BOOK I

CHAPTER I

I left Tangier, my birthplace, on Thursday, 2nd Rajab, 725 [14th June, 1325], being at that time twenty-two [lunar] years of age,¹ with the intention of making the Pilgrimage to the Holy House [at Mecca] and the Tomb of the Prophet [at Madína]. I set out alone, finding no companion to cheer the way with friendly intercourse, and no party of travellers with whom to associate myself. Swayed by an overmastering impulse within me, and a long-cherished desire to visit those glorious sanctuaries, I resolved to quit all my friends and tear myself away from my home. As my parents were still alive, it weighed grievously upon me to part from them, and both they and I were afflicted with sorrow.

On reaching the city of Tilimsán [Tlemcen], whose sultan at that time was Abú Tâshîfîn,² I found there two ambassadors of the Sultan of Tunis, who left the city on the same day that I arrived. One of the brethren having advised me to accompany them, I consulted the will of God in this matter,³ and after a stay of three days in the city to procure all that I needed, I rode after them with all speed. I overtook them at the town of Miliána, where we stayed ten days, as both ambassadors fell sick on account of the summer heats. When we set out again, one of them grew worse, and died after we had stopped for three nights by a stream four miles from Miliána. I left their party there and pursued my journey, with a company of merchants from Tunis. On reaching
al-Jazá’ir [Algiers] we halted outside the town for a few days, until the former party rejoined us, when we went on together through the Mifsja⁴ to the mountain of Oaks [Jurjúra] and so reached Bijáya [Bougie].⁵ The commander of Bijáya at this time was the chamberlain Ibn Sayyid an-Nás. Now one of the Tunisian merchants of our party had died leaving three thousand dinars of gold, which he had entrusted to a certain man of Algiers to deliver to his heirs at Tunis. Ibn Sayyid an-Nás came to hear of this and forcibly seized the money. This was the first instance I witnessed of the tyranny of the agents of the Tunisian government. At Bijáya I fell ill of a fever, and one of my friends advised me to stay there till I recovered. But I refused, saying, “If God decrees my death, it shall be on the road with my face set toward Mecca.” “If that is your resolve,” he replied, “sell your ass and your heavy baggage, and I shall lend you what you require. In this way you will travel light, for we must make haste on our journey, for fear of meeting roving Arabs on the way.”⁶ I followed his advice and he did as he had promised—may God reward him! On reaching Qusantínah [Constantine] we camped outside the town, but a heavy rain forced us to leave our tents during the night and take refuge in some houses there. Next day the governor of the city came to meet us. Seeing my clothes all soiled by the rain he gave orders that they should be washed at his house, and in place of my old worn headcloth sent me a headcloth of fine Syrian cloth, in one of the ends of which he had tied two gold dinars. This was the first alms I received on my journey. From Qusantínah we reached Bona where, after staying in the town for several days, we left the merchants of our party on account of the dangers of the road, while we pursued our journey with the utmost speed. I was again attacked by fever, so I tied myself in the
saddle with a turban-cloth in case I should fall by reason of my weakness. So great was my fear that I could not dismount until we arrived at Tunis. The population of the city came out to meet the members of our party, and on all sides greetings and questions were exchanged, but not a soul greeted me as no one there was known to me. I was so affected by my loneliness that I could not restrain my tears and wept bitterly, until one of the pilgrims realized the cause of my distress and coming up to me greeted me kindly and continued to entertain me with friendly talk until I entered the city.

The Sultan of Tunis at that time was Abú Yahyá, the son of Abú Zakariya II., and there were a number of notable scholars in the town. During my stay the festival of the Breaking of the Fast fell due, and I joined the company at the Praying-ground. The inhabitants assembled in large numbers to celebrate the festival, making a brave show and wearing their richest apparel. The Sultan Abú Yahyá arrived on horseback, accompanied by all his relatives, courtiers, and officers of state walking on foot in a stately procession. After the recital of the prayer and the conclusion of the Allocution the people returned to their homes.

Some time later the pilgrim caravan for the Hijáz was formed, and they nominated me as their qádî (judge). We left Tunis early in November, following the coast road through Súsa, Sfax, and Qábis, where we stayed for ten days on account of incessant rains. Thence we set out for Tripoli, accompanied for several stages by a hundred or more horsemen as well as a detachment of archers, out of respect for whom the Arabs kept their distance. I had made a contract of marriage at Sfax with the daughter of one of the syndics at Tunis, and at Tripoli she was conducted to me, but after leaving Tripoli I became involved
in a dispute with her father, which necessitated my separation from her. I then married the daughter of a student from Fez, and when she was conducted to me I detained the caravan for a day by entertaining them all at a wedding party.

At length on April 5th (1326) we reached Alexandria. It is a beautiful city, well-built and fortified with four gates and a magnificent port. Among all the ports in the world I have seen none to equal it except Kowlam [Quilon] and Câlicût in India, the port of the infidels [Genoese] at Súdáq in the land of the Turks, and the port of Zaytún in China, all of which will be described later. I went to see the lighthouse on this occasion and found one of its faces in ruins. It is a very high square building, and its door is above the level of the earth. Opposite the door, and of the same height, is a building from which there is a plank bridge to the door; if this is removed there is no means of entrance. Inside the door is a place for the lighthouse-keeper, and within the lighthouse there are many chambers. The breadth of the passage inside is nine spans and that of the wall ten spans; each of the four sides of the lighthouse is 140 spans in breadth. It is situated on a high mound and lies three miles from the city on a long tongue of land which juts out into the sea from close by the city wall, so that the lighthouse cannot be reached by land except from the city. On my return to the West in the year 750 [1349] I visited the lighthouse again, and found that it had fallen into so ruinous a condition that it was not possible to enter it or climb up to the door. Al-Malik an-Násir had started to build a similar lighthouse alongside it but was prevented by death from completing the work. Another of the marvellous things in this city is the awe-inspiring marble column in its outskirts which they call the “Pillar of Columns.” It is a single block, skilfully
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carved, erected on a plinth of square stones like enormous platforms, and no one knows how it was erected there nor for certain who erected it.\textsuperscript{12}

One of the learned men of Alexandria was the qádí, a master of eloquence, who used to wear a turban of extraordinary size. Never either in the eastern or the western lands have I seen a more voluminous headgear. Another of them was the pious ascetic Burhán ad-Dín, whom I met during my stay and whose hospitality I enjoyed for three days. One day as I entered his room he said to me "I see that you are fond of travelling through foreign lands." I replied "Yes, I am" (though I had as yet no thought of going to such distant lands as India or China). Then he said "You must certainly visit my brother\textsuperscript{13} Faríd ad-Dín in India, and my brother Rukn ad-Dín in Sind, and my brother Burhán ad-Dín in China, and when you find them give them greeting from me." I was amazed at his prediction, and the idea of going to these countries having been cast into my mind, my journeys never ceased until I had met these three that he named and conveyed his greeting to them.

During my stay at Alexandria I had heard of the pious Shaykh al-Murshidí, who bestowed gifts miraculously created at his desire. He lived in solitary retreat in a cell in the country where he was visited by princes and ministers. Parties of men in all ranks of life used to come to him every day and he would supply them all with food. Each one of them would desire to eat some flesh or fruit or sweetmeat at his cell, and to each he would give what he had suggested, though it was frequently out of season. His fame was carried from mouth to mouth far and wide, and the Sultan too had visited him several times in his retreat. I set out from Alexandria to seek this shaykh and passing through Damanhúr came to Fawwá [Fua'], a beautiful township, close by which, separated from
it by a canal, lies the shaykh's cell. I reached this cell about mid-afternoon, and on saluting the shaykh I found that he had with him one of the sultan's aides-de-camp, who had encamped with his troops just outside. The shaykh rose and embraced me, and calling for food invited me to eat. When the hour of the afternoon prayer arrived he set me in front as prayer-leader, and did the same on every occasion when we were together at the times of prayer during my stay. When I wished to sleep he said to me "Go up to the roof of the cell and sleep there" (this was during the summer heats). I said to the officer "In the name of God," but he replied [quoting from the Koran] "There is none of us but has an appointed place." So I mounted to the roof and found there a straw mattress and a leather mat, a water vessel for ritual ablutions, a jar of water and a drinking-cup, and I lay down there to sleep.

That night, while I was sleeping on the roof of the cell, I dreamed that I was on the wing of a great bird which was flying with me towards Mecca, then to Yemen, then eastwards, and thereafter going towards the south, then flying far eastwards, and finally landing in a dark and green country, where it left me. I was astonished at this dream and said to myself "If the shaykh can interpret my dream for me, he is all that they say he is." Next morning, after all the other visitors had gone, he called me and when I had related my dream interpreted it to me saying: "You will make the pilgrimage [to Mecca] and visit [the Tomb of] the Prophet, and you will travel through Yemen, 'Iráq, the country of the Turks, and India. You will stay there for a long time and meet there my brother Dilshád the Indian, who will rescue you from a danger into which you will fall." Then he gave me a travelling-provision of small cakes and money, and I bade him farewell and departed. Never
since parting from him have I met on my journeys aught but good fortune, and his blessings have stood me in good stead.

We rode from here to Damietta through a number of towns, in each of which we visited the principal men of religion. Damietta lies on the bank of the Nile, and the people in the houses next to the river draw water from it in buckets. Many of the houses have steps leading down to the river. Their sheep and goats are allowed to pasture at liberty day and night; for this reason the saying goes of Damietta "Its walls are sweetmeats and its dogs are sheep." Anyone who enters the city may not afterwards leave it except by the governor's seal. Persons of repute have a seal stamped on a piece of paper so that they may show it to the gatekeepers; other persons have the seal stamped on their forearms. In this city there are many seabirds with extremely greasy flesh, and the milk of its buffaloes is unequalled for sweetness and pleasant taste. The fish called búri¹⁵ is exported thence to Syria, Anatolia, and Cairo. The present town is of recent construction; the old city was that destroyed by the Franks in the time of al-Malik as-Sálih.¹⁶

From Damietta I travelled to Fáriskúr, which is a town on the bank of the Nile, and halted outside it. Here I was overtaken by a horseman who had been sent after me by the governor of Damietta. He handed me a number of coins, saying to me "The Governor asked for you, and on being informed about you, he sent you this gift"—may God reward him! Thence I travelled to Ashmún, a large and ancient town on a canal derived from the Nile. It possesses a wooden bridge at which all vessels anchor, and in the afternoon the baulks are lifted and the vessels pass up and down. From here I went to Samannúd, whence I journeyed upstream to Cairo, between a
continuous succession of towns and villages. The traveller on the Nile need take no provision with him, because whenever he desires to descend on the bank he may do so, for ablutions, prayers, provisioning, or any other purpose. There is an uninterrupted chain of bazaars from Alexandria to Cairo, and from Cairo to Assuan in Upper Egypt.

I arrived at length at Cairo, mother of cities and seat of Pharaoh the tyrant, mistress of broad regions and fruitful lands, boundless in multitude of buildings, peerless in beauty and splendour, the meeting-place of comer and goer, the halting-place of feeble and mighty, whose throngs surge as the waves of the sea, and can scarce be contained in her for all her size and capacity. It is said that in Cairo there are twelve thousand water-carriers who transport water on camels, and thirty thousand hirers of mules and donkeys, and that on the Nile there are thirty-six thousand boats belonging to the Sultan and his subjects, which sail upstream to Upper Egypt and downstream to Alexandria and Damietta, laden with goods and profitable merchandise of all kinds. On the bank of the Nile opposite Old Cairo is the place known as The Garden, which is a pleasure park and promenade, containing many beautiful gardens, for the people of Cairo are given to pleasure and amusements. I witnessed a fête once in Cairo for the sultan’s recovery from a fractured hand; all the merchants decorated their bazaars and had rich stuffs, ornaments and silken fabrics hanging in their shops for several days. The mosque of ‘Amr is highly venerated and widely celebrated. The Friday service is held in it, and the road runs through it from east to west. The madrasas [college mosques] of Cairo cannot be counted for multitude. As for the Máristán [hospital], which lies “between the two castles” near the mausoleum of Sultan Qalá‘ún, no description is adequate to its
A GROUP OF DARWISHES' DANCING
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beauties. It contains an innumerable quantity of appliances and medicaments, and its daily revenue is put as high as a thousand dinars.  

