

The Rise of the Seljuqs and their State in Central Asia

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Abstract: The Seljuqs, who arose in the 11th century CE in Central Asia, created one of the largest Muslim Empires in the Middle East, unifying the Muslim lands of the Abbasid east and giving a new impetus to the course of Muslim history. They were the most prominent Turkic Muslim dynasty prior to the Ottomans, with dominion throughout central Asia, Iran, Iraq, Kirman, Syria and Anatolia; it was the Seljuq threat to the Byzantine Empire that precipitated the Crusades. However, little is generally known of the origins and rise of the Suljuqs; this paper explores the course of the genesis of Seljuq power and authority. It traces the rise of the Seljuqs from a minor branch of a Turkic tribe through their incorporation into the fabric of the dwindling Samanid province, then the various manoeuvres and struggles that took place between them and rival Turkic peoples – the Ghaznavids and the Qarakhanids and the various wars for supremacy in Khurasan. It then charts the life and campaigns of Sultan Jalaluddin Malikshah, Sultan Rukn Al-Dunya Tughril Beg, relations with the Abbasid Caliphs (including marriage), the accession of Sultan Alp Arslan, campaigns against the Byzantines, along with numerous intra-Seljuq wars of succession and rebellions, and the important role of the vizier Nizamul Mulk. Based mainly on Arabic, Persian, Urdu and English sources, the study focuses on the intellectual legacy of the Seljuqs, including their interest in the progress of science and philosophy.

Key words: Seljuqs, Turkic Muslim, Central Asia, Abbasid Caliphate, Tughril Beg, Alp Arslan.

INTRODUCTION

The Oghuz became known in history as a cluster of nine tribes, the Toghuz-Oghuz, who shaped a large part of the Eastern Tiu-Kiu confederation; they are along with the Turkish peoples apostrophised in the Orkhon inscriptions in the 8th century (Bosworth, 210). The fame of this group inside the Tiu-Kiu Empire is recorded in the *Hudud al-Alam*: 'the kings of the whole of Turkistan in the days of old were from the Toghuz-Ghuz,' and the Oghuz-Qaghan, a grandson of Yafith, ancestor of the Turkish race as the legends recorded by Rashid ad-Din and Abul Ghazi.' (*Hudud al-Alam*, 94; Bosworth, 210). During the 8th century, the Oghuz confederacy shifted from the Eastern Tiu-Kiu, the Orkhan and Selenga valleys in Mongolia, westwards to the Irtysh, the Aral Sea and Syrdarya/Sayhun (Jaxartes) (*Hudud al-Alam*, 94).

Among the offspring of Turk bin Yafith, the tribe of Seljuq in Turkistan was perhaps the first to embrace Islam. During the tenth century, the eponymous founder of the Seljuq dynasty had moved with large groups of Oghuz equestrians (the Seljuqs were in fact a branch of the larger Oghuz nation of Turks) from their homeland near the Caspian Sea down into Central Asia, but some historians assert that their actual homeland was between Turkistan and China (al-Baladhuri, 420; Shah Moinuddin, 701; Ibrahim Kafesoglu, 23-24). Barthold explained this as being due to increasing pressure on the Oghuz from the Qipchaqs to the north; it was certainly related to increasing pressure on limited resources in the nomadic societies (i.e. a 'lack of land and pasturage', as with 'most of the great Turkish migrations in history') (Ravandi, 86; Barthold, 51-52; Ibrahim Kafesoglu, 24). The rise of Seljuqs Turks had already started during the caliphate of al-Qadir Billah (380/991-422/1031) (Shah Moinuddin, 701). Seljuq bin Duqaq or Luqman, the founder of the dynasty, was called *Tamir-Yaligh* (Iron-bow), famous for his valour and might. He served the 'king of the Turks,' the *yabghu* of the Oghuz. *Akhbar ad-Daula as-Saljuqiyya* maintains that Duqaq had refused to accept Yabghu's design to invade Muslim territory. Seljuq, Duqaq's son, had already assumed the position of *Subashi* (*Qaid al-jaish/Muqaddam al-jaish*, a general) in the service of Yabghu. Due to Seljuq's rising clout and position, Yabghu's wife became apprehensive and began inducing her husband against him. Hearing of this, Seljuq hurriedly escaped, taking with him his family members with great flocks of sheep and herds of horses, camels and cattle, initially establishing an encampment around Jand in the year 349/960, nominally an Oghuz city but in reality a border city between the Turkic and Islamic worlds (al-Husaini, 1; Ravandi, 86; Ibn Al-Athir, IX, 76; Ibrahim Kafesoglu, 24; Bosworth, 219-20). At this juncture, Seljuq took a momentous decision and decided to embrace Islam, whereupon he sought instruction in Islam and the Qur'an from learned scholars and jurists from Bukhara and Khwarazm. Whatever the sincerity of this conversion, it had very important implications politically; claiming that they would not pay tribute to non-Muslims, the Seljuq branch divorced itself from the Oghuz nation and embarked upon a *jihad* for Islam against them (al-Husaini, 1; Ibn Al-Athir, I, 163; Ibrahim Kafesoglu, 23). In this they were supported by the

