

**NIZĀM AL-MULK**, Abū 'Alī AL-Ḥasan b. 'Alī b. Iṣḥāk AL-Ṭūsī

, minister Alp [q.v.]. According to most authorities, he was born on Friday 21 Dhu 'l-Ḳa'da 408/10 April 1018, though the 6th/12th century *Ta'riḫ-i Bayhaḳ* of Ibn Funduḳ al-Bayhaḳī [q.v.], which alone supplies us with detailed information about his family, places his birth in 410/1019-20. His birth-place was Rādḳān, a village in the neighbourhood of Ṭūs, of which his father was revenue agent on behalf of the Ghaznawīd government. Little is recorded of his early life. The *Waṣāyā-yi Khwādja-yi Nizām al-Mulk*, however (for a discussion of the credibility of which see *JRAS* [1931], *The Sar-gudhasht-i Saiyidnā*, etc.), contains several anecdotes of his childhood, and is also responsible for the statement that he became a pupil in Nīshāpūr of a well-known Shāfi'ī doctor Hibat Allāh al-Muwaffaḳ. On the defeat of Mas'ūd of Ghazna at Dandānḳān [q.v. in Suppl.] in 431/1040, when most of Khurāsān fell into the hands of the Saldjūqs, Nizām al-Mulk's father 'Alī fled from Ṭūs to Khusrawdjird in his native Bayhaḳ, and thence made his way to Ghazna. Nizām al-Mulk accompanied him, and whilst in Ghazna appears to have obtained a post in a government office. Within three or four years, however, he left the Ghaznawid for the Saldjūq service, first attaching himself to Čaghri-Beg's [q.v.] commandant in Balkh (which had fallen to a Saldjūqid force in 432/1040-1), and later, probably about 445/1053-4, moving to Čaghri's own headquarters at Marw. It seems to have been now, or soon after, that he first entered the service of Alp Arslān (then acting as his father's lieutenant in eastern Khurāsān) under his *wazīr*, Abū 'Alī Aḥmad b. Shādhān. And he so far won Alp Arslān's regard as on Ibn Shādhān's death to be appointed *wazīr* in his stead (then, probably, receiving his best-known *laḳab*). During the period between the death of Čaghri-Beg in 451/1059 and that of Ṭughrīl-Beg in 455/1063, therefore, Nizām al-Mulk had the administration of all Khurāsān in his hands.

The fame which he thereby acquired, and the fact that by now Alp Arslān was firmly attached to him, played a considerable part in prompting Ṭughrīl-Beg's *wazīr* al-Kundurī [q.v.], first, before his master's death, to scheme for the throne to pass to Čaghri's youngest son Sulaymān, and then, after it, [VIII 70a] to do his utmost to prevent Alp Arslān's accession. For he calculated that Alp Arslān, on becoming sultan, would retain Nizām al-Mulk rather than himself in office. In the event, al-Kundurī, who soon found himself too weak to oppose Alp Arslān, and thereupon sought to retrieve his position by acknowledging his claim, was retained in his post on the new sultan's first entry into Rayy. But a month later Alp Arslān suddenly dismissed him and handed over affairs to Nizām al-Mulk. Al-Kundurī was shortly afterwards banished to Marw al-Rūdh, where ten months later he was beheaded. His execution was undoubtedly due to Nizām al-Mulk, whose fears he had aroused by appealing for help to Alp Arslān's wife.

