

The Month of Muharram of the Year 579

[26th of April – 25th of May, 1183]

May God let us know His grace and favour

THE new moon rose on the night of Tuesday the 26th of April while we were in Cairo. May God prosper us in our aims. On the morning of Sunday the 6th of Muharram we left Misr and ascended the Nile towards upper Egypt, making for Qus. May God, by His favour, grant us His habitual succour and generous relief. The day on which, with the help of Great and Glorious God, we sailed, fell on the first day of May. Villages and large cities followed continuously along the banks of the Nile, as we shall presently relate.

One of these villages is Askun, which lies on the eastern bank of the Nile and to the left of him who ascends it. It is said that here was born Moses the Interlocutor²⁸ – the blessings of God on our Prophet and on him – and here, as it is said, his mother cast him upon the waters of the Nile. On the day of our sailing, and that following, we observed, to the west of the Nile and on our right, the ancient city of Joseph the Truthful – God bless and preserve him – where is the prison in which he was confined [Gen. xxxix. 20], which is now being demolished and its stones removed to the citadel being built at Cairo; a strong and impregnable fortress. In this city are the store-houses in which Joseph – may God bless and preserve him – stored the food [Gen. xli. 35]. They are hollow, it is said. From there we moved to a place called Munyat ibn al-Khasib, a large town on the bank of the Nile, to the right of him who ascends it, with markets, baths, and all the conveniences of a town. We passed it on the night of Sunday the 13th of Muharram, the eighth day after our sailing from Cairo, for the wind had fallen and we had been fain to stop on our way. Now were we to describe every place we happened upon

on the banks of the Nile, right and left; our book would be cramped by it. We therefore intend to include only the larger and more famous places.

Near to Munyat and to our left we came upon the blessed mosque dedicated to Abraham the friend of the All-Merciful – God's blessings upon him and upon our Prophet. This mosque is celebrated and known for the benedictions it brings on those who visit it. In its court are said to be the foot-prints of the beast ridden by al-Khaili [the friend (of God)] – may God bless and preserve him. Beyond that, to the left, is a place called Ansina, a spacious and handsome village with ancient monuments. In past times it was (already) an ancient city, having ancient walls. Saladin destroyed them and imposed on all ships descending the Nile the task of carrying one stone to Cairo. They have now all been moved.

On the morning of Monday the 14th of Muharram, the ninth day after our sailing from Misr, we passed a mountain called Jabal al-Maglah, on the eastern bank of the Nile, to our left. This mountain is halfway to Qus from Misr being thirteen post-stages [*barid*] from both.

What must be mentioned for its remarkableness is that, starting from the district of Misr, there lies along the east bank of the Nile, to the left of him who ascends, a continuous and ancient wall, some of which has been destroyed and some of which remains, which continues along that bank to Uswan at the end of Sa'id [Upper Egypt]. Between Uswan and Qus are eight post-stages. The stories concerning this wall are varied and contradictory, but to be short, it is a wonderful thing and its secret is known only to Great and Glorious God. It is known as The Wall of the old Woman. She has a story, and I think is the sorceress mentioned in the book *al-Masalik wa'l-Mamalik*²⁹ [Routes and Countries] who reigned here for a time.

A note to repair an oversight

When we landed at Alexandria in the month mentioned [Dhu 'l-Qa'dah], the first thing we saw was a large concourse

of people come forth to gaze upon Rumi prisoners being brought to the town on camels, facing the tails and surrounded by tinbal and horn. We asked of their story, and were told a case that would rend the heart in compassion and pity. A number of Syrian Christians had assembled and built ships in that part of their land which is nearest to the Sea of al-Qulzum [Red Sea], and had then moved their various parts on camels belonging to neighbouring Arabs at a price they had agreed upon with them. On arrival at the shores of the Sea, they had nailed their ships together, completed their construction, set them in order, and launched them into the sea.

They had then sailed forth to harass (Muslim) pilgrims.¹¹ Coming to the Sea of al-Na'am,¹² they there burnt some sixteen ships, and then went on to 'Aydhab where they caught a ship coming with pilgrims from Jiddah. On the land they seized a large caravan journeying from Qus to 'Aydhab and killed all in it, leaving none alive. They captured two ships bringing merchandise from the Yemem, and burnt many foods prepared on the beaches as provisions for Mecca and Medina - God exalt them. Many infamous acts they committed, such as are unheard of in Islam, for no Rumi had ever before come to that place. The worst, which shocks the ears for its impiety and profanity, was their aim to enter the City of the Prophet - may God bless and preserve him - and remove him from the sacred tomb.

This intent they spread abroad, and let report of it run on their tongues. But God brought punishment upon them for their audacity, and for embarking on that which Providence has forbidden. They were no more than a day's journey from Medina, when God repelled their hostile purpose with ships prepared in Misr and Alexandria, and in which were the chamberlain known as Lu'lu' [Husam al-Din Lu'lu'] and some valorous Moorish sailors. They pursued the enemy who had been near to escape, and seized them all. It was one of the signs of All-Powerful God's solicitude. They had overtaken them after a long time, for there had been more than a month and

a half or thereabouts between them. The enemy were killed or taken prisoner. The prisoners were distributed amongst various countries to be put to death in them, and some were sent to Mecca and Medina. God, with His beneficent works, is sufficient to Islam and the Muslims in this grave tide. Praise be to God, Lord of the Universe.

