CHAPTER ONE

THE ASIATIC ENVIRONMENT

I. RISE OF MONARCHY AND THE GOVERNING CLASSES AMONG THE MUSALMANS

ARABIA BEFORE THE RISE OF ISLAM

The Arabian Peninsula is about one-third of the United States in size, but it is an arid region and could not under medieval conditions have supported a population of more than eight or ten millions. North of it lies the Fertile Crescent, where we find some of the earliest achievements of ancient civilization. For assistance in their constant wars with each other and for the protection of their frontiers against the unruly Arab tribes, the Byzantine and the Persian empires had organized two minor principalities in the north; the Ghassanids of Bostra were subordinate to the Byzantine empire and the Lakhmids of Hira to Persia. Nominally the subjects of both principalities were Christians, but Christianity does not seem to have taken a deep root in their hearts.

In southern Arabia there are sufficient periodic rains to warrant a systematic cultivation and here also we come across the remains of ancient civilizations. "Of the four best-known kingdoms of ancient Arabia, viz. Saba, Ma'in, Hazramaut and Qataban, the first three—and these were the most important ones—are mentioned in the Old Testament."¹ Though Arabia became a single community on the basis of one language some centuries before the rise of Islam, the distinction between south Arabian (or Yamanite) and north Arabian (or Modharaite) persisted long into the Muslim period. The Arabic word for king is malik, but the Arabians never used the title of malik except for foreign rulers and the partially Romanised and Persianised dynasties of Ghassan and Hira; the kings of Banu Kindah formed the only exception to this rule.²

Between the principalities of Ghassan and Hira in the north, and

¹ Hitti, History of the Arabs, 42.
² Ibid., 28.
Yamau and Hazramaut in the south lies the extensive region of Arabia Felix—not ‘happy Arabia’ to be sure, but Arabia which had never known any organized government or central executive authority. The climate is hot and dry; the mean temperature of the Hijaz low-bed is nearer to 90°F than to 80°F and that of Medina is a little over 70°F. The largest oases are not more than 10 sq. miles and their chief fruit is the date-palm.

Of course, human beings cannot live except in society, and society must be based on some ‘security arrangements’ so that the minimum of cooperation for social life may be possible. The basis of security arrangements in Arabia Felix—the Arabia that mattered primarily to the early Muslims—was the blood-tie. Families were organized into clans and clans into tribes. The tribes, in general, had no executive authority. In practice an Arab depended on his clan; if he was injured, he expected his clan to get him proper compensation; if he was murdered, he expected the clan to kill his murderer, or if that was not possible, his clan would kill some individual from the hostile clan or obtain compensation for his heirs. There was no judiciary, but arbiters could be appointed in special cases by mutual consent. The protection given by the blood-tie could be strengthened by *hilf*, or federation of clans for mutual protection, and *jiwar*, the granting of protection by a stronger to a weaker clan. Clan conflicts and tribal conflicts tended to multiply and continued for years. ‘Of the time of ignorance which preceded Muhammad,’ Gibbon writes, ‘1,700 battles are recorded by tradition.’ More serious than actual combats was the constant fear that haunted the minds of men, whose clans were at war.

There was no universally accepted principle for the internal organization of the tribe or the clan. The law of primogeniture was not known to the heathen Arabs and it has been rejected by Islam. The best son—or the best man—had to lead; primogeniture would have meant the ruin of the clan. The head of the tribe or clan may be elected or merely acknowledged, there could be no binding law or custom about it; if the acknowledged chief was slack or lazy in looking after the interest of the clan or behaved in an erratic or wilful manner, he would be replaced by a rival. In any case no chief could hold his post after he had lost the confidence of his constituency.

The moral ideal of the Arab tribes, generally referred to as *murawaywah*, was in consonance with their social organization. Professor Nicholson has defined *murawaywah* to mean ‘bravery in battle, patience in misfortune, persistence in revenge, protection of the weak and defiance of the strong.’ But the virtues of generosity, hospitality, loyalty,

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fidelity and honour must be added to complete the list. The great repository of the principles of murauwah is the highly developed poetry of pre-Muslim Arabia, which, however, was not put into writing till the period of the great Abbasids.

The only three cities which we need mention here were dominated by the clan system. The religious centre of the whole of Arabia was the Ka'ba, the foundation of which (according to Quranic tradition) had been laid by Abraham and Ismail. It was, in any case, a very ancient structure, sacred to Allah, 'the Lord of the Worlds'. We have to imagine it as a roofless structure; the present small room was built during the youth of the Prophet and has been preserved in the same form since then. The rites of haj are performed not in the Ka'ba itself but in the ground round it, known as Hatim. Some twelve generations before the rise of Islam, one Fihr (or Quraish) obtained the custody of the Ka'ba and his descendants built the city of Mecca round it: they also made a reputation for themselves as merchants, for a large part of the commerce of India and southern Arabia with the west was in their hands. The Quraish made themselves the leading tribe of Arabia, but we have to remember that Mecca, described in the Quran as 'a valley without cultivation', had no income except from pilgrims and from trade. 'Almost the only organ of government in Mecca was the Council or Mala. This was the assembly of the chief's or leading men of various clans. The Council was merely deliberative and had no executive of its own. Each clan was theoretically independent and could go its own way, and, therefore, the only effective decisions of the Mala were the unanimous ones.'4 Some four days' journey from Mecca is the city of Ta'if at the height of 6,000 feet, 'a bit of Syrian earth comparable with Lebanon'. It was inhabited by the Saqif tribe, but wealthy Meccans also had property there.

Yasrib, later called Medina (i.e. the city of the Prophet) was not exactly a city but a series of settlements, some 20 miles by 20 miles, several days' journey north of Mecca and some eighty miles from the Red Sea. Its strategic importance lay in the fact that, in alliance with the neighbouring tribes, it could stop Mecca's very profitable trade with the Byzantine empire. The Jews, their main tribes being Qainuqa, Banu Nadir and Quraizah, probably settled in Medina first; later on two south Arabian tribes, the Aus and Khazraj, pushed themselves in and became more prominent. But the Aus and Khazraj could not pull on together and the Jews were also drawn into the conflict. The two tribes fought a terrible battle at Bu'as about A.D. 617. Neither party could win, but the atmosphere of hatred, distrust and suspicion created

4 Montgomery Watt, Muhammad in Mecca, 8.
was such as to make life in each other's neighbourhood absolutely impossible. So both parties appealed to Muhammad to come and live with them and to decide all disputes on behalf of Allah as a neutral outsider.

The mass of the Arabs were idol-worshippers. They acknowledged Allah as the Supreme Being and His name came at the head of all documents. But Allah was not the object of worship. The Quran refers to three important idols—Lat, Manat and Uzza—whose intercession was sought as the daughters of Allah. It would be useless enumerating the idols of other tribes. Some 300 idols, or representations of idols, were put in the Ka'ba in spite of the small space available, but only one of them, Habal, was a statue. 'Nowhere do we find genuine devotion to a heathen deity.' The pagan Arabs had no religious scriptures and no deeply thought-out mythology. Colonies of Jews and Christians had settled at various places, but we find no anti-Christian or anti-Jewish sentiment among the heathen Arabs. The Jews in Arabia, as in world history, remained true to their tradition, even if not well-informed about it. With reference to the challenge of Islam, all we need say is that the Arabs, whether pagan or Christian, merely followed the religion of their forefathers; they did not like their traditional thoughts being disturbed or their ancestors being traduced. Meagre though may have been the faith of pagan Arabs in their idols, they did not like them being dismissed as non-existent. Above all, they resented the Prophet's demand that every belief should be subjected to a prolonged process of rethinking and criticism in terms of the spiritual history of mankind. After the Prophet had taken possession of Mecca, most Christians, who belonged to the heretical sects and would have been punished for their religion in the Byzantine empire, preferred to accept the Muslim creed.

The Prophet's 'Security System'

Maulana Shibli, the greatest biographer of the Prophet in our country, does not estimate the Prophet primarily as 'a man of affairs' on the ground that he was essentially a spiritual and moral teacher. This is correct and no biography of the Prophet, however brief, can ignore a reference to his religious teachings. Still from the viewpoint of the growth of political institutions, the main work of the Prophet was the establishment of a 'security system' for the whole of Arabia, except the regions subordinate to Byzantine and Persia. It was the rock on which his successors built.

*Muhammad, son of Abdullah, son of Abdul Muttalib, son of Hashim of the tribe of Quraish was born about the year A.D. 570. His father died before his birth and his mother, Amina, died when
he was six; he was, therefore, brought up by his uncle, Abu Talib, the head of the clan and the father of his cousin, Ali. Abu Talib’s financial condition was not good; so Muhammad as a boy had to look after goats, but in his youth he made a good career as an honest and reliable executive in the management of caravans. He was twenty-five when he married Khadija, a rich widow of forty, whose caravan he had managed. It is unfortunate that the collectors of the biographies and the traditions (hadises) of the Prophet tell us practically nothing of ‘the preparatory period’ of his life. But two propositions may be safely laid down. When he had to manage the ‘security system’ for the whole of Arabia, it was found that he was so remarkably well-informed about the internal tensions and economic conditions of every tribe and clan that it was impossible to deceive him. Secondly, he must have made a careful study of Jewish, Christian and Hellenic ideas as they prevailed in Arabia. Tradition, probably correct, says that he used to retire for days together with his simple fare to meditate in the comfortless cave of Hira.

In his fortieth year Muhammad went through a prolonged spiritual experience which left him convinced that he was a Nabi (Prophet) and a Rasul (Messenger) commissioned by Allah to establish, or rather to re-establish, the age-old religion of mankind—the religion of Adam and Noah, of Moses and Christ and of all other prophets ‘between whom we make no distinction.’5 (Sura 2:136). This did not mean that he accepted either Christianity or Judaism as current in his day. He had the greatest respect for Christ as the ‘Spirit of Allah’ and ‘His

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5 European writers have needlessly wasted their time and energy in applying their modern-minded psychology to discover what the Prophet felt and experienced. First, as Professor Watt admits, there are only ‘scrap of source material’ that have come to us from Az-Zuhri or Ibn-i Sa’d, who collected his material in the reign of Walid, over a hundred years after the event. Maulana Shibli insists that the whole story of Az-Zuhri should be rejected because it is not confirmed by earlier authorities. Secondly, the story consists of impossible legendary elements and completely ignores the Prophet’s work as a thinker.

Both the Quran and the traditions are clear as to how Prophet behaved when he received a revelation. He would wrap himself up in a blanket and perspire profusely, whatever the temperature, and for a period, which never exceeded a few minutes, his thoughts were so concentrated that he could attend to nothing else. Then he dictated what had been revealed to him and his followers committed it to memory. These dictated revelations form the Quran. Obviously, a verse thus dictated and immediately published could not be changed or altered, but a later verse could cancel a previous verse.

‘We must distinguish’, says Professor Watt, ‘the Quran from the normal consciousness of Muhammad, since the distinction was fundamental for him. From the first he must have distinguished carefully between what, as he believed, came to him from a supernatural source and the products of his own mind. Just how he made this
Word’, but he was uncompromisingly hostile to the doctrine of Trinity in any shape or form. With reference to the Jews, he denied that there could be any ‘chosen people’—chosen, that is, by birth. ‘The pious amongst you are nearest to Allah’, says the Quran. The Allah of Muhammad is not a tribal deity but the Lord of the Worlds (Rabbul ‘Alamin). The pagan Arabs were told that the idols worshipped by them as ‘daughters of Allah’—or as intermediaries in any form—were non-existent. Allah must be worshipped direct. ‘Think of Me and I shall think of you,’ says the Quran (Sura 2:152); and again, ‘When My creature prays to Me, I am near.’ (Sura 2:186). The basis of the new creed, called Islam, is an uncompromising monotheism. All Musalmans are equal and brothers and Islam will tolerate no monkery or ordained priesthood.

For about three years Islam was preached as a secret creed. Then the Prophet was ordered to preach it publicly and an opposition was inevitable. Abu Talib did not accept Muhammad’s creed but extended to him the protection of his clan. Since the Quraish had no organised executive, they had no means of really persecuting the Musalmans. Slaves who accepted Islam could be tortured by their owners, and the Musalmans had no alternative but to purchase them. But free-born Musalmans, who had the protection of their clans, could only be abused and harassed, specially when they were praying in the Ka’ba. The Prophet advised some of his followers to migrate to Abyssinia and there were probably two migrations. The experiment of boycotting the clans of Hashim and Muttalib was tried for two years (circa 616-618) and then given up. The Prophet and his followers were only exercising that freedom of religious choice which Arabian tradition had given to all Arabs; also both groups were of the same blood and closely allied by marriages. So some ten years passed in a discussion or ‘dialogue’ which is preserved for us in the early verses of the Quran. No loss of life is recorded as the result of pagan persecution.

But in A.D. 619 the Prophet’s wife, Khadija, and his uncle, Abu Talib, died, and Abu Jahl, as the new head of the Hashimi clan, publicly withdrew the clan protection from Muhammad. This left the Prophet practically in the position of an outlaw. Fortunately for Islam, he was invited to Medina by a combined delegation of Aus and Khazraj and

distinction is not very clear, but the fact that he made it is as clear as anything in history.’ (Muhammad in Medina, 52-53). Professor Watt is here expressing the orthodox Muslim opinion. The distinction to which he draws attention is the distinction between the Quran and the Hadiths (the precepts and actions of the Prophet). The Quran alone is the uncontested text for all Musalmans; it has been preserved from the very first both in writing and in memory.
went there in A.D. 622.

According to a document, generally referred to as the Constitution of Medina, some clauses of which probably belong to the first year of the Prophet’s life there, he seems to have guaranteed the clan system at Medina and the powers he took to himself were extremely circumscribed. ‘The clan chiefs,’ says Watt, ‘retain their authority and no executive power, except in wartime, is given to the Prophet. His main power is judicial—the maintenance of peace.’ Now according to the customs of the ‘era of ignorance’ Muhammad was not entitled to be the head of a clan, let alone a tribe. Nevertheless with the establishment of a ‘Muslim home’ at Medina, a new organization—the Muslim religious community or millat—began to develop and no one could deny that Muhammad was both its founder and supreme head. The order, ‘Obey Allah and His Prophet’ is repeated by the Quran about forty times, but the Prophet is also directed ‘to consult the Musalmans about their affairs’ and the principle—‘they decide their affairs by common discussion’—is laid down for the general guidance of all Musalmans. The millat did not immediately cancel the executive power of the clan organizations, for the Prophet had nothing to put in its place. But the executive power of the clans and tribes was abolished by the first Caliph and his advisers as the result of the War of Apostacy (Riddah) and a state, properly so-called, was organized; still the memory of the tribal and clan organizations, their affections and hatreds, lived on till the end of the Umayyad dynasty. But so far as the Prophet was concerned, the Muslim millat of which he was the head, was from the very beginning superior to the Muslim clans.

It is difficult to say how the above-mentioned Quranic injunctions were interpreted. Some things are, however, clear. The Prophet respected the skill of all craftsmen and he demanded that in the sphere of ‘religion-building’, which was the sphere of his special skill, his orders should be obeyed, even if there was no direct Quranic injunction. As good examples we may quote his precepts to the effect that there is to be no monasticism in Islam, that devotions which have the mortification of the flesh for their object are not to be permitted, and that no one may leave more than one-third of his property by will and disinherit his heirs from what is left.

On the other hand the Prophet, by the very nature of his profession, had to make himself accessible to all men and women. He was there

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6 This document is given to us by Ibn-i Ishaq, who wrote in the early days of the Abbasid dynasty. He does not quote his authority, but some clauses could only have been written in the year before the battle of Badr; others are clearly later additions.
to preach, to learn and to convince. But it was impossible to consult all men and women about public affairs. So we find a body of advisers, foreshadowing the governing classes of later ages, collecting round the Prophet. They consisted primarily of three groups—emigrants (muhajirs) from Medina who had rendered great services to Islam, the leading Muslim clan-chiefs of Medina (ansurs) and men of military and administrative skill. The Prophet had no need for ‘yes men’ in his deliberations. He sometimes allowed his companions (sahaba) to override his preferences; sometimes he overrode their collective advice; on other occasions he asked them for their opinion and discussed a problem till a solution could be found. The final decision, however, lay with the Prophet; on a few minor matters we find him admitting his errors, but as a rule he succeeded in convincing his followers of the wisdom of his decisions. Apart from the group of munafiqs or hypocrites, to whom the Quran refers but does not name, there was always an element of genuine true believers, who criticised the acts of the Prophet in peace and in war and, particularly, in the distribution of spoils; records of these criticisms—and of the Prophet’s answers—have been carefully preserved. Nevertheless, though in no sense an autocrat, Muhammad is the first executive officer or magistrate we find in the history of Arabia Felix. If he decided for war, he appointed the officers to lead his forces and collected volunteers to fight his battles. He had also by public subscriptions (sadaqah and zakat) to find the money needed for his campaigns. In case of victory he distributed four-fifths of the spoils to his men and kept in his hands one-fifth of it for eight specified public purposes. As the sphere of his influence expanded, he appointed ‘agents’ to act on his behalf and delegated such power to them as he considered necessary. Subject to public consultation and criticism, the final authority in all matters lay with the Prophet.

The Quran insists on the Prophet being properly respected, i.e. respected as a Prophet. Since he had no servants at his house, visitors were required to call three times for permission to enter. If no permission was given after the third call, they were requested not to take it ill but to call at another time. The Prophet, in his turn, followed the same procedure when calling on others. Persons talking to the Prophet were ordered not to raise their voices above his voice. When the Prophet entered the mosque, the congregation was not expected

7 The eight objects are—the poor; the needy; the incapacitated; (payment to) persons employed by the administration; reconciliation of hearts; setting free of slaves; helping persons in debt; and relief to travellers (Quran, Sura IX: 80). The fact that all these items appertain to immediate needs has not been held to debar the state from undertaking long-term public enterprises, when it has the means to do so.
to rise up out of respect for him, but they were required to move a bit and make a place for him in the centre.

The Prophet had only one place, the mosque, for his five daily prayers as well as the transaction of all business. Maulana Shibli invites us to visualise the Prophet's mosque after the manner of an Indian Id-gah. A low *kachcha* wall enclosed a large area of land. A part of this area was covered by a thatched roof of palm-leaves standing on palm-tree trunks. The Prophet used to lean on one of these trunks when delivering his sermons, but later on a carpenter made for him a *miymer* or pulpit—a structure of three steps, on which he could sit or stand when speaking. The floor remained *kachcha* for many years, but then it was paved with small stones to prevent rain-water from collecting.

