CHAPTER II

IBN TAIMIYAH — THE MAN

A. HIS FAMILY, EDUCATION, AND PERSONAL CHARACTER

A deep study of the author's personality is always helpful in an attempt to understand and evaluate his views and contribution. For this purpose it is necessary for us to begin with the man himself, and examine his back ground, i.e. how he was brought up; in what environment he lived; how he was educated; what was his character, etc. Therefore, to make a research on economic views of Ibn Taimiyah, a thorough study of him as a man is inevitable.

1. FAMILY AND EDUCATION

Ibn Taimiyah's full name is Taqī al Din Ahmad bin 'Abdul Haleem. He was born in Harrān -- a town in north-east of present Syria-- on 22 January 1263 AD (10 Rabī' al Awwal, 661 AH). He came from a family that had been renowned for its learning for a long time. His father 'Abdul Haleem, uncle Fakhruddin and grandfather Majduddīn were great scholars of Hanblite jurisprudence and authors of many books. His family was forced to leave its native place in 1269 AD before the approach of Mongols and to take refuge in Damascus.1 At that time Ibn Taimiyah was seven years old. His father 'Abdul Haleem was appointed as professor and head of the Sukkārīyā Madrasah. Endowed with a penetrating intellect and a wonderful memory, Ibn Taimiyah studied at the early stage all the existing sciences, jurisprudences, traditions of the Prophet, commentry on the Qurān, mathematics and philosophy

---

and in each he was far ahead of his contemporaries. Among his teachers was Shams al Din al Maqdisi who was the first Ḥanbali chief justice of Syria after the reform of judiciary by Baibars. The number of his teachers is more than two hundred. Names of some other famous teachers are Ibn Abi al Yusr, al Kamāl bin ‘Abd, al Majd bin ‘Asākir, Yaḥyā bin Ṣairafī, Ṣāmd bin Abu al Khair, etc. He was seventeen years old when Qāḍī al Maqdisi authorized him to give fatwā (legal ruling). The Qāḍī was proud that it was he who had first permitted an intelligent and learned man like Ibn Taimiyah to give fatwā. At the same age he started delivering lectures. When he was thirty, he was offered the office of chief justice, which he refused, as he could not persuade himself to follow the limitations imposed by the authorities.

Ibn Taimiyah himself never married, perhaps he could not find time to think over this question. Once Hāfiẓ Dhaḥbi wrote about him that he was free from the passion of food, clothing and sex. He had interest in nothing except spreading knowledge and action according to it. His brother used to take care of his expenses. His life was very simple. He was more concerned with other’s interests.

Basically, Ibn Taimiyah’s education was that of Ḥanbali theologian and jurisconsult. To the knowledge of early and classical

3 Ibn ʿAbdul Ḥādī. op. cit. p. 3.
6 ibid. p. 390.
7 ibid. p. 395.
Hanbalism he added not only that of the other schools of jurisprudence but also that of heresiographical literature, in particular of philosophy and sufism. He had an ample knowledge of Greek and Islamic history, and religious books of others, as it is clear from variety of his books. Though he preferred Ḥanbalī school of jurisprudence, he was never biased in his thinking. In his writings, he frequently quoted the opinions of four famous schools of jurisprudence or even more. In a number of matters he adopted opinions other than that of the four schools. Actually he was an original thinker (mujtahid), who drew on all the four schools.

In all his reformative efforts, Ibn Taimiyah accepted the Qurān and the Sunnah (traditions of the Prophet) as the basic criteria. In the matters where there was no clear guidance from the Qurān and the Sunnah, he never hesitated from rational thinking and adopting the path of Ijtihād (creative originality and initiative).