The account is resumed

Amongst the places we passed in Upper Egypt after Jabal al-Maqlah which, as we have already related, was halfway from Misr to Qus, was a place called Manfalut, near to the west bank of the Nile, to the right of him who ascends it. It has markets and all that is needed of commodities, which are of the highest quality and without rival in Upper Egypt. Its wheat is taken to Misr for its goodness and the heaviness of its grain. Indeed it has become renowned because of this, and merchants ascend the Nile in ships to fetch this wheat.

After Manfalut comes the city of Usyut [Lycopolis], a famous city of Upper Egypt about three miles distant from the west bank of the Nile. It has a pleasing aspect, and is surrounded by gardens of the date-palm. Its walls are old. Below it is a place called Abu Tij [Abotis], a town on the west bank of the Nile having markets and all the conveniences of a town. Then comes the city of Ikhnim [Chemmis or Panapolis], another of the famous cities of Upper Egypt, to the east of the Nile and on its bank. It is of ancient foundation and a long-standing site. Here is the mosque of Dhu'l-Nun the Egyptian, and that of Daud [David], one of the saints famed for good works and continence. They are both mosques impressed with the character of blessedness, and we entered them, to be blessed by praying in them, on Saturday the 19th of Muharram. In this city are monuments and constructions built by the Copts and churches attended till to-day by the Christian Copt clients. The most remarkable of the temples of the world talked of for their wonder is the great temple east of the city and below

its walls.³³ Its length is two hundred and twenty cubits, and its breadth one hundred and sixty. The people of these parts know it as *birṭa*, and thus too are known all their temples and ancient constructions. This great temple is supported by forty columns, beside its walls, the circumference of each column being fifty spans and the distance between them thirty spans. Their capitals are of great size and perfection, cut in an unwonted fashion and angulated in ornate style as if done by turners. The whole is embellished with many colours, lapis lazuli and others. The columns are carved in low relief from top to bottom. Over the capital of each column and stretching to its neighbour is a great slab of carved stone, the biggest of which we measured and found to be fifty-six spans in length, ten in width, and eight in depth.

The ceiling of this temple is wholly formed of slabs of stone so wonderfully joined as to seem to be one single piece; and over it all are disposed rare paintings and uncommon colours, so that the beholder conceives the roof to be of carved wood. Each slab has a different painting. Some are adorned with comely pictures of birds with outstretched wings making the beholder believe they are about to fly away; others are embellished with images of men, very beautiful to look upon and of elegant form, each image having a distinctive shape, for example holding a statuette or a weapon, or a bird, or a chalice, or making sign to another with the hand, together with other forms it would take too long to describe and which words are not adequate to express.

Within and without this great temple, both in its upper and its lower parts, are pictures all of varied form and description. Some are of dreadful, inhuman forms that terrify the beholder and fill him with wonder and amazement. There was hardly the space of an awl or needle-hole which did not have an image or engraving or some hieroglyphic writing that is not understood. This remarkable decoration which can be wrought from hard stone where it cannot be worked in soft wood, covers the whole of this vast and splendid temple, in wonder at which

the beholder might conceive that all time spent in its adornment, embellishment, and beautifying would be too short. Glory to the Creator of wondrous things. There is no God but He.

In the heights of the temple is the ceiling, spread with the great slabs of stone in the fashion we have described. The ceiling is of great height, so that the fancy is bewildered and the mind perplexed in thinking how the stones were raised and set in place.

Within the temple are chambers, chapels, entries and exits, ascents and stairs, conduits and passages, where groups of men could be lost, and never find each other except by high calls. Its walls are eighteen spans in width, and all its stones are finely joined in the manner we have described. In a word, this temple has a sublime grandeur, and its sight is one of the wonders of the world, beyond description or defining, although we have given an indication, with a fragment of its description, that will tell something of it. God embraces all knowledge of it, and knows its meaning. The reader of this book should not think our account of it is magnified, for any relater, be he a Quss or a Sahban,³⁴ would find himself deficient and inadequate. God embraces all knowledge. There is no God but He.

In the towns of this Upper Egypt passed on their way by pilgrims and travellers, such as Ikhnim, Qus, and Munyat ibn al-Khasib, the stopping of travellers' ships and their search and examination, the plunging of hands into the clothing of the merchants in search of what dirhams and dinars they might have under their arm-pits or in their bosoms, is abominable to hear, and hateful to relate. All was done by way of collecting *zakat*, without following the principle of possession for a complete year, or observing whether the goods reached the taxable level [two hundred dirhams in value in the case of merchandise], as we related in the description in this book of Alexandria. They sometimes made them give oath as to what they had and whether they had anything else (not seen), bringing forth God's Holy Book for them to swear upon. Amongst these

tax-receivers the pilgrims stand in shame and abasement, being reminded of the days in the customs (at Alexandria). This state of things, there is no doubt, Saladin has no knowledge of. Did he but know, he would end it, even as he decreed the end of graver things, and fight them as a religious duty, for such it would be in view of their oppression, their exaction of painful duties, and their unjust conduct to strangers devoted to Great and Glorious God who go forth from their native land to the sanctuary of his Haram. Such a step, God willing, would lead to the payment of the *zakat* in very good face by the owners of merchandise, provided of course that a year of possession had passed, and would prevent the interference with strangers cut off from their homes, and to whom the *zakat* should be given and not taken away. And it would protect the honour of the just Sultan, whose justice fills the land and whose fame has spread through many countries, and injure not the repute of one to whom God has given good repute, nor shame the report of one to whom He has given good report.