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Samanids, who subsequently granted them the land of Nur, a border post to protect Bukhara and Samarqand from the Qarakhanids in 374/984-85 (Hamdullah Mustaufi, 434; Ibrahim Kafesoglu, 25). During the winter they lived at Nur Bukhara (actually a small town near Bukhara) and in summer they moved to Sughd at Samarqand. The Seljuqs thus found themselves as border guards between the two powers vying for domination of Central Asia. Seljuq settled in the lower reaches of the Syrdarya. He sired four sons: Arslan/Israil, Mikail, Musa Yabghu, Yusuf and Yunus. Due to their unity and strength many people joined their group, making them a powerful faction and later a tribe. After the death of Seljuq his children settled in different parts of *Mawara an-Nahr* (Transoxiana); Arslan occupied Bukhara (Al-Masudi, VII, 60-2; Zahir al-Din, 29; Bosworth, 215; Shah Moinuddin, 702).

When Sultan Mahmud Ghaznavi crossed the Oxus to make peace with the Ilak Khan, the ruler of Turkestan and Samarqand, the latter voiced his concern about the Seljuqs' presence in the region, and persuaded Sultan Mahmud to take instant action against the Seljuqs, a threat to both powers. Mahmud became very apprehensive after observing and evaluating their strength, thus he invited Arslan for a discussion. Sultan Mahmud welcomed Arslan by showering much favour on him (Ravandi, 87-88; Ibn al-Athir, IX, 377; Zahir al-Din, 29, 31), but subsequently captured him in 416/1025 and imprisoned him in the fort of Kalinjar in India for seven years, where he died in detention in the year 423/1032 (Hamdullah Mustaufi, 435; Gardizi, 84-85; Mirkhwand, 104; Ibn al-Athir, IX, 377; Nazim, 63-4; Zahir al-Din, 29, 32; Shah Moinuddin, 702).

According to Ravandi, two Turcoman tribesmen came and successfully helped him escape from the fortress. However, the next morning they were caught; Arslan's parting words to the Turkemans were 'go and greet my brothers and say, put a great effort and strive hard to acquire the kingdom of Khurasan. Sultan Mahmud is the son of a slave and he has no high ancestry, and this sultanate will not survive for long. One day we will become the masters of the sultanate' (Ravandi, 93; Zahir al-Din, 32; Shah Moinuddin, 702).

Sultan Mahmud allowed them to stay in Khurasan, hoping that they would furnish recruits for his army. During Sultan Mahmud's lifetime they made no move, nor did they cause any brawl or rebellion. Arslan Jazib, the governor of Tus, advised the Sultan to proclaim a general order to cut off their thumbs so that they could no longer draw a bow. Sultan Mahmud rejected the idea. Consequently, 4,000 Guzz families under their chieftains crossed the Oxus and were allowed to settle on the desert of Sarakhs, Farwah, and Abidard, but as a preventative measure the Sultan forbade them to keep weapons of any kind and required them to inhabit scattered places. Sultan Mahmud shortly realized that he made a blunder in permitting the Seljuqs to settle in Khurasan. At the end of 418/1027, the inhabitants of Nasa and Abidard were in duress and protested to Sultan of the violence they suffered at the hands of the Seljuqs. The Sultan sent Arslan Jazib to punish them, but all his efforts to defeat them proved fruitless. The Seljuqs had become so strong that the regional governor was incapable of crushing their power. At last, Sultan Mahmud, in spite of his ill health, personally moved against Seljuqs in 419/1028. He marched to Tus and instructed Arslan Jazib to fight the enemy with full force (Gardizi, 93-4; Ibn al-Athir, IX, 475-76; Nazim, 64-66).

During that period, Mikail also received martyrdom against non-Muslim Turks. He was survived by his two sons, Chaghri Beg Abu Sulaymn Daud and Abu Talib Tughril Beg Muhammad. They became respected leaders of their tribe and kinsmen and moved from Jand to Nur Bukhara. However, Ali Tegin, the Amir of Bukhara, disliked their presence and attempted to evict them. As a result of severe losses inflicted by the forces of Ali Tegin and his Qarakhanid allies, the Seljuqs were forced to withdraw toward Khwarazm. Nevertheless, they stayed in an area set aside for them by Harun Altun Shah, the Khwarazm Shah, in 426/1035 (Ibn al-Athir, IX, 477; Baihiqi, 445, 687). After some time, Harun betrayed the Seljuqs by killing, looting and plundering their belongings. Finally, they moved towards Marv, requesting permission from Sultan Masud (1031-1041) to stay in Khurasan to be ready to fight against the Ghaznavids' enemies. However, Masud ordered his men to arrest the Seljuqs' envoy and dispatched a strong force to expel them from Khurasan. While battle was in progress Chaghri Beg made a counter attack that inflicted defeat on the Ghaznavid army (Baihiqi, 536-45, 570; Ibrahim Kafesoglu, 35). Sultan Masud also sent an insulting letter to Tughril and Daud. In their reply to Sultan, they quoted the following Qur'anic verse:

Say: "O Allah! Lord of Power (and Rule) thou givest Power to whom Thou pleasest and Thou strippest off power from whom Thou pleasest thou enduest with honour whom thou pleasest and thou bringest low whom Thou pleasest; in Thy hand is all Good. Verily over all things thou hast power (Al-Imran).