There are a large number of religious establishments ["convents"], which they call khāngahs, and the nobles vie with one another in building them. Each of these is set apart for a separate school of darwishes, mostly Persians, who are men of good education and adepts in the mystical doctrines. Each has a superior and a doorkeeper and their affairs are admirably organized. They have many special customs, one of which has to do with their food. The steward of the house comes in the morning to the darwishes, each of whom indicates what food he desires, and when they assemble for meals, each person is given his bread and soup in a separate dish, none sharing with another. They eat twice a day. They are each given winter clothes and summer clothes, and a monthly allowance of from twenty to thirty dirhams. Every Thursday night they receive sugar cakes, soap to wash their clothes, the price of a bath, and oil for their lamps. These men are celibate; the married men have separate convents.

At Cairo too is the great cemetery of al-Qarāfa, which is a place of peculiar sanctity, and contains the graves of innumerable scholars and pious believers. In the Qarāfa the people build beautiful pavilions surrounded by walls, so that they look like houses. They also build chambers and hire Koran-readers, who recite night and day in agreeable voices. Some of them build religious houses and madrasas beside the mausoleums and on Thursday nights they go out to spend the night there with their children and women-folk, and make a circuit of the famous tombs. They go out to spend the night there also on the "Night of mid-Sha‘bán," and the market-people take out all kinds of eatables. Among the many celebrated

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sanctuaries [in the city] is the holy shrine where there reposes the head of al-Husayn.22 Beside it is a vast monastery of striking construction, on the doors of which there are silver rings and plates of the same metal.

The Egyptian Nile23 surpasses all rivers of the earth in sweetness of taste, length of course, and utility. No other river in the world can show such a continuous series of towns and villages along its banks, or a basin so intensely cultivated. Its course is from south to north, contrary to all the other [great] rivers. One extraordinary thing about it is that it begins to rise in the extreme hot weather, at the time when rivers generally diminish and dry up, and begins to subside just when rivers begin to increase and overflow. The river Indus resembles it in this feature. The Nile is one of the five great rivers of the world, which are the Nile, Euphrates, Tigris, Syr Darya and Amu Darya; five other rivers resemble these, the Indus, which is called Panj Áb [i.e. Five Rivers], the river of India which is called Gang [Ganges]—it is to it that the Hindus go on pilgrimage, and when they burn their dead they throw the ashes into it, and they say that it comes from Paradise—the river Jún [Jumna, or perhaps Brahmaputra] in India, the river Itil [Volga] in the Qipchaq steppes, on the banks of which is the city of Sará, and the river Sarú [Hoang-Ho] in the land of Cathay. All these will be mentioned in their proper places, if God will. Some distance below Cairo the Nile divides into three streams,24 none of which can be crossed except by boat, winter or summer. The inhabitants of every township have canals led off the Nile; these are filled when the river is in flood and carry the water over the fields.

From Cairo I travelled into Upper Egypt, with the intention of crossing to the Hijáz. On the first night I stayed at the monastery of Dayr at-Tín, which was
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built to house certain illustrious relics—a fragment of the Prophet's wooden basin and the pencil with which he used to apply kohl, the awl he used for sewing his sandals, and the Koran belonging to the Caliph 'Ali written in his own hand. These were bought, it is said, for a hundred thousand dirhams by the builder of the monastery, who also established funds to supply food to all comers and to maintain the guardians of the sacred relics. Thence my way lay through a number of towns and villages to Munyat Ibn Khasib [Minia], a large town which is built on the bank of the Nile, and most emphatically excels all the other towns of Upper Egypt. I went on through Manfalút, Asyút, Ikhmím, where there is a berba with sculptures and inscriptions which no one can now read—another of these berbas there was pulled down and its stones used to build a madrasa—Qiná, Qús, where the governor of Upper Egypt resides, Luxor, a pretty little town containing the tomb of the pious ascetic Abu'l-Hajjáj, Esná, and thence a day and a night's journey through desert country to Edfu. Here we crossed the Nile and, hiring camels, journeyed with a party of Arabs through a desert, totally devoid of settlements but quite safe for travelling. One of our halts was at Humaythira, a place infested with hyenas. All night long we kept driving them away, and indeed one got at my baggage, tore open one of the sacks, pulled out a bag of dates, and made off with it. We found the bag next morning, torn to pieces and with most of the contents eaten.

After fifteen days' travelling we reached the town of Aydhab, a large town, well supplied with milk and fish; dates and grain are imported from Upper Egypt. Its inhabitants are Bejás. These people are black-skinned; they wrap themselves in yellow blankets and tie headbands about a fingerbreadth wide round their heads. They do not give their
daughters any share in their inheritance. They live on camels' milk and they ride on Meháris [dromedaries]. One-third of the city belongs to the Sultan of Egypt and two-thirds to the King of the Bejáis, who is called al-Hudrubí. On reaching Aydıhab we found that al-Hudrubí was engaged in warfare with the Turks [i.e. the troops of the Sultan of Egypt], that he had sunk the ships and that the Turks had fled before him. It was impossible for us to attempt the sea-crossing, so we sold the provisions that we had made ready for it, and returned to Qús with the Arabs from whom we had hired the camels. We sailed thence down the Nile (it was at the flood time) and after an eight days' journey reached Cairo, where I stayed only one night, and immediately set out for Syria. This was in the middle of July, 1326.

My route lay through Bilbays and as-Sálihíya, after which we entered the sands and halted at a number of stations. At each of these there was a hostelry, which they call a khán, where travellers alight with their beasts. Each khán has a water wheel supplying a fountain and a shop at which the traveller buys what he requires for himself and his beast. At the station of Qatyá customs-dues are collected from the merchants, and their goods and baggage are thoroughly examined and searched. There are offices here, with officers, clerks, and notaries, and the daily revenue is a thousand gold dinars. No one is allowed to pass into Syria without a passport from Egypt, nor into Egypt without a passport from Syria, for the protection of the property of the subjects and as a measure of precaution against spies from 'Iráq. The responsibility of guarding this road has been entrusted to the Badawin. At nightfall they smooth down the sand so that no track is left on it, then in the morning the governor comes and looks at the sand. If he finds any track on it he commands the Arabs to bring the
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person who made it, and they set out in pursuit and never fail to catch him. He is then brought to the governor, who punishes him as he sees fit. The governor at the time of my passage treated me as a guest and showed me great kindness, and allowed all those who were with me to pass. From here we went on to Gaza, which is the first city of Syria on the side next the Egyptian frontier.

From Gaza I travelled to the city of Abraham [Hebron], the mosque of which is of elegant, but substantial, construction, imposing and lofty, and built of squared stones. At one angle of it there is a stone, one of whose faces measures twenty-seven spans. It is said that Solomon commanded the jinn\(^{31}\) to build it. Inside it is the sacred cave containing the graves of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, opposite which are three graves, which are those of their wives. I questioned the imám, a man of great piety and learning, on the authenticity of these graves, and he replied:

“All the scholars whom I have met hold these graves to be the very graves of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and their wives. No one questions this except introducers of false doctrines; it is a tradition which has passed from father to son for generations and admits of no doubt.” This mosque contains also the grave of Joseph, and somewhat to the east of it lies the tomb of Lot,\(^{32}\) which is surmounted by an elegant building. In the neighbourhood is Lot’s lake [the Dead Sea], which is brackish and is said to cover the site of the settlements of Lot’s people. On the way from Hebron to Jerusalem, I visited Bethlehem, the birthplace of Jesus. The site is covered by a large building; the Christians regard it with intense veneration and hospitably entertain all who alight at it.

We then reached Jerusalem (may God enoble her!), third in excellence after the two holy shrines of Mecca and Madīna, and the place whence the
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Prophet was caught up into heaven. Its walls were destroyed by the illustrious King Saladin and his successors, for fear lest the Christians should seize it and fortify themselves in it. The sacred mosque is a most beautiful building, and is said to be the largest mosque in the world. Its length from east to west is put at 752 "royal" cubits and its breadth at 435. On three sides it has many entrances, but on the south side I know of one only, which is that by which the imam enters. The entire mosque is an open court and unroofed, except the mosque al-Aqsá, which has a roof of most excellent workmanship, embellished with gold and brilliant colours. Some other parts of the mosque are roofed as well. The Dome of the Rock is a building of extraordinary beauty, solidity, elegance, and singularity of shape. It stands on an elevation in the centre of the mosque and is reached by a flight of marble steps. It has four doors. The space round it is also paved with marble, excellently done, and the interior likewise. Both outside and inside the decoration is so magnificent and the workmanship so surpassing as to defy description. The greater part is covered with gold so that the eyes of one who gazes on its beauties are dazzled by its brilliance, now glowing like a mass of light, now flashing like lightning. In the centre of the Dome is the blessed rock from which the Prophet ascended to heaven, a great rock projecting about a man's height, and underneath it there is a cave the size of a small room, also of a man's height, with steps leading down to it. Encircling the rock are two railings of excellent workmanship, the one nearer the rock being artistically constructed in iron, and the other of wood.

Among the grace-bestowing sanctuaries of Jerusalem is a building, situated on the farther side of the valley called the valley of Jahannam [Gehenna] to the east of the town, on a high hill. This building is
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said to mark the place whence Jesus ascended to heaven.\textsuperscript{37} In the bottom of the same valley is a church venerated by the Christians, who say that it contains the grave of Mary. In the same place there is another church which the Christians venerate and to which they come on pilgrimage. This is the church of which they are falsely persuaded to believe that it contains the grave of Jesus. All who come on pilgrimage to visit it pay a stipulated tax to the Muslims, and suffer very unwillingly various humiliations. Thereabouts also is the place of the cradle of Jesus,\textsuperscript{38} which is visited in order to obtain blessing.

I journeyed thereafter from Jerusalem to the fortress of Askalon, which is a total ruin. Of the great mosque, known as the mosque of `Omar, nothing remains but its walls and some marble columns of matchless beauty, partly standing and partly fallen. Amongst them is a wonderful red column, of which the people tell that the Christians carried it off to their country but afterwards lost it, when it was found in its place at Askalon. Thence I went on to the city of ar-Ramlah, which is also called Filaštin [Palestine], in the qibla of those mosque they say three hundred of the prophets are buried. From ar-Ramlah I went to the town of Nábulus [Shechem], a city with an abundance of trees and perennial streams, and one of the richest in Syria for olives, the oil of which is exported thence to Cairo and Damascus. It is at Nábulus that the carob-sweet is manufactured and exported to Damascus and elsewhere. It is made in this way: the carobs are cooked and then pressed, the juice that runs out is gathered and the sweet is manufactured from it. The juice itself too is exported to Cairo and Damascus. Nábulus has also a species of melon which is called by its name, a good and delicious fruit. Thence I went to Ajalún\textsuperscript{39} making in the direction of Ládhiqíya, and passing through the Ghawr, followed the coast to

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'Akká [Acre], which is in ruins. Acre was formerly the capital and port of the country of the Franks in Syria, and rivalled Constantinople itself.

I went on from here to Súr [Tyre], which is a ruin, though there is outside it an inhabited village, most of whose population belong to the sect called "Refusers." It is this city of Tyre which has become proverbial for impregnability, because the sea surrounds it on three sides and it has two gates, one on the landward side and one to the sea. That on the landward side is protected by four outer walls each with breastworks, while the sea gate stands between two great towers. There is no more marvellous or more remarkable piece of masonry in the world than this, for the sea surrounds it on three sides and on the fourth there is a wall under which the ships pass and come to anchor. In former times an iron chain was stretched between the two towers to form a barrier, so that there was no way in or out until it was lowered. It was placed under the charge of guards and trust-worthy agents, and none might enter or leave without their knowledge. Acre also had a harbour resembling it, but it admitted only small ships. From Tyre I went on to Saydá [Sidon], a pleasant town on the coast, and rich in fruit; it exports figs, raisins, and olive oil to Cairo.