During Alp Arslān's reign, Nizām al-Mulk accompanied him on all his campaigns and journeys, which were almost uninterrupted. He was not present, however, at the famous battle of Malāzgird [q.v.], having been sent ahead with the heavy baggage to Persia. On the other hand, he sometimes undertook military operations on his own, as in the case of the reduction of Iṣṭakhr citadel in 459/1067. Whose, his or Alp Arslān's, was the directing mind in matters of policy, it is hard to determine. Its main points, however, appear to have been the following: first, the employment of the large numbers of Türkmens that had immigrated into Persia as a result of the Saldjūq successes, in raids outside the *Dār al-Islām* and into Fātimid territory: hence the apparently strange circumstance that Alp Arslān's first enterprise after his accession, despite the precarious condition of the empire he had inherited, was a campaign in Georgia and Armenia [see AL-kurdj]; secondly, a demonstration that the sultan's force was both irresistible and mobile, coupled with clemency and generally with reinstatement for all rebels who submitted; thirdly,

the maintenance of local rulers, *Shīrī* as well as *Sunnī*, in their positions as vassals of the sultan, together with the employment of members of the *Saldjūk* family as provincial governors; fourthly, the obviation of a dispute over the succession by the appointment and public acknowledgement of *Malikshāh* [*q.v.*], though he was not the sultan's eldest son, as his heir; and lastly the establishment of good relations with the 'Abbāsīd caliph *al-Ḳā'im* [*q.v.*], as the sultan's nominal overlord.

*Nizām al-Mulk* did not really come into his own until after the assassination of *Alp Arslān* in 465/1072. But thenceforward, for the next twenty years, he was the real ruler of the *Saldjūk* empire. He succeeded from the outset in completely dominating the then eighteen-year-old *Malikshāh*, being assisted in this purpose by the defeat of *Ḳāwurd's* [*q.v.*] attempt to secure the throne for himself (for which service *Nizām al-Mulk* received the title *atābeg* [*q.v.*], thus bestowed for the first time). Indeed, in one aspect the history of the reign resolves itself into repeated attempts by the young sultan to assert himself, always in vain.

*Malikshāh* undertook fewer campaigns and tours than his father, the prestige of the *Saldjūk* arms now being such that few would risk rebellion, and warlike operations being left largely to the sultan's lieutenants, as they had not been under *Alp Arslān*. Nevertheless, from *Iṣfahān*, which had by now become the sultan's normal place of residence, *Malikshāh* visited the greater part of his empire accompanied by *Nizām al-Mulk*.

Policy continued on the same lines under *Malikshāh* as under his father. *Nizām al-Mulk*, however, was notably less tender than *Alp Arslān* had been to insubordinate members of the *Saldjūk* family, [VIII 70b] insisting at the outset on the execution of *Ḳāwurd*, and, later, on the blinding and imprisonment of *Malikshāh's* brother *Tekešh*.

He also reversed during the earlier part of *Malikshāh's* reign the conciliatory policy originally pursued under *Alp Arslān* towards the caliph. He had been rewarded for the friendly attitude he first evinced—which formed a welcome contrast to that of *al-Kundurī*—by the receipt from *al-Ḳā'im* of two new *lakabs*, viz. *Ḳiwām al-Dīn* and *Raḍī Amīr al-Mu'minīn* (the latter believed to be the earliest of this type in the case of a *wazīr*); and up to 460/1068, his relations with the caliph's *wazīr* *Fakhr al-Dawla Ibn Djahīr* [see *djahīr*, *banū*] became more and more cordial; so much so, indeed, that *al-Ḳā'im* in that year dismissed *Ibn Djahīr*, chiefly on account of his too-subservient attitude to the *Saldjūk* court. To secure this attitude in the caliph's *wazīr* was, however, the very aim of *Nizām al-Mulk*; and on *Fakhr al-Dawla's* dismissal he sought to impose a nominee of his own in a certain *al-Rūdhrawārī*, and subsequently in the latter's son *Abū Shudjā'*. *Al-Ḳā'im*, to avoid this, reappointed *Fakhr al-Dawla*, though on condition that his relations with the *Saldjūkids* should in future be more correct. In fact, they soon grew strained, till *Nizām al-Mulk* came to attribute any unwelcome event in *Baghdād* to *Fakhr al-Dawla's* influence. For many years, matters were prevented from coming to a head by the tact of *Fakhr al-Dawla's* son, 'Amīd *al-Dawla* [see *djahīr*, *banū*], who won *Nizām al-Mulk's* favour so far as to marry in turn two of his daughters, *Nafsā* and *Zubayda*; but in 471/1078 *Nizām al-Mulk* demanded *Fakhr al-Dawla's* dismissal, which the caliph *al-Muḳtadī* [*q.v.*] (who had succeeded in 467/1075), was obliged to grant. *Nizām al-Mulk* now hoped to obtain the office for his own son *Mu'ayyid al-Mulk*; but to this *al-Muḳtadī* would not agree. Henceforward, accordingly, his dislike was deflected to *al-Muḳtadī* himself, and to *Abū Shudjā'*, his former protege, whom the caliph now created deputy *wazīr* in an effort to conciliate him, leaving the vizierate itself unoccupied till the next year, when he appointed 'Amīd *al-Dawla*. But in 474/1082 *Nizām al-Mulk* in turn demanded the dismissal and banishment of *Abū Shudjā'*, and at the

