

'wherefore' is multiplying. This leads us to acknowledge that mere mechanical explanation does not work out satisfactorily and therefore we must employ teleological explanation somewhere. We should try to understand the purpose which is behind the creation of the Universe and man. We should also try our level best to adapt ourselves to the system of life which serves the purpose. If we are unable to achieve this right adjustment we shall end in frustration and ultimately in destruction to which the present world is moving due to its ignorance of the purpose of life and creation.

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THE MONGOL INVASION OF PERSIA

(An attempt to evaluate the significance of the immediate causes of the catastrophe and to determine the claim of its inevitability)

It is an old adage that small things give rise to great and significant occurrences. The Mongol invasion of Persia affords conclusive proof of the truth of this adage, if proof indeed is needed.

The series of incidents, insignificant in themselves, which led directly or indirectly to the invasion of Persia by the Mongols may be studied profitably both by the historian and the critic who seek to understand the causal relationship which exists between historical episodes and the literary traditions of the country concerned.

It would perhaps be expedient, before we approach the core of the subject, to give a bird's-eye view of the Islamic states which were to bear the brunt of the invasion, because one of them, namely Khwarazm, was inopportune or audacious enough to challenge and defy the authority of the Mongols. The Islamic world as it was to come in contact with the Mongols was constituted as follows by the end of the sixth and the beginning of the seventh century A.H.

Khwarazm was held by Sultan Ala-ud-Din Mohammad who was an amazing mixture of contrasts—maliciously cruel and inordinately weak, pointlessly tyrannical and inopportunately generous, festering under the yoke of his mother's influence and suffering correspondingly from complexes of a very grave nature. Of him more anon.

When he came to the throne a part of what is now known as Afghanistan and a part of India was held by the Ghauri Kings. Ghiath-ud-Din and Shahab-ud-Din of the House of Ghaur, often enough, came to grips with the King of Khwarazm but more

often than not were repulsed. There was consequently trouble on the border and many 'incidents' which were either diplomatically settled or resolved by the arbiter of all arbitors, *viz.*, force. This, as may be imagined, created conditions which, to say the least, were unstable. The situation, as it were, remained always fraught with danger and explosion could be expected at any moment.

In 607 A.H. the Indian possession of the Ghauri Kings fell into the lap of a slave who possessed both courage and prudence—Aibak. It may be observed that when Jalal-ud-Din, son of Ala-ud-Din of Khwarazm fled from before the Mongols, he proceeded to India where Sultan Shams-ud-Din then held sway—the most renowned member of the dynasty ushered in by Aibak.

By 609 A.H. Ala-ud-Din Mohammad had removed almost all rivals from the Persian scene. He annexed Ghazni and extended his territorial possession to the borders of India.

In 607 A.H. Ala-ud-Din Khwarazm Shah managed through diplomatic manipulation of a shady character to subdue and defeat Gur Khan of the Karakhatai dynasty, who was a Buddhist and did not treat his Muslim subjects well enough to satisfy them. With the death of this Gur Khan, Ala-ud-Din became the undisputed ruler of that fertile tract of land which is known as Transoxiana. This meant that the Khwarazm Shah held sway over Bukhara also which from times immemorial was a seat of culture, learning, letters and literary movements.

It is unfortunate indeed that a potentate of such undisputed powers was not on good terms with the reigning Abbasid Caliph al-Nasir (575-622 A.H.). The reasons advanced for estrangement between the two monarchs appear at this stage, if not frivolous, at least not weighty enough to cause a rift which led to the annihilation of millions of Muslims, because it may be stated authoritatively that if the reigning Abbasid Caliph and the Khwarazm-shah had been on good terms and had made common cause, the Mongols could have been stopped, nay defeated, repulsed, thrown back, and humiliated as they were in Egypt.

Abbas Iqbal, one of the most erudite of modern historians

of Persia, has it that the Abbasid Caliph al-Nasir, for reasons best known to himself, honoured the envoys of Jalal-ud-Din Hassan, known as Nau-Musalman (newly converted) who had succeeded to the rulership of Almut in 607 A.H. and paid little attention to the ambassadors of Khwarazm Shah : this was considered by the latter as a deliberate insult intended to humiliate one who was already frustrated and in a huff (of this more anon).

Again, the Caliph instigated the Ghauri Kings and other nobles to revolt against Khwarazm Shah and lent moral support to all movements intended to weaken his powers.

