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RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Triple Financial Resources of the Nizamiyya Schools with Focus on Iran During the Seljuk Era

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Abstract:
The revenue sources of the Nizamiyya schools constitute one of the significant yet understudied topics within the economic history of the Seljuk era. Undoubtedly, these sources of income were among the key factors that contributed to the enduring existence of these schools and their numerous branches throughout the Seljuk period and beyond. Accordingly, this study addresses the fundamental question: what were the financial resources of the Nizamiyya schools? Utilizing the historical (descriptive-analytical) method, the research finds that the financial resources of these institutions were both highly diverse and numerous. Royal treasuries and direct support from the central government—especially by Sultans such as Alp Arslan and Malik Shah—along with the patronage of emirs, local rulers, and viziers (for various political, religious, and administrative reasons) were among the most important sources of revenue for these schools in Seljuk-era Iran. In addition, popular support, most often in the form of endowments (waqf), accounted for a considerable share of the sustainable income required to maintain these costly educational institutions.
Keywords: Nizamiya Schools, Khwaja Nizam al-Mulk, Revenue sources, Iran, The Seljuq era.

Introduction:

The Nizamiyya schools, with their

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numerous branches spread throughout the vast geography of the Seljuk Empire, represented the first Iranian educational institutions established after the advent of Islam. The educational, cultural-social, and even political roles of these schools in the history of Iran during this period are undeniable. Despite the significance and status of these institutions—and while relatively substantial research has been conducted regarding their scientific and educational dimensions—the economic aspects of the Nizamiyya schools, including their economic functions, sources of income, and expenditures, have received comparatively little attention from scholars of Seljuk history or the field of education.

Throughout their period of activity, the Nizamiyya schools incurred significant and continuous expenses. This situation made it essential to secure stable and, at the same time, diverse financial resources for their sustained operation. Beyond their regular operational costs, the Nizamiyya schools faced additional expenditures. For example, a large number of scholars and students resided in the dormitories of the Nizamiyya schools throughout their academic lives, making use of the facilities provided. Thus, the issue of accommodation and attention to the daily subsistence needs of the professors, staff, and students was always a matter of concern for the school administrators (see: TataviQazvini, 2003, vol. 4, p. 2522; Ibn Athir, 2006, vol. 10, p. 216; Ibn al-Jawzi, 1992, vol. 16, p. 301; Hosseini, 1947, p. 73; Bondari, 1977, p. 40; Yaqut, 2002, vol. 2, p. 886; Zabihi, 2007, p. 89).

The provision of such facilities indeed represented significant material incentives, particularly during the early decades of their establishment, which not only attracted many scholars to change their allegiances, but also induced notable exertion, insistent striving, and sometimes

even schemes and bribery to convince eminent religious scholars, jurists, and students to teach or study at these schools (see: al-Subki, 1992, vol. 5, p. 124; vol. 7, p. 147; Ibn Kathir, 1987, vol. 13, p. 158; Ibn Khallikan, 1978, vol. 4, pp. 225–226).

Given such considerable expenditures, the provision of financial resources from various sources was indispensable for the Nizamiyya schools. Accordingly, the present study, by posing the essential question—What were the income sources of the Nizamiyya schools? — employs the historical research method to address this question.

In terms of the research background, although numerous books, articles, and dissertations have explored the subject of the Nizamiyya schools in the history and geography of Seljuk-era Iran—such as Noorollah Kasaei's Madāres-e Nezāmīyeh va Ta'sirāt-e Elmi va Ejtemā'i-ye Ān, Naji
Ma'ruf's (untranslated) Ulama' al-Nizamiyyat wa Madaris al-Mashriq alIslami, Alireza Heydati's dissertation "A
Historical and Comparative Study of AlAzhar University and the Nizamiyya Madrasas in the Fourth and Fifth Centuries AH" (University of Tehran), and Hashem Khoshnood-Moghaddam's thesis "The Nizamiyya Schools and Their Impact on Islamic Sciences" (Shahid Beheshti University)—the financial issues of these schools have generally remained neglected. Most studies have tended to focus on their scientific-educational and, in some cases, their political, religious, and social dimensions. Under such circumstances, the present study, by utilizing untranslated primary sources, seeks to investigate and clarify the sources of income for the Nizamiyya schools during the Seljuk era.

Endowments (Waqf) and Public Contributions

Among these sources of funding were endowments (waqf) and public contributions. A significant portion of these endowments and public contributions originated from families who wielded considerable power and influence in political spheres. At the forefront of such families stood Nizam alMulk and his own family. The extent of financial support and benefits granted to scholars in the Nizamiyya schools during this period—which came to be known as the "Nizamiyya State"—is a subject of notable attention in contemporary sources. The term "Dawlat al-Nizamiyya" or the "House of Nizamiyya," according to explicit references in primary sources, denotes the era within the Seljuk polity in which Nizam al-Mulk and some of his sons occupied positions of authority. Owing to the exceptional material and spiritual attention paid to scholars and jurists, this era, with all its vicissitudes, is also referred to as the "State of the Scholars" (Dawlat ahl al-'ilm) in the sources of the time.

It was under these circumstances that Nizam al-Mulk, during his lifetime, paid particular attention to financial matters and the establishment of sustainable administrative autonomy and survival for the Nizamiyya schools. A key motivation for such efforts was to prevent the squandering and embezzlement of the Nizamiyya funds. For this reason, he instructed Abu Sa'id Sufi to use the leftover sum of 600,000 dinars from the

construction of the Baghdad Nizamiyya to purchase bathhouses, markets, estates, shops, and caravanserais and dedicate them as endowments (waqf) for the school, so that their incomes and increased value would finance the Nizamiyya's expenses. In addition to this initial sum allocated to building and supporting scholars at the foundational stage of the Baghdad Nizamiyya (Turtushi, 1415/1995: 357–360), Nizam al-Mulk contributed annually over 200,000 dinars in cash and five hundred kurr (kor) of grain in kind from his own personal properties to these endeavors. Such extensive cultural and construction activities— devoting considerable funds to the building of madrasas, ribats, and numerous bridges— were among the major factors that fueled the hostility and slander of Nizam al-Mulk's opponents in the Seljuk court, including Sultan Malikshah (r. 465–485 AH/1072– 1092 CE) (Sibt Ibn al-Jawzi, 1434/2013:
19/436–437).

In Mahasin Isfahan, authored in Arabic by Mafruqi during Fakhr al-Mulk ibn Nizam alMulk's administration in Isfahan (465–485 AH), detailed mention is made of the Nizamiyya's endowments in Isfahan and their role in paying stipends and allowances to scholars, the poor, and even minor scholars and questioners, all financed through these endowments. The Persian translator of Mahasin Isfahan in the year 727 AH also records that these endowments enabled the continued operation of the Nizamiyya madrasas up to that time:

"The seven nobles Nizamiyyas, in magnanimity and generosity, in liberality and humanity, became renowned through this abundance and variety of benevolence… exonerating them from heavy burdens… Each year, revenues from endowments and properties amounted to ten thousand dinars, and through the justice and beneficence of sultans and viziers, the territory remained prosperous, as formerly described." (Mafruqi, 1385/2006: 179–182; Kasa'i, 1363/1984: 222–224)

Nizam al-Mulk devoted the significant waqf income of the Nizamiyya schools to building and restoring the schools themselves, paying salaries to scholars and students, and meeting various other needs, including the repair of related buildings, facilities, and their libraries

(Mafruqi, 1385: 179–181; Ma'ruf, 1393/2014: 12–13). According to Hindushah
Nakhjavani (d. 730 AH/1330 CE), Nizam alMulk established special endowment deeds for the schools, which remained effective even in the author's own time, with their "doors of charity" well maintained and operative (Hindushah, 1357/1978: 269–270; see also: Khwandamir, 1355/1976: 160).