One of the most infamous things we saw was a group of insolent exactors, carrying in their hands long, pointed prods with handles, going aboard the ships to examine what was in them. There was no bundle or sack into which they did not drive those accursed staves in case there should be in the baggage, which held nothing but provisions, some unseen goods or money. This is the most shamefully affecting of the odious happenings. God has forbidden spying [Koran XLIX, 12: 'Do not spy, nor let some of you backbite others']. What then of the exposure of that which requires a decent veiling, its owner not wishing it be gazed upon, from modesty or because it is precious to him, not from cupidity, but for some need. May God punish these oppressors at the hand of the just Sultan and if He wills, favour His success.

Amongst the places that we passed after Ikhnim was one called Manshat al-Sudan [ancient Ptolemais Hermiou] on the west bank of the Nile. It is a populous village and is said to once have been a large city. In front of this village, between

it and the Nile, has been erected a high embankment of stones, like a town-wall, against which the Nile laps but does not, in its flood and rising, overtop. The village is thus safe from the river's intrusion. Below it is a place known as al-Bulyanah, a pleasant village with many palm trees on the western bank of the Nile, and distant from Qus four post-stages. Then comes a place called Dashnah on the east bank; a walled city with all the conveniences of a city. Between it and Qus are two post-stages.

We came next to a place on the west bank of the Nile and close to it, called Dandarah [Tentyras], a city of Upper Egypt. It has many palm-trees, has a pleasant aspect, and is famed for its fresh dates. We were told that it has a great temple, known to the people of these parts as *birba* as we explained in our description of Ikhnim and its temple. It is reported that the temple of Dandarah is even more magnificent and larger too than that.

From there we moved to the city of Qina [Caenopolis], also a town of Upper Egypt, white, fair to look upon, and having splendid buildings. Amongst its praiseworthy qualities is the modesty of its women, who keep to their houses so that a woman is never seen in the street in any circumstance. The stories concerning them verify this; and the women of Dashnah mentioned above are like them in it. Qina is on the east bank of the Nile, and about one post-stage from Qus. Below it is Qift [Koptos], a city to the east of the Nile, and three miles from its bank. It is one of the aforementioned towns of Upper Egypt, handsome, with clean buildings, and of finished construction.

Then, on Thursday the 24th of Muharram, the 19th of May, came our arrival at Qus [Apollinopolis]. We had been on the Nile eighteen days, and we entered Qus on the nineteenth. This is a city of fine markets, and of ample amenities, and it has many beings in it because of the comings and goings of pilgrims and of merchants from India, the Yemen, and Ethiopia. It is a place which all may come upon, a place of alighting for

the traveller, a gathering place for companies of wayfarers, and a meeting-place for pilgrims from the Maghrib, from Misr, from Alexandria and from adjoining lands. From here they go into the desert of 'Aydhab, and here they return on their way back from the Hajj. We lodged at an inn called ibn al-'Ajami in Munyah, a large suburb outside the city and facing door of this inn.

The Month of Safar (579)

[26th of May-23rd of June, 1183]

May God accord us His grace and favour

THE new moon of this month rose on the night of Wednesday, the 25th of May, while we were yet in Qus and wishful of setting forth to 'Aydhab⁸⁵ - may God in His grace and favour, help us in our aims. On Monday the 13th of the month, which was the 6th of June, we took out all our baggage, provisions, and the rest, to al-Mabraz, a place in the direction of the *qiblah* and near to the city. It is a large space surrounded by palm-trees where the baggage of the pilgrims and merchants is collected and loaded. From here they set forth on their journey, and here is weighed that which the camel-masters must know the weight of. And so, when the evening prayers were over, we departed thence, and came to a waterpoint called al-Hajir where we passed the night. The day of Tuesday we tarried there because of the absence of some of the camel-masters at their houses which were nigh at hand. That night, the night of Wednesday, the 15th of the month (of Safar), while we were still in Hajir, the moon suffered a full eclipse, which began at the beginning of the night, and continued for a part of it. On the morning of Wednesday we set forth, and took our mid-day rest at a place called Qila' al-Diya'. The night we spent in a place called Mahatt al-Laqitah. This had all been through the desert in which there was no sign of cultivation.

Early on Thursday we halted at a watering place called al-'Abdayn [The Two Slaves]. It is related that they died of thirst before they could reach it. The place was named after them, and here is their tomb. God's mercy upon them. We drew water for three days and left with the dawn on Friday the 17th of the month. We journeyed on through the desert encamping in it whenever night darkened upon us, while the

caravans of 'Aydhab and Qus came and went so that the desert was animated and safe. On Monday the 20th of the month we alighted at a watering place called Dingqash, a spring to which come animals and men of a number which none but Great and Glorious God can count.

