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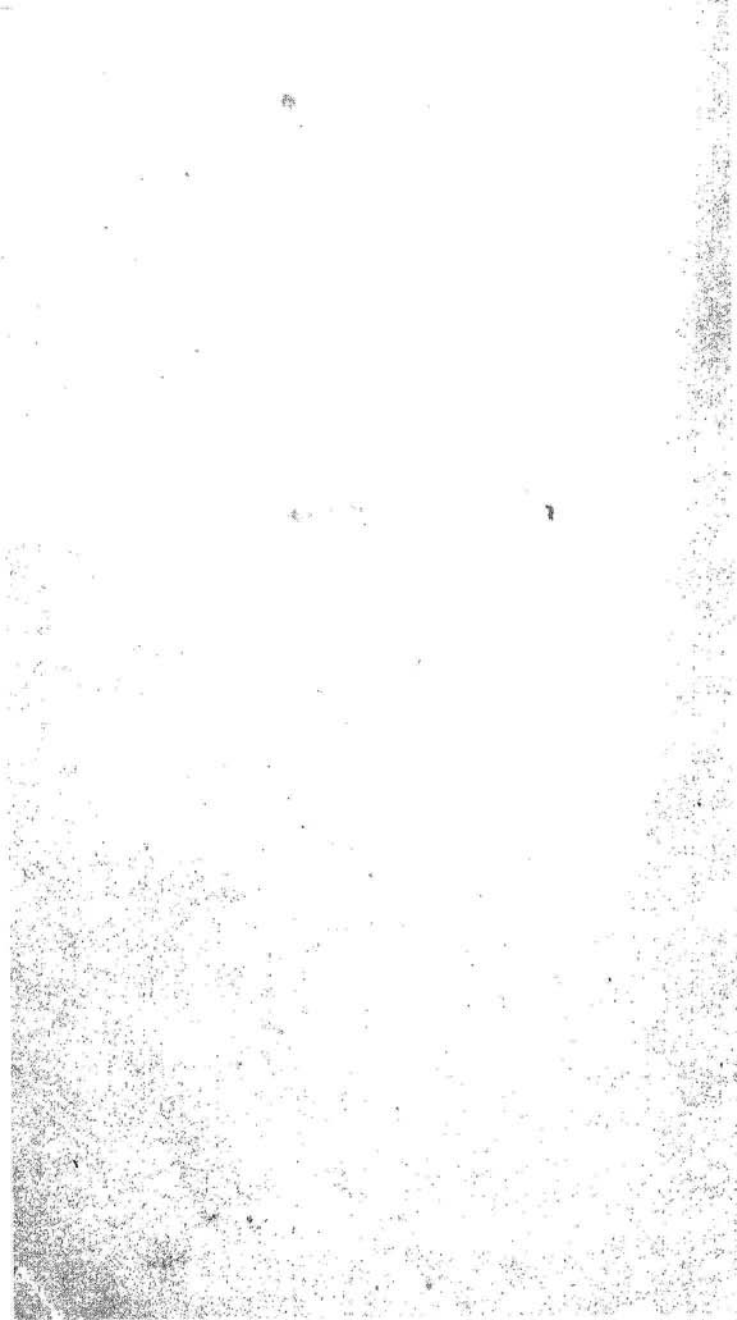
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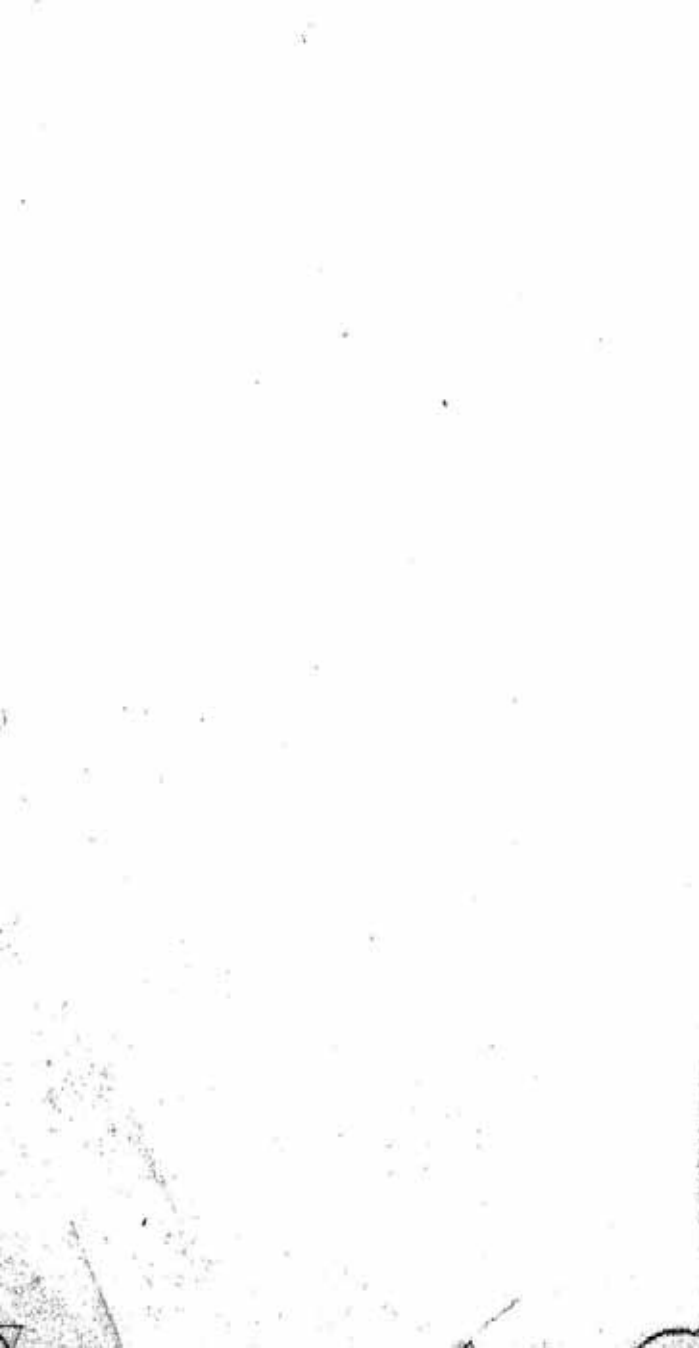
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Mehar Mehan







# STUDIES IN Medieval Indian History

By

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*At the Yugantar Press, Dufferin Bridge, Delhi.*

Mr's median child. In the 18th Dec. 1881

*To*

Dr. C. Collin Davies  
With deep gratitude and esteem

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## PREFACE

The papers collected together in this little volume are based on my lectures to the post-graduate classes. There has been a persistent demand from my pupils to possess them in permanent form. Some of them were published from time to time in historical journals but these are not easily accessible to the students. It is primarily to meet the wishes of my pupils that I have been moved to publish them in book form. Such of the papers as have been previously published in periodicals, have been thoroughly revised and enlarged for this volume.

Moreover, in publishing these papers my object is to share with scholars of history the views and conclusions which I have been led to form from a careful and anxious attempt to comprehend the significance of the available data bearing on the several topics discussed therein. It will perhaps be noted by those who care to glance through these pages that my views in respect of almost all aspects and questions of moment connected with the topics under discussion, differ rather widely and often radically from the commonly accepted ones. Hence those who have been long fed on and still more those who have propagated views far different from the ones expressed here might find it hard to swallow them. I should therefore ever welcome and sincerely appreciate healthy and helpful criticism. Equally well should I expect orthodoxies hardened

Allaud-din Khilji Dr. Saran brings forward a thesis so completely staggering in its boldness and novelty that it is likely to be the subject of a prolonged controversy. Two other topics—"Frontier policy of the Turkish Sultans" and 'Politics and Personalities in the reign of Sultan Nasir-uddin Mahmud' have been discussed for the first time in the light of original material and interpreted in a rational manner. A short but very interesting study proves that the word 'Kotwal', derived from *Kot* (fort) and *Pal* (warden), is of purely Indian origin, though it has found its way into other languages and other countries.

Dr. Saran's *Studies in Medieval Indian History* is an outstanding work of ripe and mature scholarship which all teachers and students should peruse and assimilate with the greatest care. Most of its conclusions will stand the test of time.

Mohammad Habib,  
*Professor of History and Politics*  
Muslim University, Aligarh.

## I

### THE FEUDAL SYSTEM OF RAJPUTANA

Colonel James Tod is responsible for giving currency to the belief which has come to be commonly accepted as an indisputable fact of history that a Feudal system identical with the Feudal system of Medieval Europe obtained in Medieval Rajputana. The terminology of that peculiar socio-political system which arose in the Middle-ages in Europe has been very vaguely and carelessly applied to Indian institutions by many a writer. Some Western writers persist in calling as 'fiefs' even the assignments which were made to their officers by the Muslim rulers of India, and the word feud is quite as freely and indiscriminately used, although it has been shown by some scholars, like Moreland<sup>2</sup>, for instance, that the use of the Feudal terminology of Europe to denote any institutions of India which might have a superficial or even partial resemblance with the former is highly inappropriate and misleading<sup>3</sup>.

This remark is also true in essence in respect of the system which prevailed and still survives in Rajputana, although it may be conceded at once that the Rajput society did wear the aspect of a Feudal society and its framework seemed to possess many resemblances to the Feudal society of medieval Europe. Indeed, several incidents of the two systems look so akin that



they seem to have a common origin. It was these rather striking resemblances and common incidents which misled Colonel Tod into drawing an exact analogy between European Feudalism and Rajput society. But a close examination of the essentials of the Rajput system reveals the fact that the two systems, despite their superficial resemblances, are fundamentally different. Hence to the socio-political order of society and its institutions which are found to have obtained in the kingdoms of Rajputana during the Mughal<sup>4</sup> period it is neither accurate nor safe to apply the terminology of Western Feudalism.

Before proceeding to notice the points of resemblance and difference between the two systems it would seem necessary to examine the causes and circumstances which gave rise to either of these systems. The history of the European Feudal system has been studied thoroughly by a number of eminent scholars and an enormous body of literature has been produced dealing with the various aspects of the subject. But this is, unfortunately, far from being the case with the Rajput social system. In fact, it has so far received next to no attention from our historians. Even such monumental works as the *Vir Vinod of Kaviraj Shyamaldas* and the *History of Rajputana* by G. H. Ojha, do not contain a single line on the nature of the socio-political system of Rajputana<sup>5</sup>. The only exception is that of Colonel Tod who compels admiration by the thoroughness, deep scholarship and unrivalled knowledge

of Rajputana which he brought to bear on the subject. But even Tod has not attempted any thing beyond merely describing the system as he found it obtaining in his time. He has not tried to trace the causes and conditions of its origin and growth. He only says that the basis of both the Rajput and the European systems was the patriarchal form<sup>6</sup>. But he also feels inclined to agree with the definition of Gibbon, who styles the system of our ancestors 'the offspring of *chance and barbarism*'. The significance of this realisation or feeling, however, would seem to have been missed by Tod himself, as I shall presently show. Nor has any other scholar, so far as I know, explored this field which has remained quite dark like numerous other important aspects of our history. The problem of the rise and growth of *Feudalistic institutions* in the society of Rajputana is indeed part of a wider problem which offers a vast field of enquiry for the student of Indian history. I therefore wish, in passing, to refer to this problem.

The rise of the Rajput kingdoms<sup>7</sup> is known to commence from the 7th century A. D. and their history gradually emerges from obscurity into full light until from about the 8th century we are in a position to know about their society and culture, and their political institutions, at least up to the end of the 12th century when the leading Hindu chiefs of northern India collapsed like nine-pins in the first sweep of Turkish invasions from beyond the north-west. In Rajputana where they managed to

maintain their existence they sank into insignificance until we find them emerge into prominence again in the middle of the 16th century<sup>8</sup>, and then, though only as subordinates and vassals of the Mughal emperors, they played a very important role chiefly in the political and military history of the Mughal empire. Now this period extending over close upon three centuries was, without doubt, a period of transition during which Rajput society and their institutions seem to have undergone profound and far-reaching changes. Upto the end of the 12th century the character and structure of the Rajput social and political institutions were purely indigenous, having been directly inherited from the ancient political system of India. Their terminology was entirely derived from Sanskrit, and their aims and ideals were governed by principles expounded in Hindu works of polity. Nor are there any evident traces in their social and political systems upto that time of any feudalistic institutions which seem to emerge from the 16th century onwards. There is no trace among ancient ruling dynasties of any society being based on a patriarchal order as the medieval Rajput kingdoms and dynasties are found to be in the later period. But besides the growth of 'feudalistic' institutions, which wrought a radical change in the Rajput social structure, their political system also would appear to be changed almost beyond recognition. The *Mantrin*, or *Mahamatya*, the *Mahasandhivigrahika*, the *Mahasenapati*, the *Mahabaladhikrit* and

others have all disappeared and their place is taken by *Pradhan*, *Bakhshi*, *Suratnama*, *Sahai* and *Faujadar*. In place of the *Mandal*, *Vishaya* and *Bhukti* we have the *Tahsil*, *Pargana*, and *Thana*, the last two being of course the popular forms of the ancient *Pratigana* and *Thana* or *Sthanika* but current in their new forms only in the Muslim period. How and by what forces such a radical transformation was brought about is a very interesting subject for historical investigation. Now for a comparison of the Rajput and European systems it is necessary briefly to review the origin and rise of the Feudal system of Europe and its fundamental characteristics.

In the growth of all institutions in history two things must be clearly distinguished from the very beginning in order to have a correct understanding of the process and its results. First, the change of conditions in the social and political environment which necessitated new growth or innovation, and second the already existing institutions which began to be transformed to meet the new needs.

In the case of European Feudalism the need for a change in the existing institutions and for a new growth was created by the chaos consequent upon the decline of the power and prestige of the Roman Empire. In such a condition the government of the empire found itself too weak to fulfil its primary and basic obligations of providing security of life and property to its subjects. Consequently it became a widely felt and imperative need of Roman

society to forge some other machinery which could assure them protection both from internal and external dangers and other disturbers of peace who rise up and thrive in such times. We have already referred to Col. Tod's feeling of agreement with Gibbon who described the European system as the 'offspring of chance and barbarism'. Faced with this situation the weak freeman, who was exposed to attack, in almost every relation of life, naturally sought protection from whatever quarter it was to be had and paid its price. So the *great and fundamental social fact*, was the failure of the government to perform its primary duty of protecting its people, which therefore provided the occasion for the rise and growth of Feudalism. Indeed the decline of the monarchical power created the necessity between the lord and vassal or client for mutual preservation. The immediate basis, therefore, on which the feudal structure was erected was provided by the compact between the lord and his vassal for exchange of service and protection into which they had entered. Thus was created the first and the most basic of the two conditions which made a change necessary in the constitution of the social organism. Crooke has perhaps struck at the right key to the solution of the vexed problem of the origin of Feudalism when he observes that it possibly began with the desire for protection, the "*Rakhwali*" of the Rajputs, but it seems to have been ultimately based on the Law of Rome, while the influence

of the Church interested in securing its endowments was a factor in its evolution<sup>9</sup>.

The second condition comprising the factors which determined and shaped its subsequent evolution and its various institutions was provided by the vestiges of the early Roman institutions in the beginning and later by the local institutions in France and other countries where Feudalism came in to occupy the vacuum created by the circumstance of their governments having lost the capacity and the power to fulfil their primary obligations and functions.

In Rome there were two chief classes of people who were compelled to seek protection, viz., the landless freeman and the petty land-owners. The ancient Roman institution of patron and client relationship served as a basis and was with slight modification utilised by the landless freeman, both in the later Roman and early German states. The landless freeman who could not support and protect himself went to some powerful neighbour, stated his needs and offered his services—such as befitted a freeman—in return for shelter and support. In the German state this transaction came to be a written contract, and was called *commendation*, its Roman name being *patrocinium*.

The petty land-owner was in great difficulty for the protection not only of himself but also his land. So when he begged for protection the rich man said 'I can only protect my own land.' The poor man was thus forced to surrender the ownership of his land to his powerful or rich neighbour and receive it back under

a condition called *precarium* which gave him protection during his life-time. But this was done at the cost of his children who were left without any legal claim on that land.

After the conquest of *Gaul* by the Franks, these two practices underwent certain modifications by borrowing from the Frankish institutions, such as the *comitatus*, of which the *oath of fealty* was adopted in the future relations of master and vassal, thus changing their very spirit and ideas. Prior to this the relation of overlord and client was merely in the nature of a contract. It was now by a closer tie *i.e.*, the oath of fealty. An equally important contribution was made by the church in as much as it began to grant its own land to smaller freemen, which was called a *benefice*. Later it came to be associated with an obligation on the part of the client or the vassal to maintain cavalry and render military service to his overlord, *i.e.*, the church or its head. The above-mentioned origin of the Feudal society of Europe would help us to understand the radically different origin of society in Rajputana.

The political society of the Rajputs was based on a patriarchal conception. The vassals (so-called) of the chieftains were in reality younger members of a family of which he was the seniormost and hence the head. The younger members' '*fiefs*' were their rightful shares which they claimed as their hereditary right. But the nature and conditions of the '*fiefs*' held by vassals in Medieval Europe were



quite otherwise, because the patriarchal form of society was unknown there. This was the reason why in *Rajputana no personal or landless fiefs or vassals have ever existed*, as in Europe. Many of the institutions and mutual obligations and duties between the chief and his vassals in Rajputana arose from their patriarchal basis of society, unlike Europe where they arose out of a contract entered into by two parties (not of the same family or tribe), viz., the *Lord* and his *Client*.

But the last and the most important change which the weak successors of Charlemagne had gradually to accept and even legalise was the recognition of the armies of the vassals, and of the translation of a number of cases of public duty into private obligations and of the authority of the sovereign into the hands of the feudal nobility. The powers which thus came to be exercised by the feudal nobility, independently of the sovereign may best be described in the words of Hallam : 'To understand in what degree the peers and barons of France, during the prevalence of the feudal principles, were independent of the crown, we must look at their privileges. These may be reckoned : 1. The right of coining money ; 2. That of waging private war ; 3. The exemption from all public tributes except the feudal aids ; 4. The freedom from legislative control ; 5. The exclusive exercise of original judicature in their dominions. Privileges so enormous and so contrary to all principles of sovereignty, might lead us, in strictness, to account France rather



a collection of states, partially allied to each other, than a single monarchy."<sup>10</sup>

Now these conditions have never obtained at any time in the history of Rajputana, or any other part of India, for that matter. On the contrary, in Europe about the beginning of 10th century, the lords, among other assumptions of independence, issued money with no marks but their own. At one time as many as a hundred and fifty exercised this right and excluded the circulation of royal money. 'Philip Augustus requests the Abbot of Corvey, who had desisted from using his own mint, to let the royal money of Paris circulate through his territories ; promising that when it should please the abbot to coin money afresh for himself the king would not oppose its circulation'<sup>11</sup>. In Rajputana, on the contrary, the right of coining money was never acquired by the subordinate chiefs<sup>12</sup>. Further, in the matter of taxation, 'the right of toll, customs, of alienage (aubaine), generally even the regale, or enjoyment of the temporalities of vacant episcopal sees and other ecclesiastical benefices, were possessed within their own domains, by the great feudatories of the crown'<sup>13</sup>. But the culmination of this process of the independence of the Feudal barons was reached when they also asserted the right of private war<sup>14</sup>, which has compelled Hallam to make the remark quoted above. Such a state of affairs was, from the very nature of its society, inconceivable in Rajputana. Then, again, the machinery of common law as well as its application, that is to

say, of judicature had come to a stand-still, because every noble had his own court of justice, had made his own laws for the territory under his jurisdiction, resulting in the emergence of numerous codes of laws, differing from one another, in place of the uniform common law of the king. This too was never possible in Rajputana. Public Law was never supplanted by Private Political Law in Rajputana.

But in the different lands where Feudalism found congenial soil to develop it naturally differed very greatly in its conditions and practices. Nevertheless, underlying all this diversity there were certain root principles and relationships which were everywhere alike and which lent the essence of feudalism to everything that was feudal, no matter what its form might be. The chief of these were: (1) The relation of vassal and lord. (2) The principle that every holder of a land is a tenant and not an owner until he reached the highest rank. (3) The tenure by which a thing of value is held is one of honourable service, not intended to be economic, but moral and political in character. (4) The principle of mutual obligations of loyalty, protection and mutual service binding together all the ranks from the highest to the lowest, and (5) the principle of contract or compact between lord and tenant as determining all rights and obligations between the lord and vassal, and forming the foundation of feudal law.

The foundation of feudal relationship was the *fief* which was usually land but might be

any desirable thing, as an office, a revenue in money or kind, the right to collect toll, or operate a mill. In return for the fief the man became the vassal of the lord which involved a number of duties and obligations for the vassal to render, such as military service, court service consisting of helping to form the court, submitting his decisions to the overlord's court, taking his cases to his own lord and also giving advice to the lord. He had also to pay certain aids to the lord in times of need, either civic or military. The heir had to pay something as relief for the recognition of his right to inherit his father's tenure, etc., etc.

Lastly the government of the feudal country was a new form of organisation which had supplanted the old form in which military and civil duties to the community had been the public obligations of the government to perform. In the new system the idea of public duty to the community was replaced by a private obligation on the vassals in return for the fiefs they held. Thus the feudal state was one in which private law had usurped the place of public law and public duty had become private obligation. How all these functions and powers had been usurped by feudal lords has already been stated in the words of Hallam. All sorts of services which men ordinarily owe to the public or to one another were translated into a form of rent paid for the use of land and defined and enforced by a private contract. The government was usually sustained by the scanty feudal pay-

ments and by the proceeds of justice and the income of royal domain manors.

These then were the essential characteristics of the Feudal system of Europe. Along with them had grown up a great variety of external forms and ceremonies to be observed by the vassals on ceremonial occasions. These however differed from place to place and constituted only the outer vesture of the system, and not its essence. Feudalism thus came in as a great social and political necessity, the necessity of fulfilling the public obligations and functions of the kings and rulers when the latter became too feeble to perform them. It filled the vacuum created by the disappearance of the authority of the sovereign and of his power to perform his functions and duties. Its supreme feature was that it was a system in which kings and their governments were thrown into the shade and rendered impotent and secondly in which the authority and functions of the governments were, for all practical purposes, usurped by powerful landlords in their private capacity. In other words, Feudalism was an anarchy, that is to say, a kingless society but not without an organisation and method, whatever might have been the local environments which gave it peculiar local forms. Its decline and disappearance therefore came when their functions of protection, legislation and justice and local supervision could be resumed by kings and their governments.

Besides the above stated features which constitute the essence of the Feudal system of

Europe, there were certain more general obligations of vassals known under the name of Feudal incidents, viz., Relief, Escheat, Aids, Wardship, Marriage and Fines of alienation.

We have now to see what similarities and dissimilarities can be found between the two systems on a comparison of European Feudalism with the Rajput social and political organisation.

*Resemblances :*

The resemblances of the two systems pertain mainly to their structure and framework; hence they are only superficial. They are in the incidents rather than in the essential features.

*Feudal Relief or Nazrana—*

The custom of feudal relief was in principle the same in the east and west. In Mewar when the relief was paid the estate was put in possession of the heir of the deceased chief at an imposing ceremony. The '*Khadg bandhai*' or 'binding of the sword,' is also performed when a Rajput is fit to bear arms. This is like the ancient custom of German tribes, who used to put into the hands of the aspirant for fame a lance. It also resembled the Roman custom of the '*toga virilis*' (i.e. the garb of manhood put on by boys at fourteen).

The custom of relief points to the existence of a right of resumption, though, as admitted by Tod (Vol. 1, 186), it was only a formal privilege which was never exercised, and was

rendered a dead letter by the non-practice of it (Ibid. p. 191).

*Escheat*—The practice of escheat in case of failure of heirs in lineal succession, or forfeiture, partial or total, as punishment for crimes also obtained. But in the former case the evil of escheat was mitigated by the practice of adoption. Then there were two distinct classes of landholders in Rajputana viz., the '*Girasia*' and '*Bhumia*.' The Girasia chieftain was he who held '*giras*' i.e., subsistence, by a grant (patta) of the prince for which he had to perform service with specified quotas of force at home and abroad. This class of tenure was subject to resumption and was renewable, and was comparable to that of the fief-holders of Europe.

But the *Bhumia* held his land by prescriptive possession which was inherited as an indefeasible patrimony. The Bhumia land-holder had only to pay a small annual quit-rent. His obligation to render military service too was limited both in point of time and place. He could be called upon for local service in the district where he resided and for a certain period only. The Bhumia, as Tod points out, was the counterpart of the allodial proprietor of Europe. The English land system however is fundamentally different in this respect, being based, as it is, on the conception of the whole land being legally the property of the king.

*Fine of alienation*—The practice of alienation by a vassal of his feud or transfer of tenure did not prevail in Rajputana. The only exception

noted by Tod is that of donations for pious or charitable purposes for which the Lord's sanction was necessary. There being no alienation there were no fines of alienation, as there were in Europe. But the agricultural tenants of the Crown who had no counterpart in Europe, could alienate their holdings because they were the real proprietors of the soil, although for doing so they had to pay a small fine to mark the transaction. Such peasant-proprietors did not exist in Feudal Europe.

*Aids*:—Aids or free gifts or 'benevolences' as they were termed in European code, were quite common to both. These consisted of aids at the marriage of the chief's daughter, a water-tax when the chief was in trouble or as ransom to redeem his person from prison, or again in some states, for the marriage of his eldest son. But like Europe these aids varied greatly according to the local customs and were often extorted unreasonably.

There was a further analogy in the various obligations of the vassal and indeed the mutual obligations of the overlord and vassal. In European Feudalism the vassal was bound to fidelity, aids and counsel. These vague terms implied forty-days service in war, often the temporary surrender of castles at need, the payment of Feudal aids, attendance at the suzerain's courts to give him counsel in his affairs and in his justice. In Rajputana too almost the same obligations had to be performed by the vassal. Here he had to give himself as a hostage for his release. The principle of fief



was in both cases a mutual contract of support and fidelity.

Thus the Rajput polity was organised on a military basis and in its structure it had a close resemblance with its European parallel. But there were certain fundamental differences between the two, which make it clear that in its origins and to some extent in its working the Rajput society was so different from European Feudalism that it would be highly inaccurate and misleading to call it by that name.

*Dissimilarities:*

The most fundamental point of difference between the two systems was that the Rajput system did not arise as a result of the weakness and incapacity of the monarchies which was the occasion for the rise of European Feudalism which stepped in to perform the duties of protecting their subjects from external and internal dangers. In the history of the Rajput kingdoms we know of no such period when their kings and governments had grown so weak as to be unable to perform their obligations towards their subjects. The Rajput society was not based on any such compact of mutual preservation and service between vassal and lord as European society was. The basis of the relation between the lord and vassal was, in Rajput society, blood and kinship and hence all the vassals claimed and received the jagirs as their share of the patrimony. They also claimed social equality with the lord whom they called their brother. They recognised



him only as a leader, whereas in Europe the basis of the rank of nobility was land-tenure, in Rajputana the process was just the reverse of it, in as much as purity of blood and kinship was the basis of land-tenure. From the vast estates of subchief who lived in independence, almost complete, at the head of a branch family which has multiplied into a sept, down to the single free-holding Rajput who is bound to follow his kinsmen to the battlefield all derived their status from kinship with the chief. In Europe Feudalism came in as a necessary and welcome substitute for the machinery of the king's government which had almost ceased to function. As we have seen above after Charlemagne the Governments of Europe had grown so effete that gradually almost all their powers and functions were usurped by the feudal barons. Public law gave place to private law, public duty became private obligation and the functions of the king's peace and justice were taken over by manorial courts which exercised unlimited power within their respective jurisdictions, allowing no right of appeal by their subjects to the royal court. As has been observed above they started their own currencies and coined their own monies and even asserted their right to wage wars. Thus the feudal lords threw off the responsibility for their actions to any higher or central authority and began to exercise it in their own private right. Later on the kings making a virtue of necessity recognised the accomplished fact and even went forward to begin the practice of granting admi-

nistrative fiefs to *Counts* to be administered by them. In this way the feudal duchies and counties came into existence and territories of the kingdoms were farmed out. Thus the feudal system took possession of the territory as well as the functions of the state. In its fullest development this system was a perfect example of an organised anarchy. Now in the history of Rajput kingdoms, or for that matter, in any part of India, we know of no such political weakness or incapacity of the monarchs at any time as to have occasioned the growth of a system which could so completely supplant the monarchy and usurp all its functions of legislation, justice and protection, and even of coining and issuing currency. They were seldom reduced to the position of being weaker than their own *jagirdars* or to depend solely on the latter's support and assistance even for their own safety as in Europe. So the excuse which occasioned the rise of European Feudalism was wanting in the case of the Indian system.

Secondly the land in Europe was legally the king's property whereas in Rajputana, just as in the rest of the country, the peasant was the proprietor of the soil, the king or his *jagirdars* having a claim only to a share of its produce. The king enjoyed only usufructuary rights in the land and not proprietary rights. He could therefore transfer only those rights which he possessed and nothing more.

Thirdly much of the judicial and administrative authority was exercised by the village

community councils, i.e., the panchayats, whose jurisdiction remained intact and was never interfered with by any authority. No such institution existed in Europe where the barons were the sole masters and enjoyed all powers over the inhabitants of their fiefs or manors. In Rajputana at a very late period (in the 19th century) some chiefs had begun to claim the right of exercising judicial powers but only in civil cases, while the criminal and property disputes were decided by the village panchayats. But even this power was not effectively acquired. Besides the recognition which was given to the local panchayats, other local customs and laws were respected. Such was not the case in Europe. Indeed the continuance of any such agencies of local administration as the village panchayats is inconceivable in the truly feudal society which is the very negation of democracy, whereas the village councils were democratic in nature. This was due to another fundamental difference between the two social organisations. The practice of sub-infeudation in Rajputana was naturally restricted to minor collaterals of the family, while in Europe it went down, stage by stage, to the tiller of the soil himself, who was a villein or serf. The cultivator of Rajputana, on the contrary, was never a serf, but a free-man. '*Villeinage*' was unknown to Rajputana.

Among the minor but none-the-less important points of difference was the right of adoption which was an ancient Hindu right of the childless parents and was never questioned.

This served as a protection against the abuse of the feudal right of ownership. Then the right of marrying a minor vassal to whomsoever he chose was exercised by the overlord in Europe. This was unthinkable in the Indian social system. Moreover, the nature of the military obligation of the vassal was essentially different in India in as much as it entailed military service to the lord at any sacrifice, while in Europe it meant merely an obligation *to follow* the lord in war. Here it was based on personal relationship, while in Europe it was a part of an economic contract.

Lastly we must also note that while in Europe with the revival of monarchical governments when they could resume their functions of protection and general administration the Feudal system has completely disappeared, the Indian system in the land of its birth still survives simultaneously with the governments of the kings who are by no means weaker than their vassals and far from being puppets in the latter's hands as the rulers of Europe had become. The survival of what is no more than a superficially 'feudalistic' organisation of Rajput society down to the present day further points to the undeniable conclusion that its origin was basically different from the feudal society or the politico-social system of Medieval Europe.

The causes and circumstances leading to the growth of the patriarchal system as the basis of the later Rajput society are still obscure and difficult to unravel. But it may be surmised

that the Indian system arose from certain social and moral forces rather than from any political necessity, and this is why it survives even today.

*Abbreviations :*

CHI—Cambridge History of India.

JIH—Journal of Indian History.

Tod—Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan, by Col. James Tod. Edited by Sir William Crooke (Oxford 1920).

'Middle Ages'—View of the State of Europe during the Middle Ages by Henry Hallam.

NOTES

1. The CHI. Vol. III, p. 77, and IV, for instance, and V. A. Smith, *passim*.
2. See 'Feudalism (?) in the Moslem Kingdom of Delhi' by W. H. Moreland, in JIH Vol. VII, Part I, April, 1938.
3. This view about the character of Rajput Society has curiously become widely current in spite of the warning given by Hallam himself, (*viz.*, that 'it is of great importance...for us to be on guard against seeming analogies which vanish away when they are closely observed'). See 'Middle Ages' (Fifth Edn. 1829) Vol. I, p. 200. Crooke, however, noticed the mistake of Tod and pointed out that 'Tod unguardedly overlooked the warning of Hallam' (See Rajasthan, Ed. by W. Crooke, introduction, p. XXXIX).

4. This order of society is not found to exist in the early Rajput kingdoms and can hardly be traced until as late as the latter half of the 15th century. It is extremely difficult to trace its origin and development owing to the paucity of materials.
5. These works are miscalled 'Histories of Rajputana.' They constitute merely a chronological account of the Rajput chiefs and their dynasties.
6. Tod, I. 155.
7. The term Rajput seems to have come to be applied in a specific sense (signifying the princes of Rajputana, claiming to be Kshatriyas) under Muslim rule. It is not used in any earlier writings down to the 10th century A. D. to denote a caste or community.
8. The only exception was the Sisodia house of Chittor whose warrior chiefs had acquired great power and prestige as early as the 14th century.
9. Tod., J., pp. XXXVIII—XXXIX.
10. The Middle Ages, Vol. I (Fifth edition, 1829) pp. 227-228.
11. Loc cit.
12. 'The privilege of coining money is a reservation of royalty. No subject is allowed to coin gold or silver, though the Salumber chief has on sufferance a copper currency.' vide Tod, Ed. by Crooke, Vol. I, p. 169., fn. 1.
13. Hallam's 'The Middle Ages', Vol. I., (Fifth Edn, 1829) p. 233.
14. Ibid., p. 230. 'After Charlemagne' says Hallam, 'every man who owned a castle to shelter him in case of defeat and a sufficient number of dependents to take the field, was at liberty to retaliate upon his neighbours whenever he thought himself injured.'

## II

### THE DATE AND PLACE OF SHER SHAH'S BIRTH

The question of the date of the birth of the brilliant Afghan ruler Sher Shah has an important bearing on the history of his career and achievements. Elphinstone and the early European historians of the Muslim period of Indian history, perhaps not finding any precise mention of the actual date in the sources accessible to them, safely passed it over. But Prof. K. R. Qanungo, who for the first time made a thorough and critical study of the great Afghan's life, had to assign it some approximate date to serve as a working hypothesis for reconstructing his history. On page 3 of his 'Sher Shah' (Calcutta 1921) he says: 'Farid was born in Hissar Firoza, founded by the good king Firoz Tughlaq. (*Makhzan-i-Afghana*, f. 204 b). The exact date of his birth is not given by any historian. Abbas Sarwani (*Elliot*, IV, 308) says that he was born during the life time of Sultan Bahlol, who died in 1488 A.D. The year 1486 A.D. may probably have been the date.....' This hypothetical date has been used by Prof. Qanungo throughout his work in calculating the age of Sher Shah. But his approximation falls short by not less than over a dozen years of the actual date of his birth, which the internal evidence of the text of the *Tarikh-i-Sher*

*Shahi* as well as the *Makhzan-i-Afghana* unmistakably suggests. It appears that Prof. Qanungo has fallen into this error owing to his equally wrong assumption that Sher Shah's grandfather Ibrahim came to India during the latter part of Sultan Bahlol Lodi's reign (1451-1488). It is, however, difficult to see how the Professor was led to make this assumption in the face of the internal evidence of the above mentioned authorities which clearly shows that Ibrahim Sur came to India in the early and not later part of Bahlol's reign. I shall first examine this assumption.

In A.D. 1451 the very first year of his enthronement Bahlol Lodi marched towards Multan in order to restore Sheikh Yusuf, the popularly elected governor of that province, who had been driven away by the Langahs. But he had not gone beyond Dipalpur when he heard of the attack of Sultan Mahmud Sharqi of Jaunpur upon Dihli. He, therefore, immediately retraced his steps and, on the advice of some of his nobles, issued invitations to his tribesmen in Afghanistan to come and help him at that juncture. In response to his call many Pathan warriors came with their forces and with their help Bahlol successfully repulsed the attack of Mahmud. Filled with obligation and gratitude for his kinsmen he conferred lavish presents on them and issued farmans to all his nobles and officers, that every Afghan coming from Roh should be received with great honour and courtesy and given a jagir. 'It was at the time of this bounty of



Sultan Bahlol that the grandfather of Sher Shah, by name Ibrahim Khan Sur, with his son Hasan Khan, the father of Sher Shah, came to Hindustan from Afghanistan.....<sup>2</sup> The *Makhzan* and *Tabaqat* also say that Ibrahim came to India being encouraged by Bahlol's invitation, which, of course, was extended within a year of the Sultan's accession.<sup>3</sup> It is clear from this that Ibrahim must have arrived in India in the earlier half and not in the latter half of Bahlol's reign. After mentioning his arrival, Abbas Sarwani's narrative of the subsequent career of Ibrahim Khan and his family comprises these significant incidents:—<sup>4</sup>

(1) On their arrival Ibrahim and his son Hasan both enter into the service of Muhabbat Khan Sur, Daud Sahu Khail, jagirdar of the parganas of Haryana and Bahkala, etc. in the Punjab, and settle in the pargana of Bajwara.

(2) Sher Shah is born and christened Farid.