The Prophet had none of the paraphernalia of a government or state. He needed no treasury, for all money was spent on the day it was received. His 'agents' in distant parts were allowed to enrol a few soldiers, but the Prophet himself had no body-guard, soldiers or policemen. Muhammad remained throughout his life what a Prophet has to be—the most unprotected of men. The literature of later days refers to persons as his 'body-servants', but their services must have been purely honorary. We are also told of persons who acted as secretaries to the Prophet, but their services must also have been purely voluntary. The Prophet had no secretariat or office and we are not told how the treaties and other records, of which the Prophet must have preserved a copy for reference, were kept. The Prophet had a seal, and when he dictated a letter or made a treaty, the names of the persons witnessing it were generally given.

The following statement of Gibbon finds full support in all the authenticated traditions of the Prophet.

'The good sense of Muhammad despised the pomp of royalty; the Apostle of God submitted to the menial offices of the family; he kindled the fire; milked the ewes and mended with his own hand his shoes and woollen garments. Disdaining the penance and merit of a hermit, he observed without effort or vanity the abstemious diet of an Arab or a soldier. On solemn occasions he feasted his companions with rustic and hospitable plenty, but in his domestic life many weeks would elapse without a fire being kindled in the hearth of the Prophet. His hunger would be appeased by a sparing allowance of barley bread; he delighted in the taste of milk and honey, but his ordinary food consisted of dates and water.'
According to the tradition of his companions, Muhammad was distinguished by the beauty of his person, an outward gift which is seldom despised except by those to whom it has been refused. They applauded his commanding presence, his piercing eye, his gracious smile, his flowing beard, his countenance that painted every aspect of the soul and his gestures that enforced each expression of the tongue.

The wars of the Prophet need only a passing reference here. His basic policy was to use both battles and alliances in order to win over the opponents of his religion by severe disciplinary punishments in a few cases combined with widespread forgiveness and generosity. The three battles due to the attack of the Quraish on Medina—battle of Badr (March, 624), battle of Uhud (March, 625) and the battle of the Ditch (March-April, 627)—failed to shake the Prophet’s power at Medina; in fact it grew owing to the failure of his opponents, for in all the three battles the Musalmans were greatly outnumbered. The Prophet took a ransom from captives who could afford to pay it; the rest were set free unconditionally to reflect on the character and the creed of their opponents.

In March, 628, the Prophet decided on a pacific offensive and marched with 1,200 or 1,400 followers in pilgrim’s garb and the necessary sacrificial animals for a pilgrimage (umra) to Mecca. But on reaching Hudaibiya on the precincts of the sacred territory, he was informed that the Quraish—then led by a triumvirate of Ikrimah bin Abu Jahl, Suhail bin Amr and Sufwan bin Umayyah—had decided to fight. Nevertheless, owing to the serious loss of their Byzantine trade, they were prepared for a treaty on the following terms:

(1) Pilgrimage next year; (2) Every tribe to be free to ally itself to the Prophet or to the Quraish; (3) Peace between the Prophet and the Quraish for ten years during which neither party was to attack a tribe allied to the other; (4) ‘Whoever of the Quraish comes to Muhammad without the permission of his protector (or guardian), Muhammad is to send back to them; whoever of those with Muhammad comes back to the Quraish is not to be sent back to him.”

The last clause did not apply to the heads of families or to married women, but it left the heads of the Quraish families free to torture and beat their dependents, who accepted the Muslim faith. In a clan-governed Arabia flight to Medina was the only protection converts to Islam.

9 A pilgrimage to Mecca on the prescribed dates in Zil Hij is haj; a pilgrimage at any other time is umra.
could find. And now the Prophet was by treaty giving up that sole guarantee of protection to converts, with reference to the Quraish in the treaty itself, but by implication to all other heathen clans. The Prophet's greatest believers and closest friends never wavered in their faith and respect for him, but they were definitely against the treaty. Had it been subjected to a referendum of the Musalmans, the Hudai-biya treaty would not perhaps have been accepted. The Prophet, however, was determined to accept the treaty. He had confidence in the expanding power of his Faith. No Musalmans had gone back to idolatry, and all Arab idolaters would come to Islam in their predestined time. He had no intention of breaking the provisions of the treaty, but he felt sure that Allah would find a way. He sealed the treaty and invited his followers to take a pledge to him—the 'Pledge under the Tree'. Almost everyone present took the pledge.

The Hudaibiya treaty was really a victory for Islam. Leading Meccans began to migrate to Medina, the most important being Khalid bin Walid, the great military genius of early Islam, and Amr ibnul 'As, the future conqueror of Egypt. Some 70 converts to Islam, whom the Prophet refused to receive at Medina owing to the terms of the treaty, established themselves at an independent centre north of Mecca and began to plunder the Meccan caravans; the Quraish in their distress requested the Prophet to settle them at Medina so that they may be bound by the provisions of the treaty. Thus the unequal clause of the treaty disappeared.

The Meccan triumvirate should have used the ten years of peace to build up their commerce and lay the foundation of a great alliance to preserve their old creed. But they proved remarkably short-sighted. There was a quarrel between Khuza'ah, a tribe allied to the Prophet, and Banu Bakr, who were allied to the Quraish. Mecca and Medina should have remained strictly neutral. But the Quraish leaders helped the Banu Bakr to crush the Khuza'ah and then began to reflect on the consequences of their deed. The Prophet, on his part, decided on the fatiha of Mecca—the annexation of the territory, the winning over of its inhabitants and the raising of the sanctuary to a status it had never known before. But he could only do so if he had a force that made resistance impossible and he is said to have collected about 10,000 followers. The object of the enterprise was not revealed till the army was two stages from Mecca. Sufyan bin Harb (father of the future Caliph Mu'awiya), the Prophet's lifelong enemy, came to see him and the Prophet granted protection to him and to all who sought refuge in his house. Later on protection was given to all who closed their doors and remained in their houses.
The city was entered by columns of the Muslim army from all the four sides (11 January 630) but stern orders were given prohibiting plunder and spoliation. The column led by Khalid killed 28 opponents, but the other columns occupied the city peacefully. The idols were removed from the Ka'ba and from private houses, and Usman bin Talha, the custodian of the Ka'ba, was reappointed to his post. No one was asked to accept Islam as a part of the settlement. A list of proscribed persons guilty of particular crimes was published, but appeals to the Prophet’s clemency reduced it a good deal. Political and military opposition to the Prophet in the past was not considered a crime and his foremost opponents, like Sufyan bin Harb and the members of the Meccan triumvirate, served the new regime and prospered.

Having become the ruler of the Quraish, the Prophet had to meet the immediate challenge of their opponents, the Bedawin tribe of Hawazin and the Saqif of Ta'if, who had collected over 20,000 soldiers. They were defeated at the battle of Hunain, the chief feature of which was the unwillingness of both parties to kill. The Prophet took their cattle as spoils of war, but his opponents got back their wives and children by joining the new creed.

‘There is no compulsion in matters of religion’, the Quran declares (Sura 2: 256). During the first thirteen years of his preaching life, the Prophet had placed his religious programme on a purely peaceful basis. His conversations at Medīna, as recorded by the most reliable traditions, prove that he wanted his religion to expand in the only way a religion should—by discussion, persuasion and acceptance. He was not prepared to tolerate the scriptureless idolatry of the pagan Arabs, but he made a clear distinction between them and the ‘People of the Book’ (Ahl-i Kitab); the Quran is firm in stating that the latter had started with truth but had deviated into error; consequently, though they are not accepted as men of ‘faith’ (iman), they are fully recognised as legal ‘religions’ (dīns). Now after eight years of successful struggle, Muhammad was prepared to try the old experiment again. If the treaties handed to us by tradition are of any value, the Prophet felt no hesitation in being the head of a political organization consisting of Musalmans and the ‘People of Book’ and in guaranteeing the religious freedom of the latter. Owing to the privileges given to the ‘People of the Book’, the Muslim ulama of latter days have confined the term to religious groups whose scriptures are referred to in the Quran. But the Quran says clearly that it has not enumerated the names of all prophets and, by implication, the names of all revealed scriptures. The restriction made by the ulama has no Quranic justification.
Muslim historians designate A.H. 9 (April 630-April 631) as the year of Deputations (Wafds). Apart from the region controlled by the maliks of Ghassan and Hira, deputations came to the Prophet from every part of Arabia and he was able to establish by treaties a security system under the guarantee of Allah and His Messenger. The Prophet believed in having treaties put in writing; he also dictated letters in a brief, terse and clear style, which are often in the nature of treaties. These treaties make provisions for Muslim clans and tribes and also for the organized tribes of Jews, Christians and Zoroastrians. To take the latter first, the treaties specified either a lump sum or a proportion of yearly produce, which the non-Muslim organizations had to pay; after this the treaties gave a guarantee that no more would be demanded and also that there would be no interference with their religious affairs. Typical examples of this are the arrangements with the Jews of Khaibar and the Jews of Magna in Ayla. His letter to the Magna Jews, after demanding the surrender of all fine cloth, war-material, slaves and a quarter of the dates produced, fish caught and cloth woven, ends with the sentence: 'Thereafter you are free from all tax (jizya) and forced labour.' The deputation of the Nestorian Christians of Najran in southern Arabia came to see the Prophet in his mosque and its members were invited to say their prayer in it also. They were required to pay 2,000 suits of clothes twice a year and also to lend 30 armours, 30 horses and 30 camels in case of local wars in Yaman. In return for this they were promised 'for ever' the protection (jihwar) of Allah and His Messenger for their persons, goods and properties and for their churches and services. 'No bishop will be removed from his episcopate, no monk from his monastic position and no church warden from his church wardenship.' Order was also given for levying the jizya from the Zoroastrians of the east Arabian province of Bahrain and for respecting their creed.

Three demands were made from the Muslims—sadaqah, zakat and ushr. Sadaqah is defined by the Quran as 'what you can spare' (Sura 2:219). Zakat was defined as 2½ per cent of income by later legists, who also insisted on charging it on 'unused capital' like gold and silver.

10 These treaties and letters are now available to us in the Tabaqat (Volumes) of Ibn-i Sa'd. Ibn-i Sa'd collected his material some two centuries after the Prophet's death and he must have mainly relied upon living memory. The volumes of Ibn-i Sa'd have been collected with great difficulty by Professor Sachau and other European scholars. Maulana Shibli considers the work reliable, but he was unable to make full use of it, as Professor Watt has done, owing to his untimely death.

11 Watt, Muhammad in Medina, 358.

12 Ibid., 359-60.
silver ornaments. *Ushr* meant one-tenth of the land-produce or one-twentieth, if cultivation was by buckets. No separate arrangement was made for pagan Arabs; they were expected to join Islam at their own convenient time. On the other hand, the conception of *jizya* as a separate, personal and additional tax on a non-Muslim for remaining a non-Muslim, which is expounded in the law-books of later Islam, finds no justification in the traditions of the Prophet.

It remains to be seen how Arabia was governed during the last two or three years of the Prophet’s life. As has already been stated, the Prophet had no police force, no professional and standing army and, of course, no permanent civil service. It cannot be too strongly stated that the Prophet did not establish a government or a state; he was content to leave to the tribes and clans the freedom they possessed, and it was the only freedom consistent with the conditions of his age. He would have been horrified at the unlimited power of the ‘dynastic monarchy’, which his community built up as an integral part of its social and political structure. He never contemplated it and left no laws about it. Inclined by nature to appeal to reason instead of exercising autocratic and despotic authority, he was content to unify Arabia on the basis of the power the treaties gave him.

He appointed thirty-five or more ‘agents’ and delegated to them his authority under the treaties—the collection of taxes (*uslr*, *zakat*, *sadaqah* and *jizya*), the maintenance of peace and the enforcement of justice. His ‘agents’ who were at a too great distance from him were asked to collect the taxes from the rich and distribute them among the local poor. Tradition has preserved his conversation with Mu‘az bin Jabal, who was appointed to some office in Hazramaut. On the Prophet’s asking him what law he would enforce, Mu‘az replied that he would enforce the Quran and where the Quran was silent, he would enforce what he had learnt from the Prophet. ‘And where that is also silent?’ In that case, Mu‘az replied, he would enforce his own *rai*. *Rai* here does not mean ‘opinion’, but what modern law calls ‘equity and good conscience’. The Prophet’s ‘agents’ were not governors in any sense of the word. Having nothing but a handful of soldiers, they had to depend upon the loyalty of the local tribes. The basic distinction between cognizable and non-cognizable offences depends upon the existence of an organized state-force with its police and judiciary. Where, as in the Prophet’s Arabia, no state-force existed, all offences were non-cognizable. It was for the injured party to demand compensation or revenge, and the utmost the Prophet’s ‘agents’ could do was to rally local public opinion so that the injured party could get the compensation or the retaliation to which it was entitled. The Quran has the term, *hukkam* (rulers), which may mean
either the clan chiefs or the Prophet's 'agents'. But it has no terms equivalent to the conceptions of sovereignty, nationalism, imperialism, government or state.

The phrase, 'Allah and His Messenger', had to serve for all purposes. A leader, who was reluctant to interfere with the autonomy of the Arab clans, could not dream of conquering foreign countries by force. 'It would be unrealistic', says Watt, 'to suppose that Muhammad saw the later expansion of the Arabs in detail, and indeed no claim of this sort is made by the early Muslim sources. . . . Whether Muhammad was aware of the weakness of the Byzantine and the Persian empires is a matter of conjecture.' The Prophet was, however, afraid of Byzantine aggression. He had led an expedition in that direction in A.D. 626, and also sent two expeditions in 627 and 629. His last expedition of 30,000 men and 1,000 horse to Tabuk in A.D. 630 was due to a report, which proved to be incorrect, that a Byzantine army of 40,000 was going to attack Arabia.

'I do not know the future', Muhammad used to declare emphatically. A respectful student of his administrative system will not deny its achievements. But at the same time he will realize that his system was bound to be transitional. A state, properly so-called, had to be established in Arabia in some form.

After returning from Tabuk, the Prophet sent a number of his companions to establish the Muslim rites of the Haj pilgrimage. Next year (March 632) he performed his first and last Haj pilgrimage. About a hundred thousand men had collected on hearing that he would be present, and he took advantage of the occasion to deliver repeated sermons on the basic principles of his Faith.

The Prophet had a sturdy frame and was endowed with excellent health; in spite of the great strains and stresses to which he was subjected, he had no serious illness till the age of sixty-three. But he developed some sort of fever on 14 or 15 May and died after an illness of some thirteen days. So long as his strength permitted, he led the congregational prayers in person, but when he was unable to do so, he assigned that duty to Abu Bakr. According to his widow, Ayesha,


14 *A few sentences, quoted in Shibli's StratuN Nabi, are given here. 'All the customs of the era of ignorance are under my feet.' 'The Arab is not superior to the non-Arab (Ajami) or the non-Arab to the Arab; you are all descended from Adam, and Adam was made from the earth.' 'All Musalmans are brothers.' 'Feed and clothe your slaves in the same way as you feed and clothe yourselves.' 'Everyone is responsible for his own crimes; the father is not responsible for the crimes of his son nor the son for the crimes of his father.' 'If a negro slave with a slit-nose is your amir (commander) and leads you according to the Book of Allah, hear him and obey him.'
'the Prophet left no inheritance behind him—no dirhams or dinars, camels or goats.'\textsuperscript{15}

According to the tradition of the Sunnis, the Prophet appointed no successor to his office. Silence on a question so important could not have been due to oversight.

\textbf{THE PIOUS CALIPHATE (633-661)}

As soon as they heard of the death of the Prophet, the residents of Medina (\textit{ansars}) called a meeting to elect a ruler from among themselves; Sa’d bin Ubaidah of the Khazraj tribe was the candidate contemplated. Abu Bakr, Umar and Abu Ubaidah Jarrah, representing the Quraish, burst into the meeting uninvited and told them very politely but very firmly that only a Quraish would be accepted by the whole of Arabia as the successor or \textit{Khalifa} (caliph) of the Prophet. After some unpleasant discussion, all present, with the exception of Sa’d bin Ubaidah, vowed allegiance to Abu Bakr. The choice met with general approval, but Umar declared later on that this was not the proper way of electing a caliph. It was fortunate for Islam that it had a caliph universally accepted, for it was soon to face the greatest crisis of its long history.

As the news of the Prophet’s death spread from tribe to tribe, a large number of them decided to rebel, while others preferred to sit on the fence. Three prophets and one prophetess also arose, preaching religions that were imitations of Islam; but they succeeded in finding followers, and Musailama, the most important of them, collected about 40,000 men. In spite of what these ‘careerist prophets’ taught, and we know little about their teachings, there was nowhere a return to idolatry. Objection was raised to the supremacy of Medina and to the taxes it demanded. The Prophet’s ‘agents’ either retreated or were driven away. But Mecca, Medina and Ta’if remained loyal and some tribes sent their tribute. Other tribes, however, wanted a compromise: If Abu Bakr did not insist on tribute, they would adhere to the beliefs and rites of Islam. But the Caliph refused to discuss a compromise. ‘If you but withhold the tithe of a tethered camel’, was his reply, ‘I will fight you for it.’ The tribes and clans had torn up their treaties with the Prophet by their unilateral action; Arabia would have to be reconquered with the help of such loyal elements as remained; but Abu Bakr, one of the earliest converts to Islam and about sixty years of age, was prepared for the task. He fitted up eleven military columns to conquer all the provinces of Arabia, the most important being led

\textsuperscript{15} \textit{Siratun Nabi}, Vol. II, 185 et seq.
by Khalid bin Walid, and within a year law and order was restored in the whole country by an unchallengeable central authority.

In the second year of Abu Bakr’s reign, the Arab armies attacked both Chaldea (Iraq) and Syria, which were Arab countries. But the struggle was still continuing when Abu Bakr died on 13 August 634. In his last illness he appointed Umar as his successor, dictated an ordinance about it and obtained the consent of the Musalmans assembled in the Prophet’s mosque. ‘I swear that when I meet my Lord,’ he declared, ‘I will say unto Him, “I have appointed as a ruler over Thy people him that is best amongst them.”

