Every political organisation pre-supposes the existence of a supreme administrative authority such as is connoted by the term Vizarat. Even as early as the time of Prophet Mohammad, when Arab polity was little more than a convenient system of tribal democracy, with chieftains wielding supreme powers over the lives and properties of the clansmen, someone was assigned the functions of implementing orders and policies. From amongst the nearest of the Prophet's companions some one could at any time be called upon to carry out decisions. 1

In this capacity such outstanding persons as Abu Bakr, could well be said as performing the duties and functions of a vizier. 2

The settlement reached between the Ansar and the Mahajirin after the death of the Prophet, whereby the former were debarred from claims to the caliphae office, they were thought it for the office of vizarat as their deserved reward. The

1. Treaties were generally written down by Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Zaid bin Sabit, Abdullah bin Arqam used to write letters to foreign princes and to governors of the Islamic State. Muawiyah was engaged for writing down agreements (Muahida) between the Prophet and the Arabs. The name of Ubai bin K'ab is also mentioned in the list of Katibs, Al-Jahshyari, Kitab-al-wazra-wal-kuttab, pp. 12-14. Balazuri, Ansab-al-ashraf, V.I, p. 532.

2. Prophet Mohammad used to seek advice from Abu Bakr in almost all matters. For it was this reason that the Arabs called him as the Prophet's Vizier. Al-Mawardi, Al-Ahkam-al-Sultaniyah, p. 22

The name of Abu Bakr is not included by any of the authors of the primary sources in the list of Katibs. See list in Al-Jahshary and al-Balazari, op. cit., Ibn Qutaiba, Al-Ma-a-rif, pp. 138-41 and Tabri, Part II, pp. 836-43.
settlement was never implemented. Distant provinces were placed under governors. The advisory functions were performed by Majlis-i-shura; the executive functions were assigned to the secretaries of various departments.

In all probability the Ummayyad Caliphs administered the state directly without any intermediary of the nature of vizier. With the entrance of Khalid Barmark, founder of the famous Barmak family, the vizarat institution can be said to have found its way into the Islamic administration. Khalid enjoyed the confidence and high esteem of Al-Mansur and he distinguished himself as counsellor and later head of finance department (Diwan-al-Kharaj) and governor general.

His son, Yahya was appointed by al-Hadi as his vizier, the first official of Islamic state with the powers of supreme executive head. Yahya's son and successor Jafar is known as

1. Al-Ahkam, p. 22.
3. Katib: meaning writer was the record keeper and ascribe with virtually no executive functions. Authors of the primary sources like Jahshyari and Tabri consider Katibs as the substitute title of vizier. Jahshyari, pp. 19-37, Tabri, V. II, pp. 836-843; and Haji Saifuddin, Athar-al-Wuzra, pp. 22-29.
perhaps the most illustrious of Abbasid viziers with al-
fazl, his elder brother to support him as junior minister
and seal-keeper. They practically ruled the empire.¹

The Barmakids present a fine account of administrative
capability which was to a large extent responsible for the
power and stability of the caliphate during the time of
Harun-al-Rashid (786-809). Ironically their power excited
the jealousy of Harun for whatever he was indebted to them.
Threatened by excessive accumulation of power and wealth the
caliph contrived their extinction. Jafar was treacherously
murdered in 187 A.H. (802 A.D.). Al-Fazl and Yahya languished
in prison until death at At-Raqqah.² In the words of Hitti,
the vizier acted as the caliph's alter ego. By shouldering
the burden of the state to an extent tantamount to making the
caliph's authority only a matter of formality the vizier lived
in princely pomp and luxury and wielded at the same time
over-riding powers of appointing and dismissing governors and
of confiscating their properties.

¹ Jahshyari, p. 11, Al-Fakhri, pp. 194-209. cf. S.D.
Goitien, Studies in Islamic History and Institutions,
p. 182.
² Al-Fakhri, pp. 209-10.
Vizarat acquired the status and position of a "vizier by divine right", so aptly illustrated by the diploma of appointment that caliph al-Nasir (d. 622 A.H.: 1225 A.D.) issued to his vizier, Mohammad Ibne Barz-al-Qummi.¹

The Caliph is presented as the representative of God on earth and the vizier as the representative of the Caliph over his subjects, thus inheriting both the sanctity and authority entailing upon a king by divine right.²

The rule of the Abbasid Caliphs was full of gloomy instances, of political turmoil, intrigue, conflict, struggle for power and civil strife. With the introduction specially of Turkish elements in the military which rose to prominence in the time of Wasiq Billah (d. 232 A.H: 864 A.D.) and Mutawakkil (247 A.H: 861 A.D.). The caliphal court became a permanent battle-ground for conflicting interests. More

¹ Moid-al-din Mohammad bin Mohammad bin Abdul Karim Barz was generally called al-Qummi because he was native of Qum. He was appointed in 617 A.H. by Caliph al-Nasir. He continued as Minister under al-Zaheer and al-Mustansir. Fakhri, pp. 314-25.

