



## Promotion of Educational and Learning Under Ayyubid Rulers

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### ABSTRACT

After the decline of Abbasids, numerous major and minor dynasties established. These dynasties also maintained tradition of learning and culture of the Abbasid Period. Ayyubid rulers were modest, patience, skilled in blandishment and diplomacy as well as they were religious and men of learning. Being educated and cultured themselves, the Ayyubid rulers were munificent patrons of learning and educational activities. Many scholars, philosophers, Sufi and scientist came to them from distant lands. Sunni sect views were restored through education in this period. This paper will explore educational institutions, madrasah type schools and mosques were built by Ayyubids in different parts of the Empire not only to educate people but also to popularize knowledge of Sunni Islam. This study also shows style of teaching, endowment, libraries and residential school system that flourished in this period.

**Keywords:** Ayyubid, Madrasah, education, libraries, learning

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### I. Introduction

Salahuddin established Ayyubid dynasty after abolishing of Fatimid Caliphate of Egypt that was a Shiite state. So when Ayyubid dynasties arose and established schools as a counteraction to help people learn the Sunnifaith. In this period 'the main attention of these schools was given to religious studies' (Shalaby, 1954:56). Salahuddin Ayyubi was a man of learning and praises the scholars around him. Many writers and poets wrote in his praises. He himself was a great builder of academic institutions and encourage others to do so. Although the Ayyubids were Shafiites, they built schools for imparting instruction in all the four Sunnite systems of religio-juridical thought. In Syria there was no school for the Hanbalite and Malikite systems of theology before the Ayyubid period, but the Ayyubids founded schools for them. Salahuddin founded a shafii law college in the area of *al Qarafah* near the tomb of Imam Shafi'i. He converted the house of the Fatimid wazir Abbas into a school of Hanafi jurisprudence which was popularly known as the Suyufi school. He built the Sharifiyah school in Egypt for Shafi'i jurisprudence, and in Egypt he built another school for Maliki jurisprudence. This school was known as the Qumhiliya school (Jalaluddin al Suyuti, 1903:185) In the mid of 13 century, Izz al Din Ibn Shaddad counted in Damascus 34 Hanafite schools, 40 Shafiite schools, 3 Malikite and 10 Hanbalite schools. (Abdul Ali, 1996:39)

### Endowment

The time of the Ayyubids was the golden age of Egypt for the promotion of learning. Schools were extensively founded and richly endowed not only by the Sultan but also by princes, princesses, ministers, members of the royal family, learned men and some prominent public personages. Whenever a mosque or a school was established, Sultan Salahuddin was in the habit of fixing adequate endowment to suffice for the employees and students as well as to keep the establishment in a good state. When Salahuddin established *al Nasiriyah*, he endowed it with baths, a bakery and a shop (Shalaby, 213).

The Prince Taqial Din Umar b. Shahinshah, the nephew of Salahuddin, bought the magnificent Fatimid house called "*Manazil al Izz*" (the house of glory) and made it a school for Shafiite jurisprudence. He endowed this school with baths called 'Hammam al Dhahab' and an inn known as 'Funduq al Nakhlah' (Hotel of the Oasis) (Shalaby, 213)

Ayshah the wife of Shuja al Din al Dimagh made her husband's house after his death a school for Shafii and Hanafii sects and endowed it with a third of the Dimaghiyyah's farm, a portion of Rajmal Hayyat, a portion of Ismaili's baths, a portion of a certain meadow Sharkhub's farm and other properties. (Shalaby, 214)

*Al Madrasah al Shamiyyah al Juwwaniyyah* was founded by princess Sittushsham, the mother of Husam al Din and the daughter of Ayyub who assigned this school for Shafii theologians and students and endowed it with the whole farm called 'Bezinah', eleven and a half portions out of 24 from the farm called Jirmāna, 14 1/7 portions out of 24 from the farm called 'al Tinah', half of the manor called 'Majidal al Suwaydah' and the whole farm called "Majidal al-Qaryah". The expenditure of this income was detailed as follows -

