Chapter-IV

EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES
Being educated and cultured themselves, the Ayyūbid rulers were munificent patrons of learning and educational activities. Large numbers of madrasah type schools were built by them in different parts of the Empire not only to educate people but also to popularize knowledge of Sunni Islam.¹ Ayyūbid dynasties arose and established schools as a counteraction to help people learn the true faith. So it is natural that in most of these schools the main attention was given to religious studies.²

Salāhuddīn Ayyūbi was a great builder of academic institutions. Although the Ayyūbids 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 Ayyūbid period, but the Ayyūbids founded schools for them. Salāhuddīn founded a school near the tomb of Imam Shafiʿī. He converted the house of the Fatimid wazir Abbas into a school of Hanafi jurisprudence which was popularly known as the Suyufī school. He built the Sharifiyah school in Egypt for Shafiʿī jurisprudence, and in Egypt he built another school for Maliki jurisprudence. This school was known as the Qumhiliya school.³ Izz al Din Ibn Shaddād counted in Damascus 34 Hanafite schools, 40 Shafiite schools, 3 Malikite and 10 Hanbalite schools.⁴

The time of the Ayyūbids was the golden age of Egypt for the promotion of learning. Schools were extensively founded and richly

⁴. *Islamic dynasties of the Arab East*, p. 39.
endowed not only by the Sultan but also by princes, princesses, ministers, learned men and employees. Whenever a mosque or a school was established, Sultan Salāhuddīn 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 Salāhuddīn established al Nasirīyah, he endowed it with baths, a bakery and a shop.\(^5\)

The Prince Taqī al Dīn Umār b. Shahinshāh, the nephew of Salāhuddīn, 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).\(^6\)

Members of the royal family and some prominent public personages also contributed to the establishment of educational institutions. Ayshah the wife of Shuja al Din al Dimāgh made her husband's house after his death a school for Shafii and Hanafii sects and endowed it with a third of the Dimāghiyyah's farm, a portion of Rajm al Hayyāt, a portion of Ismaili's baths, a portion of a certain meadow Sharkhub's farm and other properties.\(^7\)

\textit{Al Madrasah al Shamiyyah al Juwwaniyyah} was founded by princess Sittushshām, the mother of Husām al Din and the daughter of Ayyūb who assigned this school for Shafi‘ī theologians and students and

5. \textit{History of Muslim Education}, p. 213.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid., p. 214.
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 -

First, the school was to be properly maintained. Any damage caused to the building of the school was immediately repaired. In addition, oil lamps, mats, carpets and other requirements of the school were bought and paid for.

Secondly, each teacher of the school was given one sack of wheat, one sack of barley and 130 Nāsiri dirhams per month.

Thirdly, one tenth of the rest was given to the supervisor of the school.

Fourthly, the sum of 300 Nāsiri dirhams was allocated for distribution of sweets and fruits on different occasions.

Finally the remaining sum was given to theologians, students and the staff.

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.\footnote{Ibid., p 215.}

Al Maqrizi has mentioned eight zawiyas (sections) which 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 Imām al Shafi‘ī which was endowed with land in Sandābis by Sultan al Aziz b. Salāhuddīn.9 Al zawiyah al Kamāliyyah which was endowed with an inn in Cairo by Kamāl al Din Samannudi,10 Al zawiyah al Tajiyyah which was endowed with a number of houses in Cairo by Taj al Din al Sathi.11

In the Ayyūbid 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.

Salāhuddīn appointed Najm al Din al Khabūshāni to teach in al-Madrasah al Salāhiyyah on the following emoluments.

40 Sālāhi dinars per month for the teaching work; 10 Sālāhi dinars per month for looking after the emoluments; 60 Egyptian pounds of bread daily, 2 waterskins full of Nile water.12

After some time when Taqī al Dīn b. Ruzain held this office, he was paid only half of that amount. But when Taqī al Dīn b. Daqīq al Id occupied the post, he was given only a quarter of the paid emoluments.