same time composed his quarrel with Fakhr al-Dawla, when the latter was sent on a mission to Işfahān, concerting with him a plan by which Fakhr al-Dawla should watch his interests at Baghdād. As a result, al-Muqtadī, who gave in with a bad grace, lost all confidence in the Banū Djahīr, and two years later replaced ‘Amīd al-Dawla with the offensive Abū Shudjā‘; whereupon Fakhr al-Dawla and ‘Amīd al-Dawla fled to the Saldjūkid headquarters. Nizām al-Mulk, on this, vowed vengeance on al-Muqtadī, and at first seems even to have contemplated the abolition of the caliphate (see Sibṭ Ibn al-Djawzī, *Mir’āt al-zamān*), as a prelude to which he commissioned Fakhr al-Dawla to conquer Diyār Bakr from the Marwānids [*q.v.*], the sole remaining Sunnī tributaries of any consequence. The Marwānids were duly ousted by 478/1085, whilst al-Muqtadī, on his side, showed himself consistently hostile to Nizām al-Mulk. But the latter's feelings towards the caliph were in the following year completely transformed as a consequence of his first visit to Baghdād (for the wedding of al-Muqtadī to Malikshāh's daughter). The caliph received him very graciously; and thenceforward he became a champion of the caliphate in face of the enmity which developed between al-Muqtadī and Malikshāh as a result of the marriage.

The celebrity of Nizām al-Mulk is really due to the fact that he was in all but name a monarch, and ruled [VIII 71a] his empire with striking success. It was not his aim to innovate. On the contrary, it was to model the new state as closely as possible on that of the Ghaznawids, in which he had been born and brought up. His position was similar to that of his forerunners, the Barmakids [see *barāmika*], and the notable Būyid *wazīr*, the Şāhib Ismā‘īl b. ‘Abbād [*q.v.*]. All three may be said to have represented the old Persian civilisation (progressively Islamicised, of course) in the face of a rise to empire of barbarian conquerors, Arab, Daylamī and now Türkmen. The monarchs were in each case equalled, if not surpassed, by their *wazīrs*, and most of all in the case of Nizām al-Mulk. For with him the invaders aspired to an emperor's position whilst still quite unacclimatised to their new habitat, so that his superiority in culture was the more marked (cf. Barthold, *Turkestan*, 308). But in revenge, the Saldjūks' lack of acclimatisation stood in the way of a complete realisation by Nizām al-Mulk of the now traditional Perso-Muslim state. Hence the lamentations that recur in the *Siyāsāt-nāma*.