Receiving this reply, Sultan Masud wrote a friendly letter and sent robes of honour by assigning the areas of Dihistan to Daud, Nasa to Tughril Beg and Frawa to Payghu. They ignored the Ghaznavid emissary and rejected the royal offer. Now the Seljuqs openly challenged the Ghaznavid authority in Khurasan by defeating the Ghaznavid forces at every front. The Governor asked for help from Sultan but he was preoccupied in his Indian campaign. At last, all officials from Bukhara urged that if something was not done to prevent the safety and security of Khurasan then the whole region would be lost from the Sultan's domain. At this alarming situation, Sultan Masud dispatched Subashi, the *hajib* (chamberlain) with a contingent of 30,000 troops to defend the region. A wily general, he stationed his soldiers at Herat and Nishapur for a few days as a diversion before a surprise march on Marv, which he raided; the Seljuqs were caught utterly unprepared. This sudden

attack exhausted the Seljuqs and comprised a major Ghaznavid victory (Baihiqi, 536-45; Ibn al-Athir, IX, 478; Zahir al-Din, 39; Bosworth, 244). In the meantime, the ruler of Jurjan attacked the Seljuqs, but Daud defeated and killed him. This victory boosted Seljuq morale and they rose to high spirits. After this success a *khutba* was read in Daud's name on Friday 3, Rajab 428/ 22 April 1037. Subashi was terrified by the Seljuqs' rising power, and he never dared to fight them directly; thus he managed to protract his campaign until all provisions were exhausted, moving aimlessly from one camp to another. Finally, Daud defeated him and captured Khurasan on Monday, 6 Sha'ban 428/23 May 1037 at the gates of Sarakhs. This battle rendered the Seljuqs the masters of Khurasan (Ibn al-Athir, IX, 479; Ibrahim Kafesoglu, 34; Bosworth, 246).

Sultan Rukn al-Dunya Tughril Beg Muhammad bin Mika'il bin Seljuq (429/1038-455/1063).

Battle of Khurasan:

Tughril Beg arrived at Nishapur in Ramadan 429/June 1038 and sat upon the throne at Shadhyakh, where Ibrahim Yinal had begun to read the *khutba* with the title 'al-Sultan al-Muazzam'. With this, trouble and turmoil started among the people of the city. He issued a decree that no one was allowed to molest the residents of the city and the peasants. Daud continued the previous administrative set-up of Khurasan. Hearing this news, Sultan Masud came with a strong force to Khurasan. When Sultan Masud heard of the defeat and the heavy losses of the Ghaznavid army, he swiftly marched towards Khurasan making full preparation, pursuing Seljuq forces. They entered the desert and Sultan Masud chased them. The Ghaznavid army was disorganized and very much frustrated due to their continuous engagements in war. The royal army, composed of 50,000 cavalry and foot soldiers with 300 combat elephants, came to Balkh and hurriedly marched to Sarakhs, augmented by new forces that arrived from different areas. Chaghri Beg was in Sarakhs, to which Tughril Beg marched after mustering his soldiers from Nishapur, and Musa Yabghu from Marv, with his vanguard of 20,000 troops. Chaghri Beg was among those who supported immediately facing the Ghaznavids in a conventional war (Baihiqi, 553-54; Yaqut, 477; Ibn al-Athir, IX, 480), but the Seljuqs were unable to face the constant threat of all the forces of the Sultan in a protracted war during the month of Ramadan 430/May 1039, so they tactically migrated to the desert, where it was unfeasible for the Ghaznavid army to follow them, and fought a war of attrition.

Meanwhile, Sultan Masud entered Nishapur in the month of Safar 431/November 1039. Under duress from constant hit-and-run guerilla attacks, the Ghaznavid army engaged itself in preparation for desert warfare. In spring, the Seljuqs decided, at the persistence of Chaghri Beg, to face the Sultan. However, the Ghaznavid army was lured towards the desert by keeping away from Sarakhs. In this desert, the Seljuqs had damaged all the wells. In a waterless desert, the morale of the massive Ghaznavid army was shaken due to incessant harassments and persistent raids. At last, near Marv, the Seljuqs fought fearlessly and inflicted a crushing defeat on the Ghaznavid army before the fortress of Dandanqan, after three days of non-stop combat (7-9 Ramadan 431/22-24 May 1040). The Seljuqs seized the Ghaznavid commissariat, including treasure and numerous weapons and supplies. Sultan Masud himself managed to escape with his supporters towards Hindustan, but was later murdered by his own followers (Baihiqi, 571, 616-26; Gardizi, 85, 108; Ibn al-Athir, IX, 329-30, 480; Sadruddin, 8; Ravadi, 100; Juzjani, I, 296; Bosworth, 229). The significance of the battle of Dandanqan was a prelude to the Seljuqs' sovereignty. Now, after a stiff resistance, they realized the ambition of Arslan bin Seljuq, and in the meeting they held after the Friday prayer they proclaimed Tughril Beg the Sultan of the Seljuq sultanate (Baihiqi, 628; Ravandi, 103; Ibrahim Kafesoglu, 35).

Tughril Beg's Pledge to Abbasid Caliph Qaim bi Amr Allah (422/1031-466/1074).