Nizam al-Mulk's policy in designating endowments and financial support for the Nizamiyya schools fostered their quantitative growth and expansion across different regions of the Seljuk realm. When establishing financial resources, he did not favor one city or scholar over another; as a result of this approach, not only the major urban centers of Iran, Iraq, Fars, and Transoxiana but even remote towns benefited from the establishment of Nizamiyya schools and their advantages. Furthermore, Nizam alMulk's financial

> care for scholars was not dependent on their fame or scholarly reputation; he would provide assistance and—even build a school—based solely on the individual's merit and learning (Mahbubeh, 1419/1999: 354).

Among the benefactions provided to Nizamiyya professors, in addition to special stipends and garments, gifts such as riding animals were sometimes awarded, as evidenced by the grant to Ibn Jubayr Abu Bakr ibn Muhammad ibn Yahya (Ibn Futi, 1381/2002: 1–2; Ibn Kathir, 1407/1987: 13/158). The honorarium given to Abu Sa'd ibn Abi 'Ammamah (d. 506 AH), the Hanbali preacher at the Mahdi Mosque in Baghdad, in the presence of high-ranking officials and the caliph himself, likewise attests to the Seljuk vizier's generosity (Hanbali, 1406/1986: 6/23–25; Zarrinkub, 1353/1974: 70–71).

A story from Ibn Fanduq (ca. 490–565 AH) relates how the financial endowments Nizam al-Mulk granted to Imam Abu Hanifah 'Uthman ibn 'Ali Buyabadi Nishaburi (d. 484 AH) continued to benefit his descendants, illustrating the sustenance and continuity of scholarly support in the Nizamiyyas:

"[Buyabadi] was a pious man of knowledge… a disciple of the eminent scholar Sa'id Ali ibn Abi al-Tayyib… and Nizam al-Mulk assigned him a stipend, which is still ongoing, being divided among his grandchildren." (Ibn Fanduq, 1361/1982: 251)

Moreover, in response to 'Umar Khayyam's request, Nizam al-Mulk allocated him an annual stipend of 10,000 dinars, and as Rashid al-Din states: "year after year, it was paid without discrimination or reduction" (Hamadhani, 1387/2008: 110).

> It was this systemic support from Nizamiyya funds and Nizam al-Mulk's patronage that enabled some scholars to become landowners themselves. Not only did they serve as trustees or administrators of endowments, but they also acquired lands via inheritance, purchase, or gifts from the sultan (Lambton,

1399/2020: 50). Imam al-Haramayn Juwayni, the chief scholar of the first branch of the Nizamiyya in Nishapur, was among those to whom Nizam al-Mulk entrusted significant waqf responsibilities along with his other school offices (Farsi, 1403/1983: 507–508; Subki, 1413/1993: 5/165–177; Ma'ruf, 1393: 42–43). When al-Ghazali refused the Nishapur Nizamiyya's teaching position, he wrote to Ahmad ibn Nizam alMulk confessing that the agricultural land in Tus, gifted to him, was sufficient for his and his family's livelihood (Ghazali, 1333/1954: 45; Lambton, 1399: 50, 338). Given alGhazali's impoverished background and his father's modest trust for his children, it appears likely the land was given by Nizam al-Mulk (Farsi, 1403: 84–86; Ibn Khallikan, 1398/1978: 4/216; Subki, 1413: 6/191–196).

> Despite the attestations cited, one might still ask how we know these benefits were indeed allocated to the Nizamiyyas. The statement of the author of Siyar A'lam al-Nubala' is instructive in clarifying the financial resources that Nizam al-Mulk controlled and used for the Nizamiyya

schools. Al-Dhahabi enumerates four reasons for Nizam al-Mulk's fame, noting:

"…his renown spread far and wide. These included the founding of great schools in places like Nishapur, Baghdad, and Tus; the spread of knowledge by encouraging scholars; the establishment of rigorous stipend policies for all students (wa-adrra 'ala al-talabah al-salat); and the dictation and dissemination of hadith throughout the Islamic world." (Dhahabi, 1405/1985: 19/94)

Clearly, such achievements required vast financial resources for their realization. Additionally, al-Ghazali, in a letter to Fakhr al-Mulk, highlighted the intense care the vizier devoted to the support of scholars, which, naturally, would have been financed from these various sources (see: Ghazali, 1333: 30).

On the other hand, some historical accounts reveal that at least some of Nizam al-Mulk's sons, who served as trustees and political figures, were themselves able to support the Nizamiyyas or meet scholars' needs as needed. Hindushah Nakhjavani mentions the wealth of Nizam al-Mulk's son Abu Nasr Ahmad (vizier to the caliph al-Mustarshid and earlier to Sultan Muhammad b.
Malikshah), and that he used these resources for public benefit (Hindushah, 1357: 301). Similar support for the Nizamiyyas was provided by other sons of Nizam al-Mulk, such as Fakhr al-Mulk, Mu'ayyad al-Mulk, and Diya' al-Mulk, all of whom attained the vizierate (Ghazali, 1333: 24–28, 33–35; Basani, 1395/2016: 5/276–277).

Beyond Nizam al-Mulk and his immediate family, prominent families of the Seljuk era, notably those allied with or related to the Nizam al-Mulk house, also played significant roles in financing the Nizamiyya schools. These included the Ibn Jahir family (Hindushah, 1357: 256–258; Bandari, 2536/1977: 43; Ibn Athir, 1371/1992: 23/311), the family of Kamal al-Din Abu Rida Fazlallah ibn Muhammad (Hosseini,
1380/2001: 100), and the family of Sharaf alMulk Abu Sa'id Mustawfi (Bandari, 2536: 38–39).

Nizam al-Mulk also relied on political allies and friends for various affairs, including financial matters, and the emirs and notables who accompanied him often emulated his generosity through donations at official and unofficial gatherings. Their material and nonmaterial support in founding and managing schools in the Seljuk era is also noted in the historical record (see, for instance: Ibn Athir, 1371: 23/176–177, 22/374; Yaqut, 1995: 10/114–116; Bandari, 2536: 38–39;
Hindushah, 1357: 271).

It must be admitted, however, that after the death of Nizam al-Mulk, much of the governmental material and moral support once provided to the Nizamiyya schools, which he himself had guaranteed, ceased, and henceforth most expenditures had to be met from endowments. Ibn Jubayr, on his journey to Baghdad in 580 AH, records that there were thirty schools in the city, each so magnificent that any palace would seem inferior by comparison. He adds that the largest and most famous was the Nizamiyya, renovated in 504 AH, which possessed large endowments and estates yielding significant income. Even after salaries and maintenance, surplus funds remained to be distributed among poor

students; he ends his report by invoking blessings on the founders and benefactors, stating that the establishment of such schools and hospitals brought great and lasting honor to the land (Ibn Jubayr, 1370/1991: 263, 279–280).

Accordingly, the endowments and properties of the schools were registered in official documents, with specific conditions stipulated for their administration. Among the most important conditions was the allocation of the principal and profit of Nizamiyya endowments for the benefit of Shafi‘i scholars, teachers of this juridicaltheological school, Qur’an reciters, preachers, and grammar teachers (Ibn Jawzi, 1412/1992: 16/304). Dhahabi, in Dhawat alAmsar, while reviewing various branches of the Nizamiyya, also refers to its endowments and financial resources (Dhahabi, 1406/1986: 81–82).