² "Mohammad Ibn Barz-al-Qummi is our representative throughout the land and amongst our subjects. Therefore, he who obeys Him, obeys us, and he obeys us obeys God, and God shall cause him who obeys Him to enter Paradise. As for one who, on the other hand, disobeys our vizier, he disobeys us disobeys God, and God shall cause him who disobeys Him to enter Hell-Fire." Fakhri, pp. 314-16; cf. Hitti, History of Arabs, pp.
often than not, these conflicts were centred around the person of the vizier, who invariably happened to be deeply involved as leader of one of the other party.¹

This struggle was as much for survival of the persons involved as of the state and even the caliph. In the early phases when the upper echelon of the Abbasid society was not as yet fully accustomed to the institution of vizarat, such as was adopted later from the Iranian practice, the tendency was towards saturate accumulation of power. This naturally excited the jealousy of caliphs. Political murders seemed to be the only solution and perhaps naturally so in a state depending for survival mainly on the sword. Vizier after vizier was put to death, imprisoned or poisoned to make the office as much abhored as coveted.

¹ For instance Ibn-e-Ziyat was executed because he disliked Al-Wasiq from his vizarat days in the time of al-Mautasim. The troops of al-Mutawakkil headed by Shruyah bin Kisra a Turkish general and Amir gathered round 'Ubaidullah bin Yahya bin Khagan the vizier of al-Mutawakkil but killed al-Mutawakkil, or Abul Fadl Jafar bin Mohammad, Abu Musa Isa bin Farkhan Shah, Abu Jafar Ahmad bin Israil and later ministers of al-Muhtadi were dismissed for the same reasons. Al-Fakhri pp. 234-38, 239-46, Ibn-al-Athir, V. VII, pp. 68-69.
The conflicts intensifying with the growth of Turkish power and the establishment of minor dynasties, a point was reached when even the life of the Caliph hanged in suspense. From the time of Harun-al-Rashid ( ) to the time of al-Mustakfi (333-334 A.H.; 944-45 A.D.) the execution of at least four viziers and one Caliph is recorded, many more were imprisoned till death. Among these viziers were powerful plenipotentiaries as well as lesser ministers, whose prestige and power had been reduced to make them a plaything in the

1. Al-Fazal bin Sahal was killed by Mamun in 202 A.H. (817 AD). He combined two vizarats as master of the pen and of the sword (in the terms of Mawardi, he was truly a vizier-e-tafwiz a plenipotentiary). Ahmad bin Yousuf bin Qasim, successor of Ahmad bin Abu Khalid; vizier to Mamun recommended for this post by Hasan bin Sahal was vaccinated at the instigation of Mamun and he died of asthma. The reason was probably Mamun's annoyance over his using the same perfume which Mamun used. This was reported by his enemies. Mohammad bin Abdul Malik-al-Ziyat was killed by the same iron barrel which was made by al-Ziyat himself for others at the orders of al-Wasiq because he (al-Ziyat) opposed Wasiq's nomination for the throne. Abu Saqr Ismail bin Bulbul, Minister to Al-Mautamid appointed by al-Muwaffaq (Mautamid's brother and co-ruller liked by the troops disliked by the Amirs sized by the Caliph imprisoned and tortured him till he died in 249-51 A.H. (863-865 A.D.). Al-Fakhri, pp. 220-22, 224-26, 234, 249.
hands of military adventurers. The territories of the Caliphate, which at one time included the whole of Iraq, Iran, Khurasan, parts of Transoxiana and Afrikia had through a process of disintegration become a conglomeration of innumerable independent and semi independent states carved out from time to time by ambitious generals and governors or even Turkish tribal chiefs issuing forth from Turkistan. Few of them stayed long enough and were overrun by other adventures. In this process the territorial configuration of the caliphate kept changing with the rise and fall of minor dynasties Arab, Iranian and Turkish.

