



MAHMOOD

OF GHAZNI

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE TO THE REVISED EDITION	3
SABUKTAGIN, MAHMOOD'S FATHER	5
A STRANGE DREAM.....	5
MAHMOODS EDUCATION	6
FATHERS ADVICE	6
MAHMOODS FIRST EXPERIENCE OF THE HINDUS.....	7
MAHMOOD ON THE THRONE OF GHAZNI.....	8
FIGHT FOR THE THRONE	8
CONQUEST OF KHORASAN	9
MAHMOOD HONORED BY THE CALIPH	10
CONQUEST OF SISTAN.....	10
KHAN OF BOKHARA DEFEATED.....	11
SLAVE CRACKS A JOKE	11
CONQUEST OF KHWARAZM.....	12
SULTAN FEELS SORRY	12
OTHER CONQUESTS IN CENTRAL ASIA	13
MAHMOOD TURNS HIS GAZE TO INDIA.....	14
THE FIRST INVASION	15
JAI PAL STRIKES FIRST	16
MAHMOOD'S LARGE HEARTEDNESS.....	16
FALL OF BHERA	17
THE HERETICAL RULER OF MULTAN.....	17
JAI PAL'S GRANDSON	18
THE HINDU CRUSADE.....	19
FALL OF KANGRA (NAGARKOT).....	20
END OF THE QIRMATIS.....	20
FALL OF THANESAR	21
FALL OF NANDNA	21
THE GANGES VALLEY OVER-RUN.....	22
THE HINDU ALLIANCE.....	23

PANJAB ANNEXED	24
FALL OF KALINJAR.....	25
THE FINAL BLOW OF IDOLATORY	25
VAIN BOASTS	25
MARCH ON SOMNAT	26
THE BATTLE.....	27
SOMNAT SMASHED.....	28
THE GLORY THAT WAS SOMNAT	29
RICH BOOTY.....	29
STAY IN KATHIAWAR.....	29
THE HOMEWARD JOURNEY	30
THE LAST CAMPAIGN.....	31
MAHMOOD’S END.....	31
AFFAIRS OF CENTRAL ASIA.....	31
ILLNESS AND DEATH	32
MAHMOOD AS A MAN	32
FEAR OF ALLAH.....	33
THE SULTAN’S JUSTICE.....	35
MAHMOOD AS A SOLDIER	35
A GREAT PATRON OF LETTERS.....	36
SPREAD OF ISLAM	36
APPENDIX.....	37
THE STORY OF SULTAN MAHMOOD GHAZNI (RAHMATULLAH ALAIHE)	37
THE STORY OF SULTAN MAHMOOD AND AYAAZ.....	42
THE STORY OF AYAAZ AND THOSE WHO WERE JEALOUS OF HIM.....	45
THE INCIDENT OF AYAAZ (THE SLAVE OF MAHMOOD GAZNI).....	50

PREFACE TO THE REVISED EDITION

“I am leaving behind two weighty things. viz, the Quran and my personal example. If you hold fast to these, you will never go astray.” (Hadith)

This parting advice of the Master our beloved Nabi ﷺ, when made the basis of life, has accomplished some of the rarest marvels of history. It has inspired generations of Muslims to be the highest level of thought and action. It has, during the centuries, produced the greatest of men and the noblest specimens of humanity. The soul-stirring message of the Quran and the example of the Master ﷺ have put on a new beauty in the context of each age.

They seem ever capable of sweeping away the pettiness and shallowness that dog the path of human life. They enable man, as nothing else can, to take his destiny into his own hands, and rise to the highest sense of duty towards Allah and fellowmen. A life guided by these twin stars never fails to identify itself with the great on going forces of history.

This kitaab gives a brief account of a life characterised by such timeless quality. Mankind is at present, passing through a period of unprecedented social change. Adjustment to the inexorable requirements of a rapidly changing world-order is undermining old beliefs and customs everywhere. Much of it for the good.

However, there is a very real danger that, in the inevitable social shake-up, some of the basic values may go by the board. No worse calamity could befall a culture. The best safeguard against such an eventuality is to remind ourselves constantly how those before us met the challenge of their times, without flinching an inch from the great tradition of the Master ﷺ.

For light of our path to progress, we must turn to those immortal sons of Islam who showed to the world how the example set by the Master ﷺ could always be capable of a dynamic interpretation.

The set of short biographies, of which this booklet is a part, has been written with a double purpose in mind:

1. To acquaint boys and girls with the spiritual possessions of which they are to be the guardians and
2. To provide easy and interesting reading material that may stimulate love and ability for independent reading
3. It is earnestly hoped that the youngsters who read this booklet will catch at least some sparks of the fire that inflamed the soul of our hero.

Fazl Ahmad
Central Training College
Lahore
July 1957

Republished by Khanqah Akhtari

Jamadal Ul 1437 / March 2016

SABUKTAGIN, MAHMOOD'S FATHER

In 954, a twelve year old boy was sold as a slave in a town of central Asia. His master, Haji Nasr, was very kind to him. He brought him up carefully. The boy got good education as well as training in the art of war. The kind treatment of the master brought the youthful slave in the fold of Islaam. Haji Nasr was now sure of a good price if he offered his slave for sale. The boy of five years back was now a young man of seventeen. He was handsome and possessed winning manners.

Haji Nasr took the youth to the city of Bokhara. Here he was bought by a powerful noble of king Alaptagin. Soon after, the king happened to see the youth and was struck by his intelligent looks. So he bought him from his noblemen. This thrice sold slave was none other than Sabuktagin, the father of Mahmood.

Sabuktagin's unusual ability soon won him a place at the court. The king gave him his daughter in marriage. On Alaptagin's death, Sabuktagin became chief minister of the new king, Ibrahim.

Ibrahim passed away after a year's rule. He was followed by two more kings. At last in 977 the nobles chose Sabuktagin as their king.

A STRANGE DREAM

On a November night in 971, Sabuktagin had a strange dream. He saw a tiny plant growing out of his chimney. Presently it began to grow rapidly. Its stem grew thicker and thicker and it put out more and more branches. This went on till the tiny plant changed into a giant tree, enveloping within its branches the whole world.

In the morning Sabuktagin told his wife all about the dream. She was expecting a baby.

"What can it mean?" she said in pleasant surprise. "Anyway, it seems to be a good dream." She went on. "I think it tells something about the future greatness of our coming child."

"I feel very much the same," remarked Sabuktagin. "We should do our best to give good education and proper training to this child."

A few hours later, the child was born. It was a male child. The parents named him Mahmood, which means “the praised one.” With all their high hopes, the fond parents little knew what greatness awaited their son. They did not know that he was to go down in history as one of the greatest generals of the world.

MAHMOODS EDUCATION

It was not till six years after Mahmood’s birth that Sabuktagin became king. But even before that, Sabuktagin was a powerful and rich man. He used all the means in his power to give his son the best of education. Learned men of repute were engaged to teach the child. Mahmood was an unusually intelligent lad. Soon he had the whole Quraan learnt by heart. Then he gave himself up to the study of religious literature and became proficient in it.

Side by side with this education, the father gave his son a sound practical training. Mahmood was taught how a good ruler ought to deal with his people. Sabuktagin often took his little son in to the thick of life so that he might get first-hand knowledge of things.

Shortly after becoming king, Sabuktagin had to go on a campaign. Mahmood was hardly seven at that time. Sabuktagin left him in Ghazni, as his deputy. A few years later, Mahmood was made the governor of a province.

This practical training made Mahmood a great soldier. He was still a boy when he became a first-class swordsmen and a matchless marksmen. He was a mere lad when he fought at his father’s side in the expedition against Ghour. Mahmood was only fifteen when Raja Jai Pal of Lahore led his army against Sabuktagin. The courage and general-ship shown by the youthful prince in this battle surprised everybody.

In short, Sabuktagin did all he could to make Mahmood a great scholar, a great soldier and a greater ruler.

FATHERS ADVICE

When Mahmood was a young prince, he had a beautiful garden laid out in Ghazni. In the middle of the garden, he built a fine palace. When the garden was complete, Mahmood invited his father and the nobles to come and see it. The king liked both the garden and the palace but said

“My dearest Mahmood, the garden and palace are really beautiful. But any of my nobles can leave behind such things. A king must raise a building which none of his subject can construct.”

“What building would that be?” asked Mahmood.

“Such a building,” went on the loving father, “can only be raised in the hearts of learned men. If you win the hearts of great scholars, you will be sowing a seed that will only bear fruit both in this world and in the world to come.”

Sabuktagin himself was a kind and just ruler. He was loved both by the army and the people. From a humble slave, he had risen to be a king. He wanted his son to carry on the work he had started. He knew it was no easy task. To make his son equal to the task, he missed no opportunity to giving him a sound education and a practical training.

MAHMOODS FIRST EXPERIENCE OF THE HINDUS

Sabuktagin had a common frontier with the Hindu kingdom of Punjab. Jai Pal's rule extended to districts beyond Peshawar. Sabuktagin was a peace loving man. He wanted to be on friendly terms with his neighbours. So he built a few forts on his eastern frontier. Jai Pal, who had designs of Afghanistan, was disturbed by this act of his neighbour. He could no longer march easily across the frontier. So he started preparing for war before it was too late. He wanted to crush the kingdom of Ghazni before it became too strong.

Jai Pal decided to give the king of Ghazni a surprise. Ohind, his capital, was rather close to Gazni. So he moved to Lahore and made it the capital. Here he began to collect an army. He made it known throughout India that he was going to wage a religious war. Thus he was able to get help, in men and money, from all Hindu Rajas.

Sabuktagin knew nothing of Jai Pal's plans. Suddenly news reached Ghazni that a mighty Hindu army was on its way to Lamighan, the modern Jalalabad. Ghazni was no match for the combined might of India. Sabuktagin had no more than a few thousand troops. At the head of this small army he advanced to meet the enemy. Mahmood, a boy of fifteen, accompanied his father.

Mahmood and his father fought many battles with the Hindus. The struggle was going on when all of sudden a snow-storm came. Jai Pal and his followers could not stand the severe cold. So the Hindu Raja made peace on condition

that he would pay Sabuktagin a huge sum of money. He left with Sabuktagin some of his officers as hostages.

Sabuktagin sent his men to Lahore to collect the money promised by the Raja. Jai Pal put them all under arrest. Word was sent to Ghazni that the men would be set free only when Sabuktagin had released the hostages. Sabuktagin was naturally angry at this breach of faith. He and Mahmood again led an army against the Hindus. Jai Pal expected the attack and had gathered an army of one lakh horses and several lakhs footmen. This time he received a still greater help from all over India. His agents went from place to place and incited people in the name of religion.

Jai Pal led this mighty host to Peshawar. On the side, Sabuktagin had far fewer but well-trained men. The horsemen of Ghazni were divided into several parties of five hundred each. At the head of these parties, Mahmood and his father made endless raids on the Hindu host. Jai Pal saw to his cost that mere numbers brought no strength to an army. Before long, disorder spread among the Hindus. They lost heart, and took to flight. Sabuktagin won a complete victory. Jai Pal had to pay dearly for his treachery. He lost big bit of territory. The eastern frontier of Sabuktagin's kingdom moved to the right bank of the Indus.

MAHMOOD ON THE THRONE OF GHAZNI

Sabuktagin had made Mahmood the governor of the most important province Khorasan.

As Governor of Khorasan, Mahmood lived at Nishapur. His younger brother, Ismail lived with his father at Ghazni. In 997, Sabuktagin suddenly fell ill and passed away. As it was unwise to leave the throne vacant, the dying king nominated Ismail his successor. Ismail was a nice young man. However, he had no experience either of war or the affairs of the state.