Next I went on to the town of Tabaríya [Tiberias]. It was formerly a large and important city, of which nothing now remains but vestiges witnessing to its former greatness. It possesses wonderful baths with separate establishments for men and women, the water of which is very hot. At Tiberias is the famous lake [the Sea of Galilee], about eighteen miles long and more than nine in breadth. The town has a mosque known as the "Mosque of the Prophets," containing the graves of Shu‘ayb [Jethro] and his daughter, the wife of Moses, as well as those of Solomon, Judah,
and Reuben. From Tiberias we went to visit the well into which Joseph was cast, a large and deep well, in the courtyard of a small mosque, and drank some water from it. It was rain water, but the guardian told us that there is a spring in it as well. We went on from there to Bayrút, a small town with fine markets and a beautiful mosque. Fruit and iron are exported from it to Egypt.

We set out from here to visit the tomb of Abú Ya‘qúb Yúsuf, who, they say, was a king in North-west Africa. The tomb is at a place called Karak Núh, and beside it is a religious house at which all travellers are entertained. Some say that it was the Sultan Saladin who endowed it, others that it was the Sultan Núr ad-Dín. The story goes that Abú Ya‘qúb, after staying some time at Damascus with the Sultan, who had been warned in a dream that Abú Ya‘qúb would bring him some advantage, left the town in solitary flight during a season of great coldness, and came to a village in its neighbourhood. In this village there was a man of humble station who invited him to stay in his house, and on his consenting, made him soup and killed a chicken and brought it to him with barley bread. After his meal Abú Ya‘qúb prayed for a blessing on his host. Now this man had several children, one of them being a girl who was shortly to be conducted to her husband. It is a custom in that country that a girl’s father gives her an outfit, the greater part of which consists in copper utensils. These are regarded by them with great pride and are made the subject of special stipulations in the marriage contract. Abú Ya‘qúb therefore said to the man, “Have you any copper utensils?” “Yes” he replied, “I have just bought some for my daughter’s outfit.” Abú Ya‘qúb told him to bring them and when he had brought them said “Now borrow all that you can from your neighbours.” So he did so and laid them
all before him. He then lit fires round them, and taking out a purse which he had containing an elixir, threw some of it over the brass, and the whole array was changed into gold. Leaving these in a locked chamber, Abú Ya‘qūb wrote to Nūr ad-Dīn at Damascus, telling him about them, and exhorting him to build and endow a hospital for sick strangers and to construct religious houses on the highways. He bade him also satisfy the owners of the copper vessels and provide for the maintenance of the owner of the house. The latter took the letter to the king, who came to the village and removed the gold, after satisfying the owners of the vessels and the man himself. He searched for Abú Ya‘qūb, but failing to find any trace or news of him, returned to Damascus, where he built the hospital which is known by his name and is the finest in the world.

I came next to the city of Atrábulus [Tripoli], one of the principal towns in Syria. It lies two miles inland, and has only recently been built. The old town was right on the shore; the Christians held it for a time, and when it was recovered by Sultan Baybars it was pulled down and this new town built. There are some fine bath-houses in it, one of which is called after Sindamúr, who was a former governor of the city. Many stories are told of his severity to evil-doers. Here is one of them. A woman complained to him that one of the mamlúks of his personal staff had seized some milk that she was selling and had drunk it. She had no evidence, but Sindamúr sent for the man. He was cut in two, and the milk came out of his entrails. Similar stories are told of al-Atrís at the time when he was governor of Aydháb under Sultan Qalá‘ún, and of Kebek, the Sultan of Turkestan.

From Tripoli I went by way of Hisn al-Akrád [Krak des Chevaliers, now Qal‘at al-Hisn] and Hims
to Hamáh, another of the metropolitan cities of Syria. It is surrounded by orchards and gardens, in the midst of which there are waterwheels like revolving globes. Thence to Ma‘arra, which lies in a district inhabited by some sort of Shi‘ites, abominable people who hate the Ten Companions and every person whose name is ‘Omar.44 We went on from there to Sarmín, where brick soap is manufactured and exported to Cairo and Damascus. Besides this they manufacture perfumed soap, for washing hands, and colour it red and yellow. These people too are revilers, who hate the Ten, and—an extraordinary thing—never mention the word ten. When their brokers are selling by auction in the markets and come to ten, they say “nine and one.” One day a Turk happened to be there, and hearing a broker call “nine and one,” he laid his club about his head saying “Say ‘ten,’” whereupon quoth he “Ten with the club.” We journeyed thence to Halab [Aleppo],45 which is the seat of the Malik al-Umará, who is the principal commander under the sultan of Egypt. He is a jurist and has a reputation for fair-dealing, but he is stingy.

I went on from there to Antákíya [Antioch], by way of Tízín, a new town founded by the Turkmens.46 Antioch was protected formerly by a wall of unrivalled solidity among the cities of Syria, but al-Malik az-Záhir [Baybars] pulled it down when he captured the town.47 It is very densely populated and possesses beautiful buildings, with abundant trees and water. Thence I visited the fortress of Baghrás,48 at the entrance to the land of Sís [Little Armenia], that is, the land of the Armenian infidels, and many other castles and fortresses, several of which belong to a sect called Isma‘ilites or Fidáwis49 and may be entered by none but members of the sect. They are the arrows of the sultan; by means of them he strikes those of his enemies
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who escape into ‘Iráq and other lands. They receive fixed salaries, and when the sultan desires to send one of them to assassinate one of his enemies, he pays him his blood-money. If after carrying out his allotted task he escapes with his life, the money is his, but if he is killed it goes to his sons. They carry poisoned daggers, with which they strike their victim, but sometimes their plans miscarry and they themselves are killed.

From the castles of the Fidáwis I went on to the town of Jabala, which lies on the coast, about a mile inland. It contains the grave of the famous saint Ibráhím ibn Ḥām, he who renounced a kingdom and consecrated himself to God. All visitors to this grave give a candle to the keeper, with the result that many hundredweights of them are collected. The majority of the people of this coastal district belong to the sect of the Nusayris, who believe that ‘Alí is a God. They do not pray, nor do they purify themselves, nor fast. Al-Malik az-Záhir [Baybars] compelled them to build mosques in their villages, so in every village they put up a mosque far away from their houses, and they neither enter them nor keep them in repair. Often they are used for refuges for their cattle and asses. Often too a stranger comes to their country and he stops at the mosque and recites the call to prayer and then they call out “Stop braying; your fodder is coming to you.” There are a great many of these people.

They tell a story that an unknown person arrived in the country of this sect and gave himself out as the Mahdí. They flocked round him, and he promised them the possession of the land and divided Syria up between them. He used to nominate them each to a town and tell them to go there, giving them olive-leaves and saying “Take these as tokens of success, for they are as warrants of your appointment.”
any one of them came to a town, the governor sent for him, and the man would say “The Imám al-Mahdí has given me this town.” The governor would reply “Where is your warrant?” and he would produce the olive-leaves, and be punished and put in prison. Later on he ordered them to make ready to fight with the Muslims and to begin with the town of Jabala. He told them to take myrtle rods instead of swords and promised them that these would become swords in their hands at the moment of the battle. They made a surprise attack on Jabala while the inhabitants were attending a Friday service in the mosque, and entered the houses and dishonoured the women. The Muslims came rushing out of their mosque, seized weapons, and killed them as they pleased. When the news was brought to Ládhiqíya the governor moved out with his troops, and the news having been sent by carrier-pigeons to Tripoli, the chief commandant joined him with his troops. The Nusayris were pursued until about twenty thousand of them had been killed. The remainder fortified themselves in the hills and sent a message to the chief commandant, undertaking to pay him one dinar per head if he would spare them. The news had been sent by pigeons to the Sultan, who replied ordering them to be put to the sword. The chief commandant, however, represented to him that these people were tillers of the soil for the Muslims and that if they were killed the Muslims would suffer in consequence, so their lives were spared.

I went next to the town of Ládhiqíya [Latakia]. In the outskirts is a Christian monastery known as Dayr al-Fárús, which is the largest monastery in Syria and Egypt. It is inhabited by monks, and Christians visit it from all quarters. All who stop there, Muslims or Christians, are entertained; their food is bread, cheese, olives, vinegar and capers. The harbour of Ládhiqíya is protected by a chain between two towers,
so that no ship can either enter or leave it until the chain is lowered for it. It is one of the best harbours in Syria. From there I went to the fortress of al-Marqab [Belvedere], a great fortress resembling Karak. It is built on a high hill and outside it is a suburb where strangers stop. They are not allowed to enter the castle. It was captured from the Christians by al-Malik al-Mansur Qalâ'ün, and close by it was born his son al-Malik an-Násir [the reigning sultan of Egypt]. Thence I went to the mountain of al-Aqra', which is the highest mountain in Syria, and the first part of the country visible from the sea. The inhabitants of this mountain-range are Turkmens, and it contains springs and running streams. I went on from there to the mountains of Lubnân [Lebanon]. These are among the most fertile mountains on earth, with all sorts of fruits and springs of water and shady coverts. There are always large numbers of devotees and ascetics to be found in these mountains (the place is noted for this) and I saw a company of anchorites there.

We came next to the town of Ba'âlbek, an old town and one of the finest in Syria, rivalling Damascus in its innumerable amenities. No other district has such an abundance of cherries, and many kinds of sweetmeats are manufactured in it, as well as textiles, and wooden vessels and spoons that cannot be equalled elsewhere. They make a series of plates one within the other to as many as ten in all, yet anyone looking at it would take them to be one plate. They do the same with spoons, and put them in a leather case. A man can carry this in his belt, and on joining in a meal with his friends take out what looks like one spoon and distribute nine others from within it. Ba'âlbek is one day's journey from Damascus by hard going; caravans on leaving Ba'âlbek spend a night at a small village called az-Zabdânî and go on to Damascus the following morning. I reached Ba'âlbek in the
evening and left it next morning because of my eagerness to get to Damascus.