Across this desert no one will journey save on camel, by reason of their endurance of thirst. The best and most comfortable camel litters used on them are the *shaqadif*, and the best of these are those made in the Yemen for, like the travelling *ashakin* [seats] they are covered with leather and are roomy. Two of them are bound together by stout ropes and put across the camel. They have supports at each corner, and on these rests a canopy. The traveller and his companion in counterpoise will thus be veiled from the blaze of the midday heat and may sit reclining and at ease beneath its covering. With his companion he may partake of what he needs of food and the like, or read, when he wishes, the Koran or a book; and whoso deems it lawful to play chess may, if he wish, play his companion, for diversion and to relieve the spirit. To be short, it eases the hardship of travel. Most travellers ride their camels on top of their baggage and so painfully endure the rigours of the burning heat.

At this spring of Dingqash, because of the press around the water, there arose a quarrel between some of the Arab camel-masters from Yemen – they were 'Bali, a sub-tribe of the Quda'ah, who held the contract for providing transport on the road to 'Aydhab – and some Ghuzz [a local Turkish tribe]. This all but became a riot, but God prevented it.

The way to 'Aydhab from Qus is by two roads. One is that known as the road of the Two Slaves, and is the one we followed and the more direct. The other is by Uswan,⁸⁶ a village on the banks of the Nile. The confluence of these two roads is near to the spring of Dingqash. They have another meeting place at a waterpoint called Shaghīb, one day ahead of the spring of Dingqash.

At eventide on Monday, we provisioned ourselves with

water for a day and a night and removed to water in a place called Shaghīb, reaching it early on the morning of Wednesday the 22nd of Safar. This water comes from a hole dug in the ground and flows bountifully at little depth, but is brackish. After providing ourselves with water for three days, we moved on from it at dawn on Thursday, towards water at a place called Amtan. We left the water-track at a place called * * * , to our left, with no more than a day's journey between it and Shaghīb, but the road is difficult for camels. In the early forenoon of Sunday the 26th of Safar we dismounted at Amtan. And on this day I completed my learning by heart the Book of Great and Glorious God. Praise and thanks to Him for helping us in this.

The water of Amtan is in a spring which God has blessed in particular, for its water is the best and sweetest of the way. Water buckets beyond counting will be found there, and there will water the many caravans that descend upon it, with the camels so far gone in thirst that were they brought to a river they would exhaust it and dry it up. We wished to count the caravans that came and went upon this road but could not (for their number), especially those from 'Aydhab bearing the merchandise of India that came through the Yemen to 'Aydhab. The greater part of this was the loads of pepper, so numerous as to seem to our fancy to equal in quantity only the dust. A curious circumstance that we observed in this desert is that you will discover loads of pepper, cinnamon, and the like thrown ungarded by the side of the road.⁸⁷ They are left on the road like this through the sickness of the camels that bear them, or for some other reason, and remain thus in their place until their owners remove them, secure from all risk despite the number of men of all kinds who pass beside them.

We left Amtan on the morning of Monday, following the Sunday described, and at midday alighted by the water of a place called Mujaj nigh to the road. We took from it four days' water to bring us to al-'Usharā', a day distant from 'Aydhab. From this station of Mujaj the road leads through

al-Wadah, a sandy and toilsome stretch that reaches to the shores of the Jiddah sea. Through this stretch the march continues, if God wills, to 'Aydhab, and lies in a wide plain over which the eyes, right and left, can range.

At midday on Thursday the 28th of the month, we departed from Mujaj and took our way to al-Wadah.

The Month of Rabi' al-Awwal (579)

[24th of June-23rd of July, 1183]

May God let us know His favour

THE new moon of this month rose on the night of Friday, the 24th of the month of June, when we were at the end of al-Wadah and about three stages from 'Aydhab; and on the morning of Friday we halted at the waters of 'Ushara', two stages from 'Aydhab. In this place are many '*ushar*' plants [*Asclepias gigantea*], which are like the *utruij* [*Citrus cedra*],³⁸ but have no spines. The water of this place is not especially sweet; it is in an uncased well, and we found that the sand had fallen into it and covered the water. The camel-masters sought to dig it that they might bring forth water, but failed, so that the caravan remained without it. We marched that night, the night of Saturday the 2nd of the month, and after sunrise we encamped at the waters of al-Khubayb, within sight of 'Aydhab. Here both the caravans and the people of the country take water, which suffices for them all, for the well is large, like a huge cistern.

On the evening of Saturday, we entered 'Aydhab, a city on the shores of the Jiddah sea. It has no walls and most of its houses are booths of reeds. It has now, however, some houses, newly-built, of plaster. It is one of the most frequented ports of the world, because of the ships of India and the Yemen that sail to and from it, as well as the pilgrim ships that come and go. It is in the desert, with no vegetation and nothing to eat save what is brought to it. Yet its people, by reason of the pilgrims, enjoy many benefits, especially at the time of their passing through, since for each load of victuals that the pilgrims bring, they receive a fixed food tax, light in comparison with the former customs duties which, as we said, have been raised by Saladin. A further advantage they gain from the

pilgrims is in the hiring of their *jilab*: ships which bring them much profit in conveying the pilgrims to Jiddah and returning them when dispersing after the discharge of their pious duty. There are no people of easy circumstances in 'Aydhab but have a *jilabah* or two which bring them an ample livelihood. Glory to God who apportions sustenance to all in divers forms. There is no God but He.

We took lodging there in a house named after Munnih, one of its Ethiopian leading men who had become established there with houses, spring-encampments, and *jilab*.