Ultimately, the accumulative effect of all these incidents manifested itself in various ways : for instance, the Khwarazm Shah by a decree meant to terrorize and demoralize the Abbasid Caliph promulgated the factum of the deposition of the Caliph and enjoined on all Muslims to cease to recognize him as the religious and temporal head of Islamic states. Another Caliph—a nonentity of Tirmazi, albeit a Sayyad—was formally declared as the person legally entitled to receive the oath of allegiance or Ba'it. Not satisfied with this drastic step which must have irritated the Caliph beyond measure, Khwarazm Shah proceeded to invade the territorial possession of the Caliph—nominal as they were—and aimed at the subjugation of the Abbasid capital—Baghdad—but providence, assuming the form of geographical factors, intervened and intense cold and news of some ferment in Transoxiana forced Khwarazm Shah to return to his own capital thus giving the Caliph a very effective handle to beat him with : he contended that God had seen fit to punish the invaders and any one presumptuous enough to join issues with the Abbasid Caliph would ultimately suffer dishonour and death, if necessary.

It will be thus observed that (excluding Egypt) the most powerful Islamic state of that time, that of the Khwarazm Shah, was handicapped by the hostility of the Abbasid Caliph who wielded immense moral influence and was consequently deprived of that popular support which counts the most when the stark reality of war, with all that it entails, faces the common people,

who in their heart of hearts realize that they are but pawns only in a game of strategy and who fight either inspired by religious fervour or motivated by mercenary ends.

As we will see, the Mongols benefited fully from this rift and planned their campaign with this estrangement as the cardinal factor governing their line of action.

It must be admitted that the state of Khwarazm was manoeuvred or jockeyed into a position by circumstances, which presaged its destruction and the corresponding destruction of seats of learning, culture and letters.

As if the estrangement between Khwarazm Shah and the Abbasid Caliph was not enough, there was another factor to which we have alluded, namely, the attitude of the Rulers of Almut, the renowned or notorious fortress captured by Hassan Sabah which became the centre of a State with fluctuating borders and which remained always as an unknown factor—unpredictable and inscrutable.

The Rulers of Almut were time-server and ideologically opposed both to Khwarazm and the Abbasid Caliph : the regime of Jalal-ud-Din Hassan (the New convert) was a flash in the pan and both the Khwarazm Shah and the Abbasid Caliph knew full well that if it was expedient for the assassins to serve the Mongols in order to destroy the other Muslim states they would do so unhesitatingly and unflinchingly.

Thus was the stage set (politically) for the Mongol invasion of Persia and other Islamic States. But it would be perhaps useful to know a little about the basic traits of the main characters of this tragedy. Let us leave the Mongols for the time being and devote our attention to the pivots of the catastrophe—Ala-ud-Din Khwarazm Shah and al-Nasir, the Abbasid Caliph.

The House of Khwarazm Shah had wrested territory from the Saljuks. This in itself would have constituted a convincing proof of the initiative and undaunted courage of the members of this family but their subsequent achievements read like fiction : nothing seemed to stop them or even impede them so that when Ala-ud-Din ascended the throne he had not only inherited vast territorial possessions but also a sense of superb self-

confidence which is more valuable than untold wealth and enviable splendour.

He began his career well and consolidated the position of the State. Every thing augured well, all was auspicious, and the administration appeared to be based on very solid footing. However, there was an element of discord in this harmony of administrative smoothness and efficiency which proved to be the undoing of all achievements. It was the increasing hostility of Turkan Khatun—the mother of Ala-ud-Din—and her son, the reigning Sultan towards each other, which was fanned into a great conflagration of dissent by various circumstances and factors over which perhaps none of the parties to the unwanted dispute had any control.

Turkan Khatun was an ambitious, merciless, cruel, unsentimental woman, who prided herself on her administrative capacity and diplomacy. She saw in the reigning Sultan only a child whom she had borne and nourished and who was constantly in need of her advice and guidance. She never realized—poor soul—that boys grow up and when they ascend the throne, their advisers—polished courtiers as they are—prevail upon them to take power in their own hands, so that the delegation of authority, which is necessary, may result in their (the courtiers') prosperity and well-being.

Naturally enough, Ala-ud-Din apprised of his privileges and powers by his advisers, suggested to his mother that her proper place was the Harem and not a Royal Court. This incensed the self-willed mother and enraged the woman in her, and after some time when hostility had become an established fact and was not denied by either party, the son realized that key-posts in the state were held by the nominees of his mother including military personnel. This was very galling indeed, and Ala-ud-Din chafed under this but he found that he was almost helpless and was forced to placate his mother who commanded the allegiance of military commanders and chief civil administrators.