The *Siyāsāt-nāma* or *Siyar al-mulūk*, written by Nizām al-Mulk in 484/1091 with the addition of eleven chapters in the following year, is in a sense a survey of what he had failed to accomplish. It scarcely touches upon the organisation of the *dūwān*, for instance, partly, it is true, because the book was intended as a monarch's primer, but also because Nizām al-Mulk, having absolute control of the *dūwān*, as opposed to the *dargāh* (cf. again Barthold, 227), had succeeded with the assistance of his two principal coadjutors, the *mustawfi* Sharaf al-Mulk and the *munshī* Kamāl al-Dawla, in exactly modelling this, his special department, on traditional lines. Of the *dargāh*, on the other hand, Nizām al-Mulk complains that the sultans failed to maintain a sufficient majesty. They were neither magnificent (though he approves their daily free provision of food), formal, nor awe-inspiring enough. At their court, accordingly, the formerly important offices of *ḥādījīb*, *wakīl* and *amīr-i ḥaras* had declined in prestige. Nor, as had his model potentates, would they maintain a sound intelligence or *barīd* [*q.v.*] service, whereby corruption might be revealed and rebellion forestalled. The *Siyāsāt-nāma* consists in all of fifty chapters of advice illustrated by historical anecdotes. The last eleven chapters, added shortly before the *wazīr*'s assassination, deal with dangers that threatened the empire at the time of writing, in particular from the Ismā‘īlīs (on the work, see *Bibl.*, 3).

Nizām al-Mulk's situation resembled that of the Būyid administrators in another respect. He was faced, as they had been, with the problem of supporting a largely tribal army, and solved it likewise by a partial

abandonment of the traditional tax-farming system of revenue collection for that of the *ikṭāʿ* or fief [*q.v.*], whereby military commanders supported themselves and their troops on the yield of lands allotted to them. Since in the decay of the 'Abbāsīd power provincial *amīrs* had tended to assume the originally distinct and profitable office of '*āmil*', the way for this development had been paved. The Būyids had later attempted to restore the older system; but the establishment of numerous local minor dynasties had favoured the new. Nizām al-Mulk now systematised it in the larger field open to him. In the *Siyāsat-nāma* he insists, however, on the necessity of limiting the rights of fief-holders to the collection of fixed dues, and of setting a short time-limit to their tenures (see on this subject, Becker, *Steuerpacht und Lehnswesen*, in *Isl.*, v [1914], 81-92, and *ikṭāʿ*).

In the absence of the intelligence service he desired, [VIII 71b] Nizām al-Mulk contrived to intimidate potential rebels and suppress local tyranny by a judicious display of the might and mobility of the Salḍjūḡid arms. He also insisted on the periodical appearance at court of local dynasts such as the Mazyadids [*q.v.*] and 'Uḡaylids [*q.v.*], and proclaimed the sultan's accessibility to appeals for the redress of wrongs by means of notices circulated throughout the empire and exposed in public places (see al-Māfarrahī, *Maḡāsīn-i Isfahān*). He also gained the powerful support of the '*ulamā*', especially those of the Shāfi'ī school, of which he was an ardent champion, by the institution of innumerable pious foundations, in particular of *madrasas*, the most celebrated being the Nizāmiyya of Baghdād (opened 459/1067), the earliest west of *Khurāsān* (see below), by the general abolition of *mukūs* (taxes unsanctioned by the *sharī'a*) in 479/1086-7; and by undertaking extensive public works, particularly in connection with the *ḡadīḡ*. After the Ḥidjāz had returned from Fāṡimīd to 'Abbāsīd allegiance in 468/1076, he exerted himself to make the 'Irāḡ road safe from brigandage for pilgrims, as well as to diminish their expenses; and from the next year until that of his death, the journey was accomplished without mishap. It was not until the second half of Malikshāh's reign that the full effects of Nizām al-Mulk's achievement made themselves felt. By 476/1083-4, however, such were the unwonted security of the roads and the low cost of living that reference is made to them in the annals.

