

TUZAK-I-TIMURI

The Autobiography of Timur

Sir H. M. Elliot

Prof. John Dowson

Sang-e-Meel Publications, Lahore - Pakistan.

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THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF TIMUR

by the late

Sir H. M. Elliot

edited by

Prof. John Dowson

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PREFACE

Timur Lang ("Timur the Lane", 8th April 1336-18th February 1405, at the age of seventy-one) was the founder of the Timurid dynasty which ruled in Central Asia and eastern Iran from 1370 to 1570 A.D.

Timur's autobiography entitled *Malfūzat-i Timuri* or *Tuzuk-i Timuri*, also called *Wāqi'āt-i Timuri* (the "Autobiographical memoirs"), is an autobiographical record of his life from his seventh year to his death followed usually by an appendix called *Tuzuk-i Timuri*, or *Tuzūkāt-i Timuri* (the "Institutes, designs and enterprises"), both now usually regarded as spurious and a later fabrication but ostensibly translated from a Chaghatai Turkish original found in the library of Ja'far Pāsha, Governor of the Yemen, by Mir Abū Ṭālib Ḥusaini Turbati, a native of Khurāsān, who presented this translation to Shāhjahān in 1047/1637-8. When it was read to Shāhjahān he noticed errors and divergences from the *Ẓafarnāmah* of Yazdi and other contemporary or near contemporary histories. He therefore ordered M. Afẓal b. Tarbiyat Khān Bukhāri in the same year to compare it with the *Ẓafarnāmah* and the other histories, to delete Abū Ṭālib's additions, to supply his omissions and to correct his dates. This enlarged and corrected edition of Memoirs under the title *Malfūzāt-i Ṣāhib-Qirān*, was extended to Timur's death.

Editions:

(*Tuzūkāt* only): 1) Institutes, Political and Military written... by the great Timour..., first translated into Persian by Abu Taulib Alhusseini, and thence into English, with... notes by Major Davy...The whole work published with a preface, indexes...by T. White. Oxford 1783.

2) Institutes, political and military of the Emperor Timour.

In Persian and English (Major Davy's tr. with J. White's notes). Book the first. Calcutta 1785 (pp. 85. No more published).

3) Kitāb-i Qābūsnāmah...wa risālah-i Tuzuk-i Timuri. Teheran 1285/1868.

4) Tarīkh-i Sulṭān mabrūr musamma bah Tuzuk-i Timur. Bombay 1307/1890 (reprinted from Major Davy's edition accessible to Edwards).

Translations:

English translation (*Malfūzāt* only, as far as Timur's 41st year). The Malfuzat Timury, or Autobiographical Memoirs of the Mughal Emperor Timur, written in the Jagtay Tūrky Language, turned into Persian, by Major Charles Stewart, London 1830 (extending to the year 777/1375-6). Reprinted; Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 2000.

French translation (*Tuzūkat* only) Instituts politiques et militaires de Tamerlane...traduit...sur la version persane d'Abou-Taleb-al-Hossein...par L. Langlès. Paris 1787.

Urdu translation by Subḥān Bakhsh, Delhi 1845; by M. Faẓl al-Ḥaqq, also called Aḥmad Miyān of Ahmadabad. Bombay 1908.

In 800/1398, Timur set out for India and on 17th December 1398 (7th Rabi' II 801) took Delhi. (For Timur's wars in India see Ghiyāṣ ad-Din 'Ali Yazdi's *Rūznāmah Ghazawāt-i Hindustān*, edited by L. A. Zimin and V. V. Barthold, St. Petersburg 1915; Irfan Habib: "Timur in the political tradition and historiography of Mughal India", in: Maria Szuppe, ed.: *L'héritage timouride Iran-Asie Central-Inde, XV^e—XVIII^e siècle*, Cahiers d'Asie Centrale 3-4, Tashkent and Aix-en-Provence, 1997, pp. 297-312).