In the sea of 'Aydhab and near to the city are some islands where there are pearl-fisheries. The season for diving is the time at which we write these words, which is the foreign month of June, and the month which follows, and they extract precious pearls of great value. The divers go out to these islands in small boats [*zawariq*] and stay in them some days and then return with what God has meted out to each according to his lot. The catch is not deep, and they bring it out in double sea-shells (whose flesh is) like a kind of fish resembling somewhat the sea-turtle. When they are split, the insides of the two valves show as silver shells. They are then opened and inside them is found the core of the pearl covered by the fleshy part of the sea-shell, and these they gather according to their fortune. Glory be to God who so determines. There is no God but He. But they (live) in a country which has no (produce) fresh or dry, and live therein the lives of beasts. Glory to Him who makes dear a country to its people, but indeed these folk are closer to wild beasts than they are to men.

The journey from Jiddah to 'Aydhab is most calamitous for pilgrims, save those few of them whom Great and Glorious God preserves, for the wind takes most of them to anchorages on the desert far to the south of 'Aydhab. There the Bujat, a type of Sudanese living in the mountains, come down to them and hire them their camels, and lead them through a waterless track. Often the greater number of them perish from thirst, and the Bujat seize the money and other things that they

have left behind. Not seldom pilgrims will stray on foot through the wayless desert and, being lost, die of thirst. Those who survive and reach 'Aydhab are like men quickened from the shroud. While we were there we saw some who had come in this manner, and in their ghastly shape and changed form was 'a portent for those who observed carefully' [Koran XV, 75]. Most of the deaths of the pilgrims took place at these anchorages; some were helped by the wind to the port of 'Aydhab but they were few.

The *jilab* that ply on this Pharaonic sea are sewn together, no nails at all being used on them. They are sewn with cord made from *qinbar*, which is the fibre of the coconut and which the makers thrash until it takes the form of thread, which then they twist into a cord with which they sew the ships. These they then caulk with shavings of the wood of palm-trees. When they have finished making a *jilabah* in this fashion, they smear it with grease, or castor oil, or the oil of the *qirsh* [shark], which is best. This *qirsh* is a huge fish which swallows drowning men. Their purpose in greasing the boat is to soften and supple it against the many reefs that are met with in that sea, and because of which nailed ships do not sail through it. The wood for these parts is brought from India and the Yemen, as is the coconut fibre. A singular feature of these *jilab* is that their sails are woven from the leaves of the muql tree [Theban palm or Bellium, a kind of gum-tree], and their parts are conformably weak and unsound in structure. Glory to God who contrives them in this fashion and who entrusts men to them. There is no God but He.

The people of 'Aydhab use the pilgrims most wrongfully. They load the *jilab* with them until they sit one on top of the other so that they are like chickens crammed in a coop. To this they are prompted by avarice, wanting the hire. The owner of the craft will exact its full cost from the pilgrims for a single journey, caring not what the sea may do with it after that, saying, 'Ours to produce the ships: the pilgrims' to protect their lives.' This is a common saying amongst them.

This is the country of Islam most deserving a *hisbah*,³⁸ and the scourge employed should be the sword. The best for him who can is not to see it, and to take his way by Syria to 'Iraq and join there with the Emir of the Baghdad pilgrimage. If this is impossible for him when going to Mecca, he should then, at the dispersion of the pilgrimage, go with that Emir al-Hajj to Baghdad and thence to Acre. Thence, as he pleases, he may go to Alexandria, or Sicily, or elsewhere. He may even find a Rumi ship sailing to Ceuta or another Muslim land. And should he find this circling road to be too long, it will be easy in comparison with what he would meet with at 'Aydhah and places like it.

The people of 'Aydhah belong to a tribe of Sudanese called al-Bujat. Their Sultan is one of their kind, and lives with them in the mountains near the city. He will, on occasion, come to meet with the Wali [Governor] of the Ghuzz there, in order to display his obedience. He is appointed the Wali's deputy in the country and all the revenues, save for a small part, go to him. This race from the Sudan is more astray from the (right) path, and have less reason, than the animals. They have no religion save the formal words professing the unity of God, which they utter to display that they are Muslims. But behind that are corrupt beliefs and practices that cannot be condoned and are unlawful. Their men and women go naked abroad, wearing nothing but the rag which covers their genitals, and most not even this. In a word, they are a breed of no regard and it is no sin to pour maledictions upon them.

On Monday the 25th of Rabi' al-Awwal, the 18th of July, we embarked on a *jilabah* to cross to Jiddah. We waited that day at anchor because of the stillness of the wind and the absence of the nawati [Gr. *veatrai*, 'sailors']. But with the morning of Tuesday, we sailed with the favour of Great and Glorious God and in the hope of His gracious aid. Our stay in 'Aydhah, not including the Monday now mentioned, had been three and twenty days, of which God, Great and Glorious is He, will hold count for us because of our adversities and ill-

condition and for the ravages on our health from want of proper food. It is enough for you of a place where everything is imported, even water; and this (because of its bitterness) is less agreeable than thirst. We had lived between air that melts the body and water that turns the stomach from appetite for food. He did no injustice to this town who sang,

'Brackish of water and flaming of air.'