I entered Damascus on Thursday 9th Ramadán 726 [9th August, 1326], and lodged at the Málıkite college called ash-Sharābishiyya. Damascus surpasses all other cities in beauty, and no description, however full, can do justice to its charms. Nothing, however, can better the words of Ibn Jubayr in describing it. The Cathedral Mosque, known as the Umayyad Mosque, is the most magnificent mosque in the world, the finest in construction and noblest in beauty, grace and perfection; it is matchless and unequalled. The person who undertook its construction was the Caliph Walíd I. [705-715]. He applied to the Roman Emperor at Constantinople ordering him to send craftsmen to him, and the Emperor sent him twelve thousand of them. The site of the mosque was a church, and when the Muslims captured Damascus, one of their commanders entered from one side by the sword and reached as far as the middle of the church, while the other entered peaceably from the eastern side and reached the middle also. So the Muslims made the half of the church which they had entered by force into a mosque and the half which they had entered by peaceful agreement remained as a church. When Walíd decided to extend the mosque over the entire church he asked the Greeks to sell him their church for whatsoever equivalent they desired, but they refused, so he seized it. The Christians used to say that whoever destroyed the church would be stricken with madness and they told that to Walíd. But he replied "I shall be the first to be stricken by madness in the service of God," and seizing an axe, he set to work to knock it down with his own hands. The Muslims on seeing that followed his example, and God proved false the assertion of the Christians."
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This mosque has four doors. The southern door, called the “Door of Increase,” is approached by a spacious passage where the dealers in second-hand goods and other commodities have their shops. Through it lies the way to the [former] Cavalry House, and on the left as one emerges from it is the coppersmiths’ gallery, a large bazaar, one of the finest in Damascus, extending along the south wall of the mosque. This bazaar occupies the site of the palace of the Caliph Mu‘awiya I., which was called al-Khadrá [The Green Palace]; the ‘Abbásids pulled it down and a bazaar took its place. The eastern door, called the Jāyrūn door, is the largest of the doors of the mosque. It also has a large passage, leading out to a large and extensive colonnade which is entered through a quintuple gateway between six tall columns. Along both sides of this passage are pillars, supporting circular galleries, where the cloth merchants amongst others have their shops; above these again are long galleries in which are the shops of the jewellers and booksellers and makers of admirable glass-ware. In the square adjoining the first door are the stalls of the principal notaries, in each of which there may be five or six witnesses in attendance and a person authorized by the qádi to perform marriage-ceremonies. The other notaries are scattered throughout the city. Near these stalls is the bazaar of the stationers, who sell paper, pens, and ink. In the middle of the passage there is a large round marble basin, surrounded by a pavilion supported on marble columns but lacking a roof. In the centre of the basin is a copper pipe which forces out water under pressure so that it rises into the air more than a man’s height. They call it “The Waterspout,” and it is a fine sight. To the right as one comes out of the Jāyrūn door, which is called also the “Door of the Hours,” is an upper gallery shaped like a large arch, within which there
are small open arches furnished with doors, to the number of the hours of the day. These doors are painted green on the inside and yellow on the outside, and as each hour of the day passes the green inner side of the door is turned to the outside, and vice versa. They say that inside the gallery there is a person in the room who is responsible for turning them by hand as the hours pass. The western door is called the “Door of the Post”; the passage outside it contains the shops of the candlemakers and a gallery for the sale of fruit. The northern door is called the “Door of the Confectioners”; it too has a large passageway, and on the right as one leaves it is a khāngāh, which has a large basin of water in the centre and lavatories supplied with running water. At each of the four doors of the mosque is a building for ritual ablutions, containing about a hundred rooms abundantly supplied with running water.

One of the principal Hanbalite doctors at Damascus was Taqī ad-Dīn Ibn Taymīya, a man of great ability and wide learning, but with some kink in his brain. The people of Damascus idolized him. He used to preach to them from the pulpit, and one day he made some statement that the other theologians disapproved; they carried the case to the sultan and in consequence Ibn Taymīya was imprisoned for some years. While he was in prison he wrote a commentary on the Koran, which he called “The Ocean,” in about forty volumes. Later on his mother presented herself before the sultan and interceded for him, so he was set at liberty, until he did the same thing again. I was in Damascus at the time and attended the service which he was conducting one Friday, as he was addressing and admonishing the people from the pulpit. In the midst of his discourse he said “Verily God descends to the sky over our world [from Heaven] in the same bodily fashion that
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I make this descent,” and stepped down one step of the pulpit. A Malikite doctor present contradicted him and objected to his statement, but the common people rose up against this doctor, and beat him with their hands and their shoes so severely that his turban fell off and disclosed a silken skull-cap on his head. Inveighing against him for wearing this, they haled him before the qādī of the Hanbalites, who ordered him to be imprisoned and afterwards had him beaten. The other doctors objected to this treatment and carried the matter before the principal amīr, who wrote to the sultan about the matter and at the same time drew up a legal attestation against Ibn Taymiya for various heretical pronouncements. This deed was sent on to the sultan, who gave orders that Ibn Taymiya should be imprisoned in the citadel, and there he remained until his death.

One of the celebrated sanctuaries at Damascus is the Mosque of the Footprints (al-Aqdám), which lies two miles south of the city, alongside the main highway which leads to the Hijáz, Jerusalem, and Egypt. It is a large mosque, very blessed, richly endowed, and very highly venerated by the Damascenes. The footprints from which it derives its name are certain footprints impressed upon a rock there, which are said to be the mark of Moses’ foot. In this mosque there is a small chamber containing a stone with the following inscription “A certain pious man saw in his sleep the Chosen One [Muhammad], who said to him ‘Here is the grave of my brother Moses.’” I saw a remarkable instance of the veneration in which the Damascenes hold this mosque during the great pestilence, on my return journey through Damascus in the latter part of July 1348. The viceroy Arghún Sháh ordered a crier to proclaim through Damascus that all the people should fast for three days and that no one should cook anything eatable in the market.
during the daytime. For most of the people there eat no food but what has been prepared in the market. So the people fasted for three successive days, the last of which was a Thursday, then they assembled in the Great Mosque, amirs, sharifs, qadis, theologians, and all the other classes of the people, until the place was filled to overflowing, and there they spent the Thursday night in prayers and litanies. After the dawn prayer next morning they all went out together on foot, holding Korans in their hands, and the amirs barefooted. The procession was joined by the entire population of the town, men and women, small and large; the Jews came with their Book of the Law and the Christians with their Gospel, all of them with their women and children. The whole concourse, weeping and supplicating and seeking the favour of God through His Books and His Prophets, made their way to the Mosque of the Footprints, and there they remained in supplication and invocation until near midday. They then returned to the city and held the Friday service, and God lightened their affliction; for the number of deaths in a single day at Damascus did not attain two thousand, while in Cairo and Old Cairo it reached the figure of twenty-four thousand a day.

The variety and expenditure of the religious endowments at Damascus are beyond computation. There are endowments in aid of persons who cannot undertake the pilgrimage to Mecca, out of which are paid the expenses of those who go in their stead. There are other endowments for supplying wedding outfits to girls whose families are unable to provide them, and others for the freeing of prisoners. There are endowments for travellers, out of the revenues of which they are given food, clothing, and the expenses of conveyance to their countries. Then there are endowments for the improvement and paving of the streets, because all the lanes in Damascus have
pavements on either side, on which the foot passengers walk, while those who ride use the roadway in the centre. Besides these there are endowments for other charitable purposes. One day as I went along a lane in Damascus I saw a small slave who had dropped a Chinese porcelain dish, which was broken to bits. A number of people collected round him and one of them said to him, “Gather up the pieces and take them to the custodian of the endowments for utensils.” He did so, and the man went with him to the custodian, where the slave showed the broken pieces and received a sum sufficient to buy a similar dish. This is an excellent institution, for the master of the slave would undoubtedly have beaten him, or at least scolded him, for breaking the dish, and the slave would have been heartbroken and upset at the accident. This benevolence is indeed a mender of hearts—may God richly reward him whose zeal for good works rose to such heights!

The people of Damascus vie with one another in building mosques, religious houses, colleges and mausoleums. They have a high opinion of the North Africans, and freely entrust them with the care of their moneys, wives, and children. All strangers amongst them are handsomely treated, and care is taken that they are not forced to any action that might injure their self-respect. When I came to Damascus a firm friendship sprang up between the Málkite professor Nūr ad-Dīn Sakháwī and me, and he besought me to breakfast at his house during the nights of Ramadán. After I had visited him for four nights I had a stroke of fever and absented myself. He sent in search of me, and although I pleaded my illness in excuse he refused to accept it. I went back to his house and spent the night there, and when I desired to take my leave the next morning he would not hear of it, but said to me “Consider my house as your
own or as your father's or brother's." He then had a doctor sent for, and gave orders that all the medicines and dishes that the doctor prescribed were to be made for me in his house. I stayed thus with him until the Fast-breaking, when I went to the festival prayers and God healed me of what had befallen me. Meanwhile all the money I had for my expenses was exhausted. Nūr ad-Dīn, learning this, hired camels for me and gave me travelling and other provisions, and money in addition, saying "It will come in for any serious matter that may land you in difficulties"—may God reward him!

The Damascenes observe an admirable order in funeral processions. They walk in front of the bier, while reciters intone the Koran in beautiful and affecting voices, and pray over it in the Cathedral mosque. When the reading is completed the muezzins rise and say "Reflect on your prayer for so-and-so, the pious and learned," describing him with good epithets, and having prayed over him they take him to his grave. The Indians have a funeral ceremony even more admirable than this. On the morning of the third day after the burial they assemble in the burial-place of the deceased, which is spread with fine cloths, the grave being covered with magnificent hangings and surrounded by sweet-scented flowers, roses, eglantine, and jasmine, for these flowers are perennial with them. They bring lemon and citrus trees as well, tying on their fruits if they have none, and put up an awning to shade the mourning party. The qādīs, amirs and other persons of rank come and take their seats, and after recitation of the Koran, the qādī rises and delivers a set oration, speaking of the deceased, and mourning his death in an elegiac ode, then comforting his relatives, and praying for the sultan. When the sultan's name is mentioned the audience rise and bow their heads towards the quarter in which the
sultan is. The qádi then resumes his seat, and rose-water is brought in and sprinkled on all the people, beginning with the qádi. After this syrup is brought in and served to everyone, beginning with the qádi. Finally the betel is brought. This they hold in high esteem, and give to their guests as a mark of respect; a gift of betel from the sultan is a greater honour than a gift of money or robes of honour. When a man dies his family eat no betel until the day of this ceremony, when the qádi takes some leaves of it and gives them to the heir of the deceased, who eats them, after which the party disperses.

When the new moon of the month Shawwál appeared in the same year [1st September 1326], the Hijáz caravan left Damascus and I set off along with it. At Bosra the caravans usually halt for four days so that any who have been detained at Damascus by business affairs may make up on them. Thence they go to the Pool of Zíza, where they stop for a day, and then through al-Lajjún to the Castle of Karak. Karak, which is also called “The Castle of the Raven,” is one of the most marvellous, impregnable, and celebrated of fortresses. It is surrounded on all sides by the river-bed, and has but one gate, the entrance to which is hewn in the living rock, as also is the approach to its vestibule. This fortress is used by kings as a place of refuge in times of calamity, as the sultan an-Násir did when his mamlúk Salár seized the supreme authority. The caravan stopped for four days at a place called ath-Thaníya outside Karak, where preparations were made for entering the desert. Thence we journeyed to Ma‘án, which is the last town in Syria, and from ‘Aqabat as-Sawán entered the desert, of which the saying goes: “He who enters it is lost, and he who leaves it is born.” After a march of two days we halted at Dhát Hajj, where there are subterranean waterbeds but no habita-
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tions, and then went on to Wádí Baldah (in which there is no water)⁶² and to Tabúk, which is the place to which the Prophet led an expedition. The Syrian pilgrims have a custom that, on reaching the camp at Tabúk, they take their weapons, unsheathe their swords, and charge upon the camp, striking the palms with their swords and saying “Thus did the Prophet of God enter it.” The great caravan halts at Tabúk for four days to rest and to water the camels and lay in water for the terrible desert between Tabúk and al-‘Ulá. The custom of the water-carriers is to camp beside the spring, and they have tanks made of buffalo hides, like great cisterns, from which they water the camels and fill the waterskins. Each amír or person of rank has a special tank for the needs of his own camels and personnel; the other people make private agreements with the watercarriers to water their camels and fill their waterskins for a fixed sum of money.

From Tabúk the caravan travels with great speed night and day, for fear of this desert. Halfway through is the valley of al-Ukhaydir, which might well be the valley of Hell (may God preserve us from it).⁶³ One year the pilgrims suffered terribly here from the samoom-wind; the water-supplies dried up and the price of a single drink rose to a thousand dinars, but both seller and buyer perished. Their story is written on a rock in the valley. Five days after leaving Tabúk they reach the well of al-Hijr, which has an abundance of water, but not a soul draws water there, however violent his thirst, following the example of the Prophet, who passed it on his expedition to Tabúk and drove on his camel, giving orders that none should drink of its waters. Here, in some hills of red rock, are the dwellings of Thamúd. They are cut in the rock and have carved thresholds. Anyone seeing them would take them to be of recent construction. Their decayed bones are to be seen

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inside these houses.\textsuperscript{64} Al-‘Ulá, a large and pleasant village with palm-gardens and water-springs, lies half a day’s journey or less from al-Hijr.\textsuperscript{65} The pilgrims halt there four days to provision themselves and wash their clothes. They leave behind them here any surplus of provisions they may have, taking with them nothing but what is strictly necessary. The people of the village are very trustworthy. The Christian merchants of Syria may come as far as this and no further, and they trade in provisions and other goods with the pilgrims here. On the third day after leaving al-‘Ulá the caravan halts in the outskirts of the holy city of Madína.

