

JOURNAL  
OF THE  
BOMBAY BRANCH  
OF THE  
ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY

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VOL. 19

1943

A PERSIAN FORERUNNER OF DANTE

By R. A. NICHOLSON

During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries of our era the Sūfi doctrine was moulded into new literary forms by three great poets—Sanā'ī, Farīdu'ddīn 'Aṭṭār, and Jalālu'ddīn Rūmī—whose work is so original and creative that we may justly regard this period as the Golden Age of Persian mysticism. Sanā'ī, the oldest of the three, died *circa* 1150 A.D. Concerning his life very little is known; it was mainly passed at Ghaznah, where he found patrons who could appreciate his religious poetry and also his skill as a professional encomiast. He has recorded the names of some of them, including court dignitaries, and extolled their virtues in his most famous work, the *Ḥadīqatu'l-Ḥaqā'iq* or "Garden of Realities", which he dedicated to the Ghaznavid Sultan Bahrāmshāh. The *Ḥadīqah* is a long versified homily, made up of the same miscellaneous ingredients as the prose discourse or sermon which had been already elaborated by Sūfi Shaykhs for the instruction of their disciples. It is hardly too much to say that Sanā'ī was the father of Persian religious and philosophical poetry in the only form that allows room for any full and coherent exposition of the subject. The family likeness of the *Ḥadīqah* to the *Mathnawī* is unmistakable. Jalālu'ddīn often quotes and imitates "the Divine Book" (*Ilāhī-nāmah*)—so he calls it—of the Sage (*Hakīm*) of Ghaznah. Western readers who find the *Ḥadīqah* uninteresting may be surprised by the extracts given below from one of the author's minor works, a short descriptive poem bearing the title *Sayru'l-'Ibād ilā'l-Ma'ād*, "the Journey of God's Creatures (mankind) to the Afterworld". In this masterpiece of grotesque imagination Sanā'ī depicts the return of the fallen soul to its Divine origin and ultimate home. Like Dante, he tells how in the dark wilderness he met a Guide who escorted him through all the limbos of mortal anguish and terror that must be traversed ere the goal is reached. By way of prelude he traces figuratively the first movements of the ascending soul—its evolution from the vegetive and animal natures into the rational faculty which constitutes its true being. Only then can the "traveller", *i.e.* the reasonable soul, enter on the mystic path of self-purification under the auspices of a Shaykh inspired by Universal Reason.

Though faithful so far as it goes, the following translation covers but a small number of verses selected for the purpose of exhibiting the poet's ideas and illustrating his treatment of the topic. It is impossible to read the *Sayru'l-'Ibād* without being reminded of the *Divina Commedia*, especially the *Inferno*. The parallelism is not accidental. There are

curious details which point to a common source and confirm the now prevailing opinion that Dante, by whatever means and through whatever channels his knowledge was acquired, drew considerably upon materials preserved in Islamic legend and tradition.

## I

Cast out of Heaven, in thralldom miserable  
I came to this low world and found a Nurse<sup>1</sup>  
Coeval with the motion of the skies.

Adam of old she fostered, and hath charge  
To lead his children up the scale of life  
According to their measure and degree.

She is the Whole to which all things that grow  
Belong as parts, the primal stock whence all  
Draw power to grow and propagate their kind.

'Tis she that bids the cypress rise unbowed;  
Nay, Man himself, for whom the heavens were made,  
She, moving sap-like, makes erect and tall.

Long did I roam those deserts dark and wild,  
Those mountains haunted by fierce beasts of prey,  
Till loathing filled my heart and hungry eyes.

Then woke in me a sense of vision high.  
The Reasonable Soul displayed her face  
And I was lifted up from earth to heaven.

But still my baser self would drag me down,  
And I became a devil and beast again,  
Tugged to and fro between contending sides.

Bewildered, leaderless, no help nor hope,  
At last I ran as from a house on fire  
Into the narrow upward-winding Way—

A Way right perilous, the Summit far.  
Thou who hast none to guide thee but a beast,  
What is thy journey's happiest end? The grave.

## II

Amidst the gloom I spied an aged man  
Of radiant aspect, venerable, calm,  
Like the true Moslem in a faithless land.

"Dark was the night", I said, "and lo, the Man!  
Dire was the fever, at thy touch it fled.  
But who art thou? Declare thine origin."

"I am beyond all substance and all space:  
My father God's own chiefest Minister,  
Eternity's first-fruit, Creation's cause."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The vegetative soul, whose functions are growth, assimilation, and reproduction.

<sup>2</sup> The reasonable soul, symbolized by the Sūfi spiritual guide (*pir, murshid*) describes itself as the child of the Logos (Universal Reason), which is the final cause of creation and which Moslem mystics identify with the pre-existent "Reality" or "Spirit" of Mohammed.

'Tis not from foolishness: for reason good  
By His command I stay, a prince no less,  
In this abode of grime and fetid air.

Oh, leave the charnel-house to curs fed full  
With rotting bones. Step out upon this Path  
Back to the ancient City, thy lost home.

Come, seek a Sage who can protect and guide.  
To him cling fast, tread down the beast within,  
And so deliver both thyself and me.

Fear not this tribulation will consume  
Thy strength: a fire it is, and yet a fire  
Whence springs the Water of Eternal life.

The earth-soul dies, the angel-soul is born.  
Be thou a lowly foot to follow me,  
So wilt thou gain the headship spiritual."