The school was to be properly maintained. Any damage to the school building was repaired immediately. In oil lamps, mats, carpets and other essentials of the school were bought and paid for. 300 Nasiri dirhams was assigned for distribution of fruits and sweets on different occasions. Each teacher was given one sack of wheat, one sack of barley and 130 Nasiri dirhams per month. One tenth of the rest was given to the supervisor of the school and the remaining amount was given to theologians, students and the staff (Shalaby, 215)

Eight zawiyas (sections) were existed in the mosque of Amr for the promotion of learning, the expenses of which were met by the income from the endowments assigned for them. Some of these were –

“*Zawiyat al Imam al Shafi'i* which was endowed with land in Sandabis by Sultan al Aziz b. Salahuddin. *Al zawiyah al Kamaliyyah* which was endowed with an inn in Cairo by Kamal al Din Samannudi. *zawiyah al Tajiiyyah* which was endowed with a number of houses in Cairo by Taj al Din al Sathi” (Shalaby:214)

In the Ayyubid times, the stipends paid to teachers varied due to several factors such as endowment allotted to the institution, the position and reputation of the teachers and the generosity and integrity of the political leaders. It was required that all the staff members of the school should be members of the Sunni sect, and that they should be honest, pious and chaste.

Najm al Din al Khabushani was the close friend and advisor of Salahuddin. He appointed Najm al Din al Khabushani to teach in *al-Madrasah al Salahiiyyah* on the following emoluments.

“40 Salahi dinars per month for the teaching work; 10 Salahi dinars per month for looking after the emoluments; 60 Egyptian pounds of bread daily, 2 waterskins full of Nile water” (Suyuti, 1903:186) After some time when Taqi al Din b. Ruzain held this office, he was paid only half of that amount. But when Taqi al Din b. Daqiq al Id occupied the post, he was given only a quarter of the paid emoluments. Later when another scholar al Sahib Burhan al Din took charge of teaching in this school, he was given the full pay.

Majd al Dīn Muḥammad b. Muhammad al-Jabti was appointed as lecturer on the salary of eleven dirhams per month in *al Madrasah al Suyufiyyah* which was founded by Sultan Salahuddin for imparting education on Hanafi jurisprudence (Salaby: 139)

Salahuddin defrayed the entire expenses of the madrasah at Cairo, amounting to about 2,000 Egyptian dinars per month. In Damascus the salaries of teachers amounted to 30,000 dinars annually which was paid from the public treasury (Ziauddin Alvi, 1988:76)

### **Educational system**

Residential education was available to Muslim students even in early periods of time when the present school system was not established. Both teachers and students resided as a rule in these residential schools. The teachers appointed to teach in them were jurisconsults, theologians and traditionists, who received their salary from endowments dedicated to these institutions (Hitti, 1951:645). *Ibn Jubayr* has described the various facilities that were granted to the students. Every student was offered a lodging in which he resided. Regular grants were also provided to them to cover all their needs. In Alexandria several colleges and hostels were built for students and pious men of other lands (R.J.C Broadhurst, 1952:32)

In *al-Nasiriyyah*, built by Salāhuddīn in Egypt, professors and students were lodged in the college which had several lecture rooms, libraries, laboratories and other adjuncts. In *Nizamiyyah* also there were residential areas which were occupied by students and teachers (Lane Poole, 1898:190) The *Mustansariyyah Madrasah* was also a residential institution which was equipped with a kitchen that provided meat and bread to all the inmates (Khuda Bakhsh, 1930:150)

In this period stay in the residential schools was considered an essential part of education. In these residential institutions only students of good character were admitted. There were separate institutions for imparting education to girls. Students residing on the upper floor were required to walk slowly and not drop heavy things on the floor so that they might not disturb the people below. They

were also under instructions not to stand at the entrance of the building or in its hall, nor go in and out frequently, nor look into other people's room. In short, all possible measures were taken to ensure that the students avoided all bad habits (Shalaby, 222)

These schools were considered so prestigious institutions in society that it was not possible for anyone to get job in the government who did not receive his education in a Madrasah. Medical practitioners were not allowed to practice until they did not pass the examination to obtain the certificate.