In itself, this fait accompli was humiliating enough but when the Sultan realized that he could not replace the personnel and was forced to mould his policy in accordance with the dictates of

his mother, his frustration and sense of helplessness assumed forms which were dangerously near neurotic complexes and inhibitions. It is but natural that he was under these circumstances irritable, sensitive, excitable and prone to fits of insane rage and despondency.

Another factor which aggravated the situation was the alleged devotion of Turkan Khatun and her Turkish supporters to persons who were supposed to possess spiritual powers. Ala-ud-Din, perhaps justly, was of the opinion that the increasing influence of mystics, pseudo-mystics and other pretenders to spiritual powers may lead to political ferment and cause great damage to the administrative structure. On the contrary, Turkan Khatun was entirely devoted to mystics in general and to Najm-ud-Din Baghdadi in particular who was a disciple of Najm-ud-Din Kubra—the founder of the Kubrawiyya order.¹

Let us now turn to al-Nasir, the Abbasid Caliph. Abbas Iqbal has dealt with him very harshly and this is surprising because normally he is very sedate, restrained and balanced. If we believe Abbas Iqbal and there is other unimpeachable authority to support him, Nasir spent all his life in hoarding wealth, paradoxically enough, misspending it, instigating Islamic states to fly at each other's throats, even going to such lengths as to suggest to the Kara-khatai Gur-khans to defeat and destroy Ala-ud-Din and behaving generally in a manner which is most unsuited to the Commander of the Faithful.

Safa (History of Persian Literature) suggests and—he too has a very balanced mind—that Nasir even corresponded with the Mongols, aiming at the destruction of the State of Khwarazm, not realizing, of course, that once this buffer state was removed he himself was at the mercy of the invaders who had no reason to spare him since he was the symbol of unity and the pivot of the allegiance of all Muslims.

1. It has to be pointed out that Abbas Iqbal has also stated categorically that Ala-ud-Din caused the death of Najm-ud-Din Kubra and this led to the flaring up of hostility between mother and son. There seems to be some misunderstanding here which I propose to clear up at some other time.

It is surprising indeed that the author of *Jehan Gusha*—the most reliable of Mongol historians—who had not only been educated and cultured but was amazingly free from prejudices born of religion and differences of creed, has the audacity to suggest that the death of Ala-ud-Din and the destruction of his state was the direct result of his misbehaviour toward the Abbasid Caliph. In other words, the author of *Jehan Gusha* claims that God in His wisdom, in order to punish Ala-ud-Din, who was impertinent, decreed that the Mongols should invade the Islamic states and kill millions of innocent men, women and children so that justice may be meted out to Ala-ud-Din.

We are asked to believe that this was the only way that providence could act—leading to unprecedented butchery and massacre on a scale undreamed of.

Safa—perhaps with his tongue in his cheek—has made it clear that the ignorant and the superstitious believed these tales to be true and considered that every act of impertinence towards the Abbasid Caliph was adequately punished. If we accept this view we will have to enumerate the author of *Jehan Gusha* amongst the ignorant and the superstitious. The thought is amusing indeed and leads one to ponder over the limitations of the human mind.

However, to proceed. Now that we know something about the main character of one party let us turn to the Mongols and find out what kind of a man was destined to initiate a series of incidents which ultimately led to the extinction of the Caliphate and try to find out whether the invasion was inevitable or could be avoided.

Chengiz Khan (known to the Mongols themselves as Timujin) was born in 549 A.H. He very soon extended the possessions of his father and before reaching middle age had become celebrated as an undaunted leader of men and a soldier of unflinching courage. He unified different Mongol clans and very soon conquered the Uighurs (of Turkistan).

The subjugation of the Uighurs is a landmark in the history of the Mongols in the sense that by coming in contact with these people they acquainted themselves with the rudiments of

culture, mastered the mysteries of an alphabet, learnt the importance of trade and were introduced for the first time to specimens of Fine Arts which to the Mongols up to this time were but only useless appendages of civilised life as they understood it.

The Uighurs had preserved the tradition of painting which had come down to them from Manes. Since the Mongols paid little heed to painting or any other "useless" activity of the human mind, this tradition was carried away by the migratory Uighurs to China along with the art of illumination. The Chinese with their sensibility improved upon the heritage which they had received from the nomad Uighurs and transmitted it again to Persia under the Safawids.