With many a silent word unsyllabled  
He gave me heart and light and eyes to see.  
Together we set out upon the Way.

### III

The first day brought us to a noisome hill,  
An ash-heap overrun by herds of wolves,  
Their toothless jaws befouled with carrion gore.

Condemned to fight the shadows of themselves,  
Still do they snarl and mumble bones and live  
For ever hungry, miserable, inane.

And there I saw a viper with four mouths  
And seven faces in a single head,  
Gulching at every breath what prey it found.

"This is the mortal nature", said my Guide,  
"Devourer of the pilgrims on the Way;  
This is the dread that halts the Caravan.

Soon would it rob thee of thy light and life  
But Courage! Thou art safe with me, who bring  
The emerald to burst this viper's eye."<sup>1</sup>

He spoke and set his face towards the hill.  
When the brute saw him, in a trice it turned,  
Swept with its tail the road and slunk away.

Thence came we to a vale where I descried  
Many a friend whose eyes were in his nape  
Asquint, and in his heart a spiteful tongue.

From that foul haunt of Malice we sped on  
To Greed made visible in savage forms  
And faces murky with the smoke of Hell—

<sup>1</sup> An allusion to the old belief that if a venomous snake looks at an emerald, its eyes start out of its head and it becomes totally blind.

Baboons long-handed: some ran furiously  
To seize, while some on haunches heavy as lead,  
Casting dull looks at one another, cowered.

"Master", said I, "this region full of bane  
Who holds in fee?" "A dotard", he replied,  
"Numbering a hundred thousand years and more.

Ugly, cantankerous, miserly and mean,  
Naught but a sour grimace hath he to give,  
As though his hoards lay in the farthest sky."

Gnashing our teeth, we left these apes behind  
And gained the shore of a vast gulf that froze  
My blood, so terrible the passage seemed.

"Forward with firm undaunted heart!" said he;  
"Beside thee here is Moses, rod in hand,  
To part the sea where many a Pharaoh drowns.

But thou must chain all devils, spawn of clay,  
And straightway purge thyself of passion vile:  
So wilt thou voyage safely and arrive."

Then he became the pilot, I the ship;  
He Jonah, I the Fish in that dark sea,  
Till land we touched; and lo, my feet were dry.

"And now we mount", he said. I stood amazed,  
Seeing nor earth nor water any more,  
Nothing but empty unsubstantial air.

Methought, to mount in air is dangerous.  
Can wingless body do the work of mind  
Or follow where imagination soars?

"Nay, leave the bow of mind unstrung", said he;  
"Be a straight arrow, not a crooked bow,  
And fly towards the mark on feathered feet."

Even so I did and set my face to Heaven,  
Like Nimrod whom the vultures bore aloft.<sup>1</sup>  
Soon rested we within a realm of light

Cold, silvery, that waned and waxed anew,  
"The Sultan's courier",<sup>2</sup> said my Guide, "reigns here,  
Running to serve him, speedier than fire."

And, further on, I saw in a green isle  
A castle tenanted by sorcerers  
With heads of dragons and fishy tails,

Who made the evil thing appear as good:  
Dunghills their art could change to rosaries  
And dress the raven in gay plumes of gold.

<sup>1</sup> Nimrod, it is said, attempted to fly to Heaven in a chest borne by vultures for the purpose of making war on the God of Abraham.

<sup>2</sup> The Moon.

All lusts and sensualities were seen  
Pictured, as in Zalikha's secret bower  
What time she would have lain with Joseph there.<sup>1</sup>

Through flaming pits that house the scorpion-brood  
Of Anger, Concupiscence, Pride, we passed.  
"This", said my Leader, "is the purge for souls,

The best and wholesomest in all the world.  
This poison thou must swallow fearlessly,  
'Tis freedom, health, and hidden strength and life."

When midst the dark I drained it to the lees,  
Night vanished, and I saw glad rays of dawn  
Break of a sudden over distant hills.

My eyes were opened to a Paradise  
Of azure ports and towers. He bade me look.  
"Time's end", he said. "Death cannot touch thee now."

<sup>1</sup> These lines refer to an episode in the temptation of Joseph by Potiphar's wife.



## TWENTY DAYS IN MARRAKESH AND RABAT

By G. YAZDANI

In the beginning of 1923, by the generous help of His Exalted Highness the Nizam's Government, I was able to devote three months to the study of Arab monuments in Northern Africa, notably in Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia. During this period twenty days were spent at Marrakesh (Ar. *Marrakush*) and Rabat (Ar. *Ribāt al-Fath*), of which I have the pleasantest recollections. Marrakesh seized my imagination the more, on account of its remoteness from the beaten tracks of the world,<sup>1</sup> on account of its beautiful environment in which the snow-clad Atlas forms a conspicuous feature, on account of the motley groups of its inhabitants, on account of its time-worn and classically graceful monuments, and above all on account of its Oriental glamour, seen daily in the kaleidoscopic shows and moving throngs of *Jāmi' al-Fana*. This was once the site of a great mosque<sup>2</sup>; but is now a great square, where assemble the merchants and traders of the interior of Africa and the coastal countries, to whom the European and other foreign businessmen and tourists offer a picturesque contrast; but all seem to be permeated by a common desire of enjoyment after the toil of their sundry pursuits. In this square are to be seen story-tellers, jugglers, snake-charmers, astrologers, musicians and dancers, with a variety of tea and coffee shops providing rest and amusement.