FIGHT FOR THE THRONE

Mahmood was amazed to know that his brother had become king of Ghazni. Mahmood was a loving brother. He had no wish to deny Ismail what was his due. All the same, he expected Ismail to respect his rights. So he sent a letter to his younger brother which wrote

“No one in the world is dearer to me than you. I am ready to give you anything you want. But to be a king one needs to be mature, experienced and tactful. If you had these qualities, I must have been most happy to serve you. Father made you a king as a stop gap arrangement. Now give careful thought to facts and do no injustice. You can have Khorasan and Balkh. Let me be the king of Ghazni.”

Ismail rejected this offer of peace. Mahmood then sent his father-in-law, Abul Harith, to explain things to Ismail. Ismail refused to listen to him. The only course opened to Mahmood was to fight for the throne.

Mahmood started preparations for a march on Ghazni. His youngest brother, Abul Muzaffar and his uncle also joined him with their armies. Before beginning the fight, Mahmood made another effort for peace. However this effort was to no avail.

In March 998, the armies of the two brothers met near Ghazni. Both armies were equally strong. However, Mahmood was a seasoned general whereas Ismail knew nothing of warfare. The battle went on the whole day. Toward the evening Mahmood himself led the attack. Ismail’s army reeled under the blow and fled.

Mahmood was now king of Ghazni. He forgave Ismail and treated him most kindly. One day the two brothers were chatting,

“Mahmood asked Ismail, By the way, how would you have treated me if you had won the battle?” To this Ismail replied, “I would have shut you up in a fort and provided you with all the comforts of life.”

Mahmood said no more. After a few days, he shut Ismail up in a fort and provided him with all the comforts of life.

CONQUEST OF KHORASAN

The kings of Ghazni were nominally under the Samani Amirs of Bokhara. For a long time the Amir had an eye on the rich province of Bokhara, but he could do nothing during Sabuktigin’s lifetime. On his death the Amir saw his opportunity. On becoming king, Mahmood sent rich gifts to the Amir and requested that he be allowed to keep his father’s territories. The Amir allowed Mahmood to keep Balkh and Herat, but took the province of Khorasan away. Mahmood did not want to lose this province. He decided to take it by force. In

May 999 a battle was fought near Merv. Mahmood won a complete victory. This victory made him the master of Khorasan.

MAHMOOD HONORED BY THE CALIPH

A few months after this the Khan of Kashgar, attacked Bokhara. The Amir and all his relatives were put to the sword. Thus the house of Saman was ended. The end of the Samani Amirs made Mahmood an independent king. He married the daughter of the Khan of Kashgar. Close relations with him brought Mahmood still greater power.

Al-Qadir Billah Abbasi was the Caliph of Islam at that time. He lived in Baghdad. Mahmood sent him gifts and the news of his victory over Khorasan. The Caliph sent him a robe of honour and conferred on him the titles of Yamin-ud-Daula "the Right Hand of the State." and Amin-ul-Millat "Custodian of Faith".

Mahmood was overjoyed at the honour he received from the caliph and he prostrated in prayer to Allah. In thankfulness he made his historic vow,

"Lord!" He said in all humility, "You have showered on me the rarest of favours, as a token of gratitude, I promise to wage a life-long war against all non-believers and idolators."

CONQUEST OF SISTAN

Khalf, the ruler of Sistan, was not in good terms with the kings of Ghazni. Mahmood's uncle, Bughrachaq, was the ruler of Qaushanj. When Bughrachaq was away in the year 998 to help his nephew Mahmood, Khalf saw the opportunity to conquer his province. He sent his son, Tahir to overrun Qaushanj and he easily conquered it.

Mahmood disliked the treachery of Khalf. After becoming king he gave his uncle an army to retake the province of Qaushanj. After a tough battle Tahir was put to flight. Bughrachaq chased him. Tahir saw that he had separated from his troops he took the opportunity and slew Bughrachaq. Mahmood was very sad on hearing the news of his uncle's murder. So, he led an army against Khalf. Khalf was unable to withstand the Sultan so he locked himself in a fort and requested peace. He agreed to pay the Sultan a large sum of money. The Sultan accepted his request.

Shortly after this there was a quarrel between Khalf and his son Tahir. Khalf slew his son. This unnatural act horrified the people of Sistan. The nobles wrote to the Sultan, to occupy Sistan. He accepted their request. The cruel old leader of Sistan took refuge once again in a fort. Mahmood stormed the fort and captured Khalf. Khalf prayed for mercy and the Sultan readily accepted his request. Bent with age the old man came before the Sultan, kissing the ground he presented jewels and pearls at the young Sultan's feet. The Sultan was touched, he rose from his seat and embraced the old man. Khalf was allowed to take as much riches as he needed and he was allowed to live where he wanted to. Thus Sistan became a part of Ghazni.

KHAN OF BOKHARA DEFEATED

It was Ailak Khan who with his Turkish hordes put an end to the Samani dynasty. However he was prudent enough to remain friendly with Mahmood. The Sultan also valued the friendship of the Khans of Turkistan. He sent valuable gifts to Ailak Khan and later married his daughter. This friendship with the Khan of Bokhara, however did not last very long.

Ailak Khan had a long cherished desire to be the master of Khorasan. The Sultan was away for a very long time fighting in India, which gave Ailak Khan the opportunity to attack and occupy Khorasan. The loss of Khorasan disturbed Mahmood.

He left his India campaign and proceeded to Ghazni. He then marched to Balkh. Ailak Khan appealed to the other Khans of Turkistan to assist him. Thus he gathered a large army of horsemen. The two armies met a few miles from Balkh. Both sides fought fiercely. The ground became wet with the blood of the slain. Ailak Khan himself made a spirited attack. The day seemed to be going against the Sultan. On seeing this, the Sultan jumped off his horse and prostrated himself before Allah, on the blood-drenched ground begging Allah for victory. He then rode a huge elephant and led an attack. The example of the Sultan put a new heart into his men. The Turkish horsemen could not hold their own in the face of this attack. They soon retreated and Mahmood was the victor of the day.

SLAVE CRACKS A JOKE

Ailak Khan had been defeated but Mahmood wanted to teach him a more long lasting lesson. It was a severe winter but Mahmood wanted to pursue him. The

army chiefs thought that the chase would wear out the already weary troops but Mahmood was determined to chase him. So the pursue of Ailak Khan began.

On the third night of the chase, they experienced heavy snowfall. The chill grew terrible but several fires warmed the tent of the Sultan. In fact it was so warm inside his tent that heavy clothes had to be removed. The Sultan sat comfortably beside a fire when a slave came in. "How about the chill outside?" The Sultan enquired. "Oh! It is terrible. I am afraid many will lose their limbs." Replied the slave. In a light-hearted mood the Sultan said to the slave, "Well! Go and tell the chill, it cannot lay its hands on us. It is so warm in here we have removed our warm clothes." The slave stepped out of the tent and returned after a little while. He said, "Your majesty, I have conveyed your message to the chill. It says in reply, that the Sultan and his nobles may be out of its reach but it is going to show no mercy to the grooms and servants of the Sultan, so that in the morning the Sultan and the nobles will have to groom their own horses." The Sultan saw the point of the slaves joke so he ordered a march back to Ghazni early the next morning.

CONQUEST OF KHWARAZM

Mahmood's sister was married to Abul Abbas, the ruler of Khwarazm. He had great respect for his illustrious brother-in-law. The Sultan suggested to Abul Abbas that his name be included in the Friday sermon. Abul Abbas sought the advice of his nobles. They all opposed his proposal. However they knew he was loyal to the Sultan, so they killed him.

The Sultan immediately led an army to Khwarazm. He camped some miles from the city. Whilst his troops were busy with Fajr (Morning Prayer), the rebel nobles attacked and killed many of them. This was a horrific act which called for strong action. When the prayer was over, the Sultan advanced to meet the rebels. A brisk encounter followed and they put up a stiff fight but they could not escape Mahmood's revenge. Many were killed on the battlefield. The rest were punished accordingly. Thus Khwarazm became part of the kingdom of Ghazni.

SULTAN FEELS SORRY

Mahmood had conquered part of the province of Khorasan, the other part was still in the hands of the Caliph of Baghdad. Mahmood wrote to the Caliph

requesting that he should be allowed to take the whole of Korasan. To this the caliph agreed.

Mahmood next made another request. He asked for Samarqand. This request was turned down. In his letter to Mahmood, the Caliph said, "Let the Sultan rest content with that he already has. If he tries to take Samarqand, the Caliph will take a very serious view of the matter."

The reply made the Sultan furious. In a fit of anger he said to the Caliph's messenger, "Go, and tell your master that I am not afraid of his threats. I know what he wants. He wants me to march on Baghdad with an army of elephants. He wants me to raise that city to the ground. That is what he wants."

The messenger said nothing and left for Baghdad. After some weeks he was back again at Ghanzi. He brought for the Sultan a sealed letter from his master. He handed the letter to the Sultan, saying, "The Caliph says that this letter contains his reply."

The letter was opened. It read as follows:

"In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. Alif Laam Meem. All praises is for Allah, the Sustainer of the worlds. Blessings of Allah be on his Messenger and his followers!"

The letter was read again and again but no one could make out the meaning of the words "Alif Laam Meem." At last a learned man came forward to explain what the Caliph meant.

"Your majesty," he said, addressing the Sultan, "you held out a threat to destroy Baghdad with an army of elephants. The Caliph, in this letter, refers to the famous Surah of the Quraan 'The Elephant.' The Caliph reminded the Sultan that Allah can destroy his army of elephants as he destroyed the elephants of Abraha."

The Sultan was stunned by this explanation. For a time he was almost senseless. When he came to himself, he started weeping. Then he sent the Caliph's messenger back, with rich gifts and many apologies.

OTHER CONQUESTS IN CENTRAL ASIA

During those days constant fighting was the norm in Central Asia. Kings and kingdoms were made and unmade daily. Mahmood ended this constant

fighting during his lifetime. He conquered and included in his kingdom the whole of Afghanistan, Iran and a great part of Turkistan.

The North-Western districts of Afghanistan were known as Ghaur. The people of this mountain territory were in constant trouble, they often raided the Sultan's territories. The Sultan decided to lead an army against Ghaur. The hill men hit back so hard that the Sultan had to make use of a clever device. He ordered his men to fall back. The enemy mistook this as a flight and rushed out to chase the Sultan's army. When the hill men came out in the open the Sultan and his army turned around and fell upon the enemy. Many of them were slain. Their king was so humbled he killed himself. Ghaur became part of the Sultan's territories.

The Sultan then turned his attention to the tract known as Wazirastan. The people of this tract were idol worshippers. The Sultan led an army against them and they were easily beaten. Their rulers along with their people accepted Islam. The Sultan appointed Muslim teachers to teach them the principles of Islam.

The ruler of Tabristan, Manuchihr, was a vassal of Mahmood. The ruler of the neighbouring state of Rayy, was a boy-king, Fakhr-ud-Daula. He was nine years old and his mother was the Regent. The Sultan wanted to occupy Rayy. Learning of this the Regent of Rayy wrote to the Sultan,

“I was afraid of the Sultan as long as my husband lived. Now that he is dead I have no fear at all. If the Sultan overpowers me, he will be winning a victory over a helpless widow but if he suffers defeat, he will ruin his fame forever.”

The Sultan saw the point and gave up his plan to march on Rayy. After some years the Regent passed away and Fakhr-ud-Daula became king. He was a worthless voluptuary, unrest spread in Rayy. The Sultan had to step in and soon Rayy was conquered and then Hamadan and Isfahan were conquered too.

MAHMOOD TURNS HIS GAZE TO INDIA

In 999 the Caliph of Baghdad recognised Mahmood as an independent king. Mahmood was very thankful to Allah for this favour, he knew he was the son of a slave. Allah had raised him to power for some purpose, he thought. He felt it was his duty to fulfil this purpose. What could that purpose be? Mahmood did not have to think very hard for the answer. The land next door to him was

a land of idolaters. Millions upon millions of men and women in India worshipped idols. They bowed themselves before images carved of rocks. They looked upon these idols as their gods. They did all sorts of silly things to please these gods.