Sunni Muslims consider the Pious Caliphate as the brightest period of their religious history. The four caliphs followed the traditions of the Prophet and lived a simple life; the fact that they led the five daily prayers and delivered sermons when necessary made them accessible to all the people of Medina as well as visitors. The leading companions of the Prophet were not given high military commands at the frontiers but kept as advisers or councillors of the Caliph at Medina. But it is impossible to keep the hands of the time-clock from moving. The clans had been able to rebel against Medina owing to the executive power left to them by the Prophet. When Abu Bakr re-established his authority, the executive power of the clans vanished and Medina became the capital of a centralised and unitary state. Further, Abu Bakr undertook the responsibility of appointing his successor, and this fact, twisted out of its context, became an unfortunate precedent for later ages.

Though precedence belongs to Abu Bakr, the second Caliph Umar (634-44) is nevertheless regarded as the ideal ruler by Sunni Muslims. His sense of justice was stern and unrelenting, his life was simple and open for all to see; no one could question his piety and selflessness. Moreover, he was a man of shrewdness, foresight and wisdom, and necessity rather than choice compelled him to become a great ‘organizer of victory’. The three days’ battle of Qudsya (November 635) won by Sa’d bin Wiqqas brought Iraq and Madain, the Persian capital, under his sway. The genius of Khalid bin Walid won for him the whole of Syria at the battle of Yarmouq (20 August 636) and he paid a visit to Jerusalem. With these victories in lands inhabited by the Arabs (except the upper Tigris valley) Umar was content, and he ordered his victorious armies to stop their advance. But the Persian governing class was bent on reviving the old Persian empire and Umar had no alternative but to direct a campaign for the complete conquest of Persia. In 640-41 Amr ibnul ‘As conquered Egypt with his permission.

The spoils of war were enormous and Umar is said to have wept when he considered the demoralising effect they would have. But
unlike Abu Bakr, who gave an equal share to all Muslims, 'Umar divided the Musalmans into grades—e.g. wives of the Prophet, persons who had fought at Badr or taken the Pledge under the Tree or fought against the apostates or in Syria and Persia. The highest grade got 10,000 coins and the lowest 200 coins. The distinction was well conceived. 'I give it', said Umar, 'by priority of faith and not for noble blood.' All Arab slaves were purchased and set free. There seem to have also been registers of the whole Arab race according to the tribal disposition of the forces. The cantonment-towns of Basra and Kufa were founded about 638 by the Caliph's order. Umar also took the title of 'Commander of the Faithful' (Amirul Muminin) as an alternative to designation of the 'successor (caliph) of the successor of the Prophet'. Umar, lastly, made Arabia a purely Muslim country by purchasing the lands of the non-Muslims and settling them elsewhere. The authenticity of the order of the Prophet, on which this policy was based, has been questioned; and it was certainly a violation of his treaties. Still a state has the right to purchase whatever it needs, provided it gives proper compensation.

In November 644 while leading the morning prayer Umar was attacked by a Persian slave, Abu Lu'lu'a, who inflicted six mortal wounds upon him and then stabbed himself to death. Umar was in no position to select a successor and obtain the consent of the Faithful for his choice. So he appointed six leading companions of the Prophet—Usman, Ali, Abdur Rahman bin Auf, Sa'd bin Wiqqas, Zubair and Talha—to select the next caliph from among themselves within a specified time. The moving spirit of this committee was Abdur Rahman bin Auf, a merchant-prince and a financial genius, and he succeeded in getting Usman elected as the next caliph.

The Caliph Usman (644-56) was elected at the age of seventy and martyred at the age of eighty-two. Muslim tradition says that 'the door of troubles was opened during his reign, never to be closed again'. The first two caliphs (generally known as the Shaikhain) lived in Medina like ordinary citizens and had nothing to protect them except the respect and loyalty of the people. In consultation with the chief companions of the Prophet they decided all affairs of the state—war and peace and settlement of the conquered lands as well as the appointment, dismissal and control of governors. Usman managed somehow to lose the respect and affection of the people. There was a complaint that he appointed persons from his own clan and neglected the claims of Bani Hashim, the Prophet's clan. The Arabs were the governing class of the empire because it had been built up by their conquests; but they were divided into the Quraish and other town-dwelling tribes, like the Medinities and the Saqif, who claimed to be
the genuine aristocracy, and the Bedawins of the desert, who were again divided into northern and southern tribes.

The great curse of the day was reckless ambition. Amir Mu'awiya, who had been appointed governor of Syria by the Caliph Umar, saw to the order and prosperity of his province, but elsewhere there were tumults against Usman's governors. At a meeting of the governors at Medina in 655, Mu'awiya declared his willingness to protect the Caliph, if he came to reside in Syria; he was also willing to send an army that would protect the Caliph at Medina. Usman rejected both suggestions. His officers commanded great armies in the provinces, but he would not quarter them at Medina for his personal protection. This gave the rebels their opportunity. They came to Medina from Egypt, Basra and Kufa and besieged him in his house. Only about 18 kinsmen and citizens were available for defending the Caliph, who was assassinated on 17 June 656 while reading the Quran. His blood-stained shirt and the fingers of his wife, Naila, which had been cut by an assassin's sword, were somehow taken to Damascus and hung up in the mosque as symbols of vengeance against the murderers of Usman.

For five days the regicides controlled the frightened citizens of Medina and led the prayer in the Prophet's mosque. Then they decided to elect a caliph. Ali held back and offered to swear allegiance to either Talha or Zubair, but in the end, pressed by the threats of the regicides and the entreaties of his friends, he yielded and was saluted Caliph on the sixth day after Usman's martyrdom. The caliphate of Ali (656-61) was mostly a period of war. First Zubair and Talha along with the Prophet's widow, Ayesha, marched from Mecca towards Basra. Ali had no alternative but to pursue them and they were defeated at the Battle of the Camel (656); Talha and Zubair were killed and the Prophet's widow was sent back to Medina with all the respect due to her.

In view of the long distance of Medina from the most prosperous parts of the caliphate, Ali decided to make Kufa his capital, and Medina was not destined to regain its old political status. Ali was recognized as caliph by the whole Muslim world except Syria. But Syria under Mu'awiya's excellent administration had sixty thousand soldiers and they were too strong to be suppressed. To Ali's demand that Mu'awiya should recognize him as the caliph, the latter had a ready reply. Ali must first punish the conspirators responsible for the murder of Usman, who held high posts in his army and government, and then raise the question. The two rivals fought a battle at Siffin,
but before the conflict could lead to a positive result, Ali's soldiers agreed to the demand of their opponents that the matter should be decided according to the Quran, that is by arbitration. In this arbitration Ali's representative, Abu Musa Ash'ari, was cheated by Mu'awiya's representative, Amr ibnul 'As; after the former had declared that he had agreed to depose both the rivals, the latter said that he had only agreed to the deposition of Ali, and Mu'awiya, therefore, remained caliph.

Ali repudiated the arbitral award and so the war continued; but he was repeatedly paralysed by the revolt of the Kharijites or 'religious theocrats' in his own territory and was never able to bring an army against Mu'awiya again. In 658 Amr ibnul 'As, who had conquered Egypt for Umar before, reconquered it for Mu'awiya a second time. In 661 three Kharijites decided to murder Amr, Mu'awiya and Ali on the same morning. Amr was too ill to lead the morning prayer that day, and the person officiating in his place was killed. Mu'awiya was wounded but recovered. But Ibn-i Muljam, who had undertaken to assassinate Ali, succeeded in his task and the fourth Pious Caliph of Islam died on 25 January 661. Ali's eldest son, Hasan, was elected caliph by his party but he abdicated in favour of Mu'awiya (26 July 661) and retired to Medina.

There were merits in the Pious Caliphate which have endeared it to Sunni Muslims. But it had three shortcomings, which cannot be overlooked. If the head of the state lives the unguarded life of a private citizen, he will be in touch with the mass of the people, but his life will be in constant danger. Three out of the four Pious Caliphs were assassinated. If, on the other hand, the head of the state is given a bodyguard, he will cease to be the 'Commander of the Faithful' but only be a commander of those on his pay-roll. Secondly, no effective satisfactory law for the devolution of the caliphate could be evolved. The election could not be left to the people of a particular city, Medina or any other. The other alternative was to leave the caliph to select the best successor he could find in the whole community, but Abu Bakr alone was able to perform that duty. Lastly—and this is a fact that Muslim theological reformers have often forgotten—the Pious Caliphate could only last so long as the substance of power as governors of provinces, army commanders and advisers of the caliph remained in the hands of the Prophet's chosen companions. As Ziauddin Bārāni rightly points out, the Pious Caliphate was by its nature transitional.
Mu'awiya was the son of Sufyan, who at one time had been the leader of the Quraish against the Musalmans and had been pardoned before the conquest of Mecca; he was also a brother-in-law of the Prophet and had acted as his secretary. He had been appointed governor of Syria by the Caliph Umar in 639, and from 661 to his death in 680 he was the sole ruler of the empire and he gave to his people some twenty years of peace. He is said to have been mild, generous and forgiving, and knew how to win over the Arab chiefs by grants of money and submission to their insolence. But his achievements as a statesman have to be judged primarily by 'the institution of the dynastic monarchy' which he founded. Mu'awiya blamed Umar for not appointing a successor in his life-time and thought he was creating a better precedent by nominating his own son, Yazid, to succeed him. His two great lieutenants, Mughira and Ziyad, approved the principle, but advised him to proceed cautiously by private canvassing in the first instance. But it was only after their deaths that he felt himself strong enough to take the necessary steps. First a series of officially inspired deputations called upon Mu'awiya and appealed to him to settle the matter of succession by nominating Yazid as his successor. Then he proceeded to canvass for Yazid among the leaders of Mecca and Medina. His opponents had the courage to tell him that he had only three alternatives; he could leave the matter undecided, as the Prophet did; he could appoint as his successor the ablest Quraish he could find, like Abu Bakr; or he could leave the selection of the caliph to a committee, like Umar. 'Only, like them, thou must exclude thy sons and thy father's sons.' But Mu'awiya was unconvinced. Islam must be saved from the danger of a disputed succession after the death of every caliph.

Ultimately state power was called into play; apart from a handful of courageous persons at Mecca and Medina (including Husain, son of Ali and Abdullah ibn-i Zubair) all leading men took the oath of allegiance to Yazid, who had no difficulty in succeeding his father. Husain (son of Ali and the Prophet's daughter, Fatima) was invited by the people of Kufa to become their caliph, but Yazid's officers had no difficulty in terrorising Kufa and martyring Husain with his male followers, who may have numbered about seventy, in the field of Kerbala, some twenty-five miles from Kufa. Yazid was not aware of what was happening; still he did not punish the officers concerned and must bear responsibility for the terrible tragedy (10 Muharram a.h. 61/10 October 680).

The Quran uses the term khalifa (caliph) in the sense of 'repre-
sentative'; man has been created as God's representative (khalifa) on the earth, because man alone of all creatures is obliged to follow a moral law. But in the hurry of the moment the term khalifa was the only title found available for the Prophet's successor. The term, malik, could not be used for it implied the principle of hereditary succession. Hence Abu Bakr's explanation: 'I am the caliph (successor) of the Prophet; I am not the caliph (representative) of God.' It is only out of regard for tradition and use that the term 'caliph' can be applied to the rulers of the Umayyad and the Abbasid dynasties, who attained to their position by kinship of blood and the nomination of their predecessor. Calling a king or caliph 'the shadow of God on earth' (zilullah fil 'arz) is a meaningless phrase for which there is no canonical authority, and it has not in practice prevented the Musalmans from killing their kings, whether called caliphs, sultans, amirs or khans. The basis of the Pious Caliphate was the right of the best among the Quraish to govern the state, whatever the process of discovering him. When that right was given to the nearest of kin nominated by the last ruler, the Pious Caliphate inevitably vanished.

It cannot be too strongly insisted that the Quran and the traditions of the Prophet say nothing about monarchy, whatever its form, as a political institution. Consequently, no school of Muslim religious law or shari'at says anything concerning the monarch or the devolution of his office; and since Muslim religious law does not recognize monarchy as a political institution, it also does not regard rebellions and conspiracies as crimes. Further no distinction—apart from their policy and their administrative success—could be drawn between a king, a tyrant and a usurper. 'Dynastic monarchy' among the Musalmans has no more authority than what Mu'awiya and the customs or necessities of the middle ages could give it. But these necessities seem to have been of a very compelling type.

The following secular argument for the unlimited power of the monarch was often put forward during the middle ages: 'If there was no ruler (sultan), men would devour each other.' While Europeans in the course of their history have known many other types of government—the oligarchies and democracies of the city-states of ancient Greece, the aristocracy of the Roman republic, the oligarchies of Genoa and Venice and the free-cities of the Holy Roman Empire—the Musalmans till the end of the nineteenth century knew of no organized form of government except 'the dynastic monarchy'. Now the great Muslim legislists were not unaware of the contradictions between the Quranic law of the brotherhood and equality of all Musalmans and the brutal fact of the supremacy of one man and one dynasty. A few theoretical revolutionists, like Ibn-i Taimiya, imagined that the Pious
Caliphate could be brought back again; the great mystics found a solution by ignoring the government altogether. Nevertheless, the majority of the ulama, like Imam Ghazzali, realized that the legality of the rights of the subjects—the legality of the decisions of the law-courts, for example—depended upon the legality of the rights of the king. Therefore, in spite of his not being a caliph in accordance with the traditions of the Pious Caliphate, they were prepared to admit the legality of a king de facto; even the legality of the normal acts of the judiciary and the executive during the regime of a usurper were recognized, though the usurper himself, for very good reasons, may have been put to death.

Thus, in spite of the very great differences between the conditions of different Islamic countries, Islamic political history is dynastic history; and the two great features of dynastic history among the Musalmans are, first, the customs or conventions concerning the devolution of the monarchy and, secondly, the extraordinary powers of a capable king. In both these respects, monarchy among the Musalmans differs from the normal monarchy among other peoples.

The Abbasids accepted the procedure for the devolution of monarchy which had grown up among the Umayyads. Primogeniture was considered irrelevant; the Musalmans have not considered it a proper principle either for their public law or private law. The status of the mother was also generally, but not always, considered irrelevant. The ruling king could nominate one of his nearest relations—a brother or a son—and take an oath of fealty to him from his leading officers and prominent citizens. The experiment of the king taking an oath of fealty to a number of heirs to succeed him in the order he had fixed was tried but did not succeed; the danger was that the first heir would disinherit all others in favour of one of his own sons. During the caliphate of the Umayyads and the great Abbasids nomination by the caliph and the oath of fealty were enough. But during later dynasties a new condition was added; the nomination of the deceased king had to be ratified after his death by the great officers of the state and they could alter the succession within the dynasty. If a king died without nominating an heir, the great officers of the state could elect one of his near relations, preferably a son, to succeed him.

Two hideous and very unpleasant features appeared with the passing of ages. First, Muslim public opinion gradually reconciled itself to the fact that normal family affections, specially between brothers, had no place within the royal family. 17 If a king had four sons, only one of

17 Parricide—killing of the father—was not, however, permitted by the traditions of Muslim royal families and examples of it are very rare.
them could mount the throne, while the other three would be his rivals and were sure to rebel either on their own initiative or at the instigation of conspirators; it was, therefore, imagined that the ruling king did a service to himself, to the state, to the community and even to God, if he ensured the maintenance of the public peace by the annihilation of all his rivals and near relations. Killing perfectly innocent near relations for no other reason except that they may become possible rivals to him never disturbed the conscience of the most pious Muslim kings. Secondly, since providing the king became the privilege of a particular dynasty, the members of that dynasty naturally rose in public esteem and it was believed that so long as any member of that dynasty survived, he had a right to the throne and may possibly assert that right. Consequently a king, who came to power by overthrowing the old dynasty, could only ensure the stability of his own throne and the throne of his successors by putting to death or blinding all members of the former dynasty whom he could find. The wholesale massacre of the Umayyads by the Abbasids set the first example and later rebels had no alternative but to follow it. It has to be added that both the Umayyads and the Abbasids had no hesitation in killing such descendants of the Prophet from whom they feared a danger to their dynasty.

The royal crown*, says the wise but unambitious Hafiz, 'is an attractive head-dress, but since it involves danger to life, it is not worth the headache it entails.' The challenges to a king's power, both from his own relations and rebels, were so continuous and persistent that no king could remain on the throne for fifteen or twenty years unless he was head and shoulders above his rivals. On a rough estimate more than half the Muslim kings, who ascended the throne, have been imprisoned and killed; minors placed on the throne have rarely survived, Akbar, the great, being a rare exception. On the other hand, the occupants of the throne had to put a large number of their nearest relations to death; ten per head would, perhaps, be a modest average. In estimating the power of the average and competent Muslim kings, minors and weaklings may be ignored. The powers they lost were won back by their able successors.

It is difficult to specify the powers of the Muslim king, but the following points are clear. Subject to the obligation of consulting his leading followers, the Prophet had the sole initiative in war and peace, and in the appointment, dismissal and control of his 'agents'. Abu Bakr in his first sermon admitted the right of the people to control the caliph: 'If I do well, support me; if ill, put me right; obey me as I obey the Lord and His Prophet; wherein I disobey, obey me not.' Nevertheless, the powers of the central government increased during the Pious
Caliphate; the ‘agents’ of the Prophet were replaced by the ‘governors’ of the caliph, and their appointment, dismissal and control became one of his main functions. Their ‘governors’, unlike the Prophet’s ‘agents’, had the force necessary for executing the orders of the centre. When the Pious Caliphate gave place to the dynastic monarchy, the king took over all these powers; but since he had not the moral stature of the Pious Caliphs, he had by the dismissal or the execution of some of his highest officers to remind all concerned that this power was really in his hands. A king, who was not able to dismiss his officers, was not considered a king at all and his days were numbered.

We have seen the Prophet giving to Mu‘az bin Jabal the power of acting according to his rai (personal opinion consistent with the Prophet’s teachings, ‘equity and good conscience’) and it is reasonable to suppose that a similar power was given by the Prophet to his other ‘agents’. Now the Prophet had never considered the conquest of foreign lands; and both the Pious Caliphs and the Umayyads had no alternative but to exercise their rai, which must now be called ‘secular legislation’, where the Prophet’s precepts were silent.