The spectacle reminded me of the shows and the gaiety of the *Jāmi' Masjid Square* of Delhi, which I enjoyed in my boyhood, some forty years ago. The identity of shows, notwithstanding the distance of six thousand miles between Delhi and Marrakesh, indicates the common trend of the Oriental mind in matters of pastime and relaxation. I also noticed that Islam signifies real fraternity, for during my sojourn in spite of my aloofness owing to a certain reason, I received a cordial welcome from all—from the *Qā'id* (Governor) down to the *Jammāl* (camel-driver), and they treated me with a warmth that made me feel as if I was of their own kith and kin.<sup>3</sup>

The history of Marrakesh begins in the middle of the eleventh century A.C., for before that, according to tradition, it was but a place of ambushade for brigands, and the Roman

<sup>1</sup> Since my visit in 1923 Marrakush has been connected by railway with Casablanca, Rabat and Fez (*Fās*) and also with Tangiers through Rabat. I approached it from Casablanca by an excellent road, the work of French engineers. For the different classes of passengers there were three types of automobile service: the ordinary, an omnibus service for *Saharan and Arab peasants and workmen*; a charabanc type, better upholstered, for middle-class tourists and merchants; and a superior service comprising limousine cars with luxuriant seats and very powerful engines, in one of which we travelled the 150 miles between Casablanca and Marrakush in four hours, in spite of stops at two military stations in the middle. The fare in comparison with that of automobile services on the Continent and in England was extremely low, either on account of the cheapness of petrol or the low rate of Moroccan money.

<sup>2</sup> According to the *Tarikh al-Sūlān Ahmad al-Mansūr* undertook to build a mosque there: "As he had planned it on a wonderful scale, it had been given the name of the mosque of prosperity (*Jāmi' al-hana*), but his plans being upset by a series of unfortunate events, the prince was unable to finish the building before his death and it was therefore given the name the mosque of ruin (*Jāmi' al-fana*)." *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Pt. 41, p. 297.

<sup>3</sup> As war was going on between 'Abd al-Karīm and the Spanish Government, I thought it wise to avoid contact with the people of the country, for a foreigner is always likely to be suspected of espionage. But the *Qā'id* al-Ayyādī having heard of my arrival from the Chief of the High Atlas, who had met me by sheer chance in an olive garden in the suburbs of the city, so strongly insisted that I should not leave Marrakush without seeing him that I could not refuse his invitation. Apart from a hearty talk, his sense of hospitality was so great that during the meal he fed me now and then in Arab fashion with his own hand, offering morsels from choice dishes, among which to my taste roast partridges and *khus khus* were the best.

and Arab conquests had not penetrated so far into the interior of Western Africa. In 1162 A.C. the site was selected for a camp by the Almoravid prince, Yūsuf bin Tūshifīn, for strategic reasons; but he never intended to found his capital there and preferred to live in a tent. However, he built a mosque for the faithful to pray in, and during the course of its construction he is said to have worked as an ordinary labourer. The Almoravids, as their name denotes (Ar. *al-murābiṭūn*, dwellers in a *ribāt*-monastery), started as religious leaders, but on coming into contact with the luxurious life of Spain, they lost their own spiritual vigour and gradually deteriorated. Five kings of this dynasty ruled from Marrakesh which ultimately became their capital, and the last sovereign Iṣḥāq b. 'Alī was killed there when it was taken by the Almohade prince 'Abd al-Momin in 541 H. (1146-47 A.C.).

The monuments of the Almoravid kings, although mentioned in contemporary historical works, are difficult to trace now, except the sun-baked mud wall of the enclosure of the town, which is about 20 ft. high and has rectangular bastions at intervals of 250 to 300 ft. The nests of storks at the tops of these bastions tell a woeful story of the frailty of human power. The enclosure-wall must have been rebuilt from time to time, as the mud must have crumbled away, but according to French archaeologists, several parts of it, particularly those towards the west and south-west, are of the Almoravid period, and the *Bab-i-Dukkala*, which is mentioned in the history of the capture of the town by the Almohades, is also a monument of the Almoravid kings.

The Almohades, like their predecessors, were in the beginning a religious community and the history of Morocco to a large extent is the history of the development and variation of Islamic doctrine in that country. The Almoravids were strict followers of the Malikite school, and considered the allegorical interpretation of the verses of the *Qur'ān* as heresy, Ibn Tūmart, the founder of the Almohade group of religious thinkers, had travelled extensively in the Middle East and other countries and was familiar not only with the views of al-Ghazālī and the 'Asharite school, but had also studied the writings of the Spanish Zāhirite, Ibn Hazm.

In the law of religion, according to Ibn Tūmart, it is the objective, material sources which must be regarded as the basis of legislation, that is to say, "the *Qur'ān*, tradition transmitted by authentic sources, and the *consensus* of the *umma*, founded on the sayings and practices that have been supported for generations together by numerous authorities forming an uninterrupted chain (*tauwātūr*)". In theology Ibn Tūmart followed the strict dogmatism of the 'Asharite school and regarded the religious views prevalent in the Maghrib under the Almoravids as *kuf'r*. Whoever follows, he said, the literal interpretation of the *Qur'ān*, must come to *tajsīm* or anthropomorphism, and because of this belief should be under the ban of religion and expelled from Muslim society. With such views Ibn Tūmart declared war against the Almoravids, whom he called *Mujassimūn*, anthropomorphists.