Tughril Beg dispatched a letter to Qaim bi Amr Allah, the Abbasid Caliph, by Abu Ishaq al-Fuqqai, informing him of the recent development: that justice had been maintained in Khurasan, there would be no departure from shariah, and that the Seljuqs would be faithful to the caliph. In harmony with the old Turkish custom of state, the realm that had been occupied and those to be subjugated in the future were distributed among the three Seljuq chiefs. Marv, the center of the territories between the Oxus and Ghazna, and the cities of Sarakhs and Balkh, were assigned to Malik Al-Muluk Chaghri Beg; the areas of Bust and Sistan, centered on Herat, were given to Musa Yabghu, who was also called Yabghu Kalan, who captured Herat with the help of 5,000 cavalymen. Iraq and the area to the west was given to Tughril Beg, with Nishapur as its capital. Other members of the dynasty were also assigned land, like Ibrahim Yinal in Kuhistan; Qutalmish was assigned Gurgan and Damghan; and the districts of Kirman were allocated to Qavurd. All of the above territories were under the control of Sultan. At the end of 431/1040, Er-Tash went to Sistan and brought the region under his control and the *khutba* was read on Yabghu's name. The ruler of Sistan, Abul-Fadl pledged his loyalty to the Seljuqs. However, Musa Yabghu brought the region and the whole area around Bust under his direct control (Ravandi, 103; Ibrahim Kafesoglu, 36; Bosworth, 250).

Mawdud (1041-1050), the son of Sultan Masud, dispatched his commander Qiamaz to recuperate Sistan from the Seljuqs, but Abul Fadl routed the Ghaznavid forces in Dhil Qa'dah 433/ July 1042. Despite the fact that Tughril Beg was on his mission in Khwarazm, Er-Tash detained Shah Malik, the Amir of Jand, and sent him to Chaghri Beg's son Tash. In 442/1051, Tughril, the Ghaznavid grand chamberlain, captured the city of

Zarang, which was the main city of Sistan. Musa's son Qara-Arslan Bori came from Herat to recapture the city, but was forced to withdraw by the rapid attack. Yaquti son of Chaghri Beg arrived at Sistan and captured the region of Makran. In Rajab 446/October 1054, ensuing Tughril Beg's departure, Sistan again slipped back to Musa's control (*Tarikh-i-Sistan*, 371-375,381; Ibrahim Kafesoglu, 36).

Tughril Beg's Arrival at Baghdad:

In Muharram 447/April 1055, Tughril Beg embarked on the project of performing Hajj and started his journey en route to Makkah, and also determined to look into the affairs of Syria and Egypt. He instructed his men for the preparation of provision and fodder at Dinawar, Qarmisin, Hulwan and elsewhere. On hearing the news of Tughril Beg's arrival in Baghdad and his overthrow of the Buwayhids (a Shia sect who had effectively imprisoned the Abbasids), the Caliph ordered that the *khutba* be read in his name and coins be struck in his name, and assigned the title *Rukn Al-Dawla* Abu Talib Tughril Beg on Friday 23 Ramadan 447/15 December 1055. Tughril Beg secured permission to enter Baghdad on Monday 24 Ramadan 447/18 December 1055. Tughril Beg brought the Caliph al-Qaim from 'Ana and took the bridle of his horse and accompanied him through the Nubian gate to establish his throne on Monday 25 Dhil Qa'da 451/2 January 1060 (Ibn al-Athir, IX, 609; Ravandi, 105; Zahir al-Din, 41; Ibrahim Kafesoglu, 42).

Tughril Beg's Departure from Baghdad and Death:

After resolving the affairs of Baghdad, Tughril Beg asked the Caliph's blessing for departure to Rayy on Thursday 9 Rabiul Awwal 455/13 March 1063 (Ibn al-Jawzi, I, 99; Ibn al-Athir, X, 26; Zahir al-Din, 45). The Sultan stopped en route at Tabriz and solemnized his marriage with Ba'quba, the Caliph's daughter. On his journey from Tabriz to the city of Rayy, a non-stop haemophilic nosebleed overtook the Sultan. He halted for rest in the suburbs of Rayy at Qasran-i-Biruni in the village of Tajrisht due to its excellent climate. However, the blood could not be clogged by applying any medicine. He died issueless on Friday 8 Ramadan 455/5 September 1063 at the age of seventy years, selecting his nephew Alp Arslan as his heir (Ibn al-Athir, X, 26).

Accession of Sultan Alp Arslan Muhammad Ibn Daud Chaghri Beg (455/1063-465/1072)

After Tughril Beg's death, his vizier Amid al-Mulk al-Kunduri placed on the throne Sulayman, the son of Daud Chaghri Beg, in 455/1063. However, some of the Amirs did not accept the new ruler. The dissident Amirs thus went to Qazvin and read the *khutba* in Alp Arslan's name in Dhul Qa'da 455/ October 1063. The masses were very much inclined towards Alp Arslan. Nevertheless, his enthronement was celebrated at Rayy on Tuesday 7 Jamidil Awwal 456/27 April 1064 at the age of thirty-six. Once Amid al-Mulk al-Kunduri realized the changing affairs, he ordered that the *khutba* in Rayy be read in Alp Arslan's name and subsequently for his brother, Sulayman. Sultan Alp Arslan appointed Hasan ibn Ali, better known as Nizamul Mulk, as his own vizier and moved his capital to Isfahan (Ibn al-Athir, X, 29; Ibrahim Kafesoglu, 45).