There could be no greater disgrace for man. India was a land where there was no dignity for man. People believed in the dignity of idols rather than the worth of man. Mahmood decided to restore human dignity in India. In doing that he was sure to be acting as the tool of the Divine Will. Allah would certainly be well pleased with a man, he thought, who struggled to raise the worth and dignity of millions of human beings. With these thoughts in mind, Mahmood took a solemn vow,

“Lord!” He said in a low voice as his fore-head rested on the ground, “You have been very kind to me. I was a petty chief. You have made me an independent king. I promise to work for Your greater Glory for the rest of my life. I will wage a never ending war against the idolaters. I will strive to raise humanity to a higher level of thought. As long as I live, I will undertake at least one campaign a year against the idol-worshippers.”

Mahmood kept his vow.

He fulfilled it almost to the very letter. The remaining years of his life saw an unbroken chain of invasions and battles. To the west of Ghazni lay the land of Turkish tribes. Many of them had not yet come under the banner of Islam. To the east of Ghazni lay the Indo-Pak sub-continent, the world’s biggest stronghold of idolatry. In the hot months of summer Mahmood marched west and fought against the Turkish hordes. In the cold winter months, he usually struck at India. All this was done according to a perfect plan. Nothing was left to chance. In all Mahmood made seventeen invasions on India. Some were mere raids and others however were important events of history, which produced far-reaching results.

THE FIRST INVASION

Mahmood knew how dangerous the Hindu Rajahs of Panjab could be. They could easily rally under the flag the whole might of India. The first thing Mahmood did was to strengthen his eastern frontier. Several forts near Khyber still belonged to the enemy. In 1000 Mahmood marched towards Khyber and conquered all these forts.

JAI PAL STRIKES FIRST

Jai Pal suffered two defeats at the hands of Mahmood's father, Sabuktagin. The death of Sabuktagin raised new hopes in the breast of Jai Pal. He thought to himself, "I rule a kingdom larger than Ghazni. My people are no less hardy than the troops of Ghazni. Mahmood is a raw young man. Sabuktagin proved too much for me but I can easily beat his son. That would wipe out the two defeats which I had suffered. Moreover the young king of Ghazni is not yet very secure on the throne. He is busy dealing with his enemies in Herat and Balkh. I must strike before it is too late. Fate has thrown a golden chance in my way. I must not miss it." With such thoughts in mind Jai Pal started preparing for war. He collected a huge army, crossed the Indus and marched into Mahmood's territory in 1001. The army consisted of twelve thousand horse-men, thirty thousand foot-men and three hundred elephants. Mahmood marched from Ghazni at the head of ten thousand horse-men. The two armies met near Peshawar. A terrible battle raged for a whole day. Thousands fell on both sides. But Hindu losses were far heavier. As the day was declining the outcome of the battle still hung in the balance. Mahmood decided to finish with it before the day was out. So he made an all-out attack. The suddenness of the blow staggered the Hindus. Their lines broke and a rout followed. Jai Pal, with fifteen of his sons and grandsons, were amongst the prisoners of war. The Hindus left a huge booty.

MAHMOOD'S LARGE HEARTEDNESS

The treacherous Hindu Raja was brought before the Sultan. He hung down his head in shame, as he stood before the young victor. "What treatment do you expect?" the Sultan asked in a gentle tone.

The wretch kept quiet but made a sign to his son, Anand Pal. The son took a few paces forward and kissing the ground said, "I pray that the life of my old father be spared. I promise to pay the Sultan two million pieces of gold and fifty elephants as reparation for the war."

Here was a war monger. Thrice he had plunged his country into war with a friendly neighbour. He was responsible for the death and sufferings of thousands of people. Several times he had given his word of honour and gone back on it. Now he was pleading for mercy. No punishment could be more severe for a war criminal like Jai Pal. Mahmood would have been justified if he had put to death this old wretch, his sons and grandsons. All of them were

prisoners of war. However with large heartedness that would put to shame any modern war crimes tribunal, he forgave Jai Pal, his sons and grandsons. He set them free. Only one of Jai Pal's sons were kept behind lest he should break his word again. From Peshawar Mahmood marched on to Ohind, the old city of Jai Pal, which was easily overtaken.

Jai Pal won his freedom but the weight of his sins weighed heavily on his heart. He found it impossible to face his people. Repeated defeats and humiliation had made life unbearable for him. There was a belief among the Hindus that a Raja who suffered defeats at the hands of alien people was unfit to live. Nothing but fire could cleanse him of his sins. So the miserable Jai Pal burnt himself to death. After his death, his son Anand Pal became the Raja of Lahore. Mahmood recognised him as the ruler of Punjab. He gave an undertaking to continue as an ally of the Sultan.

FALL OF BHERA

Bhera was known as Bhatia or Bhatnair in Mahmood's days. Bajai Rai, the Raja, had friendly relations with Mahmood's father, Sabuktigin. Mahmood hoped that these relations would continue during his reign. When Jai Pal forced a war upon the Sultan, the Sultan sought help from Bajai Rai. The Raja refused to help the Sultan. This was clear proof of his sympathy with the Sultan's enemies. So from 1003-1004 the Sultan attacked Bhera. The Raja fought bravely but he was defeated. He was so humbled by the defeat, he killed himself. The Sultan took possession of the fort.

Mahmood was on his way to Ghazni from Bhera when the ruler of Multan, Abul Fateh Daood, harassed his troops. Abul Fateh was a bitter enemy of the Caliph of Baghdad but Mahmood was the Caliph's supporter. So the leader of Multan took the opportunity to harm the Sultan. The Sultan needed to be back in Ghazni, so he kept Multan in mind as his next target.

THE HERETICAL RULER OF MULTAN

Since the rule of Muhammad Bin Qasim, Sind and Multan were ruled by Muslims. At first the whole of this territory formed one province of the Caliph's empire. It later became independent and split into two kingdoms. Mansurah was the capital of Sind and Multan was the capital of Lower Punjab. Both kingdoms were ruled by Arab dynasties. The ruler of Multan belonged to the heretical sect, the Qirmatis. The Qirmatis were a branch of the Ismaili

Shias. They did not believe in the last day, good or evil deeds had no meaning for them. They were bitter enemies of the Caliph of Baghdad. Multan being too far from Baghdad had become their biggest centre. Mahmood was a firm supporter of the Caliph, so the Qirmati ruler of Multan became the Sultan's enemy.

In the year 1005-1006, the Sultan left Ghazni to punish Abul Fateh. The heretic knew beforehand that the blow was coming, so he entered into a plot with Anand Pal. The two made common cause against the Sultan. They decided to help each other against the Mahmood.

The stream of the Indus was very wide near Multan and was very difficult to cross. The Sultan decided to cross it at the northerly point near Attock. From there he intended to march south through Anand Pal's territory. The Raja was bound by his word to allow the Sultan to cross, however he chose to follow in his father's footsteps. He turned down the Sultans request to cross his territory. Furthermore he led an army to Peshawar to block the Sultan's way. The Sultan saw that Anand Pal was an ally of Abul Fateh. So he felt compelled to deal with him first. Anand Pal was badly defeated and fled for his life. The Sultan sent a party to pursue him. He was chased up to Sohdera on the bank of the Chenab and from here he fled to Kashmir. The Sultan gave up the chase and continued to Multan.

Abul Fateh saw the end of his powerful ally. He did not come out to meet the Sultan. He shut himself up in the city and sent messengers to the Sultan, begging for mercy. He assured the Sultan that him and his people will give up their heretical beliefs and accept the principles of Islam. He also agreed to pay the Sultan twenty thousand gold pieces annually. The Sultan agreed to make peace and lifted the siege.

JAI PAL'S GRANDSON

One of Jai Pal's grandson's embraced Islam, his name was Sukh Pal. After becoming a Muslim he was known as Nawasa-i-Shah or the king's grandson. Mahmood trusted him and made him his deputy at Multan. When the Sultan was busy in far-off Kashgar, Sukh Pal thought of treachery. He captured Bhera and became a Hindu again. He declared himself a Raja. In 1006-1007, as soon as the Sultan was finished in Kashgar he marched against Sukh Pal. Sukh Pal was defeated, captured and imprisoned for the rest of his life.

THE HINDU CRUSADE

Anand Pal was alarmed at Mahmood's growing power. He warned the Rajas of, Ujjain, Gwalior, Kalinjar, Qannauj and Ajmer, about the growing threat of a Muslim invasion of Hindustan. He appealed to them and said, "Let us all unite and overcome the common enemy. If Mahmood is allowed to have his way he will overcome all of us but if we combine against the "unclean" Muslims and deal a blow to their power." Anand Pal's appeal had an effect. He also hired eloquent preachers. They went all over the country, inciting people to take part in their holy war. Hindu India got alarmed and determined to crush Mahmood. Women sent their sons and husbands to take part in the holy war.

They sold their ornaments, spun cotton-yarn and sold it to make a contribution. Never before had India been stirred to such depths. It seemed that Ghazni was going to be wiped off the face of the earth. Fighting men from all over India joined the troops under Anand Pal's flag. Anand Pal gave his son, Trilochan Pal the command of this huge army. In the winter of 1008, this mass of humanity started rolling towards Attock. The news reached Ghazni that a huge Hindu army was on its way.

At the end of December 1008, Mahmood left his capital and marched to meet the enemy. He crossed the Indus near Ohind. Anand Pal was sure of victory, so he made no attempt to block the Sultan's passage across the river. The Hindu plan was to spare no Muslim, after the Sultan's defeat.

The two armies met in the plane of Hazro. For forty days they lay facing each other. New Hindu hordes were pouring in daily. The Hindu host was swelling day by day. The Sultan saw the danger of a delay, so he got ready for a final showdown with the Hindu Shahi kingdom of Lahore. A deep trench was dug on the flanks of the army to avoid a surprise attack. At last the battle ensued.

Fierce fighting raged on when all of a sudden thirty thousand Khokars made a wild attack on the Muslims. Surging like the waves of the rough sea, they overleaped the trenches on the flanks and plunged themselves into the Sultan's army. They broke the lines and cut down four thousand Muslims. The day seemed almost lost. However the Sultan remained firm and composed. Dismounting from his horse he bowed himself on the ground and prayed for victory. Then remounting his horse, he led a spirited attack the restored heart to the faltering Muslim troops. The Sultan gathered his reserve troops and struck at the rear of the Hindu army. The blow staggered the enemy. Hindus

began to lose ground. Then an arrow struck Jai Pal's elephant. The beast grew unmanageable and fled with the rider. The disappearance of the Raja completed the Hindu rout. The Hindu hordes fled, leaving behind an immense booty.

This victory made Mahmood feared throughout India. He had smashed the combined might of India. The greatest Hindu crusade of history had failed!

FALL OF KANGRA (NAGARKOT)

The Raja of Kangra was a vassal of the Rajas of Lahore. His troops had often fought against the Sultan. Mahmood decided to strike at the fortress of Kangra. Situated in the mountains, the fortress stood on a hill-top. It was surrounded by several sacred temples. Many people came to these shrines from far and near and offered rich sacrifices at these temples. In 1009 Sultan Mahmood led his army to Kangra.

It was a difficult march through the hills and mountains. The Raja had never dreamt that an invader would disturb the mountain fastness of Nargakot. He did not think that Mahmood could lay his hand on him. Therefore he was taken by complete surprise. After a three day siege the fortress fell to the hands of the Sultan. The Sultan found hundreds of maunds of gold and silver inside the fortress. There were precious stones that weighed up to twenty maunds. All this treasure was taken to Ghazni.