Imam Abu Hanifa, the legist with the greatest followers in Islam, considered rai to be an integral part of the sharī‘at, but Imam Shafi‘i disagreed with him. So far as Muslim Asia is concerned, Imam Abu Hanifa’s teachings prevailed. But with the passage of time and change of circumstances, a further development of state power became inevitable. Rai, now developed into zawabit or a‘in (state law), instead of being a supplement to the sharī‘at became an alternative to it. There was a fundamental difference between the two. The sharī‘at was based on authority—Qur’an, hadīs and qiyyas (analogy). The state law, promulgated by royal authority, was based on a definite public objective (ihtihsan, īstislāh, reform, public welfare). Thus our Indian Ziauddin Barani in his Tārikh-i Firuz Shahi defines the object of state law to be the protection of mankind from all misfortunes from which protection is humanly possible. He did not at the time he was writing (circa 1357) consider famines and epidemics as misfortunes preventable by human endeavour. Barani was also of opinion that in cases of conflict between them, the king was to override the sharī‘at by his state laws; still he is a good Musalman and advises the king, while not changing his policy, to appeal for God’s forgiveness for violating the sharī‘at and to distribute a lot of money in charity.

The average able Muslim king had more powers than other monarchs of whom history tells us, except some Roman emperors and the European rulers of the Renaissance period. These immense powers were given to the monarchs because they were needed for the expansion of Islam in the early period and for the maintenance of peace.
over immense areas during the middle ages. The problem of state v.
religion is quite different in Islam than in Christianity or Hinduism.
Islam has no organized and ordained priesthood; the ulama of Islam
have no status apart from what their learning or public esteem may
give them. Among the Christians the Pope, or someone else in non-
Catholic countries, can speak on behalf of the priests. Among the
Hindus a Brahman may speak on behalf of all other Brahmans. But
among the Musalmans none of the ulama could speak except for him-
self, and it was always possible for the state to find an opponent for
him. Secondly, among the Musalmans the state (or the caliphate)
developed first. The Sunnis have very few books, apart from the Quran,
surviving from the first century of the Muslim era. The foundations of
Muslim religious learning were laid during the Abbasid period. The
views of the state changed with reference to various religious schools
from time to time.

Ultimately the orthodox Ash‘ari school—with all its contradictions
about God, space, time and causation—was accepted by all good
Musalmans and also by the state. The relations of the state with the
ulama were thus simplified. The king was a despot with plenty of
money; most of the ulama were recruited from the lower middle class
and their only hope was livelihood in the ecclesiastical or semi-
ecclesiastical services of the state or failing that a pension or a land-
grant (madad-i ma‘ash) from the king. The mystics tried to be inde-
pendent of the government. A few fanatic mullahs preached against
the state as a state and were punished. In general the ecclesiastical
budget of the state succeeded in keeping the ulama—‘the army of
prayer’ as they were called—in proper order and subjection. There
has been no ‘Reformation’ in Islam. The state has been all in all.
All differences of religious opinion have been solved by reference to
‘orthodoxy’.

Since the average Muslim king has been a despot, and has had to
maintain himself by despotic methods according to time and circum-
stances, it is impossible to enumerate all his powers. All we can do is
to refer to two limits. First, the accepted principles of the shari‘at with
reference to personal laws sufficed, as a rule, to protect the life and
private property of non-political persons, their professional incomes as
well as their incomes from houses and small zamindaris. On the other
hand, though there were no legal limits to the power of a Muslim king
in punishing his opponents and rebels, he had always to live in fear
of assassinations, palace revolts and conspiracies. It was easily dis-
covered that the public would stand a lot of oppression before it
appealed against a tyrant to the sword, but conspiracies were recurrent
and would-be assassins were plentiful.
It remains to consider the relation of the king with the governing class. Persons in the service of the government could be divided into three groups—purely local officers of a low grade for whom no high promotion was possible; officers of the intermediate grade, generally appointed by the king, for whom promotion to a higher grade was possible; and officers of the highest grade in charge of the provinces or the departments at the centre, whom the king would normally consult about affairs of the state. Whether appointed by the king or by his great officers, all employees of the state were believed to be servants of the king. It was inevitable that the king should use his power of appointment and dismissal to build up a governing class on whose loyalty he could rely. As we pass from age to age, we will see this governing class changing.

**The Umayyad Empire (661-750)**

The Umayyad empire produced fourteen rulers and lasted for about ninety years. Since the Arabs had laid the foundation of the empire, they insisted on their exclusive right to govern it. This meant the oppression of the non-Arabs, specially the peasantry, whether converted or unconverted. A converted Persian had no legal standing unless he joined an Arab tribe as a mawali (servant) and even then all rights were not given to him; for example, the Arab could fight on horse-back but the mawali had to fight on foot. But the conquered, for the time-being, were in no position to protest or rebel; so the Arabs, having no rival to fear, could afford to break up into hostile groups. It was admitted that the aristocracy of the Arabs was the Quraish, but the Quraish were divided into two rival branches—the Umayyads and their allies, who had the monopoly of state power and high office; and their collaterals, the Hashimis (including the House of the Prophet) who were oppressed as possible rivals. Both branches had a common ancestor, Abd Manaf, but this fact only seems to have increased their bitterness. Add to it the Yamanite (southern) and Modharite (northern) Arab tribes insisted on carrying their hostility to every part of the empire. We should not be surprised that the oppressed people of Persia and Iraq based their hopes on the House of the Prophet coming into power and repeatedly fought for this object, not knowing that when the opportunity came, clever politicians would deprive them of their hopes.

Mu‘awiya’s son, Yazid, died after a reign of three-and-a-half years.

Yazid's son, Mu'awiya II, was a consumptive who died after two or three months. So the leaders of the group selected Marwan bin Hakam as the next caliph and all the remaining rulers of the dynasty, called Marwanids, are descended from him. At the same time Abdullah ibn-i Zubair laid claim to the caliphate, and the struggle with him lasted for about nine years (684-92).

The Umayyad monarchs were, as a rule, personally mild, kindly and generous. They were also their own chief ministers. But this necessitated delegating enormous powers to their governors and punishing them for the inevitable misuse of that power. Mu'awiya had appointed his brother, Ziyad, as governor of Kufa, Basra and the whole of Persia, and Ziyad won respect and loyalty by his stern maintenance of law and order.

Abdul Malik suppressed Abdullah ibn-i Zubair and brought the whole Muslim empire under his control, and his son, Walid, added to his predecessor's work. 'The era of Walid I was glorious both at home and abroad. There is no other reign, not excepting even that of Umar I, in which Islam so spread and was consolidated.' Hitherto there had only been raids by the Arabs into the lands of the Turks in the east and the Berbers in northern Africa, but the raiders had been driven back and the boundaries of the caliphal empire had not been extended. Under Hajjaj bin Yusuf Sqaafi, Walid's viceroy in the east, Qutaiba bin Muslim conquered and settled the land of the Turks from the eastern frontier of Persia to the border of China, while Muhammad bin Qasim, a cousin of Hajjaj, conquered Sind. Musa bin Nusair, governor of the lands east of Egypt, conquered and settled the whole of northern Africa, while his Berber slave-officer, Tariq, conquered and settled Andulusia or southern Spain. The curse of the Umayyad period were sectarian revolts or personal ambitions disguised under religious forms. Consequently, Umayyad officers, like Hajjaj, had no alternative but to suppress these revolts with a strong hand, and the Umayyad emperors have been considered more despotic than other dynasties.

The postulate on which the Pious Caliphate and Umayyad empire were based was that all Musalmans, regardless of all distinctions of language, race and culture, should belong to a single state; and this state, in the first century of Islam, could only be an empire of the Arab aristocracy. There was naturally a resentment against it among those Arabs, who had been deprived of their political rights, as well as among the Persian mawalis; and the 'House of the Prophet' or the 'House of Hashim', without specification of the candidate, seemed a war-cry that could draw all who were discontented against the hated Umayyads.

19 Muir, Caliphate, 360-61.
The descendants of Husain bin Ali, the Imams of the Shias, took no part in the revolt and reaped no advantage from it. But in the reign of Hisham (724-43), Muhammad, the great-grandson of the Prophet's uncle, Abbas, organized a propaganda in favour of his family in secret from his village, Homeima, in southern Palestine. He depended for his propaganda on merchants who travelled from city to city. In A.D. 743 on a visit to Mecca, he purchased a young Persian slave, Abu Muslim Khurasani, who was the stuff great revolutionists are made of. But Muhammad died; his eldest son, Ibrahim, was arrested and perished in prison, and Ibrahim's younger brothers, Abul Abbas and Abu Mansur, hid themselves in Kufa. In 747, after careful preparations, Abu Muslim Khurasani raised in revolt the black standard of the Abbasids in Herat and Merv. His cause found general support. Nasr, the eighty-five-year-old Umayyad governor of Khurasan, died while flying back near Hamadan. It was impossible to stop the revolutionary tide. Kufa was taken; Marwan II was defeated at the Battle of the Zab (25 January 750) and killed in a church in Egypt. All Umayyads of any importance were brutally killed, the only exception being Abdur Rahman (ad-Dakhil), a grandson of Hisham, who succeeded in flying to Spain and founded his independent kingdom there. Homage was done to Abul Abbas, the first Abbasid Caliph, on 29 October 749. 'I am the Great Revenger', he declared, 'and my name is as-Saffah, the Shedder of Blood.'

THE ABBASIDS (750-1258)

The Abbasid is the longest ruling dynasty in the history of Islam; it lasted for over 500 years and produced thirty-seven rulers. But of these only the first eight—Abul Abbas Saffah (749-54), Abu Ja'far Mansur (754-75), Mahdi (775-85), Hadi (785-86), Harun Rashid (786-809), Amin (808-13), Mamun (808-30), Mu'tasim (833-42)—can be considered caliphs or emperors in the proper sense of the word. We are here only concerned with the chief features of the reign of the great Abbasids.

In two important respects they made really important contributions. The Abbasid revolution put an end to Arab monopoly of high offices. The main support of the new dynasty had come from Persia, and it largely depended on highly Arabicised Persians for its administration. Abu Muslim Khurasani, the moving spirit of the revolution, the Barmakides (Khalid, Yahya and Yahya's two sons, Fazl and Ja'far), who held the highest offices for about half a century, and Mamun's

20 Ibid., 287.
wazir, Fazl bin Sahl, and his commander-in-chief, Tahir, are very good examples of Persian officers of the new regime. The Arabs were gradually eclipsed. There was no revival of the Persian language (as we have it now) till the end of the ninth century A.D. Persian politicians and scholars made the Arabic language their own; perhaps a careful examination will show that the greatest contributions to Arabic during the Abbasid period were made by persons of Persian blood, though they are mistakenly considered Arabs.

The second great achievement of the Abbasid period was in various branches of secular culture and religious learning. With the help of Christians who knew Greek, the Greek classics were translated, and though these translations seem to have disappeared quite early, text-books based upon them remained the chief source of secular learning during the middle ages. Great insistence was laid on Aristotle, 'the first teacher' (mu'allim-i awwal), and a knowledge of his works was passed on to the European nations through Spain. Translations were also made of Sanskrit works on science and astrology, and we find reference to a book, Sind-Hind, which was probably a translation of the Brahma Siddhanta. The great Abbasids followed a liberal policy about these matters. But help also came from an unexpected quarter. In a frontier skirmish in 751 the Arabs captured some Chinese, who could teach them the art of making paper, and before the end of the tenth century 'the paper of Samarkand' had made resort to papyrus and vellum quite unnecessary. Large books could now be written, copied and preserved, and education could be extended to the lower middle class.

In the sphere of Muslim religious learning the most important achievements were the establishment of the four schools of Sunni law or jurisprudence—Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'i and Hanbali—and the compilation of the six (or seven)\(^2\) works on the Prophet's hadises (his precepts and his actions) of which Bukhari and Muslim are considered to be the most authentic. Religious learning naturally led to theological controversies. Mamun and his successors patronised the Mu'tazila sect, who among other things, declared in favour of 'free will' against 'Divine predestination', claimed that the Quran was 'not eternal' but 'created' and that God would never be 'visible' to 'human eyes'. The controversy remained long after the great Abbasids had vanished; ultimately Abul Hasan Asha'ri and his followers, like the great Imam Ghazzali, established orthodoxy on two principles—the suppression of Greek philosophy and freedom of thought, and the

\(^2\) Seven if we add the Muwatta of Imam Malik to the six compilations accepted by the Hanafi orthodox.
uncritical acceptance of all sorts of contradictions based on traditional theology.

The Shias also became divided into two groups—the orthodox or Asna Asha’ris, who claim that their twelve Imams are perfect but go no further, and the Ismailis, who believe that their Imam is a Divine Incarnation, who can even alter the provisions of the Quran to suit the needs of time and circumstances. Imam Ja’far Sadiq (a contemporary of the Abbasid Caliph, Mansur) disinherited his son, Ismail, for being a drunkard and appointed Musa Kazim as his successor; also when Ismail died, the Imam called all the notables of Medina to his funeral. The Ismailis do not believe in the legality of what Imam Sadiq did or else they declare that the funeral was a mere pretence (taqayya) to hide the fact that the real Imamat went to Muhammad, son of Ismail. Sunni literature is full of all sorts of charges against the Ismailis; in particular they are blamed for legalising incest. The real religious literature of the Ismailis has yet to be published. The strength of the Ismaili propaganda lay in the appeal it made for a much-needed ‘Redeemer’. Professor Bernard Lewis in his *Ismailism* refers to a statement of the orthodox Imam Ghazzali to the effect that it was impossible to prevent the working class of Persia from being infected with Ismailism. Three Ismaili movements deserve to be noticed in the political sphere—the Carmathians of the Persian Gulf area, who sacked Mecca in A.D. 929 and took away the sacred Black Stone but returned it unasked; the Fatimid Caliphate of Egypt (909-1171); and the Imamat or kingdom of Alamut (1090-1256).

So far as capacity for war and administration is concerned, the Umayyads stand head and shoulder above great Abbasids. There can, in fact, be no comparison. ‘The palmiest days of Islam’, says Sir William Muir, ‘after Abu Bakr and Umar were the days of the Umayyads. Mu’awiya and Walid are not eclipsed by either Harun or Mamun. . . . The Abbasid reign pales before the glory of the Umayyad, which by its conquests laid the broad foundations of Islam in the east and the west. Moreover, the wholesale butcheries, cold-blooded murders, and treacherous assassinations, which cast a lurid light on the court of As-Saffah and his successors, find, as a whole, no counterpart among the Umayyads.’

From the very beginning the Abbasids had failed to control the whole inheritance of the Umayyads; province after province went out of their control, and ultimately only Baghdad and a fluctuating territory round it remained within the caliphate. ‘With Mu’tasim, the eighth of the Abbasids’, says Gibbon, ‘the glory of his family and

nation expired.' The remaining minor caliphs\textsuperscript{23} were first controlled by the Turkish bodyguard whom Mu'tasim had organized (842-945); then by the Buwaihids (945-1031); and lastly by the Seljuqian and Khwarazmian sultans (1031-1218). They got a breathing space of some forty years before their extinction by Halaku Khan in 1258. Of these 29 minor caliphs, 8 were killed, 2 were blinded, 2 were deposed but probably not killed and one was asked to abdicate. Nevertheless, people kept on repeating fabricated hadises to the effect that the Prophet had blessed the family of his uncle, Abbas. Also since the Quran is silent about monarchy, it was left to the caliph to assign to new Muslim royal dynasties some part of the legality—thin, weak and tenuous though it may be—which he himself possessed. Also reference to the 'Commander of the Faithful' on the coins, even when his name was not known, symbolised the unity of the Muslim world.

\textbf{The Minor Dynasties of Ajam}

The mammoth empire, constructed by Walid bin Abdul Malik, could only be maintained by rulers of extraordinary capacity, who could suppress local rebels supported by local populations to whom their local liberties were dear, and who could also control the distant governors to whom almost sovereign powers had been assigned and who could afford to live like the kings whom they had displaced. \textit{Ignoring some losses, like Spain, and some gains, like Indonesia, the boundaries of the Muslim 'populations' today are where Walid bin Abdul Malik left the 'frontiers' of the Muslim caliphate in A.D. 715.}

How this mass of population was converted to Islam is not known. The Christians have loved to record the labours of their missionaries; the Musalmans have no missionary labours to record, except during the life of their Prophet and the first Pious Caliph. Original material

\textsuperscript{23} Only the titles and dates of the minor Abbasid caliphs can be given here:

\begin{itemize}
\item 9. Wasiq (842-47).
\item 10. Mutawakkil (847-61).
\item 11. Muntasir (861-62).
\item 12. Musta'in (862-66).
\item 13. Mu'tazz (866-69).
\item 14. Muhtad (869-70).
\item 15. Mu'tamid (870-92).
\item 16. Mu'tazid (892-902).
\item 17. Muqtad (902-7).
\item 18. Muqtadir (907-32).
\item 19. Qahir (932-34).
\item 20. Razi (934-41).
\item 21. Muttaki (941-45).
\item 22. Mustaqfi (945-46).
\item 23. Mut' (946-74).
\item 24. Ta'i (974-99).
\item 25. Qadir (999-1031).
\item 26. Qaim (1031-75).
\item 27. Muqadi (1075-94).
\item 28. Mustazhir (1094-1118).
\item 29. Mustashid (1118-34).
\item 30. Rashid (1134-35).
\item 31. Muttaki (1135-60).
\item 32. Mustanjid (1160-61).
\item 33. Mustazi (1161-80).
\item 34. Nasir (1180-1225).
\item 35. Zahir (1225-26).
\item 36. Mustansir (1226-42).
\item 37. Musa'sim (1242-58).
\end{itemize}
on the subject is lacking in almost all lands. Some points are, however, clear. The far-flung empire of the Umayyads could only be maintained by the unquestioned supremacy of the Arab race and the Arabic language. But in the century or more that followed the conquests of Umar I, the conquered peoples, specially the Persians, ignored their own language and equalled, or perhaps surpassed, the Arabs in every sphere, scientific or secular, in which the Arabian language had become the sole medium for communication between Muslim peoples. Islamic faith, and not Arab blood, now became a condition of membership of the governing class; the old religions had gone, never to revive; in the course of generations non-Muslims, perhaps as the result of unnoticed local group-decisions, thrust themselves into Islam in order to obtain an entrance to its universal brotherhood and full citizenship rights. Inevitably different parts of the Muslim world went in different directions.