In the meantime Sultan Alp Arslan detained Tughril Beg's vizier Amid al-Mulk al-Kunduri and sent him to the jail at Marv al-Rudh on Saturday 17 Muharram 456/10 January 1064. He was executed on the Sultan's orders in Dhil Hijjah 456/November-December 1064, in the same year the Sultan conquered the territories of Khatlan, Herat and Saghaniyan. Sultan Alp Arslan decided to return the Princess Ba'quba (the Caliph's daughter) to Baghdad, informing her that he had only detained Amid al-Mulk due to his indecent act of forcibly moving her from Baghdad to Rayy without the Caliph's consent. Aytegin al-Sulaymani was ordered to escort the Princess to Baghdad and instructed that make sure the name of Sultan Alp Arslan be read in the *khutba*. The Caliph held a public assembly and Alp Arslan was proclaimed Sultan on Thursday 7 Jamad al-Akhir 456/27 May 1064 (Ibn al-Athir, X, 34; Ibrahim Kafesoglu, 45-6).

Qutalmish's Revolt:

Qutalmish, a direct descendant of Seljuq, and chief of Konya, Kaysari, Aqsaray and Malatya, became rebellious, mustered a huge army and decided to capture the city of Rayy. Hearing this news, Alp Arslan sent a strong force in advance to defend the city by the way of the desert to Rayy. He himself marched towards Rayy on 1 Muharram 456/25 December 1063. Upon reaching Damghan he sent a message instructing Qutalmish to abandon his plan, reminding him of his blood ties. Qutalmish sacked the surrounding villages and inundated the Salt Valley, a swampy region. It was quite difficult for Alp Arslan to cross the marshes. However, Nizamul Mulk had already raised a veteran army at Khurasan, which helped the Sultan to defeat Qutalmish. The Prince's army escaped in panic and he was later found dead. The Sultan was very much grieved and cried when told of Qutalmish's death. He entered the city of Rayy during the last days of Muharram 456/January 1064 (Ibn al-Athir, X, 36-7; Ibrahim Kafesoglu, 47).

Conquest of the City of Ani:

The Sultan marched towards Marand, a small town in Azerbaijan, aiming for *jihad* in Byzantine territories in the beginning of Rabi al-Awwal 456/February 1064. Tughtegin, a Turcoman Amir, volunteered himself as a guide for the campaign. The Sultan ordered the preparation of adequate boats to attack the region of Georgia.

He delegated command of his army to Jalaluddin Malikshah his son and Nizamul Mulk, who after a fierce battle captured the Byzantine castle, which was assigned to the Amir of Nakhchevan ((Ibn al-Athir, X, 38).

Jalaluddin Malikshah and Nizamul Mulk marched towards the Armenian city of Miryam Nashin, a fortified and well-populated Christian town. After fierce fighting and barrage, Muslims successfully scaled the solid stone walls and captured the city. Alp Arslan joined with his son and vizier and he was very much delighted with their achievements. On the way they reached Sudidh Shahr, and after stiff resistance Muslims conquered the city. In this battle many Muslims received martyrdom, but they opened the city for Islam (al-Husaini, 37; Ibn al-Athir, X, 38-9).

The Sultan marched to the city of Axalk'alak'i, a walled city on an elevated rock, with two sides running along a large winding river. Due to its strategic location, the Sultan constructed a bridge over the river and rigorous fighting ensued. Muslims were misled by the enemy but nevertheless triumphed. The Sultan entered the town and completed a memorable victory in Rajab 456/June 1064. Many people subsequently embraced Islam, and mosques were erected (Ibn al-Athir, X, 39).

The Sultan then proceeded towards Ani, an affluent and well-equipped city that was extremely difficult to besiege. After stiff resistance, the Muslims were able to mine the wall and entered the city. In this encounter a large number of non-Muslims were killed and immense booty was gained. On the promise of payment of annual tribute, peace was restored. On his return journey, the Sultan came to Isfahan and then went to Kirman, where he was welcomed by Qavurt Beg. From there he moved to Marv, where he married his son Jalaluddin Malikshah with the daughter of Khaqan, the ruler of Transoxiana. He also married his other son Arslanshah to the daughter of the ruler of Ghazna. Sultan Alp Arslan also paid a visit to the mausoleum of Seljuq, his great-grandfather, at Jand near the Aral Sea (Ibn al-Athir, X, 40-1; Ibn al-Jawzi, 121; al-Bundari, 31).

Jalaluddin Malikshah's Nomination as Successor:

Alp Arslan designated his son Jalaluddin Malikshah as heir apparent in 458/1065. On this auspicious occasion the Sultan bestowed robes of honour on his nobles and the *khutba* was read in Jalaluddin Malikshah's name. He assigned Mazandaran to Amir Inanj, Balkh to Sulayman ibn Daud Chaghri Beg, Khwarazm to Arslan Arghun, Marv to Arslanshah, the region of Saghaniyan and Tukharistan to Ilyas, Baghshur and its environs to Masud ibn Irtash and the area of Asfazar to Mawdud ibn Irtash (Ibn al-Athir, X, 50).