It would appear that these Uighurs were a cultured race, majority of them Buddhists who exercised great influence on Chengiz Khan and his advisors.

In the first decade of the seventh century A.H., the territorial possessions of Chengiz Khan and those of Ala-ud-Din began to rub shoulders with each other because the buffer state of the Gur Khan had been eliminated by the ambitious conquests of Khwarazm Shah. This was a momentous event in the history of mankind and it may be safely asserted that the annexation of Uighur territory by Chengiz or the elimination of Gur Khan by Ala-ud-Din really changed the map of the world, converted the stream of history into a new channel and gave birth to the catastrophe which we know as the Mongol invasion of Persia.

It must be borne in mind, however, that this elimination or annexation constituted from the historian's point of view the remote cause of the invasion. Immediate causes were born of the administrative framework of the Khwarazm Shahi State and the influence of Turkan Khatun. The question of the inevitability of the invasion would be determined after the immediate causes have been recorded in detail.

The ball was set rolling by an incident apparently innocent but really most significant and pregnant.

In the winter of 612 A.H. Ala-ud-Din Mohammad Khwarazm Shah pursuing the rebel Kabchaks entered the territory of

Chengiz, or at least arrived at a place which bordered upon his territory. While Khwarazm Shah was marching through Dasht-i-Kirkiz, he came across a contingent of Mongol army led by Tushi (or Juji), the son of Chengiz Khan, who had come hither in pursuit of Tartar rebels, whom he wanted to capture and take back. Juji was not in a mood to give battle and sent a diplomatic message to Khwarazm Shah placating him but the Shah was bent upon punishing the infidels and would not listen to reason. Battle was consequently joined and although the Mongols during the daytime fought with desperate courage but according to their old custom they fled under the cover of night leaving the Shah such satisfaction as he could muster. The Shah thereupon returned to Samarkand, but the incident, insignificant as it was, impressed the Shah deeply in the sense that he began to hold a very favourable view of Mongol tactics, strategy and their courage and fortitude.

If Khwarazm Shah had been left to his own devices, most probably events would have taken a different turn from that they actually did but unfortunately, as we have seen, the Shah was but a pawn in the game of politics played so astutely by his mother with such disastrous consequences. What happened as a matter of fact was almost beyond the control of the Shah and was predetermined, as it were, by the infiltration of his mother's influence in the administrative framework of the state.

The Shah at this critical moment was cherishing the ambition of annexing China. When he heard that the Mongols had wrested this prize from him, he sent an embassy led by a celebrated jurist, namely Bah-ud-Din Razi, into Chinese territory and we have it on unimpeachable evidence that the embassy reached Peking, sometimes the capital of the royal dynasty of China, which had now surrendered to the Mongols.

The leader of the embassy stated—on the authority of *Tabakat-i-Nasiri*—that when they reached Chinese territory they saw from afar a whitish mound which on enquiry proved to be the collection of the bleached bones of those who had been massacred

by the Mongols. As they proceeded further they found the path that was traversed covered with human fat and stinking to high heaven. This must have impressed the members of the embassy unfavourably and they must have reported the matter to the Shah.

In any case the members of the embassy were well received by representatives of Chengiz Khan and were told in the clearest possible terms that the Mongols had every desire to respect the territorial integrity of Khwarazm Shah and were keen to ensure that commercial highways and trade routes remained open, safe and secure from robbers and opportunists.

It is easy enough to understand the anxiety of the Mongols to establish trade relations with the Shah because they were so placed economically that they had to depend for their very life on the opening up of commercial highways, so that essential goods may be imported and exported. Semi-starved as the Mongols were in their original home, they wanted to compensate themselves by trading the goods of China for food and other necessities of life. The Muslim merchants and traders living in Mongol territory were also anxious that the old trade routes be opened and Chinese goods should be exported but Khwarazm Shah either would not or could not appreciate the importance of opening up commercial highways and protecting them from thieves and dacoits. As a matter of fact he had sent the embassy to evaluate and determine the strength of the Mongol army, the nature of their equipments, their military strategy and tactics and to report to him personally on these matters. Chengiz Khan had seen to it that the trade routes which passed through his territory were flourishing. The compulsion of economic need and the human desire to acquire wealth through trade resulted naturally in the establishment of commercial relations between the Mongols and the subjects of the Shah.