(3) After the lapse of some time, Ibrahim Khan leaves Muhabbat Khan's service and enters that of Jamal Khan Sarang Khani of Hissar-Firoza.

(4) Jamal Khan bestows on him the pargana of Narnaul.

(5) Hasan, father of Farid, enters the service of Masnad-i-Ali, Umar Khan Sarwani Kalkapur, entitled Khan-i-Azam, who held jagirs in the sarkars of Sarhind, Bhatnur, Shahabad and Paelpur.

(6) Hasan gets as jagir from Umar Khan several villages in the pargana of Shahabad.

(7) The young Farid is sufficiently grown up by now to be able to express a desire to enter the service of Masnad-i-Ali Umar Khan, and requests his father to introduce him to the Khan. Hasan declines owing to Farid's tender age, but on the persuasion of his mother takes him to the Masnad-i-Ali. The latter being pleased with the smart little boy bestows on him a small jagir.

(8) Several years after this, Farid's grandfather Ibrahim Khan dies at Narnaul. Hasan goes to Umar Khan the Masnad-i-Ali, who happened to be at that time with the army of Sultan Bahlol, to beg leave of him to go to Narnaul to condole with his family. Umar Khan shows great generosity by not only releasing him from his service so as to enable him to receive the larger jagir of his father, but also by commending him to the favour of Jamal Khan for conferment of further jagirs on him.

(9) Some time after this, Sultan Bahlol also dies (July A.D. 1449<sup>5</sup>; calculated according to Dorn's account, it will correspond to Ziqada 25, A.H. 893 or Friday October 31, 1488)<sup>6</sup> and is succeeded by Sikandar, who recovers Jaunpur from his recalcitrant brother Baibak (Barbak) and confers the Suba upon Jamal Khan in 1493 A.D.

(10) Jamal Khan takes Hasan with him and gives him in jagir the parganas of Sahsaram Hajipur and Tanda, to maintain five hundred horse.

(11) Sher Shah becomes dissatisfied with his father's treatment and goes away to Jaunpur.

In the above analysis the mention of Farid's birth soon after the arrival of Ibrahim is significant enough to indicate that Farid could not have been only about two years old at the time of the death of Sultan Bahlol, for the simple reason that in the interval between the former's birth and the latter's death a series of noteworthy incidents, admittedly spread over a much longer period, occurred. First of all after Farid's birth some time elapses before the family shifts to Narnaul. Then, after some time, when Farid goes to the Masnad-i-Ali to seek service under him, though yet a little boy, he must, nevertheless, have been anywhere between eight and twelve years old. Then, several years after this incident again, occurs the death of Ibrahim Khan, his grandfather, followed some time later still by that of Sultan Bahlol (Oct. 1488). Thus it would be clear that by this time Farid must have been a grown-up boy of not less than 12 to 15 years, and consequently about another five years older at the time when Barbak was expelled and the suba of Jaunpur conferred on Jamal Khan, towards the beginning of 1493.<sup>7</sup>

The above conclusion is corroborated by the actual date of the birth of Sher Shah having been found to be definitely stated in two works, viz. (i) *Asar-as-Sanadid*, by Sir Saiyed Ahmed Khan, and (ii) a Persian manuscript compiled in A.D. 1839 entitled *Naqsha-i-Jam-i-Jam* which I recently discovered in an old local library.<sup>8</sup>

There is a uniform difference of one year in the dates given in these two works, in the

case of Sher Shah's birth and all subsequent incidents of his life. Those in the *Naqsha-i-Jam-i-Jam* have been carried forward throughout by one year, the months, days etc. all being otherwise exactly the same in both. Evidently the author by oversight has made an error of one year in the date of Farid's birth, making it Rajab A.H., 878 instead of Rajab A.H. 877 (December A.D. 1472). I have accepted 1472 as correct because we know the exact date of Sher Shah's death (12th Rabi-ul-Awwal A.H. 952=25th May A.D. 1545), as also his age at the time of death which according to both the above authorities is 74 (lunar) years, 8 months and a few days, nearly  $=72\frac{1}{2}$  solar years. Deducting this from May 25, 1545 we get December 1472. Thus Farid was just 20 years when his father was put in charge of the Jagir of Sahsaram etc., and not about seven years only which he would be according to Qanungo's hypothetical date.

This initial error has led him to build up a theory about the early life of Sher Shah, which besides being self-contradictory in itself, finds no warrant in *Abbas Sarwani* or any other authority. The story of the neglect and want of kindness and love shown by Hasan towards Farid's mother is mentioned by Abbas, *after and not before Hasan's transfer to Sahsaram*. That the mind of Abbas is clear about this sequence of events and he has not mentioned them merely in confusion without being conscious of their chronological order, is evidenced by following up his narrative a little further down. After

noticing Hasan's indifference towards Farid's mother and its cause, he continues, 'Angry words often passed between Hasan and Farid. When he was assigned jagirs, Mian Hasan showed little partiality to Farid, and did not give him a jagir which contented him. Farid Khan being annoyed with his father went to Jamal Khan at Jaunpur'.<sup>9</sup> This leaves no room for any ambiguity or doubt as to whether Abbas is relating these incidents with reference to the period prior to his coming over to Sahsaram or after it. He does not even indirectly suggest any rift between Hasan and Farid's mother during the pre-Sahsram period. On the contrary we know that almost up to the time of the death of Hasan's father, his relations with Farid's mother were positively good and he had a great affection and regard both for her and her children. We have seen how, when young Farid expressed to his father his desire to be introduced to the Masnad-i-Ali, and the latter declined to comply, he appealed to his mother, whereon she said to her husband, 'Since he desires to see the Masnad-i-Ali take him with you... perhaps he may be pleased at the request of so young a boy, and give him something'. 'Hasan Khan' continues Abbas, 'to please Farid and his mother took him with him before Masnad-i-Ali.....  
...<sup>10</sup> So hitherto Hasan had a great regard and affection for Farid and his mother.

To examine now Prof. Qanungo's account of this part of the story. He has reversed the sequence of events and assumed without any

basis that the account of *Abbas* and the *Makhzan* relating to Farid and his mother having fallen under the displeasure of Hasan, refers to the pre-Sahsaram period. The above mentioned incident in which Hasan displayed such regard and concern for the pleasure of Farid and his mother has escaped his notice. He fails, moreover, to realise that by suggesting this sequence of events he makes himself responsible for a self-contradiction between his hypothesis regarding the age of Farid and his assumption regarding his and his mother's ill-treatment by Hasan. For, according to his hypothesis, Farid should have been only about seven years old and his brother Nizam still younger at the time of their leaving Narnaul. This was too tender an age of the boys for their father to have begun quarrelling with them. Even his suggestion that 'Farid's mother was forsaken by Hasan possibly owing to the loss of her physical charms'<sup>11</sup> would appear to be far-fetched in view of this hypothesis, since Farid was her eldest child and she could not have lost her physical charms so early in life as that. Indeed, it is difficult to understand how a scholar reconstructing Sher Shah's early life on the basis mainly of *Abbas* and *Makhzan*, could have arrived at such conclusions as, for instance, his hypothesis *re.* Farid's date of birth. Far more curious than this is Prof. Qanungo's comparison of the life and character of Farid's mother with that of the saintly Jija Bai, Shivaji's mother, a comparison as baseless as it is quixotic and

irrelevant. For one thing, Farid's mother was never sent away to live apart from her husband like Jija Bai. Secondly the indifference of Hasan towards Farid and his mother began after their transfer to Sahsaram and not before as Qanungo baselessly assumes. (*See Sher Shah*, p. 5.). Thirdly we do not know whether Farid's mother was a 'saintly' lady or one of the common run. There is no warrant for such a statement. We know, however, that unlike Jija Bai, about whose religiosity and the great influence that she wielded on the making of her son's character we have definite information. Farid's mother was possessed of no extraordinary qualities and did not wield any conspicuous influence on her son's character. But we find our author setting out on his narrative (See page 3 and 4) with a zeal which reminds one of bardic ecstasy which naturally leads him astray from a scientific course into 'idle dreams and fancies .....condemned by himself as having no place in a modern history' (*Sher Shah*, p. 434). From the manner in which he begins his account, it would appear as if Prof. Qanungo conceived, in anticipation, a slightly romantic figure of his hero which compelled him consequently to so interpret facts as to bear out his imaginary thesis.

Thus the above discussion leads us to the following conclusions :—

(1) The hypothetical date (1486) of the birth of Sher Shah assumed by Prof. Qanungo, is totally incorrect; the real date being Rajab 877 A. H. = December 1472 A. D. as indicated

by *Abbas* account and confirmed by other authorities.

(2) The theory that Hasan had ill-treated Farid and Nizam and their mother during the Narnaul period from their very infancy is groundless and is moreover contradicted by the internal evidence of *Abbas'* narrative. Though it is possible that in the last days of their stay, i.e., after the death of Ibrahim, when Farid and his brother were enough grown up, Hasan's affection and regard for them and their mother might have cooled down. But this can be nothing more than a mere surmise.

(3) At the time of their transfer to Sahsaram Farid was not a stripling of seven but a mature young man of full 20 years and consequently at the time of his attainment of the kingdom of Delhi in A. D. 1540 (A. H. 947) he had reached the advanced age of close upon sixty-eight years. It is only in view of this that the following lament of Sher Shah referred to by *Nur-ul-Haq*<sup>12</sup> becomes intelligible viz. 'It is said that once, when looking in a mirror, he exclaimed, "Alas! that I have attained the empire only when I have reached old age, and when the time of evening prayer has arrived. Had it been otherwise the world would have seen what I would have accomplished." Even an ordinary man of fifty or thereabouts which Sher Shah would have been at this time according to the assumption of Prof. Qanungo,—in an age when the state of general health and physique of the people was infinitely better and their expectancy of life



considerably - higher than now,—could not be expected to grow so prematurely pessimistic, much less one so energetic, so stout and so ambitious and optimistic as Sher Shah otherwise was.

The above conclusions necessitate a re-examination of the question of the time of Farid's first flight to Jaunpur. For the sake of maintaining a sort of consistency with his hypothesis Prof. Qanungo has again been driven to another assumption, highly improbable at best. He allows a period of about eight years, after Hasan's coming to Sahsaram, for the rift between father and son to come to a head resulting eventually in the latter's abandonment of Sahsaram. He puts this incident in A.D. 1501. But the cause which drove Farid to this extreme step was, as has been rightly explained by Prof. Qanungo,<sup>13</sup> his grievance against Hasan's not giving to his mother her due share of jagir. Now, it seems extremely unreasonable to suppose that Hasan could have delayed the allotment of madad-i-maash jagirs to such members of his family as were entitled to them, by almost a decade after his assumption of his new charge. In all likelihood he must needs have made the allotments soon after his arrival. Hence the conclusion would seem to be irresistible that the rift came within about a year of their arrival and consequently Farid came over to Jaunpur by the end of 1494 A.D. Nor in accepting this date are we faced with the difficulty of the age of Farid being too small at the time, with which Prof. Qanungo was naturally faced owing to his

hypothetical date. Thus it precludes the necessity which compelled him arbitrarily to stretch forward the date of Farid's flight to Jaunpur, by nearly a decade.

The ascertainment of these dates in the early life of Farid helps us in clearing up certain other dates in his subsequent career wherein Prof. Qanungo has again been forced to make unwanted assumptions. The most significant of his assumptions is about the length of Farid's stay at Jaunpur. The facts of the case are that when Mian Hasan came to know that Farid had gone to Jaunpur he wrote to Jamal Khan, that Farid having been displeased with him for nothing, had gone to his auspicious presence, and that he should kindly send him back as it was his wish to instruct him in religious and polite learning and in court etiquette. On Jamal Khan's asking Farid to return to Sahsaram he firmly refused to do so and said, "If my father wants me back to instruct me in learning. Jaunpur is certainly a better place than Sahsaram; I will study here."<sup>14</sup> Jamal Khan made no further objection. Farid then employed himself in studying Arabic. He also studied thoroughly the *Kafila* .....with the commentary of Qazi Shahab ud-Din, and the biographies of most of the kings of ancient times. He had got by heart the *Sikandar*, *Nama the Gulistan* and *Bostan* and was reading the works of philosophers. During his stay at Jaunpur he made such an impression on his kinsmen by his learning, talent and promising qualities that when after some years Mian Hasan came to pay his homage to Jamal Khan,<sup>15</sup>

they remonstrated with him severely for having banished such a promising and excellent youth as Farid, only for the sake of a slave girl. Mian Hasan realised his mistake and was highly pleased with Farid who had earned such a name, and agreed to entrust him with the charge of his parganas.

Now while Abbas says that Hasan came to Jaunpur after some years,'<sup>10</sup> Nizam Uddin, Ferishta and Qanungo's manuscript of the *Makhzan*, all say 'after two or three years.' This period has been rejected by Qanungo as being 'opposed to reason and probability,' because Farid during this period had not only made extensive study but also acquired first-hand knowledge of worldly affairs for which Prof. Qanungo thinks the period of two or three years to be too short. But it seems to be too audacious to reject summarily so definite a statement of fact in the absence of any positive evidence in our possession to show that either the particular statement in question is totally wrong, or that the three historians concerned viz. Nizam Uddin, Ferishta and Niamat Ullah (the author of the *Makhzan*) are generally in the habit of indulging in such mis-statements. On the contrary a careful consideration of the circumstances will amply bear out the correctness of their statement. As has been shown above Farid was about full twenty years old when he came to Jaunpur and he was by this time evidently quite well up in Persian literature and secular learning. The fact of his father showing his anxiety to instruct Farid in religious learning and court etiquette, together with the

statement of Abbas and other historians that at Jaunpur he employed himself in learning Arabic, is highly significant. It shows that he had not till then had an opportunity of either learning Arabic and the religious books or of court manners, both of which were regarded as essential qualifications for a nobleman of that age.<sup>17</sup> It would be unreasonable to suppose that Farid's literary attainments were very meagre when he came to Jaunpur. Nor is it too much for a mature young man of twenty years, so keen, intelligent and observant as Farid was, and one who had already seen something of the administrative conditions obtaining in his father's jagir, to have either mastered Arabic grammar and made an extensive study of other Persian or Arabic literature or to have observed carefully the administrative conditions prevailing at the time in the space of two or three years. In fact an uncommon quickness of perception and observation of human affairs and an equally good faculty of quick decision and despatch in organisation, seem to have been the supreme qualities of Sher Shah, which he never failed to evince as we may notice in all his subsequent activities. Hence it is not at all necessary to assume that he should have stayed at Jaunpur for a period of ten years, as Qanungo does. Lastly the 'some years' of Abbas would more reasonably imply two or three years than ten, and the statements of Nizamuddin and other historians are apparently quite correct. There is a further evidence of this in Abbas. At the time when Hasan came to Jaunpur his relatives remonstrated with him

on his unjust treatment to Farid and said, "As you are generally in Jaunpur in attendance on Jamal Khan, it is advisable you should entrust the administration of your two parganas to Farid."<sup>18</sup> Would it not be 'opposed to all reason and probability' to assume, in the face of these words, that Hasan did not come to pay homage to his master for 10 years?

Thus it should have been about the year 1497 or 1498 at the latest and not in 1511, as Qanungo assumes, that Farid, 'armed with the necessary powers, started for the head-quarters of his father's jagir in order to take charge of its administration. He was of course about 25 years of age at this time according to my calculation. He should have been of the same age in A.D. 1511 too when, according to Qanungo's assumption, he returned to Jaunpur, as he has supposed his age to be fourteen years short of the actual.

The place of Sher Shah's birth is also far from being definitely known and calls for a brief notice. Like the date of Farid's birth there is no definite mention of the place of his birth in any of the extant authorities. *Abbas* and *Makhzan* are the only two, however, which give some hint on the point, all others having omitted any mention of the early life of both Hasan and Farid. Both *Abbas* and *Makhzan* distinctly place Farid's birth during the period of his grandfather's stay in the pargana of Bajwara or Bejoura and before his translation to Narnaul.<sup>19</sup> This would imply that he was born in the pargana of Bajwara. Moreover

even after leaving Bajwara Ibrahim did not settle in Hissar Firoza, but in Narnaul. So there is no evidence to show that Farid was born in Hissar. If Abbas is to be believed, Farid should have been born in the Pargana of Bajwara, somewhere.

One more point may be referred to in passing. Prof. Qanungo assumes the failure of Ibrahim in his business of horse dealing as the cause of his movement into Hindustan. But the texts nowhere speak of his failure or otherwise in his trade. They only indicate that the invitation extended by Bahlol and the liberal gifts he made to his tribesmen encouraged many Afghans to come down to India, Ibrahim being one of them. And it is in nowise unreasonable to suppose that the prospect of a much more honourable and lucrative job should have proved a sufficiently strong inducement for these people to migrate.

#### ADDITIONAL NOTE ON THE DATE AND PLACE OF SHER SHAH'S BIRTH

Apropos my paper on the date and place of the birth of the Afghan King, Sher Shah Sur, (originally published in the Journal of Bihar and Orissa Research Society, Vol. XX Pt. 1, 1934,) and now reproduced herein above I have come across additional evidence which corroborates the conclusions I arrived at in the course of the above-mentioned paper.

In that paper I have shown that Qanungo's hypothesis regarding the date of Sher Shah's birth and his asseveration regarding the

place of his birth are both groundless and unsupported by any historical evidence. The question of the date of the Suri King's birth becomes important because Qanungo has built, upon the basis of his hypothesis, an entirely wrong chronology particularly of the first twenty-five years of his life and drawn therefrom many other equally baseless conclusions. In affirming Hisar Firoza as the place of his birth on the evidence of Makhzan-i-Afghana, Qanungo seems to have been led to do so by his enthusiasm to find for his hero the most suitable background and auspicious environments for the rather romantic than real picture of the Suri ruler's career which our learned friend is at pains to draw.

I will first deal with the question of the *date* and then with that of the *place of his birth*. In the paper referred to above I have shown from internal evidence that the date of Sher Shah's birth cannot but be at least fourteen years prior to A.D. 1486, the hypothetical date assumed by Qanungo, which is not supported by even a shred of evidence. In addition to the evidence I adduced then in support of my conclusion, I have recently found that in a magnificently illuminated manuscript dating from the time of the Emperor Shah Jahan, and bearing his signature, entitled Tazkira-i-Khandan-i-Timuriya, among the many portraits of the Muslim rulers of India, there is one of Sher Shah also. This portrait bears the date of his birth at the top, which though slightly indistinct can be read without any difficulty. This



date is Rajab 878, H. (end of A.D. 1473) not very far from 1472, the date I suggested from internal evidence as well as on the basis of certain later documents. A photo of this document is to be found in Mrs. A. S. Beveridge's English Translation of the Humayun Nama, facing page 133.

Regarding the place of Sher Shah's birth Qanungo says (see 'Sher Shah,' p. 3) "Farid was born in *the auspicious city of Hisar Firoza* founded by the *good king Firoz Tughlag* (Makhzan-i-Afghana, F. 204)". (Italics ours). As I pointed out in my paper, none of the contemporary chronicles seem to support this statement. Both Abbas and Dorn place his birth during the period of his grandfather's stay in the parganah of Bajwara before his translation to Narnaul. Even after leaving Bajwara Ibrahim Sur settled in Narnaul or in a village called Simla or Shamli in the parganah Narnaul and not in Hisar Firozah. At that time, however, I could not have access to any MS. of the Makhzan-i-Afghana and in the face of Qanungo's positive assertion (although he does not quote the words of the original, as he frequently does in the course of his book) I could only say that 'if Abbas is to be believed, Farid should have been born somewhere in Bajwara.' I had then to depend only on Dorn's translation of the Makhzan, which is a translation of the abridged redaction of the larger work by the same author, entitled the Tarikh-i-Khan Jahani was Makhzan-i-Afghani. The same work, as I said, places his birth during Ibrahim's stay at



Bajwara, precisely after the manner of Abbas. The mystery of Qanungo's statement was however revealed no sooner than I had an occasion to consult and compare the passage in question relied on by Qanungo, in the MSS of the Ma-khzan-i- Afghani in the British Museum and the India Office Libraries. I quote the passage in question.

که نام شیر شاه فرید و نام پدر او حسن بود از طائفه متی و  
قبیله سور است - در زمانه که سلطان بهلول بتکومت امتیاز  
یافت پدر حسن ابراهیم نام از ولایت دوه بهلدوستان آمده نوکری  
امرائی سلطان بهلول میکرد و چندگاه در حصار فیروزه متولد شد و  
چندگاه در نارنول .....

Ethe's Catalogue of the Persian Mss in India Office Library, London, No. 576, Fol. 134 b-135 a, Egerton's Cat. No. 696, has also the same reading.

This passage has been taken by Mr. Qanungo, to refer to Sher Shah's birth, obviously, we suppose, because it contains the puzzling words متولد شد which means 'was born', but the question is whether this passage at all refers to the birth of any person. No man could have been born for a few days in Hisar Firoza and for a few days in Narnaul. But supposing for a moment, that it refers to the birth of someone, that someone must be Ibrahim Sur and not Farid, a fact which is absurd on the face of it. By no stretch of imagination it could refer to the birth of Sher Shah. The fact of the matter is that it is obviously an error (the Copyist's devil) perhaps for متکون شد and the passage

only refers to Ibrahim's stay for some time in Hisar and then in Narnaul. This view finds support in the *Tabaqat-i-Akbari* whose author, Nizamuddin, uses almost the same words minus the erroneous *متولد شد* as under:

در آن ایام پدر حسن سور که ابراهیم نام داشت هندوستان  
آمده نوکری یکی از أمرائے سلطان بهلول می کرد و چندگاه در  
حصار فیروزه و درزی چند در پرگنه نازنول گزرايند -

The words *متولد شد* misled Prof. Qanungo and he was persuaded to fasten them on an incident to which they have not the remotest reference.

In view of the positive statements of Makhzan and Abbas I see no reason to modify the view expressed in my paper that Sher Shah (Farid) must have been born in Bajwara. It seems, however, very probable that soon after his birth Ibrahim Sur left Mahabat Khan Sur and took up service under Jamal Khan Sarang-Khani, of Hisar-Firozah who bestowed on him several villages in the parganah of Narnaul enough to maintain forty horsemen. This does not imply that Ibrahim necessarily resided at Narnaul, though, if tradition is to be given due weight, he might have elected to make Narnaul his head-quarter. Therefore, either in Narnaul proper or in one of the villages of his grand father's jagir, Sher Shah passed the early years of his life. Abul Fazl<sup>20</sup> and Sujana Rai<sup>21</sup>, however, mention the name of Simla, a village in the parganah of Narnaul. But the confusion seems to have occurred because Sher Shah seems to have been brought over to Narnaul

or Simla as an infant almost immediately after his birth.

### ABBREVIATIONS

Abbas..... Abbas Sarwani's *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi* (or *Tuhfa-i-Akbar Shahi*) Ms. (in my collection) (Copied from Dr. R. P. Tripathi's Ms).

Makhzan..... *Makhzan-i-Afghana* of Niamat Ullah.

Tabaqat..... *Tabaqat-i-Akbari* of Nizamuddin Ahmad (*Bib. Ind.* Publication).

Ferishta..... Mulla Muhammad Qasim Hindu Shah, Ferishta's *Tarikh-i-Ferishta*, (Published by Nawal Kishore Press, Lucknow).

Elliot..... Elliot and Dowson's *History of India*.

Dorn..... Dorn's *Trans. of the Makhzan*.

Sher Shah..... By K. R. Qanungo. (Calcutta, 1921).

Erskine..... Erskines' *History of India*, Vol. II.

### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Sher Shah, p. 2.

*Elliot*. IV, 308 ; *Abbas*, p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> *Dorn*. p. 80, repeats the story of the coming of Afghan tribes into India on the invitation of Bahlol and of his granting them jagirs, appointments etc., which enkindled a desire in other Afghans to come to India; and then says :—

"At the same time, Mian Ibrahim the grandfather of Sher Shah, came to Hindustan....."

The *Tabaqat* p. 86, has these words :

و قديکے سلطان بھلول بہ حکومت رسید از ولایت روه کہ مسکن  
افغانہ است افغان بسیار طلب داشت ..... در آن ایام پدر  
حسن سور کہ ابراہیم نام داشت بہندوستان آمد \*

*Erskine*, p. iii would seem clearly to understand that Ibrahim came to India in the early part of Bahlol's reign, and not in the latter part. *Ferishta*, who copies *Nizam Uddin* almost verbatim in the bulk of his narrative, does not indicate the time of Ibrahim's advent. Nor do the *Akbar Nama*, *Muntakhab-ul-Lubab*, *Khulasat-ut-Tawarikh* or *Badaoni* throw any light on it.

<sup>4</sup> *Elliot*, IV, 308-10 ; *Abbas.*, p. 7-11 ; *Dorn.*, p. 80 et. seq.

*Erskine* (II. p. iii et seq.) gives a different version of the early life of Ibrahim and Hasan in Hindustan, based partly on the *Akbar Nama* and partly on the *Khulasat* of Sujan Rai (Singh ?), the latter having been drawn upon, so far as the story of the dream of Farid's mother etc. goes. He says that Hasan was born in Hissar, which is highly improbable. But Ibrahim's early residence at Shamli, (*Akbar Nama*) or Simla might have been Shamli, a tahsil about 55 miles north of Delhi in the modern district of Muzaffarnagar, as suggested by Chalmers, (vide *Akbar Nama*, Tr. Bev. vol. I, ch. XXV, p. 327) and not in Agra, because Shamli might have been in the district of Hissar Firoza then.

<sup>5</sup> *CHI.*, III, p. 235.

<sup>6</sup> *Dorn.*, p. 54.

<sup>7</sup> *CHI.*, III, pp. 236-238 and *Tabaqat*, p. 317.

<sup>8</sup> (i) *Asar-as-Sanadiq*, third edition (Urdu) published by Nami Press Cawnpore, 1904 (page 35. chap. 1). This book was first compiled by Sir Saiyed Ahmad Khan in 1846 A. D. Its main theme is an account of the Muslim monuments of Delhi. A second and enlarged edition was published by the author himself in 1847.

The third edition was compiled from the materials of both the former editions by Mohammad Rahmatullah Rad, and published in 1904. The book also contains some brief chapters on allied topics among which there is a chart of the rulers of Delhi right from the age of Mahabharat down to Queen Victoria, including details of their birth, coronation, death etc.

(ii) *Naqsha-i-Jam-i-Jam* was compiled in the reign of Bahadur Shah II, the last Mughal emperor of Delhi, in 1839, from a large number of old histories of which the author gives a list. The body of this work consists of a chart containing many more details than the former one and including a brief introduction as well as conclusion. Considering the numerous details given in it, which I have found on verification to be mostly correct, it seems that the author has devoted great pains and care over the preparation of the work. The date of Sher Shah's birth is given in Chart 5, Serial No. 16.

9 *Elliot* IV, p. 390-'11 Prof. Qanungo's manuscript has a different and in all likelihood the more correct reading of the two. It is thus translated by him : "At the time of distributing the jagir, he showed little favour to Farid's mother and did not give her such jagir as she wished....." (Page 5). In a footnote on the same page, he rightly explains that the reading of his manuscript is more probable. "Farid on his own account had no claim to a share of jagir ; but his mother was entitled to *madad-i-maash* for the support of herself and her sons. It was a custom in those days to allot a certain portion of jagir for the maintenance of different members of a fief-holder's family. Farid resented his father's injustice towards his mother : so he ran away from his inhospitable roof." The reading in my Ms. also tallies with Qanungo's. It has :

وقت جاگیر دادن میان حسن بیدار فرید کم ولایت ظاهر  
ساخت و جاگیر خاطر خواہ نہ داد \*

10 *Elliot*, IV, 309 ; 'Abbas., p. 8-9, has these words :

مادر فرید بمیان حسن گفت چون خاطر او میخواهد که  
مسند عالی به بپند همراه به برد عرض بکن شاید مسند عالی  
این خورد سال خوش کند و چیزے عنایت نماید - میان بواسطه  
خاطر فرید و مادر او فرید را در خدمت عالی برد \*

<sup>11</sup> *Sher Shah*, p. 4.

<sup>12</sup> *Elliot*, VI. p. 189.

<sup>13</sup> *Sher Shah*, p. 5. fn.

<sup>14</sup> The above account is according to the manuscript used by Prof. Qanungo. But *Elliot* has a slightly different version. He says that Hasan requested Jamal Khan to keep Farid with him in case he refused to return home, as he (Hasan) wanted him, to be instructed in religious and polite learning (*Vide Elliot*, IV. 311). Here my manuscript tallies with *Elliot*; it has on p. 12:

بملازمت خود نگه دارد که من میخواهم که او را تعلیم علوم  
دینی و آداب خدمت ملوک آموزم \*

<sup>15</sup> *Elliot*, Vol. IV, p. 311; Prof. Qanungo's manuscript, p. 18, (as quoted in his book on page 7). *Abbas*, p. 12.

<sup>16</sup> It is the habit of *Abbas* to say 'after some years' very frequently, instead of giving definite dates.

<sup>17</sup> Nizamuddin and Ferishta leave no room for ambiguity on the point. They say:

حسن بخدمت جمال خان نوشت که فرید را تسلی کرده  
پیش من فرستید که میخواهم چیزے بخواند و تهذیب اخلاق  
نماید \*

(which means:—Hasan wrote to Jamal Khan requesting him to pacify Farid and send him to him so that he may be able to complete his education and training in social etiquette.—(See *Tabaqat*, II, p. 86. *Ferishta*, p. 220; also *Ferishta*, Urdu Tr. pub. by Osmania University vol. II, p. 251).

*Elliot*, IV. 312; *Abbas*, p. 13 has :

حسن گفته عزیزان قبول کرد و گفت که دلالتی او کرده  
 بیاورند آنچه خواهد گفت مرا قبول است - عزیزان گفتند که تو  
 اکثر اوقات در جونیپور بخدمت جمال خان می باشی - مناسب  
 دولت آنست که حکومت پرگنه بفرید بدهی \*

<sup>19</sup> *Elliot*, IV, 308; *Abbas*, p. 7; *Dorn*, p. 81. Prof. Qanungo, however, (*Sher Shah*, p. 3) places his birth in Hissar Firoza on the authority of his manuscript of *Makhzan*, f. 204 b, without quoting the actual words of that book or even a literal translation thereof. In case his Ms. does contain such a definite reference as to the place of Farid's birth—which is very doubtful—it must be materially different from the copy used by *Dorn*. In any case the version given in *Dorn's* copy is decidedly more acceptable tallying as it does with *Abbas* who is the original source.

<sup>20</sup> *Akbar Namah*—ASB Text. Vol I., p. 147.

<sup>21</sup> *Sujan Rai Bhandari's Khulasat-ut-Tswarikh*, Edited by Maulvi Zafar Husan, p. 315. The passage in question is as follows :

در زمانه که سلطان بهلول لودی فرمان روای هندوستان بود  
 ابراهیم جد فرید خان یعنی شیرشاه که سوداگر میسر و  
 از ولایت دوه آمده نوکری امرا اختیار نمود و در موضع غله (شمله ؟)  
 تابع نازنول توطن گزید -

### III

## THE POLITICAL DIVISIONS OF SHER SHAH'S KINGDOM

Sher Shah ruled a far wider territory than his Mughal predecessors. Before he finally drove Humayun out of India he had already subdued Bengal. Within a few years of his victory over Humayun near Bilgram and Qannauj, he made himself master of the whole of Northern India. His dominions extended from Sunargaon in the east to the Gakkhar country in the north-west, the western boundary being formed by a line joining Balnath Jogi near Bhisubhar on the Jhelum in the north and Khushab nearly a hundred miles south-west, and thence running across the Jhelum along the bank of the Indus down to Bhakkar.<sup>1</sup> On the south his territories were bounded by the Vindhya and Karakoram ranges, as he had brought within his sway practically the whole of Rajputana, Malwa and Kalanjar. No further territorial accessions took place under his successors. Qanungo wrongly supposes that the fact 'that Sher Shah's empire extended as far as Mount Abu and Sakkhar Bhakhar (in Sindh), is known only from his coins' and that these facts 'have escaped the notice of all professed historians'.<sup>2</sup> Abbas has a clear reference to the manner in which the two provinces were acquired. The kingdom of Marwar had been extended by Rao Maldeo to include the territory up to



Abu and beyond. Vanquished by Sher Shah he took refuge in Siwan on the borders of Gujrat and thus the whole of his possessions including Abu fell into the hands of the victor. As regards Sindh (Sakkhar-Bakkhar) we are told that it was surrendered by its chiefs when they learnt that Sher Shah was preparing to attack them. In his triumphal march from Qannauj he swept right across the Gangetic Doab and the Punjab up to Khushab in the north, capturing towns and subjugating provinces. At Khushab he made a halt and sent forces to hound Humayun, who was at Multan, out of the country, and to occupy that province. Here Ghazi Khan, Fateh Khan and Ismail Khan came and waited on him and gave proofs of their firm loyalty to him. The King was much pleased and confirmed Ismail as ruler of Sindh.<sup>3</sup> Subsequently during the Ujjain and Sarangpur campaign when Sheikh Bayazid, grandfather of the author of the *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi*, came to see Sher Shah, the latter promised that after the fall of Kalanjar, he would give him the provinces of Sindh and Multan, the country of the Baluchis.<sup>4</sup> From the contemporary accounts we learn that the administrative machinery was re-established in these places as soon as they were conquered, an achievement which was the unique credit of Sher Shah.

#### *Administrative Divisions.*

Sher Shah was a veteran and skilled administrator and had attained the ripe age of

sixty-eight<sup>5</sup> when he became king. What was more, he was possessed of a keen sense of duty and of extraordinary energy in organisation. He had been a careful critic and observer of the shortcomings inherent in the systems of Babar and Humayun; and finding now an opportunity to remedy them, addressed himself to the task with characteristic earnestness and enthusiasm.