Apart from their administrative incompetence, the Abbasid caliphs with their governing class of Arabicised Persians could not expect to retain the allegiance of Africa. Spain never came under their control. After the Caliph Mansur had killed two brothers, Muhammad and Ibrahirn, whose chief fault was that they were descended from Hasan, a grandson of the Caliph Ali, the third brother, Idris, fled from Mecca to Tangiers and founded the Idrisi dynasty there. The Muslims of Africa, whether Arabs or Berbers, saw no reason for accepting the Abbasid caliphate. Conditions at its capital, Qairawan, were chaotic during the larger part of Mansur’s reign; he brought the country, or at least its capital, under the control of the Abbasid government, but this control was not destined to last. Harun Rashid’s general, Harasa, found the hostility at Qairawan so great that, having no hopes of eventual success, he applied for appointment elsewhere, and after his departure the Aghlabid dynasty of Qairawan was founded, which ultimately became independent.

Egypt saw the rise and fall of two minor dynasties—the Tulunids (868-93) and the Ikhshides (933-61). Finally, Abu Muhammad Ubaidullah, who claimed descent from Ismail, son of Imam Ja’far Sadiq, laid the foundation of the Fatimid caliphate (909-1171). He conquered the larger part of northern Africa and made Mahdiya (near Tunis) his capital. Sixty years later his successor conquered Egypt. The Fatimids claimed to be caliphs as the legitimate descendants of the Prophet and were, consequently, rivals of the Abbasid caliphs of Baghdad. But since the mass of the Egyptians were Sunnis, they followed a policy of religious toleration.

Meanwhile the lands of the eastern caliphate were also being appropriated by minor dynasties. They can only be listed in the space
at our disposal and no account can be given of their wars and constantly changing frontiers. Mamun was responsible for at least two of them.

(a) The Tahirids (820-72): In 820 Mamun appointed his commander-in-chief, Tahir, governor of Khurasan. After he had been in charge for two or three years, Tahir omitted the name of the Caliph Mamun from the Friday sermon and was found dead in his bed next day. Mamun appointed Tahir’s son, Talha, in his place. Talha was followed by Abdullah, Tahir II and Muhammad, who was overthrown by Yaqub bin Lais, the Saffarid.

(b) Samanid (874-999): Mamun ordered the four sons of Saman, a converted Persian noble from Balkh, to be given the governorships of Samarqand, Ferghana, Shash and Herat. Herat was too far and went out of the control of the family, but Ismail, a descendant of Saman, consolidated his power in Trans-Oxiana in 874. The power of the family expanded into Khurasan and it lasted with varying fortunes till it was extinguished by the Qara-Khanids in 999.

(c) The Saffarids (861-900): Alone among the royal dynasties of Islam, we find the Saffarids proud of their working class origin. Yaqub bin Lais, the founder of the dynasty, started his life in a city of Sistan as a copper-smith (saffar) on the wage of 15 copper coins a month. His younger brother, Amr, also started life as a labourer. The two brothers may have resorted to highway robbery for a time, but they enlisted in the army of a Tahirid officer, Salih bin Nasr, who had been deputed to fight the Kharijis. In 861 Yaqub found himself commander of the army of Sistan and proceeded to conquer Herat, Kirman and Fars. His power over these distant provinces was recognized by the Abbasid caliph in 871 and Yaqub even conquered Kabul from its Turkish king, who was a Buddhist. Yaqub’s conquest of Khurasan from the Tahirids in 872, however, could not but bring him into conflict with the caliphate. Yaqub, who had now about half of Persia under his control, decided to attack Baghdad, but he was defeated near the capital by Mu‘affaq, the brother of the caliph, and died in Sistan some three years later. Amr, who succeeded his brother, prospered for some years. But having obtained Naishapur in 896, he also wanted to conquer Trans-Oxiana. But in the campaign that followed (A.D. 900) he was defeated and captured by Ismail Samani and sent as a prisoner to Baghdad, where he was probably left to die of starvation in his prison. A grandson of his entered the service of Sultan Mahmud.

(d) The Ziyarid Dynasty (928-1042): Mardawaj bin Ziyar laid the foundation of this dynasty by capturing Tabaristan and some other districts. It is known primarily for its patronage of letters. Albairuni dedicated his Chronology of Ancient Nations to one of its princes,
Qabus' bin Washmagir; while Qabus's grandson, Kai Kaus, has left us the delightful Qabus Nama.

(e) The Buwayhids or Dailamite Dynasty (932-1052): The founder of the Ziyarid dynasty bestowed the district of Karaj, south of Hamadan, on Ali, son of Buwayh, who with the help of his able brothers conquered Fars. The internal history of the dynasty is confusing. But the Buwayhid rulers have to be remembered for two reasons. They were Shias and orthodox Shia literature prospered under them. They also, as we have seen, controlled the caliphate for about a century with the title of Amirul Umara. Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni deprived the dynasty of most of its possessions and the Seljuqs took away what Mahmud had failed to seize.

(f) The Qara Khanids: East of the Jaxartes in Turkistan were the Qara Khanids, of whom little is known. In the kingdom of the Qara Khanids, as in all nomad empires,' Barthold tells us, 'the conception of patrimonial property was carried over from the domain of personal law to that of state law... It is impossible for us to determine with accuracy the chronology of the reigns of the separate members of the family.'24 One ruler of the family, Bughra Khan, captured Bukhara in 990 but had to retire on account of his illness and died soon after. But in 999 Ilak Khan, probably another ruler of the same dynasty, occupied Bukhara without opposition and put an end to the Samanids.

(g) The Ghaznavids (962-1186): In 962 Alptagin, a slave-officer of the Samanids, who was governor of Khurasan, took the wrong side in the succession question at Bukhara, and afraid of the punishment that might befall him, he marched to Ghazni and established himself there. He was succeeded by his son, Abu Ishaq and then by two slave-officers, Bilkatagin and Piray; the latter, who was a tyrant, had to give place to Subuktagin, another Turkish slave of Alptagin, in 977. The conquests of Subuktagin (977-99) and his son Mahmud (999-1030) gave rise to a new type of empire, called the sultanat, sanctioned by the caliph but based upon conquests.

Apart from the rise of the sultanats or the extensive empires governing the lands of the Persians and the Turks, the tenth and the eleventh centuries are to be noted for two other movements in the history of Ajam. The first is the supremacy of the Turks as a military and a governing class. The Caliph Mu'tasim had organised a Turkish bodyguard. The Samanids, though Persians in race, organised their Turkish army by putting it through a hard and stern discipline.25

24 Barthold, Turkestan down to the Mongol Invasions (Gibbs Memorial Series), 268.
25 'Nizamul Mulk (in his Siyasat Nama) describes the career of a Turkish slave at the Samanid court as follows. During the first year the slave (ghulam) served on foot
Not less important is the second movement, which Professor Browne calls the 'Persian Renaissance'. The Persians began to study and admire their ancient culture, which they had discarded in the first generations after the Arab conquest, and modern Persian, written in the Arabic script, became the second great repository of Muslim culture. If Persian literature can be said to have one founder, it is Firdausi with his great work, the Shah Nama. But Persian poetry, taken as a whole, is one of the greatest cultural achievements of mankind.\(^{26}\) It was natural for the Abbasid caliphate to patronise Arabic as the common heritage of all Muslims, but the minor dynasties began to help in the revival of the Persian language, first poetry and then prose. The greatest patrons were, of course, the Ghaznavids.

in the capacity of a groom; and not even in secret, under pain of punishment, did he dare mount a horse; at this period he wore garments of Zandani cloth (which derived its name from the Bukharan village of Zandan). After a year the hajib, in agreement with the commander of the tent (wisag), gave him a Turkish horse with plain harness. In the third year he received a special belt (garachur); in the fifth a better saddle, a snaffle ornamented with stars, richer clothing and a club; in the sixth year parade dress; in the seventh the rank of wisag-bashi, i.e. commander of the tent, which he shared with three other men. The insignia of office of the wisag-bashi were a black felt hat embroidered in silver and Ganja clothing (Ganja is the present Elizabetpol). He gradually rose to the following grades, khall-bashi (section commandant) and hajib. At the head of the whole establishment was the Chief Hajib (Hajibul Hujjab), one of the first dignitaries of the kingdom.' (Barthold, Turkestan, 227).

\(^{26}\) One of the greatest works on the subject in English is Professor E. G. Browne's A Literary History of Persia (4 vols.). According to Professor Browne the surviving pre-Muslim literature of Persia does not exceed the Old Testament in size. The Shah Nama does not touch real history anywhere before the rise of the Sasanids; most pre-Muslim Persian history as well as alleged Persian wisdom has to be discarded as manufactured stuff.
II. THE KHWARAZMIAN EMPIRE

THE CHAZNAVID AND SELJUQ EMPIRES

The credit of being the first 'Sultan' in Muslim history is generally given by historians to Mahmud, son of Subuktagn, the famous invader of India. This title is not found on his coins, which simply designate him as Amir Mahmud, and it was not given to him by the caliph. Still it is not difficult to discover the institution, which the new term was intended to indicate. The caliphate as a governing authority had disappeared; the provincial dynasties with their constant wars had been a curse; but if one of these minor dynasties rose above all others, so that it liquidated the smaller kingdoms and maintained peace between the tribal chiefs, Ajam would have both prosperity and peace.¹

Sultan Mahmud (999-1030) deserved this title on the basis of his conquests in Persia and Mawaraun Nahr. Unfortunately neither Mahmud nor his son, Mas'ud (1030-40), were good administrators. But when Tughril, leading the Seljuq immigrants from the east, defeated Mas'ud at the three-day battle of Dandaniqan, north of Merv, he and his successors were able to give a better administration to Ajam. 'The Seljuqs', says the Rauzatus Safa, 'have been the greatest of the Sultans.' The dynasty produced six great Emperor-Sultans—Tughril (1037-63), Alp Arslam (1063-72), Malik Shah (1072-92), Barkiaruq (1094-1104), Muhammad (1104-17) and Sanjar (1117-57).

The reign of Malik Shah, who probably gave to the whole of Ajam the best centralised administration it was destined to enjoy during the middle ages, has been described by Gibbon in his usual style:

'This barbarian, by his personal merit and the extent of his empire, was the greatest prince of the age... Beyond the Oxus he reduced to his obedience the cities of Bukhara, Khwarazm and crushed every rebellious slave or rebellious savage who dared to resist. Malik Shah passed the Sihun or Jaxartes, the last limit of Persian civilization; the hordes of Turkistan yielded to his supremacy; his name was inserted on the coins and in the prayers of Kashghar, a Tartar kingdom on the extreme borders of China. From the Chinese frontier stretched his immediate jurisdiction or feudatory...

¹ The title, Sultan, was occasionally given to earlier rulers also (Barthold, Turkestan, 271).
sway to the west and south, as far as the mountains of Georgia, the neighbourhood of Constantinople, the holy city of Jerusalem and the spicy groves of Arabia Felix. He is said to have perambulated twelve times the wide extent of his dominions, which surpassed the Asiatic realms of Cyrus and the caliphs.2

These three empires—the Ghaznavid, the Seljuq and the Khwarazmian—were primarily the concern of a Turkish governing class, which had absorbed Persian culture and was bilingual in speech but was proud of its racial origin. ‘The Turkish race’, says Yazdi, the biographer of Tamerlane, has conquered the world through its unity and mutual cooperation; in its generosity and justice it exceeds all other groups of mankind; and owing to its high virtues it has proved itself worthy of the Quranic verse: “We have sent you as Our representative on the earth.” An examination of the achievements of the Turks will not justify this high claim. But it is true that, till the fall of the Timurids, military power in Ajam remained on the whole a Turkish monopoly, though the wizarat and the administrative departments were in Persian hands.3

SULTAN SANJAR AND THE GOR KHAN

Though Islam had ceased to expand for centuries, its western frontiers in Ajam seemed safe. But the reign of Sultan Sanjar was to see the first signal defeat of Muslim arms and the establishment of a non-Muslim power over several Muslim communities. It was a warning that the Musalmans were not maintaining their position as leaders of world-standards, but thanks to the anti-scientific and soul-destroying orthodoxy, which had permeated the Muslim mind, this grave warning went completely unheeded. But to understand what happened we must cast a glance at remote, rational and religionless China.

‘Taking advantage of the fall of the Tang dynasty, the Khita, an eastern Mongol tribe, began to press southward into China. In 938 they made their capital at Peking. The Khita rapidly absorbed Chinese culture... and reigned at Peking for more than 180 years. But in 1114, they were attacked by a north Manchurian tribe, the Kin Tartars, who eventually conquered Peking in 1123. A certain

2 Gibbon: Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, Chapter LVII.
3 It is not easy to define a ‘Turk’. A line drawn from the Gulf of Alexandretta to the north of the Himalayas would roughly divide the Persians from the non-Persian and non-Chinese groups, for whom at present we have no name. When members of these groups became cultured and took to the ways of city-life, they were called ‘Turks’. The backward communities of the race were called by their tribal names or they were just dismissed as ‘Turkomans’.
number of Khitains refused to submit to the Kins. We know that
a band of fugitives, fleeing across the desert of Mongolia, was
crushed by the Lion Khan, prince of Kashghar, in 1128 or a little
later. Another sortie was destined to have a much more important
consequence. Yeh-lu Ta-shih, a member of the Khitai royal family,
managed to escape with a few hundred followers to seek protection
from the Aighur prince of Beshbaligh. Here Ta-shih collected an
army and embarked on a career of conquest as surprising in its way
as that of Chengiz himself. In some half-a-dozen years (he died
in 1135 or 1136), he built up an empire that extended from the
Zangarian desert to the confines of India. To the Muslim world
his people were known as Qara-Khita (Black Cathayans).\(^4\)

The rulers of the Qara-Khita were called Gor Khans (Universal
Khans). Our Muslim historians knew very little of the internal organisa-
tion of the Gor Khani state and the names of the Gor Khans as given
by them are too inaccurate to be worth transliterating. ‘The early
Qara-Khitai rulers’, Minhajus Siraj remarks, ‘were just, courageous and
equitable; they regarded the Musalmans with great respect, showed
favour to their religious scholars and did not permit any created being
to be oppressed.’\(^5\)

Sultan Sanjar’s empire was seemingly strong. ‘His orders were
obeyed in the east and the west, and owing to his extensive dominions
and their great wealth, the amirs and high officers of his state became
proud and began to oppress the people.’\(^6\) In 1142-43 Sultan Sanjar
subdued Ahmad Khan, the paralytic ruler of Samarqand, and went
out of his way to pick up a quarrel with the Gor Khan by seizing
the flocks of some tribesmen who belonged to the Gor Khan’s territory.

‘The Gor Khan collected a powerful army and marched against the
Sultan. The Khurasanis, in spite of their internal discord, imagined
that a hundred Gor Khans would not be able to oppose them, quite
unaware of the fact that pride and arrogance lead to ruin and
disgrace. When the armies met, the enemy was beyond reckoning.
Sultan Sanjar was surrounded on all sides; a great defeat befell
the Muslim army and about thirty thousand men were slain. Sanjar
was dismayed, for fighting and flying seemed equally impossible.
Ultimately Tajuddin Abul Fazl exclaimed, ‘Your Majesty! We
should try to break through, for it is impossible to make a stand
any further.’ The Sultan attacked the infidel troops with some three

\(^4\) Arthur Walley, *Introduction to The Travels of an Alchemist*, (Broadway Travel-

\(^5\) *Tabaqat-I Nasiri*, Persian text, 325.

hundred brave soldiers and succeeded in breaking through with ten or fifteen men. He reached Tirmiz, where he was joined by his surviving, wounded and helpless soldiers... In this battle ten thousand notable followers of Sultan Sanjar were killed and his wife, Turkan Khatun, with many famous amirs, was captured.\(^7\)

The Gor Khan sent back the queen and the prisoners, but the military prestige of Sanjar and, in fact of the Musalmans, had vanished. In 1152 Sanjar was defeated and captured by the Ghizz Turks, who proceeded to plunder the great cities of Ajam. Sanjar succeeded in escaping from captivity in 1156 but died heart-broken next year.

The Gor Khans did not try to establish their direct administration in Trans-Oxiana or Mawaraun Nahr, but contented themselves with levying a tribute. Still they held the premier military position for over half-a-century to come. 'When the trouble of the Ghizz arose and the power of Sultan Sanjar declined,' the *Tabaqat-i Nasiri* states,

> 'the Qara-Khita became all powerful. The maliks of Turkistan overpowered each other with their assistance and sent them money and presents in the hope of getting their help; they strove to overthrow each other with the result that the Qara-Khita became rulers over all of them, and this domination continued for over eighty years... Their armies on several occasions crossed the Oxus and entered the territories of Balkh, Tirmiz, Amu, Taliqan, Kazrawan, Gharjistan and came on to the very frontiers of Ghur for the sake of plunder, and they sometimes captured the Musalmans of these regions. All (rulers) of Trans-Oxiana, Farghana, Khwarazm, and even some rulers of Khurasan, sent them tribute; apart from the Sultans of Ghur and Bamian, who alone remained independent, all the rulers on the frontiers (of Islam) became subordinate to the Gor Khans.'\(^8\)

Among others, Atisiz, the ruler of Khwarazm, sent envoys to the Gor Khan and promised a yearly tribute of 3,000 gold *dinars* in goods and cattle.

**FOUNDA TION OF THE KHWARAZMIAN EMPIRE**

But though contemporaries failed to see it, the foundations of a new empire had already been laid. Bilkatigin, a high Seljuq officer, had purchased a slave, Nushtigin of Gharjistan. Nushtigin rose in service by dint of intelligence and sagacity and was appointed royal *tasht-dar* (basin-holder); and since the revenues of Khwarazm were allotted for the expenses of the royal kitchen, he was also made *shuhna* of that

\(^8\) *Persian Text*, 328-29.
city. Nushtigin saw to the careful education of his son, Qutbuddin, at Merv; and Dadbek Habashi, governor of Khurasan during the reign of Sultan Barkiaruq, son and successor of Malik Shah, gave the office of ‘Khwarazm Shah’ to Qutbuddin in 1097-98. This office had often been given to government officers in the past, and the term ‘Shah’ did not imply either autonomy or independence. Qutbuddin governed Khwarazm for some thirty years; he used to pass every alternate year in service at Sanjar’s court, and in the year he could not go, he sent his son, Atisiz, to serve on his behalf.

With the appointment of Atisiz (1128-56) in succession to his father, Khwarazm gradually became independent of the Seljuqs. Sanjar led three attacks on Khwarazm, but Atisiz’s power could not be broken. When Sanjar was defeated by the Qara-Khita in 1142, Atisiz took advantage of the opportunity, ‘looting the city of Balkh and making a lot of slaughter’.

