



## THE DEVELOPMENT OF ISLAMIC SCIENCES DURING THE SELJUK SULTAN SANJAR PERIOD

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### ABSTRACT

*In this article highlights of the development of islamic sciences during the seljuk Sultan Sanjar period.*

**KEY WORDS:** *Seljuk, Sultan Sanjar period, Islam and science.*

The name of the Seljuk state is derived from the name of Seljuk ibn Dukak, the chief of the nomadic Turkic-Oghuz tribe living on the banks of the Syrdarya. The Seljuk Turks were Mahmud Ghaznavi's viceroy in Khorasan. In 1038, Tughril (1038-1063), the grandson of the Seljuks, conquered Nishapur and declared the establishment of his state in the Khorasan region and partly in Mawarannahr. (*Agadjanov, S, 1991, p. 51*). In 1040, the Battle of Dandakon took place between the Ghaznavid sultan Mas'ud and Tughril. After the defeat of Mas'ud in the Battle of Dandakon, the Seljuk state ruled over a large area consisting of Khorasan, Khorezm, western Iran, Azerbaijan, and Iraq. In 1055, Tughril also captured Baghdad. The Abbasid caliph al-Qaim (1031-1075) handed over power in Baghdad to Tughril, declaring him the "King of the East and the West" and marrying his daughter (*Agadjanov, S, 1991, p. 66*).

The Seljuks sought to create all the conditions for the development of science and culture. In the Seljuk madrasahs, both natural and exact sciences were taught from socio-religious knowledge. Students were given a monthly stipend and provided with space, taught by mature scholars of their time, and had thousands of volumes of libraries at the disposal of students of science. We know that in some madrasahs the number of students is in the thousands. For example, it is known that one of the Nizamiyya madrasahs, founded by Nizamulmulk, was home to 6,000 students.

The traditional serious focus on knowledge and enlightenment among Muslim rulers did not lose its importance even during the Seljuk period. The first madrasah in the Seljuk state was built in 1046 in Nishapur by order of Tughril (*Öngül., 2003*). Fakhridin Jurjani (d. 446/1054), the author of "Vis and Ramin", one of the great writers of his time, was the chairman of the Ray office in the time of Sultan Mas'ud, the son of Mahmud Ghaznavi. Scholars such as Abul A'la ibn Hassul (d. 450/1058) (*Khalifa, 2016, p. 462*), the author of "Dumyat al-qasr fi shu'ara al-asr" Ali ibn Hasan Boharzi (d. 467/1075) have been active (*Khalifa, 2016, p. 461*), (*Sama'aani, 1977, pp. 16-17*), (*al-Hamawi, 1993, p. 1682*).

During Tughril's reign, the Hanafi sect was declared the state sect. During this period, there was serious competition in the state between Hanafi and Shafi'i. Izzuddin ibn Asir, in his work "al-Kamil fi at-tarikh", said: "He asked the Sultan for permission to criticize the Rafidis in the mosques of Khorasan. With the permission of the sultan, Amid al-Mulk began to criticize the Rafidis as well as the Ash'arites. The minister did so because he feared that Abu Sahl Nishapuri, one of the leaders of Nishapur and a Shafi'i, would become a minister in the future. As a result, mature representatives of the Shafi'i school, such as Imam Juwayni, Abu Suhail Muwaffaq, Abul Qasim Qushairi, and Imam Baihaqi, were forced to leave the land of Hijaz. This continued until Alp Arslan ascended the throne and was appointed minister of Nizamulmulk, the Shafi'i. According to some narrations, Amid al-Mulk repented for his treatment of the Shafi'is" (*Asir, 1987, p. 365*).