It is worth noting that the survival of these prosperous institutions partially stemmed from the widespread practice of reading and reiterating the Nizamiyya endowment deeds, a tradition that contributed to the protection of such endowments at least until the devastating Mongol invasion and, prior to that, the incursions of the Ghuzz. On Monday, 26 Jumada II 462 AH, Amir Amid Abu Nasr, apparently the supervisor or writer of the Nizamiyya’s endowments, summoned high officials, including Abu’l-Qasim, the son of Fakhr al-Dawlah the vizier, senior representatives of the Shafi‘i and Hanafi schools, the Qadi al-Qudat (chief judge), and some prominent figures, to witness the reading of the Nizamiyya’s deed. This formal session involved the recitation of the waqf deed, including the endowed books, estates, and markets adjacent to the school, with stipulations that Nizam al-Mulk, his sons, and the school’s trustees were obligated to uphold. The endowment was originally designed for Shafi‘is, such that all beneficiaries—including professors, students, Qur’an reciters, doorkeepers, and staff—had to be Shafi‘i to benefit from the endowment (Ibn Jawzi, 1412: 16/117, 302– 307).

Historical documents and sources also attest to various disturbances and violations of waqf in certain periods of Seljuk Iran; thus, the practice of publicly reading the waqfdeed, in view of anticipated political upheavals, was an important precaution. Nevertheless, even these measures could not ultimately prevent financial losses. As noted in the Persian translation of Mahasin Isfahan, by around 727 AH, the Nizamiyya’s financial resources and those of its dependent institutions were subject to usurpation by opportunists. Moreover, political turmoil led to the closure of some Nizamiyya endowments and agricultural lands (Mafruqi, 1385: 181–182).

Furthermore, revenue flowing to the Nizamiyyas was never steady: it changed over time, affected by shifts in the political climate, resulting in altered salaries for teachers, staff, and students and sometimes diverting funds through abuse and corruption. For example, during the vizierate of Sayyid Nasr al-Din ibn Mahdi (d. 617 AH), only three out of every ten dirhams allocated for the Nizamiyya’s librarian actually reached him; only by the vizier’s intervention did the rest get supplied (Hindushah, 1357: 334). Faced with such challenges, generating new financial resources for the Nizamiyyas became imperative. Among the most

important sources in such times were royal allocations, a topic discussed further in the next section.

Governmental Funds and Royal Allocations (Khassa-yi Sultani)

Royal allocations (*Khassa-yi Sultani*) were among the crucial financial resources, as well as core supporting funds, for the establishment and maintenance of the Nizamiyya schools' ongoing expenses. This claim is substantiated by the circumstances surrounding the founding of the Nizamiyya of Nishapur—the first Nizamiyya established during the Seljuk period.

The foundation of the Nizamiyya of Nishapur occurred during the reign of Alp Arslan (r. 455–465 AH) and the earliest years of Nizam al-Mulk's vizierate. Upon his arrival in Nishapur, Alp Arslan saw a group of scholars at the entrance of a mosque and inquired of Nizam al-Mulk about their profession. In response, Nizam al-Mulk, while extolling the scholars and jurists, seized the opportunity and requested from the Seljuk Sultan the establishment of schools in every city, along with dignified stipends for the education and focused engagement of these scholars. The Sultan agreed, and ordered that a tenth (*'ushr*) of the royal estate (*khassa-yi sultani*) be allocated to the vizier for the foundation and ongoing expenses of these schools (Qazvini, 1998: 412). It is reported that in the same year, seventy schools were established and launched using funds from the royal estate (*khassa-yi sultani*) (Kasayi, 1363: 69).

Perhaps for this reason, some have regarded Nizam al-Mulk as the primary founder of such schools, because of several distinguishing features: determining stipends from a variety of governmental sources and feudal grants, some of which belonged to the government itself, as well as the Sultan's direct concern—through the mediation and management of the vizier—and the sheer number of schools established within a single year (Qazvini, 1998: 412; Subki, 1413: 4/314). The purchase of land and supervision of the construction and architectural work of Nizamiyya schools mostly took place under Nizam al-Mulk's direct order. Additionally, he would seek financial assistance from notables by sending letters through his representatives (see: Turtushi, 1415: 359; Hindushah, 1357: 270–271). The use of confiscated lands, previously belonging to the Buyids and their amirs, was also reported in the construction of Nizamiyya schools (Zarkali, 1989: 4/54).

> Subki, while emphasizing that Nizam alMulk was the most renowned founder of schools in the history of Islam and Iran up to that period—having built institutions named Nizamiyya in all the cities of Iraq al-Arab, Iraq al-Ajam, and Khurasan, and firmly established their activities and continuity— acknowledges that Nizam al-Mulk was the first and foremost to allocate systematic governmental salaries and stipends, most of which were provided directly from *khassa-yi sultani*, for students and scholars. Prior to him, such a tradition was unprecedented. To substantiate this claim, he quotes Imam Abu al-Ma'ali Juwayni in his admiration of some of Nizam al-Mulk's attributes (Subki, 1413: 4/309–314).

Attention to the construction of magnificent educational buildings for Nizamiyya and

the establishment of constant financial systems to thus provide for the material needs of scholars from the state treasury, may also reflect Nizam al-Mulk's conviction that the state must honor religious scholars and provide for their material and economic needs (Nizam al-Mulk, 1347: 79–80; Mafrukhi, 1385: 179–181). For this reason, the sources interpret his death as the end of prosperity and the abundance of sustenance (Ibn al-Jawzi, 1412: 16/304–307).

Governmental support—including the allocation of a tenth of treasures and *khassayi sultani* derived from the bountiful conquests and fiefdom-distribution of the era of Alp Arslan—was among the most important sources of income for the Nizamiyya schools from the very beginning. The vast size and grandeur, the wide administrative structure, and the presence of a significant number of scholars and students in these schools, as well as the provision of their salaries and expenses, made governmental support all the more necessary (Minowi, 1351: 202–203).

In addition to daily and routine expenses, the Nizamiyya schools would sometimes confront unforeseen and unexpected costs such as flooding and fires. In such cases, only state aid could compensate for these extensive losses. For example, in 568 AH, due to the overflowing of the Tigris, severe flooding struck Baghdad and exposed the Nizamiyya school to destruction and damage (Ibn Athir, 1385: 11/394). Earlier, in 510 AH, there had been a fire that destroyed the Nizamiyya's library (Ibn Kathir, 1407: 12/179). Because of such damages, Ibn Jubayr, who visited Baghdad in 580 AH during the caliphate of al-Nasir (r. 575–622 AH), notes in describing the circumstances of the Nizamiyya that it was restored with the intervention of the caliph in 504 AH (Ibn Jubayr, 1370: 279–280; Hindushah, 1357: 325–326).

In addition to these restorations and other forms of cultural support by the caliph alNasir to strengthen the Nizamiyya library, his mother, Zumurrud Khatun (d. 599 AH)—one of the philanthropic and generous women of her time—would support some teachers and judges associated with the Nizamiyya. Ibn alDubaythi, in mentioning the constructive acts of some women who lived contemporaneously or close to the era of the Nizamiyya state, also refers to the mother of Caliph al-Nasir. In this regard, she appointed Abu'l-Hasan Faruqi (d. 602 AH), one of the senior instructors and judges of the Nizamiyya, to teach at a school she herself had founded (see: Ibn al-Dubaythi, 1427: 5/135–136, 140–141, 147; Hindushah, 1357: 325–326; Ibn Athir, 1385: 12/343; Dhahabi, 1406: 76, 81–82).