The house of Saman fell to the malcontents of the Ziyarids, who in turn lost to the Qara Khanids of Bukhara, these last fell to Ghaznavid arms. The process continued with the successive rise and fall of the great Saljuks, Khwarizshahis and finally

1. Mutawakkil was killed by Turkish army headed by Shniyah bin-Kisra. Al-Abbas bin al-Hussain the vizier to Muktafi was killed by the Turkish troops in the reign of Muqtadir billah. Ali-bin al-Furat was put in jail three times, was made minister three times and lastly he was executed by al-Muqtadir in 322 A.H. Abdul Qasim Ubaidullah bin Mohammad-al-Kaluzari, minister to Muqtadi was stoned to death by the army. Abdullah-al-Baridi was appointed by Tuzun as minister to Muqtadi. Ibid. pp. 238, 254, 260-62, 269.
the Ghroids. These dynasties that rose at the expense of the Caliphal state kept-up an appearance of legitimacy by extracting the inventiture of sovereignty which the caliph, not being in a position to refuse, confirmed on them.

They owed nominal allegiance to Baghdad even though actual relations between the Caliph and the usurpers were sometimes hostile. Al-Mawardi had grown under the impress of the political holocaust spelled out by a multi-cornered conflict between the Turk and the Dailamite army officers. He must not have failed to take the cognizance of the degeneration that had seized the

1. Tahil Zul Yaminayn the celebrated general of Mamun, descended from a Persian slave, was appointed by that Caliph to the Government of Khurasan in 820 A.D. where he and his dynasty became practically independent, though holding their authority by patent of the Caliphs and with express acknowledgement of vassalage. They did not attempt to extend their power much beyond the borders of their province, and after about half century collapsed, completely. Overrun by the Saffavids in 872 A.D. Saffavids emerged as serious threat to the Tahirids as well as to the Caliphate. The house of Saman was instigated by the Caliph for being released from the clutches of the Saffavid, the family of coppersmiths. Stainly Lane Poole, Mohammadan Dynasties, pp. 128-133, 136, 144, 149, 153. Also see, C.E. Boseworth, Islamic Survays, pp. 00-99-122.

2. Yaqub bin Lais bin Saffar, after the capture of Persia and outskirts of India posed serious threat to the Caliph of Baghdad, Al-Mawtamid. Hitti, pp. 461-2.

Islamic state. The generous opportionment of land (Iqta) among the military personnel started by Muizz-al-Daulah in desperate bid to keep control of the army had exhausted the state's financial resources.¹ The treasury was empty so much so that even the Caliph was forced to survive on pension and a small portion of land by the Buwahyd chiefs.² Having failed to rehabilitate the state's economy by positive measures, the military Junta was again and again deployed to implement various instruments of fleecing the population, rich and poor alike, of their wealth and property.³ Merchants and respectable men fled from the country to escape the oppression. Farmers were ruined, industries suffered from the lack of patronage and investment. Artisans spread out to neighbouring states in search of work. In such state of anarchy and confusion, justice became a casualty. The Caliph living on licence from their co-rulers looked on helplessly and without hope of rectification. Maintenance of a precarious survival in the face of adversity and mental and monetary bankruptcy being their

¹ Ibid., p. 150.
² Ibid., p. 148.
³ Ibid., p. 137.
only concern, they could neither wail nor woe at what may be described as an abominable situation the Islamic state ever found itself caught in.

Al-Mawardi came to Baghdad to receive higher education. At this time he was at the prime of his youth. Abul Hamid-al-Asfaraini, Hasan Jeeli,\(^1\) the famous master of Islamic tradition (Ilmul Hadith), Abu Khalifa al-Jumahi\(^2\) the Arabicist and his other teachers must have shared the general anxiety of the Abbasids and felt aggrieved at the moral and mental terpitude of nobles prices and officers. The young student seems to have embided from them a natural reticence to approve of what lack of dignity. The Abbasid prices fought with each other to wear the crown and disgracefully surrendered themselves into a position of subordination.\(^3\) His appointment as Qazi later on as chief justice with the title of Aqz-al-quzzat\(^4\) brought him

\(^1\) ShaJrat-al-Zahb. V. 3, p. 286.
\(^2\) Ibn-Khalikan, V. 2, pp. 444-45.
\(^3\) The period of al-Mustakfi ended and after him ruled al-Muqtadir's son al-Mutibilla, who accepted all the dictates of Muiz-al-Daula in 334 A.H./954 A.D., Al-Fakhri, p. 280.
into the ranks of officers in the administration. Notably, the department of justice was still the concern of the Caliph, the Buwahyd chiefs having no powers over it. In this position Mawardi, found excellent opportunity for acquiring intimate personnel knowledge of the conditions as well as of the nature of relationship existing between the caliph and the Buwahyds. Legalities involved in the situation and the solution to the existing problems must have occupied his thoughts. Herein we find the source of inspiration for his extremely logical treatises the *Ahkam-al-Sultanya, Adab-al-Wazir* and *Nasihat-al-Muluk*. Coming from the pen of one of the most prolific writers in the Muslim world, a highly learned scholar of Islamic jurisprudence who had the additional advantage of being a practising judicial officer, the ideas contained in these books bear the stamp of incontrovertible authenticity. Mawardi's political thought is not a philosophy of the statecraft. It has for its base the highly concrete code of the shariat.