Malfūzāt-i Ṣāḥib-Qirān deals with Timur's invasion of India and it was translated in English, alongwith Yazdi's *Ẓafarnāmah*'s relevant part, by C.E. Chapman and J. Dowson (see Elliot: *History of India*, vol. III pp. 394-477). The present edition is based on this translation, but in a new format.

Lahore
15.8.2004

M. Ikram Chaghatai

TUZAK-I-TIMURI

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF TIMUR

This is an autobiographical memoir of the Emperor Timur, written in the Chaghatai Turki language, translated into Persian by Abu Talib Husaini, and dedicated to the Emperor Shah Jahan, who began to reign in A. D. 1628.

In the brief preface to his translation, Abu Talib states that he found the original Turki work in the library of Ja'far, Hakim of Yaman,[1] and that it consisted of a history of Timur, from the seventh to the seventy-fourth year of his age. The reticence of Abu Talib as to the authenticity of the original work, and the strangeness of the place for the discovery of a MS. in a Turki language, have given rise to the suspicion that there was no such work, and that Abu Talib made the statement to give greater authority to a production of his own. Major Davy, who first brought the work to notice, argued against this supposition, grounding his opinion on the internal evidence of the work itself, and on the improbability of an author resorting to "an artifice which could tend only to diminish his fame and his profit." The probability is that Abu Talib knew nothing more of the work than what he learned from its own pages, and that when he had turned these into Persian he had nothing to add. Timur's descendants seem to have had a partiality for writing their own memoirs, as in

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[1] A person of this name was Pasha of Yaman in 1610. —Astley's Voyages referred to by Stewart in the Preface to his translation.

the instances of Babur and Jahangir; and others, who did not profess to be their own biographers, provided for a record of their lives and actions being written. This family predilection is of itself something in favour of the authenticity of the work.

The fact of its being a genuine work, produced under the supervision of Timur himself, can however be proved upon more certain evidence. Only thirty years after Timur's death, Sharafu-d din Yazdi wrote his celebrated *Zafar-nama*, or Book of Victory, to commemorate the exploits of Timur, and in his preface he details the sources from which his work was drawn, and the auspices under which it was written. To establish the veracity and authority of his history, he first describes, in the following words, the way in which a record of the events of Timur's reign was kept at the court of that Emperor.

"The third recommendation (of this my work, named *Zafar-nama*) is its truthfulness — the exactness and verity of the accounts and descriptions of the various events of Timur's life, both at home and abroad. Men of the highest character for learning, knowledge, and goodness, Uighur officers and Persian secretaries, were in attendance at the Court of Timur, and a staff of them under the orders of the Emperor wrote down an account of everything that occurred. The movements, actions and sayings of Timur, the various incidents and affairs of State, of religion, and the ministers, were all recorded and written down with the greatest care. The most stringent commands were given that every event should be recorded exactly as it occurred, without any modification either in excess or diminution. This rule was to be particularly observed in matters of personal bearing and courage, without fear or favour of any one, and most especially in respect of the valour and prowess of the Emperor himself. The learned and eloquent writers having recorded the facts, their compositions were polished and finished off in verse and prose. From time to time these writings were brought into the royal presence and were read to the Emperor, so as to insure confidence by the impress of his approval.

In this way the records of the various incidents and actions of the life of Timur, whether recounted in Turki verse or Persian prose, were revised and finally recorded in prose and verse. Besides this, some of the officers of the Court wrote down the incidents of the reign of Timur, and took the greatest pains to ascertain the truth of what they recorded. Accomplished writers then moulded these productions into Turki verse and Persian prose."