A sojourn in it is the greatest snare on the road to the Ancient House [the Ka'bah] – may God magnify it in esteem and veneration, and enlarge the (heavenly) reward of the pilgrims for what they have endured, more especially in that accursed town. Men tell stories of its abominations, even saying that Solomon the son of David – on our Prophet and on him be peace – took it as a prison for the *'ifrit* [afrite or demon, mentioned in the Koran XXVII, 39]. May God relieve the pilgrims of it by furnishing the straight road to the Sacred House, which is from Mîr by 'Aqabah of Ailah [Elim] to holy Medina. This is the shortest road, with the sea to the right and the venerable Jabal Tur (Mount Sinai) to the left. But the Franks have near to it a garrisoned castle which prevents men from passing it – may God by His favour grant victory to His faith and glorify His word.

Our passage over the sea on Tuesday the 26th of Rabi' al-Awwal, and the Wednesday following it, was long-lasting because the wind was light. But at the end of the vespers of the night of Thursday, when we had been rejoicing in the sight of the birds from the Hejaz coast circling in the air, the lightning flashed from the direction of that land, which was to the east. Then rose a storm which darkened the skies and at last covered them. The tempest raged and drove the ship from off its course and backwards. The fury of the wind continued, and the darkness thickened and filled the air so that we knew not which way lay our course. Then a few stars appeared and gave us some guidance. The sail was lowered to the bottom of the *daqal*,⁴⁰ which is the mast, and we passed that night in a storm

which drove us to despair, seeing one of the famous storms of the Pharaonic sea. Then with the morn God brought us relief in our destitution * * * the wind fell, the clouds dispersed, and the skies cleared; and in the distance the lands of the Hejaz appeared before us. We could see only its mountains east of Jiddah, and the *rubban* of the ship, that is the captain, said that between those mountains which we saw and the coast of Jiddah lay two days' travel. May God by His power and favour help us in every difficulty and aid us in every strait.

That day, Thursday, we sailed along under a good light breeze and at eventide anchored at a small island in that sea, near to the coast. We had met many reefs which had broken the water and made it laugh, and we entered their windings with care and caution. The *rubban* was shrewd in his art, and skilled, and God delivered us from the reefs so that we anchored at this island. Here we disembarked and passed the night of Friday the 29th of Rabi' al-Awwal. The morning was calm, but the wind blew from a direction unsuitable to us, so we remained there all that Friday.

On Saturday the 30th a slight wind rose, and we sailed quietly in a calm sea that seemed to the beholder to be a dish of blue crystal. Thus we moved along, praying for the beneficent works of Great and Glorious God. The name of this island is 'Aygat al-Sufun [the Obstacle of Ships], but Great and Glorious God preserved us from the evil auguries of its unhappy name. Praise and thanks to Him for that.

The Month of Rabi' al-Akhir (579)

[24th of July-21st of August, 1183]

May God let us know His favour

THE new moon of this month rose on the night of Saturday, while we yet were at the aforementioned island, but its crescent was not revealed to our eyes because of the storm. The following night it was seen large and high in the sky, so we confirmed its rising on the night of Saturday 23rd of July.⁴¹ At eventide on Sunday the second we anchored at a harbourage called Ubhur, a day's distance from Jiddah. The position of this harbour is most uncommon, since a channel of the sea penetrates the land, which encompasses it on both sides, and ships can find therein a safe and tranquil anchorage. At dawn on Monday, we sailed from this place, by the favour of God Most High, under a light breeze – God is the disposer of all things. There is no Lord but He.

When night fell we anchored near Jiddah, which was within sight. The wind raged on the morning of the Tuesday that followed, and stopped our entering the port. The entry into it is difficult to achieve because of the many reefs and the windings. We observed the art of these captains and the mariners in the handling of their ships through the reefs. It was truly marvellous. They would enter the narrow channels and manage their way through them as a cavalier manages a horse that is light on the bridle and tractable. They came through in a wonderful manner that cannot be described. At midday of Tuesday the 4th of Rabi' al-Akhir, being the 26th of July, we arrived at Jiddah, praising Great and Glorious God and thanking Him for our safety and our deliverance from the tempest we had faced those eight days of our voyage on the sea. From their

of the wind, the many reefs encountered, and the emergencies that arose from the imperfections of the sailing gear which time and again became entangled and broke when sails were raised or lowered or an anchor raised. At times the bottom of the *jilbab* would run against a reef when passing through them, and we would listen to a rumbling that called us to abandon hope. Many times we died and lived again – praise be to God who, in His power and glory, bestowed on us His care, ensuring our protection and sufficiency; praise fitting His kindness, and in solicitation of His continuing favour. There is no God but He.

We lodged, in Jiddah, in the house of the governor Ali, who ruled it in the name of the above mentioned^{41,2} Emir of Mecca. We were in one of those upper apartments built of palm-leaves at the top of their houses. They go out from them on to the roof to spend the night. On landing at Jiddah, happy in the safety which Great and Glorious God had granted us, we earnestly beseeched Him that our return should not be by this accursed sea unless some necessity arose preventing our going by other ways – God in His power acts with beneficence in all that He decrees and disposes.

This Jiddah is a village on the coast we have mentioned. Most of its houses are of reeds, but it has inns built of stone and mud, on the top of which are reed structures serving as upper chambers, and having roofs where at night rest can be had from the ravages of the heat. In this village are ancient remains which show that it is old. Traces of the walls that encompassed it remain to this day. In it is a place having an ancient and lofty dome, which is said to have been the lodging place of Eve, the mother of mankind – God's blessing upon her – when on her way to Mecca. This edifice was erected to illustrate its blessedness and excellence. God best knows concerning it. The city has a blessed mosque attributed to 'Umar ibn al-Khattab – may God hold him in His favour – and another with two pillars of ebony wood, also attributed to him – may God hold him in His favour – although some attribute it to Harun al-Rashid – may God have mercy on him.