Atisiz had proved disloyal to the Seljuqs under whom his father and grandfather had prospered and became a tributary of the Gor Khans; his only excuse for this disloyalty to his salt was that, after he had saved Sultan Sanjar from being assassinated by his slaves while hunting, the Seljuq officers had grown too jealous of him and he had to obtain Sanjar’s permission to return to Khwarazm in 1135. Still Atisiz set a bad example of Machiavellian intrigue and disloyalty for the generations to come, and the tribute to the Gor Khans was to be a halter round the neck of the Khwarazmian empire.

Atisiz’s son and successor, I-I Arsalan (1156-70), seems to have prevented a war of succession by imprisoning his younger brother, Sulaiman Shah. The affairs of Khurasan were in a confused state, but I-I Arsalan was not destined to put them right. He led a campaign against Samarqand in 1158 without any definite result. On the other hand, the army of the Qara-Khita and Trans-Oxiana marched against him in 1170, and at the battle of Amuya, a city on the bank of the Oxus, his army was put to flight and his commander-in-chief, Ayyar Beg, was captured. I-I Arsalan died on his way to Khwarazm in August 1170.

I-I Arsalan had appointed his younger son, Sultan Shah, as his successor, and Sultan Shah ascended the throne while his mother, Malika Turkan, took charge of the administration. His elder brother, Taksh, who was at Jund, claimed his share, and the conflict between the brothers began with an exchange of quatrains. Taksh, who was

9 Juwayni says that he got these facts from Razi’s Juwani’ul Ulum (Encyclopedia of Knowledge) which was written for Sultan Taksh, and Ibn-i Funduq Bahtqi’s Musharibut Tajrib, which is a continuation of the famous Tajribul Ummat of Miskawaih.
not a poet, asked his son, Malik Shah, to reply to his uncle's challenging verses. Malik Shah suggested in a quatrain that Sultan Shah should have Merv and that Khurasan, still to be conquered, was to belong to Taksh. But Sultan Shah replied: 'Dear nephew! These matters are settled by the sword.' Taksh in despair appealed to the Gor Khan. The reigning Gor Khan at that time was a woman, and the affairs of the state were managed by her husband, Fuma. Taksh promised a large lump sum in treasures and jewels and a yearly tribute. Sultan Shah was unable to resist the joint armies of Taksh and Fuma; he fled without fighting from Khwarazm to Malik Muayyad at Shadyakh and Taksh ascended the throne of Khwarazm in December 1172. In the attempt to conquer Khwarazm, Malik Muayyad was captured in a battle and put to death. Sultan Shah and his mother fled to Dihistan; Taksh captured Dihistan and put the mother to death, but Sultan Shah succeeded in escaping.

The future was to show that Sultan Shah was not only a second-rate poet but also a restless warrior, without gratitude and without policy, and in general a political nuisance. He first fled to Tughan Shah, son of Malik Muayyad, and then to the Ghurian brothers, Ghiyasuddin and Shihabuddin. They received him as an honoured guest, but made it clear that they had no intention of helping him in his ambitions. But help came to Sultan Shah from another quarter. It was a complaint then and later that the Qara-Khitai ambassadors were insolent towards the Khwarazmian rulers; they insisted on sitting by the side of the Sultan on his throne and did not observe the conventions of the royal court. Taksh had no intention of tolerating Qara-Khitai insolence, now that his purpose had been served. 'He caused one of the notables of Khita, who had come upon an embassy, to be put to death on account of his unseemly behaviour, and there was an exchange of abuse between him and the people of Khita.'

The Gor Khan and her officers looked round for a pretender to the Khwarazmian throne and Sultan Shah was the only available candidate. Sultan Shah, on his part—and much to the relief of his Ghurian hosts—hastened at the summons of the Khitai envoys and succeeded in convincing the Khitai officers of his popularity with his people. But when Fuma reached Khwarazm a second time, he found no sign of any movement in favour of Sultan Shah; the roads had been flooded with water from the Oxus and the Khwarazmians were prepared to fight to the bitter end. Fuma decided to retreat, but Sultan Shah induced Fuma to lend him a contingent; he attacked Sarakhs without success but managed to conquer Merv from the Ghizz Turks.

Taksh was destined to expand the kingdom of Khwarazm into an empire. It is not possible to go into the details of Taksh's military
achievements but they are summed up in a quatrain of the poet, Qa ani: ‘Goods news! The Khwarazm Shah has conquered the territory of Isfahan; he has also conquered the two Iraqs in the same way as Khurasan.’ For his unpleasant relations with the caliph, the main responsibility lies with the caliph’s wazir, Muayyaduddin, who among other insolent demands wanted Taksh to walk before his horse. But after defeating the Caliph Nasir’s army in 1195, Taksh made peace with him and succeeded in getting Nasir’s farman appointing him Sultan of Iraq, Khurasan and Turkistan. Towards the end of his reign Taksh decided to crush the heretic kingdom of Alamut, but he died on his way to Tarshiz in A.D. 1200. He is said to have advised his successor to keep on good terms with the Gor Khan because he was a great wall behind which there were terrible foes. Chengiz Khan had nearly completed the consolidation of Mongolia and Taksh was probably aware of what this meant.10

AL AUDDIN MUHAMMAD KHWARAZM SHAH

Taksh’s successor, Alauddin Muhammad Khwarazm Shah, styled ‘the Second Alexander’ (1200-20), was the last of the old type of Emperor-Sultans, for Timur does not belong to this category. His tragic end was to prove that the system he represented was completely outmoded. Still fortune granted him eighteen years of prosperity.

The great fact of the time was the remarkable growth of the power of Ghur both in its homelands and in India. Alauddin, according to Minhajus Siraj, appealed to Ghivasuddin and Shihabuddin to treat him as their son and suggested a marriage between Shihabuddin and his mother, Turkan Khatun.11 But Shihabuddin showed no inclination to be tied to that terrible woman, and in any case the Ghurians, incited by the caliph, had made up their mind to take the offensive. To start with, great success crowned their efforts. ‘The whole of Khurasan came under their control and was cleared of the enemy.’ Muhammad

11. Most historians refer to Turkan Khatun as a hideous monster. Among others, Juwayni writes as follows: ‘By race she belonged to the Turkish tribes, called the, Qanqali, and Turkan on account of her origin favoured the (Qanqali) Turks, who during her life-time were in the ascendancy. They were called Ajami and mercy and compassion were far removed from their hearts. Wherever they passed by, that country was laid in ruin and the people fled to their strongholds; and indeed it was their cruelty, violence and wickedness that brought about the fall of the Sultan’s dynasty.’ In order to ensure the power of her son, she used to have the hostages who were brought to Khwarazm drowned in the Oxus. ‘At the time of her departure (from Khwarazm owing to the approach of Chengiz’s army) she ordered a number of local rulers, who had been detained as hostages, to be cast into the Oxus, all except those who were not of royal rank.’ (Boyle’s translation, Vol. I, 465-66).
Kharang, a notable Ghurian warrior, who used to fight tigers and elephants, led a contingent that conquered distant Merv. Leading Ghurian officers belonging to the royal family were put in charge of the conquered cities. Malik Ziauddin, a cousin and son-in-law of Ghiyasuddin, was assigned the region of Naishapur; Sarakhs was assigned to Malik Tajuddin Zangi, a cousin of the two sultans; Herat had been captured by them some years before from a Seljuq slave-officer, Bahauddin Tughril. 'Every one who had a hand in the administration of the Khwarazmian ministry of revenue had his property confiscated by the Ghurians.'

The Khwarazm Shah, however, succeeded in recapturing Shahdyakh and Sarakhs in 1200; and when next year he proceeded against Herat, its kotwal, Izzuddin Murghazi, sued for peace. But just then Sultan Shihabuddin once more marched towards Naishapur; the Khwarazm Shah, who considered a pitched battle inadvisable, retired to his capital, but at the same time he refused to surrender any part of Khurasan. Shihabuddin captured Tus, confiscated the property of the inhabitants and seized the corn that had been brought to Mashed in the hope that it would be safe there under the protection of the shrine of Imam Ali-ur Raza. 'For these hard reasons', says Juwayni, 'in addition to what had gone before, the minds of the nobles and the commons alike were filled with hatred of the Ghurian rule, and the people had even a greater desire to attach themselves to the Khwarazm Shah's party.'

At this juncture Sultan Ghiyasuddin Ghuri died at Herat on 27 Jamadi I A.H. 599 (13 March A.D. 1203) and Shihabuddin had to beat a retreat. He kept Ghazni and his Indian conquests in his own hands, intending them to go to his senior slave-officers, but he divided the ancestral territory of Ghiyasuddin among his heirs. Ziauddin, the son-in-law of the late Sultan, was given the territories of Ghur and Garm-sir, including the capital of Firuz Koh, (the city of) Marwar Rud and Zamin-i Dawar. Ghiyasuddin Mahmud, his son, had to content himself with the city of Busr and the territories of Farah and Isfarar. Herat was given to Alp Ghazi, son of a sister of the two sultans. This distribution of Ghiyasuddin’s patrimony is hard to justify, but experience was driving Shihabuddin (who now took the title of Mu'izzuddin) to the conclusion that his relations were worthless and that no reliance could be placed on the tribal chiefs of Ghur.

Mu’izzuddin’s withdrawal had left Kharang at Merv unprotected. A Khwarazmian army captured Merv, cut off Kharang’s head and sent it to Khwarazm. The Khwarazm Shah next marched to Herat in

person; Alp Ghazi claimed that he had Mu’izzuddin’s authority to make peace and offered to surrender Iherat. Mu’izzuddin, who had been embittered by the death of Kharang, repudiated Alp Ghazi’s treaty and decided to end the struggle by marching against Khwarazm and seizing the capital of his rival. But the Khwarazm Shah anticipated this move by returning to Khwarazm by way of the desert. ‘A holy war was declared against the Ghurian aggressor on the basis of the Prophet’s precept: *Every man slain in the defence of his life and property is a martyr.*’ He also succeeded in collecting an army of some seventy thousand men round his camp at Nuzwar, probably situated on one of the branches of the Oxus. The Ghurians encamped on the opposite side and began trying to find means of crossing the stream.

Mu’izzuddin had made a terrible mistake in embarking on a campaign so far from his base; he was probably surprised at the intense hostility of the civil population and his nerves failed him when he heard that the Gor Khan, in response to the Khwarazm Shah’s appeals, had sent an army against him under his famous general, Taniku (or Tayanaku) of Taraz along with Sultan Usman, the ‘Sultanus Salatin’ of Samarqand. This relieving force very wisely decided not to march to Khwarazm but to crush Mu’izzuddin by throwing itself between him and Ghazni. Mu’izzuddin decided to run back and the Khwarazmians pursued him. Near the fortress of Hazar Asp he turned back to fight but was badly defeated. ‘Many Ghurian amirs and leaders fell into the bonds of captivity and the rest of them limped and stumbled through the waterless desert.’

The rest of the campaign is thus described by Minhajus Siraj: ‘As the conquest of Khwarazm was not possible owing to lack of equipment, the length of the campaign and want of fodder, Mu’izzuddin turned back from Khwarazm on the bank of the Oxus to Balkh. The army of Khita and the maliks of Turkistan had crossed the Oxus and were standing in the path of the army of Islam. When the Sultan reached Andkhud, the vanguard of the infidel army came up to the Sultan’s camp after the zuhr (afternoon) prayer and began the battle. A’izzuddin Husain Kharmil, malik of Kazravan and the leader of the Muslim advance-guard, defeated them and immediately came to the victorious Sultan and said: “Such has been the victory of the Musalmans and the defeat of the infidels; the proper thing for the king of Islam would be to order the Musalmans to mount immediately, pursue the infidels and attack them all of a sudden so that a great victory may be the result.” “I have been in search of such a holy war (ghazwa) for years,” the Sultan replied, “there will be no failure on my part. Tomorrow morning, with Divine assistance, I will fight the enemy and see to whom God grants success. In any case, I will have won the
rewards according to the *sunnah*.”

‘Kharmil, on observing the mental condition of the Sultan, realized that his words were inspired by his faith in Islam and his desire to protect it; but the army of the infidels was beyond computation and all their soldiers were in proper condition, while the army of Islam had been exhausted by the long campaign and would not be able to oppose the enemy. He came out of the Sultan’s presence and with his own contingent, which consisted of five thousand horsemen, started for Kazrawan at night. Most of the troopers, whose horses were lean, also deserted Mu‘izzuddin in a body.

‘Next morning the Sultan drew up his lines and started the battle with his chosen slaves and the few horsemen of the centre, who were still left with him. The infidel army surrounded them in concentric circles. The Sultan’s slaves represented to him that as only a few Musalmans were left, they ought to retreat, but he kept fighting at his post. Ultimately only about a hundred horsemen and slaves and a few elephants were all that remained with the Sultan. His Turkish slaves and his selected Ghurian officers (*sarkhail*) stationed themselves before his horse, killing the infidels and being martyred by them. Reliable witnesses state that the Sultan made such a vigorous stand that his august canopy was pierced with arrows (like quills on the back of a porcupine), but he would not turn back on any account. Ultimately, a slave, named Aibak Jogi, caught hold of the reins of his horse, dragged it towards the fort of Andkhhud and brought him safely inside the fort.’

The Khitaines sat down to besiege the fort; a wall was breached and the fort would have been captured. But in the so-called ‘infidel army’ there were only ten thousand Khitai soldiers; the rest of the army consisted of the contingents of Muslim maliks, who were anxious not to harm Mu‘izzuddin personally. Sultan Usman succeeded in arranging with Taniku that Mu‘izzuddin would be allowed to proceed to Ghazni, provided he gave up all he possessed.

On reaching Ghazni messengers came to Mu‘izzuddin from the Khwarazm Shah stating that it was Mu‘izzuddin who had started the war and that in future there should be an alliance between them. Both had enough of the Khita. Mu‘izzuddin agreed and ordered his officers to get ready in three years for a war against the Gor Khan. But next year (1206) he was assassinated by Ismaili devotees at a place called Damyak, near the Indus, and the anarchy that followed his death enabled the Khwarazm Shah to annex the homelands of the Ghurian kingdom, which had now split into three parts.

(a) Alauddin Jahansuz had conquered Bamian and placed his eldest brother, Fakhruddin Mus'ud, in charge of it. Fakhruddin extended his frontiers till his kingdom covered the whole of Tukharistan or northern Afghanistan. The Khwarazm Shah conquered Tukharistan in 1213 from its last Ghurian ruler, Sultan Jalaluddin, and put him to death.

(b) There were a series of revolutions at Firuz Koh, the Ghurian capital. Ghiasuddin Mahmud seized Firuz Koh from Ziauddin and obtained from the Khwarazm Shah a farman appointing him ruler of the place. But Ghiasuddin was assassinated in 1212-13; his son, Bahauddin Sam, a boy of fourteen, was dispossessed by Alauddin Atisiz, a son of Alauddin Jahansuz, with Khwarazmian assistance after he had reigned for three months. Alauddin Atisiz was killed as the result of wounds in a battle with Malik Nasiruddin Husain, who had been sent against him by Tajuddin Yilduz, the ruler of Ghazni. In 1212 or 1213 Malik Ziauddin, who had reigned at Firuz Koh once before, was taken out of his prison and placed on the throne, and Tajuddin Yilduz directed the canopy of Mu'izzuddin Ghuri to be taken from his mausoleum and sent to Ziauddin. A ruler subordinate to Ghazni did not suit the Khwarazm Shah, and he sent to Ziauddin a deed the latter had signed at Naishapur to the effect that he would not bear arms against the Khwarazm Shah again. Ziauddin, who seems to have been very religious minded, handed over Firuz Koh to the officers of the Khwarazm Shah in A.D. 1215 and passed the rest of his life in religious devotions at Khwarazm. This was the end of the Shansabani dynasty, which after laying the foundations of an Indian empire, quickly vanished in its homelands.

(c) Round the coffin of Mu'izzuddin Ghuri as it proceeded from Damvak to Ghazni in 1206 a severe struggle took place between his Ghurian officers and his Turkish slaves. The latter seem to have seized everything, and they placed Tajuddin Yilduz, the senior-most slave-officer, on the throne of Ghazni. Sultan Jalaluddin of Tukharistan, who wanted to take possession of Ghazni, was twice defeated, though he succeeded in carrying away a part of the spoils collected by Mu'izzuddin on two hundred and fifty camels, which ultimately went to the Khwarazm Shah. Yilduz tried to expand his kingdom in all directions, but with no success. About A.D. 1215-16 the Khwarazm Shah marched against him by way of Tukharistan. Yilduz fled to India where he was defeated and put to death by Shamsuddin Ilutmish.

Though the Gor Khan had saved Alauddin Khwarazm Shah in an hour of crisis in 1205, harmony between the two was not to be expected. The Khwarazmian empire was now almost as extensive as the empire of the Seljuqs had been, and Alauddin felt that paying tribute to the
Gor Khan was below his dignity. He withheld the tribute for three years till the Gor Khan sent his wazir, Muhammad Ta'ī, to realize it. The Sultan, who was about to start on his famous campaign to the Qipchaq, left the matter to be decided by his mother, Turkan Khatun, and his mother decided to pay all that was due. But after his return from this campaign, the Sultan decided on a war against the Gor Khan. He had received many letters from the notables of Trans-Oxiana appealing for his assistance against the Gor Khan, whose officers, contrary to their former tradition, 'had begun to conduct themselves in a lawless and oppressive manner'. Usman, the 'Sultanus Salatin' of Samarqand, also promised to join him against the Gor Khan, because the Khan had refused to marry Usman to his daughter, a woman of remarkable beauty with whom Usman had fallen in love. So when in 1209 the Gor Khan's envoy, Tushi, took his seat besides the Sultan on his throne and began to behave in an insolent manner, the Sultan ordered him to be crushed to pieces and thrown into the Oxus.

This meant a declaration of war. The Gor Khan ordered Taniku to hold himself in readiness. The Sultan crossed the Jaxartes at Fanakat and a battle was fought at Ilamish on a Friday in August/September 1210. Taniku, who (according to Minhajus Siraj) had been victorious in forty-five battles, was wounded, captured and later on put to death. The battle had been indecisive, but the Sultan ordered it to be celebrated as a victory in all his dominions and the people responded. Only Saiyyid Murtaza of Shadyakh refused to rejoice. He was apparently aware of the rise of Chengiz Khan and declared: 'Today I am in mourning for Islam.'