1. Reference may be made to some other books on political philosophy such as *Adab-al-Qazi* and *Tahsil-al-Nazarfi Tajil-al-Zafar* (on warfare). He also contributed at least four books on jurisprudence, four on ethical philosophy and theology. See, the details in the preface to *Adab-al-Dinwal-Dunya*, pp. 1-16.
the tradition of the Islamic practices to the existing demands of which it meticulously confirms. For that reason Mawardi's ideas remain native and are applicable exclusively to the Islamic state. To put it in another way: al-Mawardi's work was to interpret and reconstruct the principles of Islamic polity from the Islamic law which had already been so elaborately codified by the four Imams namely Imam Abu Hanifa (600-766 A.D.), Imam Malik bin Anas (718-795 A.D.), Imam Mohd. Bin Idris Shafai (767-820 A.D.) and Ahmad bin Hambal (780-855 A.D.) in the preceding centuries.¹ Thus Mawardi, emerges as a pioneer interpreter of the Islamic state in the same capacity as Imam Abu Hanifa was in the field of Fiqah. Mawardi's work is to be noted not for originality but for its fidelity to the Islamic law. It is a piece of deft learning rather than of creative thinking; hence a work not the least significant for any speculative import for which the author, writing within the

¹ Abul Hasan Ali bin Mohd., bin Habib al-Mawardi was himself an orthodox Shafai but his thought is not greatly influenced by this school. Subki, Tabqat-al-Shafiah V. III, p. 403 and Ibne Khaldun V. I, pp. 410-13.
highly defined confines of ecclesiastical law, had but the narrowest latitude of originality to invest. On this account al-Mawardi's work remains subject to criticism only to the extent that an oversight or an error interpretation can be pointed out. Barring this, the system constructed by him remains as the original term of reference for all subsequent writers. In this reconstruction of Islamic political thought Mawardi, fulfills a great need, that is that of filling up of a lacuna and of providing the guidelines for the state. He was concerned with the problem of saving the state from further disintegration and this he sought to achieve by specifying the legal position, functions, powers and the duties of Imam and his officers of whom the vizier occupied the supreme position.¹

¹ The work al-Ahkam-al-Sultanya is a brief guideline to all sections of administration which includes Imam, vizier, Amir, Naqib, Amil, Qazi and so on. He intended to explain their positions and other related details in other separate booklet, for vizier, for instance he wrote Adab-al-Wazir and for amirs and military generals, he wrote Tasail-al-Nazar-fil-Tajil-al-zafar. He did not forget independent states. For Sultans, he gave guidelines in his treatise Nasihat-al-Mulk (unpublished M.S. in Paris). His book Adab-al-Din-wal Dunya is guideline to all sections of society including administrators.
Mawardi's writings seem to have been intended to highlight the weaknesses entailing upon the state through continued dual authority which, in fact, was the usurpation rather than sharing of the legal authority of the sovereign by a subordinate.¹

In contrast to this Nizamulmulk 1017-1093 A.D. represented the interests of a minor state existing within the fold of the Caliphate.

Tughril Beg 1037-63 A.D. the founder of the Saljuq dynasty had begun his career as a refrectory tribal chief and had arisen ultimately to become the sovereign of a state carved out from Ghaznavid territories.² In 1058 A.D. al-Bassassiri, a Turkish slave general in the service of the Buwahyds and the latter's representative and plenipotentiary³

1. al-Ahkam-al-Sultanya, See Chapter III, pp. 30-34.

2. Tughril finally defeacted Masud at Dandqan. The area of Azarbaijan, Musal, Iraq and a great portion of Khurasan were captured by Tughril. Ibn-Athir, V. VIII, pp. 302-318.

3. Al-Bassasiri was the representative of Malik-al-Rahim who was virtually governed by al-Bassassiri. Tughril Beg helped Caliph al-Qaim to get rid of him later he was killed and al-Qaim was reinstated on the Baghdad throne. See the details, Ibn-Athir, V. IX, pp. 2320233, 236, 238, and 239.
ordered the Khutba to be read in the name of Fatimid Caliph al-Mustansir. Qaim secretly invited Tughril Beg to overthrow the Buwayhids. Tughril arrested al-Bassassiri and restored al-Qaim in his former power.