Sources also mention the existence of several ribats specially dedicated to Sufi shaykhs, jurists, and hadith scholars in Baghdad, whose founders or their associates benefited from the support of the Abbasid Caliphate or the Seljuk Sultanate. At least a few such establishments, by virtue of providing services, accommodation, support, and Sufi education to some teachers, students, and affiliates of the Nizamiyya, are of great significance. For instance, reference can be made to "the Ribāt of Bahruz" and "the Ribāt al-Katiba Shahda bint Ahmad al-Abri". Shahda (d. 574 AH), who, in addition to being among the leading hadith

scholars, maintained scholarly relationships with major Nizamiyya figures such as Abu'lKhair Isma'il Qazvini, received special attention from the caliphal establishment until her death. The ribat she founded was constructed in the precincts of the Jami' alQasr Khalifa and administered from its endowments. Her husband, 'Ali ibn Muhammad al-Anbari, was also a political notable and benefited from the support of Caliph al-Muqtafi (r. 530–555 AH) (see: Ibn al-Jawzi, 1412: 18/254; Ibn al-Dubaythi, 1427: 1/77, 226–227, 3/456, 5/142–143;

Farsi, 1403: 434, 507; Safadi, 1401: 2/73–74; Ibn Khallikan, 1398: 2/477–478). The former was constructed by one of the freedmen of Sultan Muhammad ibn Malikshah named Bahruz ibn 'Abdallah Abu'l-Hasan alKhadim al-Abyad (known as Mujahid al-Din, d. 540 AH) in the Nizamiyya marketplace. Bahruz governed Iraq for approximately thirty-nine years under the Seljuk sultans.

This cultural and educational center served as a place of activity for Sufi shaykhs and Iranian-origin teachers such as Abu 'Imran Musa ibn 'Isa, the shaykh of the Sufis, and his brother Muhammad ibn 'Isa Qazvini (d. 608 AH). Muhammad, after staying in Bahruz Ribat for some time, went on to study at the Nizamiyya and eventually attained advanced scholarly ranks. The Shafi'i jurist and Sufi Abu'l-Fadail Ahmad ibn Yahya Zahri (d. 561 AH), also known as Ibn Shuqran, was one of the outstanding debaters, preachers, and master-assistants of the Nizamiyya. After gaining knowledge and serving for a period in this school, he moved to Bahruz Ribat and became involved in the service of the Sufis. Another master-assistant of the Nizamiyya, Abu'l-Muzaffar 'Abdullah ibn Khumays Shafi'i, during the caliphate of al-Nasir, after acquiring knowledge and teaching briefly in this school, chose Shahda's ribat as his residence and for service to the Sufis there. Having arrived in Baghdad from Ahar in Azerbaijan, he advanced through the ranks of scholarship, ascetism, self-discipline, and debate both in the Nizamiyya and Shahda's ribat. The caliph granted him special favor and permission to transmit hadith, and he served as court preacher and government-appointed hadithtransmitter in the great courtyard of the Jami' al-Qasr [the caliphal palace] (see: Ibn alDubaythi, 1427: 1/226–227; Sibt Ibn alJawzi, 1434: 20/205).

Thus, while these centers sometimes differed in their educational or religious uses, their supportive and economic role—which, according to the sources, was closely tied to the caliphal institution and the Seljuk government—was pivotal and vital in providing accommodation, livelihood, and daily necessities for the Nizamiyya scholars.

There are additional indications of governmental and official support for the Nizamiyya during the reign of Sultan Uways Jalairi, which we have referenced previously. In part of the decree confirming the teaching appointment of Ibn al-Mutahhar al-Hilli in the Nizamiyya, this matter is expressed as follows:

"The purpose of this ruling is that emirs, governors, deputies, supervisors, stewards, and the bitykchi (tax officers) of Baghdad, as well as the administrators of general endowments and in particular the endowment of the Nizamiyya school… shall

pay in cash and grain, in daily, monthly, and annual installments, to the instructor appointed, with his trusted agents accounting daily, monthly, and yearly… and nothing shall be lacking or diminished. The duties of assistants and students [of the Nizamiyya] shall be entrusted to his understanding and approval" (Hindushah, 1976: 2/217–221).

Taking into account some of the terminology used in this governmental decree, it is clear that the Jalairid sultan not only called on the financial and administrative officials of the Nizamiyya but also summoned the officials and supervisors of general endowments and the government tax officers under the authority of the Jalairid house in Baghdad to cooperate and fulfill the new instructor's financial instructions. This is also evident from the term "bitykchi of Baghdad," which denoted tax officers during the Ilkhanid period. This office appears with the same meaning in other Jalairid government decrees as well (see: Qaem-Maqami, 1348: 9–14; Lambton, 1377: 777).

Historical accounts and available evidence demonstrate the grand scale of the Nizamiyya schools and the significant ongoing expenses required for their maintenance and administration.

As the work *Tajarib al-Salaf* states, regarding the excellence of the Nizamiyya of Basra:

The Nizamiyya established in Basra… this Nizamiyya was regarded as better and larger than the Nizamiyya of Baghdad, but it was destroyed near the end of the reign of alMusta'sim. Its wood, bricks, and other materials were transferred to Basra itself, another school was built and called Nizamiyya, and the ruins of the old Nizamiyya still remain as evidence of the founder's lofty ambition (Hindushah, 1357:
271).

Another indication of the vastness of the Nizamiyya of Baghdad's grounds is the report of Ibn al-Jawzi, who recounts the presence of a crowd of more than thirty thousand people in the courtyard, portico, chambers, and surrounding houses of the school during the sermon of Ardashir 'Ibadi (Ibn al-Jawzi, 1412: 17/3–4). Kasayi, while emphasizing the spaciousness and large iwans reserved for resident jurists and professors, the mosque, special chambers for the muezzin and gatekeeper, the library, and dedicated storage for fuel and lighting and other necessities, estimates the space occupied by the gathering—including the Nizamiyya school and its adjacent houses— at over 170 by 120 meters (Kasayi, 1363: 112–113). It is said that, in order to procure this space, sections of eastern Baghdad were demolished, and immense amounts were spent to purchase the necessary land for the Nizamiyya (see: Turtushi, 1415: 357–359; Ibn al-Jawzi, 1412: 16/91).

Turtushi also refers to a more explicit figure regarding the financial allocations and states that the vizier annually dedicated 600,000 dinars from the public treasury (*bayt al-mal*) to these affairs. This sum was so considerable that it could have equipped a well-furnished army with all the logistics required for the conquest of Constantinople. Apparently, the sheer size of this allocation led to the objections and slander of some of Nizam alMulk's opponents and critics at the court of Sultan

Malikshah (Turtushi, 1415: 358–359; Sibt Ibn al-Jawzi, 1434: 19/436–437).

Among Nizam al-Mulk's ethical traits, such as his compassion toward the poor, special respect for 'ulama and jurists, and holding scholarly assemblies (Ibn Khallikan, 1398: 2/128–130; Yafi'i, 1417: 3/104), were also likely contributors to his popularity and almost certainly increased his influence and prestige in society. Moreover, good relations with the caliphal establishment not only added administrative credit and spiritual influence for the vizier, but they also enhanced his material and economic standing in the eyes of the Seljuk rulers; thus, Nizam al-Mulk held as *iqta'* (feudal land grant) three or four village estates from the Caliphal holdings (see: Ibn Khallikan, 1398: 2/128– 130; 'Aqili, 1364: 207; Kasayi, 1363: 72). On the other hand, although some researchers believe that the first individual to be granted the title *atabeg* in Seljuk times was Amir Qutb al-Din Kul-Sari (Lambton, 1399: 248, 250–251), it is said that Nizam al-Mulk was also granted this rank and the investiture of the vizierate by Malikshah upon his accession to the throne (Ibn Athir, 1385: 10/80; Lambton, 1399: 251). It seems such material and spiritual privileges also increased Nizam al-Mulk's means and scope of authority for allocating funds to the Nizamiyya.