The Almohades (*Unitarians*) also evolved a sound political constitution during their regime; the king first having a Council of Ten who advised him in important matters of State, and could also officiate for the king during great military expeditions or religious assemblages. Below this Council there was an Assembly of Fifty which was constituted of the principal tribes of the country and had a voice in the administrative policy. The Almohade empire was the first State since the establishment of Islam in the West, uniting under one single authority the whole of North Africa from the Gulf of Gabes to the Atlantic, together with Arab Spain.

The Almohades were also fond of architecture and they have left some magnificent buildings showing their fine aesthetic taste and lofty religious ideals. Amongst these the Kutūbiya<sup>1</sup> mosque at Marrakesh occupies a pre-eminent position, and will be described in detail later in this paper. The town of Marrakesh expanded much under the rule of

<sup>1</sup> It got this name from the booksellers' shops in its vicinity.

Almohades which lasted just a century and a quarter from 1146 to 1269 A.C. The last king, Abū 'L-'Ula Abū Dabbus, was killed in Muharram 668 H. during the siege of Marrakesh by the *Banū Marīn*, the Merinids.

The *Banū Marīn* also in the beginning were Saharan nomads, but inspired by the vigorous teachings of Islam and the glorious deeds of their brothers in faith, they marched northward with the rival tribe of the *Banū 'Abd al-Wad* in the beginning of the sixth century *hijra* (first or second decade of the thirteenth century of the Christian era). They were first defeated by the troops of the Almohade king, al-Sa'id, but gradually by tact and strategy they took possession of Mekinez, Fez, Taza, Rabat and Sale (Ar. *Sala*), and finally also succeeded in annexing Marrakesh. The *Banū Marīn* like their predecessors, the Almohades, tried to maintain the hegemony of Spain and Barbary, and Abū Yūsuf led an expedition in person to help the *Banū Aḥmar* Sultan of Granada, while his successor Abū 'L-Ḥasan sent his son 'Abd al-Malik, who recaptured Gibraltar from the Christians in 733 H. (1333 A.C.).

The *Banū Marīn* made Fez their capital, and the glory of Marrakesh received a setback, although to maintain the political importance of the town they appointed the princes of the family as governors. The Merinids were magnificent builders and a large number of religious, military and civic institutions were constructed during their administration. The most beautiful of their buildings to be seen now are of course in Fez, but the *madrāsas* at Marrakesh and Sale, which will be described later in this article, were also built by them. The architectural grandeur of the Arabs in Spain was maintained by the Merinids in North-west Africa, and religious ideals form the dominating features of these buildings. Abū 'L-Ḥasan and his ambitious son Abū 'Inān were the greatest builders of this dynasty and their works, besides displaying artistic beauty, give evidence of considerable military prowess and cultural activity. The Merinids, unlike the Almoravids and the Almohades, were not spiritual leaders, but to keep their hold on the religious susceptibilities of the various tribes whose good will constituted the strength of their government, they established a large number of religious institutions and showed special respect to saintly persons and other distinguished personages of the faith. Piety in the form of mysticism was the salient feature of the religious life of their reign, but the growing menace of the Christian kings of Portugal and Spain led people to practise *jihād* in the temporal aspects of life.<sup>1</sup> The latter attitude brought holy men, *sharīfs* (descendants of the Prophet) and *marabūṭs* into special prominence, and this fact combined with the power of *vazīrs*, which increased vastly in the time of later Merinid kings, led to the decline of the dynasty. One Muḥammad, a descendant of the Prophet, belonging to the Sā'dīan *Sharīfs* or *Banū Sā'd*, distinguished himself in fighting against the Portuguese, and ultimately assumed the title of Muḥammad al-Qā'im bi Amrillāh in 1509. His son Aḥmad al-Ā'raj, who also carried on the holy war against the Portuguese from 1513 to 1515, succeeded in establishing himself at Marrakesh, after disposing of Muḥammad bin Naṣir, called Bū-Shentūf,<sup>2</sup> in 1526.

The *Banū Sā'd* ruled over Morocco for nearly a century until they were ousted by the *Ḥasanī Shurafa*, who were another branch of 'Alavī *Sharīfs* hailing from Tafilet. Some of the Sā'dīan kings possessed great organizing capacity and they tried with considerable success to consolidate their empire, which consisted of a collection of tribal states always prone to assume independence as soon as weakness appeared in the government of a king. But family feuds counteracted their efforts, and the Portuguese, the Spaniards and even the Turks, who had established their authority in Algiers, supported the various claimants of the throne, and in return for their services gained territories along the coast. Muḥammad al-Mahdī (1544-57), 'Abd Allāh al-Ghālib (1557-74) and Aḥmad al-Manṣūr

<sup>1</sup> In 1401 King Henry III of Castillo landed in Barbary to take vengeance for the attacks made by the Merinids and destroyed Totonan. Constant was occupied by the Portuguese in 818 H. (1415 A.C.).

<sup>2</sup> He was the last of the *Hintāta amīrs* who had become *de facto* rulers of Marrakesh, since 1430, throwing off allegiance to the kings of Fez.

(1578-1660) were the most notable kings of the dynasty; the first of these made an alliance with England with a view to purchasing arms from them; 'Abd Allāh al-Ghalib built a series of important public works, and al-Manṣūr reorganized the *Makhzan* (Army and Revenue) by recruiting troops from the Arab tribes of Tlemsen and Ujda. The last measure enabled the Sa'īdian government to preserve order in the country and levy taxes from various tribes who were often indifferent in the matter of payment. The reign of al-Manṣūr was marked by prosperity and splendour, and as he lived generally in Marrakesh he adorned the town with many beautiful edifices, the most notable among them being the *al-Badī'* palace built from 1578 to 1594. The tombs of the first two founders of the dynasty, and the *madrasa* and the mosque built by 'Abd Allāh al-Ghalib are also jewels of Arab architecture and they are described elsewhere in this paper.