Concerning the administrative divisions of Sher Shah's kingdom the contemporary chronicles yield, even to a very close scrutiny, extremely scanty information. We are left to make inferences from indirect and incidental observations only. (Sher Shah seems to have retained more or less the former limits of the provinces, sarkars and parganahs.) A modern writer has fabricated a fantastic theory about Sher Shah's political divisions, viz., that he discarded *the principle of dividing the kingdom into provinces* and although he had nominally to retain some provinces, he dispensed with them altogether so far as administrative purposes were concerned. The writer contends that the largest political unit into which Sher Shah's kingdom was divided was the sarkar.<sup>6</sup> The existence of the provinces and provincial governors which is clearly mentioned in the chronicles is explained away by suggesting that these were meant either to 'preserve the administrative unity of the whole province, and to prevent quarrels among the governors' as in the case of Bengal, or from military necessity, as in the case of the Punjab, Malwa

and Ajmer, Jodhpur and Nagor.<sup>8</sup> His conclusion, however, is based on preconceived ideas rather than on historical facts, and he does not hesitate to twist the meanings of passages to suit his purpose.<sup>9</sup> Although no detailed statistical account like the *Ain-i-Akbari* is available for Sher Shah's kingdom, we have unmistakable evidences that the empire was divided into regular provinces. Bengal was the only province which is said to have been split up into smaller governorships ostensibly with a view to minimise the chances of rebellion. These divisions have been assumed by Qanungo to be identical with the nineteen sarkars of Bengal under Akbar,—an assumption no better grounded than his theory and arguments. For Abbas on two occasions uses the distinct words :—<sup>10</sup> *و ملک بنگالہ را ملوک طوائف ساخت و قاضی فضیلت را امین بنگالہ نمود* translated by Elliot: 'And he divided the kingdom of Bengal into different provinces and made Qazi Fazilat 'Amin' of Bengal,' and again : *و ملک بنگالہ ملوک طوائف ساختہ بود و قاضی فضیلت را امین بنگالہ ساختہ بود* translated by Elliot: "The kingdom of Bengal he divided into parts, and made Qazi Fazilat Amin of that whole kingdom."<sup>11</sup> The meaning of *ملوک طوائف* is thus given by Steingass: 'The kings of those provinces into which the empire of Sikandar (Lodi) was broken up'. From the nature of Afghan polity in India it is only too well-known that it was composed of a number of tribal, more

or less autonomous leaders who continued to enjoy these privileges till Sher Shah's time. Instead of giving the province of Bengal to one of these Sher Shah divided it among several of them. In this way he satisfied the powerful and ambitious Afghans and rendered them incapable of rebellion as well. This view is fully supported by Badauni. Says he, "..... Sher Shah imprisoned Khizr Khan and taking possession of the country conferred it by way of Jagir upon several of his trustworthy Amirs, and appointed Qazi Fazilat.....superintendent of the Eastern Rohtas fort.<sup>12</sup> The same fact is borne out by the Makhzan-i-Afghani.<sup>13</sup> According to Qanungo each of these jagirs into which Bengal was thus divided represented a sarkar. Had it been so there seems no reason why Abbas and other writers quoted above should have refrained from directly stating them as sarkars, and given them instead a misleading and incorrect name. But what Sher Shah really did was that he divided that province into a few smaller jurisdictions and gave them as jagirs to the powerful local Afghan leaders, as is clearly mentioned by Badauni, Makhzan and other authorities alike. That Sher Shah did divide his provinces into sarkars is quite certain although it is nowhere definitely stated. The point to which I wish to draw attention here is that the passages under consideration do not refer to any such division. On the other hand, the only reasonable inference from them will be that out of the Bengal

province Sher Shah placed a territory comprising a few sarkars in charge of each of a few tribal chiefs who were, of course, all politically equal in status and independent of one another, but responsible to the central government through the Amin, as to whose functions and powers Qanungo has again lost touch with facts and given free play to his imagination. He contends that 'this office carried no military command and no great administrative duties except that of supervision and prevention of quarrels which were sure to arise among a number of officials of equal status .. .....' (p. 357). This view would seem to be quite untenable in the light of the passages quoted above from Badauni, Makhzan, *etc.*, in which the position and functions of the Amin have been defined in absolutely unmistakable words. This piece of evidence, however, Qanungo has completely ignored. But even the rather scanty observations of Abbas on this point would be found on a careful consideration, to lend no support to his theory. In Abbas the passage in question occurs as a conclusion to the account he is giving of the measures taken by Sher Shah for the maintenance of internal peace by stationing a certain number of troops and garrisons in different places in the country. Hence he says: 'He appointed Qazi Fazilat.....and in every place where it suited his purpose, he kept garrisons.'<sup>14</sup> The only reasonable sense which, in this context, these words can bear is that Qazi Fazilat was, like others, who were stationed in

other localities, also responsible for defence, that is to say, for war and peace, as Badauni clearly says, in addition to his duty of supervising and controlling the general administration according to the policy of the central Government and also of suppressing and punishing the contumacious whenever necessary. The designation Amin used in preference to Faujdar or Qiladar which should have been appropriate for an officer restricted simply to military duties, signifies the wider scope of his duties. Hence it has been translated by Elliot as 'Manager' (IV, 391), by Dorn as 'Trustee', and by Maulvi A. Salaam in his translation of the *Riyaz-us-Salatin*, as 'Overlord'.<sup>15</sup> Thus the Amin's office roughly resembled that of the later Mughal viceroys of the Deccan under whom several minor provinces were combined into a single viceroyalty with the same object in view, namely, to facilitate the control of a distant province and keep in check the centrifugal tendencies of the local chiefs. It was ostensibly with the object of keeping internal turbulence in check and of protecting the province from ambitious neighbours that the post of the Amin was created. As "trustee" he was responsible for the province as a whole to the king. 'Prevention of quarrels' would thus come incidentally within the scope of his duties, but the possibility of occasional quarrels among officers would not necessitate or justify the creation of such an important office. In all likelihood the Amin's duty was

also to intervene in the internal administration, whenever necessary in the interests of peace and security. Indeed the Amin's jurisdiction and authority was so wide that it soon enabled him slowly and imperceptibly to assert his power as a full-fledged governor with the result that Islam Shah, on his accession, appointed Muhammad Khan Sur, governor of the whole province in the same way as in other provinces, and the tribal Jagirdars or chiefs among whom Sher Shah had divided it were completely lost sight of. (Riyaz p. 148). He was followed by Shahbaz Khan, as governor of the Province under Muhammad Shah Adil (Riyaz p. 150). Hence it seems reasonable to conclude that the governors (i. e. the several jagirdars among whom the province was divided) were left to carry on the administration as they thought fit. Thus while the extent of the Amin's authority to intervene in their affairs cannot be estimated with any degree of precision, yet the nature of his responsibilities would seem to suggest that he must have been in control of the main strings of administrative policy. We may therefore reasonably conclude that although the peculiar circumstances of the province of Bengal necessitated its division into what we may call sub-provinces, its essential unity was maintained, and, for purposes of administrative policy, it was treated as a single province.<sup>16</sup>

No such complication, however, arises in the case of the other provinces of which we



find a clear mention in practically all contemporary authorities. But it should be carefully noted that the extent of some of Sher Shah's *Subahs* seems to have been determined by local considerations. We may now cite some cases to illustrate the existence of subahs. His first subah extended from Delhi to the western boundary of Rohilkhand, and the second from Rohilkhand, as far as Oudh and Jaunpur. The first he entrusted to *Ahmad Khan Sarwani* whom he made, in view of the difficult circumstances of the time, like Qazi Fazilat, *Amin of Dihli*,<sup>17</sup> and the second he entrusted to Masnad-i-Ali Isa Khan. As soon as he occupied Dihli after defeating Humayun at Qannauj, he was faced with the problem of maintaining order in this region which was the heart of the kingdom, and was to serve as the base of his military advance into the Punjab. The Sarkar of Sambhal (*i.e.* Rohilkhand) was the home of the most implacable rebels, and hence the governor of this territory was asked to make Sambhal his seat. The latter was expected only to restore order and peace first by suppressing the insurgents with a ruthless hand. This was an emergency step, for we are told that when he had dismissed Isa Khan to the Sarkar of Sambhal Sher Shah felt 'at ease regarding the whole country from Dihli to Lucknow.' He was asked to maintain 5000 horse for whose maintenance a suitable Jagir was assigned. Nasir Khan was made his deputy.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, even a cursory reading of the chronicles would reveal the existence of the



provinces of Lahore, Multan including the Gakkhar country, Sindh, Ajmer including Jodhpur and Nagor, Malwa and Bihar.

During his first march to the Gakkhar country in pursuit of Humayun he had hardly settled the country before he returned to Bengal to deal with Khizr Khan. But he had started building the Rohtas fort with great expedition, and the Baluchi chiefs of Sindh, Fath Khan and Ghazi Khan having made their submission were confirmed in the governorship of that province. While leaving for Bengal he had left the country between Lahore and the frontier in charge of Haibat Khan Niazi, Khawas Khan, Isa Khan Niazi, Habib Khan and Rai Hussain Jalwani.<sup>19</sup> After returning from Bengal Sher Shah took Gwalior and Malwa and 'assigned the country of Mandu to Shuja'at Khan'.<sup>20</sup> Shuja'at was soon after degraded and again restored to a *Mansab* of 12000 horse, and 'became ruler of the whole country of Mandu'.<sup>21</sup> Shuja'at Khan had even authority to distribute Jagirs throughout the whole province.<sup>22</sup> This was followed by the siege and treacherous capture of Raisen during which news came of the quarrel between Khawas Khan and Haibat Khan Niazi. The country between Lahore was yet far from being subdued much less well-settled. The Baluchisin Multan and the Jats between Lahore and Panipat were devastating the land. Sher Shah recalled every other officer and 'confirmed Haibat Khan Niazi in the government of the Punjab'—Punjab is evidently used here to

indicate the whole territory of the five rivers including Multan—and Fath Jang Khan his assistant. When Haibat Khan Niazi established peace and restored Multan to its former prosperity, Sher Shah sent instructions regarding the revenue administration of Multan, that being a special case. Haibat Niazi put Fath Jang in charge of Multan, and returned to Lahore. Thus these two officers ruled the provinces of Lahore and Multan.<sup>23</sup> Next followed the capture of Jodhpur, Nagor and Ajmer which were entrusted to Khawas Khan and Isa Khan Niazi assisted by some other chiefs.<sup>24</sup> Sulaiman Khan was appointed governor of the Bihar provinces.<sup>25</sup> These instances should suffice to show that no new mechanism 'at once original in principle and efficient in working' (See 'Sher Shah' p. 241) was created by Sher Shah. Nevertheless Qanungo would have us believe that Sher Shah's ideal of provincial organisation was that of Bengal. As we have shown, Bengal was not organised as Mr. Qanungo conceives it. Nor was even the expedient of appointing an *Amin* to it made the ideal for the rest of the kingdom. The case of Bengal was an exception rather than the rule. Sher Shah never gave any indication, either by design or by practice, of introducing the same system in the other provinces. Their governors were not so limited in the scope of their functions and were moreover called *Hakims*.

The existence of regular *subahs* is further corroborated by subsequent evidence. Ahmad Yadgar tells us that when Firoz Shah, son of

Islam Shah, was placed on the throne, orders were sent to the governors of the Subahs.<sup>26</sup> We have no reason to suppose that any such radical reorganisation as the reconstitution of Subahs was undertaken by Islam Shah. The province of Malwa was still governed by Shuja'at Khan who was succeeded by Taj Khan the Vazir.<sup>27</sup> Islam Sur had appointed his kinsman Muhammad Khan to succeed Qazi Fazilat as governor of Bengal.<sup>28</sup> He in turn was succeeded by Shahbaz Khan under Muhammad Adil Sur.<sup>29</sup> In the light of the above evidence Mr. Qanungo's theory that Sher Shah altogether dispensed with the province as an administrative unit, would seem to be entirely groundless. Incidentally we have also shown that the governors of Mandu and Multan enjoyed, among others, the usual authority of dealing with revenue administration. Yet we find Mr. Qanungo making a still bolder assertion that whereas Sher Shah was compelled by military necessity to keep governors in Malwa, Ajmer and the Punjab, 'the central government controlled finance and justice in these parts as in the rest of the Empire.' A more unwarranted statement it would be difficult to find.

Further, from the evidence of Akbar's reign also Mr. Qanungo's theory would seem to be quite untenable and self-contradictory. He contends that the great Afghan (Sher Shah) was responsible for the creation of *'the imperial edifice which the stupendous literary activity of Abul Fazal has misled the world*

*into regarding as the sole creation of his royal patron.*' In order to be consistent with this theory Mr. Qanungo ought to have shown that until his reorganisation of the Empire into provinces in 1581, Akbar had no provinces, working, as he should have done (according to Mr. Qanungo) till then, the machinery bequeathed to him by Sher Shah. The baselessness of this position is too patent to need comment.

### *The Jagir System—*

The Afghan polity was based on the conception of the kingdom being tribal property. From Bahlol Lodi down to Sher Shah and even Islam Shah all had to invite their Afghan kinsmen, and in recognition of their right to a share in the kingdom to give them some part of its income either in the shape of cash or jagir. Besides, they had to divide almost the whole kingdom among the leading Afghan nobles and chiefs. This system was not in the least altered or modified by Sher Shah. But by his great experience, dominating personality and astuteness in dealing with them, he succeeded in introducing most remarkable improvements into both the spirit and the machinery of government. The bulk of his kingdom was also assigned in Jagirs to Afghan nobles. But while they still retained their theoretical rights and privileges, their actual position under him had become greatly weakened. The Lodi Sultans had to keep flattering them in order to retain their co-operation and help and even Sikandar

had no control over his provincial governors. But under Sher Shah they had to be thoroughly submissive and obedient and even the smallest act of inefficiency or dereliction of duty never went unpunished. Islam Shah acted on the general principle of abolishing Jagirs, so far as was practicable, and substituting instead the system of cash salaries, but he could not accomplish much.

We find references also about the native chiefs many of whom were forced to acknowledge allegiance to the ruler of Dihli. For instance the Raja of Lakhnor, to the east of Sambhal, was allowed to retain his estate and evidently enjoyed a very influential position under the protection of the governor of Sambhal.<sup>30</sup> Abbas incidentally refers to the attendance of *zamindars* for interviews with the king, every morning<sup>31</sup>. But the nature of the treaties and obligations of these *zamindars* and *rajas* can only be a matter of conjecture.

## ABBREVIATIONS

- (1) Abbas—Abbas Sarwani's *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi* (also called *Tuhfa-i-Akbar Shahi*) manuscript.
- (2) Ain—*Ain-i-Akbari* of Abul Fazl.
- (3) Badauni—*Muntakhab - ut - Tawarikh* of Mulla Abdul Qadar Badauni.
- (4) Dorn—B. Dorn's *History of the Afghans*.

- (5) Elliot—H.M. Elliot's 'History of India as told by its own Historians', Edited by Professor Dowson
- (6) Ethe—Ethe's Catalogue of Persian MSS. in the India Office Library (*London*).
- (7) IO. MS.—India Office (*London*) Manuscript.
- (8) JBORS—Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society.
- (9) MS. A.—The Author's copy of Abbas.
- (10) Riyaz—Riyaz - us - Salatin of Ghulam Hussain.
- (11) Sher Shah'—'Sher Shah by K.R. Qanungo.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> While Sindh had been surrendered to Sher Shah by its Afghan chieftains, the desert of Jaisalmer and part of Bikaner and Jodhpur remained out of the sway of the Sur Government.

<sup>2</sup> 'Sher Shah,' 382—383.

<sup>3</sup> Abbas (MS. A.). 178 ; Elliot. IV, 388.

<sup>4</sup> Abbas MS. A., 180 ; Elliot. IV, 389.

<sup>5</sup> A very common but serious misapprehension exists regarding the date of Sher Shah's birth, created by Mr. Qanungo's absurd suggestion to place that event about 1486 A. C. But in a paper on 'The Date and Place of the Birth of Sher Shah,' published in the JBORS (March 1934, Vol. XX pt. I) and now revised and reprinted in this volume, the present writer has conclusively shown that Sher Shah was born in the year 1472 A. C., Qanungo's hypothetical date being late by no

less a period than 14 years. Consequently at the time of his enthronement Sher Shah was not 54 but 68 years old. It may also be observed here that he had a long experience of administering his father's jagir, extending over nearly 25 years in the first instance, and then several years again after his death.

<sup>6</sup> From pp. 241-243 of his 'Sher Shah' Qanungo laboriously develops his theory that Sher Shah 'substituted in Bengal a completely new mechanism', viz., that he broke up the province into a number of separate and smaller governorships. Qanungo fixes their number at nineteen on the ground that as we learn from Abbas that the largest administrative unit of Sher Shah's Empire was a *sarkar* (Ms. 249—Elliot, IV, 414), it would not be very far from the truth to say that about this time the 19 *sarkars* of Bengal proper enumerated in the Ain-i-Akbari were constituted by Sher Shah. 'This new system, that is to say, of dividing a province into separate governorships which were coincident with the *sarkars* of later times was, Qanungo contends, 'Sher Shah's ideal of provincial organisation' (vide 'Sher Shah', 357). It will be presently shown, however, that his contention is quite baseless. But it may be pointed out here that the statement which he ascribes to Abbas, viz., that the *sarkar* was Sher Shah's largest administrative unit does not exist either in Elliot or in any of the five MSS. extant in the Br. Museum and the India Office, nor in my copy. I find no statement of Abbas capable of yielding the sense which Qanungo has discovered.

<sup>7</sup> Sher Shah, 243.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 357—358.

<sup>9</sup> For instance, he further supports his theory by a quotation from Abbas (Elliot. IV, 432). viz., "He (Sher Shah) intended to remove Azam Humayun (Haibat Khan) from his government of the Punjab, but had no time before he was glorified in martyrdom." This sentence has been torn out of its context and twisted to yield the desired sense, which, however, happens to be just the contrary of what the passage really conveys. Read with

in the context it only means that Sher Shah wanted to remove the governor as a punishment for certain acts of high misdemeanour and not in order to abolish the office itself

<sup>10</sup> Abbas (MS.A). 183, IO. MS. fol. 87-88; Elliot. IV, 390.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid (MS.A). 225; IO. MS. fol. 108; Elliot IV, 417. It may be noted that Elliot's MS. seems to have had the word 'Amir' and not 'Amin' which is found in all other MSS. known to me, in India and England, although curiously enough an abridged redaction of the Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi. (Or. 1782) which belonged to Elliot and was copied by his *munshi* has also the word 'Amin' and not 'Amir'. It can, therefore, be safely concluded that his rendering was an error.

<sup>12</sup> خضر خان محبوس گشت و شیر شاه ضبط آں ولایت نموده  
بچند ی از امرائے معتبر جاگیر ساخت و قاضی فضیلت.....  
ناظم مہمات قلعه رحٹاس شرقی گردانید -

Badauni, 364-365. It will be remembered that Badauni was a contemporary of Abbas and had personally been witness to Sher Shah's administration in his boyhood. He is as valuable an authority for the great Afghan's reign as Abbas.

<sup>13</sup> I quote the relevant passage from the Makhzan-i-Afghani and Khan Jahan Lodi of which the different MSS. I have carefully compared and collated both in the Br. Mus and the India Office.

مسخزن افغانی (Or. 163\*, fol. 216 a) و آنجا حاکم دیگر تعیین  
فرمود و قاضی فضیلت را امین بنگالہ نمود - تاریخ خانجہائی و  
مسخزن افغانی (Ethe, 1705. fol. 158 a, d) بنگالہ چند بچند  
کس از امرائی معتبر خود جاگیر کرد و قاضی فضیلت را امین  
آن ولایت ساخت و سلاح و سداک و فساد آن ملک را در قبضہ اقتدار  
او مسلم نہاد -

<sup>14</sup> و قاضی فضیلت را..... امین بنگالہ ساختہ بود و در  
ہر مکان کہ مناسب حال اودید فوجہا نگاشتہ بود -



- 15 Dorn, 131-132; Riyaz (Tr.), 145.
- 16 The changes involved in the nature of the administration do not fall within the scope of this paper.
- 17 IO. MS, fol. 107b. MS. A., 221-223.
- 18 MS. A. pp. 171-172 ; Elliot. IV. 383-384 and p. 416.
- 19 MS. A. 181-183. Elliot. IV, 388-90.
- 20 MS. A. 187. Elliot. IV, 393.
- 21 MS. A. 191-92. Elliot IV, 396-397.
- There is a mistake in Elliot here. The command of 12000. was conferred on Shuja'at Khan and not on Haji Khan who was only a Faujdar. See Elliot, IV, 395.
- 22 MS. A. 235-236 ; Abbas IO MS. fol. 114 a.
- 23 MS. A. 193-195 ; Elliot. IV, 397-399.
- 24 MS. A. 207-208. Elliot. IV, 405-406.
- 25 Riyaz, 153.
- 26 Elliot. V, 43.
- 27 Op. cit. 44.
- 28 Ain, 415 l. 20-23 ; also Riyaz 148.
- 29 Riyaz, 150.
- 30 Elliot. VI, 384 ; MS. A. 172.
- MS. A. 200.

## IV

### REVENUE SYSTEM OF SHER SHAH

Sher Shah Suri was admittedly one of the most brilliant and capable among medieval rulers. When he became king he was already far advanced in years, having seen no less than sixty-eight summers. During his long and chequered career in which beginning from the position of jagirdar of a couple of parganahs he had gradually but steadily worked his way up, he had made the fullest use of the many opportunities he had had of observing the vices and weaknesses of the Lodi system of government in which no improvement worth the name had been effected by Babar or Humayun. He had thus a first-hand knowledge of the entire system of government and had mastered the minutest details of the administration whereby he was deeply impressed with the imperative necessity of reforming it. In this respect Sher Shah had a unique advantage over all other things and rulers none of whom ever had any such opportunities of acquiring personal experience of the system that obtained.

Sher Shah had seen days of obscurity and difficulty which might have unnerved a man of ordinary mettle. But Sher Shah faced all his trials and setbacks with courage and the fruits of his brave struggle were bright. Although his rule lasted only the very brief period of five years, in which he had hardly any

respite from his military preoccupations, his constructive achievements in reforming various branches of administration and building up a very elaborate and enduring system were most brilliant and indeed greater than his military exploits. The secret of the remarkable success and expedition with which this Afghan ruler could accomplish so much within such a short time, which is a puzzle to students of history, is to be sought in the vast and mature experience which he had gained both of the arts of peace as well as of war.

Despite the facts that the greatness of Sher Shah and his remarkable work had been recognised by almost all early students of Indian history, until about a generation ago, no detailed study of his life had been attempted, which was mainly due to the scarcity of materials bearing on the subject until Qanungo brought out his monograph on Sher Shah at the end of the second decade of this century. Following close on Qanungo's work certain aspects of Sher Shah's administration were critically studied by Moreland. Among these the most difficult and obscure is his revenue system which has occasioned a great deal of controversy. Being, in a way, the basic and the most important department of government, it was elaborated and improved by the Suri ruler as much as he could in the short time at his disposal. But the chroniclers of Sher Shah have failed to give a full and clear account of the system. We are therefore left to reconstruct it from the very insufficient information they have recorded.

Qanungo and Moreland came to opposite conclusions in respect of almost all vital points pertaining to Sher Shah's revenue system. The cause of these differences of view, as stated above, is that nothing like an adequate account of Sher Shah's fiscal institutions is to be found in the sources of his reign. Such brief notices as are found interspersed in the narratives being obscure and vague, lend themselves to different interpretations in the hands of subtle scholars.

The main source of Sher Shah's history, from which practically all other chronicles derive, is Abbas Sarvani's *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi*, of which the few texts extant differ in several places. But it is a matter for some satisfaction that in their account of the fiscal measures of Sher Shah they all agree on the whole, excepting certain ineffective points.

Before entering upon an examination of the actual problem in hand it will be well to state the main questions connected with it, *viz.*, (1) the mode of assessment, (2) the form of payment, and (3) the proportion or amount of the state share. These three questions in their several bearings should be separately studied in respect of the two periods of Sher Shah's administration, *viz.*, the period of his governorship of his father's *jagir*, and second, the period of his kingship, because nothing concerning his administrative activities when he became ruler of Bihar and Bengal is contained in the sources.

Now the question is what was the mode of assessment adopted by Sher Shah or, to be more correct, Farid when he was entrusted with the administration of Sahasram and Khawaspur parganas by his father. There are three methods of assessment which have been generally found to obtain in India since ancient times, *viz.*, (1) sharing, (2) compounding, and (3) measurement. In sharing, the basis was the quantity of the produce reaped, *i.e.*, the gross produce, which was divided into several equal shares, one of which belonged to the King. This then might be converted into cash by being sold away on the spot; but its main point is that it indicated a certain fixed portion of the gross produce as the claim of the government by way of land tax. (2) Compounding, in the words of Moreland, was the system under which 'a peasant compounded for his liability to the king by a fixed payment for leave to occupy a certain area and grow whatever crops he chose'.<sup>1</sup> (3) Measurement was based on the area sown, a charge of a certain weight of each kind of grain, or its equivalent in cash was made on each unit of area sown, and the assessment for the year was complete when the crop areas had been measured, though in practice it was found necessary to make allowances in cases where the crop failed.<sup>2</sup> Moreland is of opinion that the first and third of these systems, *i.e.*, sharing and measurement are Hindu systems coming down from ancient times, but the second one, *i.e.*, compounding, cannot be traced before Aurangzeb's time, 'but

it may be much older.' But there is a word which occurs in a passage in the *Ain-i-Akbari*, a correct interpretation of which will prove that the system of 'compounding' also existed, at any rate, in early Musalman times. This word is *Muqtei* (مقطعی) and is regarded by Moreland as of doubtful meaning. The passage in question is as follows.<sup>3</sup>—

.....” و در زمان شیرخان و سلیم خان که هندوستان از غله بخشی و مقطعی بظبط آمد بهسین گزیسموندند“

and here is Jarret's translation of it: 'Sher Khan and Salim Khan, under whom Hindustan was released from the custom of dividing the grain and its apportionment, in measuring land used this gaz.<sup>4</sup> Thus Jarret renders Moreland's doubtful word 'Muqtei', as 'apportionment,' i.e. assignment of shares due to the parties concerned. The word مقطعی is derived from *qitaa* (ق-ط-ع=قطع), meaning, 'a portion' or 'to divide into portions.' Now this word exactly signifies a system of 'compounding' which should have prevailed side by side with 'sharing' before Sher Shah, as stated in the passage quoted above, replaced those early methods by *zabt* or measurement. We have seen Moreland's definition of the 'Compounding system' as a sort of compromise made by the peasant with the ruler to make a fixed payment (presumably cash) as consideration for being allowed to grow crops on a certain area of land. But payment in cash must have been the second stage in the growth of the compounding system, and yet it

should have been only permissive and not compulsory, for we find that what I call the 'first stage' of the system was prevailing till very recently in several parts of the country. In this stage the custom was that the *Patwari* or *Patel* along with the headman of the village, would make an estimate of the expected yield by seeing the crop when it was ready and if the peasant agreed to the estimate, the formalities of the contract were fulfilled. In this transaction the Government entered into a sort of contract with the peasant to realise from him a fixed portion of his produce on the basis of the estimate which was mutually agreed upon. If the peasant agreed the contract was complete. If not, then some other method was resorted to. This system was known as *mukata*—which is only a form of *mugtea*—and was prevalent till recent times all over Rajputana. The same system under different names, the most common being *kankut* or only '*kut*', is found to obtain all over the country side by side with other systems.

So of the three systems which have simultaneously existed in many parts of the country since the Musalman times, *mukata* was the name still used for what was indisputably a system of compounding. It is also evident that *makata* is only a simplified colloquial form of *mugatea* (مقاطع) which connotes something given on contract, or a person entering into a contract. All these words,



*muqtei*, *muqtea*, etc., are derived from the same root and must have been used in slightly varied forms in different parts of the country. These facts make it clear that *muqtei* was a system of compounding, in which the peasant accepted the estimate of the expected yield of his farm, made by the *Patwari* and other officials, and agreed to pay revenue according to this estimate. The custom of compounding for cash payment must have been introduced later wherever the parties thought it to be more convenient. But it seems to have been definitely introduced under Akbar.<sup>5</sup> Thus the system of '*muqtei*' incidentally referred to in the Ain as having been replaced by measurement in the time of Sher Shah and Salim Shah, indicates none other than the very system of compounding which, Moreland says, was working side by side with the other two between Banaras and Dihli when the British Administration began.<sup>6</sup> On these grounds, Moreland's surmise that the word might indicate a system of 'Farming' seems to be baseless. As a likely support of his suggestion Moreland says: 'Derivatives from the same root are applied in some cases to assignment, in others to Farming' but he does not give any illustrations. Nor do I find any derivative of the same root being even remotely applicable to 'Farming' or 'Assigning.'

I turn now to the main points of dispute, which may be stated thus: (1) Did Farid give to the peasants their choice as to the system on which the demand should be made, that is



to say, as to the method of assessment ; or did he give them choice only as to the mode of payment ? (2) whether or not his establishing direct relations with the ryot had any significance ?

Relying on the authority of Abbas Sarwani whose facts he accepts as correct, Moreland asserts that 'Farid ..... gave the peasants their choice as to the method of assessment'. The reading, however, in Elliot's Translation of Abbas<sup>9</sup> is, " turning to the peasantry, he said :—'This day I give you your choice as to the *mode of payment*'<sup>10</sup>. Do whatever is most advantageous to you in every possible way.' Some of the headmen asked for written agreements for a fixed money rent<sup>11</sup>, others preferred payment in kind (*qismat-i-ghalla*). ...accordingly he gave leases and took agreements, etc." Prof. Qanungo's manuscript has the same wordings as Elliot's. On page 18 of his 'Sher Shah' he writes : "Next he turned to the peasants and told them to make their choice as to whether they should *pay rent in cash or kind*. He meant to make a settlement direct with the *ryot* and not through the *muqaddams*. Abbas says (Abbas Sarwani, MS. 28) "Some of the cultivators agreed to 'Zarib', (i.e., fixing of rent by measuring the area under cultivation ; a money commutation is here meant). Others agreed to an actual division of crops. Farid took written *qabuliyats* signed by the raiyats and fixed the rate of payment for measuring, the remuneration of the

tax-gatherers and the daily allowance of the tax-gatherers."

Now the words quoted above do not leave any room for ambiguity and in the face of their preciseness, it is really incomprehensible how Moreland could discover in them an option as to the method of assessment, instead of the mode of payment. But having presumed the offer to relate to an option for the mode of assessment he is led into wrongly interpreting the answer that was given by the peasants or by the headmen on their behalf. The reason of this misinterpretation is clear: it is the use of the words *jarib* in some mss. (while in others *patta-gabuliat* is used), and *qismat-i-ghalla*, in a loose way.<sup>12</sup> Elliot's rendering of these two words, as we have seen above, is absolutely clear and admits of no ambiguity. It runs thus: some asked for written agreements for '*a fixed money payment*,' and others preferred '*payment in kind*'. Now *jarib* of course came to bear, in Akbar's time, the technical sense of 'measurement,' or 'area,' etc., but because some manuscripts have *patta-gabuliat* in place of *jarib*, it appears that either it has been wrongly inserted in some copies or more probably the words were at that time loosely used to convey the same sense. And it was only in Akbar's time, I think, that *jarib* became restricted to a strictly technical sense. Prior to that it was used like an ordinary word. Before I adduce further reasons in support of this interpretation, I should like to point out that

Qanungo has confused the interpretation of the word '*jarib*' which occurs in his ms., but Farid's offer of an option as to the mode of payment and not that of assessment being in absolutely unmistakable words, has guided him ultimately to the right conclusion. My further reasons for my interpretation are: first, that the offer of Farid to the cultivators being so clear and unmistakable there could have been no sense in their reply if it had referred to something else than the question asked. Secondly, we know that when the peasant's choice was made, Farid fixed the fees for measurers or surveyors, and tax-collectors, and the latter's daily rations.<sup>18</sup> There is no clue in this of any other except the system of measurement, and commissions are fixed for the different functionaries under that system. Had the other system, *viz.*, sharing also been allowed, he would surely have fixed the commission of the functionaries concerned. But here again curiously enough Moreland discovers something which does not exist in any of the original texts. He says 'in order to prevent oppression by the headmen, the fees chargeable under each system were fixed'. It is difficult to see how the words I have quoted above can be interpreted to refer to all the systems of assessment. Fixing the fees for measurers and tax-gatherers is quite clear. It can never imply the two systems of assessment. Thirdly, Moreland himself admits that before Sher Shah's time two systems of assessment were working, *viz.*, '*ghalla bakhshi*', i.e., 'sharing'

and '*muktei*', the meaning of the latter being not clear to him, but for which he gives '*farming*' as a probable interpretation. Why then did Farid not offer them an option of this third system also? Nor does he give the remotest indication that he had resolved to suppress one of the two systems then prevailing. Fourthly, Moreland in the course of his arguments further on opines that 'Farid himself can have had no very decided opinion at the outset' and builds on this supposition conclusions which are unwarranted, *e.g.*, that during the preceding six centuries before Sher Shah 'there was, in practice, not very much to choose between sharing and measurement...'<sup>14</sup> For one thing, the opinion that Farid 'could not have had any decided opinion himself, at this time, far from supporting Moreland's theory, goes against him inasmuch as how could he, if he were ignorant of the comparative usefulness or otherwise of the two systems, drop one of them without giving it a fair trial. To draw from this the conclusion that in practice there was not very much to choose between the two systems of sharing and measurement, during the preceding six centuries, is altogether unwarranted. The system of 'measurement' which had been reintroduced by Ala-uddin Khalji had long been discontinued, and the *rai-yats* of Sher Shah's time could not possibly have had the remotest idea of how it should work. Moreland makes Farid take up the position of asking the peasants to choose between two things, one of which they had never

seen, and hence he himself stumbles into error. It is strange that he passes judgment upon the working of a system of assessment at a period in which it was not even in existence, in the *Jagir* of Sher Shah at any rate. Fifthly, while Farid, who was admittedly possessed of a keen and powerful observation and was so well equipped by his education and training, was not yet able to make up his mind, how could he expect the peasants to know better than himself. In determining this problem a study of the psychology of Farid will be of great help. He was conscious of his superiority of intellect over all his contemporaries, much more so, over the unsophisticated peasantry, and his sole aim was the improvement of the prosperity of the peasants, and thereby that of the state. Such a person would never throw open to the option of the simple-minded *raiya* anything of a dubious character, such as the systems of assessment were. He would only give them an option which would afford them some facility, for instance, in the mode of payment. He knew thoroughly well the oppressions that the headmen committed upon the *raiya*s. He therefore fixed the fees chargeable for measuring, etc., and strongly admonished them not to charge a pie more than was due under pain of severe chastisement in case of violation of his orders. All these facts go to prove that he was wide awake to the defects of the previous systems of assessment which left to the official underlings considerable loopholes to oppress the *raiya*. An exile at

Jaunpur, he was not blind to the numerous shortcomings that filled the administration of his father. On the contrary, he had made a careful study of them as also of their causes, and must have been a painful on-looker so long as he had not the power to remedy them. This is amply borne out by the conversation he had with Hasan at the time of parting. In telling his father about the oppression of the *Mukaddams* he gave clear indication of his acquaintance with the working of the existing systems of assessment and had made up his mind to put an end to them. Being thus resolved to introduce the system of measurement he had no need to discuss it with the peasants. He proceeded straight to the next question, viz., the mode of payment, in which by giving them option he could facilitate their work. On these grounds I hold that (1) Sher Shah, in his administration of the *jagir* of his father, adopted the system of measurement in assessment of land revenue, and secondly, that he offered to the peasants option in the mode of payment and not in the method of assessment.

Now the question is whether Sher Shah introduced the *zabt* or measurement system of assessment throughout his kingdom when he became king. Abul Fazl's statement (see f.n.3. supra) taken literally would seem to convey that in 'Hindustan' the two former systems of "*ghalla bakhshi* and *mugtei*" were replaced by *zabt*. But it should not be taken too literally in view of the fact that at no time, not even under

Akbar, the system of measurment could be introduced in all the provinces for the simple reason that local conditions of regions like Bengal and hilly parts like South Behar, rendered the working of the *zabt* or measurment almost impossible. Therefore, while Sher Shah did try the experiment of *zabt* in his small jagir, the conclusion that he could have insisted on a mechanical imposition of a uniform system over the whole kingdom will be obviously untenable. Abul Fazl only means, by the above statement, that *zabt* was the most well-accepted method under the Suri rulers and they tried to introduce it wherever they found it possible to do so. From this it is clear that the option to the peasants was not given in the methods of assesment, for different systems would have been adopted for different regions according to local conditions.

Our second question in this connection was whether or not the direct connection established by Farid with his *ryots* without the mediation of the headmen had any significance. In regard to this matter I entirely agree with Qanungo when he says: 'By this arrangement the *Mugaddams* were badly hit ..... Their regime of tyranny came to an end. A direct connection between the *raiyyat* and *jagirdar* having been established, both were freed from dependence on them'<sup>15</sup>. Elliot's MS., however, says that the choice was made by the headmen, and *qabuliyat* was taken from them. But Qanungo says<sup>16</sup>, and justly, that this is opposed to the very spirit of Farid's



reformation. His MS. has clearly the words :  
 دستخط قبولیت از رعیت نویسانده گرفت  
 i. e., he took *gabuliats* signed by the raiyat. My MS. as well as that of India Office, has also the same reading. That Farid evinced an intense anxiety for the security and welfare of the peasantry and in order to save them from the oppressions of the *Mugaddams*, asked them to come to him straight if they had any complaint to make, shows positively how deeply he realised the need of establishing direct contact with them, and that this measure was not meaningless as Moreland makes it out to be.<sup>17</sup> He gives a twofold argument in support of his view : First, that the headmen occupied a dual position. True, that the headmen had a dual position,—and this may have been the reason of an indifferent use of the words peasant and headman, being made in the MSS.—but they as well as the peasants had dealings with the *jagirdar* in the capacity of *ryots* and not as intermediaries for any other party. Secondly, Moreland says that 'the peasant's choice' would in any case be declared by the headmen'. This would mean that in all dealings the headman was to act as the intermediary ; but we know he called all the peasants and not the headmen alone and began a direct contact with them and plainly told them to deal directly with himself.

The above discussion precludes the necessity of any further consideration of the question as to the mode of payment. Moreland, having



once fallen into error is unable to find authority for the view held by Qanungo, *viz.*, 'that Farid gave option to the peasant to pay rent either in cash or kind. Nothing can be said as to the amount of Farid's demand from the peasant at this time, there being no mention of it in any authority.

Now in respect of the second period of his administration when Farid becomes Sher Shah the King of Northern India, there is no difficulty about the first two questions. It has been shown above that while Farid did try the method of assessment by *zabt* in all his small *jagirs*, he could not have imposed it with a mechanical uniformity over the whole kingdom. As regards the mode of payment, there is no reason to suspect that he would have withheld from the ryots the option as to their mode of payment.<sup>18</sup> We find a confirmation of this view in a sentence of Abul Fazl in the *Ain*. In the 'Ain of the classification of land', etc. (*Ain XI* of Jarrett's *Tr.*, Vol. 11) Abul Fazl says at the end, that the revenue levied by Sher Khan found acceptance<sup>19</sup> and for the convenience of the cultivators and the soldiery, the value was taken in ready money.<sup>20</sup> This is an account of the early measures of Akbar in which he had adopted the system that had been established by Sher Shah and was still prevailing. Its last clause indicates a modification that was made in the former system, *viz.* that the value of the revenue was restricted to cash payment only for the convenience of the people concerned, thus showing that

previously payment of revenue must have been made in cash as well as kind.

The last and most complicated question, viz., the king's share, requires fuller notice. Qanungo contends that Sher Shah took one-fourth of the gross produce as land revenue, in support whereof he adduces these arguments<sup>21</sup>: (1) "The Makhzan-i-Afghana says that Sher Shah wrote to Haibat Khan to take one-fourth of the produce of the land as Govt. revenue from the people of Multan without measuring the land" (Quoted in Elliot, iv. 399, foot-note 1). (2) Abul Fazal writes: 'The Revenue levied by Sher Khan, which at the present day is represented in all provinces as the lowest rate of assessment.' (Ain. ii. 63.)<sup>22</sup>

From the same writer we learn elsewhere that Akbar later on raised it to one-third (ibid., p. 66). So it is evident that Sher Shah's demand must have been lower than that."