From the explicit and implicit evidence in historical sources, we can infer that the revenues and financial resources of the Seljuk state—particularly under Alp Arslan and Malikshah—were truly remarkable. Therefore, it is no coincidence that this period is referred to as the economic flourishing of the Seljuk era and, indeed, as such in the history of the Islamic Middle Ages. The abundant revenues were, for the most part, under the control of Nizam alMulk and the administrative apparatus subordinate to him, and a significant part was spent on funding educational centers, above all the Nizamiyya schools (regarding the revenues of this period, see: Hosseini, 1380: 46, 99; Mustawfi, 1362: 27, 47–48; Mo'azzi, 1318: 222; Bosworth, 1395: 5/88). The reports in *Tajarib al-Salaf* regarding Nizam al-Mulk's financial authority during his lengthy vizierate are themselves clear indications of his freedom of action in managing available financial resources from the treasury, and also in creating new opportunities for revenue to implement his developmental and cultural reform initiatives (Hindushah, 1357: 267). Yafi'i summarizes the extent of his authority during the era of the Nizamiyya state in the following way: "Thus, all affairs were under the control of Nizam, while the sultan had nothing but the throne and hunting… and the caliph had nothing but the title" (Yafi'i, 1417: 3/103– 107). That is, all affairs and administration were handled by the vizier, while the sultan was only concerned with kingship and hunting, and the caliph was left with only his name. Thus, Nizam al-Mulk, with such power and authority, represented a peculiar form of vizier-king in this period of Seljuk Iranian history.

To grasp the financial resources at the disposal of the first circle of the Nizamiyya's founders—sources which would ultimately flow into the treasury and the *khassa-yi sultani*—one should note that historical accounts mention the diplomatic mission and pivotal role of Imam al-Haramayn (419–478 AH) in collecting tribute from Theophilus, the Byzantine emperor, for the Seljuks during Malikshah's era. Asfazari states that when the Shafi'i envoy of the Nizamiyya returned

> successfully, it brought about Malikshah's admiration. In *Rawdat al-Jannat*, in the story of the emperor's discussion with Imam alHaramayn and the outcome of the embassy, it is said: "Malikshah is so great, I do not have the power to oppose him. I have involved Rome in your matter—if you deem it appropriate, I will govern this realm as your deputy and pay tribute. When Malikshah heard this, he said that which six hundred thousand men could not accomplish, Imam al-Haramayn alone managed to do"

(Asfazari, 1338: 1/284–285).

Elsewhere, the number of Imam al-Haramayn's leading students at the beginning was three hundred (al-Sallabi, 1427: 390– 395; Ma'ruf, 1393: 43), which later rose to four hundred in his Nishapur Nizamiyya teaching circle (Ibn Khallikan, 1398: 3/168– 169). Students educated in his school, commensurate with their ability and knowledge, would attain admission to the circles of sultans, viziers, and other political, religious, and social elites of the time (Ma'ruf, 1393: 43). Among them, three notables were al-Ghazali, Abu Nasr Qushayri, and Kiya Harasi; it is said that among Imam al-Haramayn's students, who came to his study sessions from the remotest and nearest cities, there was no obscure pupil—rather, they were all the outstanding personages of their time. At times, the scholarly assembly itself was attended by leading imams and scholars. Imam alHaramayn also took special care for their livelihoods. Sometimes he would devise simple questions as a dignified pretext for providing stipends—his means for supporting the students from the financial resources at hand (al-Sallabi, 1427: 390– 395).

> Subki reports that, during Imam al-Haramayn's life, unprecedented political and religious turmoil—likely the Batiniyya movement—broke out in Isfahan. This led to a sequence of unrest and internal competition among various segments of the social and religious elite. Juwayni, in a political and religious diplomacy, attended a session named "Majlis al-Nizami," and through admonition, encouragement, and glad tidings, managed to resolve a situation that was on the verge of turning into a major political crisis. Historical records and chronology show that "Majlis al-Nizami" referred to gatherings in which government loyalists—political and religious officeholders—convened for consultation and deliberation over state matters. Moreover, even Imam al-Haramayn's teaching session was regarded as an assembly of the leading imams; his political sessions, therefore, must have been highly effective. The significance of this great Nizamiyya professor's diplomatic mission was such that after his successful mediation, the political figures in Isfahan—among whom Nizam alMulk and his agents certainly numbered— escorted him back to Nishapur with great honor. In recognition and gratitude for his writings, which notably addressed Nizamiyya and political theory, he was granted gifts of money, rich silk robes, and fine mounts (Dhahabi, 1423: 32/231–236; Subki, 1413: 5/177–179).

Sources also mention that Imam Abū Muhammad Juwayni (d. 438 AH)—the father—and then his son, and after him his grandson Abu'l-Qasim al-Muzaffar (d. 473 AH; assassinated by Isma'ilis), each had residence and an official post in their own dedicated

mosque and school. So strong was this tradition that some mistakenly thought there were two separate Nizamiyya schools under the Juwaynis' supervision in Nishapur (Farsi, 1403: 434, 586–587, 840; Subki, 1413: 5/165–175; Ma'ruf, 1393: 41–44).

The concern for funding the schools and the remarkable, special financial allocations injected by sultans such as Alp Arslan and his successor Malikshah were a significant portion of the Nizamiyya's revenues. For example, Alp Arslan, in addition to dedicating funds for the restoration of Abu Hanifah's tomb, endowed great wealth to the Nizamiyya in Baghdad. The statement by Ibn Khallikan in "Wafayat" noting the allocation of a great part of *khassa-yi sultani* to the Nizamiyya must not be overlooked, "And he spent immense sums upon it"—this denotes that this allocation was in addition to what was assigned through Nizam al-Mulk and was drawn directly from the sultan's own estate to support the Nizamiyya and other religious institutions (Ibn Khallikan, 1398: 5/70–71; Asadpour, 1399: 227–228).

Undoubtedly, the direct and personal patronage of the sultan—who not only financed schools and tombs of great scholars but was even himself buried in the school (Ibn Khallikan, 1398: 5/70–71)—certainly encouraged and inspired his other officials to devote greater financial attention to the programs of Nizam al-Mulk (see: 'Awfi, 1363: 127–128; Yaqut, 1995: 1/10, 5/114– 116).

> Such foundational acts, which, as some sources state, included a tithe (*'ushr*) of the *khassa-yi sultani* and were dedicated to cultural and religious policies in constructing and running schools across all cities, were sometimes attacked by the ill-informed or malicious, who would claim that such funding was better allocated to military and logistical needs for war. Nevertheless, in the end, a sultan like Alp Arslan never reduced the funding for schools and cultural or religious buildings (Qazvini, 1998: 412– 413).