The thirteenth and fourteenth centuries A.D. have a distinguished place in Islamic history. But their importance is in expansion of knowledge and learning, and not in the depth of knowledge. The means of acquiring knowledge were easily available. Libraries and schools were established in large numbers. But the people did not use their original thinking power. It was Ibn Taimiyah who contributed a lot by way of original thinking. He critically examined the existing sciences and laid the new foundations of research and criticism. A strong opponent of Ibn Taimiyah in his life time, chief justice Subkī (d. 1356) once wrote to the great Islamic historian al Ḥādhī, "I highly respect him (i.e. Ibn Taimiyah), and appreciate his expertise in education, Shariah, and rational sciences. I also recognize the high place he

---


achieved in original thinking and intellectual faculties, which words can not describe. Such a unique personality had not been there for centuries.¹

2. CHARACTER

He was very generous and kind hearted especially towards the poor and the needy. "Amirs, army, officers, traders and all classes of people loved him, as he worked for their interest day and night in every possible way. He used to spend money generously on poor."² Though he never engaged in trade and commerce, he had contact with such people and understood their problems as evident from the Fatawā in which a large number of enquiries were made from him about trade, commerce and enterprises and business contracts. One of his disciples al Dabahi al Zāhid (d. 1311) was a big trader before joining his discipleship.³ All kind of people used to attend Ibn Taimiyah's lectures and benefited from them. In support of a right stand he was always very firm and uncompromising. Due to this reason he had a number of opponents and enemies also.⁴

B. A LIFE FULL OF STRUGGLES AND PERSECUTIONS

Ibn Taimiyah's life was not a mere academic life. Whenever the need called him he entered in political and public affairs and made his contribution, not only with his writings and speeches but, like a brave warrior, with the sword as well. Here is an

⁴ Ibn Rajab, op. cit. p. 394.
account of his warlike activities which is a very important aspect of his life.

1. PARTICIPATION IN 'JIHĀD'

In 1300, the Mongols under their king Ghāzān invaded Syria and defeated the Sultan's army. By now well known, Ibn Taimiyah flung himself into the stream of affairs, while the religious divines and saints were leaving Damascus to take refuge in Egypt. There were disturbances everywhere. Prisoners got out from jails, the bad elements started looting and plundering the city before the Mongols entered. Ibn Taimiyah did his best to restore order in the city; and together with the remaining ʿulamā he met the chief of Mongol ʿIl Khān Ghāzān. He so forcefully pleaded the case of the people of Damascus before him that he secured the release of many prisoners and succeeded in a declaration of peace made for civilians.

During the year 1300, Mongol threat arose for a second time. Ibn Taimiyah exhorted people to Jihād and encouraged them to confront the Mongols boldly. He was asked by the governor of Damascus to go to Cairo and persuade Sultan Nasir to intervene in Syria. He left for Cairo in January 1301 and persuaded the Sultan to come to Damascus with his army. When he saw the Sultan reluctant to face the Mongols, he warned, "If you would avoid to come to the protection of Syria, we shall choose another Sultan who will defend and protect her at the time of war and will enjoy her resources during the peace time." He further argued "Even if you were not the ruler of Syria, but her inhabitants having asked you to help them, you must come to their rescue. Now that you are their ruler and they are your subjects you have no excuse; you

---

are responsible for them." The Sultan was so impressed by his speech that he got ready to set off. The Mongols refrained from attack that year but they came back the next year after full preparation. Ibn Taimiyah toured the cities, called the people to a holy war and fired them with zeal. After a pitched battle at Shaqhab in which Ibn Taimiyah fought like a brave soldier, the Syrian-Egyptian army won a glorious victory that turned the tide against the Mongols. On this occasion, Ibn Taimiyah issued a fatwa on the dispensation from the duty of fasting for those who were fighting even in the case they were actually staying at home. This victory which was to a great extent due to Ibn Taimiyah's effort stopped the advance of the Mongols and saved Europe and Africa from their ravage.

Apart from the battle of Shaqhab, he took part in some other expeditions with the Mamluk authorities, and undertook a few expedition on his own.

2. OPPOSITION BY RIVAL 'ULAMĀ

Due to his bright performance in battle field and his radical thinking, his fame spread all over the country and he became a highly distinguished personality of the time. This made a number of jurists jealous of him. Ibn Kathir pointed out to this fact saying that: "A group of jurisprudents were jealous of Ibn Taimiyah, as he had a place in the court of Sultan and people paid heed towards him. To enjoin good and forbid evil was his vocation, and because of this he became very popular among people.