### **Schools established in the Ayyubid period**

Under the Ayyubids education was generously patronized. A great number of educational institutions were built in different cities not only by the Sultans but also by princes, princesses, merchants and common people. The main schools founded by them are listed by Ahmad Shalaby(60)

#### **A. Schools founded by Sultans**

##### **In Egypt**

##### **School**

al Nasiriyyah adjoining the 'Atiq Mosque

al Qumhiliyyah

al Suyufiyyah

al-Nasiriyyah in al-Qarafah

al-Adil

al-Kamiliyyah

al-Salihiyyah

##### **In Jerusalem**

al-Salahiyyah

al-Afdaliyyah

al-Nahwiyyah

##### **In Damascus**

al Salahiyah

al-'Aziziyyah

al-Zahiriyyah al Barraniyyah

al-'Adiliyyah al-Kubra

al-Mu"azzamiyyah

Daral-Hadith al Ashrafiyyah

(al-Barraniyyah)

al-'Aziziyyah

##### **Founder**

Salahuddin

Salahuddin

Salahuddin

Salahuddin

al-'Adil

al Kamil

Salih-Najmuddin Ayyub

Salahuddin

al-Afdal b. Salahuddin

al Mu'azzam "Isa b. al-'Adil

Salahuddin

al'Aziz b. Salahuddin

al Zahir b. Salahuddin

al Malik al-Adil

al Mu'azzam 'Isa

Musa b. al-'Adil

al'Aziz b. 'Adil

#### **B. Schools founded by people of high rank (princes, princesses, ministers and Amirs)**

##### **In Egypt**

##### **School**

al-Qutbiyyah

"Manazil al" Izz

al-Fadiliyyah

al-Azkashiyyah

al-Sayfiyyah

al-"Ashuriyyah

al-Qutbiyyah

al-Sharifiyyah

al-Sahibiyyah

al-Fakhriyyah

al-Sayramiyyah

al-Fa'iziyyah

##### **Founder**

Qutb al Din Khusraw

Taqi al Din-"Umar

al Qadi al Fadil

Sayf al Din Ayazkuj

Sayf al Din b. Ayyub

"Ashura"bint Saruh

"Ismat al Din bint al"Adil

al Sharif Fakhr al Din

Abdullah b. Ali

Fakhr al Din al Barumi

Jamal al Din b. Sayram

Sharaf al Din Hibatallah

##### **Position**

Amir

Prince

Minister

Amir

Prince

an Amir's wife

Princess

Amir

Minister

ustadar of al Kamil

Amir

Minister (Shalaby,61)

**In Jerusalem**

al-Maymuniyyah	Maymun b. Abdullah	Amir
al-Badriyyah	Badr al Din b. Abi al Qasim	Amir

**In Damascus**

al Sahibiyyah	Rabi'ah bint Najmuddin	Princess
al-Farrukhshahiyyah	Farrukhshah b. Shahinshah	Prince
al-Adhrawiyyah	Adhra bint Nural Dawlah	Princess
al-Taqwiyyah	Taqi al Din b. Shahinshah	Prince
al-Shamiyyah al Barraniyyah	Sittal-Sham b. Najmuddin	Princess

al-Shamiyyah al Juwwaniyyah	Sittal-Sham b. Najmuddin	Princess
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al-Mardaniyyah	Khatun'Azziah	the wife of Muazzam
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al-Bahnasiyyah	Majd al Din al Bahnasi	Minister
al-Atabikiyyah	Khatun bint "Izzal Din	the wife of Ashraf

al-Izziyyah al Barraniyyah	Izzal Din al A'zami	the deputy of the king in Sarkhad
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al-Izziyyah al Juwwaniyyah	Izzal Din al A'zami	the deputy of the king in Sarkhad
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al-Izziyyah al Hanafiyyah	izz-al Din al A'zami	the deputy of the king in Sarkhad
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**C. By Commoners**

**In Egypt**

Ibn al-Arsufi	Abdullah b. Arsufi	Merchant
al-Masruriyyah	Masrur al Safadi	Servant
al-Ghaznawiyyah	Husam al Din Qaymaz	Freedman
Ibn Bashiq	Pilgrims from al Takrur	Freedman