The history of the Ḥasani Sharifs, who still enjoy a nominal authority under the French Protectorate, is a sad tale of the aggrandizement and diplomacy of the European powers who came forward with the plausible excuse of enforcing peace and safety in the country, and rendering help to the Sultan in strengthening his martial and financial resources by political alliances and trade pacts. Some of the Sultans, however, ruled the country with vigour and independence, and among them the names of Maulā'i Ismā'il (1672-1729), Maulā'i Muḥammad (1757-92), and Maulā'i al-Hasan (1873-94) are worthy of being mentioned. The first of these organized an army which would work his will, and the number of *regulars* in this corps by the end of his reign numbered one hundred and fifty thousand men. Maulā'i Ismā'il with their help was able to reduce to obedience the refractory tribes and to collect tribute from them in a regular manner. He also checked the growing power of the Europeans along the coast and recaptured al-Mahdiya, Larache, Asila and Tangiers. He further wanted to drive out the Spaniards from Ceuta, but he did not succeed in his efforts; although he carried out an uninterrupted blockade for seventeen years.

Maulā'i Muḥammad possessed the energy and determination of his grandfather, Maulā'i Ismā'il, for he not only kept the rebel Berbers under his control but by the capture of Mazagon in 1769 he destroyed the last trace of Portuguese power on the Atlantic coast. On the other hand, he was duped in connection with his financial policy by the representation of some foreign powers when he concluded treaties of commerce with England, France, Denmark and Sweden. A French embassy led by the Comte de Breugnon waited on him in 1767, and this was perhaps the beginning of the French influence in Morocco which the successors of Maulā'i Muḥammad in spite of their authority could not resist, for in the reign of Maulā'i al-Hasan, a very powerful monarch of the dynasty, a French military mission was invited to reorganize the artillery of the Sultan. The growth of French power exasperated one of the later Sharifian Sultans, who declared war against France; but the Sharifian army was crushed at the battle of Isly and the ports of Tangiers and Mogodor were bombarded in 1844. In the following years the Sharifian prestige and authority further suffered; and in the beginning of the twentieth century when the *loot* was being distributed between the French, Spaniards and English, the Germans also appeared on the scene to claim certain economic concessions. As a result of negotiations in which the part of the Sharifian Sultan was that of a mere spectator, the principle of French Protectorate was accepted by the European powers, according to which the right of Spaniards to a portion of the Northern Morocco was recognized, Tangiers and its environs were declared an international zone,<sup>1</sup> and the German claim, in regard to openings for commerce and emigrants, was satisfied by certain reservations. The diplomatic document signed on March 30, 1912, stipulated the maintenance of the sovereignty of the Sultan, the representation of and protection by French diplomatic and consular agents of Moroccan subjects and interests abroad, the carrying out, with the collaboration and under the

<sup>1</sup> In return for recognition of the protectorate *de facto* exercised by England in Egypt, the former power agreed to recognize the right of France to act as her interests best demanded.

direction of France, of a number of administrative reforms, judicial, financial and military, intended to give the Sharifian kingdom a new regime, while protecting the traditional prestige and honour of the Sultan, the practice of the Muslim faith and the institutions of religion.

The implications of the above treaty, however benevolent in tone its wording may be, signify "bondage" and the fate of Morocco is sealed until the present war creates a new mentality to protect the interests of minor nations. The people of Morocco, on the other hand, possess some inherent military qualities, which were exhibited by their valiant deeds during the last War when fighting for the defence of France. The same qualities also shone forth in their war against the Spaniards from 1922 to 1925. The Moroccan, whether Berber or Arab, has a keen sense of honour which Islam has engendered in him, he has a brotherly attitude towards his fellow countrymen, he is industrious and clean in his habits, he favours a plain style of living but possesses a well-developed artistic taste which is shown in the industries of the country, such as leather works, carpet weaving and embroidery. In complexion and features he resembles the people of Southern Spain (Andalusia), and the women, like their sisters of the latter country, although inclined to a little plumpness, possess considerable charm. Their dress comprises baggy trousers, like the *shalwār*, and a tight bodice, which look very smart on their bodies. When they appear in public they are covered with large sheets and except a pair of beaming eyes nothing is visible. Men, besides the ordinary shirt and pair of trousers, wear a loose cloak, called *jallāba*, which has a hood attached to it. The dwellings of the middle-class people, although looking quite plain from outside, behind the solid doors have lovely *patios* with rooms built along their sides. The room towards the street has always an alcove with well-designed windows through which the inmates of the house generally watch the trend of the outer world.

The life of the people of Morocco, although considerably enfeebled by foreign influence, presents a true picture of the social and economic conditions as established by Islam, and a religious note of equality and fraternity combined with a love of the beautiful, as a result of the yearnings of soul, runs through every phase. As a matter of fact, I should not have been able to visualize the aims and ideals of the Moorish architecture of Spain, owing to their unhappy present environment as belonging to an alien culture, until I had seen the mosques, *madrasas* and other public buildings of Morocco, thronged and occupied by the people for whom they were really constructed. French archaeologists have surveyed and described the monuments of Marrakesh in the most scientific manner, and the brief account of some of the principal monuments given by me below does not indicate any closer study; but it is presented as a result of the impressions of a Muslim student of the subject looking at the monuments from his point of view.