10. Ibid., p. 214
11. Ibid., p. 214.
Later when another scholar al Sähib Burhan al Din took charge of teaching in this school, he was given the full pay.

Majd al Dîn Muhammad b. Muhammad al-Jabṭî was appointed as lecturer on the salary of eleven dirhams per month in al Madrasah al Suyufiyyah which was founded by Sultan Salâhuddîn for imparting education on Hanafi jurisprudence.\(^\text{13}\)

Salâhuddîn 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.\(^\text{14}\)

**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.\(^\text{15}\) 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.

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In Alexandria several colleges and hostels were built for students and pious men of other lands.\textsuperscript{16}

In \textit{al-Nasiriyah}, built by Salāhuddīn in Egypt, professors and students were lodged in the college which had several lecture rooms, libraries, laboratories and other adjuncts. In \textit{Nizamiyyah} also there were residential areas which were occupied by students and teachers.\textsuperscript{17} The \textit{Mustansariyyah Madrasah} was also a residential institution which was equipped with a kitchen that provided meat and bread to all the inmates.\textsuperscript{18}

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.\textsuperscript{19}

These schools were considered so prestigious institutions in society that it was not possible for anyone to get job in the government who

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{17} Stanley Lane Poole, \textit{Cairo, Sketches of its history, monuments and social life}, London, 1898, p. 190.
\item \textsuperscript{18} Khuda Bakhsh, \textit{Contributions to the history of Islamic civilization}, vol. II, Calcutta, 1930, p. 150.
\item \textsuperscript{19} \textit{History of Muslim Education}, p. 222.
\end{itemize}
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 Ayyūbid period**

Under the Ayyūbids education was generously patronised. 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 below.  

A. Schools founded by Sultans

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Founder</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>al Nāsirīyyah adjoining the 'Atīq Mosque</td>
<td>Salāhuddīn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al Qumhiliyyah</td>
<td>Salāhuddīn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al Suyūfiyyah</td>
<td>Salāhuddīn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-Nasiriyyah in al-Qarāfah</td>
<td>Salāhuddīn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-Ādil</td>
<td>al-'Ādil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-Kāmiliyyah</td>
<td>al Kāmil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-Sālihiyyah</td>
<td>Salih-Najmuddīn Ayyūb</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Jerusalem

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Founder</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>al-Salāhiyyah</td>
<td>Salāhuddīn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-Afdāliyyah</td>
<td>al-Afdal b. Salāhuddīn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-Nahwiyah</td>
<td>al Mu'azzām &quot;Isa b. al-'Ādil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

20. Ibid., p. 149.
21. Ibid., p. 60.
**In Damascus**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Founder</th>
<th>Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>al-Salihiyyah</td>
<td>Salāhuddīn</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-'Azizīyyah</td>
<td>Salāhuddīn b.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-Zāhiriyah al-Barraniyyah</td>
<td>Salāhuddīn b.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-'Adilīyyah al-Kubrā</td>
<td>Malik al-Ādīl</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-Mu'azzamiyyah</td>
<td>Mu'azzūm īsā</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dār al-Hadith al Ashrafiyyah (al-Barraniyyah)</td>
<td>Musā b. al-Ādīl</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-'Azizīyyah</td>
<td>Salāhuddīn b.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

