

IBNE-TAIMIYAH

A great reformer

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IBNE-TAIMIYAH was a versatile genius. He was well-versed in Tafsir, Hadith, Fiqh, Literature, History, Logic and Philosophy. He was an eminent orator and debator, a brave warrior and above all, epoch making reformer in the annals of Islam. He sacrificed his life to purge Islam of the hereses and corruptions that threatened its original form. He had a towering and uncompromising personality which never yielded to the opponents, even to the supreme authority of the Government. He suffered imprisonment several times, yet he did not renounce his ideology. He was a Mujtahid. He preached free-thinking and condemned 'Taqlid' i.e. imitation and representation of the primitive theologians. He was the first man, who made his countrymen stand against the oppressions of the Tartars. He lived for truth and died for truth. Is it not a matter of regret that this symbol of Islamic spirit breathed his last in a solitary cell of jail?

Shaikhul Islam Imam Ibn-Taimiyah was born on Monday 10th Rabiul Awwal, 681/22 January, 1263 at the town of Harran in Syria. His full name is Taqi Uddin Abul Abbas Ahmed Ibn-Abdul Halim-Ibn-Taimiyah. One of his old grand mothers, named Taimiyah, was a famous intellectual lady, after whose name all of his family were called 'Ibn-Taimiyah'.

The people of Harran (the

birth place of Ibn-Taimiyah) were in constant terror due to successive expeditions of the Tartars. Fleeing from the oppressions of the Mongols, Abdul Halim, father of Ibn-Taimiyah took refuge at Damascus with his family in the middle of the year, 687/1268. He was very much popular in Damascus for his intellects and scholarship. The Government was pleased to appoint him Chief Professor of Hadith in the 'Darul Hadith' of Sakaria and Imam of the Jam-e-Mosque of the capital city.

Ibn-Taimiyah was a boy of six, when he reached Damascus. In those days it was a centre of learning Darul Hadith of Sakaria and Madrasah-e-Hambalia were two famous Islamic Institutions. Ibn-Taimiyah got his education in these Institutions. He followed the lectures of his father and those of many others. He acquired his manifold learning to nearly two hundred teachers, of whom four were ladies. Among his teachers Shaikhul Islam Shams Uddin Abu Muhammad Abdur Rahman, Shaikh Zain Uddin Najm Uddin and Zainab bint deserve special mention. Besides, Ibn-Taimiyah attended intellectual gatherings, participated in occasional debates, and utilised the rich resources of the Libraries in that city and thus established his name and fame by dint of his extraordinary merit, sharp memory and subtle intelligence. It is

said that he never forgot anything, which he had once learned. His knowledge of theology and jurisprudence was so extensive as almost to justify the saying, "A tradition that Ibn-Taimiyah does not recognise, is no tradition."

Ibn-Taimiyah acquired elementary knowledge in every branch of Islamic Theology, when he was only ten or eleven. At the age of seventeen he earned so proficiency that people began to take 'Fatwa' from him. By this time he started writing books and those were of so high standard that all of his contemporary Ulama were astonished to see them.

Shaikh Abdul Halim, Father of Ibn-Taimiyah expired in 682/1283. By this time Ibn-Taimiyah a youth of 21 years completed studies and proved himself a worthy successor of his father. The Government appointed him Chief Professor of Hadith in Darul Hadith in the post of his deceased father. On the other hand, he was favoured with the task of expounding the Holy Quran in the Jame Mosque of Damascus each Friday. He explained the verses of the Quran in the light of other verses therein. If not sufficient, he would take help from Hadith and yet if it was not sufficient he would go to the opinions laid down by the followers of the Prophet. He rejected in his commentaries all unauthentic stories that took place in our previous com-

mentary books.

Ibn-Taimiyah had a profound knowledge both in Islamic theology and Philosophy. So his commentaries were authenticated with theological arguments as well as reasonings.

At the time of Ibn-Taimiyah people were highly interested in Greek philosophy and scholasticism. They took the Quran Hadith and Islamic beliefs in the light of the same. As a result, a lot of ideas repugnant to the beliefs of Islam had crept into their minds. With this end in view Ibn-Taimiyah seriously criticised Philosophy and 'Kalam' (Muslim theology). He tried to let the people understand that these learnings have no sound value in presence of the Quran and Hadith. He declared "no view is acceptable, if opposed to the direct meaning of the Quran and Sunnath. From this angle of vision, he had to criticise many a Muslim Philosopher and theologian.

In 695 A. H. Ibn-Taimiyah was appointed 'Shaikhul Hadith' in the Madrasah-e-Hambalia, in which he studied for a considerable period of time in his student life.

From 683 to 699 A. H. i.e. for about sixteen years Ibn-Taimiyah had been exclusively engaged in teaching, preaching and book writing on Islamic jurisprudence. During the period Syria had to encounter many ups and downs. Five rulers ascended the throne by this time. But none had the opportunity of ruling the country peacefully.

Having the advantage of this internal combat of Syria Qazan, the Chief of the Tartars attacked Syria. At that time Syria was under the Government of Egypt. It was being ruled by a lieutenant on behalf of the Egyptian Sultan. Nasir, the Sultan of Egypt fought Qazan. But unfortunately he was defeated. As a result, looting, plundering, chaos and confusion reigned in the city of Damascus for some time. The citizens began to flee away from the town. In this critical moment a deputation of Ulama headed by Ibn-Taimiyah met Qazan and condemned him for his annihilating the sanctity, lives and properties of the Muslims. Qazan felt ashamed and he was very much influenced to see his righteousness and moral courage. He begged Ibn-Taimiyah pray to Allah for him. Thus the city of Damascus was saved from looting and plundering.

It was a good luck for Nasir that a disturbance arose at Tibriz, the capital city of the Tartars and as such Qazan had to go back to his lands & Nasir re-occupied his throne.

Next year in the month of Ramzan, 700 A.H. the Mongols attacked Damascus again. This time Halab, Hamat and Syria were united to fight against them. They sent Ibn-Taimiyah to Sultan Nasir to rouse him against the Tartars. Qazan went back without fight, when he heard the arrival of the army of Nasir and realised their strength.

Taking a large scale preparation, Qazan attacked Damascus after two years again. Sultan Nasir also arrived at the warfield with a large gallant