It would appear that in 615 A.H. three enterprising Muslim traders laden with brocade and silk entered Mongol territory and were treated well by Chengiz Khan who sent them back with precious gifts for Khwarazm Shah with a request that both

Kings should cooperate in opening up trade routes and the establishment of regular commercial relations between the two countries. Unfortunately the message sent by Chengiz described Khwarazm Shah as "His worthy son." This enraged the potentate with whom the term son had become an excuse for losing his temper on account of his relationship with his self-willed mother. Anyhow, one of the representatives of Chengiz rose to the occasion, placated the Sultan and the Shah also considering discretion as the better part of valour accepted the situation if not with good grace at least with acquiescence. A covenant was entered into providing for mutual cooperation in matters of trade and commerce and it was further stipulated that the two kings would join forces in repulsing an enemy who attacked any one of them; it was a defence pact of great significance and if circumstances had allowed Ala-ud-Din to observe its conditions faithfully, the Mongols most probably would have remained contented with their Chinese possessions which provided them with undreamt luxury, comfort, convenience and precious metals, not to speak of the sage advisers who overhauled the administrative framework of the Mongols and converted the Mongol army into an attacking spearhead of great ferocity and efficiency. It may be observed in parenthesis that Chengiz in his march from his original abode to the State of Khwarazm Shah did not lose a single soldier although his army had marched under conditions of severe hardship. If the Mongol soldiers considered themselves divinely ordained to destroy the Islamic state, there is nothing surprising in this belief. They were part of a military machine which has had no equal in history. However, to proceed.

The covenant—above referred to—was signed, sealed and accepted on behalf of Chengiz by a Muslim citizen of Transoxiana named Mahmud Yalwaj: the second part of his name means in the Turkish language a messenger, an ambassador, a Plenipotentiary extraordinary or a leader of a diplomatic contingent.

After this contract or agreement had been solemnized, many Mongol merchants moved into the state of Khwarazm laden with gold, silver, silk, brocade, musk and precious

stones of various types. This contingent or horde of traders entered Utrar.¹

The border city of Utrar was held by a person closely related to the royal house. (The Marzban or the ruler of border province or a city is a person of a great importance and is almost invariably bound to the royal house by ties of blood; the Sharwan-Shahs of Persia providing a case in point since they were supposed to govern a border province founded by Nausherwan.) He was named Ainaljak and the title of Ghair Khan was conferred upon him. The exact nature of his relationship to the royal house is a matter of some doubt; the majority of the historians opine that he was the nephew (brother's son) of Turkan Khatun. The pattern of events is not very clear and the true picture has been a little obscured by controversy on one hand and the passage of time on another but there seems to be no doubt that the ruler of Utrar seized the Mongol traders on the pretext that they were Mongol spies. Whether the suspicion was well founded or whether it was a subterfuge to plunder the traders is not easy to determine. News was conveyed to the suspicious Shah that Mongol spies had been seized in large numbers. The Shah did not waste time in pondering over the question that spies do not invest states in hordes and do not usually burden themselves with merchandise of a very precious nature. He ordered Ainalajak to keep the spies in custody and exercise the greatest care.

Again, it cannot be determined with any certainty whether the Shah was misled by the ruler of Utrar or whether his hands were forced by the fact that Ainaljak, being closely related to Turkan Khatun, was not an official whose recommendations could be brushed aside carelessly. We would be on very safe ground if we suggest that the tone of Chengiz Khan's previous message describing the Shah as a "son" was rankling in his mind

1. Before the Mongol invasion the city of Farab was named Utrar. The ruins of this city can be observed on the Western bank of the Sechun (the famous river) at a distance of 8 farsakhs south east of the city of Ya-Hazrat (Turkistan). See *Atlas of Islamic History*.

and the report of Ainalajak was given more credence than it deserved at that time. It is surprising indeed that none of the courtiers of the Shah or his advisers warned him against this precipitate step or apprised him of the consequences of an action which, on the face of it, was to put it very mildly, treacherous and dastardly.

Anyway, Ainalajak killed the traders one and all; whether by royal command or at his own initiative, is not clear and the stage was now set for the second and the most pregnant scene of this horrible tragedy.

One of the traders—so-called—Ibn-i-Kafraj Bughra, by name, managed to escape and narrated the tale of horror to Chengiz Khan who was naturally incensed and enraged.