Sultan Alp Arslan (1063-1072), who ascended the throne after Tughril's death, patronized science throughout the country. During his time, in 1067, the first madrasah was built in Baghdad. This madrasah was named "Nizamiyya"



because it was built on the initiative of the Minister Nizamulmulk. Later, madrassas built in Ray, Nishapur, Merv, Balkh, Herat, Basra, Isfahan and Mosul were also called Nizamiyya. In contrast to the politics of Tughril's time, clerics from four sects were involved in Nizamiyya madrasahs. Many clerics expelled during Toghrubek's rule were repatriated and madrassas were built for them. The ideological conflicts of Tughril's time were completely eliminated.

Turkish researcher Nevzat Kosoglu says: "The teachers, imams and preachers who graduated from these madrassas were a key factor in shaping the beliefs and way of life of the people" (*Kosoglu, 1991, p. 68*). In addition to religious sciences, literature, mathematics, astronomy and philosophy were taught in Nizamiya madrassas. The main activity of the Nizamiyya madrasahs was to deny Shiite sects such as rafidies and botinies. This is evidenced by the fact that madrassas were built in cities where rhetoric and innerism were prevalent.

Scholars worked at the Nizamiyya madrasah in Baghdad, for example, the Shafi'i jurist, the author of the works, "al-Tanbih fi furu al-fiqh al-Shafi'i", "al-Muhaddhab fi-l-madhab", "al-Tabsira fi usul al-fiqh", "al-Nukat", "Talkhis" Abu Is'haq Shirazi (393/1003-476/1083), a great jurist and mutakallim, author of the works "Kitab al-mughni", "Tatimmah al-ibana", "Kitab fi al-khilaf" Abu Sa'd Mutawalli (427/1036-478/1086), Sharif Abul Qasim Dabbusi (d. 483/1090), Husayn ibn Ali Tabari (d. 504/1097), Abdul Wahhab Sherazi (XI century), "Documents of Islam" Imam Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (450/1058-505/1111), Ahmad ibn Muhammad al-Ghazali (d. 520/1126), Abu Bakr ibn Ali Shashi (d. 1113), al-Khatib Tabrizi (421/1030-502/1109) and Ibn Burhan Scholars such as Ali ibn Muhammad Baghdadi (479 / 1087-518/1124). (*Khallikan, 2007, pp. 29-31, 99*), (*al-Jawzi, 1992, p. 244*), (*Kosoglu, 1991, pp. 449, 462, 465, 486*), (*Bulliet, 1972, pp. 133-134, 216-219*).

The madrasa library in Baghdad has been endowed with books for 6,000 years by the regime. Abu Is'haq Shirazi was the first director of the madrasah. Imam Ghazzali was the director of the madrasah from 1091 to 1095.

The Nizamiya Madrasah in Nishapur was built in 1058 in honor of Imam al-Haramain Imam Juwayni (419 / 1028-478 / 1085), who was forced to emigrate to Hijaz during the Tughril period. Imam Juwayni was the first teacher of the madrasah (*Bulliet, 1972, p. 73*). This madrasah differed in construction and education from the Simjuri madrasah, which ruled Khorasan from 940 to 1000, and the "Sa'idiya" madrasah of the Ghaznavids. Until Tughril's death, the madrasah was called "Sultan Madrasah".

From 300 to 400 students studied at the madrasah. Sufis, commentator, muhaddith, author of the works "ar-Risala", "at-Tahbir fi-t-tazkir", "at-Tafsir al-kabir" by Abul Qasim Qushairi (376/986-465/1072), Muhammad ibn Ahmad Marwazi (d. 465/1072) such scholars worked in the madrasa.

The Nizamiyya madrasah in Isfahan was built in 1072 next to the Masjid al-Juma in the city center. The madrasah was taught by Abu Bakr Sadriddin Khojandi (d. 483/1090), Fakhriddin Abul Ma'ali (d. 559/1163) and Abu Sa'id ibn Abu Bakr (XIII century). The madrasahs magnificent library in Baghdad dates back to the XIV century.