As regards the first argument, I agree with Moreland that Multan was the recipient of a specially favourable treatment, and its case cannot be supposed to apply to the rest of the kingdom. The second argument of Qanungo also cannot hold water. He has quoted Jarret's translation of the Ain. But on referring to the text we find that Jarrett's rendering entirely misrepresents the sense of the original. The passage in question has been reproduced by me in footnote 20, (q.v.) Moreland gives a correct rendering of it: 'and the *ray*' (or *a ray*') which Sher Khan had fixed (and at the present day in all provinces less

than that is not indicated), found acceptance...<sup>23</sup> Herein also I agree with Moreland that the word "that" refers to a schedule of Sher Shah's assessment rates, and hence it only means that the assessments when the Ain was written were not less than Sher Shah's: 'they may therefore have been equal or greater and the passage cannot be used to prove that they were greater.' Further, the text clearly says that the ray of Sher Shah found acceptance (پزیرش یافت). Hence whatever rates were prevailing at that time and were approved by the Emperor were those which had come down from Sher Shah's time. Hence Akbar's rates of this period were equal to those of Sher Shah. Qanungo's statement that Akbar raised the assessment to one-third later, is neither to be found in Jarrett's translation on page 66, nor in the Text.

Again in Elliot's Abbas we find that Sher Shah "ordered his governors to measure the land every harvest, to collect the revenue according to the measurement and in proportion to the produce, giving one share to the cultivator and half a share to the *Muqaddam*; and fix the assessment with regard to the kind of grain."<sup>24</sup> This passage does not occur in Qanungo's MS., nor in those seen by Moreland. It seems, however, to give the clue to the rate of assessment. The instruction to the collectors is, that they should give one share to the cultivator and half a share to the *Muqaddam*, through whom the government dues were

realised. It cannot mean the share of the *Muqaddam* himself. But even if we discredit the authority of this doubtful passage, an unmistakable confirmation of this view which I hold, in agreement with Moreland, is contained in the passage of the Ain quoted above. All that remains to do is to elucidate the sense and application of the word *ray*' (ریعی) used in this passage. It means 'cultivation,' or 'the income accruing from cultivation,' or the tax on cultivation.<sup>25</sup> In the Ain immediately after saying that 'the ray' (ریعی) fixed by Sher Khan ..... etc', Abul Fazl gives several tables or schedules of the assessment rates. The headings of these schedules are, e.g., رییعی دیم پولج (i.e., *ray*' of the *rabi* crop of *polaj* land)<sup>26</sup> رییعی دیم خریفی (i. e., *ray*' for *kharif* crop)<sup>26</sup> and so on. This clearly shows that these *ray*'s or schedules are those referred to by him and which have come down from Sher's time. The word *ray*' also occurs in some other places in the Ain where it bears a different meaning according to the context, e. g., رییعی جنس و ارج آن 27 i. e., 'and taking the gross produce and estimating its value, they determined the rates of collection.....' 28

Thus this passage helps us to know that Sher Shah used to charge one-third of the produce as revenue. But there is another difficulty which arises out of this. These schedules, based as they were on the three

different productivities of the land were soon found to be unworkable for the kingdom of Akbar owing to the varying degrees of fertility of land in different provinces of the Empire. This failure to work them led to the so-called ten year settlement of Todar Mall.<sup>20</sup> Moreland suggests that the same difficulty should have arisen for Sher Shah on account of the cut and dry schedules of assessment rates. But I think these are given by Abul Fazl only as illustrations from the vestiges of a system which, while it was every year regularly adjusted to the needs of the situation by its masterly creator, should have become petrified during the chaos following his death. Moreland forgets that under Sher Shah the measurements were made every year and the revenue was assessed according to the produce.

Then there is the question whether the schedules of rates of different classes of land given in the Ain represent a continuation of those prevalent under Sher Shah and Islam Shah. From the Daulat-i-Sher Shahi of Hasan Ali Khan we learn that Sher Shah carried out a measurement of the land through Ahmad Khan Begi (Tangi ?) 'who was the soul of this system of management' and he accomplished this task with the help of learned Brahmans, and prepared a detailed statement showing the rights of *ownérs* and the measurement of all arable and other pieces of land. Then we are told that the land was *divided into several classes and the rate of every one of them was fixed*. This leaves no room for doubting the

fact that a full classification of different varieties of land had been already carried out by Sher Shah.

Incidentally we also have a clear recognition here of the cultivator's right of ownership of land, a much debated question.<sup>90</sup>

### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> JRAS, 1926, p. 449. The Compounding system was, however, originally very different from this, as I shall show in the course of this paper.

<sup>2</sup> JRAS, 1926, p. 449.

<sup>3</sup> Ain-i-Akbari, Persian Text, Published by the Nawal Kishore Press, Lucknow, 1893 ; Book I. p. 206 ; in account of the Ain-i-Gaz.

<sup>4</sup> Jarrett's Tr. of the Ain-i-Akbari, II., 61., Cal. Text, p. 296, II. 5-6.

<sup>5</sup> See Ain. (Jarrett's Tr., II) p. 63. and Cal. Text of the Ain, p. 297. The passage referred to here is quoted under foot-note 20.

<sup>6</sup> JRAS, 1926, p. 449.

<sup>7</sup> The Agrarian System of Moslem India, by W. H. Moreland, pp. 73, 74.

<sup>8</sup> JRAS, 1926, p. 450 ; also his 'Agrarian system of Moslem India', pp. 69 and 71.

<sup>9</sup> Elliot IV, 313.

<sup>10</sup> But my MS. of Abbas and those of the India Office with which I compared my copy, do not contain the equivalent of the words '*as to the mode of payment*'. There the text : بر رعیت آورده گفت که امروز اختیار

بدست شما دادم - بعضی رعیت جزیب قبول کردند - بعضی  
غله دادن اختیار نمودند

which means "Turing to the peasants he said : 'This day I give you choice : some peasants chose *Zabt*, while others preferred sharing." See MS. A, p. 22.

<sup>11</sup> With regard to this Elliot in a foot-note on the same says notes : 'In two copies *jarib*, in one, *patta-Kabuliyat*.'

<sup>12</sup> The actual words in most MSS, including mine as quoted in f. n. 10 are غله دادن which some scribes not realising the different connotations of the two phrases, have changed to قسمت غله a term which was commonly applied in the specific sense of 'sharing'. But غله دادن only means that some chose to pay in 'Corn' i.e. *kind* and others in *Cash*.

<sup>13</sup> (Qanungo's MS., p. 28.)

<sup>14</sup> JRAS, 1926, p. 451.

<sup>15</sup> Sher Shah by K. R. Qanungo, pp. 18—19.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, foot-note, p. 18.

<sup>17</sup> JRAS, 1926, foot-note on p. 450.

<sup>18</sup> There is also no mention of the fees of measurers and tax collectors, etc., at this time. Qanungo's surmise that all such items should have been included within the land revenue, seems to be quite reasonable. Similar was the case in Akbar's system, which in the first few years of his reign, was only a continuation of Sher Shah's system.

<sup>19</sup> Jarrett (II, p. 63) has wrongly translated these words (پزیرش یافت) as 'generally obtained', which should be 'found acceptance'.

<sup>20</sup> Ain.N.K. Press Lucknow Text, p. 207. Here is the sentence referred to : و دیعی که شیر خان برگرفته بود : امروز در همه صوبها از و کمتر نشان ندهند پزیرش یافت و



برای آسودگی سپاه و رعیت ارج بر سخته زر باز خواست نمایند -

<sup>21</sup> Sher Shah, p. 373, foot-note.

<sup>22</sup> He refers to Jarrett's Translation.

<sup>23</sup> JRAS, 1926, 453 and 455.

<sup>24</sup> Elliot IV., p. 413-14.

<sup>25</sup> Ain. Lucknow Text. 207; in the marginal note the meaning of ray' (ریعی) زراعت is given thus :

مزدروعات و آنچه از زراعت حاصل شود و محصول زراعت

<sup>26</sup> Ain, (Lucknow Text) p. 207.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 208.

<sup>28</sup> Ain. (Lucknow Text) Book II, p. 2.

<sup>29</sup> Jarrett's Ain, II, p. 88.

<sup>30</sup> This question has been fully dealt with by me in another paper.



## V

### ANNUAL INCOME AND EXPENDITURE OF SHER SHAH

The chroniclers of Sher Shah do not give adequate information concerning the revenues and expenditure of Suri kings. They only mention certain items of the expenditure under Sher Shah and Islam Shah. It is therefore difficult to form anything like an accurate estimate of their finances. We, however, know the exact figures of the revenues of some of his predecessors and his successors, the Mughals, and also the extent of the territories over which they held sway. Besides we know the condition of the country under the different reigns, which fact considerably influenced the prosperity of the people and consequently the finances of the State. These facts may help us to form an approximate estimate of the Suri finances.

Firoz Shah ruled a much truncated Tughlaq empire. Before he actually ascended the throne a large part of the Tughlaq empire, including the whole of the Deccan, Sindh and Bengal had already been lost. The general prevalence of peace and prosperity and the cheapness of commodities ensured a balanced economy and steady revenue. Afif twice mentions that the revenues of the state were six crores and 85 (75 ?) lacs of *tankas*. In the

year 1375, the Sultan abolished some twenty-five vexatious cesses, mostly of the nature of *octroi* duties, which had weighed heavily upon merchants and tradesmen. This involved a loss of about 3000,000 of *tankas*. But it should have been certainly made up by the large extension of cultivation and the growing prosperity all around. The income from canals also must have been considerable but it is not mentioned, while the gardens around Dihli are said to have yielded one lac eighty thousand *tankas*. Thus it may be reasonably assumed that Firoz's total income from land, canals and gardens was nearly 8 crores of *tankas*. There were some other sources of revenue such as *zakat*, *jaziyah*, *kham*s octroi and tolls etc., but it is impossible even to make any rough estimate of the income from these sources. It could not, however, have been much.

#### *His Income.*

Edward Thomas in his 'Chronicles of the Pathan Kings of Delhi' has calculated the annual income of Firoz Tughlaq and Babar as follows:—

	Silver Tankas or rupees	£ (at the rate of 2s. a rupee)
Firoz Shah (A. D. 1351—1388)	6,85,00,000	=68,50,000
Babar (A. D. 1526—1530)	2,60,00,000	=26,00,000

Let us now compare the extent of the kingdoms and incomes of these two rulers with those of Sher Shah. Firoz Shah had lost a large part of the Tughlaq Empire, his dominions having dwindled almost entirely to Northern India. The whole of the Deccan,

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| 4. Khams or booty from holy wars (Jehad). | C o u l d not have been considerable as Firoz waged very few wars, and hardly any with success. | Although Sher Shah did not wage any wars in the name of religion, he must have yet got a great deal from wars.          |
| 5. Revenue from gardens and canals.       | This was quite considerable.  | Sher Shah did not charge any taxes on public works.   |
| 6. Octroi and tolls.                      | F i r o z had probably abolished these.   | S h e r S h a h charged an octroi and terminal tax only at two places on the frontiers.                                 |
| 7.        ...        ...                  |   | Income from the Jagirs of the <i>imams</i> and soldiers, which the state had resumed in consideration of cash payments. |
| 8.        ...        ...                  |   | Income from the land attached to the <i>sarais</i> .  |

On comparing these resources of Sher Shah and Firoz we may reasonably presume that the former's income should have approximately been more than double that of the latter, that is to say, it should have been a little above sixteen crores of *tankas*.

This estimate seems to be correct when we compare it with Akbar's income. In the year 1539, Akbar's income has been calculated to have been about 33 crores of rupee and in 1605 when two more provinces were added to his empire it came up to 35 crores<sup>4</sup>. The provinces of Kabul, Khandesh, Berar, Ahmadnagar, Orissa and Kashmir which did not owe allegiance to Sher Shah, were included in Akbar's empire, that is to say the extent of the latter's empire was nearly double that of the former. Moreover, under Akbar, in 1605, half a century of peaceful and well-established government had made the country very prosperous; he had, besides, introduced various other taxes which Sher Shah had not imposed. Thus these facts also warrant the estimate that Sher Shah's revenue should have been about half that of Akbar, *i.e.* about 16 crores.

### **Expenditure :—**

It is not possible to make any better estimate of the expenditure of Sher Shah than that of his income. For making a rough estimate of the expenditure we have two classes of facts to utilise. Firstly, the historians have on some occasions given definite figures of his expenditure.

Secondly, we know the remaining heads of expenditure from which we can make a rough estimate of the total.

The total expenditure of Sher Shah can be divided under four main heads:—

- I. Civil Administration.
- II. Army.
- III. Public Works, including charities, gifts, etc.
- IV. The Emperor's person and the *harem*.

I. *Civil Administration*.—Within this department the following were broadly the sub-heads of expenditure:—

(1) *The Central Government*.—Sher Shah's Government was an example of the most centralised autocracy. He used to inspect and supervise every branch of administration personally. But there were a number of secretaries whose duty it was to present before him the daily business of the several departments, in order to receive his orders and instructions, for the disposal thereof. The number of the secretaries could not have been less than a dozen.

(2) The royal kitchen was another major item of expenditure. Several thousand horsemen, footsoldiers and attendants, servants, etc., as well as the needy and destitute used to board in the royal kitchen every day. He had issued a general order that 'if any soldier or religious personage, or any cultivator be in need of food, he should be fed at the king's kitchen, and should not be allowed to famish. And places for the dispensing of food, to the

poor and the destitute and to all necessitous persons were established in the camp that they might feed every one as above described.' The daily cost in connection with this feeding amounted to 500 gold pieces (*Asharfis*) i. e., (182,500 *Asharfis* per year).<sup>5</sup> Now the *Asharfi* of Sher Shah was nearly one tola in weight and the ratio between the price of gold and silver, as calculated by Edward Thomas, was 9½ : 1,<sup>6</sup> and the silver *tanka* or the rupee also weighed a tola. Thus in terms of rupees the daily expenses of his kitchen would have amounted to nearly Rs. 5,000 or 18,25,000 rupees annually. The value of money at that time was nearly thirteen times as much as it was before the present staggering scarcity and rise in prices consequent upon the Second World War.<sup>7</sup> Calculated on this basis the expenditure on the royal kitchen which was meant to feed the needy and the destitute would amount to as much as Rs. 2,37,25,000 of the pre-war period and at least five times as much again of the present day.

(3) As in Moghul times, there must have been under Sher Shah also numerous royal factories for supplying dresses and the necessary equipments to the army and other functionaries of the state, though unfortunately no mention of these is so far known. These must also have formed a considerable item of expenditure.

(4) If we accept the territorial divisions of Akbar's time to have been based on the preceding ones, the kingdom of Sher Shah should

have comprised about ninety *sarkars* and 2,500 *parganas*. Thus there would have been about 100 chief *shiqdars* and as many chief *amils*, *kotwals*, *faujdars* and *qazis* in the *sarkars*, in addition to about a thousand subordinates, clerks, etc., in their offices. Then in the 2,500 *parganas* the number of the various officials and the servants must have been as follows :—

2,500 *shiqdars*, 2,500 *amins* or *amils*  
5,000 *karkuns*, 2,500 *fotadars*, 2,500 *qazis*.  
Besides, there were several thousand *patwaris*, *ganungos*, peons, bailiffs and numerous other assistants in the departments. In addition to the expenditure on this establishment had to pay a certain allowance to the *mugaddams* or headmen of each village in consideration of their help in the collection of revenue. The number of villages being computed at 113,000, allowances must have been paid to at least as many *mukaddams*. In the time of Jahangir the rates of workers' wages were as follows :— Wages of the servants of the royal camp varied from Rs. 3 to 10 per month, roughly equal to Rs. 39 to 130 of the pre-war days. The peons got Rs. 3-8, equal to Rs. 45 of the pre-war period. The sweeper got Rs. 5 and the ordinary servant Rs. 4-8, i.e., Rs. 65 and 58 respectively of the pre-war period.<sup>6</sup> If we assume about the same ratio between the salaries of peons, *patwaris* and *ganungos* as obtains at the present time the salaries of these and higher officials may have been roughly as follows :—

Peon Rs. 3-8; *patwaris* Rs. 8 to 15, *ganungo* Rs. 20 to 30; *karkuns* Rs. 15 to 20; *fotadars* Rs. 20 to 25; *amils* and *shiqdars* Rs. 50 to 100 and Chief *shiqdars* and *amils* Rs. 200 each on an average. Multiplied by 13 these figures will approximately give us an idea of the rates of salaries in terms of the pre-war value of money in our country. Thus the monthly expenditure on the administrative staff may be roughly estimated to have been as follows :—

Shiqdars	= 2500 × 75	= Rs. 1,87,500
Amils	= 2500 × 75	= Rs. 1,87,500
Chief Shiqdars and Amils	= 90 × 2 × 200	= Rs. 36,000
Kotwals	= 90 × 2 × 200	= Rs. 36,000
Karkuns	= 5000 × 20	= Rs. 1,00,000
Fotadars	= 2500 × 20	= Rs. 50,000

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Therefore the total of yearly  
salaries ... .. = Rs. 5,97,000  
× 12 = 71,64,000

Besides the above mentioned officers, there was a numerous staff of subordinate servants whose salaries are not included in the above calculations.

(5) *The Judiciary*.—The number of *sarkars* and *parganas* has been estimated to have been approximately 90 and 2,500 respectively. Assuming two *qazis* for each *pargana* and one chief *qazi* for each *sarkar* there should have been 5,000 *qazis* and 90 chief *qazis*. Therefore the expenditure on the salaries of the judiciary would have been per month :—



$$5000 \times 100 = \text{Rs. } 5,00,000$$

$$90 \times 200 = \text{Rs. } 18,000$$

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$$\text{Rs. } 5,18,000 \times 12$$

$$= 62,16,000 \text{ yearly}$$

(6) *Dak or Postal Department*—The expenditure on this item must have been considerable. To each *sarai* a *dak chowkie* was attached in which a pair of good horses was kept for carrying *dak*. Thus at last 3,400 horses of the best quality were maintained in the 1,700 *sarais* that he had built, and at least as many grooms to tend them.<sup>9</sup> Assuming the groom's wages to be Rs. 2 or 2-8 per month and the expense per horse to be another Rs. 2 per mensem, the total expenditure on *dak* would amount to  $3400 \times 2\frac{1}{2} + 2 \times 3400$ , i. e., Rs. 15,300 or Rs. 1,83,900 yearly.

(7) *Spies*—Spies were attached to each army as well as to the persons of important officials. If we assume five spies in the *pargana* there would have been about 12,000 spies in the government employ. Their salaries could not have been less than about Rs. 20 to 25 per head. Thus the total expense on the espionage would amount to roughly Rs. 2,50,000 per mensem = Rs. 30,00,000 annually.

(8) *Police*—Sher Shah's police was mainly local but it is certain that there were certain government officers of police also in the *pargana* and *sarkar* to supervise and assist in the policing of the country and to enforce the laws of the state. It is not possible,

however, to strike even an approximate estimate of the expenses on this department.

II. *The Army*.—The strength of the army was as follows :—

	Cavalry	Infantry	Elephants
With the king	150,000	25,000	5,000
Distributed in the cantonments	150,000	50,000	Nil

In addition to this force Sher Shah had a considerable artillery also, but of this again it is not possible to form even a workable estimate. The above was the strength of the regular army. But because Sher Shah was engaged almost in constant warfare he had to recruit temporary soldiers very frequently, whose number must have been large. The heavy expenses of unceasing wars and expeditions added to the regular expenses of the army constituted another big item of expenditure.

III. *Public Works*.—The length of Sher Shah's trunk roads as mentioned by Abbas Serwani and in the *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi* comes to nearly 3,500 miles. Briefly speaking the following were the heads of expenditure under this department.

(1) 3,500 miles of roads; cost of constructing and maintaining them, as also of planting fruit trees on both sides of them.

(2) 1,700 *sarais* containing wells, mosques, *dak chowkies*, royal guest houses, and inspection houses, etc., cost of building and maintaining them.

(3) The regular expenses of the *sarais*, which consisted of (a) food to all travellers

and their cattle, free of charge ; (b) salaries of one *shiqdar*, cooks, *bhatiaras*, water-carriers, ration-suppliers, clerks etc., employed for the management of each *sarai*.

(4) Gifts to the *imams* for maintaining mosques and connected schools.

(5) Gifts and presents to learned men, scholars, poets and others.

(6) Charity houses for the poor and needy which he opened in all cities.<sup>10</sup>

(7) *Ibadat-khanas* opened in every city.

All these works must have entailed a considerable expenditure but it is very difficult to make an estimate of the amount thus spent.

IV. Sher Shah had one more big item of expenditure. He had a deep regard for all Afghan noblemen, who came to India from their homes. He granted them rich jagirs and cash and thus made them wealthy and prosperous. It would seem that Sher Shah incurred no expenses on his harem worth the name. He was much too pre-occupied with his ambitious schemes and too religious in private life in his old age, at any rate, to exceed the legal limit of wives allowed by the *Shariyat*.

Thus we see that though it is impossible to calculate even approximately the total annual expenditure of Sher Shah's Government, we may at any rate form a rough idea of how vast and varied it was.

Islam Shah tried to improve upon and enlarge the establishments of the department of Public Works and charities, which might

have increased the expenditure to some extent, but there seems to have been no notable alteration in his time in the finances of the State.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> *Chronicles*, of the Pathan kings of Delhi, by Edward Thomas. 445.
- <sup>2</sup> Moreland makes it  $5\frac{3}{4}$  crores of tangas (see Agrarian System of Moslem India. 57).
- <sup>3</sup> Sindh had been reconquered by Firoz.
- <sup>4</sup> Thomas, *Chronicles of the Pathan Kings*, 445.
- <sup>5</sup> Elliot, IV, 423.
- <sup>6</sup> *Chronicles of the Pathan Kings*, 405.
- <sup>7</sup> Brij Narain's *Indian Economic Life* 21.
- <sup>8</sup> Brij Narain's *India Economic Life* 23.
- <sup>9</sup> Elliot, IV, 550.
- <sup>10</sup> Elliot, IV, 549.

## VI

### HISTORY OF KOTWAL

There are many social and political terms prevalent at the present day which have come down from very ancient times often with but slight modification and alterations both in form and in the functions and obligations associated with the office they indicate. The biography of such terms is highly interesting, and the vicissitudes through which the word *Kotwal* has passed since very early times of our history afford an apt illustration of this class of words.

Despite the belief of certain Western scholars<sup>1</sup> that the *Kotwal* is a word of Persian origin, it is established beyond question that the word is of Hindi origin.<sup>2</sup>

The office which the word *Kotwal* signified prior to the Muslim conquest and with some alterations during the Muslim rule can be traced back at least to the time of Kautilya's *Arthashastra*. But at that time, as we find in the *Arthashastra*, the term *durgapala* which is a synonym of *Kotwal*, was in vogue. The functions and duties, however, which appertained to the office of *Durgapal* were exactly the same as those of the *Kotapala* of the subsequent Hindu kingdoms.

I have not found any such officer in Gupta inscriptions. The only officer who resembles

Kotapala in the administration of the Great and later Guptas is *Pustapala*, whose duty, according to R. D. Banerjee, was the valuation of land. Nor does this officer find mention in connection with the government of Harsha of Kanauj. It may be that the term Kotapala or Durgapala had fallen into desuetude for sometime; for we find it revived in the 9th century.

The Bhagalpur grant of Narayanapala (A.D. 875—900) mentions *Kotapala*, as an officer in charge of forts. (1A.Vol. XV)

Then in the Gurjara Pratihara plates we find that the term kotapala was used as the designation of a military officer in-charge of forts and outposts which were built on the boundaries of kingdoms and provinces, to protect them from external attacks.<sup>3</sup> Under Bhoj I (Mihir Bhoj, A.D. 840—890) Alla was the kottapala.<sup>4</sup>

Then the word *Kotwal* is referred to as having been current in Ghazni as early as the 11th century A.C. Buali-Hasan, Kotwal of Ghazni was sent in 1048 (A.D.) by Sultan *Maudud* (grandson of Mahmud) to curb the aggression of the 'Khilj who had been very turbulent during the Amir's absence, and he was ordered to bring them to terms, or attack them.'<sup>5</sup> The use of the term in Ghazni so early seems enough evidence for us to presume that it should have been current during the regime of the Hindu Shahi dynasty and was inherited and retained by the Yaminis, as a convenient and significant term. In 1192 a

Kotwal was appointed in the fort of Mirat (Meerut) by Kutb-uddin Iybek. (Elliot II. 219). There is also reference to the kotwal of the fort of Deokot in Assam in 1205, A.C. in the T.N. (See Elliot, II., 315). At the time when, just before the invasion of Chingiz Khan, Ghazni had been occupied by the Khwarazmian Prince Muhammad (Ala-uddin), Sala-ud-din was the *Kotwal* of Ghazni (Raverty p. 1013).

That the *Kotwal* or *Kotapala* continued to be an officer in charge of forts down to the age of the Delhi Sultanate is evidenced by the duties which that officer had to perform. All the cities during that period used to be enclosed by a wall or fortification around them for the sake of protection, and the primary duty of the *Kotwals* was to guard the fortifications and the gates of which they had the keys. For instance, when Ala-uddin Khalji, after murdering his uncle, proceeded to Dihli (*Siri*) the officers of the city came out to meet him, among whom there were the *Kotwals* with the keys of the forts.<sup>10</sup> It seems the author is referring here to the kotwals of several towns in the neighbourhood of Dihli. That the office of kotwal of the capital town was as high and respectable as that of a minister of the Court needs no showing. But there are evidences also to show that he exercised certain magisterial functions.

Under Akbar, however, the powers and obligations of the *kotwal* were fully defined.

He was solely incharge of the town administration and his functions in connection with the town in his charge were, at least in theory, the most comprehensive conceivable, being in certain respects even wider than those of the municipal bodies of the present day.

The kotwal was among the high officials of the State. His appointment was made by the Imperial Government on the recommendation of Mir Atish (Commander of Artillery).

His powers and duties may be summarised under the following heads: (1) Watch and Ward of the Town, (2) Control of the Market, (3) Care and legitimate disposal of heirless property, (4) Care of the people's conduct and prevention of crime, (5) Prevention of social abuses such as sati, infanticide, etc., (6) Regulation of cemeteries, burials and slaughter houses. In order to enable the kotwal to perform these duties efficiently he was allowed all the necessary facilities and to use his discretion. It will be seen that the *kotwal* of the Mughal Government had usurped, as it were, almost all the functions of the *Muhtasib* of the *Khilafat* governments.

But in addition to the above mentioned municipal and police duties the Kotwal of the *Sarkar* towns, at any rate, also acted as a senior criminal magistrate over the *shiqdar* of the *parganah*, and if his headquarter town happened to be a post, he also acted as customs officer and port magistrate.<sup>7</sup> Cases which were not within the cognisance of the court of the *shiqdar*, that is to say, the *parganah* court,



went up to the criminal court of the *Sarkar* presided over by the *Kotwal*. Manrique, a European traveller and merchant (who came and lived in India from 1640-1653 A. D.) mentions several instances in which the *Kotwal* acted as magistrate in criminal cases.<sup>8</sup> It may not, however, be denied that there were qazis also who tried criminal cases.

That the *Kotwal* acted as a magistrate trying criminal cases is further borne out by the following foreign as well as indigenous testimony, leaving no room for doubt.

(1) In a *farman* of instructions for the guidance of officials issued by Aurangzeb, the last clause (No. 33.) enjoins upon him to personally investigate the case of any one who is brought to his court by the complainant, or by his own men or by any official, and to release or punish him according as he found him innocent or guilty. But if he be accused of any offence against the *Shariyat*, he should be sent to the *Qazi's* court and if there be a revenue case against him, he should be sent to the *Subadar*.<sup>9</sup>

Now this clause gives us an unmistakable clue as to how the classification of cases was made between the *Kotwal*, the *Qazi* and *Subadar*. It is significant that the *Faujdar* is not mentioned in connection with the judiciary anywhere. Cases of crimes of an ordinary nature, e.g., theft, had to be tried by the *Kotwal* and those of a religious character, such as fornication, drinking, etc., were tried

by the Qazi, and the revenue cases by the Subadar.

(2) Tavernier tells us that 'the office of *Kotwal* was a sort of barrier where a provost administers justice to those of the quarter.' (Tavernier, Tr. by Ball, p. 92.)

(3) Pelsaert bears testimony to the fact that questions of divorce, quarrels, fights were in the hands of the *Kotwal* and the Qazi. (Pelsaert, Tr. by Moreland.)

(4) Thevenot is still more definite and precise: "The governor of the town judges in civil cases and commonly renders speedy justice. He meddles not at all in criminal cases. *The Kotwal takes cognisance of criminal cases.* His other main duty is to guard the town. Nevertheless, neither the civil nor criminal judges can put any one to death. (Thevenot, part III., pp. 90-91.)

The *Kotwal's* kutchery (court) was called Chabutra. A very independent and highly interesting evidence of this comes from a source altogether unsuspected and not yet utilised by historians of the Muslim period. A very interesting work of the 15th century A.D., written in a language which is a mixture of Sanskrit words and phrases with many words and phrases of the Gujarati dialect has been edited and published in the Gaikwar Oriental Series. The title of the work is *Lekhpaddhati*<sup>11</sup> (लेखपद्धति). In Appendix I of this book the editor has also included a number of old deeds of the 16th and 17th centuries in which the name of the title *Kotapala* is repeated several times,

e.g., p. 69 re कोटपालक p. 70 दुलर्गप, p. 71 कोटपालक p. 76 and 77 कोटवाली. His kutchery is called Chotra (चौतरा चौतरि) and also Mandapika. It shows that in common parlance, in certain localities, at any rate, the term *kotapala* as an alternative of *kotwal* was still surviving, and that his court was called either *chabutra* or *chotra*. It is also interesting to note that these documents mention in addition to the *Kotwal* some other high state officers as *Hakim*, *Waqianavis*, *Diwan* and *Qazi* and refer to all of them together as constituting a *Pancha-kula*, e.g.,

स्वस्ति श्रीसंवत् १७२४ वर्षे माघ सुदी ७ मुखे अद्येह पातशाहा श्री सुलतान शाहा आलम ग्यरी साहिब कुरान शानी धार्मिक सत्य-वर्दी बाचा अविचल ज्यवनकुलतिलक सकलरायां शिरोमणि ।

महाराज राज्येश्वर एहवो पातशाहा श्री श्री श्री श्री श्री श्री श्री औरंगजेब सरबमुद्राभाष्य करोति ।

तस्यादेशात् श्री गुजरातमध्ये सो० श्रीराजनगरे सोबे साहिब नुवाप श्री महबतापन दीवान्नी श्री श्री हाजीमहिमद सफि छि । हवि पासपत पालसि श्री पंभायत हवालि मीर्या श्री श्री जहान अलावदीन हवडा श्री सूरतमध्ये छे । ते पंभायतनी चोषडीह न्यायकर्त्ता हाकिम मीर्या श्री मीरजुमला कजाइकानी श्री महिमद-सरागदीन बाके निकसे मीर्या श्री एहमद बेग दीवान्नी श्री किशुरदास श्री कोटवाली चौतरि मीर काशमबेग बेसे छे ।

एवमादीपंचकुल प्रतिपत्तौ..... ।

It shows that in the Vikrama year 1724, in the reign of Aurangzeb (whose imperial titles are repeated) the governor सूबा साहिब of Gujrat

was Mahabat Khan and the Diwani was in the hands of one Haji Md. Shafi. The local administration of Khambayat at that time was entrusted to five officers, viz., a Hakim, Qazi, Waqianawis, Diwan who was usually a Hindu, and a Kotwal who held his office on the chotri.

## ABBREVIATIONS

Raverty — *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri* of Minhaj-us-Siraj, Translated by Major H. G. Raverty, 1880. (Bib. Indica Series).

Elliot — Elliot and Dowson's *History of India* as told by its own Historians.

IA—Indian Antiquary.

EI—*Epigraphia Indica*.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> E.g., Sir R. Burn. (Oxford.)

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* Karim-ul-Lughat (Lahore, 1867). On p. 268 it says

اس لفظ میں اختلاف ہے یعنی کہتے ہیں کہ اصل میں کوتوال  
تھا یعنی محفاظ قلعہ بہر تقدیر یہ لفظ ہندی کا ہے ۔

The Hindi Shabd Sagar also affirms the same origin (कोट पाल) of the word, as also other Persian dictionaries

corroborate the same origin. Sir R. Burn (I.C.S., Retd. insists that the word is of Persian origin.)

<sup>3</sup> EI., Vol. I, 156—60

परमेश्वर श्री भोजदेव तदधिकृत कोटपाल अल्ले बलाधिकृत तत्तके  
स्थानाधिकृत श्रेष्ठी वन्वीयाके

<sup>4</sup> Vide, R. S. Tripathi's History of Kanauj, pp. 339-340.

Elliot, II, p. 146.

<sup>6</sup> Elliot, III, p. 160.

<sup>7</sup> Manrique (Hak) II, pp. 120—123; 135—37.

<sup>8</sup> Travels of F. S. Manrique, I, 419. For a full treatment of the office of *kotwal* during the Mughal period see my 'Provincial Government of the Mughals', pp. 231—236; 389 and 400—403.

<sup>9</sup> Mirat-i-Ahmadi, (Ethes Cat. of Persian Mss. in the India Office Library, London, No.3597, fol 165 b).

<sup>10</sup> The faujdars, as I have discussed in detail in my 'Prov. Govt. of the Mughals' were military and executive officers of *Sarkars*, but they do not seem to have exercised any magisterial powers.

<sup>11</sup> Published in Gaekwad's Oriental Series, Vol. XIX. The Editor has assigned this work to the 15th century on the basis of the last *lekha* on p. 5 which is dated V.S. 1533 (A.D. 1477.) In the Appendices the book also contains documents of the times of Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb, whose names are quoted in the respective documents dated V.S.1788—A.D. 1651; V.S. 1715—A.D. 1658. V.S.1724—A.D. 1667. A.D. Vide pp. 72—77 I am indebted for the reference to *Lekhapaddhati* to my friend Dr. V. S. Agrawala,

## VII

### THE JIZIYAH

'To do justly and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.'

'Utterance of a prophet of old.'

Different interpretations of the *Jiziyah*<sup>1</sup> have been given in the past but there is a tendency among modern scholars to view it from a fresh standpoint altogether. It therefore seems necessary to state the theory of the *jiziyah* as it has been interpreted by the authoritative exponents and doctors of Muslim jurisprudence. It is also equally important to trace the history of the manner in which theory was understood and applied in actual practice by the Muslim rulers with special reference to India<sup>2</sup>. In the *Fiqh* books the *jiziyah* is discussed in connection with holy war (*jihad*) when the question arose with regard to the manner in which the subjugated enemies had to be treated under the Islamic state. The *Fiqh* ordained that while the 'pagans' were to be offered only the choice between Islam and death, the possessors of a scripture (*ahl-al-kitab*) may obtain security for themselves, their families and goods by paying the *jiziyah*. The dogma is found in *Quran*, IX, 29, where it is laid down, "Fight them that believe not in God and the last

day who hold not as forbidden what God and his apostle have forbidden, and do not profess the true religion, those that have a scripture, until they pay the *jiziyah* in person, in subjection." The whole theory of the *jiziyah* and all its subsequent developments and different interpretations are professedly based on this passage of the *Quran*.

'Relying on this the *Fiqh* (Islamic law) regards the *jiziyah* as an individual poll-tax by payment of which Christians, Jews (and other 'men of the Book' make a contract with the Islamic community, so that they are henceforth not only tolerated but even have a claim for protection. Certain Christian groups occupy a special position and do not pay *jiziyah*. Only adult males are liable to the tax. Women, children and old men are exempted, as war is not waged on them. Blind men and cripples only pay when they are wealthy; poor men and beggars are not expected to pay. Monks are exempted if they are poor. But if their monasteries are wealthy their superiors have to pay the tax.'

Now as has been said above the principle of the *jiziyah* is directly associated with and therefore arises from the duty which is enjoined upon every Muslim to wage holy war (*jihad*) on non-Muslims. *Jihad* implies the spread of Islam by arms, as a religious duty enjoined on Muslims in general. "It narrowly escaped being a sixth *ruk'n* or *fundamental duty* and indeed is still so regarded by the descendants of the *Kharijites*. This position was

reached quickly by the following steps. First, in the *Meccan Suras* of the Quran patience under attack is taught ; no other attitude was possible. The second step was attained when at Medina the right to repel attack appears, and then gradually it became a prescribed duty to fight against and subdue the hostile Meccans. *Whether Muhammad himself recognised that his position implied steady and unprovoked war against the unbelieving world and that it was to be subdued to Islam, may be in doubt. Traditions are explicit on the point,* but the Quranic passages speak always of the unbelievers who are to be subdued as dangerous or faithless. Still the story of his writing to the powers around him shows that such a universal position was implicit in his mind, and is certainly developed immediately after his death, when the Muslim armies advanced out of Arabia. It is now a duty in general on all male, free, adult Muslims, sane in mind and body and having means enough to reach the Muslim army, yet not a duty necessarily on every individual, but sufficiently performed when done by a certain member. So it must continue to be done until the whole world is under the rule of Islam. It must be controlled or headed by a Muslim Sovereign or *Imam*." (vide Encyclopaedia of Islam).