Let us pause at this stage and pose the question: was the massacre of the Mongol traders inevitable, keeping in view the character of Khwarazm Shah and the circumstances surrounding the case? The answer is definitely, no. Even if we take it for granted that Ainalajak had seized the traders in order to plunder them and the Shah was powerless to exercise his authority against a nominee of Turkan Khatun, it was possible to spare the lives of the traders and confiscate the goods, thus placating the ruler of Utrar and also diminishing the seriousness of the crime perpetrated by Ainalajak. Why did the Shah deem it necessary to kill all the Mongol traders? Even if they were spies they would have served a better purpose by being kept alive. They might have been 'put the question'¹ and might have disclosed their 'contacts' in the state of the Shah (if they had any). Anyway it would have been more sagacious to keep them alive than kill them. Their death, therefore, would show that either the Shah wanted a pretext to go to war with the Mongols (if he had ordered their death) or was honestly under the impression that they were spies. If the latter conjecture is true, we would have expected some judicial or even executive enquiry or some semblance of an attempt to determine their

1. The attempt to implicate others by torturing the offenders seized.

guilt. Their death, without enquiry or delay, would tend to show that the Shah definitely wanted a war with the Mongols. If this conjecture is correct, the reason is not far to seek. He wanted China—the fabulous land of wealth, luxury, charm, mystery and women—so delicately modelled that the poets expressed their inability to draw their penportraits. Perhaps the Shah was under the impression that the conquest of China would take him away from the sphere of influence of his mother and he would become a real monarch as contra-distinguished from a prince who was fated to play the second fiddle to his mother. He perhaps visualized for himself a land—remote from the machinations of his mother—where he could really wield power and prove that he was a man in every sense of the word. As a matter of fact his sense of frustration was boiling over and the incident of the arrival of Mongol traders provided a channel into which he could direct his suppressed activity. He therefore committed an act which inevitably led to the Mongol invasion of Persia. We would therefore contend that the invasion was inevitable. So far as the character of Ala-ud-Din was concerned, he had played his part, he had done what he could to invite disaster and clamity to his country and other Islamic states.

The question now arises, Was the invasion inevitable merely on account of the action of Ala-ud-Din or did the character of Chengiz Khan also play an important part therein? The answer is in the affirmative. The Mongol Chief was so constituted psychologically, so placed economically and so driven by military strategy and diplomatic expediency that an invasion was inevitable.

Chengiz Khan hearing of the incident realised that it would be suicidal from the point of view of prestige to refuse to take action. He was bent upon keeping the trade routes open and if the murder of the Mongol traders was to go unpunished, no person, however daring and enterprising he might have been, would have the temerity to get to Khwarazm. Again, the death of innocent traders (if left unpunished) would cause ferment in the Mongol Army which was a very closely-knit framework and which reacted to stimulus very strongly. The Khan's

mental outlook was determined by the hard school in which he had been trained and which did not brook the death of a single Mongol unless proper reprisals were forthcoming. The Khan had envisaged a world wherein traders freely marted their wares and which provided to the Khan everything which the arid mountains of Mongolia could not. He saw in the murder of these traders the shattering of his dream, the loss of his immense prestige; his vanity was hurt to death; he was humiliated without cause and beyond measure.

He, therefore, at once ordered the reorganization of the Army with the purpose of destroying Khwarzam but in order to be on the right side of the Law, he sent another embassy to the court of the Shah demanding that Ainalajak be surrendered to the Mongols for such treatment as he deserved. This demand was a little pre-emptory and perhaps intentionally so. The Shah would not and could not surrender the offender because apart from all other considerations, he was informed in the most explicit of terms by Turkan Khatun and the relatives of the offender who held key-posts in the administrative framework that any expression of weakness on the part of the Shah would be construed as treachery and punished as such; as a matter of fact he was warned that if he took any steps against Ainalajak, he, the Shah himself, would be surrendered to the tender mercies of the Mongols.

The result was obvious. A flat denial of all demands by the Shah followed by an act of supreme foolishness and stupidity. All the messengers of the Mongol Khan were murdered in cold blood. This act in itself could provide sufficient cause for the Mongol invasion of Persia. It is impossible to conjecture why Ala-ud-Din who, although a frustrated monarch, was nobody's fool thought it fit to perpetrate this pointless act of stupidity which proved nothing beyond this that the Mongols were perfectly justified in their action.

After this deplorable incident, the Mongol chief determined to invest the state of Khwarzam but before he actually embarked upon the expedition, he performed an act of great strategical

significance and cut the ground—as it were—from under the feet of the Shah.