**In Damascus**

al-"Asruniyyah	Sharaf al Din b" Asrun	Qadi al Qudat
al-Falakiyyah	Falak al Din Sulaiman	half brother of al-'Adil
al-Iqbaliyyah	Jamal al Din Iqbal	Freedman
al-Mansuriyyah	Shibl al Din Kafur	Servant
al-'Umariyyah	Abu-'Umar al Maqdisi	Qadi al Qudat
Dar al Hadith al Urwiyyah	Sharaf al Din b'Urwah	Theologian
al-Ruwahiyyah	Zaki al Din b. Ruwahah	Merchant
al-Sarimiyyah	Sarim al Din b. Azbak	Freedman
* al-Shibliyyah al Barraniyyah	Shibl al Din Kafur	Servant
al-Rukniyyah	Rukn al Din Mankurs	Freedman
al-Dawla"iyyah	Jamal al Din al Dawla'i	Theologian
al-Dimaghiyyah	The wife of Shujauddin	Theologian

b. al Dimagh

\* Shibl al Din died in 623, but in accordance with his will the school was built post humously (in 626).

**Medical Schools**

al-Dikhwariyyah	Muhadhhab al Din Dikhwar	Medical doctor
al-Dunaysariyyah (Shalaby:63)	Imad-al Din al Dunaysari	Medical doctor

**Repeaters (*Mu'id*)**

There was a post of *Mu'id* (repeater) in most of the schools in the Ayyubid period. They sat with the audience and listened to the lecture given by the professor. When the lecture was over, they explained the difficult parts of the lecture and assisted the students in comprehending the topic. In *al Nasiriyyah* Salahuddin appointed *Mu'id* to assist Najm al Din al Khabushani in imparting education to the students. In *Madrasah al Salihiyah* which was established by al Salih Najmuddin Ayyub there were two teachers and two *Mu'ids*. Sometimes a man could be a teacher in one school and a *Mu'id* in another. Al-Nusair b. al Tabbakh was a teacher in *al-Madrasah al Qutbiyyah* and a *Mu'id* in *al Salihiyah*, where the famous Ibn Abd-al Salam was the professor. The *Mu'id* could also perform the duty of a teacher. In *Madrasah al Nasiriyyah* 10 repeaters taught for 30 years without any professors (Shalaby, 144)

**Libraries**

In the Ayyubid period good libraries were established by the rulers, princes and the learned men. Every school and institution had a reference library, enriched by manuscript donations and acquisitions. Scholars spent a great deal of time copying books, which ultimately found their way to school or mosque libraries. The rapid growth and spread of libraries in practically every city of the Islamic world was made possible by the introduction of paper from China to the Middle East in this period. Paper mills were established at Baghdad, Tripoli in Syria and many other centers in Egypt and Alexandria to cope with the increasing demand of paper by scribes. Tremendous accumulations of manuscripts filled the palace libraries of the caliph as well as all the famous learned institutions (Atiya Aziz, 1962:249). These libraries were served as academics and translation bureaus also. Binders and attendants were employed to look after the safety and management of the books. The librarian looked after the administration of the library. He supervised the cataloguing of the collections as well as gave advice and all possible facilities to the learners. He issued orders for the binding or repair of any book in need of it. Copyists were also employed in almost all the important libraries. Some major libraries are briefly described below:

1. Madrasah Fadiliyyah was founded by the Qadi al Fadil in 580 A.H./1184 A.D. There was a library attached to the Madrasah in which al Fadil incorporated the books which he had received from Salahuddin (F.Krenkow, 1929:217)

Umar Hasan Hamadi also discussed many libraries those were attached to these Madrasah.

2. Al Madrasah Babriyyah
3. Al Madrasah Mansuriyyah
4. Al Madrasah al Nasiriyyah
5. Al Madrasah al Hajaziyyah
6. Al Madrasah Takrisiyyah
7. Al Madrasah Mankutamiyyah
8. Al Madrasah Malikiyyah
9. Al Madrasah Sabaqiyah
10. Al Madrasah Mahmudiyyah
11. Al Madrasah Basiriyyah
12. Al Madrasah al Zayiyyah
13. Al Madrasah Amir Jamaluddin (Hasan Hamadi, 1959:52-58).