Letters received from Alp Arslan and Malikshah show that both these Seljuk kings, for the sake of Nizam al-Mulk's service, always provided the vizier with more than the stipulated amounts. For example, in one letter, Alp Arslan, after reviewing the vizier's services, increased Nizam al-Mulk's *iqta* 'by fifty thousand dinars from the *khassa-yi sultani* to be spent for his attendants and slaves (Mueid Thabati, 1346: 22–23). Malikshah, as well, gave Nizam al-Mulk, in official fief, several villages, including Tus and its dependencies, in addition to prior *iqta'*s (Ibn Athir, 1371: 23/52–55). It is clear from the correspondence between Nizam al-Mulk and Malikshah that the vizier did not receive a regular monthly salary or emolument for his administrative services; thus, Malikshah ordered that twice a year, one million dinars each time should be paid out of the *khassa* at Nizam al-Mulk's discretion (Mueid Thabati, 1346: 21–22). In this sense, it would hardly be inaccurate to say that part of the resources thus provided from the *khassa-yi sultani* were spent—directly or indirectly—on the administration of the Nizamiyya schools. It was with the power and activity of some of the Nizamiyyatrained slaves, who exercised authority over the government arsenal of Ray and Isfahan, and with the help of Nizam al-Mulk's son-inlaw Abu

Muslim Sarvishyari, that the succession dispute after Malikshah's death was resolved in favor of Barkiyaruq (see: Ibn al-Jawzi, 1412: 16/300–305; Ravandi, 1364: 140–142; Ibn Athir, 1385: 10/210–216; Shabankara'i, 1381: 2/106; Iqbal, 1392: 208– 209).

Another important issue related to the finances and endowments of the Nizamiyya schools and other institutions founded by Nizam al-Mulk is the sensitivity of monarchs such as Sultan Sanjar in preserving and enhancing the yield of these resources, and thus increasing the effectiveness of these institutions. In part of a governmental letter by 'Atabat al-Kuttab, Sultan Sanjar refers to the sensitivity of preserving endowments and financial resources of the Nizamiyya and to the appointment of experienced, reputable, and well-born individuals tasked with safeguarding and ensuring the continuity of these centers' operations. Clearly, such attention was not unrelated to the abundant treasury and the sultanic *khassa* in Sanjar's era. He redefined one of his primary governmental duties as the preservation of the interests and financial resources of schools supported by Nizam al-Mulk in Nishapur and other cities of Khurasan and Iraq, as well as the welfare of scholars and jurists active therein, as follows:

> "As for safeguarding those charitable interests in Nishapur, renowned as the central knot of the dominions and the heart of Khurasan and Iraq, we consider them particularly essential for ourselves and direct our efforts toward them—especially the Nizami school, which is the locus of divine mercy and the source of Islamic truths, and the abode and refuge of jurists and religious scholars" (Montajab al-Din, 1384: 7).

It was during the reign of this very king that his vizier, Mu'in al-Din Kashi, using *khassayi sultani* revenues as well as his own financial means, established many schools, ribats, and public welfare institutions throughout the eastern and western Seljuk territories. Notably, one of these ribats was founded in Ahmadabad—the resting place of Nizam al-Mulk and Malikshah. He purchased the village of Kaj, formerly belonging to Malik Abu'l- 'Abbas Zubbi, from the heirs of Nizam al-Mulk and endowed it to some of these institutions. Earlier, his uncle Abu Tahir Kashi, a prominent figure elevated by the vizier, acquired significant wealth through his authority over the *khassa* of Amir-Qamaj (one of the chief *iqta'*-holders under Malikshah) and built several schools and hospitals (Kirmani, 1364: 64–68; Gumnam, 1318: 465; Honarfar, 1386: 115–117; Mahdavi, 1386: 90–91). It thus seems that, during the time of the "Nizamiyya State," using resources from the sultanic *khassa* for the construction and maintenance of schools was a common practice.

Furthermore, it is clear that long-term financial support was under the supervision of Nizam al-Mulk's descendants and the endowments of the Nizamiyya in cities such as Herat, even during the turbulent events of the 7th century AH, when the Ghurids (r. 543–612 AH) and the Khwarazmshahs (r. 491–628 AH) played significant roles. For example, it is reported that 'Ali ibn 'Abd alKhalaq ibn Ziyad both taught in the Nizamiyya of Herat and held the administration of all the endowments of Khurasan under the Ghurids, during the reign

of Sultan Ghiyath al-Din Ghurid (Ibn Athir, 1371: 31/104–106).

Miscellaneous Revenue Sources

In addition to the revenue sources addressed in previous discussions, another indirect source of income for the Nizamiyya schools (*madāris-e Nizāmiyya*) must be found in the presence of wealthy notables and scholars who, by virtue of their financial standing, were appointed to positions of leadership or teaching within the Nizamiyya. Such scholars and notables were considered an asset to the Nizamiyya due to their financial resources; in some cases, others also contributed through the authorship of books and scholarly works, the inclusion of which in the Nizamiyya's curriculum—or even through the sale of these works—brought about financial savings in favor of the schools' budget. Still others endowed valuable books to the treasuries and libraries of the various Nizamiyya branches in different cities, which, in addition to their cultural benefit, assisted Nizamiyya scholars in research and represented a further form of financial savings, as there was less need to purchase books—the details of which will be discussed below.

> The inherent income and financial resources of the Nizamiyya, along with certain customary and occasionally socio-political schemes leading to financial saving, not only increased the accumulation of the Nizamiyya's wealth and revenue, but also contributed to the expansion and diversification of the school's library collection and the educational materials available at this academic institution (Qafas Oghli, 1395: 178).
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> Ibn al-Jawzi reports in *Sayd al-Khatir* that 60,000 registered endowed books existed in the library treasury of the Nizamiyya, asserting that he had seen the catalogue himself and apparently studied the existing books (Ibn al-Jawzi, 1412: 375). According to the available evidence and Ibn al-Jawzi's chronology, this unparalleled collection was separate from the books owned by scholars of various sects in Baghdad, including Shafi 'i jurists. After the establishment of the Mustansiriyya school, itself an imitative and more developed model of the Baghdad Nizamiyya and dedicated to the teaching of all four Sunni schools, the caliph alMustansir undertook efforts to supply its library with 80,000 book titles. Considering the migration of many scholars and elite students from the Nizamiyya to the
> Mustansiriyya (Kasa'i, 1363: 213–215), it is probable that groups of former Nizamiyya scholars also endowed their personal libraries to the Mustansiriyya. The author expressly maintains that the model of the Nizamiyya was emulated in the founding and operation of numerous schools not only during the Seljuk period, but also subsequently, at a more advanced level for other Islamic schools and sects, both Sunni and Shi'a (Ma'ruf, 1393: 83–203; Yousififar, 1398: 225–228). Indeed, once the caliphal court donated its books to the Mustansiriyya library, many scholars, inspired by this noble precedent, likewise endowed their own collections (Kasa'i, 1388: 282).