**In Egypt**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Founder</th>
<th>Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>al-Qutbiyyah</td>
<td>Qutb al Din Khusraw</td>
<td>Amir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Manazil al&quot;Izz</td>
<td>Taqi al Din-&quot;Umar</td>
<td>Prince</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-Fādiliyyah</td>
<td>Qādī al Fādīl</td>
<td>Minister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-Azkashiyyah</td>
<td>Sayf al Din Ayazkuj</td>
<td>Amir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-Sayfiyyah</td>
<td>Sayf al Din b. Ayyūb</td>
<td>Prince</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-&quot;Ashūriyyah</td>
<td>&quot;Ashūra&quot;bint Sarūh</td>
<td>Amir's wife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-Qutbiyyah</td>
<td>&quot;Ismat al Din bint al&quot;Ādil</td>
<td>Princess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-Sharifīyyah</td>
<td>al Sharīf Fakhr al Din</td>
<td>Amir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-Sāhibiyyah</td>
<td>Abdullaḥ b. Ali</td>
<td>Minister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-Fakhriyyah</td>
<td>Fakhr al Dīn al Bārumī</td>
<td>Ustadār of al Kāmil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-Sayramiyyah</td>
<td>Jamāl al Dīn b. Sayram</td>
<td>Amir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-Fā'iziyyah</td>
<td>Sharāf al Dīn Hibatallāh</td>
<td>Minister^22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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22. Ibid., p. 61.
In Jerusalem

al-Maymūniyyah    Maymun b. Abdullah   Amir
al-Badriyyah      Badr al Din b. Abi al Qāsim  Amir

In Damascus

al Sāhibiyyah    Rabi'ah bint Najmuddin  Princess
al-Farrukhshāhiyyah  Farrukhshāh b. Shahinshah  Prince
al-Adhrāwiyyah    Adhrā bint Nural Dawlah  Princess
al-Taqwiyyah      Taqi al Din b. Shāhinshāh  Prince
al-Shāmiyyah al Barranīyyah  Sittal-Shām b. Najmuddin  Princess
al-Shāmiyyah al Juwwāniyyah  Sittal-Shām b. Najmuddin  Princess
al-Mārdāniyyah    Khātun'Azziāh  the wife of Muazzām
al-Bahnasiyyah    Majd al Din al Bahnasī  Minister
al-Atabikiyyah    Khātun bint "Izzal Din  the wife of Ashraf
al-Izziyyah al Barrāniyyah  Izzal Din al A'zami  the deputy of the king in Sarkhad
al-Izziyyah al Juwwāniyyah  Izzal Din al A'zami  the deputy of the king in Sarkhad
al-Izziyyah al Hanafīyyah  izz-al Din al A'zami  the deputy of the king in Sarkhad

C. By Commoners

In Egypt

Ibn al-Arsūfī  Abdullah b. Arsufī  Merchant
al-Masrūriyyah  Masrur al Safadi  Servant
al-Ghaznawiyyah  Husam al Din Qāymāz  Freedman
Ibn Bashiq  Pilgrims from al Takrūr  Freedman
In Damascus

al-"Asruniyyah  Sharaf al Dīn b"Asrun  Qādi al Qudāt
al-Falākiyyah  Falāk al Dīn Sulaiman  half brother of al-'Ādil
al-Iqbalīyyah  Jamāl al Dīn Iqbal  Freedman
al-Mansūriyyah  Shībl al Dīn Kāfūr  Servant
al-'Umariyyah  Abu-'Umar al Maqdisi  Qādi al Qudāt
Dar al Hadith al Urwiyyah  Sharaf al Dīn b'Urwa  Theologian

al-Ruwāhiyyah  Zaki al Dīn b. Ruwāhah  Merchant
al-Sarimiyyah  Sarim al Dīn b. Azbak  Freedman
*al-Shibliyyah al Barraniyyah  Shībl al Dīn Kāfur  Servant

al-Rukniyyah  Rukn al Dīn Mankurs  Freedman
al-Dawla'iyyah  Jamāl al Dīn al Dawla'i  Theologian
al-Dimāghiyyah  The wife of Shujauddin b. al Dimāgh

Medical Schools
al-Dikhwāriyyah  Muhadhdhab al Dīn Dikhwār  Medical doctor
al-Dunaysariyyah  Imād-al Dīn al Dunaysari  Medical doctor

Repeaters (Mu'id)

There was a post of Mu'id (repeater) in most of the schools in the Ayyūbid period. They sat with the audience and listened to the lecture

* Shībl al Dīn died in 623, but in accordance with his will the school was built posthumously (in 626).