    Tughril's star was on ascendance. He consolidated his position further by entering into matrimonial alliance with the caliph who had already conferred upon him the investiture of sovereignty in 1057 A.D. In return for which Tughril offered presentations of precious jewels and other things all wroth about one million Dinars.

    This position continued in the times of Alpasalan. The Saljuqs acted as the protectors of the Imamate, not only against ambitious chiefs and petty princes but also against the Fatimid power. The institution of Vizarat was revived and the bases of the punishment which they awarded to al-Qaim, confirmed land with the title of Amir on Tughril Beg without the will of Buwahyd general was actually the

1. The relations of Abbasids with Buwayhids extremely deteriorated with the appointment of Amid-al-Baghdad especially al-Bassassiri's dictator. Confirmation of
2. Caliph al-Qaim gave his daughter to Tughril Beg and conferred the title of Sultan on him in reward to his service that he rendered for his re-establishment to power.
3. King Alp-Arsalan reconquered all those areas which were annexed by the Fatmids. Khutba was read in Mecca and Madira in the name of Abbasid Caliph. Dastur-al-Wazra, M.S. 19 B – 24 a. cf.
vazier was enabled to function in consonance with the norms of its dignity and status. A status quo in the relations between the caliph and his protege established through acts of mutual obligation was not in the nature of times. The coming of the Saljuqs was in effect the replacement of one usurper by another. Ambition vitiated the cordial relations buttressed and strengthened by the matrimonialties. The Saljuqs became the virtual rulers of Baghdad while the Caliph retreated into obscurity. Malik Shah gave his daughter to al-Muqtadi. Nizamulmulk became the father-in-law of the caliph's vizier

1. As soon as Saljuqs reinstalled Caliph al-Qaim on the throne of Baghdad Fakhr-al-Daulah Abu Nasr Mohammad bin Mohammad, commonly known as al-Jahir the cleverest and most astute of mankind was appointed as the vizier of al-Qaim in 483 A.H./1090 A.D. Ali bin Hussain bin Ahmad bin Mohammad bin Umar bin al-Musailmah is not of much importance but he was made minister earlier to al-Jahar. Al-Fakhri, pp. 281-95.

2. Malik Shah's wife Turkan Khatun's daughter was married to al-Muqtadi in 474/1081 A.D. but she was sent to the Caliph's palace six years later in 480/1087 A.D. Nizamulmulk was the vakil of Malik Shah in his marriage. However, cordiality of relations between the king and Caliph continued to exist even after this marriage because it was conditional and the caliph did not fill the condition for long time. However, a son called Jafar was born of this daughter. Ibn-al-Athir, V. X, pp. 143-53-55.
and received the title of Razi-amir-al-mominin and Taj-al-Hazratain. Already the names of Malik Shah and Nizamulmulk Tusi had been included in the Khutba at Baghdad. Malik Shah's name appeared on the reverse side of the Baghdad coins. Effective authority was exercised by the Sultan through a shahna or the Kotwal of Baghdad, who may be described as a Saljuq version of the Dailamite Amid-al-Baghdad.

Justification for such a state of affairs was not wanting. Dissatisfaction with the terms and conditions that accompanied the marriages combined with the dismissal of Nizamul Mulk's son in law Amid-al-Daulah who was also the Caliph's vizier to give point to the contempt and disregard with which the caliphal authority was kept in the esteem of the Sultan and his minister.3

2. Sa'ad-al-Daulah was the shahna of Baghdad who was later replaced by Kodan, however, the Caliph was not pleased with the shahna because we find that the Caliph sent Sheikh Abu Ishaq Shafa'i to report the affairs to Malik Shah and Nizamulmulk. Ibn-Athir, V. X, pp. 42-75.
3. al-Fakhiri, p. 287.
No mean role was played in this tussle by the Saljuq queen Turkan Khatun,¹ mother in law of caliph al-Muqtadi. This interesting character appears as a pivotal personality in all the intrigues and conspiracies hatched at the caliphal court as much as the court of the Saljuqs. She was the main instigator of Malik Shah in his demand for the nomination of Jafar as the future Caliph in place of Muqtadi's eldest son, Mustazhir, the nominated successor and their apparent of the Caliph of Caliph of Baghdad.²

Turkan's emergence as leader of a powerful faction was, at any rate not an isolated phenomenon but only one of a string of examples in faction fights and intrigues for power

1. The sources refer to four wives of Malik Shah one was divorced and Nizamulmulk married her. Second was a slave wife. Mohammed and Sanjar born of her in 1082 A.D. and 1084 AD respectively. Third was Zubaida Khatun who was a Saljuq princess, daughter of Yaquti bin Chighri Beg gave birth to Barkyarouq born 1081 AD, fourth and the most important was Jalalya Khatun a Qara Khaind princess 1064 AD commonly known as Turkan Khatun who gave birth to Mahmud. Ibn-al-Athir, V. X, p. 20, 212, Athar-al-Wuzra, pp. 208-210.