The Sultan spared the lives of the people. He announced that Hindus could join his army. The response was satisfactory. Ten thousand Hindus enlisted in the Sultan's army from various parts of the country. The Sultan formed a separate Hindu battalion with a Hindu commander.

END OF THE QIRMATIS

Abul Fateh Daood of Multan had promised to give up his heretical beliefs when he was overpowered by the Sultan. That promise was not meant to be kept. Abul Fateh and his people continued to be heretics after the Sultan left Multan. The ruler of Multan thought the Sultan would never come back to the far-off Multan. However he was mistaken. Reports had reached the Sultan that Abul Fateh and his nobles persisted in their heretical beliefs and practises. This led to a second attack on Multan in the year 1010. Thousands of heretics were put to the sword and Abul Fateh was taken prisoner and spent the rest of his life as a captive. The Sultan appointed his own officers in Multan.

FALL OF THANESAR

In the year 1013 Anand Pal the Raja of Panjab died and he was succeeded by his son Trilochin Pal. The new Raja knew how dangerous it was to oppose the Sultan, so he undertook to remain loyal to Ghazni. There was a large Hindu temple in Thanesar. In this temple there was a huge idol named Chakra Swami. The Brahmans gave out that Chakra Swami was very angry with the “unclean” Muslims and was going to punish their Sultan. This raised new hopes in the hearts of Hindus. The temple of Thanesar became the centre of intrigues against the Sultan.

These reports reached Mahmood, who at once advanced to strike Thanesar. Trilochin Pal was asked to allow the Sultan to pass through his territory. The Raja agreed, however he offered the Sultan a huge amount of money if he left their sacred temple of Thanesar untouched. The Sultan rejected his offer.

When the Sultan reached the Sutlej, a Hindu Raja blocked his way. The Hindu army was defended by a mountain behind them and a row of elephants in front of them. The Sultan divided his army into two parts. Then he struck at the flanks of the Hindu army at one and the same time. The Hindu army was put to rout and the Sultan continued his march to Thanesar.

When the Raja of Thanesar heard of the Sultan’s approach, he fled. Mahmood entered the temple, with one blow of his mace, he smashed the idol Chakra Swami to pieces. These pieces were taken back to Ghazni and buried in the central square, to be trodden under the feet of people. The Sultan wanted to prove to the Hindus that their idol gods were powerless.

FALL OF NANDNA

Trilochan Pal’s capital was not Lahore but it was the city of Nandna, in the Salt Range. The city stood on the bank of Jhalm. The capital was moved to this place because it was the home of the warlike Khokhars. The Raja depended on these Khokhars for recruits to his army. Trilochan Pal himself was a very timid man. His son Bhim Pal was a daring young prince. He wanted to be independent of Ghazni. He was particularly upset about the destruction of his idol god Chakra Swami. So he defied the Sultan and declared himself independent. His father Trilochan Pal set off to Kashmir to raise an army for his son, Bhim Pal.

In the spring of 1014, the Sultan marched on Nandna and he laid siege to the city. Bhim Pal came out twice to face the Muslim army but he was driven back both times. At last the city fell to the Sultan. The Sultan then advanced to meet Trilochan Pal, who was coming from Kashmir with a large army. He was also beaten. The news of this victory spread to the neighbouring countries and their Rajas submitted to the Sultan. Many people embraced Islam. The Sultan appointed Muslims to teach the people the principles of Islam. Many Masaajid were built to accommodate these reverts.

THE GANGES VALLEY OVER-RUN

Mahmood had so far overrun the Indus Valley but the real stronghold of Hinduism was the valley of the Ganges. This valley was ruled by a number of powerful Rajas. These Rajas had been helping the Rajas of Lahore against Mahmood. The Sultan decided to overrun the rich valley of the Ganges and the way to this valley already lay wide open for him.

In 1018, the Sultan set off from Ghazni. Passing through the Panjab, he marched along the Himalayas. It was the month of December when he passed the Jumna. The Sultan's name struck terror in the hearts of the people. Many cities and forts fell without any serious fighting. The Raja of Blundshahr shut himself up in his fort. After a brief siege the fort fell. The Raja with his ten thousand followers, accepted Islam.

The Sultan advanced toward the stronghold of Mahaban, on the bank of the Jumna. The Raja of Mahaban Kal Chand, was greatly feared in the Ganges Valley. He had a large army, hundreds of elephants and many forts. The Raja advanced to meet the invader. Terrible fighting took place and no less than fifty thousand Hindu soldiers were killed in the battle. The Raja, realised he was losing the battle killed his wife and himself.

Mathra the birthplace of Sri Krishna, was the next target for the Sultan. The temples of this city were the most beautiful in India. The city was conquered without a fight. The Sultan made a round of the temples. He was amazed at the splendour of these buildings. Most of the idols were made of solid gold encrusted with precious stones. All the idols were broken. The Sultan left some of his troops in the city and he marched on to Qannauj.

Qannauj was the capital of the most powerful kingdom of Northern India. The city covered an area of several square miles and it was strongly defended. The

army of the Raja consisted of thirty thousand horses, eight thousand armoured warriors and a half a million foot soldiers. However the Raja fled before the Sultan arrived and after a day's siege the city fell. From Qannauj the Sultan marched back to Ghazni. On the way he laid siege to many forts and took them all. At last he was back in his capital, loaded with rich booty. Apart from the maunds of gold the booty included thousands of slaves.

As a mark of thankfulness to Allah, Mahmood ordered the building of a large Jame Masjid in Ghazni. Indian architects were set to work. The Masjid on completion was a model of beauty and workmanship. It soon came to be known as the "Bride of the Heaven." There was a big library attached to the Masjid, which contained thousands of selected books on different subjects in various languages. The Sultan's exploits had brought so much of wealth into Ghazni that the city was now overflowing with riches. The nobles followed the example of the Sultan and they also built Masjids and libraries. Soon Ghazni became a city of public buildings and beautiful gardens. It became one of the most beautiful cities in the east.

THE HINDU ALLIANCE

Rajya Pal, the Raja of Qannauj, had submitted to Mahmood without a fight. When the Sultan left Qannauj, his neighbour Raja Ganda of Kalinjar was angry and he accused Rajya Pal of being a coward. He demanded that Qannauj should throw off the yoke of the Sultan. To this Rajya Pal disagreed. This gave Raja Ganda an opportunity to incite hatred for Rajya Pal. He was described as a Muslim agent. Ganda prepared an alliance of the neighbouring Rajas and attached Qannauj. The raja of Gwalior was also one of the allies. Rajya Pal fought bravely but he was killed. His son Trilochan Pal, succeeded him as the Raja of Qannauj.

Ganda becomes very powerful. He stood for the Hindu course. The other Rajas regarded him as a hero, even the Raja Trilochan Pal of the Panjab sought his help to win his old kingdom back. Ganda promised to help him. A strong Hindu alliance was formed. The Rajas of Kalinjar, Gwalior, Qannauj and the Panjab joined the alliance, with Ganda as their leader. Reports of this Hindu alliance reached Mahmood.

In the autumn of 1019 he sets off from Ghazni. He marched through the Panjab and crossed the Ganges through Hardwar. The Raja Trilochan Pal was leading an army to join the allies. By forced marches the Sultan overtook this

army on the banks of the river Ganges. Trilochan Pal suffered a crushing defeat and fled to Kalinjar. The Sultan now advanced to meet Ganda.

The Hindu Raja had a huge army under his command. It consisted of thirty six thousand horse, forty six thousand footmen and more than six hundred elephants. Before the battle began the Sultan made an offer of peace to Ganda. “Agree to come under the protection of Ghazni or accept Islam.” The offer said. Ganda however rejected the offer.

It was afternoon when the Sultan stood on the top of a hillock and viewed the enemy troops. “What a huge mass of humanity.” He said to himself. He then bowed himself in prayer and sought Allah’s help. In the evening a party of the Sultan’s troops had a sharp encounter with the enemy. The enemy suffered heavily and fled. Night soon came on. In the morning the Hindu camp lay empty. In the darkness of the night, Ganda had disappeared into the nearby forests of Central India. He left behind a large booty. As it was not safe to chase Ganda through unknown jungles the Sultan made no attempt to pursue him and thus returned to Ghazni.

PANJAB ANNEXED

For three generations, the Hindu Shahi kingdom of Panjab had been a source of trouble to Ghazni. Its Rajas would suffer defeat after defeat, they were forgiven and then they would become active against the Muslims again. Even in the alliance of Ganda Trilochan Pal was an active member. The Sultan made up his mind to put an end to this source of trouble. He decided to make Panjab a province of his kingdom.

In the winter of 1021 at the age of fifty, the Sultan led an army into the Panjab. Trilochan Pal’s son, Bhim Pal, was now the Raja. He proudly called himself “the fearless” but the self-styled “fearless” one could not stand before the Sultan. He fled and took refuge with the Raja of Ajmer. With his death a few years later, the Hindu Shahi dynasty of the Panjab came to an end. After Bhim Pal’s defeat, the Sultan annexed the Panjab. He appointed a governor, who lived in Lahore. This new province of Ghazni extended from the Indus to the Sutlej. Several military bases were set up in the province, which proved very beneficial in the future campaigns of the Sultan.

FALL OF KALINJAR

The Raja Ganda of Kalinjar was still active against the Sultan. In 1022 the Sultan marched against him the second time. Gwalior lay on the Sultan's path, the Raja of Gwalior was an ally of Ganda. The Sultan laid siege to his fortress which was situated on a hill-top. The fortress was thought to be impregnable. The Sultan failed to overtake by storm. However fear overpowered the Raja and on the fourth day of the siege the Raja gave in.

The Sultan then marched on to Kalinjar. Ganda shut himself up in a fortress. This fortress was stronger than Gwalior. The Sultan laid siege to it and cut off all supplies. It was not long before Ganda sued for peace. He agreed to become the vassal of the Sultan. Ganda also sent some Hindi verses composed in praise of the Sultan. The Sultan accepted this offer of peace and lifted the siege. Ganda was treated with honour and kindness. Not only was he allowed to keep Kalinjar but he was also given fifteen more forts and a robe of honour.

The Ganges valley now lay completely overrun. Its biggest idol temples had been plundered and their idols were broken. Mahmood was happy at the thought that he exposed the helplessness of the idols. With this satisfaction Mahmood marched back to Ghazni in the spring of 1023.

THE FINAL BLOW OF IDOLATRY

VAIN BOASTS

For centuries the Hindu masses had looked upon their idols as all powerful. Their gods seemed to rule the destiny of men. People turned to them for all good things in life. The displeasure of these idols was the most dreaded thing for them. For the first time, Mahmood gave a rude shock to this belief of theirs. He smashed the idol-gods of countrywide fame but no harm came to him. If anything it made him more and more powerful. He marched from victory to victory.

It was a strange lesson Mahmood was teaching the Hindu masses. They did not like this lesson but the truth was too clear to be missed. The Hindu masses were set thinking that perhaps Islam was right after all. They thought about the idols, that it could do no harm nor can it do any good.

The Brahmans had to stamp out these doubts from the Hindus. They invented strange stories to explain the helplessness of their gods. One of these stories

was concocted by the Brahmans of Somnat. This area was protected on three sides by the sea and on the fourth side by an impassable desert. The temple of Somnat had remained untouched by Mahmood. The Brahmans thus declared and boasted, "Somnat is the supreme of all gods! Other gods got into trouble because Somnat was angry with them. The "unclean" invader dares not raise a finger on Somnat. If he does Somnat knows how to deal with him." These proclamations reached Mahmood. "What a pity!" He exclaimed. "The cunning Brahmans do not stop befooling Hindus. Look at the silly story they have invented but the simple-minded Hindu masses are sure to believe them. This bubble must be pricked. The vain boasting of the Brahmans must be exposed, no matter how great the cost."