Naji Ma'ruf, in two subsections entitled "Scholars Who Endowed Books to the Nizamiyya" and "Scholars Whose Books Were Written in or for the Nizamiyya," lists several such figures. It is evident that transferring a

scholar's library to the Nizamiyya library, in addition to providing cultural support, also constituted financial assistance by saving the cost of acquiring books. On the other hand, scholars who authored works at or for the Nizamiyya sometimes saw these works sold, providing material benefit or at the very least some financial savings. For the first group, in addition to Caliph al-Nasir (d. 662/1264), who transferred a treasury from three exquisite libraries into the Nizamiyya's collection, other scholars such as Abu Ja'far Muhammad Shafirowz Tabari (d. 518/1124), Muhibb al-Din Ibn al-Najjar (d. 643/1245)— historian and head teacher at the Mustansiriyya—and Ibn Sa'i (d. 647/1249), historian and librarian of the Mustansiriyya, can be mentioned. For the second group, one may name Hindushah ibn Sanjar (d.
683/1284), whose command of literature led him to author *Jami' al-Daqa'iq fi Kashf alHaqa'iq*, a work on logic long held in esteem and whose manuscript survives in Cairo to this day (Dhahabi, 1406: 76; 81–82; Hindushah, 1357: 325–326; Ma'ruf, 1393: 35–36). To this list may be added such works as *al-'Aqida al-Nizamiyya* by Imam alHaramayn Juwayni, composed for and dedicated to Khwaja Nizam al-Mulk

(Juwayni, 1412: 10–12), and multiple works including *Bahr al-Madhhab* by Abu alMahasin al-Ruyani—the leading teacher at the Nizamiyya of Amul—which became one of the most comprehensive Shafi'i references and a major source for Khorasani scholars (Junayd Shirazi, 1328: 71; Hamawi, 1995: 3/105). To further enrich this catalog, one may cite several compositions by Abu Zakariya al-Tabrizi, famed as the "Imam of Language" and professor of Arabic at the Nizamiyya—whose important works included *Tafsir al-Gharib wa I'rabuhu*, *Sharh al-Luma'* by Ibn Jinni, three commentaries on *al-Hamasah*, *Sharh Diwan al-Mutanabbi*, *Sharh Diwan Abi Tammam alTa'i*, and *Saqt al-Zand* of al-Ma'arri—works which were essential references for students at the Nizamiyya (Baghdadi, 1417: 21/195– 196). Muhammad ibn 'Abd Allah al-Sulami, a native of Murcia in al-Andalus, also traveled to Baghdad to study at the Nizamiyya, where he distinguished himself in hadith, Qur'an, and fiqh, and later journeyed to Khorasan for further study in Nishapur and Herat (ibid.: 21/15–16).

The author of *Tarikh Dimashq* reports on the cultural and political travels of Abu Zakariya al-Tabrizi to Damascus in 459/1067 (Ibn 'Asakir, 1415: 64/348–350). Such journeys across Islamic frontier lands, in addition to their cultural and political impact, could also yield material benefits by raising the profile of Nizamiyya teachers and increasing demand for additional manuscript copies and sales of scholarly works, thus benefiting the institution. The endowment of rare books by Yusuf ibn Ibrahim Suhaybi Hibali (d. 530/1135) stems from this same tradition of emulation. Suhaybi, one of the leading scholars of Hibal in Sham (close to Karak and perhaps Bayt Jibrin near Ascalon), spent his later years in Marw, where he was killed during Atsiz's assault. During his career he traveled and studied in Baghdad, Nishapur, and Marw, and during a visit of his friend Ibn 'Asakir to Herat, he donated most of his valuable library to the Nizamiyya of that city (Ibn 'Asakir, 1415: 74/211–212; Yaqut, 1380: 2/131–132).

The significance of these accounts is heightened by reports that, along with the eminent positions held by Imam al-
Haramayn, Ruyani, the Khujandi family, and other leading founders of the Nizamiyya, the advanced paper industry, long established in Baghdad and other Islamic cities and especially prominent in Tabaristan and Egypt, ensured that Nizamiyya schools in cities such as Nishapur, Isfahan, Amul, Marw, and Balkh also enjoyed substantial libraries (Zarrinkub, 1348: 33–36; Ma‘ruf, 1393: 41). Yaqut’s report of the library at the
Nizamiyya of Marw, and ‘Imad al-Din alKatib al-Isfahani’s testimony on the precious library of the Nizamiyya of Isfahan, provide further evidence for the universality of such resources (Imad al-Din, 1375: 7/148).

Ibn al-Najjar also records the residence of Umar ibn Ahmad ibn Rowshan Khatibi Zanjani in 561/1165–1166 in the “Ancient Library” (*dar al-kutub al-‘atiqa*) of the Nizamiyya, confirming not only the very existence and richness of the “older” Nizamiyya library in Baghdad but also its impressive architectural and institutional dimensions, as it housed the premier preachers of the Nizamiyya at the time (Ibn al-Najjar, 1417: 20/19–21). By implication, at the time of Ibn al-Najjar’s report, a more recent library must also have existed.

> Moreover, the Shafi‘i jurist Abu’l-Hasan ibn Abu’l-‘Abbas Alawi (529–575/1134–1179), known as al-Sharif al-Zaydi, renowned for his piety and learning, along with his close friend Sabiḥ ibn ‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Attar, publicly endowed many of his books to the mosque in Suq al-Sultan, situated in Suq alThulatha’. According to the contemporary testimony of Ibn al-Dabithi (558–637/1163– 1239), “people benefited from it” and the whole community of aspirants to knowledge made use of this collection (Ibn al-Dabithi, 1427: 4/389–392). The proximity of this library to the market and the Nizamiyya school in Baghdad (Ibn al-Jawzi, 1412: 16/91) and its public endowment must have greatly assisted Nizamiyya scholars and students. These arrangements brought about significant long-term financial savings for the Nizamiyya schools.
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> All these efforts regarding endowed books gradually built a large treasury for the Nizamiyya. There is an account from 480/1087 which describes the extraordinary richness of the Nizamiyya library by that time, even before the late donations of later generations. At that time, a library of over 400 books in various sciences was built on Ibn Abi ‘Awf Street in Baghdad. Later, when the librarian’s wage went unpaid, some of the endowment tags were removed and the books sold; the library closed and visitors and its founder were told: “They are no longer needed, for the Nizamiyya library suffices.” The remainder of the books was sold and the proceeds given to charity (Ibn al-Jawzi, 1412: 16/276).

Nizam al-Mulk’s respectful, reciprocal relationship with leading scholars was a continuous and tangible reality. For example, the special regard shown to Fakhr al-Islam Ruyani through founding the Nizamiyya of Amul and assigning him its professorial chair is evident; Amul was a prosperous and economically vibrant town with thriving agriculture and crafts (Ibn Esfandiyar, 1366: 230; Maqdisi, 1361: 2/527). Both Subki and Yaqut state that Nizam al-Mulk was

"exceedingly respectful" toward Abu alMahasin, known as the "Second Imam alShafi'i" (Subki, 1413: 4/251; Hamawi, 1995: 2/104–105). This deep religious, political, and even emotional relationship further secured financial support for the Nizamiyya of Amul through the reputation and popularity of Abu al-Mahasin, who could assist the government in mobilization and resource acquisition when necessary.

The appointment of prominent, affluent scholars for teaching or related services at the Nizamiyya schools was thus one means of attracting financial resources to the Nizamiyya. For instance, Abu'l-Fath [Ibn Burhan] Abu Nasr As'ad Mihani (d.
523/1129), among the foremost jurists of his time, whose reputation attracted both the elite and the public, had accumulated great wealth through close connections with rulers and officials, and was therefore given the headship of the Baghdad Nizamiyya upon his arrival (Ibn al-Jawzi, 1412: 17/255; Ibn Kathir, 1407: 12/200; Fatemi, 1384: 1/406). Similarly, some Shafi'i imams associated with the Nizamiyya under government patronage achieved considerable financial capacity. For example, Abu Tahir 'Abd alRahman ibn Ahmad 'Ulk Isfahani (d. 484/1091), who reached the pinnacle of scholarly and legal achievement in Samarqand and played a leading role in the city's conquest by the Seljuks, was so well off during his extended stay in Baghdad that he lent up to 500,000 dinars to military commanders (Ibn al-Jawzi, 1412: 16/295– 296).