At the time when these occurrences were taking place, Eastern Turkistan was held by a powerful potentate, Kuchlak Khan, who consistently maltreated his Muslim subjects and whom the Khwarazm Shah was unable to curb. The Mongol Khan considered it expedient to remove Kuchlak Khan from the scene. The reasons for this action were twofold and had repercussions of a lasting nature on the battles which were to be fought by the Mongols in the Shah's territories. In the first place the Mongol Khan, naturally enough, wanted to protect his rear from the attacks of a ruler whose inclinations were not clearly known and in the second place he wanted to create the impression—in this he succeeded completely—that he had joined battle with the Shah not as an impious infidel who should be resisted by the Faithful as an unjustified invader but in sheer self-defence and he had no cause of complaint against the Muslim subjects of the Shah. The defeat of Kuchlak Khan at the hands of the Mongol chief resulted in the natural jubilation of the oppressed Muslims of Eastern Turkistan who welcomed the invader as a rescuer and a just monarch as contra-distinguished from the impious tyrant, Kuchlack Khan. The Muslims of Eastern Turkistan had naturally contact with their brethren in Khwarazm and the defeat of Kuchlack was a piece of news which spread like wild fire throughout the possessions of the Shah, not only establishing the power of the Mongol Khan but also clarifying the position of the Mongols vis-a-vis the Muslims. They, it would appear, had no religious bias against the Muslims and were on the contrary favourably inclined towards them. This interpretation of events prejudiced the Shah's cause because he was now not in a position to give out that his subjects were going to engage in a holy war. Not only was the Shah defeated—diplomatically—before he joined issue with the Mongols, but he was also handicapped in the sense that his military commanders viewed with great concern the defeat of Kuchlack Khan by the Mongols although he had proved a headache of long standing for the Shah and had to be placated occasionally so that he may not take into his head to invade the territories of the Shah.

To recapitulate, at the time when the Mongol Khan decided to invade the Shah's territories the moment was most inauspicious for the Shah and most expedient for the Khan for the following reasons:—

(a) The Mongols, jubilant on their victory over Kuchlack Khan, trimmed to fight and fight hard were ready to embark on a major expedition, especially after their conquest of China which had led them to believe that luxuries and comforts awaited them in other countries and that they were destined to conquer the world under the indomitable leadership of their Khan.

(b) The pivot of the respect of the entire Muslim World—the Abbasid Caliph—was not on good terms with the Shah and orthodox theologians had begun to predict that a state which had defied the Caliph was predestined for destruction, especially when the plenipotentiary extraordinary of the Caliph had invited the Mongol Khan to invade the state of Khwarazm and had made it clear that the sympathy of the majority of the Muslims were with the Khan as against the Shah.

(c) The countries and the officials of the Shah were tormented by the rift which had existed between the Shah and the Mother Royal and the administrative framework had thus not only become weak but was like a house divided against itself.

(d) The Mystics and their followers constantly foretold a horrible death for the Shah who was responsible for showing disrespect to the Mystic Orders and their respective leaders.

(e) The Army and the civilians were not inspired by that patriotic or religious fervour which bolsters up the morale of both and which gives heart to those who are in need of it.

(f) The supreme command though nominally entrusted to the Shah looked towards Turkan Khatun for instructions and this dyarchy led to disaster both in the field of battle and at the home front.

(g) The Shah himself had been so much impressed by the bravery and the fortitude of the Mongols that he saw safety

in retreat and on no occasion gave pitched battle to the invaders who found it easy, going wherever they went.

It can, therefore, be suggested that not only was the invasion inevitable but the end was also predestined and the Shah had lost the battle before arms had been taken up by the rival armies.

The sequence of events attendant upon the invasion is very simple.

The Mongol Khan mustered any army of 200,000 strong and marched towards Transoxiana.

The Shah thereupon convened a conference of top-ranking officials and the only sane opinion was expressed by a jurist and not a professional soldier. Imam Shahab-ud-Din, a celebrated scholar of Khawarzm, opined that armies should be summoned from all parts of the kingdom and that battle should be joined when the Mongols attempted to cross Seehun (river). This opinion was strategically sound, tactically flawless, practically possible, psychologically safe and aimed to put to the test the strength of the enemy at an extremely vulnerable point. If this suggestion had been acted upon effectively, the results might have been quite different from what actually happened. Unfortunately the majority of the military commanders expressed the opinion that it would be desirable to draw the Mongol army forward into mountainous territory, where they were prone to lose their way and they fall upon them from all sides so that the spearhead of the attack may be totally annihilated. One of the suggestions mooted was that the Mongols should be allowed to proceed to Ghazni or even beyond and that effective resistance should be offered in India.