Sharafu-d din then goes on to relate how his own royal patron Ibrahim, grandson of Timur, took the greatest interest in the composition of the *Zafar-nama;* how he procured from all parts of his dominions copies of the works relating to the life of Timur, in prose and verse, in Turki and in Persian; how he supplied him with men learned in Persian and Turki as assistants; how reference was made to surviving actors in the events recorded; how he wrote letters in all directions to settle discrepancies in the MSS., and how he had the work read to him in the rough draft and in the finished state.[1]

So the basis of Sharafu-d din's history was a work or works written under the direction or with the approval of Timur, and a comparison of the *Zafar-nama* with the *Malfuzat* proves the one to be a mere reproduction of the other. The events recorded and their succession are identical,[2] and leave no doubt upon the mind that Sharafu-d din translated or wrote over again in an ornate style that history which had been complied under Timur's direction. Like Oriental writers in general, he half conceals the true origin of his book, and. so exaggerates the magnitude and importance of his own labours, but the only difference observable in the two works is, that one is the production of a skilful and accomplished writer, the other the work of a plain, laborious and minute chronicler of events. With all the rhetoric and flourishes of the *Zafar-nama*, the

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1 Petis de la Croix in his translation of the Preface of the *Zafar-nama*, which is abridged, and is less accurate than the rest of his translation, has made all this to appear as if it applied to Timur.

2 So far at least as concerns the extracts in this volume.

narrative is shorter than that of the detailed and verbose biography.

The *Tuzukat* or Institutes were translated into English by Major Davy, and published under the editorship of Professor White, at Oxford, in 1783, ard this work was turned into French by M. Langles, and published in 1787.

The *Malfuzat* or Memoirs, as far as the forty-first year of Timur's age, were translated into English by Major Stewart, and were published by the Oriental Translation Fund in 1830.

The MS. used by Major Davy and Major Stewart was imperfect, ending abruptly with the forty-first year of Timur's age. This MS. is now in the library of the Royal Asiatic Society, which library also possesses another imperfect copy. There is a similar defective copy in the library of the East Indian office; Sir H. Elliot also procured a defective copy in India, and there are several in the British Museum. These, in all probability, were derived directly or indirectly from one MS. But the British Museum has lately secured a perfect copy from the library of the late General Hamilton, which bears the marks of having once belonged to the Royal Library at Lucknow.

Besides the Version of Abu Talib, there is another, the work of Muhammad Afzal Bukhari. The author of this later version tells us in his preface that when Amir Abu Talib's translation had been read by the Emperor Shah Jahan, it was found to contain errors and mistakes. Its statements occasionally differed from those of the *Zafar-nama* and other histories and while omitting events recorded in the *Zafar-nama*, it added others of which no notice had been taken in that work. For these reasons he goes on to say: "In the year 1047 of the Hijra, and tenth of His Majesty Shah Jahan's reign (A.D. 1687),[1] the royal orders were issued to me, the meanest of the servants of the Imperial Court (Muhammad Afzal Bukhari), to read and revise this book from beginning to end, and to assimilate it with the *Zafar-nama*, of the

correctness of which no intelligent person can have a doubt, and compare it with some other trustworthy histories; to omit some things which the translator had inserted, and to insert occurrences which he had omitted: also to translate the Turki and Arabic sentences into Persian, and to correct several dates, which do not agree with the *Zafar-nama*.....(The author) has exerted himself as much as possible in revising and correcting the said translation, and has thrown out all the unauthenticated passages which Abu Talib had inserted. He has inserted several passages that have been omitted by that translator, and he has thereby made the book conform with the *Zafar-nama*." Major Stewart observes that "It appears in Dow's History of Hindustan that Muhammad Afzal was the name of the Emperor Shah Jahan's preceptor, and so he was probably the person employed to revise this work, but he has not complied with his promise of translating all the Turki passages, although a native of Bukhara, where that language was well understood."