> One scholar who contributed, through a mix of conventional and unconventional means, to the Nizamiyya treasury was Abu Muhammad ibn Husayn Tabari—a product of the schools of his father Tabari and of Abu Ishaq Shirazi. In addition to his financial standing, through authoring books, exploiting the family name, and even the payment of bribes, he had a notable financial impact on the Nizamiyya; Tabari the younger reportedly paid bribes to officials for a teaching post at the Nizamiyya—a sum large enough to build and endow a complete school (Subki, 1413: 7/147).
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> Ibn 'Adim reports in greater detail on other sources and opportunities at Nizam al-Mulk's disposal for use in cultural and social projects. He notes that 'Abd Allah ibn Hasanwayh Sawaji—of Saveh—who had a special devotion to Nizam al-Mulk, handed over an entire market (from his own estate) in Saveh to the Seljuk vizier. In a short time, revenue from this market reached 80,000 red dinars, which, with Sawaji's approval, Nizam al-Mulk distributed among scholars, the poor, and other chosen persons (Ibn 'Adim, 1408: 5/2489).

At this point, certain miscellaneous financial receipts of the vizier merit attention (*manābe'-e darāmadī-ye motafarreqe*). The *Tarikh al-Alfi* recounts how 'Amid al-Mulk Kunduri, at the start of Alp Arslan's reign, presented Nizam al-Mulk with 500 dinars and various gifts during a meeting with Alp Arslan in Ray (Tatavi & Qazwini, 1382: 4/2345). When Kunduri was later arrested by Alp Arslan, all his substantial property was confiscated (Ibn al-Jawzi, 1412: 16/86). These confiscations and gifts, in turn, widened Nizam al-Mulk's scope for implementing his educational, cultural, and political programs. Indeed, in a letter to Malikshah, Hasan Sabbāh himself remarked that one reason for his enmity toward Nizam al-

Mulk—apart from the latter's injustice toward Kunduri—was the markedly greater financial power the vizier wielded compared to the period of 'Amid al-Mulk Kunduri. Despite numerous political and religious challenges, these events constituted potential obstacles to the funding of the Nizamiyya's ongoing expenses. Hasan Sabbāh, in his comparative analysis—which contains subtle points regarding Nizam al-Mulk's financial power in constructing educational and public buildings—recounts: "Nizam al-Mulk, who is the steward of the realm, executed a vizier such as Abu Nasr Kunduri—who had never exercised such stewardship in any reign under any king—on the pretext of exercising control over the sultan's realm and wealth. Today he collaborates with wrongdoers and officials, whereas in Kunduri's time ten dirhams were taken to the treasury, but today he [Nizam al-Mulk] takes fifty dirhams, spending barely half a dirham for royal affairs. What he wastes on bricks and mud for building around the kingdom is clearer than the sun. Did Kunduri have a son or daughter? On what day did he ever spend a single dinar on bricks or mud?" (Moeid Thabati, 1346:

35–36).

Reports from *Mir'at al-Zaman* make clear that these kinds of financial threats endured, for the bricks, wood, and mud to which Hasan Sabbāh referred pertained not only to bridges, inns, hospitals, mosques, and other public works, but encompassed the numerous schools founded in this period. From this source as well, criticism of costly undertakings attributed to Nizam al-Mulk arises: "he has squandered vast sums of money." In such audience with Malikshah, critics displayed the dominant militaristic discourse, preferring spending on campaigns and at least military preparedness to such "development"—regarding civic and semisustainable growth in the medieval era—and they regarded expenditure on non-military affairs as a waste of public and royal funds (Sibt ibn al-Jawzi, 1434: 19/436–437). Other than the official madrasas and mosques that became centers of anti-Isma 'ili activism, most such welfare and social buildings did not draw the criticism of Hasan Sabbāh and other opponents of the vizier. Though the Isma'ili leader's accusations were pointed and trenchant, it is clear that the bricks, mud, and money drawn from the royal treasury (*khassa-ye sultani*) and various other financial resources—including those explicitly cited by Hasan Sabbāh—were, in essence, allocated by Nizam al-Mulk and his subordinates to the founding and maintenance of educational institutions such as the Nizamiyya. Given that the political conflicts between the Isma'ilis and other sects—both with the Abbasids and the Seljuks—were rooted in religious and educational institutions, Hasan Sabbāh's concern about Nizam al-Mulk's power is understandable. It must not be forgotten that Nizam al-Mulk's expenditures were not limited to the Nizamiyya alone, but included the funding of other public institutions required by society.

In conclusion, attention should also be paid to the marketplace as a further source of revenue for the Nizamiyya schools. Ibn alAthir and Bandari, in their accounts of the sectarian conflicts in Baghdad in 469/1076– 1077, mention the "Nizamiyya Market" (Ibn al-Athir, 1371: 23/82; Bandari, 2536: 60). As previously

noted, Turtushi records the purchase and endowment of bathhouses, markets, properties, shops, and caravanserais for the Baghdad Nizamiyya at Nizam alMulk's behest (Turtushi, 1415: 357–360). Later, *Nuzhat al-Qulub* reports the continuing existence of the "Nizamiyya Market" and specifically a bakery owned by the Baghdad Nizamiyya (Mustawfi, 1362: 35), suggesting the ongoing operation of income-generating institutions belonging to the school into the seventh century AH, and their role as financial mainstays.

Conclusion

The revenue sources for the high-cost Nizamiyya schools (*madāris-e Nizāmiyya*) in the history of Seljuk-era Iran were numerous and diverse. At the same time, as a result of evolving waqf (endowment) structures and under the influence of the socio-political circumstances of their time, these sources fluctuated and underwent various ups and downs. For example, the financial situation of these schools in the sixth to eighth Islamic centuries (12th–14th centuries CE) differed from that of the fifth century AH (11th century CE).

Moreover, the influence and social standing of individuals played an undeniable role in attracting public support for the schools, particularly from officials and prominent families. Additionally, the alignment and support of rulers and sultans with the Nizamiyya, combined with periods of economic prosperity, had a significant effect on the financial status of the schools. Just as the dominance of the founding body and of Nizam al-Mulk himself during his tenure as vizier led to the notion of the "Nizamiyya state" (*dawlat-i Nizāmiyya*) or "the state of the scholarly class" (*dawlat-i ahl-i 'ilm*), so too could the effectiveness and power of each of the vizier's successors, as subsequent heirs to the Nizamiyya, directly impact the resources and lack thereof available to these institutions.

The cultural movement led during this era by the Nizamiyya and particularly by Nizam alMulk himself left an exceptional legacy in the development of schools and in enriching libraries such as the Nizamiyya's, a legacy seldom matched in other periods of Iran's history. Furthermore, the relatively open and tolerant religious and political climate prevailing in the later Abbasid period—and, subsequently, after the waning of the Mongol invasions and the emergence of regimes such as the Ghurids, Khwarazmshahs, and Jalayirids—brought about notable fluctuations in the Nizamiyya's finances.

Additionally, the inclusion of certain nonShafi'i and Shi'i individuals in the administration and supervision of endowments during this period—contrary to the explicit wording of some waqf documents—is also noteworthy. Such developments undoubtedly affected the financial and endowment foundations of the Nizamiyya and could facilitate the acquisition of support from other religious groups, or vice versa.

Therefore, post-Seljuk political changes, the level of security in the cities where Nizamiyya schools operated, and the direct political engagement of Nizamiyya professors and administrators during various periods all had considerable influence on the relative prosperity or deprivation of the Nizamiyya's financial resources.

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