Most of the inhabitants of this town and the surrounding desert and mountain are Sharifs, 'Alites, Hasanites, Husaynites and Ja'farites – may God hold in His favour their noble ancestors. They lead a life so wretched as to break the hardest stone in compassion. They employ themselves in all manner of trades, such as hiring camels should they possess any, and selling milk or water and other things like dates which they might find, or wood they might collect. Sometimes their women, the Sharifas themselves, would share in this work. Glory to the Determiner in what He decrees. Beyond a peradventure they are of a house to which God is pleased to give the life to come and not this world; and He has made us amongst those who it is proper should love the family of the Prophet, from whom He has removed impurity and whom He has cleansed.

Outside the city are ancient constructions which attest the antiquity of its foundation. It is said that it was a Persian city. It has cisterns hewn from the hard rock, connected with each other and beyond count for their number. They are both within and without the town, and men say that there are three hundred and sixty outside the town, and the same within. We indeed saw a great number, such as could not be counted. But in truth the things of wonder are many. Glory to Him whose knowledge encompasses them all.

The greater number of the people of these Hejaz and other lands are sectaries and schismatics who have no religion, and who have separated in various doctrines.⁴³ They treat the pilgrims in a manner in which they do not treat the Christians and Jews under tribute, seizing most of the provisions they have collected, robbing them and finding cause to divest them of all they have. The pilgrim in their lands does not cease to pay dues and provide foods until God helps him to return to his native land. Indeed, but for what God has done to mend the affairs of Muslims in these parts by means of Saladin, they would suffer the most grievous oppression, with no remission of its rigours. For Saladin lifted from the pilgrim the customs duty, and in its stead provided money and victuals with orders

that they should be sent to Mukthir, Emir of Mecca. But when this consignment allotted to them was somewhat delayed, this Emir returned to intimidating the pilgrims and made show to imprison them for the dues.

In this regard, it happened that when we arrived at Jiddah the matter was under discussion with Mukthir, this Emir, and we had been arrested. His order came that the pilgrims should guarantee each other (for payment) and might then enter the Haram [Holy Mosque] of God. Should the money and victuals due for him from Saladin arrive it would be well; otherwise he would not forego his dues from the pilgrims. Such was his speech, as if God's Haram were an heirloom in his hand and lawfully his to let to the pilgrims. Glory to God who alters and changes laws.

That which Saladin had substituted for the pilgrim's customs dues was two thousand dinars and two thousand and two *irdabb* of wheat, which is about eight hundred *qafz* in our Seville measure, and this was exclusive of the land-rents granted to them by this ordinance in Upper Egypt and in the Yemen. And but for the absence of this just Sultan, Saladin, at the wars against the Franks in Syria, these actions of the Emir against the pilgrims would never have occurred.

The lands of God [i.e. Islamic lands] that most deserve to be purified by the sword, and cleansed of their sins and impurities by blood shed in holy war are these Hejaz lands, for what they are about in loosening the ties of Islam, and dispossessing the pilgrims of their property and shedding their blood. Those of the Andalusian jurists who believe that the pilgrims should be absolved from this religion obligation believe rightly for that reason, and for the way, unplesing to Great and Glorious God, in which the pilgrims are used. The traveller by this way faces danger and oppression. Far otherwise has God decreed the sharing in that place of His indulgence. How can

the pilgrims on its account, thus bringing them to humbleness and abject poverty. May God soon correct and purify this place by relieving the Muslims of these destructive schismatics with the swords of the Almohades, the defenders of the Faith, God's confederates, possessing righteousness and truth, the protectors of the Haram of Great and Glorious God, the abstrainers from what is unlawful, the zealous raisers of His name, the proclaimers of His message and the upholders of His creed. Truly He can do as He wishes. He is the best of Protectors, the best of Helpers.

Let it be absolutely certain and beyond doubt established that there is no Islam save in the Maghrib lands. There they follow the clear path that has no separation and the like, such as there are in these eastern lands of sects and heretical groups and schisms, save those of them whom Great and Glorious God has preserved from this. There is no justice, right, or religion in His sight except with the Almohades – may God render them powerful. They are the last just imams of this time, all the other Kings of the day follow another path, taking tithes from the Muslim merchants as if they were of the community of the *dhimmah*, seizing their goods by every trick and pretext, and following a course of oppression the like of which, oh my God, has never been heard of. All of them, that is, except this just Sultan, Saladin, whom we have mentioned for his conduct and virtues. If he but had a helper in the cause of righteousness * * * of what I desire. May Great and Glorious God mend the affairs of the Muslims with His beneficent attention and kind works.