That same evening we entered the holy sanctuary and reached the illustrious mosque, halting in salutation at the Gate of Peace; then we prayed in the illustrious “garden” between the tomb of the Prophet and the noble pulpit, and reverently touched the fragment that remains of the palm-trunk against which the Prophet stood when he preached. Having paid our meed of salutation to the lord of men from first to last, the intercessor for sinners, the Prophet of Mecca, Muhammad, as well as to his two companions who share his grave, Abú Bakr and ‘Omar, we returned to our camp, rejoicing at this great favour bestowed upon us, praising God for our having reached the former abodes and the magnificent sanctuaries of His holy Prophet, and praying Him to grant that this visit should not be our last, and that we might be of those whose pilgrimage is accepted. On this journey our stay at Madína lasted four days. We used to spend every night in the illustrious mosque, where the people, after forming circles in the courtyard and lighting large numbers of candles, would pass the time either in reciting the Koran from volumes set on rests in front of them, or in intoning litanies, or in visiting the sanctuaries of the holy tomb.
TRAVELS OF IBN BATTUTHA

We then set out from Madīna towards Mecca, and halted near the mosque of Dhu’l-Hulayfa, five miles away. It was at this point that the Prophet assumed the pilgrim garb and obligations, and here too I divested myself of my tailored clothes, bathed, and putting on the pilgrim’s garment I prayed and dedicated myself to the pilgrimage. Our fourth halt from here was at Badr, where God aided His Prophet and performed His promise. It is a village containing a series of palm-gardens and a bubbling spring with a stream flowing from it. Our way lay thence through a frightful desert called the Vale of Bazwā for three days to the valley of Rābigh, where the rainwater forms pools which lie stagnant for a long time. From this point (which is just before Juhfā) the pilgrims from Egypt and Northwest Africa put on the pilgrim garment. Three days after leaving Rābigh we reached the pool of Khulays, which lies in a plain and has many palm-gardens. The Badawin of that neighbourhood hold a market there, to which they bring sheep, fruits, and condiments. Thence we travelled through ‘Usfān to the Bottom of Marr, a fertile valley with numerous palms and a spring supplying a stream from which the district is irrigated. From this valley fruit and vegetables are transported to Mecca. We set out at night from this blessed valley, with hearts full of joy at reaching the goal of our hopes, and in the morning arrived at the City of Surety, Mecca (may God ennoble her!), where we immediately entered the holy sanctuary and began the rites of pilgrimage.

The inhabitants of Mecca are distinguished by many excellent and noble activities and qualities, by their beneficence to the humble and weak, and by their kindness to strangers. When any of them makes a feast, he begins by giving food to the religious devotees who are poor and without resources, inviting them
first with kindness and delicacy. The majority of these unfortunates are to be found by the public bake-houses, and when anyone has his bread baked and takes it away to his house, they follow him and he gives each one of them some share of it, sending away none disappointed. Even if he has but a single loaf, he gives away a third or a half of it, cheerfully and without any grudgingness. Another good habit of theirs is this. The orphan children sit in the bazaar, each with two baskets, one large and one small. When one of the townspeople comes to the bazaar and buys cereals, meat and vegetables, he hands them to one of these boys, who puts the cereals in one basket and the meat and vegetables in the other and takes them to the man's house, so that his meal may be prepared. Meanwhile the man goes about his devotions and his business. There is no instance of any of the boys ever abused their trust in this matter, and they are given a fixed fee of a few coppers. The Meccans are very elegant and clean in their dress, and most of them wear white garments, which you always see fresh and snowy. They use a great deal of perfume and kohl and make free use of toothpicks of green arák-wood. The Meccan women are extraordinarily beautiful and very pious and modest. They too make great use of perfumes to such a degree that they will spend the night hungry in order to buy perfumes with the price of their food. They visit the mosque every Thursday night, wearing their finest apparel; and the whole sanctuary is saturated with the smell of their perfume. When one of these women goes away the odour of the perfume clings to the place after she has gone.

Among the personages who were living in religious retirement at Mecca was a pious and ascetic doctor who had a long-standing friendship with my father, and used to stay with us when he came to our town of
Tangier. In the daytime he taught at the Muzaf-fariya college, but at night he retired to his dwelling in the convent of Rabī‘. This convent is one of the finest in Mecca; it has in its precincts a well of sweet water which has no equal in Mecca, and its inhabitants are all men of great piety. It is highly venerated by the people of the Ḥijāz, who bring votive offerings to it, and the people of Tā‘if supply it with fruit. Their custom is that all those who possess a palm garden, or orchard of vines, peaches or figs, give the alms-tithe from its produce to this convent, and fetch it on their own camels. It is two days’ journey from Tā‘if to Mecca. If any person fails to do this, his crop is diminished and dearth-stricken in the following year. One day the retainers of the governor of Mecca came to this convent, led in the governor’s horses, and watered them at the well mentioned above. After the horses had been taken back to their stables, they were seized with colic and threw themselves to the ground, beating it with their heads and legs. On hearing of this the governor went in person to the gate of the convent and after apologizing to the poor recluses there, took one of them back with him. This man rubbed the beasts’ bellies with his hand, when they expelled all the water that they had drunk, and were cured. After that the retainers never presented themselves at the convent except for good purposes.
CHAPTER II

On the 17th of November I left Mecca with the commander of the ‘Iráq caravan, who hired for me at his own expense the half of a camel-litter as far as Baghdád, and took me under his protection. After the farewell ceremony of circumambulation [of the Ka’ba] we moved out to the Bottom of Marr with an innumerable host of pilgrims from ‘Iráq, Khurásán, Fárs and other eastern lands, so many that the earth surged with them like the sea and their march resembled the movement of a high-piled cloud. Any person who left the caravan for a moment and had no mark to guide him to his place could not find it again because of the multitude of people. With this caravan there were many draught-camels for supplying the poorer pilgrims with water, and other camels to carry the provisions issued as alms and the medicines, potions, and sugar required for any who fell ill. Whenever the caravan halted food was cooked in great brass cauldrons, and from these the needs of the poorer pilgrims and those who had no provisions were supplied. A number of spare camels accompanied it to carry those who were unable to walk. All those measures were due to the benefactions and generosity of the sultan [of ‘Iráq] Abú Sa‘íd. Besides this the caravan included busy bazaars and many commodities and all sorts of food and fruit. They used to march during the night and light torches in front of the files of camels and litters, so that you saw the country gleaming with light and the darkness turned into day.

We returned through Khulays and Bādār to Madīna, and were privileged to visit once more the [tomb of
the) Prophet. We stayed in Madīna for six days, and having provided ourselves there with water for a three-nights' journey, set out and halted on the third night at Wādi’l-‘Arūs, where we drew supplies of water from underground water-beds. They dig down into the ground for them and procure sweet running water. On leaving Wādi’l-‘Arūs we entered the land of Najd, which is a level stretch of country extending as far as eye can see, and we inhaled its fine scented air. After four marches we halted at a waterpoint called al-‘Usayla, then resumed our march and halted at a waterpoint called an-Naqira, where there are the remains of watertanks like vast reservoirs. Thence we journeyed to a waterpoint known as al-Qārūra, which consists of tanks filled with rainwater. These are some of the tanks which were constructed by Zubayda, the daughter of Ja‘far. Every tank, water-basin, and well on this road between Mecca and Baghdad is a noble monument to her memory—may God give her richest reward! This locality is in the centre of the district of Najd; it is spacious, with fine healthy air, excellent soil, and a temperate climate at all seasons of the year. We went on from al-Qārūra and halted at al-Hājir, where there are watertanks which often dry up, so that temporary wells must be dug in order to procure water. We journeyed on and halted at Samīra, which is a patch of low-lying country on a plain, where there is a kind of fortified enceinte which is inhabited. It has plenty of water in wells, but brackish. The Badawin of that district come there with sheep, melted butter, and milk, which they sell to the pilgrims for pieces of coarse cotton cloth. That is the only thing they will take in exchange. We set out again and halted at the “Hill with the Hole.” This hill lies in a tract of desert land, and has at the top of it a hole through which the wind whistles. We went on from there to Wādi’l-Kurūsh, which has
no water, and after a night march came in the morning
to the castle of Fayd.¹

Fayd is a large walled and fortified enceinte on a
level plain, with a suburb inhabited by Arabs, who
make a living by trading with the pilgrims. On their
journey to Mecca the pilgrims leave a portion of their
provisions here, and pick them up again on their return
journey.² Fayd lies halfway between Mecca and
Baghdád and is twelve days' journey from Kúfa, by
an easy road furnished with supplies of water in tanks.
The pilgrims are accustomed to enter this place
armed and in warlike array, in order to frighten the
Arabs who collect there and to cut short their greedy
designs on the caravan. We met there the two amírs
of the Arabs, Fayyádh and Hiyár, sons of the amír
Muhanná b. 'Isá, accompanied by an innumerable
troop of Arab horsemen and foot-soldiers. They
showed great zeal for the safety of the pilgrims and their
encampments. The Arabs brought camels and sheep,
and the pilgrims bought from them what they could.

We resumed our journey through al-Ajfur, Zarúd,
and other halting-places to the defile known as "Devil's
Pass." We encamped below it [for the night] and
traversed it the next day. This is the only rough
and difficult stretch on the whole road, and even it is
neither difficult nor long. Our next halt was at a
place called Wáqisa, where there is a large castle and
watertanks. It is inhabited by Arabs, and is the last
watering point on this road; from there on to Kúfa
there is no other watering place of any note except
streams deriving from the Euphrates. Many of the
people of Kúfa come out to Wáqisa to meet the
pilgrims, bringing flour, bread, dates and fruit, and
everybody exchanges greetings with everybody else.
Our next halts were at a place called Lawza, where
there is a large tank of water; then a place called
al-Masájid [The Mosques], where there are three
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tanks; and after that at a place called Manárat al-
qurún [The Minaret of the Horns], which is a tower
standing in a desert locality, conspicuous for its height,
and decorated at the top with horns of gazelles, but
there are no dwellings near it. We halted again in
a fertile valley called al-ʿUdhayb, and afterwards at
al-Qádisíya, where the famous battle was fought
against the Persians, in which God manifested the
triumph of the Religion of Islam. There are palm-
gardens and a watercourse from the Euphrates there.³

We went on from there and alighted in the town of
Mash-had ʿAlí at Najaf. It is a fine town, situated
in a wide rocky plain—one of the finest, most populous,
and most substantially built cities in ʿIráq. It has
beautiful clean bazaars. We entered by the [outer]
Báb al-Hadra, and found ourselves first in the market
of the greengrocers, cooks, and butchers, then in the
fruit market, then the tailors’ bazaar and the Qaysarta, then the perfumers’ bazaar, after which we came to
the [inner] Báb al-Hadra, where there is the tomb,
which they say is the tomb of ʿAlí.⁴ One goes through
the Báb al-Hadra into a vast hospice, by which one
gains access to the gateway of the shrine, where there
are chamberlains, keepers of registers and eunuchs.
As a visitor to the tomb approaches, one or all of them
rise to meet him according to his rank, and they halt
with him at the threshold. They then ask permission
for him to enter saying “By your leave, O Commander
of the Faithful, this feeble creature asks permission
to enter the sublime resting-place,” and command him
to kiss the threshold, which is of silver, as also are the
lintels. After this he enters the shrine, the floor of
which is covered with carpets of silk and other materials.
Inside it are candelabra of gold and silver, large and
small. In the centre is a square platform about a
man’s height, covered with wood completely hidden
under artistically carved plaques of gold fastened with
silver nails. On this are three tombs, which they declare are the graves of Adam, Noah, and 'Ali. Between the tombs are dishes of silver and gold, containing rose-water, musk, and other perfumes; the visitor dips his hand in these and anoints his face with the perfume for a blessing. The shrine has another doorway, also with a silver threshold and hangings of coloured silk, which opens into a mosque. The inhabitants of the town are all Shi‘ites, and at this mausoleum many miracles are performed, which they regard as substantiating its claim to be the tomb of 'Ali. One of these miracles is that on the eve of the 27th Rajab⁵ cripples from the two 'Irāq, Khurāsān, Persia and Anatolia, numbering about thirty or forty in all, are brought here and placed on the holy tomb. Those present await their arising and pass the time in prayer, or reciting litanies, or reading the Koran or contemplating the tomb. When the night is half or two-thirds over or so, they all rise completely cured, saying “There is no God but God; Muhammad is the Prophet of God and 'Ali is the Friend of God.” This fact is widely known among them, and I heard of it from trustworthy authorities, but I was not actually present on any such night. I saw however three cripples in the Guests’ College and asked them about themselves, and they told me that they had missed the night and were waiting for it in a future year. This town pays no taxes or dues and has no governor, but is under the sole control of the Naqīb al-Ashrāf [Keeper of the Register of the descendants of the Prophet]. Its people are traders of great enterprise, brave and generous and excellent company on a journey, but they are fanatical about 'Ali. If any of them suffers from illness in the head, hand, foot, or other part of the body, he makes a model of the member in gold or silver and brings it to the sanctuary. The treasury of the sanctuary is consider-
able and contains innumerable riches. The Naqīb al-Ashrāf holds a high position at the court. When he travels he has the same retinue and status as the principal military officers, with banners and kettle-drums. Military music is played at his gate every evening and morning. Before the present holder of the office it was held jointly by a number of persons, who took turns of duty as governor.