His followers were countless. His religious zeal, learning and actions made them jealous of him.  

a. Visit to Cairo and the First Persecution. The opponents of Ibn Taimiyah complained against him in the court of the Sultān in Egypt, and a number of baseless charges were levelled against him. He was called by the Sultān in Egypt. He reached Cairo on 7th April 1306. Ibn Taimiyah was accused of anthropomorphism. He was not given proper chance to clarify it and was put into prison. He remained in the citadel of Cairo for nearly a year and a half. He was released on 25th Sept., 1307.

b. Second Persecution. After coming out from the jail, Ibn Taimiyah decided to stay for some days in Cairo to bring out reforms in the creeds of people as well as in their way of life. He criticized bitterly the un-Islamic ideas of sufism and continued to denounce all the innovations which he regarded as heretical.

Meanwhile another Sultān Baibars al Jashankir who was strongly pro-sufism captured power in Egypt. Since a number of supporters of Ibn Taimiyah were present in Cairo, this time he was exiled to Alexandria and put under house-arrest. His exile in Alexandria lasted seven months. When Nāṣir Muḥammad bin Qalāwūn was restored to the throne on 4 March 1310, he recalled Ibn Taimiyah and received him in audience at Cairo.

Coming back to Cairo he resumed his reformist activities and remained there for about three years. Sultān Muḥammad bin Qalāwūn used to consult him. He continued to advise him privately and 

---

1 Ibn Kathīr. op. cit. Vol. XIV, p. 37
2 ibid. p. 38
3 Ibn ʿAbdul Hādī. op. cit. p. 257.
c. Return to Syria and the Third Persecution. In the year 1313 a new Mongol threat appeared. The Sultan decided to face them on the border of Syria. People remembered the great role played by Ibn Taimiyah in the earlier battle. Though he was over fifty yet the Sultan wanted him to accompany him to Damascus on 28 February, 1313. The Mongol returned without any confrontation. Ibn Taimiyah now concentrated his attention on academic and social problems. He organised teaching as people wanted guidance from him in their everyday life. His knowledge and thinking had now become broader and more concrete. Sometimes he would issue a fatwa even against the verdicts of the four famous schools of jurisprudence. One of such legal ruling (fatwa) was about divorce. In 1318, a letter from the Sultan forbade Ibn Taimiyah to issue any fatwa on divorce contrary to the prevailing Hanblite doctrine. He held the opinion that thrice pronouncement of repudiation at the same time shall be considered one and that a repudiation obtained under duress shall be ineffective. Ibn Taimiyah was accused of disobeying the Sultan's order and was condemned to prison in the citadel at Damascus where he remained for five months and eighteen days. He was released on 9th February 1321 by a decree from Sultan Nasir.

d. The Fourth and Last Persecution. The last persecution came on 13th July, 1326 which continued till his death. The opponents of Ibn Taimiyah dug up an old fatwa given by him some seventeen years back which could be provocative. It related to visits to tombs. In his treatise on visits to tombs ('Risalah ziyarah al QBUr') he had questioned the legality of such visits even to the

1 Laoust H. op. cit. p. 952.
Prophet's tomb. They distorted the meaning and passages of the fatwā to make it more objectionable in the eyes of public and the Sultan. A great dispute arose and Ibn Taimiyah was imprisoned in the citadel of Damascus along with some of his pupils like Ibn Qayyim.

e. His Last Days. In the citadel he spent all his time in teaching and writing. Many of his works belong to this period. During his detention in the citadel, the Maliki Qādī al-Ikhnā'ī wrote a booklet against Ibn Taimiyah's treatise on tomb visit. From inside the citadel, Ibn Taimiyah wrote an article in which he attacked the Qādī and proved him to be ignorant and incompetent for the post of justice. This got wide publication and al-Ikhnā'ī complained it to the Sultan. At last, Ibn Taimiyah was deprived of all means of writings, his pen and papers were taken away from him. This happened in the year 1328.