Soon after it was announced throughout the kingdom that the Sultan was getting ready for a great crusade against the idolaters. Thousands of volunteers marched to the capital from, Turkistan, Khorasan and Afghanistan. In the middle of October 1025, Mahmood left Ghazni with thirty thousand volunteers in addition to his regular troops. After a month of marching he reached Multan.

MARCH ON SOMNAT

The Sultan camped in Multan. Careful preparations began for the trying journey that lay ahead. Between Multan and Somnat lay the waterless wilderness of Rajputana. The crossing of this desert had in the past been regarded as a hopeless task. The Sultan was determined that nothing was going to stand in his way. He was to be fully prepared to face any emergency, nothing was going to be left to chance.

Each soldier and volunteer was instructed to carry water and food to last several weeks. In addition to this, thirty thousand camels were laden with provisions and water. Thus equipped the Sultan began his historic march across the desert of Rajputana. He marched along the hills of Jessalmir, the Sultan advanced in a south-westerly direction. A month's journey brought him to Anhalwara, the modern day Patan. Bhim Dev the Raja of Anhalwara, fled at the approach of the Sultan, leaving the city to its fate. The Sultan rested his army here for a few days, he took fresh supplies of food and water and marched on, he now moved to the south.

He reached Mandher, a Hindu army of twenty thousand blocked the Sultan's way. The Sultan put the army to rout. As the Muslim army drew closer to

Somnat, the cities and forts along the way gave up opposition. They were sure that their idol Somnat alone was enough to deal with the invaders. A thick mist happened to hide the sun, the Hindus were sure that this was a sign that Somnat was angry with the invaders. They were sure that Mahmood and his army were walking into a death trap.

On the 6 January 1026, the Sultan stood before Somnat at last. He saw that the city was very well fortified. The inhabitants of the city jeered at the Muslims, “Surely our god has drawn you hither to kill you all. You have insulted other gods, so Somnat has made you walk into the jaws of death. Surely your doom has come. Nothing can save you from it, get ready for it as best you can.”

The fort of Somnat had a strong garrison to defend it. Urgent calls were sent to Hindu Rajas to hasten to the defence of their chief god. The Sultan knew that a delay would prove very dangerous. So he ordered his men to lay siege to the city at once.

THE BATTLE

The Sultan’s men advanced towards the walls and stood under it. The walls were lined by jeering crowds. “Glory be to Somnat.” They howled. “That he has made you walk into the trap of death.” Showers of arrows were sent up by the Sultan’s army, forcing down the jeering crowds of shaven Brahmans. In a short while joyous shouts gave way to confusion. Hundreds of Hindus rushed to the temple. They fell on their faces before their idol, weeping and praying for help. The garrison got ready to beat back the Muslim army. The Muslim soldiers managed to climb the walls with ladders. Fighting continued the whole day until the gathering of darkness halted the fight.

The fight continued early the next morning. Up went ladders against the wall and the Sultan’s men jumped into the city. They were met by volleys of arrows and spears but this did not deter them. They kept streaming into the city. The defending garrison divided themselves into several divisions. They took turns to fall upon the invaders and fought desperately. Meanwhile weeping and praying continued in the temple. The priests and the people begged the idol to help them against the votaries. The garrison was feeling hard pressed when the darkness of the night forced the Muslim army to retire.

By the morning of the third day, reinforcements for Somnat arrived. The Sultan saw that a huge Hindu army was going to fall on him from behind. He

ordered his troops to continue the siege. With the greater part of the army he advanced to meet the Hindu hosts on his back. A grim battle began. The Hindus fought with wild courage. The battlefield was wet with blood. As the day wore on, the outlook became gloomier. Fresh Hindu reinforcements were constantly pouring in. For a while the Muslims staggered under the blows of the enemy. The situation became grave. The Hindu army was swelling every hour. The garrison inside the city could till strike. If the Muslims had to win they had to win this battle immediately or they would perish to one man.

The Sultan retired to a corner of the battlefield. He jumped off his horse and threw himself in earnest prayer. He wept and prayed to Allah for a victory against the host of idolaters. He remounted his horse and led a violent attack. The Hindus failed to withstand it. Their lines broke and they fell, pell-mell, right and left. A general fight followed. Thousands were put to the sword. Many Hindus tried to escape by sea. The Sultan had foreseen this and posted some troops on the coast. So hundreds of Hindus got drowned in the sea.

SOMNAT SMASHED

The Muslims victory proved to the Hindu priests that Mahmood was more powerful than their mighty god. So they opened the gates of the city. The Sultan walked straight into the temple. "Let me see your god?" He ordered the chief priest. Through a maze of halls the victor was led into an inner hall, resting on fifty six pillars, it was so sheltered on all sides that sunlight could not come in. The dim light of candles, reflected through precious stones, it produced a perpetual, uncanny twilight in the hall. In the middle of the hall stood the nine-foot high "Ling Mahadev" hewn from solid rock.

The sight of the ugly "Ling" filled the Sultan with contempt. With one thrust of his spear, he chopped off its nose. He exclaimed! "So you are the hateful thing that had received the homage of millions for generations!" He then raised his mace to smash the idol. Seeing this the Brahmans begged Mahmood to spare their god. "We promise to pay you any amount in gold and precious stones, if you spare Somnat." They begged weeping. To this the Sultan retorted angrily, "I am not an idol-seller, I am an idol-breaker." Saying this he dealt such a blow with his mace that "Ling Mahadev" broke into pieces. Some of these pieces were sent to Ghazni to be buried under the steps of the Jamea Masjid to be trodden under the feet of Muslims. Some of the pieces were sent to Makkah and Madina and were buried there in a like manner.

THE GLORY THAT WAS SOMNAT

Somnat was the chief god of the Hindus. They believed that the souls of men after death went to Somnat. They thought that he resent the souls to the world in any shape he liked. The temple of Somant stood on the shores of Kathiawar, at the mouth of the Saraswati. The waves of the sea constantly struck at the walls of the temple. Hindus believed that the sea constantly danced and worshipped Somnat. They believed that all the other gods were the servants of Somnat. They believed he could at will, do and undo anything.

People from all over India brought offerings to Somnat. Hindu Rajas endowed ten thousand villages for the upkeep of the temple. One thousand priests were busy, day and night worshipping the idol. The Ganges River was a distance of six hundred miles but water was brought daily from the holy Ganges to wash the idol-god Somnat. A basket of beautiful flowers was sent daily from far-off Kashmir. A chain of solid gold weighing two hundred maunds, hung in the central hall. Golden bells hung with the chain. When the chain was pulled the bells would ring. This was a signal for one party of one thousand priests to leave and the next party to come in. Five hundred singing girls and two hundred musicians constantly sang the praises of Somnat. Many Rajas gave their daughters for service to the temple. There were three hundred barbers to shave the heads and beards of the pilgrims. At the time of a solar or lunar eclipse, millions of people thronged to Somnat.

Such was the glory of Somnat which Sultan Mahmood destroyed with one blow of his mace.

RICH BOOTY

The booty which fell into Mahmood's hands from Somnat surpasses description. For generations, gold, silver and precious stones poured into the temple. There was no Raja in India who had a tenth of the riches that belonged to the supreme idol-god. All these riches were now Mahmood's. The Sultan was determined to leave no trace of Somnat. He feared that the Brahmans would make another idol after he was gone. So he ordered that temple be razed to the ground.

STAY IN KATHIAWAR

After the fall of Somnat, Mahmood was determined to deal with the Raja of Anhalwara. It was he who rushed thousands of troops to the defence of

Somnat and made the Sultan's situation critical. So he marched on to Anhalwara. When the Raja heard of the Sultan's advance he fled to the island of Khanda, which is forty miles from Somnat. The Sultan appeared before this sea-locked fortress but the Raja had fled leaving behind a large booty. The Sultan returned to Anhalwara. He liked the climate of the place so he made up his mind to stay on in Gujerat. He even proposed to make Anhalwara his capital and to leave Ghazni to his son Masood. The nobles however, did not like the idea. They said, "We laid our lives for Khorasan, it is not wise to make this far-off town the capital, we yearn to be back in fair Ghazni." Thus Mahmood was forced to drop his plan and after a few months of stay in Gujerat, he set off for Ghazni.

THE HOMEWARD JOURNEY

The Rajas of Rajputana felt greatly humbled at the destruction of Somnat. They were determined to attack the Sultan during his homeward march. The Raja of Abu gathered a huge army. The Sultan came to know of the enemy designs. So he decided to march back to Sind, instead of Rajputana. He was loaded with booty and it was unwise to cross swords with the enemy. Thus the homeward march began.

The desert of Sind was unknown to the Sultan's men. A priest from Somnat was taken as a guide but he proved to be treacherous. He misled the army for a whole day and night into a waterless wilderness. There was not a drop of water in sight for miles. Soon it became clear that the guide was playing tricks. The Sultan arrested him and cross-examined him. He said, "I am a votary of Somnat and I want all of you to perish of thirst. I have done my duty to my god. Now you can do as you wish." The treacherous priest was at once put to the sword. The Sultan was however in a fix, he had no way of leading the army out of this death-trap.

Night came and the men lay down to rest their tired limbs. However there was no rest for the Sultan. He came out of his tent and started pacing to and fro, with his eyes fixed to the sky. Alas! He bowed himself on the ground in earnest prayer to Allah. He wept and prayed for a long time and begged the Almighty to rescue the Muslims. Then he stood up and looked around. Lo! In the distance there was a streak of light on the northern horizon. At once the army was ordered to march in the direction of the light. The march continued for the rest of the night. In the morning the Muslims found themselves on the

banks of a stream of water. Following the course of the stream the army found themselves on the banks of the mighty Indus.

From here the army continued a northward march along the Indus. The Jats of Sind however harassed the Muslim army. They shot volleys of arrows at them from their boats in the river. In the spring of 1026 the Sultan reached Ghazni. The campaign of Somnat, earned the Sultan an immortal fame. It made him a wonder of his age. His exploits of this campaign eclipsed the exploits of Alexander and other generals of history. The Caliph bestowed fresh titles on Mahmood. At the age of 55 he became an unquestioned hero of the world of Islam.

THE LAST CAMPAIGN

The Sultan had been harassed by the Jats during his journey through Sind. A year after his return from Somnat he marched off to punish them. The Jats thought they were beyond the reach of the Sultan. No army however powerful could overpower the light boats of the Jats that darted across the Indus. The Sultan proved more than a match for them.

Reaching Multan he prepared a fleet of one thousand boats. Each boat had iron spikes in front and on the flanks. In each boat sat twenty archers, with supplies of kerosene oil. The order was to shower burning arrows at the Jats. The Jats prepared a fleet of four thousand boats to meet the Sultan. They left their families in the safety of the Indus Islands. A terrible battle ensued in the waters of the mighty Indus. The Jats fought desperately but were no match to the volleys of burning arrows. They were utterly routed. Many were killed and many more drowned in the mighty river. The Sultan returned to Ghazni in July 1027.

MAHMOOD'S END

AFFAIRS OF CENTRAL ASIA

The last years of Mahmood's life was taken up by the affairs of central Asia. The Saljuq Turks were getting more and more powerful. The Sultan's generals were having difficulty dealing with them. They requested that the Sultan takes personal command in the operations against them. He therefore led an army against the Saljuqs and put them to rout.

In the meantime the Delmi kingdom of Rayy came to an end and became part of the Sultan's kingdom. However under Delmi rule, Rayy became a centre for Qirmati heretics. The Sultan disliked the Qirmati heretics. So he was very hard on these heretics of Rayy. He killed them by the hundreds. After restoring order in Isfahan and Rayy, the Sultan handed the government of these territories to his son Masood. The strain of these campaigns took their toll on the Sultan. He therefore retired to Balkh for a little rest.