In the lovely panorama of Marrakesh the giant minaret of the Kutubīya mosque occupies a dominating position (Plate I). The original mosque was begun by 'Abd al-Momin (1128-63 A.C.), but as it was wrongly oriented he extended it in order to give it the correct orientation towards the *Kā'ba*. The mosque appears to have been further extended by Ya'qūb al-Mansūr, the grandson of 'Abd al-Momin, who built the great minaret of the mosque, along with those of the mosques at Seville and Rabat. The minaret at the last place has remained incomplete, while its prototype at Seville has undergone certain changes; but the minaret of Kutubīya stands in its original form, and besides exhibiting the lofty idealism of the Islamic faith under the Almohade dynasty, it indicates the vigorous character and refined taste of its rulers. The minaret is square in form and rises 230 ft. above the ground level. Notwithstanding its great height the building is extremely massive, but to soften these features the architect has cleverly decorated the minaret on all four sides with windows and a network of overlapping arches and stalactites, in which the interspacing has been filled up with coloured tiles. The minaret is divided into four stages, the highest is rather more slender in proportion than the lower three, and it is crowned with a fluted dome which has a finial consisting of

three copper-gilt orbs. The minaret although it does not possess the grace of form and ingenious designing of the Qutb Minār at Delhi or the later *Mā'dhyanās* at Cairo and Istanbul, yet for solid vigour and majesty yields to none and perhaps stands unique.

The mosque is entered by eight gateways, and its present plan consists of an extensive prayer-hall facing the east, and colonnades towards the north, south and west. The prayer-hall in its depth has nine aisles, each having nineteen arched openings. The form of the arches vary; they are of perfect horseshoe shape; but in some cases they have been pointed at the apex, while in other they have been decorated with stucco work giving them an ornamental cusped form. The arches rise from masonry columns, and thus the interior of the building suffers in comparison with that of the Great Mosque at Cordova where arches spring from marble pillars of exquisite design. The ceiling of the Kutubiya is of wood, the carving being plain, and in this respect also it lacks the splendour of its rival at Cordova, whose elegance of patterns enchant the eye.

The mosque has a vast court, along the sides of which, as described above, are colonnades, those towards the north and south being four aisles deep, and that towards the west being single.

The Jāmi' al-Manṣūr, or the mosque built by Ya'qūb al-Manṣūr in the *Qaṣba*<sup>1</sup> exceeds in grandeur the former mosque, although its minaret is smaller in dimensions than that of the Kutubiya. Ya'qūb constructed it between 1189 and 1195 A.C., but later 'Abd Allāh al-Ḡhālīb the Sā'dīan made extensive alterations in the mosque, and in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries further renovations were carried out by Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allāh and 'Abd al-Raḥmān, the Sharifian kings. The exterior of the building is somewhat dull and heavy, as is the case with all the monuments of Morocco, but the splendour of its interior is indisputable. It is entered by three gateways from the south and by one from the north. The inner plan consists of the *liwan* (prayer-hall) facing the east, and colonnades towards the north, the south and the west. The colonnades facing the north and the south have seven arched openings while that facing the west has only five. The ceilings of these colonnades are in the form of a casket, flat in the middle and curvilinear at the sides. They are beautifully carved, the designs being generally geometrical. The ceilings are also painted over, and the predominant colours are red and blue. The latter is in some cases not pleasing to the eye, particularly in the case of the restorations made by the two Sharifian kings mentioned above.

In front of each of the northern and southern colonnades, there are two pleasant courts paved with marble and having fountains in the middle. These courts are divided from one another by a covered passage which starts from the middle arch of each colonnade and leads to the central court. The smaller side courts are separated from the middle court by arched screens. The latter court is about fifty yards square and it has two cisterns for the ablutions of the votaries.

The *liwan* is divided into three apartments in its depth and has eleven arched openings in each apartment towards the west. These apartments are further divided into bays by means of arches built across the width of the hall. The arches of the outer two apartments although of horseshoe shape are pointed at the top; and the arch-heads of the inner apartment are filled up with ornamental stalactites giving the openings a very attractive appearance. The charm of the stalactites can of course be best appreciated in the buildings of Alhambra, notably in the Hall of Two Sisters and the Hall of Justice; but this form of decoration was freely used a century, or more, earlier by the Almohades and Merinids in Morocco, and some of the *madrasas* and mosques built by the rulers of these two dynasties possess very artistic specimens.

Another important monument of Marrakesh is the so-called Madrasa of Abū Yūsuf, which according to some authorities was built by Abū 'l-Ḥasan al-Marīnī in 1347 A.C.,

<sup>1</sup> Enclosed quarters for the garrison.

and restored by 'Abd Allāh al-Qhālib, the Sā'dīan, in 1564-65 A.C.<sup>1</sup> A majority of French archaeologists, however, contradict this view and state that in 972 H. (1564-65 A.C.) al-Qhālib built the *madrasa* at the present site as a new structure, and that he did not extend or restore the *madrasa* of Abu 'l-Ḥasan, the remains of which can still be traced to the north of the mosque in the *Qasba*. The opinion of these French archaeologists seems to be correct, for I also noticed the inscriptions of some Sā'dīan kings in the building, but the people of Marrakesh still call it the *Madrasa* of Ibn Yūsuf al-Marīnī. It is a magnificent building, and its tile-decoration, its stalactites and its wood carving possess all the subtle charm of the *madrasas* of Fez built by the Banū Marīn.