A singular circumstance that we observed in the matter of the propagation of the Mu'amin Almohade faith and the spreading of its word in these lands, and the inclination of its people to their dominance, is that most, indeed all their peoples, hint at it covertly and even quite plainly. They relate this to certain

the mosque of ibn Tulun and Cairo are two old and closely-built towers. On one is a statue facing the west, while on the other there had been a statue looking to the east. They used to relate that if one of them should fall, it would give warning of conquest by the people in whose direction it faced over the lands of Egypt, and others besides. By a strange conjuncture, the falling of the statue facing the east was followed by the victory of the Ghuzz [the Seljuk Turks under Saladin] over the 'Ubaydin [Fatimid] power and their conquest of the territories of Misr and other lands. They now expect the fall of the statue facing west and the fulfilment of their hopes of being governed by the people of the west [the Almohade rulers of Spain]. Please God it may be so. There remains nothing but the happy prospect of an Almohade conquest of these lands, and attentively they watch for it one auspicious morning, being certain of it, and expecting it as they expect the (last) hour, the fulfilment of the promise of which no one feels doubt.

In this regard, we learnt in Alexandria and Misr and other places, both directly and by hearsay, of a strange circumstance which indicated that this dear event is truly decreed by God and that the claims concerning it are true. For it was told us that some jurists and leaders of these countries have prepared an embellished discourse to be delivered before our lord the Prince of the Faithful – may God exalt his state – and that he expects that day as he expects the Day of Resurrection and composedly awaits it with the patience which is (proper to) our faith. May Great and Glorious God unfold His word and exalt His claim. As He wishes, so He disposes.

At eventide on Tuesday the 11th of the month, being the 2nd of August, we left Jiddah, after the pilgrims had guaranteed each other (for payment), and their names had been recorded in a register kept by the governor of the city, 'Ali ibn Muwaḥḥaf in accordance with an order from his lord, the ruler of Mecca.

favour – but he is of those who act unrighteously, and not like his noble forebears – may God have them in His favour.

We passed on our way that night until we arrived at al-Qurayn, with the rising of the sun. This place is a staging post for pilgrims and a place of their encampment. There they put on the *ihram*,⁴⁴ and there they rest throughout the day of their arrival. If they remove in the evening and travel all night, they will come in the morning to the Haram al-Sharif – may God increase its honour and sublimeness. The returning pilgrims rest there too, and from it they pass on by night to Jiddah. In this place is a well of sweet spring water, and by reason of it the pilgrims do not need to supply themselves with water save for the night on which they travel to it. Throughout the daylight hours of Wednesday we stayed resting at al-Qurayn, but when evening had come, we left it in the pilgrim garb to perform the 'Umrah [Lesser Pilgrimage],⁴⁵ and marched throughout the night. With the dawn, we came near to the Haram, and descended as the light was about to spread.

We entered Mecca – God protect it – at the first hour of Thursday the 13th of Rabi', being the 4th of August, by the 'Umrah Gate. As we marched that night, the full moon had thrown its rays upon the earth, the night had lifted its veil, voices struck the ears with the *Talbiyah*⁴⁶ ['Here am I, O God, here am I'], from all sides, and tongues were loud in invocation, humbly beseeching God to grant them their requests, sometimes redoubling their *Talbiyat*, and sometimes imploring with prayers. Oh night most happy, the bride of all the nights of life, the virgin of the maidens of time.

And so, at the time and on the day we have mentioned, we came to God's venerable Haram, the place of sojourn of Abraham the Friend (of God), and found the Ka'bah, the Sacred House, the unveiled bride⁴⁷ conducted (like a bride to her groom) to the supreme felicity of heaven, encompassed by the deputations [pilgrims] of the All-Merciful. We performed

Multazam, which is between the Black Stone and the door, and is a place where prayers are answered. We entered the dome of Zamzam and drank of its waters which is 'to the purpose for which it is drunk',⁵⁰ as said the Prophet – may God bless and preserve him – and then performed the *sa'i*⁵¹ between al-Safa and al-Marwah. After this we shaved and entered a state of *halal*.⁵² Praise be to God for generously including us in the pilgrimage to Him and for making us to be of those on whose behalf the prayers of Abraham reach. Sufficient He is for us and the best Manager. We took lodging in Mecca at a house called al-Halal near to the Haram and the Bab al-Suddah, one of its gates, in a room having many domestic conveniences and overlooking the Haram and the sacred Ka'bah.

The Month of Jumada 'l-Ula (579)

[22nd of August–20th of September, 1183]

May God let us know His favour

THE new moon rose on the night of Monday the 22nd of August, when we had been in Mecca – may God Most High exalt it – eighteen days. The new moon of this month was the most auspicious our eyes had seen in all that had passed of our life. It rose after we had already entered the seat of the venerable enclosure, the sacred Haram of God, the dome in which is the maqam of Abraham, the place from whence the Prophet's mission (was sent out), and the alighting place of the faithful spirit Gabriel with inspiration and revelation. May God with His power and strength inspire us to thanks for His favour and make us sensible of that amount of privilege He has made our portion, finally accepting us (into Paradise) and rewarding us with the accustomed generosity of His beneficent works, and giving us of His gracious help and support. There is no God but He.

A description of the Sacred Mosque and the Ancient House

May God bless and exalt it

The venerable House has four corners and is almost square. The chief of the Banu Shayba who are the custodians of the House, one Muhammad ibn Isma'il ibn 'Abd al-Rahman ibn * * * * of the stock of 'Uthman ibn Talhah ibn Shaybah ibn Talhah ibn 'Abd al-Dar, the Companion of the Prophet – may God bless and preserve him – and the incumbent of the chamberlainship of the House, informed me that its height, on the side which faces the Bab [Gate] al-Safa and which extends from the Black Stone to the Rukn al-Yamani [Yemen