Even then Ibn Taimiyah did not stop writing; he wrote many letters and booklets with coal. Ibn Taimiyah never complained to anybody about his persecution. He was happy in all conditions. When all means and materials of reading and writing were taken away from him, he said, "Now they really have put me into prison." He breathed his last on 26th September, 1328 AD (20th Dhil Qa'dah 728 AH) having endured these tough conditions for five months. The whole country mourned his death. Schools, shops, hotels and markets were all closed to mark his sad demise. His burial was attended by a large number of the inhabitants of Damascus. Eye

---

1 cf., Ibn 'Abdul Hādī. op. cit. pp. 335-36.
4 ibid. op. cit. pp. 363-64.
witnesses wrote that all the inhabitants, pro and against, except some invalids, attended the funeral prayer.\footnote{Ibn Abdul Hādī. pp. 11-12, 362; 371; Ibn Kathir. op. cit. Vol. XIV, p. 136.} This is a clear proof of his sacrifices for public purposes and just cause; and a testimony to his place among people. As a whole he spent about five years in different prisons, including the two years and three months of the last imprisonment.

C. A GREAT REFORMER

The word 'reform' in Islamic terminology does not mean the same as in the Christian terminology. In Islam 'reform' means to purify Islamic teachings and to remove the innovations and misconceptions from it. Ibn Taimiyah was a great reformer in this sense.

According to ʿAllāmah Shibli Noʿāmānī, a perfect reformer is one who revolutionises religion or politics; who does not imitate others, but expounds original ideas of his own, and; bears hardships, makes sacrifices and does not hesitate even from laying down his life for that cause.\footnote{Noamānī, Shibli: Maqālāt (Anzamgarh: Dar al Muṣannifīn, 19 ), Vol. V, p. 62.} All these essential qualities of reformer are found in Ibn Taimiyah.

1. THE MAIN ASPECTS OF HIS REFORM

The most important aspects of Ibn Taimiyah's reforms were: a) to bring a revolution against the innovations and corrupt practices crept in Islam and to emphasize the concept of 'Tawḥīd' with all its implications; b) a return to fundamental principles of Islam and its original spirit instead of disputing over secondary and
non-fundamental problems; and c) serving the public purposes through state intervention in economic life of people in a way that guarantees justice and security and prevents exploitation and selfishness. He devoted all his energies to these activities throughout his life.

In the 13th century, the sweet and pure spring of Islam was spoiled, on the one hand, by un-Islamic customs and rites and false innovations such as tomb worship; on the other hand, the so called sufism had made the revolutionary message of Islam lifeless. Ibn Taimiyah carried reform in both directions.

Sufism was widespread in that period. There were different forms of sufism, with different concepts, methods and cults. But all of them preached a life of seclusion and individualism; and any effort for organising good social life or participating in it was considered as worldliness. They invented different ideas and beliefs contrary to the teachings of Islam. Thus they diverted the attention of their followers from the actual problems of life. Ibn Taimiyah bitterly criticized their ideas and attacked their practices. Once he wrote a letter to Shaikh Naṣr Manbijī the spiritual advisor of Baibars Jāshānkīr in which he condemned the monism of Ibn ʿArabī. Manbijī became angry with him and on his advice, Jāshānkīr exiled him to Alexandria. At that time Cairo was dominated by the sūfīs. He wanted to break their power and preached against them. As a result he faced strong opposition from sūfīs and their followers. In Damascus, a certain Shaikh Ibrāhīm al Ḥāṭṭān, who had disfigured himself and was accused among other things, of antimonianism, was brought to him. Ibn Taimiyah persuaded him to civilize and better his condition.