So the *Zafar-nama* was based upon the Turki memoirs of Timur translated by Abu Talib into Persian, and Muhammad Afzal was afterwards employed to bring these memoirs more completely into accord with the *Zafar-nama*, which was founded upon them. The alterations of Abu Talib's work are, however, made to appear greater and more important than they actually are. Major Stewart, after the translation of his fragment of Abu Talib's work, received two copies of Muhammed Afzal's and he says in his Appendix: "I have minutely compared them with Colonel Davy's MS. as far as it extends, and find that the only additions they contain are extracts from Sharafu-d din's history, an explanation of some particulars omitted in the Memoirs, and an attempt to prove that Timur was of the *Sunni* sect, although there is the strongest evidence that he was a very bigoted *Shi'a*." The Editor of this work has made a comparison, though not a minute one, of the text of the following extracts as given in the MS. of Abu Talib in the British Museum, and in one of Muhammad Afzal's belonging to Sir H. Elliot, and

he has found no greater differences between them than might be expected in two MSS. of the same work. So far as regards the portion relating to India the works are identically the same. The concluding sentences differ slightly in the two works, but in both Timur is made to record his own death. Muhammad Afzal, the later writer, makes him briefly say, "I arrived at the village of Atrar[1] and died;" but Abu Talib is more specific, saying "At night, on the 17th of the month of Sha'ban (March 19, 1405 A.D.) calling upon the name of God, I lost my senses, and resigned my pure soul to the Almighty and Holy Creator" (and pure it was if blood, could make it pure!). Major Stewart has noticed this apparent record by Timur of his own death, and shows that it ought not to stamp the work as a forgery. In the fourth clause of his Testament Timur says, "I desire that this my Testament, and whatever I shall say to the last moment of my existence, shall be written in my Memoirs as if proceeding from my own mouth." This instruction has only been carried a trifle too far. The narrative given in this work of Timur's expedition to India has been closely followed by Mirkhond in the *Rauzatu-s Safa* used by Price in his *Retrospect of Mahommedan History.*

Two MSS. of Muhammad Afzal's work have been used for the following extracts. One belonging to the Nawab of Jhajjar, and a copy of a portion of the work made for Sir H. Elliot from a MS. belonging to the Raja of Balamgarh. The first few pages of the translation is the production of C. E. Chapman of the Bengal Civil Service; the remainder has been prepared by the Editor.

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[1] A large town two parasangs or leagues north of the Sihun (Jaxartes).

THE HISTORY OF MY EXPEDITION AGAINST HINDUSTAN

About this time there arose in my heart the desire to lead an expedition against the infidels, and to become a *ghazi*; for it had reached my ears that the slayer of infidels is a *ghazi*, and if he is slain he becomes a martyr. It was on this account that I formed this resolution, but I was undetermined in my mind whether I should direct my expedition against the infidels of China or against the infidels and polytheists of India. In this matter I sought an omen from the Kuran, and the verse I opened upon was this: "O Prophet, make war upon infidels and unbelievers and treat them with severity."

My great officers told me that the inhabitants of Hindustan were infidels and unbelievers. In obedience to the order of Almighty God I determined on an expedition against them, and I issued orders to the *amirs* of mature years, and the leaders in war, to come before me, and when they had come together I questioned the assembly as to whether I should invade Hindustan or China, and said to them, "By the order of God and the Prophet it is incumbent upon me to make war upon these infidels and polytheists." Throwing themselves upon their knees they all wished me good fortune. I demanded of the warrior chieftains whether I should direct my expedition against the infidels of Hindustan or China. At first they repeated fables and wise sayings, and then said, in the country of Hindustan there are four defences, and if any one invading this extensive country breaks down these four defences, he becomes the conqueror of Hindustan.

The first defence consists of five large rivers, which flow from the mountains of Kashmir, and these rivers unite in their course, and passing through the country of Sindh, flow into the Arabian Sea, and it is not possible to cross them without boats and bridges. The second defence consists of woods and forests and trees, which, interweaving stem with stem and branch with branch, render it very difficult to penetrate into that country. The third defence is the soldiery, and landholders, and princes, and Rajas of that country, who inhabit fastnesses in those forests, and live there like wild beasts. The fourth defence consists of the elephants, for the rulers of that country in the day of battle equipping elephants in mail, put them in the van of their army, and place great confidence in them, and they have trained them to such a pitch that, lifting with their trunks a horse with his rider, and whirling him in the air, they will dash him on the ground.