2. Last visit of Malik Shah and Nizamulmulk to Baghdad was important from various points of view such as the murder of Nizamulmulk and placement of Jafar on the Caliphal throne even the Caliph al-Muqtadi was compelled to quit Baghdad. Malik Shah also died in the mean time. Ibn-al-Athir, V. X, 68, 70, 72, and Athar-al-Wuzra, pp. 210-13.
with which the history of medieval muslim states appears to be full. It brings us to an important question of the basis on which muslim polity was structured.

The precariousness of the existence of viziers, Caliphs and Sultans exemplified by their murders, the continued subjection of Caliphs to the dictates of ephemeral sovereigns in power, the murky intrigue-ridden atmosphere of the courts where every inmate must inevitably belong to a faction or perish, are all symptoms of a deep rooted malice besetting the Caliphate as much as the Turkish states which imbibed both the weaknesses and the blessings of each other.

In the first place, it must be noted that neither the Umayyad nor the Abbasid states were established in consonance with the Islamic law, except in broad principles of political ethics enunciated in the Quran or the Prophet's tradition (and these two were rarely observed). These states had developed on regional customs and practices. The Caliphate resembled in character to Oriental absolutist monarchies rather than the Islamic democracy visualised during the rule of the pious Caliphs. Perhaps, such deviation was necessitated by the demands and the vastness of the conquered domains placed on them. The Umayyad and Abbasid Caliphates were highly centralized
governments and the political institutions had had to be inevitably retained as they existed in the conquered lands. Yet the tribal democratic notion that the Caliph was only first among the equals persisted. The same was true of the numerous dynastic states that came into being at the expense of the caliphate.

Whereas the concept of equality admitted no succession heredity but the monarchial character of the Caliphate took for granted the reasonableness of the law of primogeniture. With Muawiyah began the practice of nominating the eldest son as successor. In the strict interpretation of Islamic law such a practice was bound to be a stumbling block making the task of nomination increasingly difficult. The door thus opened for rulers to attempt the establishment of dynastic rule, not only led to serious trespass of the spirit and law of Islam but also ushered in an era of strife, engendered the vilest and the most irresponsible intrigues of political adventures identifying their personal interests and security with the machinations of influential king-makers. In each successive regime it was possible to establish a case for or against a candidate by appealing either to the adopted custom of primogeniture or to its inadmissibility. In contradiction to the
truly Islamic democratic principles, more often than not, the latter stand-point was only a subterfuge, for, invariably, alternative candidacies drew legitimacy from the fact of their belonging to royal blood rather than from personal qualifications.

However, the intrigues would not come to an end with the ascendancy of a candidate but persisted. It showed in the form of personal jealousies, vendetta, party politics, incriminations, betrayals and murders, all of which gnawed at the very roots of the state. Even the army was divided. Left with no effective military power the state became thoroughly incapacitated when called upon to cope with the threat of disintegration posed by the issuance of petty Turkish Tribal chiefs. Not otherwise powerful enough to harm the sovereignty of a caliph, they were encouraged and aided in their ventures by the lack of any potential defensive power in the state.

Ironically the Turkish states thus established at the expense of Caliphal territories themselves suffered from the absence of any incontrovertible rule of succession. In course of time, each of these states fell victim to and were finally
vanquished by the same negative forces that had licked the mother state.

In such situations uncertainty of life and tenure loomed largely over the ruler and also the viziers. The brute rule of party politics pushed them both in the simmering fray of intrigueing nobles and they were obliged to utilise their own resources to ensure their survival. The vizier, the virtual executive head of the state, would seek to entrench himself behind a vast heirarchy of supporters assigned to key offices in the central and provincial administration. The exclusion of such aspirants as belonged to rival groups only added upon the existing threats to security and stability which in turn, demanded still more rigorous safeguards. To ensure unquestioned support, the viziers turned to the expedient of filling high administrative offices with the nearest of their kith and kin. The need to create barriers of security around,

1 The appointment of sons and sons in law in key posts and strategically important frontiers of the state and recruitment of 2000 military slaves was the demand of hour without which stability and existence of the vizier had become almost impossible. Frequent murders of Abbasid viziers, vizier of Alp-Arsalan like Kundari and viziers of later Saljuqs took place probably because they failed to withstand the faction in opposition. Nizamulmulk however, certainly realised this fact and it also became a point of jelousy and mutual intrigues between him and other faction i.e., Nizamites and Turkanids. Ibn-Athir, V. X, p. 69-70, Haft Aqleem, pp. 166-67, and Haji Saifuddin Athar-al-Wuzra, pp. 207-210, cf. introduction to Siyasat Nama, p. 7.
enforced among these officers, complete subservience to their master. Although good from administrative point of view the unity thus forged and the power thus built up by the ruling faction did not fail to attract royal hostility and many viziers fell victims to the combined threat from the ruler and the faction in opposition.