In addition to these libraries attached to the colleges, there were many private libraries also which were established by learned men. When Salāhuddīn overthrew the Fatimid dynasty, he dissolved the library of this dynasty by destroying the heretical books, selling some in auctions and presenting the rest to his secretaries al Qadi al Fadil and Imaduddin al Isfahani.

**The Library of Jamāluddin Qifti**

Al-Qifti known also had a fine library in Halab. He was such a great bibliophile that authors and book owners travelled from distant places to present him new works and rare manuscripts in order to receive his liberal remuneration in return. His library is reported to have been worth 50,000 dinars, which by his will he left to Al-Nasir, the ruler of that city (F. Krenkow, 1929:217)

#### **The Library of ImaduddinIsfahani**

ImaduddinIsfahani had a huge library. He was a great lover of books. When Fatimid books were selling in low prices, he hurried to the spot and took part in the auctions. He chose the wonderful collections to cost some hundreds of dinars for him, but Salahuddin did not let him pay anything and gave all the books as a gift.

#### **The Library of Muwaffaq al Din b. Matran**

Al Muwaffaq al Din b. Matran, the medical scholar, was also a great bibliophile. In his library he left about 10,000 volumes. Being a notable calligrapher he enriched his collection by copying several books himself. He also employed three scribes for the same purpose. Most of the books he preserved were collected and revised by himself with useful marginal comments inserted. Three copyists were continually working for the library of Muwaffaq al Din al Matran. The calligrapher Jamal al Din called Ibn Jammalah was one of these employees (Ibn Usabiyah, 1882:178)

#### **The Library of Qadi al Fadil**

After the conquest of Egypt SalahuddinAyyubi presented several books to Qadi al Fadil. In the course of time he built a well-stocked library which contained as many as 68,000 volumes (F.Krenkow, 1929:217)He also founded a library attached to the Fadiliyah madrasah in which he incorporated the books which he had received from Salahuddin.

In the Ayyubid period, the garments of learned persons were different from those of the public. They used to wear very big turban, an end of which hung down between their shoulders. Sometimes it was so long that it reached the saddle of a rider's mount. Some learned men used to put a fancy *Taylasan* upon their shoulders. Another robe called *Farajiyah* was sometimes worn by men of the learned profession (Shalaby: 154)

In this period Sultans, princes and princess also took interest in acquiring knowledge. There were many learned women in different fields such as poetry, medicine and tradition in this period. Taqiyyah Umm Ali, daughter of Abu al Faraj was a poetess of eminence. On one occasion she composed a laudatory poem and sent it to Taqi al Din Umar, the nephew of Salahuddin. The poem was a symposium and in it the lady beautifully and precisely described a drinking party, the glasses and all that usually takes place in such a meeting as if she were a habitual drinker. On reading the poem Taqi al Din proclaimed that the poetess must have had experience in this respect. The lady then composed a martial poem in which she gave accurate details of a battle and a correct picture of warriors in the field. She sent the poem to Taqi al Din with a note explaining that she had as much experience of drinking parties as she had had of battles. On seeing this poem Taqi al Din recognized and appreciated her high imaginative powers (Abdullah al Udhari, 1999:148)

In this period Sultans and princes did not hesitate to go to the house of learned men. Al Malik al Afdal regularly used to take his books, leave his royal palace and go to the house of Taj al Din al Kindi. If the lesson of the earlier disciples used to be continued longer than al Malik al Afdalwaited outside.

When Ali b. al Hasan b. Asakir died, Salahuddin went to his house, prayed for him and walked in his funeral.

A literary meeting was regularly held in the house of al-Qadi al Fadil, the prince Izzal Din Farrukh Shah and the learned Taj al Din al Kindi were among those who attended it on regular basis. Izz al Din took Taj al Din to his palace and prepared a magnificent apartment for him and from that time Taj al Din became one of the shining lights of the Ayyubid gatherings (Shalaby:42)

## **II. Conclusion**

Ayyubid rulers contributed a lot in the education and learning that influences many philosophers, scientist, writers and poetstocome here from distant places. Scientific and literary work flourished so much in this period that the Western societies also became eager about knowledge. Europeans started taking interest incollege planning, programming and teaching and built school on the pattern of Muslims.

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