Rebellion of Qara Arslan:

Qara Arslan, the chief of Kirman, rebelled against the authority of Alp Arslan by removing his name from the *khutba* in Muharram 459/November 1066. On hearing this news, the Sultan marched to Kirman and in the first encounter he defeated enemy's advanced guard. Qara Arslan escaped to Jiruft and asked for mercy. The Sultan accepted his plea and restored his authority, giving him rich gifts and a robe of honour. After restoring peace, the Sultan came to Istakhr via Fars and took control of the fort by replacing its governor (Ibn al-Athir, X, 53; Ibn al-Jawzi, 132).

Death of Sultan Alp Arslan:

Sultan Alp Arslan had crossed the river Oxus and marched to Transoxiana that was ruled by the Qarakhanid Shams al-Mulk Nasr (460/1068-472/1080). Alp Arslan's men captured the small fortress Barzam adjacent to the water and brought its superintendent Yusuf al-Khwarazmi before the Sultan for punishment. The Sultan interrogated al-Khwarazmi about the condition of the area and his armed strength. Yusuf betrayed the Sultan by giving false information. The latter ordered his execution by being fixed out on stakes. Nevertheless, Yusuf challenged the Sultan concerning the way of his punishment, whereupon he was released; the Sultan shot an arrow at him but missed. Yusuf unexpectedly stabbed the Sultan on 6 Rabi al-Awwal 465/21 November 1072; the Sultan stood up and entered another tent, but died from the wound on 10 Rabi al-Awwal 465/24 November 1072 at the age of forty. He was renowned for valor and courage (Ibn al-Athir, X, 73-4; Ibn al-Jawzi, 165-66; Zahir al-Din, 53-4).

Accession of Jalaluddin Malikshah (445/1053-485/1092)

After receiving his fatal injury, Alp Arslan nominated his son Jalaluddin Malikshah as his heir, and ordered his army pledge loyalty to him. In spite of the survival of nine brothers elder and younger than him, the accession to the sultanate was safe for Jalaluddin Malikshah. This process was completed smoothly because of the greatest efforts undertaken by Nizamul Mulk. Jalaluddin Malikshah dispatched a letter to Baghdad requesting that his name be included in the *khutba*. Jalaluddin Malikshah was also advised by Alp Arslan to assign the provinces of Fars and Kirman to his brother Qavurt Beg ibn Daud. Alp Arslan also instructed that the close family members be treated gently and given their due (Ibn al-Athir, X, 76; Ibn al-Jawzi, 160; al-Bundari, 47; al-Husaini, 56).

Jalaluddin Malikshah left Transoxiana and came to Nishapur on Friday 16 Rabiul Thani 465/28 December 1072, and he reconfirmed Nizamul Mulk on his position as vizier. A proclamation was sent to all the governors instructing them to recite the *khutba* in Jalaluddin Malikshah's name. The new Sultan kept himself busy by

overcoming domestic as well as external problems; Qavurt Beg rebelled against his rule simultaneous with an attack by the Qarakhanids and Ghaznavids. The Sultan captured Qavurt on 4 Sha'ban 465/10 May 1073. In the meantime, the Abbasid Caliph confirmed him as the successor of Alp Arslan. The royal army successfully chased the Qarakhanids up to Samarqand. Jalaluddin Malikshah exonerated Sham al-Mulk, the Qarakhanid. Similarly, Malikshah's forces coerced Zahir al-Dawla Ibrahim, Ghaznavid to sue for peace. Jalaluddin Malikshah decided to make Isfahan his capital (Ibn al-Athir, X, 77; Ibn al-Jawzi, 166; Zahir al-Din, 54-5, 57).

Capture of Tirmidh by Sultan Jalaluddin Malikshah:

After strengthening the administration, Jalaluddin Malikshah marched to Tirmidh and besieged the city in the year 467/1074. The defiant Bughategin, brother of the chief of Bukhara, came out and submitted; the Sultan received him with benevolence and presented him with robes of honour. After settling the affairs of Tirmidh, the Sultan marched to Samarqand, where the rebel leader deserted the city. He sought peace through Nizamul Mulk and pleaded for mercy, which was granted. The Sultan departed for Khurasan and from there to Rayy (Ibn al-Athir, X, 77; al-Husaini, 56; al-Bundari, 47).

Jalaluddin Malikshah set out for Kirman to meet his cousin Sultanshah ibn Qavurt Beg in Muharram 473/June 1080. Sultanshah went ahead to welcome the Sultan by presenting rich gifts. Jalaluddin Malikshah marched to Rayy after scrutinizing the army and dismissing 7,000 soldiers from his regular army in Shaban 473/January 1081. The dismissed soldiers joined the army of Tekish, the Sultan's brother. Tekish rebelled against the Sultan Jalaluddin Malikshah by capturing Marv al-Rudh, Marv al-Shahjahan, Tirmidh and other towns. On hearing the news of Tekish revolt Jalaluddin Malikshah swiftly reached to Nishapur before Tekish could capture the town; hearing of the Sultan's arrival at Nishapur, Tekish shut himself at Tirmidh, confining the Sultan's men there. However, a peace deal was arranged and Tekish unconditionally surrendered to the Sultan (Ibn al-Athir, X, 116; Ibn al-Jawzi, 206).