ILLNESS AND DEATH

Mahmood contracted malaria in the summer of 1027, while he was fighting the Jats on the Indus. The malady became chronic and developed into tuberculosis. The disease ate into the body of the Sultan but he continued with his duties. His physicians advised him to rest but the Sultan would not rest. He insisted on fighting against the Saljuqs and the heretics of Rayy.

When the Sultan was in Ghazni he used to hold his court twice a day. Once a year the Sultan made a tour of his kingdom. He insisted on continuing this routine throughout his illness. The wasting disease gradually reduced the Sultan to a mere skeleton. However he would not accept defeat at its hands. He refused to be down in bed. He would sit whilst leaning against pillows and conduct his daily routine. Up to the door of his death Mahmood was the same hero of a hundred battles.

In the summer of 1029, the Sultan went to Khorasan. The change of climate did not agree with him. The following winter he spent in Balkh, here he seemed to improve a little but the disease was on the increase all the time. The Sultan returned to Ghazni in the spring of 1030. Each day his condition grew worse. On the 30 April 1030, he passed away quietly at the age of 59. He was buried in his favourite garden, the Firozi Garden. His tomb still stands about a mile from Ghazni.

After nine centuries the buildings have been damaged. The doors were removed by the British viceroy to India, lord Ellanborough. It was done mistakenly because he thought the doors originally belonged to the temple of Somnat.

MAHMOOD AS A MAN

Mahmood was a middle sized man of sturdy build. He was a loving father and a kind brother. Although stern in war, he was always kind to the fallen foe. He

never refused a request of mercy. His enemies sometimes took undue advantage of this tendency. The Rajas of Lahore in particular, were forgiven a number of times, only to fall back on their word and restart their activities against the Sultan. With all these experiences the Sultan was always ready to embrace the defeated army on condition they remained friendly in future.

Mahmood was Allah fearing. He often made rounds of the streets of the capital to check if the people were happy. On one of these rounds, he saw a poor boy, book in hand, sitting at the door of a house. Every few minutes the boy would run to the neighbouring grocer's shop and had a look at the book in the light of the lamp. He would come back to his seat and learn what he read. The Sultan felt very touched by this scene. He immediately gave the boy his golden lamp which his servant carried for him.

The same night he saw Nabi ﷺ in a dream. He said to the Sultan, "O' son of Sabuktagan! Allah will give you honour in both this world and the hereafter. This is the reward for showing kindness to the seeker of knowledge."

Mahmood was extremely kind to his brothers he gave them high ranks in his government. He was very kind to his sons and brought them up with great care. He was kind and courteous to his nobles. Rank in his court depended on ability alone.

FEAR OF ALLAH

The most outstanding quality of the Sultan's character was his fear of Allah. He had an unshakeable faith in Allah, the Almighty. Whenever he found himself in difficulty, he always turned to Allah for guidance and help. The Sultan had a great regard for Muslim saints. He had respect for people who feared Allah. Of all the saints Mahmood had the greatest regard for Sheikh Abul Hasan Khirqani (R.A). The Sheikh lived at Khirqan, in Khorasan. Once while he was on a state visit to Khorasan, some of his provincial officers spoke very highly of the Sheikh and advised the Sultan to visit him. The Sultan replied, "I have come on state business. It would be an act of disrespect if I call on the Sheikh now. I will come another time especially to meet the Sheikh."

After some time the Sultan left Ghazni to meet the Sheikh. On reaching Khirqan, he sent for the Sheikh saying, "The Sultan has come especially from Ghazni merely to see you. It would be very kind of you if you could call on his

camp.” To this the Sheikh replied, “I have no time to meet with kings.” The royal messenger then said to the Sheikh, “But the Quran says.

O’ believers! Obey Allah and His Nabi ﷺ and those from among you whom have been raised in authority.”

The Sultan instructed his messenger to give this argument if the Sheikh refused to come see him. On hearing the verse of the Quran the Sheikh replied,

“Go tell the Sultan to excuse me, I am so taken up by the thoughts of Allah that I am ashamed to neglect “Obey the Nabi” how can I follow, “obey the Sovereign?”

When the Sultan heard the Sheikh’s reply he exclaimed, “Here is a truly Allah-fearing man, I must go to him!” so the Sultan called on the Sheikh. He sat before him with great respect and begged for spiritual guidance.

The Sheikh advised him,

“Do four things,

- 1. Always fear Allah,*
- 2. Perform you five Salaah with Jamaah,*
- 3. Spend for the cause of Allah,*
- 4. Be kind to the people.”*

The Sultan never forgot this advice. With all his love for Islam, the Sultan was tolerant of all religions. He never forced Islam on anybody. He did his utmost to prove to the Hindus, the helplessness of their idols but beyond that he did nothing. He had regular Hindu division in his army, with Hindu officers. In Ghazni there was a Hindu quarter. The Hindus had full freedom of worship. The Sultan was also tolerant of the different sects of Islam. However he did not tolerate the Qirmati heretics. That was because they violated ordinary moral code in the name of religion.

Throughout the kingdom the Sultan appointed censors on public morals. These officers ensured that people were honest in their dealings and observed the common moral code. Mahmood was very hard on people who had no moral scruples.

THE SULTAN'S JUSTICE

Mahmood dealt out justice with an even hand. His justice made no distinction between a prince or a commoner. The Sultan's eldest son, Masood, once owed some money to a merchant of Ghazni. He delayed the payment, the merchant feared that he was going to lose his money, took the matter to the Qazi of Ghazni. The prince immediately paid the merchant in full because he knew full well that if the matter reached the Sultan, then things would go very hard for him.

A high military officer once did something against Islamic Law. He was arrested and whipped publicly. Some robbers looted a caravan in a far off part of the kingdom. An old woman came to complain to the Sultan that her son was looted and killed by the dacoits. She demanded justice from the Sultan. The Sultan said, "Old woman! How can I maintain law and order in such a far off part of the kingdom?" She replied, "If you cannot do that, then why do keep the province under your rule?" The Sultan saw the old woman's point. He at once gave her enough money to cover her loss and then he personally visited the place and dealt with the culprits.

MAHMOOD AS A SOLDIER

Mahmood is known as one of the greatest generals of history. He led armies for forty years but did not get defeated once. He was younger than thirty, when he became a king. His rare ability, however soon made him the wonder of his age. He overran vast tracts, from the Ganges Valley to the Caspian Sea and from Samarqand to Rayy. There was no power or combination of powers that could halt his victorious marches. His military exploits came to sound stranger than the stories of "Arabian Nights."

Mahmood's victories were not the result of happy accidents. He planned and worked hard for them. His rare military genius and wonderful daring were at the root of all his successes. No detail of a campaign escaped Mahmood's notice. He was brave and fearless. No difficulty was too great for him. He never allowed an unforeseen situation to overwhelm him. Whenever he found his men faltering, he put a new heart into them by his own example. Mahmood knew no fatigue. By forced marches he rushed from one country to another and surprised the enemy. As soon as he had carefully thought out a plan, he wasted no time in carrying it through.

In short Sultan Mahmood had all the qualities of a great soldier. It was after centuries that a soldier of this calibre was born into Islam.

A GREAT PATRON OF LETTERS

With all his military exploits, Mahmood was a great patron of letters. He tried to assemble in his court, the best poets and scholars of age. Amongst them was the famous poet, Firdausi, the author of Shahnama. Amongst the scholars was Abu Rehan Alberuni. He lived in India for several years. He studied the customs and practises of the Hindus. He described them in his world famous book, "Kitaabul Hind." No other book describes the Hindu society of that time more aptly and with great detail.

The Sultan was also a scholar and a poet. The Sultan kept a diary of his campaigns. This diary has unfortunately not been made available to the author. The Sultan was also fond of beautiful buildings. He did not forget the works of public utility. One of the canals constructed by him is serving the people to this day.

In short Mahmood was a man of broad culture. He was a patron of the arts of war and peace alike. The beautiful city of Ghazni, with its gardens, fine buildings, libraries and schools, furnished the best testimony of the Sultan's refined taste.

SPREAD OF ISLAM

Sultan Mahmood is the first Muslim ruler who carried the banner of Islam to the heart of India. However he was not a teacher himself but several Muslim teachers followed his flag. The most notable of them was Sheikh Ali Hajveri, known as Data Ganj Baksh. He came to Lahore from Ghazni. Here he silently carried on his work as a teacher. He wrote several books on the teachings of Islam. He passed away in the year 1072 and he is buried in Lahore. Among some frontier tribes and some tribes of the Panjab, the Sultan himself sent out teachers to spread Islam.

APPENDIX

THE STORY OF SULTAN MAHMOOD GHAZNI (RAHMATULLAH ALAIHE)

extract from Ma'Arif-e-Mathnavi

One night Sultan Mahmood went walking among his subjects after taking off his royal clothes and putting on ordinary clothes. He came upon a group of thieves who were consulting amongst themselves. On seeing him, they asked him, "Who are you?" The king (Sultan) replied: "I am also one like yourselves". They understood that to mean that he was also a thief like themselves and allowed him to join their company. They, then, continued the conversation amongst themselves. It was decided that each one of them would explain his specialty/skill that he possessed so that at the time of need, a task could be put before accordingly.

One of the thieves said: "Friends, I have a special gift in my ears, that whenever a dog barks, I fully understand what he says."

The second one said: "I have a special gift in my eyes, that whatever I see in the darkness of night, I am able to recognize it in the light of day."

The third one said: "I have this specialty in my arms that through the strength that lies in my arms, I can make a hole in the strongest wall, to enter a house."

The fourth one said: "I have a special gift in my nose that by smelling the sand on the ground I am able to ascertain whether there is any treasure buried underneath it or not." It is just like in the case of Majnoon, who without being told, merely by smelling the ground, got to know where Layla was buried.

The fifth one said: "I have such strength in my hands that no matter how high a building is, I can climb along its walls with my rope ladder and easily enter into it."

Thereafter they all asked the king, "O Man, what special gift do you possess which we can make use of in our thieving activities?" The king replied, "I have this specialty in my beard that when criminals are handed over to their executioner, I merely shake my beard and they are immediately set free".

In other words, if as a show of mercy I shake my beard, the criminals found guilty of murder, are set free. On hearing this, the thieves said: "O you are our leader, on the day of difficulty; you will be our only means of salvation."

In other words, if we are arrested, then through your blessings we will be saved. Now we do not have to fear, because the rest of us had the special gifts that would help us in our thieving exploits, but none of us had the means of granting safety from punishment. This specialty lies only with you. Now we need not have any fear of punishment. Now we can get on with our work.

They all went in the direction of the palace of Shah Mahmood with the king in their midst. Along the way, a dog barked and the one who understood the dog's language translated: "The king is also in your midst". Although they heard it, no one paid any attention to this information, as their greed was uppermost in their minds. One of them smelled the ground and explained that this is the Royal Palace. There is a treasure in this place. The other one threw a rope ladder against the wall. The other one made a hole in the wall and they all entered to rob. Afterwards, they divided the loot amongst themselves and hastily each one of them went to hide his share of the spoils.

The king noted each one's description and found out where each of them resided. He left them and secretly re-entered the Royal Palace. The following day the king related the entire story to his courtiers. Thereafter he sent the policemen to arrest them and to inform them of their death sentence. When they were brought before the court with hands bound together, they were all trembling in fear before the king's throne. However, the thief who had this special gift of recognizing anybody during the day whom he had seen during the darkness, was quite at ease.

In him, together with the signs of fear there were also signs of hope. In other words, although he was struck by awe while standing before the king and although fearing the king's wrath and revenge, he also had the hope, that the king would be true to his word, that when in mercy he shakes his beard, criminals will be set free. Furthermore, he also had the hope of setting free all his companions because the king will surely not turn away from all those whom he knew and recognized. This person's face was changing from yellow to red, as within himself the feelings of fear and hope alternated.