One of these personages was the Sharīf Abū Ghurra. In his youth he was given over to devotions and study, but after his appointment as Naqīb al-Ashrāf he was overcome by the world, gave up his ascetic habits, and administered his finances corruptly. The matter was brought before the sultan, and Abū Ghurra, on hearing of this, went to Khurāsān and thence made for India. After crossing the Indus, he had his drums beaten and his trumpets blown, and thereby terrified the villagers, who, imagining that the Tatars had come to raid their country, fled to the city of Úja [Uch] and informed its governor of what they had heard. He rode out with his troops and prepared for battle, when the scouts whom he had sent out saw only about ten horsemen and a number of men on foot and merchants who had accompanied the Sharīf, carrying banners and kettle-drums. They asked them what they were doing and received the reply that the Sharīf, the Naqīb of ‘Irāq, had come on a mission to the king of India. The scouts returned with the news to the governor, who thought that the Sharīf must be a man of little sense to raise banners and beat drums outside his own country. The Sharīf stayed for some time at Úja, and every morning and evening he had the drums beaten at the door of his house, for that used to give him much gratification. It is said that when the drums were beaten before him in ‘Irāq, as the drummer finished beating he would say to him “One more roll, drummer,” until these words stuck
to him as a nickname. The governor of Uja wrote to the king of India about the Sharíf and his drum-beating, both on his journey and before his house morning and evening, as well as flying banners. Now the custom in India is that no person is entitled to use banners and drums except by special privilege from the king, and even then only while travelling. At rest no drums are beaten except before the king's house alone. In Egypt, Syria and 'Iráq, on the other hand, drums are beaten before the houses of the military governors. The king was therefore displeased and annoyed at the Sharíf's action. Now it happened that as the Sharíf approached the capital, with his drums beating as usual, suddenly he met the sultan, with his cortege on his way to meet the amír of Sind. The Sharíf went forward to the sultan to greet him, and the sultan, after asking how he was and why he had come and hearing his answers, went on to meet the amír, and returned to the capital, without paying the slightest attention to the Sharíf or giving orders for his lodging or anything else. He was then on the point of setting out for Dawlat Ábád, and before going he sent the Sharíf 500 dinars (which equal 125 of our Moroccan dinars) and said to the messenger: "Tell him that if he wants to go back to his country, this is his travelling provision, and if he wants to come with us it is for his expenses on the journey, but if he prefers to stay in the capital it is for his expenses until we return." The Sharíf was vexed at this for he was desirous that the sultan should make as rich presents to him as he usually did to his equals. He chose to travel with the sultan and attached himself to the wazír, who came to regard him with affection, and so used his influence with the king that he formed a high opinion of him, and assigned him two villages in the district of Dawlat Ábád, with the order to reside in them. For eight years the Sharíf
stayed there, collecting the revenue of these two villages, and amassed considerable wealth. Thereupon he wanted to leave the country but could not, since those who are in the king’s service are not allowed to leave without his permission, and he is much attached to strangers and rarely gives any of them leave. The Sharíf tried to escape by the coast road, but was turned back; then he went to the capital and by the wazír’s good offices received the sultan’s permission to leave India, together with a gift of 10,000 Indian dinars. The money was given him in a sack, and he used to sleep on it, out of his love of money, and fear lest some of it should get to any of his companions. As a result of sleeping on it he developed a pain in his side as he was just about to start on his journey, and eventually he died twenty days after receiving the sack. He bequeathed the money to the Sharíf Hasan al-Jarání, who distributed the whole amount in alms to the Shi‘ites living in Delhi. The Indians do not sequestrate inheritances for the treasury, and do not interfere with the property of strangers nor even make enquiries about it, however much it may be. In the same way, the negroes never interfere with the property of a white man, but it is left in charge of the principal members of his company until the rightful heir comes to claim it.

After our visit to the tomb of the Caliph ‘Alí, the caravan went on to Baghdád, but I set out for Basra, in the company of a large troop of the Arab inhabitants of that country. They are exceedingly brave and it is impossible to travel in those regions except in their company. Our way lay along the Euphrates by the place called al-‘Idhár, which is a waterlogged jungle of reeds, inhabited by Arabs noted for their predatory habits. They are brigands and profess adhesion to the Shi‘ite sect. They attacked a party of darwishes behind us and stripped them of everything down to
their shoes and wooden bowls. They have fortified positions in this jungle and defend themselves in these against all attacks. Three days’ march through this district brought us to the town of Wásit. Its inhabitants are among the best people in ‘Iráq—indeed, the very best of them without qualification. All the ‘Iráqís who wish to learn how to recite the Koran come here, and our caravan contained a number of students who had come for that purpose. As the caravan stayed here three days, I had an opportunity of visiting the grave of ar-Rifá’í, which is at a village called Umm ‘Ubayda, one day’s journey from there. I reached the establishment at noon the next day and found it to be an enormous monastery, containing thousands of darwishes. After the mid-afternoon prayer drums and kettledrums were beaten and the darwishes began to dance. After this they prayed the sunset prayer and brought in the meal, consisting of rice-bread, fish, milk and dates. After the night prayer they began to recite their litany. A number of loads of wood had been brought in and kindled into a flame, and they went into the fire dancing; some of them rolled in it and others ate it in their mouths until they had extinguished it entirely. This is the peculiar custom of the Ahmadí darwishes. Some of them take large snakes and bite their heads with their teeth until they bite them clean through.

After visiting ar-Rifá’í’s tomb I returned to Wásit, and found that the caravan had already started, but overtook them on the way, and accompanied them to Basra. As we approached the city I had remarked at a distance of some two miles from it a lofty building resembling a fortress. I asked about it and was told that it was the mosque of ‘Ali. Basra was in former times a city so vast that this mosque stood in the centre of the town, whereas now it is two miles outside it. Two miles beyond it again is the old wall that
encircled the town, so that it stands midway between the old wall and the present city. Basra is one of the metropolitan cities of 'Irāq, and no place on earth excels it in quantity of palm-groves. The current price of dates in its market is fourteen pounds to an 'Irāqī dirham, which is one-third of a nugra. The qádí sent me a hamper of dates that a man could scarcely carry; I sold them and received nine dirhams, and three of those were taken by the porter for carrying the basket from the house to the market. The inhabitants of Basra possess many excellent qualities; they are affable to strangers and give them their due, so that no stranger ever feels lonely amongst them. They hold the Friday service in the mosque of 'Alí mentioned above, but for the rest of the week it is closed. I was present once at the Friday service in this mosque and when the preacher rose to deliver his discourse he committed many gross errors of grammar. In astonishment at this I spoke of it to the qádí and this is what he said to me: "In this town there is not a man left who knows anything of the science of grammar." Here is a lesson for those who will reflect on it—Magnified be He who changes all things! This Basra, in whose people the mastery of grammar reached its height, from whose soil sprang its trunk and its branches, amongst whose inhabitants is numbered the leader whose primacy is undisputed—the preacher in this town cannot deliver a discourse without breaking its rules!

At Basra I embarked in a sumbug, that is a small boat, for Ubullā, which lies ten miles distant. One travels between a constant succession of orchards and palm-groves both to right and left, with merchants sitting in the shade of the trees selling bread, fish, dates, milk and fruit. Ubullā was formerly a large town, frequented by merchants from India and Fārs, but it fell into decay and is now a village. Here we
embarked after sunset on a small ship belonging to a man from Ubulla and in the morning reached ‘Abbádán, a large village on a salt plain with no cultivation. I was told that there was at ‘Abbádán a devotee of great merit, who lived in complete solitude. He used to come down to the shore once a month and catch enough fish for his month’s provisions and then disappear again. I made it my business to seek him out, and found him praying in a ruined mosque. When he had finished praying he took my hand and said “May God grant you your desire in this world and the next.” I have indeed—praise be to God—attained my desire in this world, which was to travel through the earth, and I have attained therein what none other has attained to my knowledge. The world to come remains, but my hope is strong in the mercy and clemency of God. My companions afterwards went in search of this devotee, but they could get no news of him. That evening one of the darwishes belonging to the religious house at which we had put up met him, and he gave him a fresh fish saying “Take this to the guest who came today.” So the darwish said to us as he came in “Which of you saw the Shaykh today?” I replied “I saw him,” and he said “He says to you ‘This is your hospitality gift.’” I thanked God for that, then the darwish cooked the fish for us and we all ate of it. I have never tasted better fish. For a moment I entertained the idea of spending the rest of my life in the service of this Shaykh, but my spirit, tenacious of its purpose, dissuaded me.

We sailed thereafter for Májúl. I made it a habit on my journey never, so far as possible, to cover a second time any road that I had once travelled. I was aiming to reach Baghdad, and a man at Basra advised me to travel to the country of the Lúrs, thence to ‘Iráq al-‘Ajam and thence to ‘Iráq al-‘Arab, and I

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followed his counsel. Four days later we reached Májúl, a small place on the Persian Gulf, and thence I hired a mount from some grain-merchants. After travelling for three nights across open country inhabited by nomadic Kurds we reached Rámiz [Rám-hurmuz], a fine city with fruit trees and rivers, where I stayed only one night before continuing our journey for three nights more across a plain inhabited by Kurds. At the end of each stage there was a hospice, at which every traveller was supplied with bread, meat, and sweetmeats. Thereafter I came to the city of Tuštar [Shushtar] which is situated at the edge of the plain and the beginning of the mountains. I stayed there sixteen days at the madrasa of the Shaykh Sharaf ad-Dín Músá, one of the handsomest and most upright of men. He preaches every Friday after the midday service, and when I heard him, all the preachers whom I had heard previously in the Hijáz, Syria and Egypt sank in my estimation, nor have I ever met his equal. One day I was present with him at a gathering of notables, theologians and darwíshes in an orchard on the river-bank. After he had served them all with food, he delivered a discourse with solemnity and dignity. When he finished, bits of paper were thrown to him from all sides, for it is a custom of the Persians to jot down questions on scraps of paper and throw them to the preacher, who answers them. The shaykh collected them all and began to answer them one after the other in the most remarkable and elegant manner.