The rise and fall of Nizamulmulk Tusi, although only one of a string of similar episodes interspersed over the whole period of Muslim history, still remains as a telling illustration of this peculiar character of politics. This strong-willed son of a tax-collector in the service of Abu Ali Shazan, the administrator (Amid) of Balkh under Chighri Beg,¹ was by no means so peaceable as to wave of an opportunity even though it meant inevitable collusion with the intriguing factions of the court. Born on 21st Zigad 408 AH/7th April 1017 AD² his father, Ali called him Hasan in the tradition of the fourth pious Caliph.³ His early education in the

3. The dream recorded in Dastur-al-Wuzra, reads that "Zamarrud Khatun" (Nizam's mother) entered the paradise where she saw al-Fatima. Fatima advised her to name him as Hasan because his father's name is Ali. Dastur-al-Wuzra, f. 14a, 16b.
traditional learnings of Islam under the guidance of Imam Muwafaq, groomed him into a learned scholar of the Quran and traditions. But it was to his training under Abdul Samad,\(^1\) one of the leading exponents of jurisprudence that he developed a taste for administration and politics. Hasan got excellent opportunities to travel widely in central Asia until he came in contact with Abu Ali Shazan, who appointed him his secretary (Katib).\(^2\)

The reasons of Shazan's dislike for him subsequently would perhaps be never known. He must, however, have been quite impressed by the talents of this young, ambitious incumbent, for he recommended Hasan to Alp-Arsalan, who appointed him his minister. It was not long before Hasan realized the importance of factionalism and intrigue as an instrument for materialising political ambitions. Soon he found himself at the head of the faction opposed to Kundari\(^3\) the chief minister and Nizam's own superior and caused Kundari to be imprisoned.

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3. Saifuddin remarks:

    In a message to the king and the vizier Nizam-ulmulk, Kundari said:

    *Athar-al-Wuzra*, p. 204-7.
and executed by the orders of Alp-Arsalan in 1047 A.D.¹

Hasan, was only twenty nine when he joined the service of Alp-Arsalan. One year later he had become the full-fledged minister and embarked on a long, glorious career of twenty nine years during which period he dominated the whole political scapie of Central Asia, never before or after rivalled by a vizier in Islamic history. He manipulated the succession of Malik Shah against the warlike Tuksh, trained and educated him, built up the state's finances by ruthless enforcement of discipline and extensive reforms² made the Caliph virtually subserviant to his own authority. He extended the Saljuq empire upto the precincts of India, Afghanistan, Armenia, Azarbaijan, China and Syria. He had the audacity of refusing the king sixty thousand Dinars. A virtual ruler, his master, otherwise known as the most powerful king, was reduced to a mere shadow of the vizier. At one time Malik Shah felt himself


at a loss to know whether Nizamulmulk was his vizier or co-ruler of the state. Pressed to the extreme Malik Shah once threatened to take away the minister's 'inkstand' (Qalamdan-e-Vizarat) meaning thereby to dismiss him. But he elicited the retort that the Saljuq empire stood on the power of his inkstand and the king would be well advised to be on his guard before he thought of harming the minister, for, as he said, "enough strong are my arms".¹

The strength, of which Nizamulmulk so boasted had accrued to him as much from his wisdom applied to nursing the state into a power, as from his well planned system of intrigue and partisanship. Nizamulmulk, had rightly realized that political power was achieved and survival ensured by buttressing his own authority by a powerful faction. He built up an impregnable rampart of officers and nobles drawn from his own progeny and faithful relatives. By the same logic, it was on the unquestioned fiedality to their master, that the prestige and power of these nobles depended. Enemies, critics, refractory

subordinates and men of doubtful allegiance were either eliminated or cleverly dissipated.¹

The emergence of Turkan Khatun, the irreconcilable opponent of Nizamulmulk was thus not a co-incidence. She had been thrown up into prominence by the same forces as had brought Nizamulmulk to power. In a life and death struggle for securing the Saljuq throne for her own son, Mahmud, whom the Nizam opposed, she brought into her own orbit of influence a rival aspirant for ministership, Taj-ul-Mulk Abul Ghaniam Marzban bin Feroz Khusro² was inferior to none in resourcefulness, administrative acumen, wisdom, learning, pedigree and above all in the skill for hatching conspiracies. With Turkan Khatun at his back, he left no stone unturned to bring about the Nizam's downfall. As it was, all the opposing forces ultimately combined to see the colossus fall to the dagger of an assain.¹ Sure enough, Turkan and Taj-al-Mulk had played no small role in the deed than Malik Shah himself.