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 Salāhuddīn appointed Mu'id to assist Najm al Din al Khabūshānī in imparting education to the students. In Madrasah al Salihīyyah which was established by al Salih Najmuddin Ayyūb 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 Tabbākh was a teacher in al-Madrasah al Qutbiyyah and a Mu'id in al Salihīyyah, where the famous Ibn Abd-al Salām 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.

**Libraries**

In the Ayyūbid 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.

24. Ibid., p. 144.
25. Ibid., p. 144.
26. Ibid., p. 144.
Paper mills were established at Baghdad, Tripoli in Syria and many other centres 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. 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 catalogueing 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 Fādiliyyāh was founded by the Qādi al Fādil in 580 A.H./1184 A.D. There was a library attached to the Madrasah in which al Fādil incorporated the books which he had received from Salāhuddīn.  
2. Al Madrasah Babriyyah
3. Al Madrasah Mansuriyyah
4. Al Madrasah al Nasiriyah
5. Al Madrasah al Hajaziyyah

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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 Qāḍī al Fāḍil and Imāduddīn al Isfahānī.

The Library of Jamāluddīn Qīftī

Al-Qīftī known also by the title al Qāḍī al-Akram, had a fine library in Halab. He was such a great bibliophile that authors and book owners travelled to him from distant places to present him with 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.

The Library of Imāduddīn Isfahani

Imāduddīn Isfahani 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. The wonderful collections he chose for himself cost some hundreds of dinars but Salahuddīn did not let him pay anything and made him a present of them.33

The Library of Muwaffaq al Din b. Matrān

Al Muwaffaq al Din b. Matrān, the medical scholar, was 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.34 Three copyists were continually working for the library of Muwaffaq al Din al Matrān. The calligrapher Jamāl al Din called Ibn Jammālah was one of these employees.35

The Library of Qādi al Fādil

After the conquest of Egypt Salāhuddīn Ayyūbi presented several books to Qādi al Fādil. In the course of time he built a well-stocked library which contained as many as 68,000 volumes.36 He also founded a library

33. Ibid., p. 110.
34. Ibid., p. 109.
attached to the Fādilīyah madrasah in which he incorporated the books which he had received from Salāhuddīn.  

In the Ayyūbid period, the garments of learned persons were different from those of the public. They used to wear very big turbān, 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 Taylāsan upon their shoulders. Another robe called Farājiyyah was sometimes worn by men of the learned profession.

In the Ayyūbid period women also took keen interest in learning. There were many learned women in different fields such as poetry, medicine and tradition. 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 Taqī al Dīn Umār, the nephew of Salāhuddīn. 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 Taqī al Dīn 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 Taqī al Dīn with a note explaining that she had as much experience of drinking parties as she had of battles. On seeing this poem Taqī al Dīn recognised and appreciated her high imaginative powers.

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37. Ibid., p. 225.
39. Ibid., p. 196.
In this period Sultans, princes and princesses also took interest in acquiring knowledge. For this they 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 Dīn al Kindi. The lesson of the earlier disciple might be continued longer than usual and in this case al Malik al Afdal would wait until he was called for.40

When Ali b. al Hasan b. Asakir died, Salāhuddīn went to his house, prayed for him and walked in his funeral.41

A literary meeting was regularly held in the house of al-Qādi al Fādil and among those who attended it were the prince Izzal Dīn Farrukh Shah and the learned Taj al Dīn al Kindi. Izz al Dīn took Taj al Dīn to his palace and prepared a magnificent apartment for him and from that time Taj al Dīn became one of the shining lights of the Ayyūbid salons.42

40. Ibid., p. 130.
41. Ibid., p. 130.
42. Ibid., p. 42.