3 Ibn ʿAbdul Ḥādī. op. cit. p. 271.
In 1305, he also reformed a similar group of Rifä'iyyah.¹

Some misguided people glorified the tombs. Tomb-worship is contrary to the Islamic belief of 'Tawhīd'. Tawhīd requires denial of divinity and power to anyone except Allah the Almighty. Tomb devotion and similar innovations violate this principle. Ibn Taimiyah denounced this innovation and wrote many treatises on this issue.

As far as his reform in politico-economic matters is concerned he wrote some books and took an active part in such affairs. His economic views will be discussed later on. It seems worthwhile to note here that Nāṣīr Muḥammad bin Qalāwūn was inspired by him in his many reforms.²

Once a tyrant governor of Damascus imposed some excessive taxes. Ibn Taimiyah got him transferred by the Sulṭān and got the taxes cancelled.³

Ibn Taimiyah had seen great upheavals in this period. He had seen how a false concept of religion causes exploitation and disturbances, and how misconceptions entered in the religion especially when it is deprived of power. He was of the opinion that religion and the state should be indissolubly linked. Without the coercive power of the state, religion is in danger; without the discipline of the revealed Law, the state become, a tyrannical organization.⁴

¹Ibn Kathīr, op. cit. Vol. XIV, p. 36.
Once he wrote a letter to the Sultan of his time, advising him to fight starvation, fulfil needs, help the suppressed, listen to the troubled persons, and to enjoin good and forbid evils. He counted these things as pillars of justice and goodness.\(^1\)

### D. ATTACK ON PHILOSOPHY AND LOGIC

Another target of Ibn Taimiyah's criticism is the Greek philosophy and logic. The translation of Greek heritages into Arabic started in the early periods of Islam. A few Abbasid caliphs established academies for such translations. Within two or three centuries, a great number of Muslim philosophers appeared who propounded Greek ideas or tried to justify the Islamic ideas and creeds from the Greek philosophical point of views.

The true picture of Islam became distorted by conflicting interpretations. By the 13th century AD, Greek philosophy had such a strong hold over the minds of people that they could hardly think without its help. Greek philosophy had become the measuring rod for religious truths. Due to their influence it became almost impossible for people to keep steadily to the right path of Islam.

Ibn Taimiyah was aware of this situation. He knew that unless the false handicap of Greek philosophy was removed people would not be able to grasp the divine truth of Islam. He studied all the great Muslim philosophers and their works such as al Fārābī, who is called the next Master after Aristotle, works of Avicenna (Ibn Sīnā) Ibn Tufail, Averroes (Ibn Rushd) etc. He criticized even al Ghazālī who himself was a great critic of philosophy in his last days, for not getting rid of philosophy to the full extent.

---

extent. During his exile in Alexandria in 1307 he wrote one of the most valuable works Al Radd‘Ala al Mantiqiin’. The French scholar Henri Laoust is of the opinion that in Alexandria he might have met and influenced by the passing Muwahhidin of al Maghrib, who were very opposed to the philosophical thinking in religion and very strict in their belief of the unity of God.

"Ibn Taimiyah was opposed to extreme rationalism. Like Kant (d. 1804) he did not believe that reason could drive us knowledge of ultimate truths. He was opposed to logic in its application to the truths of religion or ultimate truths. He was not against reasoning as such, but believed that it was not confined to the Aristotelian logic or syllogistic reasoning. Logic, he demonstrated, was not a measure of the truth or reality. It was only a means of judging the consistency of arguments. Its constant use sharpened the intellect and assisted in discovering fallacies in reasoning. It was, however, absolutely incapable of proving the existence of a thing. It was neither a source of existential nor valuational knowledge. ...."

"In the opinion of Ibn Taimiyah logic was also not in conformity with reason, because reason could not be subordinate to principles laid down by one man. Reason had its own nature and it had its own methods. Its course and functioning could be determined by anyone. The lines prescribed by Aristotelian logic were too narrow for reason and in fact reason was not restricted to these ways alone. ....."

"As against the deductive method, Ibn Taimiyah emphasized the need and importance of the inductive and empirical method."  