The visitor enters the building through a gate of modest dimensions and first passes along a corridor which leads to a vestibule. The dados of both the corridor and vestibule are decorated with tile-mosaics of geometric pattern, the designs being intricate but not tiresome to the eye. Higher up on the walls is a band of inscriptions in black tiles, and above it ornamental stucco work and calligraphic devices which fit in very well in the decorative scheme. The ceiling of the corridor is divided into several compartments by means of beautifully carved beams. These compartments are casket-shaped vaults; but the ceiling of the vestibule is domical, resting on an octagonal drum, although the plan of the vestibule at the base is square.

From the vestibule the visitor enters the main court which is about 90 ft. square and has a cistern in the middle (Plate II). The court is paved with marble and has colonnades and rooms on three sides while the fourth towards the east is occupied by a spacious hall, which is in the middle, and two rooms, one on each side of the former. The walls and pillars up to a height of 3 ft. 6 in. are faced with tiles of geometrical pattern, which have decayed considerably owing to neglect and passage of time, but the stucco ornamentation and wood carving of the higher parts of the columns and the walls are well preserved, and the elegance of their designs shows how the artistic traditions of the Merinids were maintained, if not improved upon, by the Sā'dīan kings. The colonnades have five openings in the trabeate style, but ornamental corbels and wooden struts, which project below the lintels, have given the openings a very pleasing form. The lintels are of wood but for purpose of strength they are double, placed one above the other. They are richly carved, still the stucco decoration above them is even richer and in the middle of the latter are beautifully designed windows which open on to the rooms of students, built in the upper floor of the building. The columns which support the lintels of the colonnades in the ground floor rise up to support the beams of the students' rooms in the upper storey, and their loftiness combined with the lavish decoration of the frieze and the brackets, below the margin of the roof, add much stateliness and magnificence to the general style of the building.

The splendour of architecture is further enhanced by the stalactites and the well-proportioned arch-heads of the eastern wing of the *madrasa* (Plate III), which comprises the prayer-hall, or the main lecture-room, and two rectangular side-rooms. The dados of the prayer-hall are of marble with carving of floral design in the style of the carving in the Great Mosque at Cordova. At the eastern end of this hall is the *mihrāb*, or the prayer-niche, pentagonal in plan and lavishly ornamented with stucco work. The ceiling of the hall is domical, resting on a drum in the sides of which windows have been built to admit light and air to the interior of the building. The openings of the windows have been filled up with trellis work, specimens of which may be seen in the large arch-head above the entrance of the hall (Plate III). The two rectangular rooms, one on either side of the prayer-hall, are separated from the latter by means of arched screens with pillars

<sup>1</sup> The *madrasa* built by Abū Yūsuf stood in front of the palace and was still in existence in the time of Leo Africanus, who has described it. Leo has also given an account of the *madrasa* built by Abū 'l-Ḥasan al-Marīnī. It was situated north of the mosque of the *Qasba*.

of marble. The pillars are round but slender in shape and on their capitals the following inscription is carved :—

بني عبد الله بن محمد الشيخ الشريف الحسنی

*Built by 'Abd Allāh son of Muḥammad al-Shaiḫ al-Sharīf al-Ḥasanī.*

Muḥammad al-Shaiḫ was the eighth ruler of the Sā'dian dynasty, who ruled 1605–30 A.C. The inscription shows that this part of the building was re-designed by the son of the latter king some time during his reign. The ceiling of the rectangular rooms is of cedar wood, comprising casket-shaped vaults. The wood is carved and painted over. The lustre of the tiles used in the prayer-hall and the side-rooms compares favourably with the brilliance of the tiles at Alhambra.

The *madrasa* has small courts on three sides of the central block, i.e. towards the north, south and west. These courts have a pair of rooms on each side for the accommodation of students.<sup>1</sup> This arrangement is repeated in the upper floor of the building, but there the rooms instead of having open courts in front have galleries for purpose of light and air. There is accommodation for 150 students in the *madrasa*, and at the time of my visit 90 students were living on the premises. Morocco possesses a large number of *madrasas* built in equally grand style, and the idea of the builders was to create a love of the beautiful in the young mind of the student from the very beginning so that in after-life his outlook may be sweet and noble, despite the grim features of the worldly existence through which he may have to pass.

The Sā'dian kings, in regard to the enchanting beauty of their architecture, seem to have emulated the example of the Banū Aḥmar of Granada, but unfortunately *al-Qaṣr al-Badī*, "the Wonderful Palace", which was the *chef-de'œuvre* of the building genius of the Sā'dian king, Maṣṣūr al-Dḥahabī, Maṣṣūr the Golden, has completely perished,<sup>2</sup> the reason of its destruction being the jealousy of the succeeding dynasties, who could not tolerate the glorious monuments of their predecessors and under one pretext or another pulled down the magnificent halls and apartments of the palace. A shadow of the splendour of the edifice, however, survives in the interiors of the tombs of the dynasty, to which the hand of the vandal, for religious scruples, could not reach, although their exteriors have been mutilated and the precious material removed for mundane purposes. The neglected condition of the entrance to the tombs and the court inside, which I found overgrown with rank vegetation, speaks of the indifference of the rulers of the present dynasty to the preservation of these unique treasures of art and culture. The French authorities have apparently refrained from taking any action in the matter, because the enclosure of a tomb is always a sacred area and the Muslims of the West on this point are more orthodox and sensitive than their brethren in other parts of the world.