Now when the lands beyond Arabia quickly fell under the arms of the Muslim Arabs and they found that it was impossible either to convert their entire populations or to exterminate them, the conquerors were confronted



with the dilemma of how to deal with such subjugated peoples. The solution of this problem was the *jiziyah*, which implied that the non-Muslim subjects of the Islamic state could be allowed to purchase the right of living under the protection of the state by paying a price for such a privilege, that is to say, by becoming *zimmis* whose life was held under a contract.

The *jiziyah* was therefore levied on those persons who being non-Muslims were admitted to the status of *zimmis* and not on all non-Muslims. 'The word *jiziyah*' says Agahnides, 'is derived from *jaza*, meaning compensation, requital for good or evil.' This tax owes its name to the fact that it is taken from the *zimmis* as a punishment for their unbelief in order to humiliate them, or it may be, by way of mercy, as a price for the protection given them by the Muslims.<sup>3</sup>

'The collection of the *jiziyah*', continues Agahnides, 'is based on the divine words:<sup>4</sup> "Make war upon such of those to whom a scripture has been given, as do not believe in God, nor in the last day .....until they pay by their hands the *jiziyah* in order to be humiliated." The *zimmis* by paying the *jiziyah* become entitled to two rights: (1) security from molestation and (2) protection. By virtue of the first right they become safe (*amin*) and of the second, proteges (*mahrus*).

'According to the *Hanifite* doctors, the tax is called *jiziyah* because it is paid by the *zimmis* as a compensation i. e. (*jaza*) for being

spared from death; since by the payment of the *jiziyah* the non-Muslims purchase their lives and may no longer be killed. *Al-Sarakhsi* in this connection remarks that the infidel who lives in the Moslem state is subjected to the payment of *jiziyah* for his humiliation and punishment so long as he persists in his unbelief, and in order to impress him with the degradation of unbelief and the power of Islam. According to him the *jiziyah* is taken from the *zimmis* in lieu of the assistance which they would be liable to give if they had not persisted in their unbelief, because, living as they do in the Muslim state, they must be ready to defend it. However, since they do not embrace Islam, they are not fit for such assistance in person because they would be favourably inclined towards the enemy. Consequently, instead of personal service they are required to give part of their wealth, which is spent on the Moslem soldiers who defend the state; and exactly as the poor Moslems take part in the war as foot-men and the rich as horsemen, so the amount of the monetary equivalent collected from the *zimmis* varies according to their means. Some say that the *jiziyah* collected from the *zimmis* is a rental for residing in the Moslem state, but the former view is preferable; for if the latter view were true, women and children also would be liable to pay the tax, which they are not, because they are not liable for the defence of the country'.

To elucidate the implications of the *jiziyah*,

it will be of further help to know that the privilege of escaping by paying the *jiziyah* was not conceded to the inhabitants of Arabia. 'Within Arabia itself no non-Muslims were permitted to live. It was preserved ..... as a breeding ground for defenders of the *faith*, and as a sacred soil not to be polluted by the foot of an unbeliever.' The Arab therefore had no choice except Islam or death. This condition not being found feasible to impose on the people of other countries, some device was necessary to be forged whereby the *non-Muslims* who had no natural or original right to be subjects or members of an Islamic state, could be allowed to exist within it, and enjoy its protection. This device was the *jiziyah*, that is to say, compensation or price which every unbeliever who wanted to live in an Islamic state must pay in order to be allowed to enjoy the privilege of residing in it under its protection. The rudimentary Islamic state, as conceived by its founders did not contemplate the inclusion within it of any non-Muslim. It was therefore not confronted with that problem in its earliest stages. When, however, the Arabian Muslims conquered the Christian and Jewish countries of Palestine and Trans-Jordiana, they found it impossible either to compel the entire population to embrace Islam or to exterminate it. The doctors of *the law*, therefore, never to be beaten in their ingenuity to meet such situations, propounded the doctrine of the *jiziyah*. This was the origin or genesis of the

*jiziyah* according to the views expressed by the Muslim jurists.

The next stage consisted of further expositions and elaborations of this doctrine by the authoritative Muslim jurists. Their views as given by Agnides may be summarised thus : First, that the Muslim state, as originally conceived, does not contemplate providing for the residence and protection of a non-Muslim within it, and hence if a non-Muslim must needs be allowed to live in it or to enjoy its protection, he must pay a price for this privilege or favour, which price is the *jiziyah*. Secondly, because the non-Muslim persists in his unbelief and refuses to embrace the *faith*, he must be punished by being subjected to abject humiliation and contempt. Thirdly it is intended that the non-Muslim must be made to realise that he does not enjoy the status of a citizen in a Muslim state, and that therefore he is allowed to exist in it only on the sufferance of the Head of the Muslim world, the *Khalifah*. Fourthly, because the non-Muslim, *in strict theory*, cannot be allowed to fight on behalf of the Islamic state, he must pay for the support and up-keep of the army of the *faithful* (Muslims) who fight for the *faith* (Islam.) Thus there are two payments involved in the *jiziyah*; (1) The price for the privilege of being allowed to exist within the Islamic state (2) a sort of *wergild*, or a compensation for their being spared from fighting the wars of the Islamic state. In actual practice, however, no distinction was

ever made between these two counts of payment because the *jiziyah* was collected both in war as well as peace times. Were it levied merely in lieu of assistance in war which they (the non-Muslims) would have rendered if they had embraced the *faith*, the *jiziyah* would not have been collected in times of peace. The exemption which was made in the case of women and children, the insane and imbecile and the destitute or the disabled, and slaves and monks, was dictated by practical necessity as these classes of people, being unable to earn, were not in a position to pay. According to one view the poor who are unable to pay should be ousted from the Muslim country, according to another, they are subject to the *jiziyah* like others.<sup>6</sup> In short, the *jiziyah* was imposed with a twofold object; (1) To make the *zimmi* pay for certain advantages which he as non-Muslim was not entitled to, but was allowed to enjoy, and (2) to subject him to humiliation and contempt to make him feel his inferior and contemptible position.

Before dealing with the extent to which this theory of the *jiziyah* was actually enforced by Muslim rulers in India, we must briefly notice certain essential incidents of the *jiziyah*.

*Who were eligible for the privilege of the jiziyah—*

As has been noted already the *jiziyah* could be levied only on *zimmis*. All non-Muslims are not included *ipso facto* in the

privileged class of *zimmis* unless and until they are recognised as such. There is a wide divergence of opinion among doctors of the *Islamic Law* as to who should be admitted to the status of *zimmi*. The most liberal school is that of *Malikites*, which allows 'all persons who may be made slaves, i. e. all *kafirs*, even including the *Quraysh*, to the status of *zimmi*, the only exception being the *apostates* who cannot be so admitted. As against this the school of *Al-Shafe'i* excludes all except those who have a scripture, i. e. Christians, Jews, Magians and Samaritans or Sabeans and also the fire-worshippers. The *Hanifite* school however would admit even the idolators on the ground that they can be made slaves and as such are entitled to all privileges available to slaves. The Arab idolators were excluded from this privilege of paying the *jiziyah*, 'for the Prophet was sent from among them and the miracles were performed before their eyes.'

The later expositions and developments of *jiziyah* were indeed the outcome of historical circumstances and situations. They were based on the peace-time covenant between *Khalifah Umar* and the conquered people. The covenant was actually drawn up in the schools of law but is ascribed like everything else to *Umar*. The peace-terms imposed on non-believers can be boiled down to these: (1) The unbelievers are to be humiliated in every way before the Muslims. (2) They must pay certain taxes and maintain Muslim travellers. (3) They

must not build new or repair old temples or synagogues. (4) They must not openly worship, and must not do anything forbidden by the law of Islam. (5) They shall not be under the protection of the Muslim Government; it will not be obligatory on it to protect them amongst themselves; though they will be protected from external dangers. These enactments pertain to the political, social, religious, economic and personal life of the unbelievers.

When in later times the jurists developed and expounded the *Law* on the basis of the *covenant* or of the *Hadith*, they differed in their views. (vide A. S. Tritton, 'The Caliphs and their non-Muslim Subjects.')

### *Two Kinds of Jiziyah—*

There are two kinds of the *jiziyah*; one, the *jiziyah* imposed by treaty, the amount of which has been fixed by the terms of the agreement and may not be subsequently changed.<sup>9</sup> In this the *Shafite* and *Hanifite* schools hold in common the view that the rate of the *jiziyah* should never be less than one *dinar* per head.<sup>9</sup> The various schools authorise the *Imam* to settle the terms of the *jiziyah*. The second class of *jiziyah* is that which is imposed by the *Imam* upon a people conquered by force of arms. In this case the early rates are 48, 24 and 12 *dirhams* from the rich, middle and poor classes respectively.<sup>10</sup> In India it was realised in *tankas* and *rupees* instead of *dinars* and *dirhams*.

The *jiziyah* becomes due in the beginning



of the year, but concerning its realisation there are different views. According to *Abu Hanifah* it may be collected two or three days before the close of the year. According to others, at intervals of two or three months. The *jiziyah* becomes cancelled by conversion to Islam, by death and, according to *Abu Hanifah*, even by non-collection. Other jurists, however, do not agree with the last condition.<sup>11</sup>

*The manner in which the jiziyah should be paid —*

With the exception of *Qazi Abu Yusuf*, (A. D. 731-798) the greatest supporter and exponent of *Imam Abu Hanifa's* school (A. D. 699-767) his later exponents as well as the schools of *Al Shafe'i* and *Malik*, agree in the view that when the *zimmi* comes to pay the *jiziyah*, he should keep standing while the collector is seated, and he must wear the distinctive dress prescribed for the *zimmis*. During the process of payment the *zimmi* is to be seized by the collar and vigorously shaken and pulled about (according to one view, he should be seized by his beard and slapped on both sides of the face by the collector), and rebuked in these words: 'Oh *zimmi*, Oh enemy of God, pay the *jiziyah*'. As this personal humiliation of the *zimmi* is a necessary incident of the *jiziyah*, it is not allowed to be paid by proxy. The *zimmi* must pay it himself so that this essential object of the *jiziyah* may be fulfilled.<sup>12</sup>

The only notable exception is that of the



generous and humane Abu Yusuf who, far from subscribing to the above extreme views, recommends to the *Khalifah*, Harun-al-Rashid, gentleness (*rifq*) in the treatment of the *zimmis*. Thus it will be observed that though the majority of the Islamic legists took an extremely fanatical and narrow view of the *jiziyah* and its accidents, there was room in it for softening the edge and tempering the ruthlessness of the humiliation which it was the professed object of the *jiziyah* to inflict upon the *zimmi*.

Another object in subjecting the *zimmis* to such humiliation, according to the *Malikites*, was that the *zimmi* thereby 'may feel compelled to embrace Islam.'<sup>13</sup> In fact this motive is inherent in all the invidious taxes which were imposed on the infidels, whether *zimmis* or not. For instance, according to Baillie, 'the reason which is assigned for the imposition of the tax (*kharaj-i-wazifah*) on the land of unbelievers, and for the conversion of *ushri* to *kharaji* land when transferred to them, is that being due, whether the land be tilled or not, it is burdensome, and therefore in the nature of a punishment for their unbelief.'<sup>14</sup> The same motive lies behind the imposition of transit duties, octroi taxes and customs on non-Muslim merchants, twice as much as on Muslim merchants, a practice which was followed by the Muslim rulers in India before Akbar and revived by Aurangzeb, besides a host of other inequitable impositions.

*Practical enforcement of jiziyah—*

The actual enforcement of the *jiziyah* was conditioned mainly by two factors; viz., the character and temperament of the ruler and the political situation of the state concerned. No law can ever be enforced to the letter. Nor was it possible for the Muslim sovereigns to satisfy the letter of the law in levying the *jiziyah*. At the same time it must be remembered that the ecclesiastical class and the priesthood were, as usual, the most obdurate, the most obstinate and the most uncompromising and wooden in their attitude about the enforcement of all religious injunctions pertaining to the treatment of the non-Muslims. Most divines sincerely believed that it was the duty of every Muslim ruler to act strictly in accordance with the rules of the *jiziyah* as expounded by the jurists. Those, like Abu Yusuf, who were inclined to take a generous and humane view, were in an infinitesimal minority and were therefore ineffective. There can be no two opinions as to the fact that the notions of the most prominent divines about the religious duties and obligations of a Muslim king had not undergone any appreciable modification up to the time of Akbar. But this sturdy immobility of the Muslim priesthood need not surprise any one. It was nothing peculiar to them. This *noble fraternity*—*priests, mullas, pandas, rabbi*—is alike distinguished by the supreme virtue of fanaticism and parochialism everywhere, in all countries and all ages. They seldom suffer from the

weakness of a liberal outlook. Indeed their incapacity and unwillingness to change and progress was the main cause of the decline of their power and influence under the rule of that most enlightened emperor, Akbar.

For the sake of illustration it will suffice to quote the following instances: (1) The extremely ridiculous and inhuman interpretation of the Quranic injunction given by the well-known *qazi* Mughisuddin of Bayana who expounded the *Law* for the enlightenment of Alauddin Khalji, which represents a faithful echo of the *Shafe'i* and *Maliki* views quoted above. (2) The verdict given by the divines of Sikandar Lodi that, for that intrepid Brahman who had the audacity to affirm that there was truth in both religions, Islam as well as Hinduism, there was no alternative but conversion to Islam or death. (3) A similar verdict given by the doctors of the law to Sher Shah concerning the latter's solemn pledge of safety given to Rai Puran Mal and his family, to the effect that it was not binding at all on a Muslim to fulfill a pledge given to a *kafir* and that, indeed, its violation in the cause of Islam was an act of merit.

In recent times a number of enlightened scholars have, however, made very appreciable attempts to reject all such parochial interpretations of the scriptural *law* bearing on the *jiziyah* and *jehad* and kindred questions, which was expounded, elaborated and commented upon by the authoritative jurists, who were founders of the four great schools of Islamic

jurisprudence, and by their disciples. Modern scholars have turned the new light of scientific criticism upon the scriptural injunctions and have brought to bear upon them a fresh and broadened outlook. No one need or ought to have any objection to this re-orientation which is bringing out new and healthier imports and interpretations of Islamic canon law. Indeed all such attempts must be welcome: but it will be, I venture to aver, a naked injustice to truth and scientific history, should these new exponents seek to assert that the early jurists or their disciples, the medieval divines, priests and potentates, were imbued with the same motives and ideas which are being developed in this age, and not with those which they have themselves unmistakably professed to have held and practised.

Perhaps a saner and fairer view will be that the infant Islamic creed and community, born and nurtured as they were in an environment of hostility all round, were obliged from the start to wear the garb of militancy; and it is in the nature of all militant creeds and communities to fortify themselves with doctrines and laws in order to invest their deeds with the halo and sanction of legality. It is not necessary here to enter into the various other factors, cultural, social and even physiographical which determined the origin and elaboration of these doctrines on those lines which they followed in different times and countries. Suffice it to say that they were meant only for a certain set of circumstances and were

circumscribed by the inevitable limitations of time and space. The mistake lay in applying them when and where they were, far from being applicable, positively detrimental to the healthy development of society. It is on this ground alone that the fresh interpretations of modern scholars can become comprehensible.

This line of thought and method of interpretation seems to be fully supported by the *Quran* and the teachings of Muhammad. For, a careful study of the text of the *Quran*, chapter, 9, verse 29, which is supposed to have been made by all Muslim jurists as the basis of their elaboration of the theory of the *jiziyah*, would reveal quite another story. Neither the real object and purpose nor the genesis of the *jiziyah* and *jihad* can be comprehended without a thorough and patient perusal of the first six sections of chapter IX. This chapter is named '*The Immunity*,' which signifies '*releasing*' or '*freeing*' because the main object thereof was to *release the Muslims from the contract or agreement which they had entered into with their opponents, the Jews and idolators of Arabia*. But while this immunity to fight against the idolators is granted to the faithful, an exception is clearly made in verse 4 in favour of those idolators who had not repudiated their agreement. The occasion for the issue of the injunctions comprising this chapter was the starting of the Muslims on the annual pilgrimage to Mecca in the 9th year of Hijra towards the end of which Muslims had also to march on a campaign to

Tabruk.<sup>15</sup> Commenting on verse 4 and other relevant verses of chapter IX, Sec. I., Maulvi Muhammad Ali rightly points out that the exception given here makes it quite clear that the Muslims were not fighting with the idolators on account of their religion, but on account of their having been untrue to their engagements. If the Muslims had been fighting with the idolators on account of their religion, why should they have made an exception in favour of those idolators who had been true to their engagements? The cause of the renewed fighting was political, i.e., the violation of treaties, and hence only those tribes were fought against who had broken their engagements. If idolatory had been the cause all idolators would have been fought against.

'The clear exception of the verse shows that by idolators here are meant not all idolators or polytheists wherever they may be found in the world, nor even all idolators of Arabia, but only those idolatrous tribes of Arabia, assembled at the pilgrimage who had first made engagements with the Muslims and then violated them.<sup>16</sup> Further commenting on verse 29 of the same chapter (which, as has been shown above, has been made the basis of the *jiziyah* and the inhuman methods of its realisation by Muslim divines) Maulvi Muhammad Ali makes it clear that 'the last word on the wars with the idolators of Arabia having been said, this verse introduces the subject of fighting with the followers of the

*Book.*<sup>17</sup> At this time the great Christian power of the Roman Empire had mobilised its forces to subjugate Muhammad and his followers. The Tabruk expedition was undertaken to meet this danger. "As the object of this Christian power was simply the subjection of the Muslims, the words in which their final vanquishment by the Muslims is spoken of are different from those dealing with the final vanquishment of the idolatrous Arabians. *The Quran neither required the idolators to be compelled to accept Islam nor was it in any way its object to bring the Christians into subjection.* They, on the other hand, had determined to compel the Muslims to give up Islam and to bring them under subjection. The fate of each was therefore according to what it proposed to do to the Muslims." It was in such circumstances that the *jiziyah*, (which means, 'to give compensation or satisfaction') was imposed on those Christians and Jews who had thus been attempting to suppress the Muslims. The author, quoting early Muslim jurists, opines that it was the tax taken from the free non-Muslim subjects of the Muslim Government whereby they ratify the compact that affords them protection, and because they are free from military service, and must accept the superiority of the Muslims. But it would appear that the Quran warrants no such imposition on or against all non-Muslim subjects of the state in times of peace. This imposition of the *jiziyah* has been enjoined only under



especial circumstances on those followers of *the Book* who had been fighting to suppress and subjugate the Muslims.

Maulvi Muhammad Ali further quotes verse 190, chapter 2<sup>18</sup> to show that 'permission to fight as given to the Muslims is subject to the condition that the enemy should first take up the sword to destroy the Muslims... The Holy Prophet never overstepped this limit.'<sup>19</sup> Fighting was thus permitted or ordained as a measure of self-defence and to put a stop to religious persecution.<sup>20</sup>

In view of the above elucidation of the circumstances in which fighting with the non-Muslims or imposing *jiziyah* upon them had to be resorted to, it would appear that the jurists who expounded and interpreted the injunctions of the Prophet pertaining to these particular incidents so as to apply to all non-Muslims even when they are peaceful, have certainly done great injustice both to the Quran and the Prophet. But even if these injunctions of the Prophet could be stretched to apply to all hostile non-Muslims, there is certainly no warrant in them for the sort of interpretation thereof given by the *Maliki* jurists or the Qazi of Bayana, much less for the barbaric and inhuman manner of its realisation by subjecting the non-Muslims (idolators) to such abject humiliation as he and other jurists enjoined upon Muslims, and especially on Muslim rulers, as a sacred duty, professedly on the authority of the teachings of the Quran. Some earlier



jurists did of course maintain that, according to the great Abu Hanifa, the *zimmi* should be humiliated at the time when he goes to pay the *jiziyah*. But the luxury of spitting into the mouth of the *zimmi* is a privilege which seems to have been conferred on the Muslim collector of the *jiziyah* by the ingenious imagination of qazi Mughis alone and his tribe. As a welcome relief from and happy contrast to this parochial divine, stands the sensible and humane Abu Yusuf who, far from subscribing to such a caricature of the *Hanafi* school as was made by the Muslim *pandits* of medieval times, recommended to *Khalifah* Harun-al-Rashid, gentleness (*rifq*) in the treatment of the *zimmi*,<sup>21</sup> as has been already stated.

Such being the real origin of the *jiziyah* and of the injunctions of the Prophet regarding the treatment of non-Muslims it would not be unfair to assert that these innocuous injunctions were either wrongly understood or dishonestly employed by most of the Muslim monarchs to gratify their selfish political ends and to achieve their imperialistic ambitions, and that in these altogether irreligious and unwarranted acts they were not only assisted but woefully misguided by the equally selfish and even more narrow-minded class of divines and theologians whose vanity deluded them into the belief that they were the repositories of all divine knowledge and all religious merits. Lamenting the degeneration and abuse of Islamic faith, a modern authority on Islamic

history pathetically says: "The political history of Islam is a history of shattered ideals. The system founded by the Prophet was a system impossible of complete realisation in a world of imperfect conditions. In the political history of Islamic states we witness the slow and steady decline and eventual disappearance of that *purely ideal system of love, brotherhood and equality*, (italics are mine) inaugurated by the genius of the Prophet and sustained by the unswerving loyalty of his two successors." (Khuda Baksh) Maulana Muhammad Ali's commentary fully supports this view. In the face of such enlightened views it seems surprising that a number of scholars are still at pains to justify the misguided acts and beliefs of Muslim divines and potentates.

As regards the seemingly curious beliefs and actions of the theologians, it may be said that it was not peculiar to the Muslim priesthood alone. The atrocities and barbarities committed during the reign of Inquisition by the *Christian* monarchs of Europe upon those who were branded as heretics for the simple sin of claiming freedom of thought and holding heterodox views, were so horrible in their own way that history hardly affords anything like them. It is well known that the self-styled custodians of the religion of *Christ*, the leaders of the Holy Church and mentors of monarchs, were the authors of these 'Horrors of the Inquisition,' and their nefarious instructions were faithfully carried out by the servile European monarchs who

put their poor victims to death usually by fire or by consigning them to dismal dungeons to famish and to suffer a prolonged agony from which they were released only by the merciful angel of death.' Human history is one continuous witness of the fact that in the fair name of religion the most heinous atrocities and unspeakable barbarities have been committed by princes and priests in an unholy alliance in almost all ages and countries, and that the unholy conspiracy and clique of these two exploiting classes has been directed to the preservation of their vested interests, their power and pelf and has been more often than not responsible for not only a tragic set-back to the march of mankind but even for the destruction of human happiness and mutual good relations between man and man. History abounds in instances of the manner in which the priests and theologians of a country have put the seal of their approval with a perfectly easy conscience on the most immoral and inhuman deeds of their rulers by twisting the meanings of the scriptures, and even by tampering with original texts and by interpolations, in order to provide legal sanction for their misdeeds.

The philosophy of the treatment of non-Muslims, chiefly idolators, by Muslims as developed by Muslim theologians was nothing different in its nature from the philosophy of the Brahmanic theologians which allowed them, in the sacred name of religion, to treat with all manner of contempt, humiliation

and disgrace, a very large section of their countrymen whom they condemned as untouchables. There is no occasion here to make a detailed reference to the Hindu priesthood and their equally reprehensible misdeeds. The mental stature and complexion of this community, whether Hindu, Muslim, Christian or Jew, has been the same all over. The *jiziyah* and *jihad* in the hands of vested interests, were the Muslim counter-part of Hindu untouchability.

The present writer may be allowed to adduce here from his own experience, an illustration of the torture of truth and justice under the delusion of a religious and cultural mission. He was a silent and sad witness, while travelling on board an Italian ship from Naples to Bombay in August 1936, to the very solemn and pious prayers which were offered every morn and eve, with perfect felicity and equanimity, by a fairly numerous company of Italians, including a large number of Jesuit monks and nuns while they were going, at the behests of the *Duce* to settle in Abyssinia with the 'sacred object of showering the blessings of civilization and of the religion of the Catholic God upon the benighted and sinful humanity of that unfortunate land.' No less pitiable and tragic is the spectacle, in what claims to be the greatest and holiest seat of Hindu culture and creed in this country, of the sole attention and efforts of the custodians of *dharm* and of men's souls, being devoted on the erection of a gigantic 'house

of God' in brick and mortar at an enormous cost while the primary needs of thousands of young souls, such as proper provision for their *health and nourishment, sanitation and accommodation, or for their training in civic sense and discipline and their character-building*, which constitute the essential conditions of the healthy development of the youth, are left to take care of themselves. 'The hungry sheep look up and are not fed.' Power always tends to make men ambitious beyond measure and to blind them to the true values of life. It compels its willing victims to bury noble aims and exalted ideals of the true religion of humanity beneath the debris of a dead, rotting corps mis-called religion with its empty, degrading formalisms and rituals crushing the human souls like a tomb-stone denying it the right to soar into the skies of an invigorating and honest faith built on the sublime principle that 'the best form of worship is to love and serve your brother man.'

Barring a few brilliant exceptions, the most outstanding of them being king Zain-ul-abdin of Kashmir and the Emperor Akbar among monarchs, and the Faizi brothers among scholars, the Muslim theologians and kings of medieval India were no exception to the general rule. It is but a truism that the most zealous followers of all great religious teachers and reformers are really the men who do them the greatest injustice and most mercilessly pervert and mar the noble truths taught by them. The tragic fact about the history

of Islam is that environments and circumstances of its birth having compelled its assuming the form of a militant creed, the future generations of Muslim rulers and theologians so elaborated and enlarged the precepts of and examples set by the Prophet under peculiar conditions, as to apply them to conditions for which they were perhaps never intended. This was an utter negation of the ultimate intention and ideal of the Prophet which seems to us, from a careful perusal of the Quran, to be the establishment of peace and goodwill among all mankind.

But it seems rather disconcerting to find that certain recent writers have spilt much ink and displayed much ingenuity in order to prove that in imposing the *jiziyah* on non-Muslims the Musalman rulers were actuated by the highly laudable and altruistic motive of protecting them against their enemies, in the performance of which noble obligation—as these authors would have us believe—the brave Musalmans used to bare their chests to receive the bullets of the enemies only for a few sordid dirhams (i. e., the *jiziyah*).<sup>22</sup> On the basis of such generalisations the conduct of all Muslim kings has been sought to be justified and even extolled in a sweeping manner. Obviously it is forgotten by these writers that when Aurangzeb re-imposed the *jiziyah*, he made no exception even in the case of those Rajput warriors who had for generations loyally served the Mughals and fought their battles. Nor were their subjects spared. His

son and successor Shah Alam, Bahadur Shah tried to assuage the laceration inflicted on the Rajputs, but his lustre was short-lived, and as Tod puts it: 'They had proved that no act of duty or subserviency could guarantee them from the infatuated abuse of power.'<sup>23</sup> Of this abuse of power a fresh evidence was not long to follow. It was again imposed, albeit for financial reasons, by Farrukh Siyar (1713-18) despite the fact that owing to its insulting religious associations 'it was held in unmitigated abhorrence by the Hindus. In this case the incidence of the tax was lighter; nevertheless it rightly generated a universal feeling of hostility, particularly from its retaining the insulting distinction of a 'tax on infidels.'<sup>24</sup>

The denial to the entire non-Muslim class of the basic human right of enjoying freedom and equality to which every man as man is entitled, which is involved in the very principle of the *jiziyah* as expounded and much worse practised by most Muslim rulers, is curiously ignored by this new class of scholars. But while the underlying invidiousness of the principle of the *jiziyah* may not be easily perceptible, what is most surprising is that the entire volume of facts regarding the manner in which the *jiziyah* and its numerous accidents were inflicted on the non-Muslim *kharaj-guzars* simply for the sin of their adhering to their old persuasions, should be sought to be vindicated with much ingenuity. It is suggested that the *jiziyah* was realised from the



non-Muslims because they were not expected to share in fighting for the country's defence in which Musalmans alone were sacrificed. Such things may grow and live in the imagination of the writers concerned, but they are not known to Indian history. We hardly know of any period or any region under Muslim domination in which very large numbers of Hindus did not fight in the armies of their Muslim sovereigns. Further we can hardly find an example of a war which was fought by Muslim rulers purely on a religious basis and for a religious cause. Most, if not all, wars fought by them were actuated by political motives and worldly ambitions. Where then was the justification for inflicting the material punishment and moral and social humiliation of the *jiziyah* upon the non-Muslims? Moreover, while it may be quite true to say that all other conquering people behaved in a similarly ruthless manner towards the vanquished, to advance the misdeeds of others in justification of one's own wrong conduct is to betray sheer bankruptcy of positive ideals. Such attempts may mislead some, but can serve no useful purpose. No amount of rhetoric or casuistry can provide a gilt cover to the heaps of misdeeds of these rulers simply because they pleaded the sanction of religion in defence of their selfish conduct. The naked truth is—may be it is painful, as often it is—that all such kings did more injustice to the creed which they professed to serve than even to the victims of their oppression.



The spirit of the Prophet, we suppose is enshrined in the opening verse of the Quran: "Praised be the Lord, the Maker of the world With the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate." the prayer with which every Musalman must commence his day's work. This to us seems to be the sheet-anchor by which the teachings of the Prophet and the *Faith* he preached must hold. Any deviations from this in thought or deed must be deemed as betrayal of the ideals of the Prophet. If Islam is to justify its professed role as a Divine dispensation for the good of humanity, it must purge itself of all its later accretions.

## ABBREVIATIONS

Aghnides, N. P.—Theories of Muhammandan Finance.

Macdonald, D.B.—Muslim Theology, Jurisprudence and Constitutional Theory.

MQ; Maulana Muhammad Ali's translation and commentary of the Quran.

JRAS; Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, London.

## NOTES

1. It has been variously rendered as '*commutation money*' or *poll-tax* or '*head-tax*'. In the Encyclopaedia of Islam *jiziyah* is defined as the name given in Muhammadan law to the *indulgence* taxes levied on the *ahl-al-zimma*.
2. Here I am concerned with merely tracing the historical development of the theory and practice of the *jiziyah*, whether it is warranted by the Quran or the teachings of Muhammad is a question which will be discussed in the concluding part of this paper. The whole theory and law of the *jiziyah* has been fully discussed by N.P. Aghnides in his '*Theories of Muhammadan finance*' and by D. B. Macdonald in '*Encyclopaedia of Islam*'. I may be pardoned for drawing freely upon both these authors.
3. Aghnides, 398.
4. Quran, chap 9, verse 29.
5. Muslim Theology, Jurisprudence and Constitutional Theory, by D. B. Macdonald., p. 15.
6. Aghnides, 405 f. n. 1.
7. Aghnides, 400.
8. Ibid, loc. cit.
9. Ibid, 401.
10. Opinions differ as to the criterion of determining rich, middle and poor classes.
11. Aghnides 405—'6.
12. Some theologians held a far more drastic view: Qazi Mughisuddin of Bayana, while expounding the Law before Sultan Alauddin Khalji, stated that the Hindu (*khirajguzar* or payer of *jiziyah*) is he who, should the collector choose to spit into his mouth, opens the same without hesitation so that the official may spit into it, and who, under such circumstances or in this condition continues to pay

him homage. The purport of this extreme meekness and humility on his part, and of the collector's spitting into his mouth, is to show the extreme subservience incumbent on this class, and the glory of Islam and the *orthodox* faith, and the degradation of the false religion.' The Qazi then quotes verse 29 of chapter 9, in support of his view, and says: 'God Almighty Himself (in the Quran) expressly commands their complete degradation, in as much as these Hindus are the deadliest foes of the true Prophet. Mustafa—on whom be blessing and peace—has given orders regarding the slaying, plundering and imprisoning of them, ordaining that they must either follow the true *faith*, or else be imprisoned and slain, and have all their wealth and property confiscated. With the exception of the *Imam-i-Azam* (Abu Hanifah) whose doctrines we uphold, we have no other great divine as authority for accepting the *jiziyah* from a Hindu; for the opinion of other learned men is based upon the *Hadith* text, "Either Islam or death," vide *Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi* of Zia Barani, Translated by Major Fuller, in JASB, vol. XXXIX (1870) Part I., No. 1., p. 11; Text p. 290.

It is well known that the very same verse 29 of chapter IX of the Quran has been made the basis of the *jiziyah* and *jihad* by all commentators and jurists who have held widely divergent views both as to the conditions justifying the imposition of *jiziyah* and as to the manner of its realisation. The import of this same verse as explained, with reference to its context, by Maulana Muhammad Ali (as will be shown presently in the course of this paper) is diametrically opposite to the one given by the Qazi of Bayana referred to above. It is also a patent fact that most of the early and mediaeval divines as well as monarchs were believers in and followers of the said Qazi's interpretation. In the view of this class of men, all men, except the Sunni Musalmans, deserved the treatment described above even as the faith of the Brahman divines, self-appointed

monopolists of all sacred lore, dictated that should an untouchable happen even by chance to hear a single syllable of the Vedas, molten lead should be poured into his ears so that his audition i. e. the offending organ, may be killed for good. There is hardly anything to choose between these two representatives of their respective *faiths*. They are both cast in the same mould, and no great or small religion in human history has escaped the clutches of this class.

The only difference between these two classes was that in the case of the Brahmanic divines the monstrous octopus of a host of superstitions, rituals and stupid taboos, miscalled religion, which they had built up, finds no support in their *original sacred literature*, while their Muslim compeers had the satisfaction that their views had the support of the holy Quran itself. Any attempt therefore to justify the cynicism of this class of people is bound to lead us astray from the straight path of scientific integrity and historical honesty into purposeful writing. It is painful to observe that many a modern writer in their enthusiasm to find justification for such beliefs and practices has not escaped the pitfall.

13. Aghnides, p. 408.
14. See JRAS. (New Series, 1875) Vol. VII, p. 175.
15. MQ, p. 395, para 3.
16. Ibid, p. 397., footnotes. The whole question becomes clear by a careful perusal of Sections 1 and 2 of Chapter IX.
17. Ibid., p 403., footnote 1049. From this chapter it would seem clear that there is no provision whatsoever in the Quran which either enjoins or sanctions the imposition of the *jiziyah* on peaceful idolators.
18. And fight in the way of Allah with those who fight with you, and do not exceed the limits; surely Allah does not love those who exceed the limits.
19. MQ, p. 403

20. Ibid. p. 87, f.n.
21. Agnides, p. 407
22. See, for instance the laboured special pleading of Qari Muhammad Bashir Ahmad Pundit in his 'Hindi Qurun-i-Wasati' (Urdu), pp. 27-28.
23. Tod (Ed. by Crooke) I, 464.
24. Ibid., 469.

## VIII

### THE ECONOMIC POLICY & PRICE CONTROL OF ALAUDDIN KHALJI

[Sultan Alauddin Khalji was the first of the Turkish rulers of Dihli who was compelled by the logic of circumstances to try administrative experiments on an extensive scale.] His administrative measures have naturally evoked keen interest among students of history and there are not a few who are so enthusiastic over his achievements as to rank him as the greatest medieval ruler of India.<sup>1</sup>

(The problems, both civil and military, with which the Khalji Sultans were confronted were extremely grave and complicated and it cannot be denied that the solutions thereof which the Khalji Sultan tried were in some cases recklessly bold and far-reaching in their consequences. The socio-political and economic results of these measure were bound to be so profound as to call for a close and critical study in order to comprehend and estimate their true value and import.) The complexity of the subject has become infinitely greater owing to the chronological mess which Ziauddin Barani (the earliest chronicler of this dynasty) has made of his narrative, and it is only by an extremely careful analysis that we can reconstruct the correct sequence of events

which are germane to the discussion of our subject.

[At the time when Alauddin captured the throne of Dihli the Mongol menace on the north-west was becoming more and more formidable. Nor was the state of internal security in the least satisfactory.] The manner in which the new Sultan had wrested the kingdom from his doting old uncle and had destroyed the late Sultan's family was bound to rouse feelings of horror, suspicion and detestation among all sections of his subjects. [He therefore purchased the support of the nobility and the people of Dihli by a lavish distribution of the enormous treasures which he had brought from his Deccan expedition, and by conferring on them *Iqtas*, *Inams* and offices.] But while money could buy their temporary support and disarm hostility, it could not buy confidence nor allay their suspicions and fears against the essentially selfish and brutal nature of the man.) Moreover, for the ambitious spirits the Sultan's conduct had set a dangerous precedent and naturally bred in them a sense of justification for paying him in his own coin.