From Tuštar we travelled three nights through lofty mountains, halting at a hospice at each station, and came to the town of Ídhaj, also called Mál al-Amír, the capital of the sultan Atábeg (which is a title common to all the rulers of that country). I wished to see the sultan, but that was not easily come by, as he goes out only on Fridays because of his addiction

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to wine. Some days later the sultan sent me an invitation to visit him. I went with the messenger to the gate called the Cypress Gate, and we mounted a long staircase, finally reaching a room, which was unfurnished because they were in mourning for the sultan’s son. The sultan was sitting on a cushion, with two covered goblets in front of him, one of gold and the other of silver. A green rug was spread for me near him and I sat down on this. No one else was in the room but his chamberlain and one of his boon-companions. The sultan asked me about myself and my country, the sultan of Egypt, and the Hijáž, and I answered all his questions. At this juncture a noted doctor of the law came in, and as the sultan started praising him I began to see that he was intoxicated. Afterwards he said to me in Arabic, which he spoke well, “Speak.” I said to him “If you will listen to me, I say to you ‘You are a son of a sultan noted for piety and uprightness, and there is nothing to be brought against you as a ruler but this,’ ” and I pointed to the goblets. He was overcome with confusion at what I said, and sat silent. I wished to go, but he bade me sit down and said to me, “To meet with men like you is a mercy.” Then I saw him reeling and on the point of falling asleep, so I withdrew. I could not find my sandals, but the doctor I have mentioned went up and found them in the room and brought them to me. His kindness ashamed me and I made my excuses, but thereupon he kissed my sandals and put them on his head saying “God bless you. What you said to the sultan none could say but you. I hope this will make an impression on him.”

A few days later I left Idhaj, and the sultan sent me a number of dinars [as a farewell gift] with a like sum for my companions. For ten days we continued to travel in the territories of this sultan amidst high mountains, halting every night at a madrasa, where
each traveller was supplied with food for himself and forage for his beast. Some of the madrasas are in desolate localities, but all their requirements are transported to them. One-third of the revenues of the state is devoted to the maintenance of these hospices and madrasas. We travelled on across a well-watered plain belonging to the province of the city of Isfahán, passing through the towns of Ushturkán and Firúzán. On reaching the latter place we found its inhabitants outside the town escorting a funeral. They had torches lit behind and in front of the bier, and they followed it up with fifes and singers, singing all sorts of merry songs. We were amazed at their conduct. The next day our way lay through orchards and streams and fine villages, with very many pigeon towers, and in the afternoon we reached Isfahán or Ispahán, in 'Iráq al-ʿAjam. Isfahán is one of the largest and fairest of cities, but the greater part of it is now in ruins, as a result of the feud between Sunnis and Shiʿites, which is still raging there. It is rich in fruits, among its products being apricots of unequalled quality with sweet almonds in their kernels, quinces whose sweetness and size cannot be paralleled, splendid grapes, and wonderful melons. Its people are goodlooking, with clear white skins tinged with red, exceedingly brave, generous, and always trying to outdo one another in procuring luxurious viands. Many curious stories are told of this last trait in them. The members of each trade form corporations, as also do the leading men who are not engaged in trade, and the young unmarried men, these corporations then engage in mutual rivalry, inviting one another to banquets, in the preparations for which they display all their resources. I was told that one corporation invited another and cooked its viands with lighted candles, then the guests returned the invitation and cooked their viands with silk.
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We then set out from Isfahán on purpose to visit the Shaykh Majd ad-Dín at Shíráz, which is ten days' journey from there. After six days' travelling we reached Yazdikhwášt, outside of which there is a convent where travellers stay. It has an iron gate and is extremely well fortified; inside it are shops at which the travellers can buy all that they need. Here they make the cheese called Yazdikhwáští, which is unequalled for goodness; each cheese weighs from two to four ounces. Thence we travelled across a stretch of open country inhabited by Turks, and reached Shíráz, a densely populated town, well built and admirably planned. Each trade has its own bazaar. Its inhabitants are handsome and clean in their dress. In the whole East there is no city that approaches Damascus in beauty of bazaars, orchards and rivers, and in the handsome figures of its inhabitants, but Shíráz. It is on a plain surrounded by orchards on all sides and intersected by rivers, one of which is the river known as Rukn Ábád, whose water is sweet, very cold in summer and warm in winter. The people of Shíráz are pious and upright, especially the women, who have a strange custom. Every Monday, Thursday, and Friday they meet in the principal mosque to listen to the preacher, one or two thousand of them, carrying fans with which they fan themselves on account of the great heat. I have never seen in any land so great an assembly of women.

On entering Shíráz I had but one desire, which was to seek out the illustrious Shaykh Majd ad-Dín Ismá‘íl, the marvel of the age. As I reached his dwelling he was going out to the afternoon prayer; I saluted him and he embraced me and took my hand until he came to his prayer mat, when he signed me to pray beside him. After this, the notables of the town came forward to salute him, as is their custom.
morning and evening, then he asked me about my journey and the lands I had visited, and gave orders to lodge me in his madrasa. The Shaykh Majd ad-Dín is held in the highest esteem by the king of ‘Iráq, for reasons which the following story will show. The [late] king of ‘Iráq, Sultan Muhammad Khudábanda, had as a companion, while he was yet an infidel, a Shi‘ite theologian, and when the sultan embraced Islám together with the Tatars, he showed the greatest respect for this man, who persuaded him to establish the Shi‘ite faith throughout his dominions. At Baghdád, Shíráz, and Isfahán the population prevented the execution of the order, whereupon the king ordered the qádís of these three towns to be brought. The first of them to be brought was the qádí Majd ad-Dín of Shíráz. The sultan was then at a place called Qarábágh, which was his summer residence, and when the qádí arrived, he ordered him to be thrown to the dogs which he had there. These are enormous dogs with chains on their necks, trained to eat men. When anyone is brought to be delivered to the dogs, he is placed at liberty and without chains in a wide plain; the dogs are then loosed on him and he flees, but finds no refuge; they overtake him and tear him to pieces and eat his flesh. But when the dogs were loosed on the qádí Majd ad-Dín, they would not attack him but wagged their tails before him in the friendliest manner. The sultan, on hearing of this, showed the greatest reverence and respect to him, and renounced the doctrines of the Shi‘ites. He made vast presents to the qádí, including a hundred of the villages of Jamkán, which is the best district in Shíráz. I met the qádí again on my return from India in 1347. He was then too weak to walk, but he recognized me and rose to embrace me. I visited him one day and found the sultan of Shíráz sitting in front of him, holding his own ear. This is the height
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of good manners amongst them, and all the people do so when they sit in the presence of the king.

The sultan of Shíráz at the time of my visit was Abú Isháq,16 one of the best of sultans, handsome and well-conducted, of generous character, humble, but powerful and the ruler of a great kingdom. He has an army of more than fifty thousand men, Turks and Persians, but he does not trust the people of Shíráz. He will not take them into his service, and allows none of them to carry arms, because they are very brave and apt to rise against their rulers. He made himself master of Shíráz, as well as of Fárs and Isfahán, after the death of Sultan Abú Sa'id [in 1335], when every amír seized what he possessed. At one time Sultan Abú Isháq desired to build a palace like the Aywán Kísrá,17 and ordered the inhabitants of Shíráz to undertake the digging of its foundations. They set to work on this, each corporation of artisans rivalling the other, and carried their rivalry to such lengths that they made baskets of leather to carry the earth and covered them with embroidered silk. They did the same with the donkey panniers. Some of them made tools of silver, and lit numerous candles. When they went to dig they put on their best garments, with girdles of silk, and the sultan watched their work from a balcony. When the foundations were dug the inhabitants were freed from service, and paid artisans took their place. Several thousands of them were collected for this work, and I heard from the governor of the town that the greater part of its taxes were spent on it. Abú Isháq wished to be compared to the king of India for the magnificence of his gifts, but "How distant are the Pleiads from the clod!" The largest gift of Abú Isháq that I ever heard tell of was that he gave an ambassador from the king of Herát seventy thousand dinars, whereas the king of India never ceases to give many times more than that to an in-

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numerable number of persons. One instance may be cited.

The amīr Bakht one day felt indisposed at the capital of the king of India, who went to visit him. As the king entered he wished to rise, but the king swore that he must not come down from his bed. A divan was brought on which the sultan sat down. He then called for gold and a balance, and when these were brought he ordered the sick man to sit on one of the trays. The amīr said, “O master of the world, had I known that you would do this, I should have put on many clothes.” The sultan replied, “Put on now all the clothes that you have.” So he put on the clothes that he wore in the cold weather, which were padded with cotton-wool, and sat on one of the trays of the balance. The other was filled with gold until it tipped down, when the king said “Take this, and give it in alms for your recovery,” and left him.

Shīrāz contains many sanctuaries which are visited and venerated by its inhabitants. Among them is the tomb of the imām ‘Abdallāh ibn Khāṭif, who is known there simply as “The Shaykh.” He occupies a high place among the saints, and the following story is told of him. One day he went to the mountain of Sarandīb [Adam’s Peak] in the island of Ceylon accompanied by about thirty darwīshes. They were overcome by hunger on the way, in an uninhabited locality, and lost their bearings. They asked the shaykh to allow them to seize one of the small elephants, of which there are a very large number in that place, and which are transported thence to the king of India. The shaykh forbade them, but their hunger got the better of them and they disobeyed him and, seizing a small elephant, killed and ate it. The shaykh however refused to eat it. That night, as they slept, the elephants gathered from all quarters and came
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upon them, smelling each one of them and killing him until they had made an end of them all. They smelled the shaykh too but offered no violence to him; one of them lifted him with its trunk, put him on its back, and brought him to the inhabited district. When the people of that part saw him, they marvelled at him and came to out meet him and hear his story. As it came near them, the elephant lifted him with its trunk and placed him on the ground in full view of them.

I visited this island of Ceylon. Its people still live in idolatry [Buddhism], yet they show respect for Muslim darwishes, lodge them in their houses, and give them to eat, and they live in their houses amidst their wives and children. This is contrary to the usage of the other Indian idolators [Brahmans and Hindus], who never make friends with Muslims, and never give them to eat or to drink out of their vessels, although at the same time they neither act nor speak offensively to them. We were compelled to have some flesh cooked for us by some of them, and they would bring it in their pots and sit at a distance from us. They would also serve us with rice, which is their principal food, on banana leaves, and then go away, and what we left over was eaten by dogs and birds. If any small child, who had not reached the age of reason, ate any of it, they would beat him and make him eat cow dung, this being, as they say, the purification for that act.

Among the sanctuaries outside Shíráz is the grave of the pious shaykh known as as-Sa‘ídī, who was the greatest poet of his time in the Persian language, and sometimes introduced Arabic verses into his compositions. There is a fine hospice which he built in this place having a beautiful garden within it, close by the source of the great river known as Rukn Ábád. The Shaykh [Sa‘ídī] had constructed some small cisterns

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in marble there to wash clothes in. The citizens of Shíráz go out to visit his tomb, and they eat from his table [i.e. eat food prepared at the convent] and wash their clothes in the river. I did the same thing there—may God have mercy upon him!

I left Shíráz to visit the tomb of the pious shaykh Abú Isháq al-Kázárúní at Kázarún, which lies two days' journey [west] from Shíráz. This shaykh is held in high honour by the inhabitants of India and China. Travellers on the Sea of China, when the wind turns against them and they fear pirates, usually make vows to Abú Isháq, each one setting down in writing what he has vowed. When they reach safety the officers of the convent go on board the ship, receive the list, and take from each person the amount of his vow. There is not a ship coming from India or China but has thousands of dinars in it [vowed to the saint]. Any mendicant who comes to beg alms of the shaykh is given an order, sealed with the shaykh's seal stamped in red wax, to this effect: "Let any person who has made a vow to the Shaykh Abú Isháq give thereof to so-and-so so much," specifying a thousand or a hundred, or more or less. When the mendicant finds anyone who has made a vow, he takes from him the sum named and writes a receipt for the amount on the back of the order.