Some of the nobles said in reply that Sultan Mahmud Subuktigin conquered the country of Hindustan with 30,000 horse, and established his own servants as rulers of that region, and carried off many thousand loads of gold and silver and jewels from that country, besides subjecting it to a regular tribute, and is our *amir* inferior to Sultan Mahmud? No; thanks to Almighty God, today a 100,000 valiant Tatar horsemen wait at stirrup of our *amir*; if he determines upon this expedition Almighty God will give him victory, and he will become a *ghazi* and *mujahid* before God, and we shall be attendants on an *amir* who is a *ghazi*, and the army will be contented and the treasury rich and well filled, and with the gold of Hindustan our *amir* will become a conqueror of the world and famous among the kings of earth.

At this time the prince Shah Rukh said: "India is an extensive country; whatever Sultan conquers it becomes supreme over the four quarters of the globe; if, under the conduct of our *amir*, we conquer India, we shall become rulers over the seven climes." He then said: "I have seen in the history of Persia that, in the time of the Persian Sultans, the King of India was called Darai,

with all honour and glory. On account of his dignity he bore no other name; and the Emperor of Rome was called *Caesar*, and the Sultan of Persia was called *Kisra*, and the Sultan of the Tatars, *Khakan*, and the Emperor of China *Faghfur*; but the King of Iran and Turan bore the title of *Shahinshah*, and the orders of *Shahinshah* were always paramount over the princes and Rajas of Hindustan, and praise be to God that we are at this time *Shahinshah* of Iran and Turan, and it would be a pity that we should not be supreme over the country of Hindustan." I was excessively pleased with these words of Prince Shah Rukh. Then the Prince Muhammad Sultan said: "The whole country of India is full of gold and jewels, and in it there are seventeen mines of gold and silver, diamond and ruby and emerald and tin and iron and steel and copper and quick-silver, etc., and of the plants which grow there are those fit for making wearing apparel, and aromatic plants, and the sugarcane, and it is a country which is always green and verdant, and the whole aspect of the country is pleasant and delightful. Now, since the inhabitants are chiefly polytheists and infidels and idolaters and worshipers of the sun, by the order of God and his prophet, it is right for us to conquer them.

My *wazirs* informed me that the whole amount of the revenue of India is six *arbs*; now each *arb* is a 100 *kror*, and each *kror* is a 100 *lacs*, and each *lac* is a 100,000 *miskals* of silver. Some of the nobles said, "By the favour of Almighty God we may conquer India, but if we establish ourselves permanently therein, our race will degenerate and our children will become like the natives of those regions, and in a few generations their strength and valour will diminish." The *amirs* of regiments (*kushunat*) were disturbed at these words, but I said to them, "My object in the invasion of Hindustan is to lead an expedition against the infidels that, according to the law of Muhammad (upon whom and his family be the blessing and peace of God), we may convert to the true faith the people of that country, and purify the land itself from the filth of infidelity and polytheism; and that we may overthrow

their temples and idols and become *ghazis* and *mujahids* before God". They gave an unwilling consent, but I placed no reliance upon them. At this time the wise men of Islam came before me, and a conversation began about the propriety of a war against infidels and polytheists; they gave it as their opinion that it is the duty of the Sultan of Islam, and all the people who profess that "there is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is the prophet of Allah," for the sake of preserving their religion and strengthening their law, to exert their utmost endeavour for the suppression of the enemies of their faith. And it is the duty of every Muslim and true believer to use his utmost exertions in obedience to his ruler. When the edifying words of the wise men reached the ears of the nobles, all their hearts were set upon a holy war in Hindustan, and throwing themselves on their knees, they repeated the Chapter of Victory.

When I girded up my loins for the expedition, I wrote to Hazrat Shaik Zainu-d din to the effect that I had determined on a religious expedition to Hindustan. He wrote in the margin of my letter: "Be it known to Abu-l Ghazi Timur (whom may God assist) that great prosperity in this world and the next will result to you from this undertaking, and you will go and return in safety." He also sent me a large sword which I made my sceptre.