[For a time, however, all spirit of hostility and insurgence seems to have been appeased.] Still the kingdom was far from being secure. It was imminently imperilled by Mongol invasions which began again early in the reign and became so frequent that every year immense Mongol hordes poured down into the plain of the Punjab and wrought terrible

devastation and ruin. The credit of repelling the invaders and saving the Khalji crown from a catastrophe goes to the Sultan's loyal and brave generals, Nasrat Khan and Zafar Khan. Although the Mongols had thus been driven away every time no permanent remedy or measures of defence against this menace had yet been thought of. But because victory and success fell into the lap of this lucky king from all sides, his head became bloated and he began to cherish fantastic and impossible schemes of becoming at once founder of a new religion and a prophet like Muhammad and a conqueror like Alexander of Macedon, whereon Ala-ul-Mulk, the kotwal of Dihli, (the only far-sighted politician of the time and a sincere well-wisher of the Sultan) administered a severe reprimand to Alauddin and persuaded him to eschew the puerile ambition of founding a new religion. As regards the scheme of conquering the whole world the Kotwal impressed on him the hard reality of his precarious position and advised him first to take steps to secure it both from external and internal dangers and then proceed to conquer other lands. Ala-ul-Mulk also suggested an elaborate plan for the defence and consolidation of the kingdom. But Alauddin was so full of the ambition to imitate Alexander that he assumed the title of *Sikandar Sani*, (Alexander II) and paying no heed to the Kotwal's wise suggestions straightaway launched forth campaigns against neighbouring territories.



(The Mughal invasions, which had never ceased and indeed had become more frequent and intensified, were luckily warded off by warriors like Zafar Khan.) The Sultan, however, 'did naught but indulge in pleasure and gaiety, giving full scope to the bent of his inclinations, and convoking festive assemblies.'<sup>2</sup> For more than five years after his accession he did nothing else. Nothing was done to improve or reorganise the machinery of government<sup>3</sup> during this period. Obviously the old system was allowed to continue and the sources of the State income also remained unaltered. The frontier situation, however perilous as it was, had not yet awakened the Sultan from his foolish delusions, but three successive internal revolts, one of which well nigh cost him his life, eventually whipped him up to the consciousness that there was something seriously wrong in his system of administration.

Since the revolt of the neo-Muslims during the Gujrat campaign (1298) up to the siege of Ranthambhor (1301) three more revolts of a very serious nature had occurred. The Chauhan prince Hammir of Ranthambhor had offered to the royal forces a tough and tenacious resistance. Hence the siege was prolonged. But the Sultan, realising that the internal situation demanded immediate attention, called his council of ministers to discover the causes of the trouble and to consider the ways and means of dealing with the problem, while the siege was still on.<sup>4</sup> The deliberations of the

council ended in the formulation of certain definite suggestions regarding the causes of the internal trouble as well as the steps to be adopted to remedy it. These steps were enforced by the Sultan soon after he returned to the capital from Ranthambhor (end of A.D. 1302).

[Among the measures which were thus adopted the most far reaching in their consequences were his *economic measures*.] The object of the present discussion is to estimate the significance and value of these measures. It may however be noted, in passing, that the foregoing sequence of events leading to the enforcement of these measures makes it quite clear that they were the outcome of an urgent and grave political situation which forced itself on the attention of the king. *Far from being the outcome of any altruistic or philanthropic motives such as the amelioration of the general lot of his people, it is patent that they did not arise even from any idea of improving the efficiency of the government.* No sober historian can accuse the Sultan of possessing any such ideas or schemes. [The administrative machinery had definitely become lax and its efficiency deteriorated in the period of chaos following Balban's death.] Yet for more than five years after his accession it never occurred to the Sultan to take any steps to improve in the slightest degree the administration of the kingdom. It was only by the rude shock of incessant rebellions that he was awakened to

the urgency of taking steps to consolidate and strengthen his position.

There were three occasions on which [Alauddin felt compelled to consult his ministers about the causes of discontent and sedition within and insecurity from without and asked them to suggest remedies.] The first of these arose, as we have noticed above, when during the prolonged absence of the Sultan from Dihli in 1301-2, several serious revolts occurred, which well-nigh cost him his life and throne.

The councillors, after due deliberation, found that there were four chief causes of sedition and suggested their remedies accordingly. These four causes as diagnosed by them were : (1) the king's disregard as to the affairs of the people (أهل), whether they are prosperous or adverse; (2) the prevalence of drinking; (3) the friendships, amity, relationships and frequent intercourse among the *maliks* and *amirs*; and (4) wealth, by reason of which ideas of treason and disaffection enter their brains. That the Sultan presided over these deliberations is quite clear, but we have no direct means to know the extent of his influence on or his contribution to these deliberations. The chronicler gives no details of the discussion. He only states the conclusions and decision of the council, as to the steps to be adopted to curb the spirit of rebellion.) The Sultan's previous conduct, however, and the evidence that he had given

of his political intelligence or military farsightedness, afford enough grounds for us to conclude that he could hardly have made any positive contribution to the plan that was decided upon. But Alauddin had one very happy trait of character which almost always stood him in good stead and saved him from all perils and thus counterbalanced his lack of political farsight while, he was also favoured by luck as no man was. This trait was the habit of respecting the advice of his councillors and ministers and adopting their proposals whenever he found himself in difficulty. Accordingly [no sooner did he return to the capital than he set about giving full effect to the plan prepared by his councillors. Among the orders which he enforced at this time was the resumption by 'one stroke of pen' of all grants, *inams*, *iqtas* etc.] (Tripathi opines that 'more probably he asserted the right of the State to deal with all classes of land, cancelled all such grants of which he did not approve and bestowed others on his own terms.'<sup>5</sup>

This view is more likely to be correct in respect of a later period, but originally the ostensible and declared object of the step was to 'render revolts in future impossible' by depriving the richer class of people of all their surplus wealth which was supposed to be a potent cause of the prevalent spirit of turbulence. Nor did the Sultan, in pursuance of this objective, stop merely at this. [He ordered the officers concerned to use all

manner of excesses and cruel and ruthless extortions to make the people disgorge their wealth and to 'leave no one in possession of gold'. As a result of this the 'whole people had so much to do with earning their livelihood that no one had even time to pronounce the word rebellion.' After making due allowance for the exaggeration of the chronicler it is clear from the above account that the enforcement of this ordinance was made, in the beginning, at any rate, without any restraint or moderation.

Now as to the political wisdom or administrative efficacy of this step, diametrically opposite views will naturally be held depending on different conceptions regarding the obligations and functions of the State or of the sovereign. The Turkish State was a *police-state*; it ruled and believed in ruling by force in the interests and for the benefit and enjoyment of the governing class with the *Sultan* as its head. Their conception of the State and of the rights and privileges of the sovereign had no scope for the good of the people to occupy even a secondary place among the duties and obligations of the government. The various activities of the government and its measures were enforced avowedly in the interests of the ruling class; if any good accrued to the people it was only incidental, a bye-product of their measures, not an outcome of any deliberate steps for such purpose. Where the interests of the ruler are not identified with those of the ruled, authority

can only be maintained by the sword and the bayonet, by force and fright. We need not imagine, however, that such a conception of the State was peculiar to that age. Perhaps the only difference between earlier and modern conceptions of this class is that the former one was unconscious and rather traditional while its modern counterpart is deliberate and conscious. The policy adopted by Alauddin has the approval of a modern authority also. 'The view adopted by Alauddin and his councillors' says Moreland,<sup>6</sup> 'was that chiefs and leaders would be rebellious so long as they had the resources necessary for rebellion; and a consideration of the actual position suggests that this view was probably sound.' Despite the fact that the present age prides itself on being that of democracy and liberalism in politics, it need not surprise anyone that Moreland should have chosen to take the view he has done.

As against this there is another view based on the principle that the primary aim of the sovereign should be to consider himself as the first servant of his people. In other words the chief concern of a ruler ought to be the well-being of the people and their prosperity and progress, which he should place above all other considerations. According to this view a rule, to be popular and enduring, should be broad-based on the love and willing acquiescence of the people. In the healthy atmosphere of a rule based on the love and confidence of the people in general, rebellious

and ambitious spirits cannot thrive. They either die of inanition or are easily crushed. Examples of such benevolent rulers were not wanting even in that early age. Zain-ul-abdin of Kashmir lived only in the generation following the Khaljis, and embodied in his government the latter conception of the king's obligations and functions. The Turks had been in the land one full century and their rule had come to stay, and yet it had failed to strike roots into the soil of the people's heart. Had they been imbued with different ideas they would have followed a different policy. (Moreland agrees that the cause of the revolts was the surplus wealth of the people. In effect he would seem to suggest that a ruler to be strong and secure must so scrape and squeeze his well-to-do subjects of all their material belongings as to leave just enough for them to keep body and soul together.) Both the above mentioned schools of thought have their votaries even in this enlightened age of ours. It is not necessary to comment on them here. But (it seems clear that the new policy was applied to all intents and purposes without any discrimination, because *the very fact of possession of surplus income or wealth made a man a suspect*, and he was treated as such irrespective of his actual character.) With the other three measures which the Sultan enforced at this time we are not concerned here. The economic effect of the prohibition of the sale of wine and of gambling was the loss to the government



of considerable revenue. So far as it concerned the people this measure would have benefited only the disreputable elements of the populace.

[After enforcing these measures the Sultan called his councillors a second time and requested them to suggest some rule or regulation whereby *Hindus* might be ground down,] and their property or wealth, which is the source of rebellion and disaffection, might no longer remain with them ; and that one law respecting the payment of revenue might be instituted for all of them, whether landlords or tenants, so that revenues due from the strong might not fall upon the weak, and that so much should not be left to the *Hindus* as to admit of their riding horses, wearing fine dress and indulging in sumptuous and luxurious habits."<sup>7</sup>

[In pursuance of this object, viz., that of reducing the *Hindus* (both landlords and tenants) to the condition described above, the councillors suggested two regulations which may be analysed thus: the revenue or state demand was to be collected everywhere according to the rule of measurement (obviously in order to insure accuracy) and the quantity of the state demand was fixed at 50% or one-half of the produce. It was to be realised at a uniform rate from all, *khuts* as well as *balahars*.<sup>8</sup> The *khuts* were to be deprived of all special privileges. In addition to this two more taxes were imposed, viz, a grazing tax on all milch cattle from a cow to a she-goat, and a house-tax on every inhabited house.] The former was to be realised only when the



cattle were wet and not when they went dry.

It may be pointed out here that the term *Hindu* is used by Barani to denote all Indian landlords, both Hindu and Muslim, as distinguished from that Muslim nobility which comprised the ruling class and government employees and loved to reckon themselves still as foreigners although a certain degree of Indianisation in higher services had already been effected. In order to understand fully the policy of the Khalji Sultan it is necessary to remember that although the ruling aristocracy were no more as pure foreigners as under the slave Turks, they still sedulously and jealously maintained a snobbish isolation from the people to exploit whom they regarded an unquestionable privilege of theirs.) It is obvious that such regulations could not possibly be enforced easily. Barani, in his characteristic, inflated style, describes the extreme measures, persecution and rigour employed by even the petty government officers and the terrible humiliations of flagellations inflicted on the people. We are not concerned here with the political effects of these measures. These will be discussed in a separate paper. As regards the economic consequences they are too obvious to need any expatiation. [After making due allowance for the exaggeration of Barani, it is clear that the people were reduced to a most abject state of misery and poverty.] That was the avowed aim and object of the King<sup>9</sup> and in achieving it no amount of force and ferocity

was considered too much. By the Sultan's own admission about *ten thousand clerks and collectors were reduced to destitution and beggary.*<sup>10)</sup>

These were the measures adopted for the suppression of internal revolts and the establishment of peace and for the safety of the King's person of which he had felt the urgency during the siege of Ranthambor. (But the problem of frontier defence and Mughal menace had not yet impressed Ala-uddin sufficiently. He therefore took no steps to guard the frontiers which remained exposed to Mughal invasions from the North-West and West.) On the contrary, he immediately prepared an army and marched off to lay siege to the distant fort of Chittor and sent Malik Fakhruddin Juna, the *Dadbak-i-Hazrat* (the future Muhammad bin Tughlaq) and Malik Jhaju of Kara, nephew of Nasrat Khan, 'with all the officers (*amirs*) and forces of Hindustan against Arangal',<sup>11</sup> leaving the capital altogether unprotected and denuded of all its armies. The siege of Chittor proved to be even more prolonged and costly than that of Ranthambor. Although the fort had eventually fallen the Sultan's army had suffered a great loss. But the force which had been despatched to Arangal was almost completely annihilated. When Targhi the Mughal learnt of Ala-uddin's absence at a distant place from the capital, and of its defenceless condition, he gathered together a force of about 120,000 men (*12 tumans*) and invested Dihli within a

month of Ala-uddin's return from Chittor. The Sultan found himself utterly helpless; he had only a wrecked and dispirited army and the frontier forts and outposts were still thoroughly ill-equipped. Every one, high and low, was siezed with deep consternation, and it was only some mysterious luck which saved the kingdom from utter destruction. The Mughals plundered the country around Dihli for about two months and then retired. It was this hammer blow which at last served to shake Ala-uddin out of his torpor just as the successive internal revolts had made him realise the perilous internal situation. (Once again, for the third time he resorted to the advice of his councillors. The result of the suggestions given by his councillors on this occasion was the enhancement and reorganisation of his army which in its turn necessitated the adoption or introduction of his so-called economic reforms. The problem of maintaining a huge army in a good state of equipment and efficiency with the limited resources of the kingdom was the sole motive which prompted the control of prices of all necessaries of life so as to make them cheap enough for the soldiery to maintain themselves on the low salaries which they were to be paid according to the decision of the Sultan. The amelioration of the condition of the poor people was not even in the remotest imagination of Ala-uddin.) Indeed if he had attempted to do anything toward making the people more prosperous and happy, it would have amounted

to the undoing of his own plan of reducing the people to a state of utter economic helplessness which had been launched forth in order to suppress internal revolts, just a year prior to this. In the face of these facts, it seems curious that a number of writers have discovered philanthropic motives in the economic policy of Ala-uddin.) It has also been suggested recently by some writers that the necessity of cheapening the prices also arose from the fact that the influx of Deccan gold, brought by Malik Kafur, and the consequent increase in the circulation of money had led to the appreciation in the prices of commodities of common consumption. This view suffers from the obvious defect of anachronism as the campaigns of Kafur took place several years after the introduction of Ala-uddin's price control. Nor could the riches lavishly distributed to the people of Dihli by Ala-uddin at his accession have had so lasting an effect upon the prices as to necessitate a reduction of them eight years after that event. Moreover, the prices in the capital would be generally controlled by the prices in the environs, which had remained unaffected by the changes in the capital. So much about the genesis and motive of the Sultan's economic policy. The next and far more consequential question is of the actual effect upon the people of this *new deal*. For this it will be necessary to make a careful and detailed survey of the operation and methods of this 'price-control' system.

Zia Barani has given a fairly detailed, but rather rambling, account, full of superfluous repetitions, of the whole plan as it was formulated and enforced. Four different sets of regulations which were promulgated are described. These regulations dealt with the various problems and difficulties involved in the system. The first three sets were concerned with the fixing of the price-scale respectively of (1) food products (2) cloth and all kinds of piece-goods and (3) maid servants, concubines, male and female slaves, milch cattle, beasts of burden, horses, and also various articles of general merchandise including such comparatively insignificant articles as bread, vegetables, *reori*, *yakhni*, needles, etc., etc. They also deal with the other cognate problems. But the fourth set of regulations deals solely with the ways and means of enforcing the observance of the ordinances. These ordinances may be boiled down to the following main steps: (1) fixing of the price-scale, (2) insuring of supplies by means of (a) commandeering the produce of the *Doab* and the neighbouring country to a distance of a hundred *cos*. (b) prohibition of hoarding, (c) commandeering merchants to transport grain from villages to Dihli, (d) storing grain in government granaries, (e) devising a machinery of coercion to make the people obey the regulations. (3) maintaining the fixed price level quite unshaken and unaffected even in times of famine, which, as the chronicler significantly observes, frequently occurred during this

period. (4) strict rationing in times of famine.<sup>127</sup>

Now the fixing of a comprehensive schedule of prices such as was issued by the government of the Sultan was an expedient measure dictated by the imperative need of making all the commodities required for the armed forces, 'excessively cheap' and 'reduced to the price of water', to quote the very words of the chronicler.<sup>128</sup> Consequently the criterion which determined the level of prices was that a soldier might be enabled to maintain his family in comfort and with due dignity, and also equip himself fully according to government specifications within the meagre salary which he received. In other words, this expedient was resorted to because the government had decided to recruit and maintain an army which was too large and numerous for all its resources which had been tapped to the utmost. Thus it was what in modern economic terminology will be termed indirect taxation inflicted upon a people who had been subjected already to the maximum amount of direct taxation, beyond which it was not possible to enhance it.

We have, however, no means to know the actual reduction in the prices. The chroniclers have not supplied us with the necessary data about the pre-control prices. But we have enough grounds to presume that the reduction was quite considerable. For one thing, we have Alauddin's confession that if the contemplated army were paid at the norma



rates the treasury, including all its reserves, would soon be depleted and hence a very considerable reduction in the total expenditure upon the salaries of the army was inevitable, involving a proportionate reduction in the prices of necessities of life. The councillors agreeing with the king's estimate of his resources and of the expenditure of the contemplated army, had, as we have noticed above, suggested a drastic reduction in prices with a view to rendering commodities '*excessively cheap*'. Further the fact that at every point from the source to the place of sale such ruthless persecution had to be employed in order to maintain the artificial level of prices which constantly tended to spring back to their natural level, also points to the same conclusion. Nothing but a relentless coercion could maintain such unnatural prices. / Certain recent writers have discovered an analogy between the price-control problem with which the erstwhile British Government had to deal and those of the Khalji Sultan and have with enviable simplicity of mind arrived at the conclusion that the medieval monarch solved this problem quite successfully whereas the British Government had failed. On a closer examination, however, the analogy between the two would appear to be thoroughly unscientific and fallacious even though the consequences of either would seem to be somewhat similar within their respective spheres of influence. / The present day problem of price control arose from the

policy of inflation by means of an invertebrate paper currency, followed by the British Government, during the last World War, resulting in an unprecedented depreciation of money and proportionate appreciation of commodities. The problem before the British Government in India was to keep the prices at a reasonable level and to prevent the prices rising too high for the people to bear. Secondly it was subject to international conditions. The British Government used to drain away all the real wealth of the country beyond its shores in order to feed the British people and keep them in comfort as well as to obtain war materials, because they could inflict any amount of paper money on us without any solid reserves at its back. No such device of forging an infinite quantity of money was known to the medieval monarch. He had to shift within the limitations of his time and circumstances. The quantity of money he could command could not be increased. Hence the only course left for him to resort to was to procure the required equipment for his army by raising the purchasing power or the value of his currency. The two processes were just the reverse of each other albeit the object was similar. In the case of the British Government money had depreciated, in the other it had considerably appreciated in value. It is not necessary, however, to show here that the effect of both was the sucking of the people's wealth by the government. Another point of difference is that the present problem



of controlling the prices which our national government have received as a legacy from the British, has arisen from the fact that things have become too dear for the purchasing power of the average man, leading to the worst famine conditions in the country. These prices are far above the normal level. Alauddin's control on the contrary was intended to push the prices down far below the normal level. Under the present system, the majority of the people suffer by having to pay three to four times for their necessities; under Alauddin's system they suffered by having to part with their purchases, products and manufactures for a much lower price than the normal. The margin of profit fixed by the State for the merchants was obviously much smaller than they used to make under normal conditions. Hence the discontent and the consequent need of coercion.

Another fundamental difference between the two systems lies in the scope and extent of their application. The present problem is country-wide and infinitely greater both in complexity and magnitude than its medieval counterpart whose operation was confined to Dihli and its environs. The rest of the Khalji dominions had directly nothing to do with it although the districts immediately surrounding the area under the ordinance rule would surely have felt its repercussions. I shall examine this point in more detail presently. The measure of success in the actual operation of the control, by whatever means it was achieved

was certainly appreciably greater than under the recent price control since the last World War, of which the avowed object has been greatly defeated by a most insufferable corruption among the government functionaries causing untold hardships and economic distress to the common people. Such a thing was inconceivable under Alauddin. If he was ruthless in extorting obedience from his subjects, he was equally relentless in keeping the services free from corruption and took every precaution to make his plan a success.

[The price-scale having been fixed and announced, the next measure was to insure the supply of goods in the markets (of Dihli). This object was sought to be obtained by the following means : (1) The districts of Doab and the country to a distance of one hundred kos from Dihli were brought under the operation of the ordinance rule.<sup>14</sup>

(2) *Prohibition of hoarding both by the farmers and traders and grain-dealers.* For this purpose the revenue of the territory under the ordinance rule was to be so regulated (it probably implies that it was to be collected in kind and so rigorously) that neither the farmers were able to retain any surplus which they could secretly sell at a higher price nor the merchants and grain-dealers. Moreover written agreements were taken from the governor, (here the term used is *Nawab*) and the other government officers concerned to the effect that no one within their jurisdiction should be allowed to hoard and regrade corn.

In the event of any case of regrating being detected the officers were made to account for it and were chastised.<sup>15</sup> Further the superintendents and agents (*Shahnas* and *Karkunan*) had also to give agreements that they would cause the grain from the farmers to be delivered to the caravans of merchants *on the fields at the fixed rates*.<sup>16</sup> Besides this the collector and his overseers and other revenue officers were also bound by agreements to realise revenues in the districts of the Doab (because these were near the Capital)<sup>17</sup> with the utmost severity so that they might be compelled to sell the little quantity left to them at the cheaper rate to the corn-carriers (probably in order to get a little money for their other expenses). These steps ensured a regular flow of grain to the markets of the capital through the caravans, at the fixed rates. (3) Thirdly the unfailing services of the merchants were obtained and caravans were ordered to carry grain from the villages of the Doab to the capital. The merchants and caravans from far and near were commandeered and pressed to render service to the State under pain of terrible punishments and humiliation<sup>18</sup>. These merchants were compelled to shift lock, stock and barrel from their homes and settle near Dihli on the bank of the Jamna in order to be within easy access of the *Shahna* (Superintendent) of the market.

(4) The fourth step was the storage of large quantities of grain in government granaries set up for the purpose in all quarters of

the city.<sup>19</sup> The granaries were filled chiefly with grain collected by way of revenue from the *khalsa* (reserved) villages of the *Doab* and those attached to the 'New City'. (*Shahr-i-Nau*) Granaries are mentioned to have been set up in one more town only, viz. *Jhain* and its villages. But these stores were meant to be transported to the capital by the caravans and not to be sold in the country. side/ Perhaps *Jhain* was then a big *mandi* or grain-market. [The storage was meant for emergencies and for times of scarcity and famine.] In such times the supply of corn to the people of Dihli was rationed at a *maximum of half a man<sup>2</sup> per family per day*. (See JASB. 1870, p. 29). On such occasions special consideration was shown to the poor people and if they were not cared for by the *Shahna*, he had to suffer for it.

(5) The fifth measure was the appointment of a Superintendent or Inspector of the markets (*Shahna*) with a contingent of cavalry and infantry and a suitable *jagir* for his maintenance. He was also given a *barid* (translated by Fuller as travelling agent, but I think it implies, head of the intelligence department) and other officers from amongst his own friends to serve.] Malik Maqbul, a servant of Ulugh Khan, was made *Shahna*. He was not only to supervise the market but to compell the merchants and caravans to collect grain from the villages.

[The next set of regulations were concerned with the maintenance of the official price-scale unaltered even in times of famine. A whole

net-work of official machinery was required to achieve this end. First, prices at the source of commodities had to be kept down at a sufficiently low level to meet the demands of the government. Secondly the caravans and merchants had to be kept under control so that they might regularly bring the goods to the capital without regrating any portion thereof elsewhere. Thirdly, cheating on the part of the sellers in the markets and corruption among government servants had to be stopped. This discipline and observance of the king's orders was secured by adopting the rough and ready instrument of the most rigorous coercion. That even in normal times there will always be some dishonest merchants who cheat the people hardly needs mention. But the extreme severity of the coercive measures that had to be resorted to in this case points unmistakeably to a rather abnormal state of affairs. It would seem that most of the traders and shop-keepers had a strong tendency to break the regulations. The king, therefore, appointed a separate staff whose business it was to see that the regulations were strictly obeyed. The Head of this department was the *Shahna*, or Superintendent of the market, as I have stated above. He was assisted by the *Barid* and a numerous staff of assistants. A further precaution taken by the king was that daily reports of the current prices in the market had to be sent by three agencies independently, viz, the *Shahna*, the *Barid* and the Informers of the Court, and if these reports did

not tally the officer who was found to be at fault was punished. Barani, however, tells us that in spite of the extremely harsh and merciless punishments administered to them the people of the bazars did not desist from cheating and giving short-weights to the buyers. He therefore used to make enquiries about the rates 10 to 20 times a day<sup>21</sup>, and he often found that still the cheating was not completely stopped. Then he devised the method of occasionally sending to the market a few slave boys to buy articles of food and if these were found to be less than the correct weight a quantity of flesh equal to the deficiency was cut from the cheeks or haunches of the seller and then the victim was kicked out of his shop by the *Shahna-i-Mandi*. It was by resorting to such drastic and dastardly measures that Alauddin succeeded in maintaining the artificial rates fixed by him.

Before we proceed to examine the subsequent regulations two more points pertaining to the control of prices must be noted. First, that the sole object of the control system was to keep the sale prices low in the capital alone. It was not intended to maintain these rates for public sale of commodities outside Dihli. The districts around the city, however, had to bear the brunt of the control only in as much as the inhabitants of those places had to furnish supplies for the consumption of Dihli at the rates which were appreciably lower even than those which were fixed for the sale of commodities in Dihli. These sale rates were



not enforced in the districts around Dihli and it is clear that while the government extorted from the peasants and business men their commodities at much cheaper rates than even the official *sale rates* enforced in Dihli, the rates in the open markets of the places outside the capital should have sprung up much higher than normal as an inevitable result of the withdrawing for the capital city of large quantities of all sorts of necessities of life from these localities. This is clearly borne out by Barani himself who tells us that the *Diwan* (*rais*) of the *Sarai 'Adl*, was ordered to grant passes to rich men to buy a limited quantity of costly stuffs for their personal use; but if the *Diwan* suspected that their intention was to buy such stuffs in order to sell them in the country at four or five times the price at which they had got them from the stores of the Sultan, he refused to give passes.<sup>122</sup> This is further corroborated by the fact that there was such a strong temptation among the merchants for regrating, obviously because they would have got a large margin of profit if they could conceal a part of the commodities bought at the controlled *rates of purchase* in the country and sell the same in the open markets of the selfsame localities. Some writers would seem to suggest as if regrating had to be stopped in the capital. But there the commodities being available to everybody at the *control rates*, there was no chance for regrating. For, who would buy at higher rates when he could get every thing at cheaper rates? Thus

it is clear that the whole control system was intended to maintain reduced rates within the capital alone where the army was stationed and, secondly, that as a direct result of the measures enforced on the surrounding country, the general rates therein should have inevitably mounted much higher than normal, naturally giving rise to temptation for regrating. So far as its effect upon the people in general was concerned, the system must have acted upon them as a double-edged sword. On the one hand it relieved them of their commodities for a much smaller amount than they would have normally got. On the other, they, chiefly the peasantry, would have had to buy their necessities at considerably higher rates which as has already been shown had risen in some cases four or five times the control prices prevailing in Dihli. This is a clear index of the prices prevailing in the country outside the capital. The other classes would have also suffered but to a lesser extent. It might be suggested that the peasants were free to buy their necessities in Dilhi. But it should be noted that in the first place it would neither be easy nor economical for these poor people to travel all the way to the capital to buy goods. Moreover, so far as corn or ordinary cloth, sheep and goats were concerned, they would have had to pay more for these than what they had received from the government for the same commodities and hence there was no temptation for them to buy their necessities in Dihli. Lastly if all the village people were



to come to make their purchases in Dihli it would have defeated the very object of the price control system.

Let us examine now the second set of regulations by which the prices of piece-goods, sugar, oils, fruits, etc., and the third set by which prices of horses, slaves, cattle and certain eatables and articles of general merchandise were fixed.

The second set comprised five regulations. By the first regulation a new government market named *Sarai-'Adl* was established under the Badayun gate. The second one fixed the schedule of prices, and the third ordered registration of merchants (chiefly Multani merchants) of Dihli and the provinces. The fourth provided for advance of loans to Multani merchants because they were given charge of the *Sarai-'Adl* market. The fifth regulation provided for the issue of passes to those rich people who wanted to buy costly articles. As a result of these regulations all merchants had to deliver up their entire stocks into the *Sarai-'Adl* on pain of severe chastisement if they concealed anything. The *Diwan-i-Riyasat* was ordered to register names of merchants, both *Muslim and Hindu*, without any discrimination. These merchants were compelled to sign an agreement according to which they had to bring their commodities to the city and sell them at the control rates. Another condition of these agreements was that the merchants must bring things from far and wide and sell them at the control prices.

This must have entailed great hardship on them unless the government recompensed them for the loss which they would have had to suffer simply because they must have had to pay higher prices for their goods, than they got in Dihli. There is no indication in the account of Barani and other chroniclers that even the people of the distant districts were or could be compelled to sell their goods to the merchants at the rates imposed on the farmers and artizans of the *Doab*. If, however, we were to suppose that the government did recompense the Multani merchants and did bear this loss in order just to provide commodities to the soldiers at cheaper rates, than it would have defeated its own object of cheapening the prices. Further if the government bore the loss itself and recompensed the Multanis, there would have been no need for coercion admittedly resorted to by the government. It is therefore clear that the Multani and other merchants were made to suffer this loss themselves. In the third set of regulations which dealt with the prices of horses, slaves, maid servants etc. the only important point to note is that cheapness of horses was sought to be obtained by strictly putting a stop to the purchase of horses by horse-dealers and brokers in the Dihli market for the purpose of selling them elsewhere. The chronicler clearly says that the *brokers* and *horse-dealers* who used to earn large profits were ruined by the enforcement of this regulation. Not satisfied with this alone the

Sultan banished the chief brokers to distant fortresses and in a way practically wiped out the whole class of these business men.<sup>23</sup>

[The fourth and the last set of regulations were drawn for the purpose of fully enforcing the above-mentioned control of prices. In this connection the most important measure adopted by the Sultan was the establishment of a full staff of supervising officers under the Finance Department] (*Diwan-i-Riyasat*). For this purpose a very ill-tempered and cruel person, by name Yaqub, who held the offices of *Nazir* (Supervisor of the collection of revenues, according to Qureshi) and *Muhtasib*, was promoted to the post of *Diwan-i-Riyasat*. [Under him a *Shahna* was appointed with a numerous staff of subordinate functionaries for each market.] The *qualifications by which these officers were selected were not only trustworthiness and honesty but harsh-temper, cruelty, bad-tongue etc.* The *Shahnas* were supplied with schedules of the control rates and were instructed to keep strict vigilance over the sales in the markets. *For the least deficiency in weight or any other aberration the sellers were lashed mercilessly and ill-treated in every possible way.*<sup>24</sup>

After the above review and analysis of the genesis of and the circumstances in which the price-control regulations of Sultan Alauddin were promulgated and enforced we are in a position to (1) estimate the success with which the scheme of price-control was carried out, (2) to assess the sum total of the

effects of this system on the people who were directly concerned with it as well as on the country as a whole, and (3) to estimate as approximately as possible the extent of change that was effected in the prices. As regards (1) every line of Zia Barani's account of the price-control system bears testimony to the thoroughness with which the Sultan devoted himself to perfect his plan in every detail and the enthusiasm with which he strove to make it a success according to his lights. The prices of all sorts of field produce and of almost all types of finished goods are said to have been elaborately worked out and fixed. But he was not unaware, it would seem, of the thoroughly *artificial nature* of his regulation prices which would not have lasted for a moment without the coercion which was used to maintain them. Accordingly he devised a characteristically ruthless machinery for the purpose. (If our criterion of judging the deeds of kings and rulers were that the end should dictate as also justify the means, then certainly Sultan Ala-uddin deserves credit for making his scheme a success as he understood it.)

This leads to the next question which must be regarded as of the greatest consequence provided we concede the principle that the extent of the benefit and good of the subjects ought to be the measure of the success of the projects and schemes of a ruler. I have already elucidated the point that judged by the motive which actuated the Sultan to introduce his

system, it was only intended from first to last to benefit ostensibly the soldiers of the army, but really the government, because the real wealth of the soldiers did not increase (if we suppose that the reduction in prices was proportionate to the reduction in their salaries). But, as seems probable, the cumulative resultant of depressing the prices even of valuable things being greater, the soldiers too to some extent shared the benefits accruing from the scheme. The government however was the real gainer, because finding it impossible to impose any more direct taxes on the people it increased its real wealth by this device to the extent to which its income at that time fell short of the expenditure it had budgeted for the army, and to the same extent it deprived the people of their real wealth, and in this case, even of their quantity of money. It may however be noted that the government collected grain from the peasants on two distinct counts: (a) the government revenue all of which was ordered to be realised in the form of grain within the Doab country; (b) whatever surplus was left was bought from the peasants at the rates much lower than the official control rates obtaining in Dihli. Now the government could not gain anything on the quantity of grain collected by way of revenue because it sold it at cheaper rates to the people of Dihli. This would seem to defeat the very object for which the price control had been introduced. But the government did certainly profit *on the grain purchased*

*from the peasants* by forcing them to part with their products at cheaper rates in order to make up the loss of the soldiery to the extent their salaries were reduced whereby the government effected an economy in its expenditure. The only class of people who must have been really benefited by this control were those government servants who continued to enjoy their salaries fixed in normal times. Apart from these whatever benefit accrued to some classes of people in the capital city was only incidental. Among these the most conspicuous seem to be the rich nobles and zamindars who had hardly anything to sell, but were allowed to purchase even costly goods, albeit in a very restricted measure. This concession to the wealthier class of people should have involved robbing the poor manufacturers of these costly stuffs only to benefit the rich, a step in no sense philanthropic and altogether un-called for, but positively detrimental to the interests of the producers. Some minor beneficiaries were the poor labouring classes in the capital because they got food and their meagre necessities at cheaper rates.

{ Besides the king, the government servants and the army, there were three more principal classes of people who were directly affected by this price-control, viz. (1) the middle class or richer merchants, traders, importers and exporters, (2) the peasants and cultivators, and (3) the artizans and handicraftsmen.



Concerning the businessmen, including all classes,—grain-dealers, general merchants, cloth merchants, horse and cattle dealers, and others,—it hardly needs any showing that they lost all their normal business because they had to cater solely to the government demand. No speculation on this point is however necessary, as Barani himself recounts the miserable plight to which they were reduced and the humiliations to which they were subjected. While the grain dealers and general merchants were thus coerced into service by the government, the horse-dealers and brokers were almost wiped out as a class. It should also be remembered that the sufferers were not the businessmen of Dihli alone, but included merchants of the districts within a radius of nearly a hundred *kos*. i.e. nearly 200 miles, as well as the rich Multani merchants, who were assisted by an advance of 20 *lacs* of *tankas* and were ordered to bring articles to the *Sarai 'Adl* from all parts of the empire and sell them at the rates fixed by the government. The implications of this regulation are too evident to need elaboration. These classes of the population could by no means be set down as insignificant or of no consequence to the stability of the economic life of the country.

But even more serious than this must have been the chaos into which the economic life and business conditions of the surrounding country were thrown. The historian, Zia Barani, was obviously not concerned with that

aspect of things. The only bright spot of the scheme was the cheapness of the prices, however artificial, within the confines of the capital. But this was far too inadequate to relieve the gloom of the insufferable economic disintegration which the system must have caused. To take only one instance. The merchants were asked to go far and wide and bring things to sell in the markets of Dihli at the cheap artificial rates fixed by the Sultan. Now either the merchants must have employed some sort of coercion on those from whom they bought their goods or else they should have suffered the loss themselves. Supposing they procured their goods somehow at cheaper rates, then those who sold it to them must have been the losers. There is no escape from this chain of economic disorder in a country where prices were artificially kept within a limited space far below the normal level such as was done by the Khalji Sultan.

The next class of people concerned were the agriculturists. A full consideration of their circumstances under the price-control system leads to the irresistible conclusion that they were the hardest hit. They had to pay more than 50% in the shape of land revenue and grazing and house-taxes. Out of what remained they were allowed to retain not a grain more than was just sufficient for their sustenance and the rest was taken away by the government at a rate considerably lower than the sale-prices of Dihli. This in itself meant much loss to them, but supposing some of the



peasants were compelled to buy corn in an emergency, then they would have had certainly to pay for it considerably more than what they had to sell it for. Further, as already pointed out, the general rates in the open market outside Dihli being much higher, the peasants had to pay more for their other necessities of life, however meagre, and they received less than the normal prices for the produce of the sweat of their brow. Of course, those few who happened to reside in the neighbourhood of Dihli might have taken advantage of its cheaper markets for buying their very limited requirements but none belonging to places beyond the suburbs of Dihli.

The fourth class of people affected by the control were the handicraftsmen and artisans and confectioners. It is stated by the chronicler that the Sultan went into great detail and fixed the prices of everything, however insignificant, such as needles, combs etc. and settled the profits of the vendors.<sup>25</sup> It is difficult to see how the Sultan could have reduced the prices unless the cost of these articles was reduced, which would involve not merely a reduction in the rates of raw materials but also of skilled labour of which there is no mention in Barani's account. Thus the artisan who had to employ skilled labour and purchase raw materials was bound to suffer a loss. In the absence of any relevant data we are left to conclude only on the basis of what details the chronicler has furnished. In the light of the

above discussion we may now sum up our conclusions as follows:—

(1) That the whole populace of Dihli and its environs could be classed under four categories for our present purpose, viz., the king, the army and the government servants and all other salaried people, (2) the rich and middle class merchants, traders and grain dealers, (3) the agriculturists, (4) the artisans, handicraftsmen and other kindred workers. Of these the first named class were consumers wholly and solely. They had nothing to sell, and hence their gain from the price control was the greatest and quite unmixed.