There are two groups of tombs, the one towards the east is earlier and contains the tomb of Muḥammad al-Shaiḫ, also known as Muḥammad al-Mahdī. He was assassinated in 1557 A.C., and the tomb was apparently built by his son 'Abd Allāh entitled al-Ḥālib. It is entered from three sides; the southern entrance being comparatively in a better state of preservation (Plate IV), for those towards the north and east have been robbed of their richly carved lintels and masonry. The plan of the entrances is uniform, comprising three arches, the one in the middle being wider and

<sup>1</sup> The pavement of the small court is of tile-mosics, being sadly out of repair now. In one of the chambers I noticed a marble fountain of Roman workmanship with the carved figure of an eagle holding a deer in each of its claws. This fountain also bears an Arabic inscription which is much obliterated now, but the name of 'Abd al-Malik and al-Maṣṣūr, the sixth and seventh Sā'dian kings, can be read with certainty.

<sup>2</sup> Al-'Irfānī has described the palace in his book, *Nuḥat al-Ḥādī* (ed. and trans. by Houdas, 1880). The foundations of the palace can still be traced beyond the enclosure-wall of the Sā'dian tombs.

higher in dimensions than the two side ones. The contrast is pleasing to the eye. The heads of the arches are decorated with stalactites.

The sepulchral hall is of considerable dimensions. It has a casket-shaped ceiling, flat in the middle and curved at the sides, but as the expanse is large, the architect has inserted three beautifully carved cedar beams across the ceiling for its support. At the western end of this hall there is another, the ceiling of which is decorated with stalactites of plaster work, giving it the effect of a natural cavern hung with icicles.<sup>1</sup> The walls of these rooms are decorated with mosaic tiles and calligraphic texts, containing *Qur'ānic* verses and benedictory lines for the peace of the souls of those who are interred there. The principal graves are of Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad al-Shaikḥ, also entitled al-Mahdī, and of his son 'Abd Allāh al-Ghālīb. The texts of the inscriptions relating to these two monarchs were copied by me during my visit and as they are of considerable literary and historical interest I give them below with their translation in English.<sup>2</sup>

I—INSCRIPTION ON THE TOMB OF THE SĀ'DĪAN KING ABŪ 'ABD ALLĀH MUḤAMMAD AL-SHAIKḤ, ENTITLED AL-MAHDĪ

Text

- |     |   |  |
|-----|---|--|
| (١) | و ظَلَّتْ لِحْدَهُ مِنْهَا غَمَامَاتُ                     | حَيِّي ضَرْحًا تَغْمَدْتَهُ رَحْمَاتُ              |
| (٢) | هَبَّتْ مِنْ الخَلْدِ مِنْهَا نَسِيمَاتُ <sup>٣</sup>     | وَ اسْتَنْشَقْتَ نَفْحَاتِ الْقَدَسِ مِنْهُ فَقَدْ |
| (٣) | مِنْ اجْلَاهَا الْاَرْضِينَ السَّبْعَ ظَلَمَاتُ           | لِحْدِ بَه كُورَتِ شَمْسِ الْهَدْيِ فَكَسَتْ       |
| (٤) | وَ اثْبَتَتْ سَهْمَهَا فِيهَا. الْمَنِيَاتُ               | يَا مَهْجَةً غَالَهَا غَوْلُ الرَّدَى قَنَصَا      |
| (٥) | وَ ارْتَجَّتْ مِنْ نَعْيِكَ السَّبْعَ السَّمَوَاتُ        | دَكَّتْ لِمَوْتِكَ اطْوَادَ الْعُلَى صَعَقَا       |
| (٦) | مِنْ الْمَلَائِكِ الْخَانَ وَ اصْوَاتُ                    | وَ شَبِعَتْ نَعَشِكَ الْمَرْجِي إِلَى عَدْنِ       |
| (٧) | تَدْوُرُ مِنْهَا عَلَيْهِ الدَّهْرُ كَاسَاتُ              | يَا رَحْمَةً اللَّهُ اعْطَاهُ سَلَاةً رَضَى        |
| (٨) | دَارَ اِمَامِ الْهَدْيِ الْمَهْدِيِّ جَنَاتُ <sup>٤</sup> | قَضَى وَ وَاْفَقَ وَ التَّارِيخُ مِنْ جَلَا        |

<sup>1</sup> A very impressive example of natural stalactites is at Constantine in Tunis which I visited during my sojourn in Northern Africa. The cave is approached by an electric lift which the French authorities have fixed with a view to enabling the tourist to enjoy the sight.

<sup>2</sup> The texts of these inscriptions with translations in French might have been published before, but as I have deciphered them on the spot my readings and translations in English may be independently of value to the students of Muslim epigraphy. I am obliged to Professor Abdul Haq, Head of the Arabic Department of the Osmania University, who has kindly helped me in fixing the reading of many Arabic words, peculiar to the vocabulary of North African countries.

<sup>3</sup> This hemistich will read better as follows:

هَبَّتْ مِنْ الخَلْدِ مِنْهُنَّ النَسِيمَاتُ

<sup>4</sup> Two kings of this dynasty hold this title, Muḥammad al-Qā'im bi Amri'llah and his son Muḥammad al-Mahdī. According to contemporary history the former died in 924 H. (1517-18 A.C.) and the latter in 965 H. (1557 A.C.). The date (881 H.) contained in the second hemistich of line 8