Nizām al-Mulk was naturally much sought after as a patron. The poet Mu'izzī [*q.v.*] accuses him of having "no great opinion of poetry because he had no skill in it", and of paying "no attention to anyone but religious leaders and mystics" (see Nizāmī 'Arūḡī Samarḡandī, *Čahār maḡāla*, tr. Browne, 46). But though his charity, which was profuse (see for example, al-Subkī, *Ṭabaḡāt al-Shāfi'iyya*, iii, 41), went in large measure to men of religion—among them the most notable objects of his patronage being Abū Ishāḡ al-Shīrāzī [*q.v.*] and Abū Ḥāmid al-Ḡhazālī [*q.v.*]—, he was clearly a lavish patron also of poets, as is attested by the *Dumyat al-ḡaṡr* of al-Bāḡharzī [*q.v.*], the greater part of which is devoted to his panegyrists. In another sphere, the inauguration of the *Djalālī* calendar [*q.v.*] in 466/1074 was probably due to his encouragement, since at this time his ascendancy over Malikshāh was at its most complete.

Nizām al-Mulk's name is especially associated with the founding of a series of colleges whose ethos and teachings were closely connected with the Ash'arī *kalām* and the Shāfi'ī legal school, of which the vizier himself was an adherent. His reasons for the setting-up of a chain of *madrasas* in the main cities of 'Irāḡ, al-Djazīra and Persia (and especially in his home province of *Khurāsān*) [see MADRASA. I. 4] are not entirely clear. But in the context of the age, with its reaction against Mu'tazilism in philosophy and dialectics and against political Shī'ism as manifested in the preceding Būyīd and north Syrian amīrates and the still-powerful Fāṡimīd caliphate in Egypt and southern Syria, it seems possible that he aimed at training a body of reliable, Sunnī-oriented secretaries and officials who would run the Great Salḍjūḡ

empire when Nizām al-Mulk had moulded it along the right lines and thus further the progress of the Sunnī political and intellectual revival. In his patronage of such institutions as these colleges, he was by no means an innovator, for the Sunnī *madrasa*-building movement had been under way since the later part of the 4th/10th century, and other leading figures in the Salḍjūḱ state were equally active in founding and [VIII 72a] endowing *madrasas* and associated institutions like hostels for students, such as the Ḥanafī official of Alp Arslān's, the *mustawfi* Abū Sa'd, who built a *madrasa* attached to the shrine of Abū Ḥanīfa in Baghdād, and Nizām al-Mulk's enemy at the court of Malikshāh, the *mustawfi* Tādḱ al-Mulk Abu 'l-Ghanā'im (d. 485/1093), founder of the Tādḱiyya college there (see G. Makdisi, *Muslim institutions of learning in eleventh-century Baghdad*, in *BSOAS*, xxiv [1961], 1-56; C.E. Bosworth, in *Camb. hist. of Iran*, v, 70-4). Nizām al-Mulk may have intended to give an impetus to the spread of his own Ash'arī and Shāfi'ī views (although, in fact, the Baghdād Nizāmiyya, where the great Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī had taught, declined in the 6th/12th century, when the Ḥanbalī institutions of learning there showed greater vitality), but it seems reasonable to impute to him a wider vision of a Sunnī political, cultural and intellectual revival in the central and eastern lands of Islam, in which his own colleges would play a contributory role.

For the first seven years of Malikshāh's reign, Nizām al-Mulk's authority went altogether unchallenged. In 472/1079-80, however, two Turkish officers of the court instigated Malikshāh into killing a protege of the *wazīr*; and in 473/1080-1, again, the sultan insisted on disbanding a contingent of Armenian mercenaries against Nizām al-Mulk's advice. Malikshāh now began to hope, indeed, for the overthrow of his mentor, showing extraordinary favour to officials such as Ibn Bahmanyār and, later, Sayyid al-Ru'asā' Ibn Kamāl al-Mulk, who were bold enough to criticise him. Ibn Bahmanyār went so far as to attempt the *wazīr*'s assassination (also in 473), whereas Sayyid al-Ru'asā' contented himself with words. But in each case, Nizām al-Mulk was warned; and the culprits were blinded. In the case of Ibn Bahmanyār, in whose guilt a court jester named *Dja'farak* was also implicated, Malikshāh retaliated by contriving the murder of Nizām al-Mulk's eldest son *Djamāl* al-Mulk, who had taken *Dja'farak*'s execution into his own hands (475/1082). After the fall of Sayyid al-Ru'asā' in 476/1083-4, however, the sultan left plotting till, some years later, a new favourite, Tādḱ al-Mulk, caught his fancy.