The army of the Gor Khan, when it returned after its alleged defeat, found the gates of its capital, Balasaqun, closed; the inhabitants paid no heed to the advice of Muhammad Ta'ī and the amirs; and ultimately the soldiers slaughtered the inhabitants for three days and nights and 4,700 of the chief notables of the city were counted among the slain. Meanwhile differences had arisen between the Khwarazm Shah and Sultan Usman; the latter had been married to the Sultan's daughter, but she complained bitterly against her husband. The Khwarazm Shah marched against Samarqand; and though Usman came out submissively with a sword tied to his neck, the Sultan ordered a general massacre till about ten thousand inhabitants had been put to death. His daughter demanded the death of her husband and he acceded to her wishes. Samarqand was then declared to be the capital of the empire.

- At this time affairs were complicated by the appearance of Kushluq,
son of Tayang Khan, chief of the Naiman tribe. Chengiz had defeated and probably killed Kusluq’s father and had married his grandmother, Gur Besu; he now wanted to kill Kusluq and make a drinking cup from his skull. But just then Chengiz was busy fighting the Kin empire of northern China and Kusluq remained unmolested for a time. The Gor Khan had received him cordially, but after some time Kusluq parted from the Khan on the excuse of collecting his men. He then found it more to his interest to make an alliance with the Khwarazm Shah against his former host on the following terms: ‘If the Sultan gained a victory over the Gor Khan, he was to receive all territory as far as Khutan and Kashghar, but if Kusluq was the victor, he would get everything as far as the river (Jaxartes) at Fanakat.’ The Sultan marched against the Gor Khan, but the battle that followed was indecisive and for some time all traces of the Sultan were lost. Kusluq, on the other hand, succeeded in falling upon the Gor Khan unawares. But he treated the Gor Khan well till his death after a year or two.

This victory placed the region beyond the Jaxartes in the hands of Kusluq, who was a fanatical anti-Muslim. He had been brought up as a Christian, but seems to have become a Buddhist after marrying a Khitai girl. He asked his Muslim subjects to choose between conversion to Christianity and the wearing of Chinese dress; since the first alternative was impossible, they accepted the second. ‘The Muslim call to prayer — azan and takbir — were hushed.’ Kusluq used to abuse the Arabian Prophet and a scholar, Alaudeen Muhammad, who ventured to challenge him in a public debate, was killed with tortures. But then to the relief of the Musalmans a Mongol army under Yeme appeared on the scene and Kusluq took to flight. The Mongols said they had no quarrel with anybody’s religion and removed all restrictions on the Muslim faith. They also had no commission to fight any one except Kusluq, who fled to Badakhshan, where he was captured and beheaded and his skull was made into a drinking cup.

When Alaudeen Khwarazm Shah got possession of Ghazni in 1215-16, he discovered in the Ghurian archives the letters of the Caliph Nasir ‘wherein the Ghurians were incited to attack the Sultan and the latter’s deeds and actions were reviled’. Alaudeen’s wrath was naturally aroused when he discovered that Nasir was responsible for the continued hostility of the Ghurians to him and his father. He did not deem himself inferior in any way to the Buwaihids and the Seljuqs, to whom the caliphs had been obedient and subordinate; and he obtained the assent of his religious scholars to three propositions: (a) that an imam or caliph who behaved like Nasir was unfit for the office; (b) that a ruler, who had spent his whole time in holy wars, had
the right of ejecting such a caliph and putting a proper person in his place; (c) and that the Abbasids were usurpers and that the caliphate should go to the descendants of Imam Husain. On the basis of this fatwa the Khwarazm Shah removed the name of Nasir from the khutba throughout his extensive dominions.15

In A.D. 1217 Alauddin Khwarazm Shah raised Saiyyid Alauddin Tirmizi to the caliphate and marched with an army of three hundred thousands, supported by the chiefs of Iraq, Khurasan and Mawaraun Nahr, against Baghdad. The Caliph Nasir prevailed upon the great mystic, Shaikh Shihabuddin Suhrawardi, to call on the Khwarazm Shah and appeal to him to go back. But the eminence of the Shaikh was not known to the Khwarazmian court; the Shaikh had great difficulty in obtaining an interview, and when they met the Khwarazm Shah, who was sitting on a carpet, neither replied to the Shaikh’s salam nor invited him to sit down. The Shaikh spoke in Arabic and it was translated for the Sultan. Alauddin’s reply was brusque: 'What this man says (about the virtues of Nasir) is not correct. When I reach Baghdad I will put on the throne of the caliphate a person with the necessary qualifications. As to the statement that the Prophet has asked us not to injure the Abbasids, it is the Abbasids who have caused the greatest harm to each other and many Abbasid princes have been born in prison.' At that time, remarks the Rauzatus Safa, a large number of the descendants of Abbas were in prison.16 When the Shaikh reported the failure of his mission, Nasir prepared to stand a siege. But that year the winter in Baghdad was unexpectedly severe; the tents of the invaders were surrounded by snow; the animals in the Khwarazmian camp died; the hands and feet of the soldiers froze so that they were unable to move; and the Khwarazm Shah had no alternative but to retreat. He promised to return again with the necessary equipment, but it was impossible for him to do so owing to the Mongol invasion.

THE ISMA'ILI STATE OF ALAMUT (1090-1255)

In spite of the great orthodox empires of the Seljuqs and the Khwarazmians, the Ismaili or heretic state of Alamut founded by Hasan bin Sabbah succeeded in maintaining its independence and expanding its power. Hasan’s father had come from Yaman and settled in Iran.17 Hasan was brought up in the orthodox Asna Ash’ari

16 For this campaign of Khwarazm Shah, see Rauzatus Safa, Vol. III, 182-83.
17 When Halaku conquered Alamut, he allowed his Muslim secretary, Ata Malik
Shia creed but accepted Ismailism and was commissioned as a do'i or propagandist. He was in Egypt for a year and a half during the reign of the Fatimid Caliph, Mustansir (1035-95). In 1090 his followers captured a fort, called Alamut (Eagle's Nest), north of Qazwin, from one Mahdi, an officer of Malik Shah Seljuqi. Hasan gave Mahdi a draft of 3,000 dinars on a Seljuq officer, Muzaffar, who was one of his secret followers. Muzaffar seems to have paid this amount, and the Ismailis got a centre for their propaganda. Alamut could not have been of much importance then, for when Hasan was besieged by the Seljuq officers, he had only sixty men with him and had to summon three hundred volunteers from outside.

Hasan was destined to live for thirty-five years in Alamut, during which he studied, wrote and directed the administration from his house, but never came out of the fort. Hasan considered himself to be merely a propagandist, whose duty was to prepare the way for the advent of the Ismaili Imam; he never claimed to be anything more. Persian historians, though otherwise hostile, do not deny Hasan bin Sabbah's academic eminence, dialectical ability and administrative skill. He was also a strict adherent of the religious law of the Prophet. He had two sons whom he put to death on various charges. He would not allow in Alamut or his other possessions anything not permitted by the shari'at.

The state of Alamut, which Hasan bin Sabbah founded, had three remarkable features. First, it consisted entirely of hill-forts. Hasan and his successors continued to capture old forts and to build new forts till their state came to consist of one hundred and five forts — seventy in the Iranian province of Qahistan and the rest outside it, including Iraq and Syria. These forts gave the rulers of Alamut a stranglehold over the commerce of the country. Secondly, no attempt was made to organize a field-force, apart from the garrisons of the forts. Such a force would have been useless against the trained veterans of the Seljuq empire. As an alternative, Hasan trained a body of devotees (fida'is), who would assassinate at his order and the order of his successors. If we remember that for two centuries past an Ismaili in Ajam was killed, and often killed with tortures, as soon as he was discovered, it will be possible to understand the dauntless courage that inspired these 'assassins'. They killed orthodox kings, who had

Juwayni, to examine its library. The works of Hasan bin Sabbah had been burnt by one of his successors, Jalaluddin. But Juwayni found there a biography of Hasan bin Sabbah, called Sarquzasht-I Salluddin (Biography of our Master). Most historians have depended upon the third volume of Juwayni's Tarikh-I Johan Gusha for their information about the Alamut kingdom. The Rausatus Safa follows Juwayni closely, but adds something to it.
been putting Ismailis to death, and also orthodox mullahs, who incited the kings and the public against them. It was retaliation, pure and simple. The popular story of a mock-paradise is not required to explain their courage.

Sultan Sanjar Seljuqi, the Rauzatus Safa tells us, was prepared to make an agreement with Hasan bin Sabbah on three conditions — they were not to construct any new forts or purchase more arms or carry on their propaganda for conversion. But the mullahs would not agree and accused him of sympathy with the Ismailis. So Sanjar was driven to act on his own responsibility. ‘He allowed them’, Juwayni declares, ‘a pension (idrar) of 3,000 dinars from the taxes on lands belonging to them in the region of Qumish and also permitted them to levy a small toll on travellers passing below Girdkoh, a custom which has survived to this day. I saw several of Sanjar’s orders (manshurs), which had been preserved in their library and in which he conciliated and flattered them... In short during his reign they enjoyed ease and tranquillity.’

Before his death in 1124 Hasan bin Sabbah appointed his life-long friend, Kia Buzurg Umid, to succeed him; he also appointed three other high officers to help him ‘and charged them, until such time as the Imam came to take possession of his kingdom, to act in concert and agreement’. Kia Buzurg Umid (1124-38) carried on the work of Hasan bin Sabbah efficiently but before his death he appointed his son, Muhammad (1138-62), as his successor. The office, thereafter, became hereditary and in due course developed all the evils of a Muslim monarchy based on the stern principle of primogeniture.

Hasan (1162-66), son of Muhammad, claimed that he was the caliph (representative) and the hujjat (proof) of the Imam in 1164, but in his later circulars he laid claim without any disguise to be the Imam the Ismailis had been waiting for. The claim was apparently accepted and Hasan was given the title, ‘On his Name be Peace’ (Ala zikrihus salaam) by his followers. According to Juwayni, Hasan followed the philosophers in believing that ‘the universe is uncreated, that time is unlimited, that resurrection (qiamat) will be spiritual and that Heaven and Hell are to be understood in a purely allegorical sense.’ If Hasan had any programme for his community beyond the mere claim to the Imamat, it was not revealed, for he was assassinated by his brother-in-law in 1166.

The next Imam, Muhammad, son of Hasan, had a fairly long reign of forty-five years (1166-1210); he was an educated man and devoted his life to establishing his claim to the Imamat. But his son, Jalaluddin Hasan (1210-21), declared himself to be an orthodox Sunni; he cursed his ancestors and burnt the books of Hasan bin Sabbah. But
his reign of eleven years was not long enough to take his people back to orthodoxy; and on the accession of his son, Alaeddin, at the age of nine, they went back to their old ways.

It was left to Alaeddin (1221-55) to prove that the new experiment of the Imamate was a failure. 'Since it is the belief of the Ismailis', says the Rauzatus Safa, 'that the eminence of the Imam is the same whether he is a boy, a young man or an old man, and that every order he gives will be in accordance with the Truth, no one has a right to criticize him or to disobey him.' So whatever Alaeddin said was considered to be divinely inspired and he was implicitly obeyed. After he had reigned for five years, he opened a vein without the advice of any physician and lost a lot of blood. This brought on melancholia or some nervous disease, and Alaeddin became 'a man fit only to be kept in bonds and chains'. But an Imam cannot be deposed; so Alaeddin's regime of madness completely ruined the administration of Alamut. Jalaluddin, his father, had wisely offered his homage to Chengiz, but Alaeddin in his ignorance took no notice of the Mongols and the Mongols considered this equivalent to treason. In 1255 when Alaeddin's madness had become excessive, and his son and heir, Ruknuddin Khurshah, was thinking of flying away to another fort, one Hasan Mazendarani, a favourite of Alaeddin whom he had driven to madness by his continued persecution, cut off his head at midnight (1 December 1255).

Ruknuddin Khurshah immediately offered his submission to the Mongols, but it had been decided at the Quriltai of 1251 at Qara-Quram that Khurshah and all his people would be put to death. Halaku gave him and his people false promises of security and killed them after they had surrendered to him. Ata Malik Juwayni gloats over the massacre of the 'heretics', and ignorant of what was to befall him and his brother at their hands, thanks the Mongols for their service to Muslim orthodoxy.\(^\text{18}\) The Rauzatus Safa is more cautious: 'Such Musalmans as the Tatar sword had spared thanked Halaku for what he did.'\(^\text{19}\)


\(^{19}\) Persian Text, Vol. IV, 85.
III. THE RISE OF CHENGIZ KHAN

THE STEPPE SOCIETY

One of the recurrent phenomena in ancient and medieval history has been the west-ward movement of conquering nomadic tribes from the vast steppe region that extends from the east of the Jaxartes to the north of China. Not all these movements resulted in conquests; in fact most of them were suppressed and crushed by the sedentary or city-dwelling peoples of the east. But we find them beginning centuries before the White Huns and the Red Huns and the fiercest of them has been the attack of the Chengizi Mongols or Mughuls;¹ it was also the most devastating and lasting in its effects.

The cities of Turkistan were only to be found on the eastern bank of the Jaxartes and south of the Taklamakan desert; thereafter the steppe—rocky hills and rocky mountains—extends for what used to be some three months’ journey till the Manchurian frontier. About the middle of it, and south of the territory of the Mongol uluses or military clans, is the Gobi desert—a sea of sand (registan) or dried up seabottom, which must be clearly distinguished from the steppe (dashi), which seems to have been formed by the weight of the primeval ice.

The main sources of livelihood for the steppe-dwellers were cattle-breeding, horse-breeding, hunting and fishing. Agriculture was almost unknown; the Yuan-Chao-Pi-Shi (Secret History of the Mongols), our only extant authority on the early career of Chengiz Khan, makes no reference to any cultivated field or farmer. Since the shepherds could only find a sparse vegetation on the steppe, they had to be constantly on the move, carrying about their tents (aqsus) on their carts and forming temporary tent-villages (urty).² But some excellent pastures and sweet-water lakes (kols) were also to be found, where a shepherd-group, strong enough to drive away its enemies, could claim an exclusive right of pasturage. There were no cities, and city-life was regarded with contempt. The cattle provided the steppe society with its basic needs—milk, curd, meat, and skins for their clothes and their

¹ Chengiz and his people called themselves ‘Dada’. Mang ku, from which ‘Mongol’ is derived, is a Chinese term meaning ‘brave’. It dates from the third century. The Musalmans gave the name of Tatar, Turk, Mughul and even Chinese to this horde. The Europeans preferred to call them Tartars (after the Greek hell, Tartarus).

² An excellent account of this steppe society, as it existed in the last generation, is to be found in Skrine’s Chinese Turkistan. Mr. Skrine, the English Consul in Chinese
tents. When necessity drove them to it, they could cut open a vein of their horse or camel, put their mouth at the spot, suck the fresh blood and then stanch the incision they had made.

To the Muslim intelligentsia, which considered physical purity to be a part of its religion, these nomads as a people seemed to be intolerably dirty and frightfully disgusting. Like some of the backward tribes of India, they ate all animals—mice, rats, martens and the like. The distinction between eatable and non-eatable flesh was not known to them. In spite of the fact that summer in some regions is frightfully hot, the custom of bathing was almost unknown, and bathing or washing clothes in a stream during the summer was punished with death. Men and women, they all stank horribly. Their unwashed clothes were full of lice and they were constantly scratching their skins. Many of them preferred to shave off the hair of their heads. Owing to their insufficient and unvaried diet, they had not the same body-weight and muscular strength as the sedentary people; their surviving pictures show thin arms, lean waists, sparse beards and leathery faces.

None of the steppe societies had a written script, except the Aighurs; and Chengiz Khan, who did not know how to read or write and could speak no other language except the Mongolian, arranged for the sons of his chiefs to be taught to write Mongolian in the Aighur script. The steppe society was divided into units or uluses. These uluses were military in their character; the genealogy of the chiefs alone counted, or, to be more exact, the genealogy of the followers was supposed to be the same as that of their chiefs. The ordinary shepherds were transferred from the ulus of one chief to another according to the fortunes of war. North of the Gobi desert lived the Dada uluses (or the original Mongols), whose chiefs traced their descent from Qublai, the first Khaqan (Qa-an or Emperor). East of the Mongols lived the Tatars and east of the Tatars lived the Manchus. The basic achievement of Chengiz was the unification of these steppe societies into a single organisation directed by a central authority.

The character of primitive societies—their priest-kings, taboos, idols, mythologies, etc.—has been carefully studied during the last three generations. It has to be insisted that the steppe society, in spite of the hard conditions of its life, was in no sense primitive. This

Turkistan (Kashghar), calculated that two women working together could put up a tent in forty-five minutes and pack it up in fifteen minutes. A whole family—men, women and cattle—lived in one tent, which had a flap at the top to let out the smoke. Social opinion required that no young man should marry till he had a tent of his own. The price of a tent—a round structure made of animal skin—was about three pounds sterling.
is clear if we look at its intellectual development in two great fields—
military science and religion.

The constant struggle for the means of life—struggle against
nature which provided so little and against the neighbouring ulus
organizations which threatened to take away even that—had in the
course of centuries taught the steppe society, both men and women,
to be sturdy, self-reliant and self-sufficient. They had great powers of
endurance, an immense capacity for suffering and inflicting pain, and
an almost unbelievable power of bearing cold and heat, thirst and
hunger. It is doubtful if any group of human beings has equalled
them in this respect. Moreover, continuous fighting over the centuries
had developed certain skills which lay at the basis of medieval mili-
tary science—excellent horsemanship, rapid marching and counter-
marching, planning of ambushes, reading of the stars at night, follow-
ing tracks, scouting, cooperation in fighting which is the basis of
military discipline, and above all the genius that could accommodate
itself to varying circumstances—discover new means for attaining its
ends and learn all that the enemy could teach. It is surprising how
the Mongol generals, who had never known warfare except in its
primitive steppe-form, succeeded in devising unexpected tricks for
capturing great walled towns and hill-forts, which they had not seen
even in their dreams, by utilizing all the military machines of their
day and improving upon the strategy and tactics they had learnt from
their opponents. But these achievements would not have been possi-
ble if the ‘private war’ of the steppe had not in the course of centuries
trained soldiers and horsemen capable of executing the tasks assigned
to them; and in the steppe society every man was a professional
soldier.