---

1Ibn Taimiyah: Sharh al 'Aqīdah al 'Asfahānī (Cairo: Matbāh Kurdistan al 'Ilmiyah, 1911), p. 115.
1. METHOD OF TEACHING

Ibn Taimiyah's method of teaching was very elegant and remarkable. It was full of authentic references and strengthened with rational reasoning and traditional evidence. Whenever he wanted to deliver a lecture on a subject he referred to the verses of the Qurān and discussed their meanings with cross references from the Qurān. He also noted the evidence from the traditions of the Prophet and examined their authenticity. Then he explained the opinions of the four schools of jurisprudence and some others famous doctors of jurisprudence. He discussed the matter fully in the light of these so that the problem and its solution became clear in the minds of his listeners. He had a very good memory which helped him overwhelm his adversaries in polemics.¹

2. STYLE OF WRITING

Almost the same style he adopted in his writings. His writings are clear and elegant. It is so much rich with the references of the verses of the Qurān, tradition, saying of the companions, their followers, and opinions of the other doctors of jurisprudence that a person who reads it, feels that he is living in the blessed age. From the literary point of view too, his writings have a great value. Because of their clear expression, and choice of idioms even his technical works seem to be literary ones.

Along with these merits his writings are blamed for some shortcomings. For example, he so frequently digresses in his writings.

Dealing with a particular problem he soon goes off the track and he comes back to the topic only after a long de tour.

3. HIS DISCIPLES

When Ibn Taimiyah died he left a very large number of pupils and disciples. In this case he was next to none. His disciples were of two kinds as his teaching meetings were also of two kinds. One kinds of pupils were those who benefited and learned from him through his speeches after the Friday prayers and public lectures. In such meetings he used to present before them the pure and simple teachings of Islam; invoked them to follow the good and just, and forbade the evils and innovations.

The other kinds of disciples were those who attended his special sessions. These were disciples in true sense of the word. They possessed intelligence and ability to grasp the teaching of their master. They inherited his knowledge and thinking.

His disciples spread from Syria to Egypt and Cairo to Alexandria. Some of them scattered to the farther places. His disciples preached and developed his intellectual heritage. They shared their masters persecutions. One of the most famous disciples was Ibn Qayyim al Juziyyah (d. 1350), who is a great writer in his own right. He mingled his personality with that of his teacher. We find in his books reflections of Ibn Taimiyah's thought. The other distinguished disciples are Ibn 'Abd al Hadi (d. 1343) who died at the age of forty but left valuable works behind him; he wrote a biography of his master namely al 'Uqud al Durr'iyyah; Ibn Kathir (d. 1373), the famous historian and commentator of the Qur'an, whose book 'al Bidayah wa al Nihayah' contains detailed

---

1 Ibn 'Abdul Hadi. op. cit. p. 267.
biography of his teacher; Ḥāfīẓ Dhahbī (d. 1348), the great Islamic traditional historian; al Mizzī (d. 1341), another expert on traditions; Muḥammad bin Mufleḥ (d. 1362), writer of many books; Abū Ḥafṣ al Bazzāz (d. 1349), the author of a biography of Ibn Taimiyah; Ibn al Wardī (d. 1348) expert in literature, grammar and some other branches of learning; and Qāḍī Ibn Faḍlullāh (d. 1349) a famous writer.

F. IMPACT OF IBN TAIMIYAH THROUGH THE AGES

Ibn Taimiyah created an atmosphere of revolutionary thinking with his views and ideas and reformative endeavours whose impact is felt not only in his time but through the ages even today. In his life time people were divided into three groups, those who were strong opponents of him, those who were his supporter and fully agreed with him and the third group was neutral or agreed in some views and disagreed in others. When Ibn Taimiyah died he left behind him a large number of books and disciples. Soon, his opponents became unknown while the value and appreciation for his works increased as the time passed.

Ibn Taimiyah had great influence over Sultān Nāṣir Muḥammad bin Qalāwūn. The Sultān used to consult him during his stay at Cairo in the years 1309 to 1312. The Sultān appointed the Amīr Shams al Dīn Afrām as the Governor of Tripoly on the advice of Ibn Taimiyah.