1. The cases of putting out the eyes of Ibn-Bahman Yar, Abu-al-Muhasin and killing Malik Shah's court Jester, Jafarak may be recalled.

2. Tajalmulk Abul Ghanaim, came from a vizier's family in Fars through the patronage of the slave general Saftegin, central figure of opposition against Nizamulmulk in the court and secretary to Turkan Khatun and tutor of Sultan's male children.

This, in a nutshell, provides the background to the political philosophy of Nizamulmulk. Inspite of the fact that the contemporary historical sources fail to give really intimate account of the complicated politics of the Saljuq court, or any wholesome information with regard to its administrative structure, or the achievements on which Nizamulmulk's reputation rested. It is easy to identify his political ideas as eloquent commentaries on the subterranean forces that governed the rise and fall of the dynasties and empires. In an atmosphere charged with perfidy, treachery, selfishness, where virtue waited upon factional power and right was measured by manipulative skill, all glory, all power remained inherently ephemeral and survival was an art. Nizamulmulk's career and the view of his writings reveal him as a sincere well wisher of the Saljuq dynasty. He seems to know the good from bad. His discussions in the Siyasat Nama vibrate with idealism and sense of justice: justice to people to one's own profession, to the sovereign and to oneself.¹ But the painful imperative of having to exist and justify oneself

1. Siyasat Nama, pp.
in a circumstance where every component of state authority precariously hanged in a state of equilibrium by complex gravitational forces working in opposite directions, makes the means directly subservient to the ends. Elimination of hostile elements by murder or bribe or by simple rebuff is no sin, should they be necessary to satisfy the demands of justice.

Unlike Mawardi, Nizamulmulk's task was not the interpretation of Islamic law. He interprets an existing situation. Like al-Mawardi, he offers no structural alternatives of state. He is concerned with subtler aspects of relationship amongst the various characters enacting a peculiar situation wherein centripetal forces appear to maintain the existence of the state by tension. His recommendations are in the nature of worldly wisdom. A king is like a wealthy man surrounded by claimants having conflicting ambitions and as such must keep his eyes open and mind alert to the dangers inherent to the crowned heads. The vizier is either a friend or a foe. A good administrator discriminates between man and man and deals with them likewise. Underlying the concept of a 'truly' Islamic state, the Caliphate is assumed to be in many senses the embodiment of the political aspirations of muslim corporate life. In many sense, however, it highlighted fatal deviations
from the original concept envisaged in the teachings of the Prophet. The way Islam's power had expanded had naturally resulted in the corruption of its original democratic concepts. A large empire such as that of the Ummayyad's made the displacement of democratic idealism by personal authoritarianism incumbent both structurally and functionally. The Turkish states arising from its disintegration, far from resuscitating the Islamic spirit, had made the state look all the more odious through adultration of institutions; and since return to the old democratic concept was clearly not feasible the knowledgeable among the intelligentsia were inevitably set to reconciling a historical fact to the fundamentals of Islamic policy. Unlike the theories of the state propounded by the European philosophers, the theories of state remain alien to both, al-Mawardi and Nizamulmulk Tusi; instead their philosophy is by and large confined to the instructions in the political virtue applied to the existing framework of the state.

It is in this specific context that the institution of vizarat finds a conspicuous place next in scope and importance to only that of sovereignty. Although, as referred to earlier, the term vizarat was quite in vague in the earliest stages of the Imamate, the vizarat of our philosophers' concept is what it later on developed under the impact of Iranian tradition.
As a supreme functional authority, as understood by the European equivalent of chancellor, controller-general or prime minister, it came into being only as late as the time of second Abbasid Caliph al-Mansur (754-775 AD). It grew in importance subsequently as the power of the Caliph waned; so much so that except for the title of sovereignty, the vizier virtually became synonimous with the ruler, of which the vizarat of Nizamulmulk provides the most characteristics example.

It follows then, that many of the discussions relating to the attributes, functions, moral behaviour and responsibilities addressed to the sovereign clearly appear equally applicable to the vizier as will be observed in the following chapter.