All went well with Nizām al-Mulk till 483/1090-1. In that year, however, occurred the first serious challenge to the Salḍjūḱid power, when Baṣra was sacked by a force of *Ḳarmaṭians* [see *ḳarmaṭī*]; and almost simultaneously their co-sectary the Assassin leader al-Ḥasan b. al-Ṣabbāḥ [*q.v.*] obtained possession of the fortress of Alamūt [*q.v.*], from which repeated attacks failed to dislodge him. Meanwhile, moreover, an awkward problem had arisen over the succession to the sultanate, on account of the death in turn of Malikshāh's two eldest sons, *Dāwūd* (474/1082) and *Aḥmad* (481/1088). These sons had both been children of the *Ḳarāḱhānid* princess Terken *Khātūn* (see *Rashīd al-Dīn, Djāmi' al-tawārīḱh*), who had borne the sultan a third son, *Maḥmūd*, in 480/1087. She was eager for *Maḥmūd* to be formally declared heir. Nizām al-Mulk, however, was in favour of *Barkiyārūḱ* [*q.v.*], Malikshāh's eldest surviving son by a Salḍjūḱ princess. Hence Terken *Khātūn* became his bitter enemy, and joined with Tādḱ al-Mulk, who was in her service, in instigating Malikshāh against the *wazīr*.

Tādḱ al-Mulk accused Nizām al-Mulk to the sultan, who by this time was in any case incensed with the *wazīr*'s championship of al-Muḱtadī, of extravagant expenditure on the army and of nepotism; and Malikshāh's wrath was finally inflamed beyond bearing by an unguarded reply made by Nizām al-Mulk [VIII 72b] to a formal accusation of these practices. But even so, he did not dare to dismiss him. (The earliest

historian to assert that he was dismissed is Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍl Allāh, who appears to have misunderstood the purport of some verses by al-Naḥḥās quoted in the *Rāḥat al-ṣudūr* of Rāwandī, and really composed after the *wazīr*'s death.)

Nizām al-Mulk was assassinated on 10 Ramaḍān 485/14 October 1092 near Siḥna, between Kanguwar and Bisutūn, as the court was on its way from Iṣfahān to Baghdād. His murderer, who was disguised as a Ṣūfī, was immediately killed, but is generally thought to have been an emissary of al-Ḥasan b. al-Ṣabbāḥ. Contemporaries, however, seem to have put the murder down to Malikshāh, who died suddenly less than a month later, and to Tādī al-Mulk, whom Nizām al-Mulk's retainers duly tracked down and killed within a year. Rashīd al-Dīn combines the two theories, stating that the *wazīr*'s enemies at court concerted it with the Assassins. The truth is therefore uncertain; but as Rashīd al-Dīn is one of the earliest historians to whom the Assassin records were available, his account would seem to deserve attention.

The extraordinary influence of Nizām al-Mulk is attested by the part played in affairs after his death by his relatives, despite the fact that only two appeared to have displayed much ability. For the next sixty years, except for a gap between 517/1123 and 528/1134, members of his family held office under princes of the Saldjūkid house.

Of Nizām al-Mulk's family, Diyā' al-Mulk is remarkable as being his son by a Georgian princess, either the daughter or the niece of Bagrat I, formerly married, or at least betrothed, to Alp Arslān, after the campaign of 456/1064.

See further, on the sons and descendants of Nizām al-Mulk in the 6th/12th century, *nizāmiyya*.

(H. Bowen  
[C.E. Bosworth])

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