(2) The merchants and other businessmen were, according to their status, consumers as well as sellers. They, therefore, as a class would have obtained appreciable relief by being able to obtain their requirements at cheaper rates.

(3) But the cultivators were producers *par excellence*, and had comparatively very little to buy of other articles. Moreover, they were too far from the capital to be able to take advantage of the amenity. Indeed they formed a class apart, being no part of the Dihli population. Their lot was therefore the most insufferable. They were the most hard hit.

(4) Last of all came the artisans including grocers of minor articles in the capital. While we know that the grocers were allowed a fair profit, we have no data to know how the producers and manufacturers fared. All the same there can be no doubt that in order to

ensure a supply of these articles so large as to meet the demands of the huge and latterly almost doubled population of Dihli, the business of artisans and producers must have become unhinged to its very roots. How this control system resulted, as a whole, in the utter impoverishment of the people and how and by what means it succeeded is explicitly stated by Barani himself. His words are worth quoting in full: 'Politicians of the age used to ascribe the low prices prevailing during the reign of Ala-uddin to four reasons: first, the harsh way in which he enforced his orders, from which there was absolutely no escape, secondly, the oppressiveness of the taxes and the rigour with which they were exacted, so that the people had to sell grain and other articles at the rates fixed by the Sultan; thirdly, the scarcity of money among the people, which was so great that the proverb got *an vogue* "a camel may be had for a *dang* ; but where is the *dang* to be had?"; fourthly, the impartiality and consequent harshness of the officials...' <sup>226</sup> Further comment is needless. }  
}

✓ The whole account of the 'new deal' of Ala-uddin points to one conclusion and one alone, that it was a thoroughly irrational, ill-conceived and artificial system being in flagrant violation of all economic laws, intended primarily for the benefit of the government, and resulting in incalculable misery, poverty and humiliation to the people who happened to fall directly or indirectly under its heel.

Before I conclude, an attempt to estimate the reduction in the rates or to compare the natural pre-control rates with the schedule fixed by Alauddin will not be out of place. We will take the rates of wheat as typical. Under Jalaluddin Khalji we learn that the murder of Sidi Maula by Arkali Khan was followed by such scarcity of rain from Dihli upto the Siwalak country that a severe famine was the result and grain rose, we are told, to one *jital* per *ser*. Now the price of wheat fixed by Alauddin was  $7\frac{1}{2}$  *jitals* per *man*, and we can easily presume that the natural open market price of wheat should have been anywhere between at least 9 to 10 *jitals* per *man*. The *man* of Dihli of that time was equal to forty *sers*.<sup>27</sup> Hence during the famine above referred to, the purchasing power of *jital* had fallen to one-fourth its normal level and under the control of Alauddin the *jital* appreciated by about 25 to 30% in its purchasing power. This is about the most moderate estimate we can make of the natural pre-control prices. But as I have shown above, by the inevitable operation of economic laws, the prices in the districts around Dihli must have mounted up considerably, a clear indication of which is to be found in the fact that silk and other costly stuffs could be sold outside Dihli at a price four to five times higher than their control price in Dihli.

A word here might also be said as to the wisdom of the counsel of the ministers or councillors who had advised the Sultan to

adopt these measures. On two occasions the Sultan had sought their advice on such important matters of State policy and administration. On both these occasions the councillors gave no evidence of any far-sightedness, statesmanlike insight or sobriety of judgment. They had no true conception of either the good of the people or of the State. Their solutions were mechanical and not informed with political wisdom or that humane elasticity of mind which is the essence of statesmanship. Whenever they found themselves faced with any complicated problem they could think only of iron and blood, and the brunt of their ruthless decisions fell on their poor helpless subjects. As I shall show in another place the only farsighted statesman of the age was the corpulent Qazi Ala-ul-mulk and he was unfortunately then dead

## ABBREVIATIONS

JASB—Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal.

Barani—Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi of Zia-uddin Barani.

Agr. Sys.—Agrarian System of Moslem India, by W. H. Moreland.

E and D—History of India as told by its own historians, by H. M. Elliot, Edited by J. Dowson.

## NOTES

1. See, for instance, Islamic Culture, vol. XVIII, No. I, January 1944. p. 45 ; Ishwari Prasad in 'History of Muslim rule in India' pp. 98-99 ; I. H. Qureshi in 'Administration of the Sultanate of Dihli', passim. Qari Md. Bashir Uddin, Pandit, in '*Hindi Qurun-i-wasati*' (Urdu).
2. Barani, p. 261, Fuller's Tr., JASB, 1869, p. 200.
3. Moreland (vide. Agr. System, p. 32) says that the king took steps to bring his officers under closer control in or near A. D. 1300 which is incorrect. These steps were taken after the Sultan's return from Ranthambhor in the beginning of A. D. 1302.
4. Vide Barani (Bib. Ind. Text), p. 282.
5. Aspects of Muslim Adm., p. 256.
6. Vide Agr. Sys., p. 32.
7. Barani, Bib Ind. Text, 287 ; Fuller's Tr. JASB, 1870, Vol. XXXIX pt. I, p. 7.
8. Zamindars and ordinary peasants. See Dowson's note on the meaning of *khuts* and *balahars* in E and D., III. 623.
9. After describing the object of the Sultan to reduce the people to abject humiliation and poverty, the author says : 'in furtherance of the above object which is indeed the chief of all objects of Government ; they suggested two regulations.'
10. JASB, Vol. XXXIX, Part 1, p. 16, Text p. 296, l. 1., from below.
11. Text, p. 300 ; E and D, III, p. 189 ; JASB. XXXIX, Pt I. 19-20.
12. Reg. VIII, Text, pp. 305 and 308, line 2 from below ; JASB : op. cit, pp. 25 and 29.
13. JASB, XXXIX, 24 ; Text p. 304-5.

14. Vide Regulation V, Text, p. 305, and 307 and *JASB*, Vol. XXXIX, pp. 25 and 27.
15. Regulation V, Loc. cit. It will be noted that the use of the term *Nawab* in the sense of 'governor' is very uncommon, and perhaps the only example of such use.
16. Reg. VI, loc. cit.
17. This is significant. Its implications will be presently discussed.
18. Reg. I, Text. p. 306 ; Tr. pp. 25, 26.
19. Reg. II, Text, p. 304, and Reg. III Text, p. 305. *JASB*, XXXIX, (1870), pp. 25, 26. (Here the order of Regulations II and III in the synoptical table and the following detailed account is reversed. q. v.)
20. Ferishta (Lucknow text, p. 114, ll. 14—16) says that the *tanka* (تنگہ) of that time was either of silver or gold and was one *tola* in weight. Each silver *tangah* was equal to 50 *jitals*. But the weight of *jital* was not known with certainty. But the *man*, according to Ferishta was = 40 *seers* of 24 *tolas* each, which means that the *man* of Aluaddin was—12 *seers* of the present day. But Ed. Thomas (Chronicles of the Pathan kings of Dihli, p. 162) has worked out, on the basis of *Masalik-ul-absar* and Ibn Batuta, the *man* of that time to be equal to 28'78 lbs. avoirdupois i.e. about 14 *seers* of the present day. Thus every buyer in the market was allowed a ration of 7 *seers*. It is not mentioned whether this quantity was given to every individual or for his whole family, the words in the text being ; زنہنگان من عام خریداران — داد ندی which only means that half a *man* was allowed to each individual purchaser in the market. But seven *seers* being too much for a single man's daily ration we may safely presume that it was meant for the family of the purchaser, of which the normal strength might have been specified.



21. *JASB*, XXXIX, p. 30, para 3.
22. *Ibid.* p. 32 ; Text, 312.
23. *JASB*, XXXIX (Part I), 1870, p. 33.
24. *Ibid.* p. 38.
25. *JASB*, 1870, p. 36. Major Fuller translates it as "determined the prices of everything ....according to the cost..." but there is nothing in the text which refers to the cost of production, vide Text, p. 316.
26. *JASB*, 1870 p. 32, Text p. 312—Barani has given expression to his estimate of Alauddin on several occasions, for instance, on p. 49 of *JASB*, 1870, and Text p. 324, he attributes the success of his plans to sheer luck and happy accident, and all his victories and achievements to the virtues and benedictions of the Shaikh-ul-Islam, Nizamuddin Auliya. Barani is not in the least obsessed with the ability, greatness or virtue of Alauddin. On the contrary, he says that Alauddin had no relation to virtue or divine inspiration, being polluted with so many sins, both active معاصي الزمّة و متعديّه "who from indulgence in cruelty and bloodshed has become a habitual and blood-thirsty murderer". (Vide *JASB* 1870, p. 50; Text p. 325). In another place Barani says that Sultan Alauddin was a man who had not a particle of education and had never cultivated the society of intelligent persons. (Text p. 289, *JASB*, XXXIX, p. 10).
27. Vide E. Thomas, *Chronicles of the Pathan Kings of Dihli*, p. 161.



## IX

### THE FRONTIER POLICY OF THE TURKISH SULTANS OF DIHLI

3 If there is any country whose history has been dominated more by its frontiers than by any other phisiological factor it is India. Time and again since the dawn of human history on this land its destiny has been moulded by its north-west frontier. The problem of the frontiers in India is as old as the hills, and it constitutes one of the most extensive and important subjects of study for the students of the history of this country.

✓ From the earliest times the root cause of the invasions and migrations into India through its north-western passes has been the political upheavals in the central and western Asiatic regions and the temptations which the rich land of this country has offered to outsiders whose homelands did not happen to be so favoured by nature as India has ever been. Lust of conquest also has diverted the conquering hosts of many an invader into the Indian plains.

After the invasions of the Huns who devastated the north-western regions of the country upto the 6th century A. D., the curtain is lifted again at the end of the 10th century, when the rise of the (Yamini)

Ghaznavi Turks in north-western Persia and their gradual encroachment on the Turki Shahi kingdom in Afghanistan, led to an inevitable contest for existence between them and the Shahis of the Punjab and Kabul. //The exploits of Mahmud brought the question of the security and defence of the frontiers to the forefront of Indian politics and exposed the inherent weakness and inefficiency of the Rajput political system. But it also demonstrated that the most important condition for any invasion of India from beyond the north-west hilly region was the rise of a great and ambitious military leader like Mahmud.// (After him there was once again a long cessation of these invasions. Among his successors none proved worthy of his seed.) None possessed even a fraction of Mahmud's military skill and inexhaustible energy, his passion for conquest or his virility. (After him the Indian chiefs enjoyed respite for a century and a half from the annoying raids of the Turks. But a revolution in the kingdom of Ghazni brought to power another Turk as ambitious as Mahmud, though a much inferior warrior.) The tale of a succession of onslaughts upon the country was repeated and once again it demonstrated the utter incapacity of the rulers of the land to defend their homes. Notwithstanding all their reckless courage and valour, the magnificence of their courts and palaces and their enormous resources, it is clearly shown by the amazing rapidity with which the whole country from west to

east fell under the sway of the Turkish invaders—a phenomenon which is unparalleled in the history of any country—that the Indian chiefs were utterly lacking in anything like a scientific and systematic policy of frontier defence. That is why they had no line of political or military frontier well-guarded and well-established. It also exposed their outworn strategy and system of warfare. (When the Turks stepped into the position of the early Hindu rulers of northern India the problem became infinitely more formidable owing to the stupendous eruption of the Mughals under the mighty Changiz Khan.) But the new rulers of the land, quite unlike their somnolent predecessors, were found to be wide awake to the gravity of the problem.

*Central Asiatic Politics:* Before coming to the frontier defence policy of the Sultans it would not be out of place here to say a word about the Central Asiatic politics which at that time was entirely dominated by the Mughals. The Mongol cataclysm was fundamentally different from the invasions of the Ghuzz Turks too centuries earlier. The Ghuzz had already embraced Islam and were thus invading the country of their co-religionists, whereas the Mongols had no respect for any religion at all and having achieved their initial successes swept away all that came in their way. The accounts of the destruction and devastation caused by them strain our powers of belief. Town after town which had been famous for its buildings, its mosques, its

colleges and its pleasure gardens, was levelled to the ground never again to revive. As they advanced they only left desert waste-lands in their wake. Prawdin draws an admirable picture of the rise of the Mughal power. "Jenghiz Khan's iron will" he says, "had made a nation out of nothing, had metamorphosed loose aggregates of nomads into the best disciplined army of the 13th century, *had transformed savage warriors into the most distinguished commanders and strategists in the world.* It was his will which had shattered twenty realms, had overrun inconceivable areas, bridged the largest of the continents and converted herdsmen of the *steppes* into rulers of all the people and all the civilizations. In only one respect had this will failed to achieve its purpose. *Jhenghis could not alter the character of his Mongols.* Fratricidal warfare had prevailed for ages in Mongolia, dissipating the forces of the country, now it prevailed over the whole Asiatic continent. It was not the losses sustained in unceasing campaigns of conquest, it was not the extension of the Mongolian people until it spread thinly over such vast spaces, which had undermined its energies. It had become steadily greater, and and in these vast spaces its numbers had been many times multiplied. The weak spot was internal dissension. This it was that wrecked Jhenghiz Khan's work.

Futile had been his exhortations to unity, vain had been his parables of the arrows and of the snake with many heads, which on his

death-bed, he related to his sons; vain, too, had been the law of the Yasak, to the effect that everything which impaired the central authority should be an offence punishable with death. For one generation only was unity maintained, though he had believed it cemented for a thousand years. Already in the second generation increasing quarrels began. Theft, poisoning, assassination by violence, had again become daily incidents as among the nomad chiefs before the time of Jhenghiz Khan, until open war broke out between the sons of his four sons, and at length, in each fragment of the empire, a ruler could only ascend the throne over the corpses of other aspirants."

The vast empire of Changiz was divided into three Khanates and in Central Asia a number of more or less independent Mughal chieftains jostled one another with the result that time and again they poured down into the plains of India to quench their lust of blood and booty. It was with this unceasing inundation of the Mughal hordes that the Sultans of Dihli had to deal. But this was not the only source of trouble.

Almost equally important was the problem created by the existence of the *Khokhars* who had established themselves in the region between Lahaur and Ghazni, on the southern borders of Kashmir. These people, whose early history is yet uncertain had probably migrated from Tibet. They had joined the confederacy of Hindu chiefs

who opposed Mahmud on the invitation of Anandpal, then ruler of Lahore, and they had done tremendous havoc in Mahmud's army cutting down five thousand of his men in a few minutes. The territory between the Jhelum and Indus was the centre of their kingdom, and hence they constituted a tough problem to all invaders from outside. They were equally opposed to the Ghurians. *Thus (there were two aspects of the Frontier Problem* which confronted the Sultans. They had to deal with the Khokhars and to defend the kingdom from Mongol invaders. The Khokhars nursed a deep hostility towards the Turks and were friendly to the Mughals. They often went to the extent of inviting the Mughals to invade Hindustan and invariably gave them passage through their territory.

When Muhammad Ghuri in 1186 attacked Khusrau Malik, king of Lahore, the last of Ghaznavides, the Khokhars under Raja Khan (1152-1186), went to his help, and the Ghuri Sultan was compelled to resort to treachery in order to circumvent the king of Lahore who was captured and taken prisoner to Ghazni.

At this time a new chief named Rasal or Raisal 'who lived in the mountains between Lahore and Kabul and the sandy desert' rose to power and allying himself with the Khokhars for the defence of the country against the foreigners, began to plunder that tract which had passed into Ghurian hands. The Khokhars

of these parts who paid tribute to the Ghurian Sultan stopped it and the allies intercepted all communication between Lahore and Ghazni. Amir Muhammad, the Ghurian governor of Lahore wrote that the tribute of the year which had been realised and was ready could not be sent to Ghazni because the Khokhars and Rasal had stopped the communications: "in a manner that nobody could travel on the road." Shihabuddin Ghuri, therefore, gave up the Khwarazmian expedition, and prepared a huge force to march against the Khokhars. Aibak was asked to collect the several armies of Hindustan and come to his help. The army of Muhammad met the Khokhar force (1205 A. D.) in the territory between the Jhelum and Chenab, and in the battle that followed the Khokhars fought with great valour and tenacity and had nearly exterminated the enemy's forces and compelled them to retreat when suddenly the arrival of Aibak from behind with a large army, fresh and vigorous, turned tables on them and compelled them to beat a hasty retreat. Thousands of Khokhars were put to the sword, but still they did not cease to give trouble to the foreigners so long as the Sultan remained at Lahore. Some time after this the Khokhar chief embraced Islam through the influence of a Muslim whom they had taken prisoner, and he became instrumental in the conversion of the whole tribe later on. Nevertheless many of them still remained hostile to the Ghurids and according to Ferishta (Bombay Ed., 105) Sultan Muhammad Ghuri was



murdered by some Khokhars while during his return march to Ghazni he was lying in camp on the bank of the Indus.

The subsequent attitude of the Khokhars and the part they played during the early period of the Dihli Sultanate is highly significant. Hostility towards the Ghurian Turks seems to have been so deeply ingrained in their minds that throughout the Sultanate period they continued to give trouble to the Dihli Sultans by making constant incursions into their territory, just as the frontier tribes have continued to harras the people of the border districts since Mughal times down to the present day. But far more than this was their hostility shown in the fact that they used to help the Mughals and other invaders who came to attack the Turkish rulers. Consequently the influence which the unquenchable hostility of the Khokhars exercised on the politics of Dihli was very far reaching. By occupying the territory between Lahore and Kabul they delimited the western boundary of the Dihli Sultanate to the line of the Ravi. Secondly, while on the one hand they practically intercepted all communication between Dihli and Kabul, on the other they made it easy for the Mughals and even encouraged them to enter the country by depriving the Sultans of the possibility to guard the gates of the land at its natural frontiers.

(In this predicament the Sultans were reduced to the necessity of forging up an artificial frontier for purposes of defence. *This frontier was represented by the line of the Beas and the*



left (eastern) bank of the Ravi, and extended from Lahore in the north to Multan and Uch in the south-west.) It should be noted in this connection that both the rivers, the Beas and the Ravi have since that time considerably changed their courses. This shifting of the course is most remarkable in the case of the *Beas*, which now joins the Satlaj near *Lohian Khas* (at Lat. 31, Log. 75), but at that time its channel ran parallel to the Satlaj about forty miles to its west, right upto the neighbourhood of Uch. The Ravi in its old course ran parallel to the Beas about forty miles to its west, while its present course takes a sharp turn towards the south-west so that the point where it empties its waters into the Chenab is no less than sixty or seventy miles from its former bed.

(The Sultans of Dihli realised full well the extreme difficulty of guarding a frontier of which the natural barrier was made up only of rivers. Hence the only alternative was to buttress up their border line by constructing a *chain of strongholds and military out posts on the routes* leading from the western passes into the depth of the country)

The invaders entered the country either through the northern passes commanded by Peshawar, Attock and Ohind or through the middle and the Gomul-Tochi and Bolon pass, southern gates, commanded by the forts of Sibi, Multan, Uch and Bakkhar. In the north the point of concentration was Lahore and in the south Multan and Debalpur. In the former case, if they managed to cross Lahore they

descended into Sirhind and from here either followed a southern course through *Samana*, *Karnal*, *Thaneshwar* and *Sonpat*, or an easterly course through *Sirmur* and *Ambala*, and entered the Doab and then came via Meerut and Loni etc. to Dihli. Sometimes they chose a more northerly course avoiding the watch-posts of the Sultanate and pressed deeper as far as Amroha, and Sambhal in Katehar (the ancient Uttar Panchal and modern Rohilkhand). In the second case they came through, Gomal pass and descended on D. I. Khan or through Bolon, commanded by Sibi, Uch and Multan and bifurcated from Debalpur near Pakpattan in the Montgomery district either due east through *Bhatinda*, *Sunam*, *Samandh* and then *Karnal* and *Dihli* or through *Bhatnir*, further south, and then *Hansi*, *Hissar*, *Rewari* to *Dihli*.

//The frontier problems of Aibak—The death of Muhammad Ghuri, created a very complicated situation for Aibak whom the late Sultan had left in charge of his Indian conquests since the subjugation by the latter of Gujrat in 1195. Ever since that time Aibak had been the *de facto* ruler,—although legally only as viceroy—of the vast Indian territories which had fallen under the sway of the Turks with amazing rapidity. The frontier complication arose from the fact that there were two rivals of Aibak, Tajuddin Yalduz who held Karman and the country near Ghazni, and Nasiruddin Qubacha, son-in-law of Yalduz, who held Sind. Both of these were also among the leading slaves of the late Ghuri Sultan. A

further element of weakness of Aibak's position was that he had not received his manumission till as late as 1208. On the other hand his strength lay in the fact that he was actually in possession of Dihli and had been recognised as Sultan of India by Mahammad's nephew Ghiyasuddin Mahmud, who had succeeded to the throne of Ghur. A much greater complexity and confusion was added to the situation by the ambition of the Khwarazmian Shah to capture Ghazni and conquer India in which he was greatly encouraged by the wavering loyalties of the citizens of Ghazni. When therefore Yalduz, on the death of Muhammad occupied Ghazni and laid claim to suzerainty over all Ghurian possessions, the partisans of the Khwarazmian Shah made things so hot for him that he was obliged to run away and take shelter in the Punjab.

Aibak, on his part, remained at Lahore in order to be able to watch the developments and take suitable action as soon as the situation required it. Taking advantage of the vacancy caused by Yalduz's expulsion Aibak moved to Ghazni. But he soon realised that his action had been hasty. The people of Ghazni compelled him to retire to India and invited Yalduz again who had been promptly driven out of India to his former possessions in Karman. After returning to India Aibak was kept busy with the difficult problem of settling the affairs of the kingdom till his death in 1210. //

After the death of Aibak a struggle for the throne ensued between Aram Shah and Iltutmish each backed up by his own partisans. Within a few months Iltutmish emerged successful and was recognised as the Sultan of Dihli. Meanwhile Yalduz further strengthened himself by wresting the Punjab from Qubacha and driving him into Sindh. (1215) The position of Iltutmish was yet so insecure and unsettled that he thought it advisable to acknowledge the nominal suzerainty of Yalduz, because he did not like to repeat the experience of Aibak by trying to occupy Ghazni. But the same year Yalduz himself was expelled from Ghazni by the Khwarazmian Shah, and found shelter in Lahore, but he still pressed his claims to suzerainty. Now it was time for Iltutmish to deal effectively with him. In a battle near Tarain Yalduz was defeated and sent a captive to Badaun where he died (1217).

It was now a greater and more formidable enemy on the frontiers, the Khwarazmian who had to be reckoned with. Iltutmish's hands were full with internal problems of consolidation and administrative arrangements. Like an astute politician therefore, instead of annexing the Punjab he restored it to Qubacha thus gaining the double advantage of winning the latter's friendship and support and creating between Dihli and Ghazni a sort of buffer state which by relieving him from the frontier menace, would give him a chance of devoting his full attention to the internal problems.

But the bulwark of safety thus created by Iltutmish was not destined to last long. It was destroyed first by the unsated ambitions of Qubacha and then by the overwhelming Mongol storm that arose in Central Asia under the leadership of the great Changiz Khan and swept across Western Asia. The contumacy of Qubacha (1217) compelled Iltutmish to drive him out of Lahore which he now placed under his own governor. The territory west of Lahore however stilled remained under the sway of the Khokhars. The hostility of the Khokhars was an additional source of danger and worry to the Sultan of Dihli. //

The Mongol cataclysm which was to create the most formidable frontier problem for Iltutmish followed within three years. The Khwarazmian Shah Alauddin having provoked the wrath of the mighty Mongol by putting to death his envoys, invited his own doom. Changiz completely annihilated the Khwarazmian empire (1219) driving Alauddin Shah Mangbari to take shelter in the Caspian region. His son Jalaluddin offered stiff resistance for a time but was eventually vanquished and fleeing across the Indus took shelter in the *Doab* between the Indus and Jhelum. Here he established himself and married the daughter of the chief of the Salt Range whereby his power was greatly strengthened. He took advantage of this accession of strength by wresting west Punjab from Qubacha. He then captured the important military stations in the *Sind Sagar Doab* and carried

his plundering raids as far as Lahore. He had been now nearly three years in the Punjab. From Lahore he sent envoys to Iltutmish entreating him to grant him asylum in his dominions. Iltutmish was not the man to take any risks. The establishment of such a brave warrior with a large army of more than 10000 men on the frontiers was bound to throw the Dihli Sultante into serious jeopardy. But far greater than this was the risk of offending the terrible Changiz by offering shelter to his enemy. In this predicament Iltutmish acted with remarkable astuteness and saved the kingdom and the country from what might have been a terrible calamity. He sent a diplomatic refusal to the Khwarazmian prince telling him that the climate of Lahore would be injurious to his health and offering him residence near Dihli. Jalaluddin naturally resented such a treatment and thought of capturing the Punjab, whereon Iltutmish prepared an army and proceeded to drive Jalal by force. The latter, however, thought it discreet to withdraw into Sindh where he attacked Qubacha and shattered his power by extorting an enormous tribute from him. Afraid of being pursued by the Mughals, he finally escaped to Persia, but on the way plundered Sindh and Gujrat.

The blow sustained by Qubacha left him too weak and incapable of harm to Dihli, and Iltutmish had some respite from the anxiety of the western frontier. He now addressed himself to settling his internal affairs until 1228 when,



feeling free to deal with Qubacha who still maintained a rebellious attitude and claimed the territory from Sind to Lahore, the Sultan launched a powerful offensive against him. While attempting to escape in a boat across the Sindh (Indus) he was drowned with all his family. The defeat and destruction of Qubacha was followed by the reduction of the whole of Sind, which was finally conferred on Malik Sinan-ud-din Chatisar, of the Surma line (the ancient rulers of Sind), who became a vassal of the Sultan. Sind was thus created a buffer state between Dihli and the Mughals of Khorasan who had by that time extended their empire upto Kabul and Ghazni. The frontier was now further strengthened by the capture and garrisoning of the most important forts, such as Siwi. The country upto the sea including Makran came under the sway of Dihli. In the north Iltutmish probably extended his power upto Sialkot.

//The return of Changiz Khan from the Indus because his forces were reluctant to proceed further lifted the heaviest load of anxiety from the mind of Iltutmish. After this, luckily for the weak successors of Iltutmish, the frontier regions enjoyed an uninterrupted peace and freedom from Mongol incursions till December 1241, when the young prince Bahram was on the throne. At this time the court at Dihli was in a state of utter chaos owing to the youth and inexperience of the Sultan heightened by the treachery of his crafty minister Nizam-ul-Mulk. The Mughals now made an incursion

under Tair, lieutenant of Hulagu in, A.D. 1241. Their first objective was Multan but here they met with tough opposition by the governor Kabir Khan Ayaz. Despairing of success their leader, Bagatur Tair turned towards Lahore and invested the city in December, 1241. On this first occasion of a Mughal invasion of which hereafter an endless series was to follow, the frontier government at Lahore was taken quite unawares and unprepared. A fairly long period of peace on the frontiers had allayed their fears and their vigilance had been relaxed. But the ill equipment of the garrison was due mainly to the internecine dissensions in which the kingdom had been involved since the death of Ilutmish. Moreover the merchants and the people of Lahore who traded with Central Asia and had to receive passports and other facilities from the Mughals, did not like to oppose them. The Sultan despatched under the Wazir Nizamul Mulk a force for the relief of Lahore but all ended in a fiasco owing to the machinations of the wily and vindictive Wazir, in consequence of which the simple minded young Sultan lost his crown as well as his head. Left to depend on his own resources Malik Qaraqash the governor of Lahore defended the city for some time and finding the job hopeless quietly escaped. The city was taken by storm by the besiegers and given up to massacre and plunder, after which they retired. There was one more raid of the Mughals in 1245. They invested Multan and drove out the governor Hasan Qarlagh who had recovered it from Abu



Bakr son of Ayaz. Then they laid seige to *Uch*. The Sultan Masud now prepared a force and advanced as far as the Beas which at that time flowed down and joined the other rivers ten miles north of Uch (see Raverty I, p. 696, f. n. 3). On hearing of the king's advance the Mughals raised the seige and retired to their country.

Now from this time in regard to the frontier a definite policy of strongly garrisoning the frontier forts and military stations, and of appointing tried and veteran soldiers to their charge seems to have been initiated and followed by the Sultans. The need of this was felt by the *precarious condition of the frontier region*. The frontier outposts had long suffered from neglect and were ill-equipped. Multan had been torn between the Qurlugh Turks and the house of Ayaz who had declared their independence thus depriving Delhi of the province of Multan and Sind. The northern region was occupied by the *Khokhars* and lay exposed to Mongol incursions. The whole hinterland of the Frontier thus lay outside the confines of the kingdom and was indeed friendly to the invaders.

Such an insecure situation demanded not only a defensive but an aggressive policy. The next Sultan, *the young and zealous Nasir Uddin Mahmud*—whom the contemporary chroniclers and their modern replicas have sought to paint as a pious and mild prince who loved seclusion and was therefore a willing puppet in the hands of Balban—took up the question of the frontier defence with characteristic

earnestness and zeal. The urgency of securing the north-west frontiers was the first to attract his attention and on it he focussed all his energies immediately after his accession to the throne<sup>1</sup>. His first act was to march out with his forces towards Multan and Sind along with the tried generals of the realm with the object of destroying the Mughals and dealing effectively with the Gakkhars. The Mughals were becoming a growing menace. In the beginning of that year they had made several raids upon Multan and Lahore and had extorted an enormous booty in gold, silk, and other valuables from the citizens, besides carrying away hundreds of people as captives from the two cities.<sup>2</sup> The Sultan crossed the Ravi in November, 1247, and advanced to the banks of the Chenab (Sudhara) where he stayed and sent Balban to the Jud hills and the Salt Range to punish the Khokhars for their continued incursions and for having led the Mughals through their country into Hindustan. Balban inflicted a terrible chastisement on the Gakkhars and on the Raja of the Salt Range, named Jaspal Sehra. He then pushed forward upto the bank of the Indus, but as the country was barren and in ruins, he found it impossible to occupy it. When he was encamped on the bank of the Jhelum a Mughal force made its appearance but seeing Balban ready to receive them, retired. Thus the turbulent Khokhars and other insurgent border tribes were for the time being thoroughly crushed and also the

menace of Mongol raids checkmated. The Sultan then returned to the capital.

As has been stated above the supercilious policy of Balban had turned even his near relations against him, besides many other Turkish nobles. This gave rise to fresh complications in an already difficult frontier situation. His brother Kishlu Khau had made no secret of his dislike of Balban. Raihan had appointed him governor of the frontier districts of Multan and Uch. On the restoration of Balban he threw off his allegiance to Dihli and acknowledged the suzerainty of the Mughal Hulagu Khan of Khorasan. Thus the province of Multan was again lost to the Dihli Empire and became a part of the Mughal dominions. In 1256 Qutlugh Khan, Amir of Bayana, having been driven out of Sirmur where he had taken shelter with the Raja, moved into the Punjab to the bank of Beas and effected a junction with Kishlu Khan's army, and the combined forces then marched upon fort Samanah. Balban had to prepare a force and meet this new danger and though the rebels were defeated and dispersed, their hostility was not appeased and no improvement was effected in the frontier situation. Indeed within a few months when a Mughal army under Nuyin Salin invaded the southern frontier, it was joined by Kishlu Khan from Uch. They dismantled the defences of Multan, but when it came to be known at Dihli that they intended to cross the Satlaj, it created a great consternation even in the mind of Balban and of the young Sultan as well. He

therefore called upon all the great Maliks and nobles to come with their contingents to help save the kingdom from this danger. It was lucky for the Sultan that the Mongols at this time were interested only in plunder and did not care for conquest. They therefore retired after taking what they had come for, and the land was saved from a terrible fate. Such were the repercussions of Balban's over-weening ambition and arrogant policy which had well-nigh landed the kingdom in a whirlpool of destruction. If he had not alienated Kishlu Khan, the latter would have served as a bulwark of defence against the foreign invaders. Instead, he helped them.

Some time after this occurrence a temporary conciliation was brought about between Hulagu and the Sultan by a curious agency. Balban had sent an agent to Nasir-uddin Muhammad Qarlagh of Multan who wanted to marry his daughter to Balban's son. This agent happened to be detected by the *Shahnas* (intendents) of Hulagu, who were at Multan and Uch. Hence Qarlagh was compelled to send him to Hulagu at Tabriz, where he was received with great honour and was sent back to Dihli, accompanied by a Mughal officer who brought an assurance from Hulagu that the Mughal depredations would in future be stopped. This assurance, however, proved of no avail as the subsequent events will show.

(When Balban became *de jure* Sultan also) his policy of destroying the Shamsi nobles was enforced with redoubled vigour from the very

start. This marred to a very great extent the advantage which his vigour and vigilance of the frontier regions had gained for the Empire. (The Mongol menace assumed ever more threatening proportions during his time and their raids became more frequent as well as more powerful. But Balban was not the man to rest on his oars. With characteristic care and caution he always kept himself in readiness to meet all such eventualities on the frontiers, and made it a point never to go very far from the capital. But he did not rest satisfied with merely a negative policy of defence, and adopted the aggressive policy of attempting to subjugate or at least crush the Khokhars and other tribes which had never ceased to plunder and ravage the frontier districts of the empire.) Moreover his plan was to bring their territory under Dihli so as to deprive the invaders of the invaluable advantage of a safe passage through the tribal country, which they had till then enjoyed. (With this object Balban led an attack upon the Salt Range and severely chastised the Khokhars, yet he failed to establish a permanent foothold on the land, or to win over the friendship of the Khokhars. The Turks never succeeded in remedying this root cause of the insecurity of their frontier defences.)

(Balban's other measures for the defence of the frontier consisted of (1) maintaining the forts on the routes of the invaders in perfect preparedness, fully garrisoned and equipped (2) building new forts or watch-posts wherever necessary, (3) keeping a vigilant watch on the

routes, (4) appointing as *wardens of the marches*, tried and experienced military hands, such as his cousin Sher Khan Sanqar, the most distinguished warrior of the age, who had been since the time of Iltutmish governor of Bhatinda, Bhatnir, Sunam and Samana which gave him control of the junction points of all the main routes from the west and north western frontiers. His presence on the frontier line was a guarantee of security. He was dreaded by both the Mongols and the Khokhars. Balban deserves full credit for the thoroughness with which he understood this most taxing problem of frontier defence, no less than for his taking every possible measure to deal with it.) (But) as I have said above (the advantage and strength thus gained were considerably marred by his supervening ambition to perpetuate the sovereignty in his own family. This consuming lust had so blinded him that he was prepared to pay any price for achieving his object. He became incapable of realising that such a policy was bound to prove suicidal. In order to remove a powerful warrior from his way, he caused the death of Sher Khan Sanqar by poison. The result was that the dreaded man having gone the Mughals as well as Khokhar and other tribes began their raids again (1271).) Balban now conferred the charge of Sunam and Samana on Timur Khan, one of the *Forty*, and the other *Iqtas* and forts of Sher Khan on other Amirs. But they proved incapable of handling the situation. (Faced with this problem the Sultan deputed his son Muhammad to take charge of

the southern frontier. The prince made Multan his head quarter. Two more invasions of the Mughals, (1279 and 1285) took place which strained all the might and resources of the Sultan to resist. The Mongols were of course driven back but at an irreparable cost—the life of prince Muhammad himself and the captivity of his favourite poet Amir Khusrau. It is also to be noted that in these raids the Mongols did great havoc in the Punjab and Multan, before they were repulsed.)

During the reign of Kaiqubad, there was another invasion under Tamar Khan of Ghazni, in which the Mughals carried rapine and plunder as far as Samana but the well-organised defence measures set up by the late Sultan were still strong enough, and the Mughals were once more vanquished with terrible loss to their numbers. No improvement in the situation nor any modification of policy could be expected from the young dissolute Kaiqubad. It was a sound advice which Bughra Khan, his father, gave him at their meeting in Awadh. Bughra Khan is reported to have remonstrated with his son in this wise: 'you should refrain from slaying the *amirs* and *maliks*; so that the confidence which the ministers and officials have in you may not be impaired.' But the son heeded it not. This advice might have been given by Bughra Khan to his own father Balban also with equal force. However the sceptre soon changed hands. Due to his excessive indulgence Kaiqubad had become a physical wreck and,



was confined to his palace. The Khalji warriors under the leadership of Jalal-uddin, had acquired ascendancy. The Shamsi nobles made one last bid to capture or retain power but in vain.