Sultan Mahmood, in kingly dignity, passed judgment that they all should be handed over to the executioner to be hung on the gallows. As the king himself was witness to their crime, there was no need for any other witnesses. As soon as the king announced his judgment, this person appealed in great humility: "Sir, with your permission, may I say something?" The king permitted him to speak and he said, "O Master, each one of us had exhibited his special gift which helped in this crime. Now, it is time that the kingly specialty should be exhibited according to the promise. I have all the while recognized you.

Remember you promised that in your beard there is this specialty, that if you cause it to move in mercy, the criminal will be saved from punishment. Hence, O king, shake your beard, so that through the blessings of your grace, all of us may be saved from punishment.

Our specialties have brought us to the gallows. Now it is only your special gift that is left which can save us from being punished. Now is the time for the exhibition of your specialty. Kindly shake your beard. Because of fear, our lives have reached right up to our mouths. Please save us by the special gift that lies in your beard. "

Sultan Mahmood smiled at the plea and became filled with mercy and grace as he heard this pitiful admission of guilt. He said, "Each one of you have exhibited his special quality to such an extent that it has brought you to the brim of destruction, except in the case of this one. He recognized me as the Sultan. He saw me in the darkness of the night and recognized me as the Sultan. Hence, for his having recognized me, I set all of you free. I feel ashamed at those eyes which recognized me not to shake my beard and thereby exhibit my special quality".

Lesson

1. When a person is committing a sin, the True King of kings is with him, and is fully aware of all that he does "And He is with you wherever you are." (Qur'an)

When a person commits any disobedience to Allah Ta'ala, he is actually committing treachery against Him. Anyone who fails in his duty to Allah Ta'ala or in the rights that are due to men is like a thief committing theft of Allah Ta'ala's treasures. For this reason, one should always bear in mind that the Master is the witness, watching all time, and is aware of all that we do. If

we commit any disobedience or inequity, it means that in His very presence, His treasury is being looted and robbed.

Think for a moment! Whom are you robbing? That King and Master tells you "I am watching what you do. I am with you. My laws have been revealed to you. Today you are breaking that law. Today, in this world I will hide your fault, hoping that perhaps you will come upon the right path. But if you do not come to your senses, then tomorrow on the Day of Judgment when you will be brought before Me, with hands bound together, then who will be able to save you from My anger and revenge?"

2. Allah Ta'ala will punish sinners in the Hereafter, although, He may overlook them in this world. We see that at the time the thieves were looting the Royal treasury, the Sultan witnessed the entire incident. He was with them and allowed them to proceed without punishing them. However, in the end, he had them arrested. If, at all times, this thought is uppermost in our minds that Allah Ta'ala sees all our deeds, then, there will surely be fear in the heart when committing sins.

On the Day of Judgment, no special quality will be of any benefit. All those deeds which contravene the laws of Allah Ta'ala will on the Day of Judgment be bound around man's neck; even though, in this world, they were considered as special qualities. The thieves mentioned those special gifts and qualities as if they were qualities of virtue, but in reality, those very qualities were the cause of their destruction: "Each one of them exhibited their special quality, But all their qualities only caused their misfortune to increase".

3. Any special quality that does not bring a person closer to his Creator, does not connect the heart with Allah Ta'ala, and which is not a medium towards the remembrance of Allah Ta'ala is no quality of virtue. In fact, it is a curse and a misfortune. All the powers and attributes of man that are used in rebellion against Allah Ta'ala and towards disobedience and negligence, will one day cause him to be brought before Allah Ta'ala as a criminal. All those nations that have made great progress and through scientific inventions have made this world subservient to them, but turn away from Allah Ta'ala, passing their lives in disobedience, will realize on the Day of Judgment, whether that specialty of scientific progress had been the cause of receiving Allah Ta'ala's grace or His anger. "Blessed be to you the subjugation of the sun and moon, But if there is no light in the heart there is no light anywhere"

4. No special quality will be of benefit except that which allows one to recognize Allah Ta'ala. Just like the person who having seen the Sultan, recognized him and through this special quality, he not only saved himself but was also able to intercede on behalf of his companions. As for his other companions, their special quality became a means of their destruction. "Only the sight of the fortunate one was of any use who recognized the Sultan during the darkness of night."

The lesson derived is that this world is like a place of darkness. In the darkness of this world, every servant of Allah Ta'ala who follows the Divine Laws of Shari'at and through its blessings recognizes Allah Ta'ala, will be provided with salvation against the punishment of hell-fire on the Day of Judgment.

This recognition will also be a means towards intercession on behalf of other criminals from among the sinners of the people of faith. However, there should not be any pride and over confidence in this recognition. In fact, one should alternate between fear and hope and in utmost humility beg for this intercession. Then Allah Ta'ala will accept this intercession from whomsoever He wishes according to His Mercy. For those whom He will not accept this intercession, He will in perfect justice exhibit His overwhelming vengeance.

Hence, fortunate indeed is the person who, in this world, created within himself the knowledge of recognizing Allah Ta'ala. The Aarifeen (those who have recognized Allah Ta'ala) who through their spiritual efforts and exercises recognize Allah Ta'ala with their souls, will tomorrow on the Day of Judgment see Allah Ta'ala and attain salvation. Furthermore, their intercession on behalf of other sinners will also be accepted.

However, the disbelievers and criminals will through their special qualities be admitted into hell-fire. On that Day these poor starving ones (pious ones) with pale faces, patched and coarse clothing, who today are being ridiculed and jeered at, will feast their eyes upon the countenance of Allah Ta'ala. On that Day, the criminals will envy them: "Would that we had lived like them in the world and acquired their qualities. Would that we had recognized Allah Ta'ala properly!"

5. This story also illustrates the high position these righteous and saintly ones have as far as their humanity is concerned. What a pity it is that nations and people, just like those thieves, spend their short span of worldly lives looking

upon means of delight and comfort as special gifts of accomplishment, and look upon material progress as being actual progress. Whereas on the other hand, they have adopted uncouth habits like urinating while standing and cleansing themselves with toilet paper after defecating. They also consider it normal to take a bath sitting in a tub and allow the water, which has become dirtied through being in contact with the anus to be drawn into their mouth and nose. They consider these actions as the norms of society. Can such people ever be considered cultured and progressive? What a pity! The beloved Islamic norms are being cast aside and such despicable ways are being adopted.

Dua'a

"O Allah Ta'ala, let just rulers be appointed to rule over us, who will introduce Thy Laws, and punish those who neglect salaah, consume alcohol, gamble, commit adultery, steal, etc. Let them punish those women who refuse to observe the rules of pardah. Let him order the closure of cinema houses, prostitution quarters and liquor houses". Ameen.

THE STORY OF SULTAN MAHMOOD AND AYAAZ

extract from Ma'Arif-e-Mathnavi

One day Sultan Mahmood called together the officials of his government with the aim of testing their intelligence. He took out a pearl from his treasury and first of all handed it to the Chief Minister and questioned him: "What is the value of this pearl? How much can it be sold for?" The Wazir replied, "Sir, this pearl is of great value. It is more valuable than two hundred donkeys laden with gold". The king then ordered: "I command you to crush this pearl." The Wazir replied: "I will not destroy this valuable pearl. I have the welfare of your treasury at heart and to crush this valuable gem would amount to disrespect on my part".

The king applauded this reply and rewarded him with a royal robe of honour. The king then took the pearl from the Wazir and handed it to another of his court officials and asked him to determine what the value of the pearl was. He replied, "Sir, this precious pearl is more valuable than half of your kingdom. May Allah Ta'ala protect this pearl." The king commanded him similarly; to crush the pearl. He replied, "Sir, my hands cannot move to destroy this valuable pearl. To destroy this pearl would amount to enmity towards your

treasury". The king praised him profusely for his reply and rewarded him as well.

In this manner, one by one the king called sixty-five officials from his government and each one of them followed the example set by the Chief Minister. The king praised each one of them and rewarded them with a royal robe of honour.

After testing all the other officials, the king now turned to Ayaaz, handed him the pearl and said: "O Ayaaz, every one of my officials have seen this pearl. You also have a look at its radiant light and then tell me, what is its value?" Ayaaz replied, "Sir, whatever value I am going to mention, this pearl will be worth much more than that". The king ordered, "Quickly, crush this valuable gem into pieces". Ayaaz knew the king's temperament and immediately realized that the king was putting him to a test. He broke the valuable pearl into small pieces and did not pay any attention towards receiving any royal robe as a reward.

As soon as he broke the pearl into pieces, all the officials created a great commotion. The Minister of the State uttered, "By Allah! This man is a disbeliever, an ungrateful one, showing no regard for a valuable gem belonging to you." Ayaaz replied, "Respected brothers! Which is more valuable, the command of the king or this pearl? O people, in your sight the pearl is more valuable than the king's command. I could not dismiss and, like a Mushrik, turn towards the pearl. To remove my sight from the king and turn towards the pearl is equivalent to shirk in the love and obedience towards the king."

Ayaaz said: "Respected Sirs, is the command of the king more valuable or the pearl? I shall not move my sight from the king and I will not turn my sight to the pearl like a Mushrik. O You unworthy ones! The actual pearl was the king's command. All of you broke the pearl of the king's command." When Ayaaz explained this secret to all the Ministers who were jealous of Ayaaz's nearness to the king became humiliated and disgraced by his understanding.

Lesson

In this story, we learn that the "command comes before respect". It means that when the king gave a command, the correct line of action was to obey

that command. Ayaaz had personal love for Sultan Mahmood whereas the Ministers and courtiers had love for their own positions, ranks and wealth.

The understanding and rational reasoning which Ayaaz displayed was an outflow of his love for Sultan Mahmood. Love itself teaches one the etiquettes of love. This true understanding and knowledge is not derived through the intellect, it is created out of love.

Note that Shaytaan himself was a rational being and not a being filled with love. For this reason, he objected to the command of Allah Ta'ala, the Ruler of all rulers, whereas it would have been only proper that when an order came from Allah Ta'ala, it should have been immediately implemented. The result of his action was that he was banished from the Court of Allah Ta'ala.

On the other hand, Nabi Adam (Alaihis Salaam) and Hawa (Alaihas Salaam) were lovers of Allah Ta'ala. When they committed a mistake, they did not feel any disgrace in admitting their fault to Allah Ta'ala. Along with admitting their fault before their Beloved, they busied themselves with gaining His pleasure, by shedding tears as they prayed for His pardon.

In this story, there is a further lesson of the magnitude of the Divine Command which should be carried out without any hesitation. The relationship between Sultan Mahmood and Ayaaz was the relationship between Master and slave. Our relationship with Allah Ta'ala is even greater and deeper. Every atom of our bodies was created by Him, reared by Him and is owned by Him. He has such absolute ownership over us; wherein no one else shares.

Muslims are commanded to perform Jihad. In Jihad, we remember that the "Kuffaar" (disbelievers) are also Allah Ta'ala's creation and Allah Ta'ala's numerous bounties are employed in rearing them just as they are provided for the believers. "O Allah Ta'ala, You are so Kind that from Your unseen treasury, You provide sustenance even for the nonbelievers." But, when the command is given to perform Jihad, it would be inappropriate to think why should we shed the blood of so many people for whose fostering and nourishment the heavens, the earth, the sun, the moon, the stars, the clouds, the East, the services of thousands of machines, thousands of factory workers and labourers and thousands of animals were utilized..

Now in Jihad, those very same people for whom so much provisions have been made, are being destroyed within minutes and seconds. Now, in Jihad there will be no time for hesitation because now the Order of Allah Ta'ala has come and in the face of Allah Ta'ala's command, the whole world has no value whatsoever. When the command from Allah Ta'ala comes, the demand is that the necks of the Kuffaar (disbeliever) should be struck down for they are enemies of Allah Ta'ala fighting against the Believers.

"Without Shariat's command, it is a crime even to drink water and when the fatwa of Jihad is sounded, it becomes obligatory to shed blood."