The author of *Jehan Gusha*—the most reliable source of Mongol history—has taken great pain in proving that language is primarily a vehicle for the concealment of thought. He has written almost 3 pages in a language which is not easily intelligible to discuss the strategy decided upon by the Shah in resisting the Mongols. In spite of one's best efforts one can only arrive at the conclusion that the Shah arrived at no definite conclusion. One thing, however, is clear: Sultan Jalal-ud-Din, the son of

Ala-ud-Din Mohammad was in favour of joining issues at once but the author of *Jehan Gusha*—with his tongue in his cheek no doubt—has given great weight to the suggestion of the Shah that the armies should be decentralized (and thus made ineffective in every sense of the word).

The poor author of *Jehan Gusha* was in a predicament of no mean order. He had to give to posterity a good impression of Ala-ud-Din and he had to speak—albeit deviously—the truth also. This conflict has made the history (*Jehan Gusha*) a study in contrasts.

However, to proceed. The author of *Jehan Gusha* has it that the Shah decentralizing his armies—as an act of strategy, mark you—fled from before the advancing Mongols and did not stop until death put an end both to his flight and sufferings.

The strategy of the Mongols would appear from the following salient features:—

The Mongol forces appeared before the doors of Utrar in the month of Rajab 616 A.H. and it was at this juncture that the Mongol Khan divided his army into the following contingents.

- (a) 70,000 men strong led by two sons of the Mongol Khan were deputed to conquer Utrar and punish the ruler.
- (b) Another contingent led by Juji was deputed to conquer the land and the cities lying on the bank of the Seehun (river).
- (c) A third wing was embarked for conquering Khujand and Banakat.
- (d) Chengiz himself with a force fully equipped with the latest features of warfare, proceeded to Bukhara so that he may be in a position to cut off the Shah from the rest of his forces.

These armies were very well informed because the Khan had ensured that the discontented subjects and disgruntled traders of the State of Khwarazm should supply him with accurate estimates of the enemy strength and his strategical position. The

advance guards of the Mongols were definitely well advised as to the opposition they were supposed to meet. The Mongol armies succeeded completely in achieving their objects but it is not intended to detail the measures that followed manœuvring of the contingents as detailed above ; we are concerned only with the fate of the ruler of Utrar—Ainaljak. He knew that the Mongols would never spare him ; he therefore determined to sell his life as dearly as possible. The Shah sent one Karraja with an army of 10,000 strong with him to reinforce Ghair Khan but this Karraja seeing the situation deserted to the Mongols after he had failed in convincing the ruler of Utrar to surrender.

The Mongols, typically enough, did not like the behaviour of Karraja and killed him with his kith and kin for the offence of playing traitor to the ruler of Utrar. Such is the irony of fate.

Ainaljak continued to fight desperately ; slowly but steadily the ring round him was tightened. At last he was on his last legs. Even then he continued to resist : the slave girls gave him pieces of stone which he hurled at the Mongols. Ultimately he was captured, still fighting furiously, and the Mongols, as directed by their commander, poured molten lead into his ears and thus tortured him to death. Thus perished the man who had lived miserably but died a man's death. He was immediately responsible for the Mongol invasion of Persia, though as we have already seen, the advent of this catastrophe was inevitable if we keep in view the traits of the main characters of the tragedy : Turkan Khatun, Ala-ud-Din, Chengez Khan, al-Nasir, the Abbasid Caliph and of course Ghair Khan, the ruler of Utrar.

SYED ABID ALI ABID

IN THE STORM'S EYE

In the stillness of the centre lies the glory of the mind,
 In the vacuum's calm abstraction, skined perplexities unwind,
 Like the autumn's auburn ripeness, like the sunset's tinted glow,
 Thoughts of peace and ordered beauty soothe with mystic ebb
 and flow ;
 Spurn the fury of the conflict, ease the pain and anguish slow ;
 Seek salvation in the mind.

Hate eternal, greed eternal, wrath eternal is the trend,
 Power unending, power transcending, power the means and power
 the end,
 Joy overtred, faith subverted, passions of the hunt alerted,
 Radiant benedictions of true thought to misery converted,
 Weave the web of peaceful thinking, and this grief is soon averted ;
 Seek salvation in the mind.