In the meanwhile there came a petition from the Prince Pir Muhammad Jahangir, from the confines of Kabulistan, the government of which country, from the boundaries of Kunduz and Bakalan and Kabul and Ghazni and Kandahar, was vested in him. When I looked at this petition it was thus written: "Since, according to your order, I arrived in this country, I have acted towards all the people conformably to the exalted order and wisdom-increasing counsels of the great king. When I had satisfied my mind with the conquest and settlement of this kingdom, I turned my thoughts towards the acquisition of some of the provinces of Hindustan. I enquired concerning the condition of the country and received the following account: that the city of Dehli

is the capital of the sovereigns of India, and after the death of Sultan Firoz Shah, two brothers among his nobility, of whom one was named Mallu and the other Sarang, becoming very powerful, established their independence, giving the nominal sovereignty to one of the sons of Sultan Firoz Shah, by name, Sultan Mahmud, they kept the real power in their own hands, and virtually governed the empire. Mallu, the elder brother, lives at Dehli, about the person of Sultan Mahmud, and Sarang is established in the city of Multan, for the protection of that country. When I became acquainted with these matters, acting according to the practice of the great king, I wrote a letter and sent it to him (Sarang) by an ambassador, purporting that since the fame of the victories and conquests, and of the extensive empire of the great king is spread all over the world, it is certain that it must have reached him also. The great king has appointed me to the government of those provinces which lie on the borders of Hindustan, and has ordered that "If the rulers of Hiudustan come before me with tribute I will not interfere with their lives, property, or kingdoms; but if they are negligent in proffering obedience and submission, I will put forth my strength for the conquest of the kingdoms of India. At all events, if they set any value upon their lives, property and reputation, they will pay me a yearly tribute, and if not, they shall hear of my arrival with my powerful armies. Farewell.' When the ambassador reached the presence of Sarang at Multan, he was treated with great respect and consideration ; but in reply to his letter, Sarang said, 'It is difficult to take empire like a bride to your bosom without trouble and difficulty and the clashing of swords. The desire of your prince is to take this kingdom with its rich revenue. Well, let him wrest it from us by force of arms if he be able. I have numerous armies and formidable elephants, and am quite prepared for war.' With these words he dismissed the ambassador. But when this unsatisfactrory answer was brought back to me, I issued immediate orders for the armies to assemble from all quarters, together with such of the nobles as were in my

province, such as Amir Saikal Kandahari, and other *amirs*,[1] and soldiers. I got ready for the invasion of Hindustan. I plundered and laid waste the country of the Afghanis who inhabit the mountain Sulaiman. and marching steadily forwards I crossed the river Indus, and assaulted the city of Uch, and through the good fortune of the great king, I took it. Leaving a body of men there as a garrison, I proceeded to Multan, which I beseiged; but as Sarang had carefully fortified and strengthened this fortress, the siege has been protracted for some days, and, indeed, I am at this moment engaged in the siege, giving an assault twice every day. All the nobles have displayed great valour and intrepidity, more especially Timur Khawajah, the son of Amir Akugha, and 1 am now waiting. for further instructions."