Abul Qasim Abdullah ibn Tahiri (XI-XII centuries) was a teacher in Balkh madrasah. The madrasah was taught by scholars such as Abu Sa'd al-Harawi (12th century) and Ziyavuddin Sadr al-Aimma (XII century). Rashiduddin Watwat (d. 573/1177), a poet and writer of the Khorezmshah period, is also a graduate of this madrasah (*Is'fandiyor, 2002, pp. 109-112*). The madrasa was demolished in 1153.

Qadhi Abu Hamid Shahrzuri (586/1190) and Qadhi Abu Bakr Khalidi (XII century), Abu Fazl Anbari (XII century), Abu Bakr Shashi (421/1030-502/1109), Abu Muzaffar Samani (426 / 1035-489 / 1096) and Abul Fath Asad Mahini (12th century) Scholars such as Mosul, Herat, Basra, and Merv have taught at the Nizamiyya madrasahs (*Asir, 1987, p. 462*). Alisher Navai has renovated the Nizamiyya madrasah in Herat.

Before these madrasahs began to operate, those who sought knowledge had to travel to distant cities. Nizomiyya madrasahs have fully met this need.

After the death of Sultan Alp Arslan in 1072, his 13 year old son Maliksah (1072-1092) ascended the throne. In 1074, Maliksah conquered Termez, Bukhara, Samarkand, and later Fergana. During the reign of Maliksah, the Seljuks were very militarily and politically powerful. The capital was moved from Nishapur to Is'fahan. The king also declared Nizamulmulk as his minister. Like his father, he sponsored science and education.



The historian of the Ottoman period, Ahmad ibn Mahmud (d. 1570), in his work “Saljuq-nama” (“Book of Seljuk Empire”), describes the contribution of the Nizamulmulk to science and enlightenment as follows: “Those who could not see Nizamulmulk’s patronage of science told the sultan, “Nizamulk spends 300,000 dinars a year from your treasury on Quran memorizers, jurists and Sufis. If this money is spent on troops, we can conquer Constantinople”. Nizamulmulk replied to Sultan Malikshah from this letter: “O Sultan of the worlds! Allah has bestowed upon you and on me blessings that none of His slaves have. Do you see 300,000 dinars more than those who remember the Book of Allah? You spend twice as much on soldiers. However, the bullet fired by them does not go more than a mile. And with this money I will form such an “army” that their knowledge will not be able to prevent them from ascending to the Throne of Allah. “To Sultan Malikshah Nizamulmulk, increase the number of this “army” as much as you can. I will give you as much wealth as you want. The riches of the world are yours”. (*Mahmud, 1977, pp. 142-144*).

During the reign of Sultan Malikshah, an observatory was built in Is’fahan and a madrasah in Tabaristan. The english orientalist Henry George Raverty, in his study of the medieval Muslim historian Minhajiddin Juzjani’s “Tabaqati Nosiri”, assesses the development of science during the reign of Sultan Malikshah as follows: “Sultan Malikshah has a lot of good things left in the world. One of them is the correction of errors in the science of Nujum. Nujum and arithmetic scholars, by order of Malikshah, developed a new method of observing the stars and redefined the days of the moon. A new calendar ‘Jalaliy’ has been developed for the state” (*H.G.Raverty, 1873, p. 142*).