Tekish took the chance of launching another rebellion when the Sultan was away. He captured Marv al-Rudh and its neighbouring towns, including a fortress close to Sarakhs, in 477/1085. The Sultan came to Khurasan and captured Tekish on Thursday 9 Jamadil Thani 478/2 October 1085. Finally, he was imprisoned in the fortress of Fayruzkuh on 20 Ramadan 478/9 January 1086 (Ibn al-Athir, X, 116; Ibn al-Jawzi 1937, IX, 4).

Caliph Muqtadi bi Amr Allah's Marriage with the Daughter of Jalaluddin Malikshah:

The Caliph's vizier Fakhr al-Dawla Abu Nasr ibn Jahir came to Isfahan seeking a matrimonial alliance between Sultan Jalaluddin Malikshah's daughter and the Caliph Muqtadi bi Amr Allah. The Sultan instructed Nizamul Mulk to seek the opinion of the Queen, Turkan Khatun. They presented their request to her and she responded that the ruler of Ghazna and the Qarakhanid princes were seeking the hand of the Princess for their sons, presenting 100,000 dinars. Arslan Khatun, the widow of the Caliph Qaim bi Amr Allah, intervened and told that the royal alliance with the Caliph was more prestigious. The Princess accepted her advice and the marriage was facilitated by the Caliph paying 50,000 dinars in advance. The other conditions included that the Caliph would not keep concubines or other wives. The marriage was solemnized in grand ceremony in Muharram 480/April 1087 with great pomp and show (Ibn al-Athir, X, 120; Ibn al-Jawzi, 214,244-5; Ibn al-Jawzi 1937, IX, 4).

Capture of Transoxiana by Sultan Jalaluddin Malikshah:

In the year 482/1090, Sultan Jalaluddin Malikshah had taken stern action against the chief of Samarqand, the tyrant Ahmad Khan, a nephew of the Queen Turkan Khatun. Due to his tyranny, the inhabitants complained secretly to Sultan Jalaluddin Malikshah asking for help. The Sultan mustered his forces and marched to Khurasan by crossing the River Oxus, landing at Bukhara. The Sultan besieged Samarqand and soon Jalaluddin Malikshah's soldiers scaled the fortifications and captured the tyrant Ahmad Khan. Sultan Jalaluddin Malikshah appointed Amir Abu Tahir to lead Samarqand, and he himself marched towards Kashgar, where he ordered the ruler to recite the *khutba* and strike coins in the Sultan's name. At last, he returned to Khurasan (Ibn al-Athir, X, 171-72; Ibn al-Jawzi 1937, IX, 58-9; al-Husaini, 65).

Assassination of NizamulMulk:

Sultan Jalaluddin Malikshah and his vizier Nizamul Mulk left Isfahan for Baghdad on Tuesday 1 Ramadan 485/5 October 1092. On reaching a village near Nihavand he said that 'this is the place where several Companions were killed during the time of Caliph Umar. Blessed are those that were with them'. He was killed the same night at the same place, after breaking his fast while preparing to go to family tent; a Daylami youth in a Sufi costume addressed Nizamul Mulk with a blessing and requested him to accept a petition. As Nizamul Mulk rose out his hand to get hold of the petition, the assassin stabbed him in the chest with a dagger on 10 Ramadan 485/14 October 1092. He was immediately taken to his tent where he died. His assassin was instantly killed while he tried to escape (Ibn al-Athir, X, 204; al-Husaini, 66-7; al-Bundari, 63).

Sultan Jalaluddin Malikshah's Death:

After the murder of Nizamul Mulk, Sultan Jalaluddin Malikshah departed for Baghdad and reached it on 24 Ramadan 485/28 October 1092. He nominated Taj al-Mulk as the new vizier and ordered that a robe must be prepared according to his status. Meanwhile, the Sultan went hunting and became sick, returning on 3 Shawwal 485/7 November 1092. His health deteriorated and the condition was much aggravated due to the severity of disease. He died on Friday 15 Shawwal 485/19 November 1092. Queen Turkan Khatun concealed his death, carrying the corpse to Isfahan. She bribed the Amirs for the elevation of her son Mahmud to the throne. The reign of Sultan Jalaluddin Malikshah was also known for its patronage of the development of science and astronomy, including inviting the famous mathematician Omar Khayyam to join his court (Ibn al-Athir, X, 210-11; Ibn al-Jawzi 1937, IX, 62; al-Bundari, 70).