In this story, Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) tells us a general rule through which a person can save himself from disobedience and from going astray. All those desires which are contrary to the pleasure of Allah Ta'ala, no matter how valuable, pleasurable and beautiful they may appear, the True Lover of Allah Ta'ala and the daring one, should never act in accordance to them. In fact, he should readily crush the pearl of his desires with the stone of Allah Ta'ala's command.

Neither should they cast an evil glance at any handsome beardless boy, nor at any strange woman; even though there may be danger of them losing his life (first accidental gaze is forgiven).

THE STORY OF AYAAZ AND THOSE WHO WERE JEALOUS OF HIM

extract from Ma'Arif-e-Mathnavi

Ayaaz, one of the close courtiers of king Mahmood, built a room in which he kept his old leather jacket, other torn and tattered clothing which he wore before becoming a servant of the king. He used to keep the room locked at all times.

Occasionally, he used to enter this room alone. Then, looking at his torn and tattered clothes and his leather coat, he used to cry thus, "O Allah, I am a son of a very poor person. I used to be in this torn and tattered state. This was my clothing of which today I am so ashamed that I keep it locked up. Not only will I not wear it in the presence of others, but I feel ashamed to even show it to them. In fact, now I consider it an insult to let others come to know of them."

Then he used to address himself, "O Ayaaz, today you are a close courtier of the king. Do not be arrogant and proud of the shine and splendour you enjoy. For in reality you are like these tattered clothes."

The other courtiers and ministers of the king did not know what was in the room. Seeing him entering and leaving this room, they started forming all kinds of opinions and ideas about the room and its contents.

One day, all the king's courtiers gathered in one place. They exchanged ideas as to why Ayaaz went into this room alone and why he kept the room locked at all times? The king loved him and considered him a saintly person. They thought that Ayaaz was stealing the king's wealth and hiding it in that room. They thought that if the king was to be informed of the treasure that was being kept in the room, then upon its discovery, Ayaaz would lose his position of nearness to the king.

Secondly, if the king was to find the treasure, he would reward his informers. Hence, the result of their mutual consultation was that king Mahmood should be informed of their suspicions. A delegation from among them went to the king and told him: "The court officials told the king that Ayaaz has a room in which is hidden gold, silver and carpets. He does not permit anybody else to enter into it and keeps the room locked at all times."

The king listened to them and said: "At midnight, I am going to inspect that room. You all should remain with meduring the inspection. Whatever wealth we shall find therein will be divided amongst you people." The king further said: "Sorrow upon Ayaaz that in spite of so much respect and honour that he enjoys from us, he should involve himself in such a despicable act, as to hoard gold and silver in secret.

Whoever has discovered the life of Divine Love, for him it is ingratitude to become involved with beings other than Allah Ta'ala." The king was quite convinced of the sincere love which Ayaaz had for him and had full confidence in his honesty. However, he was actually jeering at the courtiers and making a fool of them.

The king had no mistrust of Ayaaz. He only tested the court officials and played the fool with the jealous ones. It was impossible that Ayaaz could be untrue to the king because his faithfulness was unlimited. Ayaaz was a king among kings; in fact, he was a king in the making and it was only for protection from an evil eye that he was called Ayaaz. King Mahmood was aware of his innocence and purity of life and only to rectify those who envied him, he decided to inspect.

In the middle of the night, the room was opened. When the court officials could not find anything, they said: "The treasure must be under the ground."

Hence, the floor of the room was dug up, but still they found nothing. Everybody was quite surprised and distressed as to what excuse to give before the king and worried as to how they were going to save themselves from their false accusations.

Finally, in despair, they bit their hands and lips and like women they put their hands on their heads in shame. They all came before the king and said: "Whatever punishment you wish to meet out to us, we are prepared to accept. We deserve such punishment. But if you pardon us, (it will be good) for you are king of Grace." The king said: "Whatever Judgment or verdict Ayaaz will give, that will be our Judgment, because you people have tried to defame him and his good name and honour. Therefore, I shall; not pass any Judgment."

He said further: "O Ayaaz, please pass Judgment on these evil-mongers for you were innocent of their accusations and completely loyal. O Ayaaz, from your test and trial numerous people are ashamed and full of grief".

Now listen to Ayaaz's good fortune, his annihilated self and his morals of love. Ayaaz said: "O king! All sovereignty and rule is fitting for you, it is your kindness that this honour Ayaaz enjoys, I am a mere slave. How can a star show its light in the presence of the sun? Whether it is Venus, or Mercury or whether it is a shooting star, How can any of these show their existence in the presence of the Sun?" The king, hearing this, became quite pleased.

He replied: "O Ayaaz, your high-mindedness has caused serfdom to be granted light and your light has speedily moved from down here to the stars. O Ayaaz, your bondage has reached that rank which is the envy of freedom, for you have done your duty to bondage and acquired the true life."

To this Ayaaz replied: "This high-mindedness is your gift and the result of the blessings of your company otherwise, I am that slave of lowly rank who initially appeared before you in tattered clothes and leather jacket. O You listener, your tattered clothing is a clot of blood and your leather jacket is the blood of menstruation. Apart from that everything else you possess is a gift from Allah Ta'ala."

Lesson

In this story, Maulana Rumi (Rahmatullah Alaihe) is teaching the lesson of annihilation of the self.

Ayaaz was granted many favours by the king. In spite of that honour, in order to save himself from arrogance and pride, he used to go and see his tattered

clothing and his old leather jacket and used to advise himself: "O Ayaaz, this is your reality. Be not proud of your position of nearness to the king".

In the same way, the seekers after the Sufi path and the seekers of Allah Ta'ala should at all time keep their reality in front of their eyes. They should remember their humble beginnings as Allah Ta'ala reminds us: "We have created man from a clot". The origin of man is that he is created from the father's sperm and the mother's blood of menstruation.

Apart from that, all man's inner and outer gifts are bounties from Allah Ta'ala. No matter what high rank Allah Ta'ala grants any man, the fact still remains that he is created from the sperm of his father and the menstrual blood of his mother. The mere thought of this should be a protection and salvation against arrogance.

Man should at all times keep this thought in mind, that he was created in the womb of his mother. Then he was granted sight, hearing, reason and understanding. Who was the one who granted these gifts?

Once a saintly man was crossing the road. He happened to accidentally bump against an arrogant, proud person. This was because the saintly man, due to his old age, was weak in eyesight. The arrogant one proudly asked him: "O blind one, can you not see? Do you not know who I am?" The saintly man replied: "I know full well who you are. If you want, I shall explain to you". He said: "All right, tell me".

The saintly man said: "Life consists of three times: Past, present and future. As for the past, you were your father's unclean sperm mixed with the menstrual blood of your mother. As for the present, your abdomen contains faeces and is filled with urine. And as for the future, you will be a stinking rotten corpse that will be buried in the graveyard."

Pride and arrogance is quite common amongst the foolish. But if one uses his reason, he will discover that arrogance is definitely not befitting man.

In a Hadith Qudsi, Allah Ta'ala proclaims: "Pride is My Covering. Whosoever enters into it, I shall break his neck."

The Difference between Ujub and Takabbur (Conceit and Arrogance)

Conceit (Ujub) is focusing on some specific quality in oneself and instead of considering it a gift from Allah Ta'ala, one looks upon it as a personal virtue. Because of 'Ujub', one does not express gratitude and thanks to Allah Ta'ala

for it, but rather brags about oneself exclaiming: "I am like this or that". Consequently, he does not see the giver of the bounty and gifts i.e. Allah Ta'ala. Hence, in his heart he considers himself as worthy of praise.

Takabbur (pride) means to consider oneself greater in comparison to others. Hence, in the concept of takabbur, a necessary element, is to consider others as being contemptible and lowly, whereas in 'Ujub' it is not necessary that the person considers himself superior to another.

The difference between a conceited person and a proud person is that every proud person has conceit in him, for when he admires his own qualities and considers himself better than someone else, then he is bound to consider another person as being despicable and low.

However, it is not necessary that every conceited one be a proud person; because a person may look at a special quality of his and consider himself great without any thoughts of belittling others or considering him inferior.

Allah Ta'ala has given this humble understanding of this subtle difference. All Praise to Allah Ta'ala for it. And in this there is no boasting. Of the many diseases of the heart, both self-admiration (Ujub) and pride are fatal diseases for the seekers of Allah Ta'ala. They should never be negligent in treating these ailments.

Let us understand the harm of these ailments by looking at the following example. A lover has a great longing to meet his beloved. However, when meeting his beloved, he foolishly takes out a mirror from his pocket and instead of looking at his beloved, continues looking at himself, admiring his own form and beauty. Is this person not to be considered a hypocrite in his claim of love and is he not depriving himself?

Similarly, the seekers after the Sufi path should think that Allah Ta'ala is at all times directing His Grace and bounties towards His servants. Now, if the servant, instead of directing himself towards Allah Ta'ala and His attributes, foolishly becomes engaged in admiring his own borrowed attributes (from Allah Ta'ala), then is this not hypocrisy in his claim of love for Allah Ta'ala and is this not a sign of being deprived of good?

You, yourself, can Judge. You yourself may measure and gauge the amount of harm they cause. From the above example, the harmful nature of both 'Ujub' and 'Takabbur' is clearly understood. And it serves as a clear warning for all seekers of the Love of Allah Ta'ala. "O Allah Ta'ala, protect us against the

sickness of conceit, pride and all other deadly spiritual and physical illnesses." Ameen.

It is through the blessing of the company of my Shaikh that these examples and this knowledge is granted to me. All Praise to Allah Ta'ala! All Thanks to Allah Ta'ala! O Our Creator, OAllah Ta'ala, grant us the ability to work righteous deeds. O You Helper of those seeking help, guide us. There is no boasting over knowledge and riches.

THE INCIDENT OF AYAAZ (THE SLAVE OF MAHMOOD GAZNI)

extract from a byaaan rendered by Hazrat Moulana Abdul Hamid (Damat Barakatuhum)

Ayaaz was an ordinary poor person. He did not possess any wealth, position, connection with the top class of society. However he possessed some very great qualities within him. A person's value is not based on what he possesses. A person's value is according to his qualities. For example, a person was a multi-millionaire and after a natural disaster, everything he owned gets destroyed. The value of his bank balance no longer exist, in fact the bank is also destroyed.

We have heard of the storms that affected America, what happened in Heiti, what happened in Kashmir, the tsunamis, that caused various places to be completely destroyed. However those people who have qualities within them such as honesty, hard work, loyalty, etc. these qualities cannot get destroyed and such people come up very quickly in life again.

Ayaaz possessed such qualities which the king recognised. These qualities made him the king's favourite and he kept Ayaaz close to him. The other people became very jealous. So they spread rumours about Ayaaz to the king. The king said, "*I will show you who Ayaaz is?*" There are many valuable lessons in this story.

The king put valuable jewels in his courtroom, diamonds, emeralds, pearls, rubies, etc. and announced, "Whoever places his hand on any valuable will become the owner."

The ministers had rushed to grab whatever they could, but Ayaaz stood still.

The king then said, "Ayaaz! Have you not heard my command?" He replied, "O king, repeat your command!" The king said, "Whatever you put your hand on today will belong to you."

He said, "King, are you sure that this is your command?" The king said, "Yes!" Ayaaz walked up to the king, placed his hand on the king and said, "King, when you are mine, whatever is in the state treasury and whatever is still to come is mine." What you have placed in the courtroom is a fraction of what you possess.

Similarly, if we make Allah Ta'ala ours then everything is ours.

ایک تو میرا تو ہر شے میری زمین میری آسمان میرا ایک تو نہیں میرا تو کوئی شے نہیں میری

If You are mine everything is mine, the heavens are mine, the earth is mine, if You are not mine, then nothing is mine.



MAHMOOD

OF GHAZNI