During the reign of Sultan Malikshah, Abu Is’haq Shirazi, Abul Qasim Qushairi, Imam al-Haramain Juwayni, Imam al-Ghazali, well-known Shafi’i jurists, disciples and sons-in-law of Abdul Qahir Baghdadi, author of the works “at-Tabsir fid-din”, “Taju-t-Tarajim”, “Awsat”, “Tafsiru-l-Kabir” Shahfur ibn Tahur Isfari (d. 471/1078), Mahmud Kashgari (421/1030–521/1127), grammar scholar, author of the works “Asroru-l-balaga”, “Dalililu-l-ejaz”, “ar-Risalatul-Shafi’iya”, “Kitabu-l-Jumal” Abdul Qahir Jurjani (d. 471/1079), great philosopher, poet, astrologer, mathematician and physician, author of works such as “Ruboiyot”, “Risola fi taksim rub’i-d-daira”, “Risalat al-kawn wa-t-taqrib”, “Risola fi-l-wujud”, “Risola fi kulliyati wujud”, “Nawroznama”, “Ziji Malikshahi” Omar Khayyam (439/1048-526/1132), poet and writer known for his works “Shi’ru ibn al-Habbariyya”, “Falak al-Ma’ani” Ibn Habbariyya (414/1033-509/1115), Abu Tahur Hatuniy (d. about 529-532 / 1134-1137), author of historical works such as “Uyun at-Taworikh”, “Al-Hafawat an-Nadira”, “Kitab ar-robi” Abul Hasan Sobi (416/1025-480/1088) such as religious scholars, poets and engineers who lived and worked (*adz-Dzahabi, 1996, pp. 432-433*), (*V.V., 1998, p. 87*), (*Rozenfeld B, Yushkevich A., 1965*), (*Brockelmann, 1937, p. 505*)

As a result of the internal struggles for the throne that began after the Sultan Malikshah, a period of stagnation arose in the Seljuk scientific environment. The recession continued during the reigns of Mahmud I (1092-1093), Berkyaruk (1094-1105), and Malikshah II (1105). After Muhammad Tapar (1105-1118) came to power, science and culture began to rise again. During this period, scholars from the time of Sultan Malikshah were mainly active.

Imam al-Ghazali dedicated his persian work “al-Tibr al-masbuk fi nasihat al-muluk”, and Ibn Balkhi dedicated his “Farsnama” to Muhammad Tapar Muhammad Tapar built rabats for Sufis around each of the Nizamiyya madrasahs.

Muhammad Tapar died in 1118. At this point, the Seljuk state was divided into two. Western Iran, Iraq, and Azerbaijan were ruled by Mahmud II (1118-1131), son of Muhammad Tapar, under the name of the Sultanate of Iraq (1118-1194). Hamadan has been designated as the capital of the Sultanate of Iraq. In Khorasan, Sijistan, Khorezm and Movarounnahr, Ahmad Sanjar (1118-1157), the son of Malikshah, was proclaimed sultan. Sultan Sanjar declared Merv as the capital of his state. After the death of Sultan Sanjar (1157) the Seljuk rule in Khorasan came to an end. In 1194, Khorezmshah Takash overthrew the Sultanate of Iraq. Another Seljuk state, the Sultanate of Konya, ruled until the XII century.

The period of Sultan Sanjar is the most prosperous period of the Seljuk state. Like his father, he sponsored science. Sultan Sanjar invited Khorasan not only muslim scholars but also representatives of other religions. He had great respect and attention to scientists. “This land (Khorasan) was a place of knowledge, a source of virtue and a land of professions” (*Rowandi, 2005, p. 167*).



Sultan Sanjar had a high regard for scholars. Instead of interfering in the intellectual struggles between the sects, he followed the scholars. He also did not interfere in the disputes between the Hanafis and the Shafi'is in Nishapur. He had good relations with great scholars such as Imam al-Ghazali and Yusuf Hamadani. In 1110, he sent 50,000 dinars and a letter to Yusuf Hamadani, who was in Samarkand. In his letter, he asked to be blessed in his own right.

Sultan Sanjar distributed 700,000 dinars, 1,000 pieces of clothing, many horses, and other valuables from the treasury to scholars, physicians, and philosophers. When the treasurer said that the treasury was being emptied, he said, "If you say I am prone to wealth, it is not true. Distribute these clothes".

During the reign of Sultan Sanjar, all branches of science developed. Scholars have written mature works in the fields of tafsir, fiqh (jurisprudence), kalam, tasawwuf, philosophy and the exact sciences.

The Seljuk period is a bright page in the development of Islamic civilization. One thing is clear, the Seljuks from the Syrdarya region relied on centuries-old experience and traditions in the political, economic, cultural and educational spheres of the Khorasan and Mawarannahr regions, and tried to continue them in their activities.

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