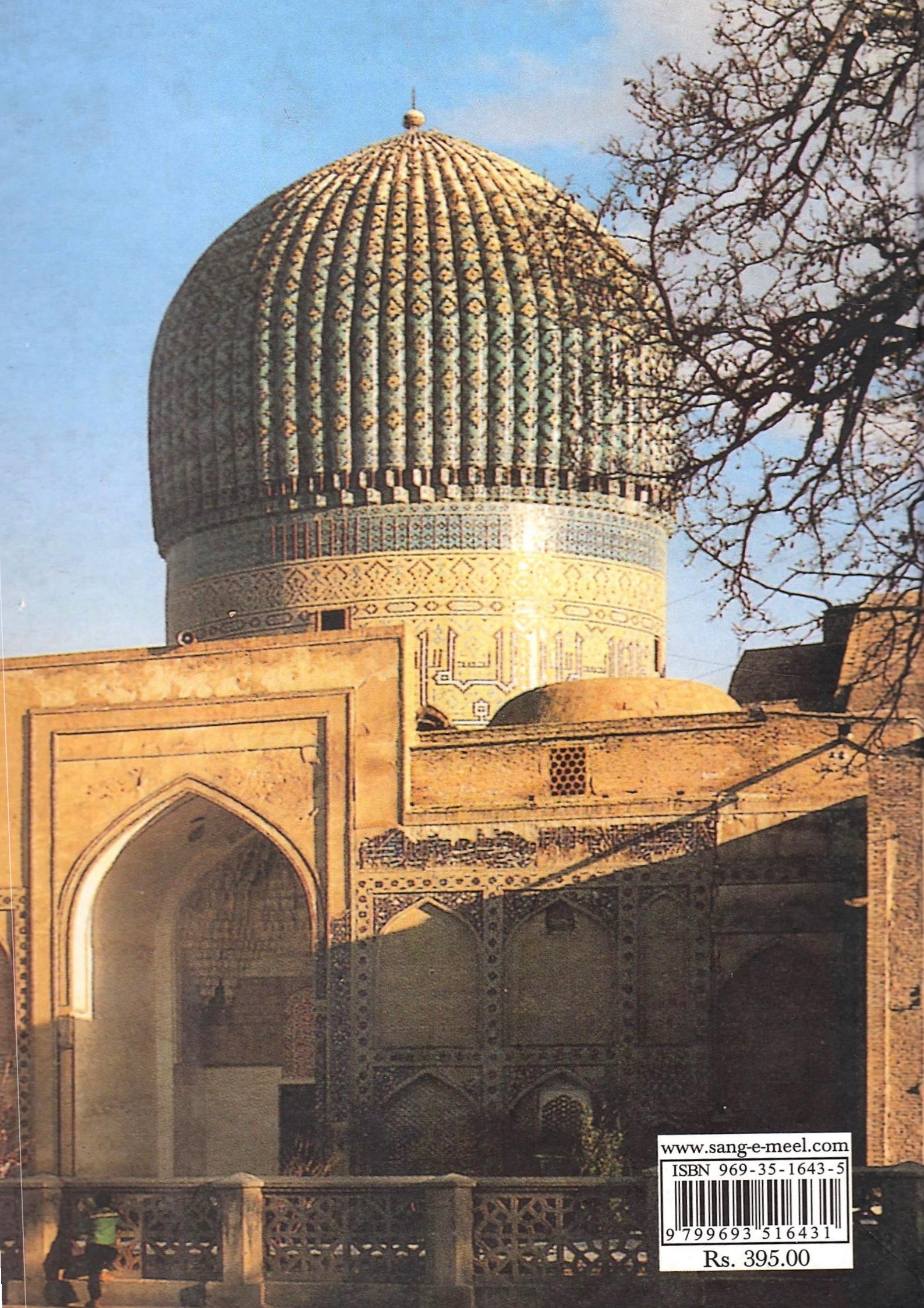
When I had read this letter, my previous resolution was confirmed and strengthened.

THE HOLY WAR AGAINST THE INFIDELS OF HINDUSTAN

I acted in such a manner that by the spring of that year I had collected the soldiery from all parts of the countries under my sway; and in the auspicious month Rajab, A. H. 800 (March 1398), which may be exprssed according to the rule of *Abjad*, by the words *karib fath*, appointed the prince Umar, the son of Prince Mirza Shah, my viceroy in Samarkand, and leaving him some of the nobles and soldiery, I placed my foot in the stirrup at a lucky moment and quitting my capital Samarkand, directed my course towards Hindustan. Marching on, hunting as I went, I reached Turmuz, and ordering the construction of a bridge of boats over the Jihun. I crossed that river with my whole army and encamped at the village of Khulm. Beating the drum of departure from that

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[1] (A long string of names is given.)



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