He had great influence among amirs and high ranking officials. During his stay in Egypt and Syria, and even when he was imprisoned, amīrs and other responsible persons, along with the common

---

public, used to consult him. Husamuddin Mahanna Amir of Arab, Kitbughā al Mansoor (d. 1321), and Saifuddin Arghun al Nasiri (d. 1330) who held the office of viceroy and governor of Aleppo, are described as his friends and admirers. When he was imprisoned in Egypt, several amirs used to visit him and present him with good quality food. The Qadi did not like it and he complained the case to the Sultan and got him transferred to the prison of the fort.

In his life time Ibn Taimiyah's fame and influence extended beyond the boundaries of Egypt and Syria, and reached other countries. When he was imprisoned for the last time in the citadel of Damascus, many letters came from the inhabitants of Baghdad protesting his arrest and demanding his release. When he died funeral prayers in absentia were performed in the east, even in China. One of his disciples Altama Abd al Aziz Ardebili came to the court of the Sultan Muhammad Tughlaq from Damascus. Prof. K.A. Nizami writes "Ibn Taimiyya's disciples reached India at a time when the country was in the grip of pantheistic doctrines. The policies of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlaq and Firuz Shah seem to have been very greatly influenced by these tendencies of the age."

Ibn Taimiyah's influence continued to be deeply felt long after

---

7 Nizami, K.A.: Religion and Politics in India (Delhi: Idara-i-Adbiyat-i-Delhi, 1974), p. 56.
his death, as acknowledged by, Maqrīzī (d. 1441) the historian of the second Mamlūk period.¹ It continued later on, as exemplified by the biography written by al Marājī (d. 1623) in the Ottoman period. Historian have generally recognized his deep impact on the most prominent reformer of the eighteenth century, Muḥammad bin 'Abd al Wahhāb (d. 1792).²

Some of Ibn Taimiyah's rulings (fatwā) have been incorporated into the legal codes of some modern Muslim countries. A prominent example is the case of divorce under duress in the Egyptian and Syrian laws.³

G. ECONOMIC VIEWS IN HIS WRITINGS

As far economic problems are concerned, it was impossible for them to escape the attention of such a versatile genius. Ibn Taimiyah had seen destruction of families and their deteriorated economic condition since very beginning of his life. His own family faced migration and suffered from loss of property. He witnessed a general economic plight at the hands of Mongols. He had contacts with every class of the society -- starting from 'fallāḥīn' and artisans upto amīrs and sultāns; and had seen the agony of the poor classes as well as the exploitation by the ruling class. All this affected him to a great extent; and a dynamic and conscientious

personality like him could not keep silent in this situation. Moreover, he was inspired by the fact that Islam as a religion, is concerned with the economic problems and it has given certain fundamental principles in this regard.

On the one hand, Ibn Taimiyah emphasized that every person must be ensured a minimum standard of living so that he could fulfil his duties towards the Almighty and his obligations towards his brethren. On the other hand, he stressed upon justice; that is, he tried to point out the responsibilities of the individual as well as the state, so that both could cooperate with each other and none was exploited. According to him justice is a value recognised by all nations. He says, "All people agreed that the consequence of injustice is gloomy, and fruit of justice is admirable." ^1

Ibn Taimiyah discussed the economic problems mainly in two of his books. One, 'al Hisbah fi'l Islām' (the Institution of Hisbah in Islam); two, 'al Siyāsah al Sharī'ah fi Islah al Rā'i wa'l Ra'iyah' (Eng. Tr. Public and Private Laws in Islam by Farrukh Omar). While in the first book he discusses the market and government interference in economic life, in the second book he deals with public income and expenditure.

Apart from these two books there are a number of his works in which he explores matters related to economics. Since he was a writer of frequent digression, his economic views are scattered all over his books. Especially, in his Fatawā we find his views and opinions on different economic issues.

In the following pages his economic views will be our main concern.

---

^2 idem. al Hisbah, p. 9.