Owing to the complete absence of written records, it is impossible
even to guess what phases the religion of the Mongols had passed
through. But in the final form in which we find it in the time of
Chengiz Khan, it is crystal clear. The Mongols had no sacred scrip-
tures, no gods and goddesses and, of course, no mythological stories;
also no idols, no consecrated tents or temples, no priests, no holy
places and no pilgrimages. They were strangers to religious rites and
rituals and to all religious directions and prohibitions, except with
reference to Mongol moral laws. They believed, simply and sincerely,
in one God, whom they called Tengiri or Il Tengiri (meaning sky or
space), who stood both for the physical universe and the moral order.
But there were no prescribed forms of prayer. If a person wanted to
pray to Il Tengiri, he would kneel towards the sun, or towards the
west if the sun had set, sprinkle wine or water on the ground and
pray in such words as came to his mind. Congregational prayers were
quite unknown. The steppe society was not shackled by any un-
scientific religious inhibitions. Two steppe-groups, the Naaimans and
the Keraitis, were Christians, but apart from the use of some symbols,
like the wooden bell (naqus), they in no way differed from their neigh-
bours. Theism without humbug, that was the essence of the Mongol
creed.

Religious hatred in any form was quite unknown to the steppe-
mind. It was perfectly tolerant towards all creeds and allowed them
full opportunity of religious propaganda. The Musalmans, whom
Chengiz murdered in such enormous numbers, were surprised at his
belief in his God and at his undoubted tolerance in religious matters.
Having no priests of their own, the leaders of steppe society were
remarkably tolerant to the priests of all other cults—Muslim, Chris-
tian, Taoist and Buddhist. Exemption from taxes was granted to them,
and they were expected to pray to God in their own way for the suc-
cess of the Mongols. Lastly, the Mongols had no objection to inter-
marrages, and even Chengiz gave one of his daughters in marriage
to a Muslim chief, Arsalan Khan of Kayaliq.

EARLY LEGENDS TO YESUGAI BAHADUR

In A.D. 1228 a Mongol officer dictated a small book on all he knew
about the traditions of the Mongols (‘Dada’) and the struggle of the
uluses that made Chengiz Khan supreme in the country. This work
survives to us in a Chinese translation with a Chinese title—Yuan-
Chao-Pi-Shi. The author’s geographical references have been check-
ed and found correct. The book only gives a few dates; the events,
as is likely to happen in a dictated composition, are not always put
in proper sequence. But the parts of the book which we can test are
so correct that we can safely trust the non-legendary part of the rest
of the work. A Persian version of the same work known as the Golden
Book (Altun Daftar) fell into the hands of Rashiduddin (author of the
Jamiut Tawarikh) and later Persian writers (Abul Fazl and others)

3 Translated into English by Professor Dr. Wei Kwai Sun and published by the
Department of History, Muslim University, Aligarh. In Europe, as in those parts of
Muslim Asia which the Mongols could not reach, hatred for the Mongols was freely
expressed. But later on the Muslim descendants of Chengiz and Timur occupied a
large part of Ajam and their official historians were required to glorify Chengiz and his
ancestors. In Europe Chengiz Khan—the ‘Cambuscan bold’ of Milton—became a
figure of romance and he continues as such even in works like Sir Henry Howorth’s
History of the Mongols, not to mention Harold Lamb’s Chengiz Khan and Murch of
the Barbarians. Dr. Wei has for the first time put the Mongols in a proper historical
setting. I freely acknowledge the great debt I owe to my Chinese pupil. A Chinese
scholar is fortunately free from those concepts which sometimes misguide people
belonging to Semitic creeds.
have expanded its legendary part, which is not historically acceptable, into a perfect hideous.

The Yuan-Chao-Pi-Shi (Secret History of the Mongols) declares that the 'Dada' people are the descendants of 'a heaven-born grey wolf and a whitish doe', who settled at the foot of Mount Burkhan at the source of the Onan river, and had a man-child, Batachi Khan. Duban Mirkhan, eleventh in descent from Batachi, had Alan Goa for his wife. She bore him two sons during his life and had three sons after his death. To her legitimate sons, who accused her of adultery with their only family servant, she explained: 'You do not know that every night there entered a golden hued man from my brightened window and came into contact with my bosom, into which his light penetrated... My other three sons are apparently the children of heaven.' This legend was obviously manufactured under Christian influence. Some Muslim writers have declared Alan Goa to be a contemporary of the early Abbasids.

Alan Goa's descendants prospered and multiplied. But so far as the knowledge of the author of the Secret History goes, Qublai Khaqan (or Qa-an), the great grandfather of Chengiz, was the first ruler of the whole 'Dada' people. His successor, Anhbai, who was not one of his seven sons, was captured by the Tatars and handed over by them to the Kin emperor. The Kin was a Tatar dynasty, which had been governing northern China since A.D. 1114 and had gradually adopted Chinese ways of life. Since 'kin' means 'gold', the Kin emperor is referred to by Persian historians as 'Altun Khan'. Anhbai sent a message asking his relations to avenge him. They fought thirteen battles with the Tatars but the result was inconclusive. During these wars, Chengiz was born in A.D. 1163. He was holding a clot of blood in his hands and was named Temuchin after a Tatar his father had captured.

Temuchin's father, Yesugai Bahadur, was the son of Bartan Bahadur, the second son of Qublai Khaqan. He had with the help of his two brothers captured Oyelun, the wife of a Merkit, named Yeke Chiradu, but they had not succeeded in capturing and killing her.

4 There has been a controversy about the date of Chengiz's birth. The Turks and the Chinese put their years in cycles of twelve, each year being named after an animal.' Now the Rauzatus Sofa says that Chengiz died in the same year of the cycle in which he was born; that is, he lived to an age that was a multiple of twelve. The Tabaqat-i Nasiri says that he was fifty-five when he invaded Khurasan. Chengiz's death in Ramazan, A.H. 624 (August/September 1227) was a world event. Both the above-mentioned conditions are fulfilled if we put his birth in A.D. 1163. Howorth is obviously wrong in putting it in A.D. 1155. Barthold's statement that Chengiz died at the age of seventy-two (Turkistan, 459) contradicts the Tabaqat-i Nasiri.
husband, though they pursued him over seven hills. There was, consequently, something not quite legal about the marriage, for Mongol law did not consider such a marriage legitimate unless the previous husband had been killed. But the Mongols were not inclined to be finical about these matters, and Oyelun, who had been devoted to her first husband, also proved a good wife to Yesugai. She bore him four sons—Temuchin, Khasar, Khachiun and Temuga (Otchigin)—and a daughter, Temulun. In addition to them, Yesugai had two sons, Bektor and Belgutai, by another wife. When Temuchin was nine years, Yesugai affianced him to Bortei, daughter of Dae Sechen of the Ungira clan, and left him at the house of his future father-in-law. While returning home Yesugai was given poisoned food by the Tatars and died soon after.

EARLY STRUGGLES; TAICHUTS AND MERKITS

Yesugai seems to have collected a substantial number of followers, but a collateral branch, the Taichuts, took them all away. 'The deep water is gone', they said, 'and the bright stone is broken.' Thus Temuchin, on returning to his mother's tent, found that the family had to obtain its daily sustenance by its daily labour. 'Deserted by the Taichuts, the able and resolute mother of Temuchin resorted to picking fruits and digging roots in order to feed her sons,' the Secret History tells us, 'and her sons, who grew up under these hard conditions, developed princely qualities. Oyelun's sons, though reared on simple vegetable diet, proved strong enough to resist any aggressor.' But even under these conditions Temuchin and Khasar quarrelled with Bektor and killed him. Oyelun gave her errant sons a good round of curses, but she could not have realized that she had given birth to the world's greatest killer.

The aggressors also reappeared in due course. The Taichuts, fearing revenge, attacked Oyelun's family but said that they would be content if Temuchin was handed over. Temuchin, thereupon, escaped to the forest on his horse and remained there alone and hungry for nine days. But when he came out, the Taichuts captured him; they tied his head to a yoke (kang) and decided that he should be kept as a prisoner in a different tent every day. Temuchin, however, succeeded in escaping one night with his head still tied to the yoke, and hid himself in a shallow part of the Onan river with his nose just above the water. A Taichut, Sorkhan Shira, who alone happened to spot him, succeeded in inducing his companions to postpone a thorough search to the next morning. Later on Temuchin came to Shira's tent and Shira's two young sons decided to help him. They took off his yoke and hid him under the wool in their cart. Next day
when the Taichuts decided to make a thorough search of all tents, Shira succeeded in keeping them away from the wool-laden cart with the remark: ‘In such a hot weather, how could any one survive under all that wool?’ So Temuchin regained his freedom.

In the years that followed the prosperity of the family seems to have increased. Marmots and wild mice were still a source of food, but the family came to possess nine horses and Temuchin was in a position to send for Bortie and marry her. It was in these years that Temuchin seems to have established his reputation as an excellent captain of young men.

He had, however, much to learn. One early morning three Merkit groups attacked the Oyelun household. Since Yesugai had captured a Merkit’s wife, the Merkits thought it their duty to capture Chengiz’s wife, Bortie, in return. All other members of the family succeeded in escaping, but Bortie was captured and handed over as wife to Silchar, the strong. Years later Chengiz succeeded in capturing her along with her child, Juji, whom she seems to have borne to Silchar. According to the moral code of the Mongols, Juji was Chengiz’s eldest son and Chengiz accepted him as such. But later on his legitimacy was questioned.5

CHENGIZ’S STRUGGLE WITH JAMUKHA, WANG KHAN AND THE NAIMANS

It is only possible to note the main stages of Temuchin’s career in his homeland. A ‘Dada’ group, called the Keraitas, lived in the Black Forest; its allegiance was divided between two brothers, Tughril, who had the habit of killing his relations, and Jamukha, who was inordinately ambitious and unreliable. Both brothers could put in a force of 20,000 in the field. Tughril had been a close friend of Yesugai Bahadur, who had rescued him in his distress when he had been attacked by his uncle, the Gor Khan, and had only a hundred men left. Temuchin, therefore, regarded Tughril as his father. Temuchin and Jamukha had played together during their childhood and regarded each other as sworn brothers or andas. At the appeal of Temuchin, Tughril and Jamukha marched with him against the Merkits, who were duly suppressed. The three hundred Merkits, who had attacked Chengiz’s family and tried to capture him, were massacred without exception. Their wives, if fit for marriage, were taken as wives (by

5 For an altercation between Juji and Chaghatal on the matter, see the Secret History of the Mongols, 184-67. Juji did not claim legitimacy but challenged Chaghatal to fight. Chengiz remained silent. Ultimately the matter was settled on the ground that the princes should respect the feelings of their mother.
the conquerors); those who could only serve as maid-servants were enslaved. But Temuchin's friendship with Jamukha gradually turned into suspicion, and suspicion into hostility.

About the year 1196 Tughril got into trouble once more. He wished to kill his younger brother, Yarke Khan, and Yarke fled to the Naimans; the chief of the Naimans drove Tughril from the 'Black Forest to the Gor Khan, but Tughril rebelled against the Gor Khan and crossed the country of the Aighurs and the Tanguts (eastern China) with five she-goats and a camel. Chengiz Khan, however, came to his help and restored him to his old authority.

In 1201 Jamukha got himself elected as 'Khan' of eleven tribes, including the Naimans (who were not included among the 'Dada' people) and decided to attack Tughril and Chengiz. But in the battle that followed Jamukha was defeated. The Naimans returned to their own place; the confederacy vanished; and Chengiz, though badly wounded in the neck by an arrow, took advantage of this opportunity to exterminate the Taichut chiefs.

In 1202 Chengiz and Tughril defeated the Tatars, probably with the help of the Kin emperor's forces. In retaliation for the poisoning of his father by the Tatars, Chengiz ordered all Tatars 'who were as high as the axle of the cart' to be killed and the rest to be reduced to slavery. It was on this occasion probably that the Kin emperor bestowed the title of Wang (Prince) on Tughril and of Chao Khuli (Warden of the Marches) on Chengiz.

As a result of these victories Temuchin was elected 'Khan' at the Ouriltai of 1203 with the title of Chengiz Khan (Very Mighty Ruler). This title was a definite challenge to Jamukha's claim to superiority. A second war was inevitable in which both parties mustered about 30,000 soldiers. But Jamukha's men had no stomach for fighting, and he marched back after having the heads of the chiefs, who were disloyal to him, boiled in seven large cauldrons. This left only three effective powers in the field—Chengiz, Wang and the Naimans. Jamukha proceeded to make Senkun, son of Wang, jealous of Chengiz on the ground that Wang would be succeeded by Chengiz, whom Wang had adopted as a son, and not by Senkun. Wang refused to believe in Chengiz's protestations of loyalty. The result was a three days' battle between Wang and Chengiz in the course of which the Kerait power was completely broken. Chengiz divided the conquered people among his followers. Wang Khan was killed by a Naiman soldier and Senkun by one of his own followers. Jamukha fled to the Naimans.

6 Secret History, 82. Bortei was recovered on this occasion.
Inancha Bilga, the ruler of the Naimans, observing that his son, Tayang, was a weakling, had ordered the administration to be carried on by his wife, Gur Besu, after his death. But seeing the power of Chengiz increasing, Tayang decided to fight him. ‘I am coming to deprive you of your bows and arrows’, was his message to Chengiz. In spite of the numerical superiority of the Naimans, Chengiz immediately accepted the challenge and marched up the Kerulen river. Tayang and his soldiers tried to find security by retreating up a mountain, but they were surrounded and compelled to surrender. Tayang was captured though his son, Kushluq, managed to escape. Gur Besu had to marry Chengiz Khan. Such ‘Dada’ uluses, as had hitherto followed Jamukha, now finally joined Chengiz. Jamukha was left with only five companions, who brought him to Chengiz and were, at Jamukha’s request, put to death before his eyes. Lastly, Jamukha demanded an honourable death for himself—death without the shedding of blood. ‘O my anda,’ was his message, ‘Il Tengird has preferred you all the time. Let a merciful order of yours put an early end to my existence, so that peace may be restored to your heart.’ Chengiz was reluctant but yielded. ‘He commanded Jamukha to be put to death at that spot and in that manner, and honoured him with a grand burial ceremony.’

CHENGIZ AS KHAN; ARMY ORGANIZATION, INVASION OF THE KIN

In the year A.D. 1206 Chengiz was enthroned for a second time at a second Quriltai. But this time he was not only the leader of the ‘Dada’ people after the manner of Qublai Khaqan but ‘Emperor’ (Huang-di)—‘Emperor of the whole steppe society’. He did not, at this stage, claim any Muslim or Chinese territory. But claim to suzerainty over the whole steppe—and if suzerainty was not accepted, then to direct administration—was implicit in the new accession. All steppe chiefs were expected to make their choice. Subetai was sent against the Merkits, who still remained on the banks of the Irtish. Another general, Chepe Noyan, was sent in pursuit of Kushluq.

It was at this stage, if we may trust the Secret History, that Chengiz Khan devoted himself to the organization of his remarkable army. The basis of it was compulsory military service; all men who were capable of fighting were required to do so and were put into units of ten; these units of ten were combined into units of hundred and units of hundred into units of one thousand. Chengiz had at this time 95 commanders of one thousand. They were put under still higher commanders of the left wing, the right wing and the centre—each having 30,000 men under him. To this was added a specially
recruited royal body-guard of 10,000 designated as 'the central army', but its duty was to guard the Khan and it was not to go on any campaign except with him. A few officers, by special permission, were allowed to recruit from their own relations and tribesmen; otherwise Chengiz looked to military considerations only. He had slaughtered the chiefs who had opposed him; it is to be assumed that those who survived were forgiven. The old ulus distinctions were completely erased; Naimans, 'Dada' people, Merkits and Keraits all found themselves now in the same basic units of 10, 100 or 1,000. The highest offices were given to the members of the Khan's family, provided they came up to the standard required; next to them came officers who had won Chengiz's trust by their efficiency and loyalty. He was up to great enterprises, and favouritism and nepotism would have led to ruin. The horses and arms required by the soldiers were carefully prescribed: nothing impossible was demanded, but that which was necessary had to be kept ready. When orders were sent down, it was expected that every soldier would join his unit within twenty-four hours. When men were on military duty, all their work had to be done by women, so that the taxes may be duly collected and the civil work of society may not suffer.

No army more disciplined and more cruel has walked on this earth.

The chiefs nearest to Chengiz Khan were quick to realize the importance of the change. Three Turkistan rulers—Bardjut, the Idiqut (ruler) of the Aighurs; Arsalan Khan of Kayaliq, who was a Musalman; and Ozar, ruler of Almaligh—came to pay their homage to Chengiz Khan in 1209 or 1210. Each of them was given a princess in marriage from Chengiz's own family.

China in those days was divided into three kingdoms. Reference has already been made to the Kin kingdom in the north. The south China dynasty, the Sung (960-1279), was purely Chinese, but it had many inherent weaknesses. The army had been raised from two lakhs to more than a million and a quarter. 'The larger the number of soldiers, the more unserviceable they proved', Dr. Wei remarks, 'they consisted of groups of volunteers drafted from vagabonds, refugees and able-bodied men from the famine-stricken areas.' Simultaneously, civil expenditure was also increased; the number of gazetted officers, who were recruited by competitive examinations, was more than doubled, and though the taxes were increased six times, the budget remained unbalanced. In western China and the very heart of Central Asia, the kingdom of Si-hsia (called Tangut by the Musalmans) had been founded as early as A.D. 976. It was the weakest of the three kingdoms and also nomadic in origin like the Kin.
In 1209 in reply to the demand for tribute made by the newly enthroned Kin ruler, Chang-hai, Chengiz addressed his officers, prayed to *Il Tengirt* and sent a Musalman, Jafar Khodsha (Khwaja), with a haughty message: 'The Kin could have war or peace, as it preferred, but Chengiz was not a subordinate.' He then marched with his army from the Kerulen river. The invasion was a great success. The whole of China north of the Yellow river was plundered and some ninety flourishing towns were sacked. There was no annexation of territory at this stage, but after two invasions of northern China, the Mongol army returned overloaded with spoils. Chengiz Khan was now as rich as any other ruler. More important than that was the fact that he and his officers had learnt the sedentary people's art of war. Chinese craftsmen, who had constructed catapults or *munjaniqs* for them, were brought to Mongolia in large numbers, may be 10,000 families. Considerable quantities of *naphtha* or gunpowder had also been obtained. The disciplined Mongol army had also learnt the secret of paralyzing large cities and reducing inaccessible forts to distress. The somnolent Musalmans of the west were now to learn what this meant.