Ghiyathal-Din Abul Fath Omar al-Khayyam Ibn Ibrahim Al-Nishapuri (435/1044-516/1123)

Omar al-Khayyam was born in Nishapur, 435/1144. As a precocious child he learned mathematics and astronomy, for which he was famous in his lifetime; he is now more famous as a poet and philosopher (principally for his *Rubaiyat*). During his childhood he was fascinated by watching the night sky, and spent much of his time on the roof of his house. He was a born genius, ahead of his time, known as 'The Imam of Khurasan.' He observed and described the shining and blur of the Milky Way (*Darbal-Labbana*). Omar al-Khayyam entered the madrasa of Imam Mowaffaq Nishapuri after excelling in the entrance examination. He continued his intellectual journey in different Central Asian cities, particularly Balkh and Samarqand. He worked on and unlocked mathematical ambiguities by concluding formulas together with books on the rules leading to the positive roots of numbers like *Sharh-i Mushkil min Kitab al-Musiqi* (The Mathematical Structure of Music) (Kasir, 1; Nasr, 52-3; Morgan, 107; Mahaini, 95).

Omar al-Khayyam during his stay at Balkh, Samarqand and Nishapur, wrote the mode of resolving the cubic equations for students' higher-level mathematical studies, for example the cubic equation:

$$x^3 + 200x = 20x^2 + 2000$$

He solved this by an intersection of semicircle:

$$y^2 = (x-10)(20-x) \text{ and equilateral hyperbola: } xy = 10\sqrt{2}(x-10)$$

Moreover, Omar al-Khayyam found that binomial expansion increases the power of sums. In 1077, he gave a critique on Euclid's theory of parallels entitled *Sharh ma ashkala min musadarat kitab Uqlidis* (On the Difficulties of Euclid's Definitions). There were anxieties in Omar al-Khayyam's life due to momentary assignments and financial difficulties that hindered his works. He was looking for a potential benefactor like Sayid Abu Tahir, an eminent jurist of Samarqand whose sponsorship enabled him to complete his work on algebra, *Maqalat fi al-Jabr al-Muqabila* (Treatise on Demonstration of Problems of Algebra), which firmly established his reputation as a great mathematician (Daoud, 44; Morgan, 107, 110).

Omar al-Khayyam classified several algebraic equations based on their intricacy, and documented fourteen different types of cubic equations. He formulated a geometrical approach to resolving equations, which involved a unique option of proper conics. He solved cubic equations by interconnecting a parabola with a circle.

Omar al-Khayyam came to the attention of the Sultan Jalaluddin Malikshah, who invited him to Isfahan in 1073. Omar al-Khayyam got this opportunity due to his old links with the Grand Vizier Nizamul Mulk, who helped gain his appointment by the Sultan as the court mathematician and astronomer. In Isfahan he was assigned the task of establishing an observatory and recalculating the calendar. Besides being chief of a research team of mathematicians and astronomers he embarked on the project of producing a definitive and perfect calendar in 1079 (Daoud, 1). His calendar was one of his greatest contributions in the field of astronomy; a refinement of the Jalali calendar, his ideal solar calendar was a tribute to the honour of his patron, Sultan Jalaluddin Malikshah Seljuq. Omar al-Khayyam's calendar is an amazing feat of manual calculation without modern devices. He determined the year's length to be 365.242198156 days; a modern calculation, with the aid of the Hubble telescope, atomic clocks and computers, determined the length of the year to be 365.242190 days. Omar al-Khayyam's error in the sixth decimal place represents an error of a fraction of a second (Morgan, 112-3; Mahaini, 99). His work on astronomy commenced a new epoch starting from 10 Ramadan 471/17 March 1079 in the early history of Islamic astronomy (Daoud, 2).

After the death of Sultan Jalaluddin Malikshah, Omar al-Khayyam was compelled to abandon his position and to leave Isfahan. He fell into numerous controversies with the *ulama* regarding his beliefs. Finally, he was required to visit Makkah for a pilgrimage. In 1018, he was fortunate to be summoned by Sultan Sanjar to his new capital city in Merv. Soon it became an important center of Islamic learning, and in that atmosphere, Khayyam added more works in the field of mathematics. He worked there for several years, before dying in his childhood city of Nishapur in 1131 (Morgan, 111-12; Mahaini, 101).

Conclusion:

The Seljuqs of the Oghuz Turks established their Sunni Muslim Empire in the first quarter of the 11th century and later controlled a vast area stretching from the Hindu Kush to eastern Anatolia and from Central Asia to the Persian Gulf. Starting from their homelands near the Aral Sea, the Seljuqs advanced first into Khurasan and then into mainland Persia prior to the capture of eastern Anatolia. They united the politically divided eastern Muslim lands and played a major role in Islamic history. The Seljuq rulers espoused and supported local Perso-Islamic traditions, and are recognized for merging together Perso-Islamic and Central Asian-Turkic elements. During this period, Persian arts gained prominence throughout the Islamic world (e.g. the famous art of inlaying bronze or brass objects with valuable metal works including copper, silver, and gold became well-known in the region of Khurasan). The Seljuqs were the patrons of architecture and built fine buildings such as the Madrasa Nizamiya in Baghdad and the Jama' Masjid in Isfahan. Additionally, scientific disciplines continued to flourish under their rule, as manifest in the one of the greatest mathematicians and astronomers of all time – Omar al-Khayyam.

The Seljuqs came to be seen as restorers of Muslim unity under the Abbasids, and invigorated the dream of universal caliphate. They left not only a perpetual impact on Central Asian history and civilization, but also became originators of the biggest empire in the Middle East in the eleventh century. Their rule lasted for more than three centuries in the regions of Iran, Iraq, Kirman, Syria and Anatolia.

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