From Kázarún we went by way of Zaydán to Huwayza, and thence by a five days' march through waterless desert to Kúfa. Though it was once the abode of the Companions of the Prophet and of scholars and theologians, and the capital of 'Alí, the Commander of the Faithful, Kúfa has now fallen into ruins, as a result of the attacks which it has suffered from the nomad Arab brigands in the neighbourhood. The town is unwalled. Its principal mosque is a magnificent building with seven naves supported by great pillars of immense height, made of carved stones
placed one on top of the other, the interstices being filled with molten lead. We resumed our journey and halted for the night at Bi’r Malláha [“Salt Well”], which is a pretty town lying amongst palm gardens. I encamped outside it, and would not enter the place, because the inhabitants are fanatical Shi‘ites.

Next morning we went on and alighted at the city of Hilla, which is a large town lying along the western bank of the Euphrates, with fine markets where both natural products and manufactured goods may be had. At this place there is a great bridge fastened upon a continuous row of boats from bank to bank, the boats being held in place both fore and aft by iron chains attached on either bank to a huge wooden beam made fast ashore. The inhabitants of Hilla are all Shi‘ites of the “Twelvers” sect, but they are divided into two factions, known as the “Kurds” and the “Party of the Two Mosques,” between whom there is constant factional strife and fighting. Near the principal market in this town there is a mosque, the door of which is covered with a silk curtain. They call this the Sanctuary of the Master of the Age. Every evening before sunset, a hundred of the townsmen, following their custom, go with arms and drawn swords to the governor of the city and receive from him a saddled and bridled horse or mule. With this they go in procession, with drums beating and bugles blowing, fifty of them in front of it and fifty behind, while others walk to right and left, to the Sanctuary of the Master of the Age. They halt at the door and call out “In the Name of God, O Master of the Age, in the Name of God, come forth! Corruption is abroad and injustice is rife! This is the hour for thy advent, that by thee God may discover the true from the false.” They continue to call out thus, sounding their drums and bugles and trumpets, until the hour of sunset prayer, for they hold that
Muhammad, the son of al-Hasan al-‘Askarí, entered this mosque and disappeared from sight in it, and that he will emerge from it, for he, in their view, is the “Expected Imám.”

We travelled thence to the town of Karbalá, the shrine of al-Husayn, the son of ‘Alí.21 The surroundings of the tomb and the ceremonies of visitation resemble those of the tomb of ‘Alí at Najaf. In this town too the inhabitants form two factions between whom there is constant fighting, although they are all Shi‘ites and descended from the same family, and as a result of their feuds the town is in ruins.

Thence we travelled to Baghdád, the Abode of Peace and Capital of Islám.22 Here there are two bridges like that at Hilla, on which the people promenade night and day, both men and women. The town has eleven cathedral mosques, eight on the right bank and three on the left, together with very many other mosques and madrasas, only the latter are all in ruins. The baths at Baghdád are numerous and excellently constructed, most of them being painted with pitch, which has the appearance of black marble. This pitch is brought from a spring between Kúfa and Basra, from which it flows continually. It gathers at the sides of the spring like clay and is shovelled up and brought to Baghdád. Each establishment has a large number of private bathrooms, every one of which has also a wash-basin in the corner, with two taps supplying hot and cold water. Every bather is given three towels, one to wear round his waist when he goes in, another to wear round his waist when he comes out, and the third to dry himself with. In no town other than Baghdád have I seen all this elaborate arrangement, though some other towns approach it in this respect.23 The western part of Baghdád was the earliest to be built, but it is now for the most part in ruins. In spite of that there remain in
it still thirteen quarters, each like a city in itself and possessing two or three baths. The hospital (mâristân) is a vast ruined edifice, of which only vestiges remain. The eastern part has an abundance of bazaars, the largest of which is called the Tuesday bazaar. On this side there are no fruit trees, but all the fruit is brought from the western side, where there are orchards and gardens.

My arrival at Baghdad coincided with a visit of the sultan of the two 'Irâqs and of Khurâsân, the illustrious Abû Sa'îd Bahâdur Khân,²⁴ son of Sultan Muhammad Khudâbanda whose conversion we related above. He was an excellent and generous king. He was still a boy when he succeeded his father, and the power was seized by the principal amîr, Jûbân, who left him nothing of sovereignty but the name. This went on until one day his father's wives complained to him of the insolence of Jûbân's son Dimashq Khwâja, and the sultan had him arrested and put to death. Jûbân was then in Khurâsân with the army of the Tatars. They agreed to fight the sultan, and marched against him, but when the two forces met, the Tatars deserted to their sultan and Jûbân was left without support. He fled to the desert of Sîjistân [Sistan], and afterwards took refuge with the king of Herât, who betrayed him a few days later, killed him and his youngest son and sent their heads to the sultan. When Abû Sa'îd had become sole master, he desired to marry Jûbân's daughter, who was called Baghdad Khâtûn, and was one of the most beautiful of women. She was married to Shaykh Hasan, the same who became master of the kingdom after the death of Abû Sa'îd, and who was his cousin by his father's sister. Shaykh Hasan divorced her on Abû Sa'îd's order, and she became his favourite wife. Among the Turks and the Tatars their wives hold a high position; when they issue an order they
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say in it "By order of the Sultan and the Khátúns." Each khátún possesses several towns and districts and vast revenues, and when they travel with the sultan they have a separate camp. After this had gone on for some time the king married a woman called Dilshád, of whom he was very fond. He neglected Baghád Khátún, who became jealous and poisoned him with a kerchief. On his death his line became extinct, and the amírs seized the provinces for themselves. When they learned that it was Baghád Khátún who had poisoned him, they decided to put her to death. A Greek slave, called Khwája Lu‘lu’, who was one of the principal amírs, came to her while she was in her bath and beat her to death with his club. Her body lay there for some days, covered only with a piece of sacking.

I left Baghád with the mahalla of Sultan Abú Sa‘íd, on purpose to see the way in which the king’s marches are conducted, and travelled with it for ten days, thereafter accompanying one of the amírs to the town of Tabríz. We reached the town after ten days’ travelling, and encamped outside it in a place called ash-Shám. Here there is a fine hospice, where travellers are supplied with food, consisting of bread, meat, rice cooked in butter, and sweetmeats. The next morning I entered the town and we came to a great bazaar, called the Gházán bazaar, one of the finest bazaars I have seen the world over. Every trade is grouped separately in it. I passed through the jewellers’ bazaar, and my eyes were dazzled by the varieties of precious stones that I beheld. They were displayed by beautiful slaves wearing rich garments with a waist-sash of silk, who stood in front of the merchants, exhibiting the jewels to the wives of the Turks, while the women were buying them in large quantities and trying to outdo one another. As a result of all this I witnessed a riot—may God preserve
us from such! We went on into the ambergris and musk market, and witnessed another riot like it or worse.

We spent only one night at Tabríz. Next day the amír received an order from the sultan to rejoin him, so I returned along with him, without having seen any of the learned men there. On reaching the camp the amír told the sultan about me and introduced me into his presence. The sultan asked me about my country, and gave me a robe and a horse. The amír told him that I was intending to go to the Hijáz, whereupon he gave orders for me to be supplied with provisions and to travel with the cortege of the commander of the pilgrim caravan, and wrote instructions to that effect to the governor of Baghdád. I returned therefore to Baghdád and received in full what the sultan had ordered. As more than two months remained before the period when the pilgrim caravan was to set out, I thought it a good plan to make a journey to Mosul and Diyár Bakr to see those districts, and then return to Baghdád when the Hijáz caravan was due to start.

Leaving Baghdád we reached a station on the Dujayl canal, which is derived from the Tigris and waters a large tract of villages, and two days later stopped at a large village called Harba. From there we travelled to a place on the Tigris near a fort called al-Ma‘shúq, opposite which on the eastern bank, is the town of Surra-man-rá‘a or Sámarrá. This town is a total ruin and only a very small part of it remains. It has an equable climate and is exceedingly beautiful in spite of its disasters and the ruins of its noble buildings.\textsuperscript{28} One day further on we reached Takrít, a large city with fine markets and many mosques, whose inhabitants are distinguished by their good qualities. Two marches from there brought us to a village called al-‘Aqr, from which there is a con-
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tinuous strip of villages and cultivation to Mosul. We came next to some black land in which there are wells of pitch, like the one already mentioned between Kúfa and Basra, and two stages on from these wells we reached al-Mawsil [Mosul].

Mosul is an ancient and prosperous city, whose fortress, known as al-Hadbá’ ["The Humpback"], is famous for its strength. Next to it are the sultan’s palaces. These are separated from the town by a long and broad street, running from the top to the bottom of the town. Round the town run two strong walls, with close-set towers. So thick is the wall that there are chambers inside it one next the other all the way round. I have never seen city walls like it except at Delhi. Outside the town is a large suburb, containing mosques, baths, hosteries and markets. It has a cathedral mosque on the bank of the Tigris, round which there are lattice windows of iron, and adjoining it are platforms overlooking the river, exceedingly beautiful and well constructed. In front of the mosque there is a hospital, and there are two other cathedral mosques inside the town. The Qaysariya of Mosul is a fine building with iron gates.

From Mosul we journeyed to Jazírat ibn ‘Omar, a large town surrounded by the river, which is the reason why it is called Jazírah [island]. The greater part of it is in ruins. Its inhabitants are men of excellent character and very kind to strangers. The day that we stayed there we saw Mount Júdi, which is mentioned in the Book of God [the Koran] as that on which Noah’s vessel came to rest. Two stages from Jazírat ibn ‘Omar we reached the town of Nasíbín, an ancient town of moderate size, for the most part in ruins, lying in a wide and fertile plain. In this town rose-water is manufactured which is unequalled for perfume and sweetness. Round it there runs like a bracelet a river which flows from sources.
in a mountain close by. One branch enters the town, flows amidst its streets and dwellings, cuts through the court of the principal mosque, and empties into two basins. The town has a hospital and two madrasas.

Thereafter we travelled to the town of Sinjár, which is built at the foot of a mountain. Its inhabitants are Kurds, and are brave and generous. We went on next to the town of Dará, a large, ancient and glistening town, with an imposing fortress, but now in ruins and totally uninhabited. Outside it there is an inhabited village in which we stopped. We journeyed on from there and reached the town of Máridín, a great city at the foot of a hill, one of the most beautiful, striking and substantially built cities in the lands of Islám. Here they manufacture the woollen fabrics known by its name. At Máridín there is a fortress of exceptional height, situated on the hilltop. The sultan of Máridín at the time of my stay was al-Malik as-Salih. There is no one in Iráq, Syria or Egypt who is more openhanded than he, and poets and darwishes come to visit him and receive munificent gifts.

I then started to make my way back to Baghdad. On reaching Mosul I found its pilgrim caravan outside the city setting out for Baghdad and joined them. When we arrived at Baghdad I found the pilgrims preparing for the journey, so I went to visit the governor and asked him for the things which the sultan had ordered for me. He assigned me the half of a camel-litter and provisions and water for four persons, writing out an order to that effect, then sent for the leader of the caravan and commended me to him. I had already made the acquaintance of the latter, but our friendship was strengthened and I remained under his protection and favoured by his bounty, for he gave me even more than had been ordered for me. As we left Kúfa I fell ill of a diarrhoea and had to be dis-
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mounted from the camel many times a day. The commander of the caravan used to make enquiries for my condition and give instructions that I should be looked after. My illness continued until I reached Mecca, the Sanctuary of God (may He exalt her honour and greatness!). I made the circuit of the Sacred Edifice [the Ka'aba] on arrival, but I was so weak that I had to carry out the prescribed ceremonies seated, and I made the circuit and the ritual visitation of Safá and Marwa riding on the amír's horse. When we camped at Miná I began to feel relief and to recover from my malady. At the end of the Pilgrimage I remained at Mecca all that year, giving myself up entirely to pious exercises and leading a most agreeable existence. After the next Pilgrimage [of 1328] I spent another year there, and yet another after that.