On June 13, 1290 Jalal-uddin Firoz was enthroned as Sultan. The kingdom of Delhi at the end of the slave dynasty extended from Multan and Lahore in the west to Dhaka in the east and from the Himalayas in the north to Ajmer, Gwalior and Malwa in the south. It has already been stated that the slaves had but a loose hold on the Frontiers. The new Sultan Jalaluddin Firoz Khalji had long occupied the post of Warden of the Frontiers and had held the charge of the fort of Samana. He had fought and driven back incessant waves of Mughal raids. But after he became Sultan there was only one Mughal invasion during his reign in 1292. An enormous horde of 100,000 or 150,000 Mughals is said to have entered the country as far as Sunam. But the Sultan was not to be outwitted. He was not afraid of them. He met the invaders at Sunam and crushed their advance guard and so cowed them down that they readily agreed to make peace. Ulghu a descendent of Changiz accepted Islam with thousands of other Mughal officers and men, and they were settled in a colony outside the capital which came to be called Mughalpura. Jalaluddin, however, was too old and age had appreciably affected his energies and vigour. He did not take any positive steps to put a

stop to the Mughal incursions./ He did not think of curbing the Khokhar and other tribes, whose co-operation with the invaders made it possible for them to penetrate as far as the neighbourhood of Dihli itself without any hindrance. It would also appear that during the chaos following the death of the mighty Balban the efficiency and solidarity of the frontier organisation had been considerably impaired, because we find the border outposts like Lahore and Multan unable to check the advance of the Mughals. Nor did old Jalal-uddin take any step to re-strengthen these frontier outposts.

/Under Ala-uddin the frontier policy enters a new phase—a phase which was of a piece with Rajput military consciousness or the lack of it. The interest of the problem becomes all the more intense because of the great frequency of the Mughal incursions with ever increasing numbers of Mughal armies, who now began to invade Hindustan with redoubled intensity and pertinacity./

Ala-uddin snatched the throne from his uncle the Sultan, in the middle of A.D. 1296. No sooner he felt that he was well-established than his puerile mind, having discovered an analogy between the prophet and himself, both having four companions and friends, began to entertain fantastic projects which occupied the man completely. He had no grasp of the reality of the task which lay before him. The preceding history of the incessant Mughal invasions and the turbulence of the Khokhar

and other tribes of the *Sindh-Sagar Doab* which had been a source of profound concern and distraction to his predecessors, seemed to have no significance for him. Ala-uddin therefore completely neglected the frontiers, the securing and defence whereof should have been the foremost concern of any ruler of Dihli situated as he was. Within a few months of his accession to the throne, a huge force of the Mughals poured down into the kingdom probably as far as Jalandhar.<sup>3</sup> Ala-uddin was exceptionally lucky in having a number of good generals, including the brave Hizabr-uddin Zafar Khan the greatest warrior of the age.

But for the most valuable services rendered by these loyal and able warriors who defended the country from what might have, on several occasions, proved a disaster, Ala-uddin's utter neglect of the frontiers would have resulted in the devastation of the country as well as his own ruin. For close on eight years after his accession the Sultan did absolutely nothing to secure his frontiers inspite of a series of most formidable Mughal invasions year after year. On every occasion the situation was saved either by these stalwart warriors or by a lucky chance, for instance, when the Mughals retired after investing the capital for several months, the cause of which remains a matter of conjecture.<sup>4</sup> But in order to comprehend the situation fully let us first see how many invasions took place during the period from 1296 to 1304, because it was in 1304 that the Sultan eventually thought of preparing his

*grand army* to deal with the Mughal menace.

The first invasion took place under Qadar Khan at the close of 696 A. H. (1297) (according to Zia Barani). Ulugh Khan and Zafar Khan defeated and drove back the invaders with great slaughter.

The same year the fort of Sivi (Sibi) which commands the Bolon pass was captured by Saldi the Mughal and his brother. Again Zafar Khan was sent to its relief. Zafar displayed on this occasion exceptional valour and military skill and within a short time not only did he recapture the fort but also Saldi himself and all his Mughals, including their families (1700 in number), and sent them to Dihli. This brilliant achievement of Zafar Khan filled the people with awe and made him the object of the Sultan's jealousy. Zafar Khan was in charge of Samanah at that time.

The third invasion followed soon in A. D., 1300 when a horde of 20 *tumans* [a *tuman* consisted of 10 or 12 thousand men] invested the capital itself under Qutlugh Khwaja. They cut off all transport and communications so that even commodities of daily consumption became scarce and rose in value causing great consternation among the people. The Mongols engaged themselves in plundering the old city and its suburbs. The Sultan was caught napping. He was quite unprepared for this contingency. In the intoxication of his power and successes he had forgotten the possibility of danger. The wary and circumspect Kotwal Ala-ul-Mulk, like the realist that he was, counselled the Sultan

to follow the rather timid course of coaxing the invaders to return, but here Ala-uddin gave evidence of his mettle. If he did not possess political insight and had no comprehension of the situation, he at least had the reckless courage of a soldier and spurned the cowardly course suggested by the corpulent Kotwal. He therefore got together whatever army he could collect and moved out of Siri his new city. Once more it was Zafar Khan who drove back the Mughals with terrible destruction and saved the kingdom, though he paid for his valour with his life, having been left unaided, perhaps consciously, by Ulugh Khan who commanded the left wing.

Let us now turn to review the reaction of the Sultan to this most perilous situation as was clearly shown by the Mughal invasions. There can be no two opinions as to the fact that the situation was grave in the extreme and that it also indicated that the frontier outposts were hopelessly ill-equipped for defence and hence they were never able to prevent the advance of the Mughals at any stage of their route right upto the capital. And it seems highly curious how the Sultan failed to be impressed with the situation even after the capital itself had narrowly escaped falling into the hands of these ruthless invaders. Far from showing any concern on that score and taking any steps to meet the danger, the Sultan, quite regardless of the risk to which the kingdom and the capital itself lay exposed, persisted in devoting all his attention and the empire's

resources to conquering new regions and extending his dominions. In deliberately leaving Zafar Khan unaided and allowing him to be killed he acted like Balban both of whom were rendered by their narrow personal ambitions blind to the larger good of the state and stability of their own positions. But, as we have seen, if this weakness be excepted, Balban was almost over cautious and took all conceivable steps to strengthen the north-west frontiers. Ala-uddin, however, did just the opposite of Balban. / He completely neglected the question of frontier defence. The forts and outposts on the routes of the invaders were neither repaired nor equipped with garrisons and other necessary war materials. Moreover, with the single exception of Zafar Khan, they were never entrusted to the command of experienced and capable soldiers. And after Zafar's death his place was not filled by any one fit for the difficult job. / Further the Sultan, with unique nonchalance, went twice on distant expeditions, as far as Ranthambhor and Chittor leaving the capital to its fate, and remained away for periods extending over a whole year. Whatever army could be spared from the Chittor campaign led in person by the Sultan was despatched to Warrangal under Malik Juna Khan. That he never left behind any sound arrangements for the maintenance of security and peace is proved by the frequency of revolts and disturbances which took place in the capital itself during his absence. / But the most surprising of all is the fact of his going on distant campaigns to

Ranthambhor and Chittor after the formidable invasion of Qutlugh Khwaja, without making any provision for the security of the capital. That his defence arrangements at the outposts were in a state of utter helplessness is shown by the fact that as soon as the Mughals learnt of the Sultan's departure for Chittor they led an army of more than a hundred thousand men and made straight for Dihli, there being none to block their passage along the whole line of the frontiers. The Sultan returned from Chittor only to find the capital besieged and himself utterly helpless. Having no provision to fight he took shelter in his fort which was beleaguered for two months by the invaders who made raids into the streets of the capital itself while it was left to their tender mercies by the flabbergasted Sultan, and besides, plundered the country around. Save for the fact that the Mughals were ignorant of the art of besieging, it might have been all over with Ala-uddin and his great empire. But then the Mughals suddenly retreated to their country, which was a puzzle to everybody.<sup>6</sup> Now it was this rude shock which eventually opened the eyes of Ala-uddin and made him realise the perilous condition of his state, in consequence of which he called his war council again and for the first time, set about putting his house in order in right earnest.

But before dealing with the subsequent policy of the Sultan, it is necessary to draw attention to another fact of great significance. Almost at the start of the Sultan's career when he had commenced hatching his dreams



of founding a new religion and conquering the whole world, the wise Kotwal Qazi Ala-ul-Mulk had given him a most invaluable and statesmanlike advice pertaining to his ambition of making extensive conquests. After endorsing his design of conquering Hindustan piece by piece, the Qazi said : "The second undertaking which is far more important, is the prevention of the inroads of the Mughals by strengthening the strongholds in their direction, by the appointment of trustworthy commandants and the repair of the fortifications, and excavation of ditches as well as the formation of magazines for arms, and depots for grain and fodder, and the organisation of projectile engines of war, with skilfull and experienced marksmen to serve them. To this end a commandant should be settled at Samanah with a large force, another at Multan with a body of horse, for in order that the Mughals may be entirely restrained from any hostile attempts on Hindustan, military commanders of loyalty and experience, and a picked and chosen body of troops, well mounted, must be depended on. As soon as these two objects, viz., the extinction of the rebellious spirit of the Hindus (i. e. the Hindustanis) from the realms of Hindustan, and the appointment of famous and illustrious nobles to the quarters whence the incursions of the Mughals take place, have been satisfactorily attained, your majesty should stay perfectly at ease in the metropolis of Dihli, which is the centre of the kingdom and employ

yourself with a tranquil mind in state affairs ; for the stability of the sovereign in the centre produces stability in the government of the provinces. After the establishment of the permanent power in the centre, and the consolidation of the provinces of the empire, your majesty can proceed to territorial aggrandisement *without stirring from your throne*, by deputing your loyal and confidential servants with well-equipped and organised forces, with the faithful nobles of the state, to march into distant countries and wage war there .....and bring all the princes and kings under subjection, *after which their lands and principalities can be restored to them, on condition that they agree to furnish an annual tribute to your majesty in money, horses and elephants.*" After this the Qazi admonished the Sultan against his addiction to wine and took his leave. Viewed against the context of the age and the occasion, a wiser and more wholesome counsel could not conceivably have been given to the Sultan. /The Sultan listened to the Qazi, as usual, with due deference, but the latter's words all but fell flat on him. He failed to grasp their profound import and, as his subsequent actions showed, rarely acted on them. Neither the example of Balban nor the precepts of Ala-ul-Mulk sufficed to make this puerile soldier of fortune realise the hard, gruesome realities of his responsible position and the gravity of the dangers to which the kingdom was exposed.

It was after a period of no less than seven or eight years that the almost fatal blow of the siege of Dihli and devastation caused by Targhi, roused him and brought him down from the airy castles of his dreamland to concrete earth. This led him to organise a large, well equipped force, to repair old forts and indeed to give effect at last to the several suggestions given by Ala ul-Mulk more than seven years earlier.

Now let us see how he made use of all this enormous furniture of army and armaments, forts and garrisons etc. There were at least two more invasions of the Mughals, one in 1305, under Targhi, immediately after the recruitment of his *Grand Army*, and another under Kapak and Iqbal in 1306-7; in the first the invaders penetrated deep into the country as far as Amroha, about a hundred miles north-east of Dihli, a feat which was altogether unprecedented even in the history of Mughal invasions. The fact that despite the enormous preparations which Ala-uddin had made at a cost which broke the people's back, he failed even to check the advance of the Mughals at the frontiers, much less subjugate the Khokhar territory to provide an effective and permanent solution of the problem, speaks volumes about his utter incapacity to make proper use of his war-machine and his lack of military skill. This was the result of the best warriors of the day having passed away by that time; and Malik Kafur, the

rising man, having been sent on a distant campaign to the south.

Thus in its utter lack of war strategy and tactics Ala-uddin's frontier policy, can well be compared to that of the Rajputs from whom the Turks had wrested the rule of the country, the only difference being that the Khalji Sultan was favoured by luck while the latter were not.

In view of the above analysis of his military skill and achievements, it would not be out of place also to remark that Ala-uddin was a mere soldier of fortune with a dash and reckless boldness bordering on bravado, but in no sense did he 'possess the qualities of a born military leader' as some superficial and uncritical writers would seem to think. It may also be noted that the success of Ala-uddin's daring raids into the Deccan were due to a state of military paralysis from which the Hindu chiefs of central and southern India at that time suffered and not to any innate military skill. Even so on the occasion of his sudden raid upon Deogiri the Yadava ruler's son Shankardeo had well nigh defeated him and would have routed him but for the appearance at a distance of the approaching contingent of Nasrat Khan which being misunderstood to be the army of his uncle the Sultan of Dihli, so unnerved the Yadava prince's forces that they gave up fighting and ran away from the field.

## NOTES

1. It should be noted that the young Sultan began his reign with great enthusiasm, but evidently this was not palatable to Balban who wanted to reduce him to the position of a non-entity. The young Mahmud was far-sighted enough to take the hint and allowed himself to be thrown into the shade by his minister. He patiently waited for the proper moment, till Balban by his own actions had made himself obnoxious even to the Turkish nobility, including his own cousins and brothers. At this time the king found that he had the full backing of the Hindustani party, and then he expelled Balban whom he hated not only because of his overbearing treatment, but because the young king was quite conscious of the ultimate designs of his unscrupulous minister.
2. Raverty, I, 677, f.n., 6.
3. Various Mss. and printed editions of Zia Barani and Nizam-uddin Bakhshi have Jaranmanjur, but Ferishta, (my Ms. fol. 101b) has Lahore. Elliot translates it from Barani as Jullandhar which seems to be more probable because entering the country meant coming farther interior from Lahore which was the furthest outpost.
4. It was ascribed by the common people to the prayers of the Saint Nizam-uddin Auliya. But the fact seems to be that the Mughals only wanted plunder and having gratified themselves fully in that direction, they retired.
5. The probable cause of this has already been noted.

## X

### POLITICS AND PERSONALITIES IN THE REIGN OF NASIRUDDIN MAHMUD, THE SLAVE.

The foundation of the Turkish Sultanate of Dihli, attended as it was with the glory of a sweeping conquest of a vast territory, was laid under inauspicious stars. Its besetting vice was that the Muslim rulers never succeeded in formulating a well-recognised or definite law of succession which therefore always remained subject to several conflicting principles, conventions, traditions and individual interests in which the length of the sword often played the decisive role. The chequered history of the succession to the throne of Dihli after Qutbuddin Aibak is a rather sickening story of the contest for power between the monarch and the Turkish oligarchy who were organised and united into a compact body by Iltutmish. Another feature of this conflict was that contrary to the dreams of Iltutmish that a well-organised party of the Turks would be the strongest prop of his heirs, the selfish and individualistic ambitions of the nobles soon got the better of their loyalty to the line of Iltutmish. The result was that the Turkish nobles broke up into rival camps led by a

succession of clever and ambitious men, each seeking to capture and wield the real power from behind the throne. The logical culmination of the growing ambitions of these dominating and self-seeking intriguers was reached when Ghiyasuddin *Balban-i-khurd*, who had attained a position of unrivalled authority and dominance ever since he became Amir-i-Hajib (Master of Ceremonies) in the reign of Alauddin Masud, decided to destroy the Turkish party itself in order to capture the throne and insure it for his descendants by leaving no serious rival alive to claim it.

In the present paper it is proposed to analyse and discuss the significance of the heartless and unscrupulous intrigues of rival factions and of their diplomatic duals in the midst of which the throne of Dihli was buffeted like a rudderless bark for a quarter century or more. It should be noted in this connection that while Balban as minister *de jure* and ruler *de facto*<sup>1</sup> during the reign of Nasiruddin Mahmud was taking steps gradually but steadily to eliminate every powerful Turkish warrior or noble, a new factor had entered the lists in this contest for power, which had to be reckoned with. This new factor was the rise of the party of the Indian Muslims to whom all high positions of power and privilege had been wilfully denied. This policy of treating the Indians as underdogs naturally bred discontent and disaffection chiefly among the Indian Musalmans among whom there was no dearth of talent or ability and who naturally expectedly to be



treated on a footing of equality with the foreign Muslims. The discontented Indian party eventually found a leader in Imad-uddin Raihan himself a convert from Hinduism who consolidated them into a compact body. Raihan proved himself a shrewd politician and astute diplomat. He turned tables, as we will presently notice, on such a formidable person as Balban, although due to an unfavourable turn of events the success of the Indian party was very short lived. Nevertheless the circumstances which made it possible for Raihan to overthrow Balban, despite the tremendous power which he had wielded, are full of significance for any careful student and are enough to expose the misrepresentations of Minhaj concerning the characters of the three main actors in this drama of political intrigue and struggle for power particularly between two self-seeking men as I shall presently show.

It is highly curious, however, that in our own time, this whole subject has been treated by most professed historians in a very superficial and uncritical manner. No attempt seems ever to have been made to probe beneath the thin veil of Minhaj's prevarications which can be easily seen through. On the contrary certain reputed authors have only slavishly copied Minhaj in assigning a very high place to Balban and in the same breath most unsparingly condemning Raihan. Similarly on the authority of the same chronicler Sultan Nasiruddin Mahmud has been acclaimed as a pious, god-fearing and saintly person on whom, it is

affirmed, the business of government and affairs of the State sat rather heavy, and who therefore had of his own accord resigned the actual exercise of all authority into the able hands of his minister Balban so that he might be left in peace to lead his self-imposed life of religious devotion and seclusion. Such is the impression conveyed by most modern writers about Nasiruddin Mahmud. It would seem that no attention has ever been paid to the fact that the statements and asseverations of Minhaj are not to be taken at their face-value obviously because his whole narrative is deeply coloured and the truth distorted as much by the partisan spirit and personal likes and dislikes of the man, as by his chronic habit of making false statements, suppressing facts, and even indulging in gossips whenever it suited his purpose.<sup>2</sup> But despite the attempt of Minhaj to camouflage the true facts and his deliberate misrepresentation of the characters of the three chief men under discussion, the real truth of the matter reveals itself readily to a critical examination of his account. In interpreting the character and career of Balban and Raihan from the account of Minhaj the fact has always been overlooked that Minhaj was a protege of the former and as deeply beholden and devoted to him as he was hostile and even malicious towards the latter. It is clear that Minhaj cannot be relied upon as an impartial and disinterested chronicler. Even a cursory glance over the narrative of Minhaj cannot fail to impress any one with the manner in which he

bursts into eulogistic ejaculations over Balban's infinite virtues and invokes on him the blessings of Heaven whenever he finds a chance to make any reference to the name of his patron. This exhibition of unrestrained excitement and laudations about Balban has misled the Editor in E. and D. (II. 261) to surmise that 'the work appeared in the reign of that Sultan' (Balban) which is obviously wrong.

Now Raihan has naturally come in for a most unsparing condemnation and scorn at the hands of Minhaj. But certain modern writers have far outdone him in their condemnation of Raihan. For instance they have characterised him as a '*vile upstart*,' '*a renegade Hindu*,' '*a usurper and a conspirator*,' '*a rancorous and vindictive eunuch who maintained a gang of ruffians at the capital*,' and so forth. (See *Med. India* by Ishwari Prasad) It is significant to note that such generous epithets and attributes are nowhere used by Minhaj himself as have been bestowed on Raihan by the fertile imagination of modern scholars. Nor do we find any thing in subsequent chroniclers like Nizamuddin Ahmad Bakhshi, Ferishta, Badauni and others, to warrant such voluble castigations. The utmost that they say amounts to this that Raihan was jealous of Balban and he therefore became vindictive in consequence of which his administration grew intolerable. But nowhere do they question his ability as an administrator of which he gave ample evidence during his all too short regime as *Vakil-i-dar*. And yet our scholars have discovered the

information that under Raihan 'the administration grew lax.'

The real reason, however, why Raihan has been so unscrupulously traduced by Minhaj is to be found in the fact, as I have already pointed out, that there were two well organised rival parties at the court and this chronicler was not only a prominent member of the party opposed to Raihan but had suffered dismissal from office and perhaps much humiliation at the hands of Raihan when he was in power. These two parties were: (1) that of the foreigners, or the Turkish aristocracy led by Balban-i-Khurd, and (2) that of the Indians including both Hindus and Muslims, led by Imad-uddin Raihan. It will be remembered that the Turks, although extremely jealous of preserving all high and pecuniary posts for themselves, were torn by dissensions and jealousies among their own ranks.

The occasion for the rise and growth of the Indian or Hindustani party must be sought in the supercilious and snobbish attitude of the Turkish aristocracy and their intolerable and highly unfair treatment of all the Hindustanis. The policy and conduct of the Turkish nobility who were in power, were determined and moulded by a deep vanity born of a feeling of superiority natural to all conquerors over the conquered. To this was added the belief in the purity of their blood and their great strictness about maintaining that racial purity. Thus for various reasons the Turkish aristocracy treated the Indians, both Hindus and Muslims, with

wilfull contempt and regarded them as fit only to remain the underdogs of the ruling class. Moreover, as conquerors, they regarded themselves as entitled to all the privileges, positions and distinctions in the gift of the state, to which no Indian, whether Hindu or Muslim, could ever aspire. The latter were, as a rule, relegated to minor and inferior situations. The Turks could not tolerate the idea of any Indian holding a high office whereby some of them might have to serve as his subordinates. It is a noteworthy fact that the being a Muslim was not considered enough to make any difference to his political status unless he was a Turk of pure blood. All the higher posts were jealously preserved as the monopoly of the Turkish nobility and the Indians were mostly debarred from holding them. Here and there a solitary, brilliant figure like Imad-uddin Raihan rose to eminence by sheer dint of personal merit. The struggle for priority and power was not between the Hindu and Muslim, but, between the foreigner and native, the conqueror and the conquered. *Its nature was national and not communal.* The equality of all Muslims, professed by them, had no meaning for them. *Islamic social democracy was the first casualty in the hands of these rulers.*

Among the Turks the feeling of superiority and of being the privileged class, was based, as I have indicated above, not only on their sense of being the conquerors but also on the belief of their superiority and purity of blood. This was the reason which, within a short interval

after Balban's expulsion, impelled the majority of the Turkish nobles to sink their mutual jealousies and to combine against Raihan. This too was mainly responsible for the restoration of Balban who otherwise might have ended his career as a provincial governor and would never have become prime minister or *vakil* again, much less Sultan. Minhaj himself admits with characteristic vanity, that the real reason of the revolt of the Turkish party against Raihan's ascendancy, and of their march on the capital with the sole purpose of persuading or compelling the Sultan to expel him, was that *he* was a contemptible Indian and not a member of the Turkish nobility. Minhaj's own words in this connection are worth quoting. He says:<sup>3</sup> "*The reason was this that the Maliks and servants of the Sultan's court were all Turks of pure lineage and Tajiks of noble birth, and Imad-uddin Raihan, who was castrated and mutilated, and of the tribes of Hind, was ruling over the heads of lords of high descent, and the whole of them were loathing that state and were unable any longer to suffer that degradation. The case of this frail individual was on this wise, that for a period of six months or even longer, it was out of his power to leave his dwelling<sup>4</sup> and go to the Friday's prayers for fear of the violence of a gang of villains who were patronised<sup>5</sup> by Imad-uddin Raihan : so the condition of others, every one of whom consisted of Turks and conquering, ruling and foe-breaking Maliks, may well be conceived. How could they continue under*

*this disgrace ?*" This is the plainest and sincerest, though an unwitting confession of the real reason why the Turkish party were hostile to Raihan and chafed under his rule. There was no inefficiency or laxity in the administration. There is not a shred of evidence to support this strange view which has been expressed by most modern writers. The oppression and unbearableness of Raihan's government described by Minhaj, and copied by later authorities, refers only to the feelings of the Turkish minority who certainly suffered humiliation and in many cases expulsion from office. This reaction, however, was the natural outcome of the ascendancy of the Indians who had been treated by the Turkish party, when it was in power, with open contempt and excluded from all honourable and profitable posts. But there is no evidence in any of the sources to bear out the view that the people in general or the *ryots* suffered any oppression owing to the laxity or incapacity of the government. On the contrary we have ample evidence in the sources to show how assiduously and ably the Indian minister Raihan met each and every difficult situation and how, unlike Balban who had always deliberately followed a policy of throwing the Sultan into the shade reducing him thereby to the contemptible position of a mere puppet, he ungrudgingly treated him with the dignity and regard due to his kingly office, and associated him in all affairs of the state, both civil and military, and gave him the fullest scope to exercise his authority. Indeed it was



Balban's supercilious and irksome treatment of the Sultan which led to his fall and disgrace as I shall presently show. Raihan, on the contrary sent the young king to suppress the Hindu revolt in Katehar. He never tried to crush the youthful ambitions and energies of the king as Balban had cleverly and purposefully done. The exclusive authority which Balban had, from the day of his appointment as *Vazir*, assumed in all matters of administration, besides his excessive domination had become galling not only to the Sultan but also to some of the Turkish *amirs* and even to the Malika-i-Jahan, the Sultan's mother. That Raihan could make capital out of this growing discontent against Balban in advancing the cause of the Indian party and driving out the hostile Turkish party only shows his diplomatic skill and astuteness *and not his envy as is commonly supposed*. Modern scholars have fallen into this error by taking the language of Minhaj literally without making due allowance for that author's deep personal animus against Raihan on the one hand, and his (Minhaj's) exaggerated reverence for his patron Balban on the other. Minhaj's hatred for and consequent prejudice against Raihan was further deepened by his own expulsion from the office of Chief Qazi which he had held under Balban's patronage. We can well imagine the picture as it would have been drawn by the chronicler had he been a partisan of Raihan and not of Balban.

The young king, however, appreciated the worth of Raihan fully and would never have

dismissed him had he not been constrained to do so by the rather awkward and critical situation created by the Turkish Malik who had lost their power and privileges under Raihan's regime. Even when the Sultan eventually realised that in order to save his own skin there was no alternative but for him to pacify the Turkish party whose sole aim at that moment was to get rid of the hated Raihan, the Sultan, instead of dismissing him, simply reverted him to his *jagir* (assignment) of Badaun. When Balban returned to power, however, the axe of his wrath and revenge fell, of course, first of all on Raihan. Thus it is clear that the expulsion of Balban from the office of chief minister at the instance of Raihan signifies no personal jealousy but the existence of two mutually hostile and rival parties at court struggling for power and positions. It also signifies, in this instance, the triumph of the Indian party under the lead of Raihan.

As regards the abuses showered on Raihan by some modern writers, no comment is necessary. We may only point out that Raihan, in capturing power in order to assert the just and legitimate claims of the Indians, deserves all credit and not to be called a usurper any more than all those before and after him who like Nasiruddin Mahmud and Balban captured thrones and crowns by wading through the blood of the royal families and their own kith and kin<sup>o</sup>. Indeed Raihan was one of those who rose to power by sheer dint of personal merit in the face of heavy odds. The fact that Raihan

could successfully prevail upon the Sultan to expel such a powerful and dangerous minister as Balban who had the additional advantage of being his father-in-law, proves beyond doubt Raihan's ability and political astuteness to make the fullest capital out of a situation favourable to the Indian faction. The young Sultan and his mother were both sick of Balban's tutelage and overbearing behaviour. The Turkish party who were his sole prop had for similar reasons begun to detest him and were in a state of consternation at his ambitious designs. Raihan's keen eye saw that the time was ripe for him to strike and he did strike with perfect success.

Let us now consider the role of king Nasiruddin Mahmud in all these transactions and see what picture of his character and achievements emerges as reflected by the mirror of his conduct. Minhaj has invested the Sultan who was his patron, with the attributes of saints and *sufis* and the pen-portrait that he has drawn of the young king leaves the impression on the mind of the casual reader as though the Sultan was a man of very advanced age which had bred in him the attitude of a religious devotee whose piety had lifted him above sordid materialist desires and political ambitions and who, consequently, was only too glad to find in Balban a minister ready to take upon himself the onerous burden of the entire administration of his kingdom leaving him completely free and secure to perform his pious exercises such as the copying of the Quran. Subsequent medieval chroniclers and their

modern representatives have put a further gloss on Minhaj's rhetoric so as to make Nasiruddin appear to be a most pious person among crowned heads, who was full of the milk of human kindness. Actually however, Mahmud was only a little over seventeen years at the time of his elevation to the throne, and had been made governor of Bahraich and its dependencies when he was less than sixteen. Normally no young man in his teens, much less a king brought up in an atmosphere surcharged with intrigues and plots and counterplots, could be expected to turn a recluse as Mahmud has been represented, unless it were supposed that he was a born saint and spiritualist. As against this we have the authority of Minhaj himself who naively tells us (forgetting what he would have to say about Mahmud when he became Sultan) that the young prince, as governor of Bahraich, evinced great earnestness, enthusiasm and energy and threw himself heart and soul into the business of administration. His piety and charity to learned men is also noticed (perchance an after thought) but nowhere is it even hinted that his charitable and generous temperament had destroyed his interest in worldly affairs and turned his mind away from his high office. On the contrary it is stated that Mahmud displayed conspicuous energy and skill in waging holy wars on the infidels, *for which purpose he* is said to have led several campaigns into the neighbouring territories including the hilly regions. Under his benevolent administration, we are told, the province

attained prosperity and the peasantry received particular attention and sympathy. These facts must suffice to manifest the baselessness of the view to which even modern writers have given wide currency, namely that the Sultan was by temperament so free from materialist ambitions that he shunned the kingly office and glory and was therefore only too happy to be relieved of the burdens which that position entailed. But we have, in the subsequent conduct of Mahmud, a much stronger and incontrovertible evidence to show that the young Sultan, despite his much proclaimed religiosity, was as ambitious to enjoy worldly power and pelf as any the most virulent and materialist monarch among the Turks ever was.

Now, it has been noted that Mahmud as well as his brother Jalal-uddin both owed their life and high position to the extra-ordinary generosity and kindness of their nephew and predecessor Sultan Ala-uddin Masud who, had he followed the established practice of the Sultanat, would have removed such serious rivals by putting them to death. But how Mahmud repaid this act of unprecedented generosity and mercy! Masud had refused to be reduced to the position of a mere tool by the dominant faction of the Turks of which Balban, the Amir-i-Hajib, was now the undisputed leader, the elder nobles having all passed away. But though brave and capable Masud was a green-horn and an unsophisticated youth. He knew no diplomacy or finesse. He therefore tactlessly offended Balban and his party

by plainly frustrating the hope of Balban to wield the real authority from behind the throne. He paid for his tactlessness by his life and throne. Balban hatched a heartless conspiracy to dethrone Masud and the unscrupulous Minhaj covers his patron's tortuous machinations by accusing the victim of suddenly turning unworthy, cruel and perverted. However, we are here concerned with an estimate of the conduct of Mahmud. Whatever might have been the circumstances, the Turkish Maliks led by Balban decided to pull down Masud and invited Mahmud from Bahraich to occupy the throne because they expected that he would prove a 'good boy' and would let Balban be the virtual ruler. It would seem that Mahmud and his mother the Malika-a-jahan were accomplices in the conspiracy, because we find that Mahmud readily accepted the invitation. The consideration that the acceptance of such an offer involved the unpardonable guilt of a most heartless ingratitude towards one who was his greatest benefactor in life besides being his nephew had no value in Mahmud's eyes. The crown was too tempting a prize to be sacrificed at the altar of affection for blood or of gratitude for one who had, with a nobleness of mind altogether unknown to the monarchs of that age, not only spared Mahmud's life but had installed him on a position which the latter was soon to use as his spring-board wherefrom to push his patron aside and wrest his throne. Mahmud, as we know, clutched at the summons

of the Balbanites, and in his anxiety to take no risks, allowed himself to be hurried to the capital disguised as a sick man and then veiled as a woman evidently because Mahmud and his mother were not yet sure of walking up to the throne without opposition. Nor was the tragic fate of his four predecessors at the hands of the self-seeking Turkish nobility enough to unnerve him or dissolve his lust for the throne. Masud was thrown into prison and perished, shortly after, very likely by the orders, either express or implied, of the new Sultan; at any rate, certainly by his cold connivance.

How far such a conduct and such a manifestation of unscrupulousness, ingratitude and ruthless inhumanity can be regarded as conforming to the ethical code of any creed, society or age need hardly be commented upon. But viewed in the light of this behaviour the fulsome eulogies showered on him by numerous writers would appear to be nothing but sentimental non-sense<sup>7</sup>.

With his accession to the throne Mahmud entered on the second scene of the political drama of the Dihli Sultanat at that time. Despite his youth he proved himself to be a much wiser though of course a sadder man than his predecessors. Their tragic fate had opened his eyes to the hard realities of the situation, guided and counselled at every step as he was by his mother, who had seen bright days as well as dark gloomy nights, having had to pass through many a vicissitude in her life. He was therefore fully conscious that the chief cause

of the ruin of former sultans had been the struggle for supremacy between the Turkish nobility and the sovereign. In this struggle the injudicious and tactless handling of the situation by inexperienced young rulers had been their undoing. Nasiruddin however took every precaution to preserve the loyalty and support of the nobility and patiently suffered the humiliation of being reduced to the position of a mere figure-head by their leader Balban<sup>a</sup>. That this position was most galling to him and his mother is more than evidenced by the Raihan episode as shown above. Balban's expulsion by Nasiruddin on the pursuation of Raihan was a step taken at a time when the opportunity for it was ripe and in no haste; and it shows the farsightedness and patience, even under terrible strain, with which the young Sultan acted. Instead of taking such hasty and indiscreet steps as Masud and Bahram had done, Mahmud patiently bided his time waiting for a favourable turn of events. Such an opportunity came as soon as the Sultan was assured of the support of the rival party led by Raihan. The moment for such a step was made all the more favourable by the fact that Balban's obnoxious demeanour towards his own supporters and his extremely centralised despotism had alienated from him even the sympathies of the majority of the Turkish nobility mainly because they were rightly suspicious of his ulterior designs. The intensity of the young Sultan's feelings and disgust with the domineering Balban can



be judged from the fact that though he had married the minister's daughter shortly before this incident, even that close relationship did not deter him from banishing his father-in-law far away from the court. He was obliged to take this drastic step because he was convinced of the nefarious designs of Balban<sup>9</sup> and had been chafing under the humiliating position to which Balban's policy had reduced him.

During Raihan's regime the Sultan was quite happy because he was allowed full scope for the display of his youthful energies and aspirations. He would undoubtedly have adhered to this new party if the rather hasty policy of Raihan towards the Turks had not brought about a reversal of the situation within a short time leading to the resuscitation of the power of Balban who successfully appealed to the fallen Turkish nobles to unite once more to regain their lost power and prestige. Mahmud's conduct in the subsequent events was of a piece with his innate character. Faced with an awkward predicament in which he found his position to be in jeopardy he now threw overboard Raihan by whose help he had been able to secure and enjoy the real royal authority for which he had been pining. We have noticed above that once restored to power Balban started a systematic vendetta against all those who had been directly or indirectly implicated in the conspiracy against him. After Raihan his next notable victim was the Malika-i-Jahan, the Queen mother herself. Minhaj once again tries to gloss

over the incident by making the cryptic remark "Under the *behests of fate* the mind of his Majesty was turned against his mother, the Malika-i-Jahan, who was married to Qatlagh Khan. Awadh was now granted to them, and they were *ordered* to proceed thither. It is unnecessary to point out who this '*Fate*' was under whose '*behests*,' Mahmud was obliged even to banish one who was not only his mother but who had been all his life his guide, friend and philosopher. The indebtedness of Mahmud to his mother, besides his natural obligations as her son, were comparable in depth, if at all, only to those of the noble but unfortunate Masud. But the sacrifice and victimisation even of his own mother was not too great a price to pay, for this *pious and God-fearing* king when his own position was at stake. Thus we see the real character of this much belauded king in its true colours. It is more than clear that the eulogies sung in his honour by our historians are not worth the paper on which they are written.<sup>10</sup>

Now Balban's character and achievements also call for a brief notice. It has been commonly supposed by modern writers that Balban was a very successful ruler and administrator. But the fact is curiously overlooked that while Balban showed great military courage, capacity and skill, he hardly showed any administrative acumen or statesmanlike insight. The aim and ideal of the Turkish State was that the subjects were meant to be used as so much material for the comfort and enjoyment of the sovereign

and his court, and Balban could not be expected to rise above it. But even in his methods he remained incapable to the last of making any improvement. The policy of suppressing turbulence and recalcitrance with a ruthless hand, which Balban adopted, ought to have been followed by a policy of taking real interest in the people's weal so as to breed in them confidence and love towards the ruler. But the utter lack of such a benevolent spirit in the administration is revealed by the fact that the whole long reign of Balban, both as minister and as king, presents an endless and gloomy tale of repeated revolts and insurgence throughout his dominions. Further there could be no better proof of the feebleness of the organisation than the utter insecurity from which the capital itself suffered, for sometime, at any rate. It is quite baseless to say, as some modern writers have done, that Balban as minister 'stamped out' rebellion during his ministry. The problem which demanded his immediate attention on his accession to the throne was that of revolts of the various petty chiefs in and outside the Doab. Balban never realised that one could do everything with bayonets except sit on them.

Then again he is said to have been most impartial in doing justice, and in support of this view instances are quoted of his flogging to death the governor of Badaun Malik Baqbaq, for having done to death his servant by the lash, and of Haibat Khan governor of Awadh, having been similarly punished with a severity which was evidently vindictive. The real reason

of these terrible punishments was that the victims were Turks whom Balban was systematically and deliberately destroying on the slightest pretexts, with the ulterior motive of leaving no rival to compete for the crown against his progeny. But nemesis was not slow to overtake him. By destroying the party of the Turkish slaves Balban brought about the ruin and end of the rule of his own house for no able person was left after him either to supplant or support his feeble grandsons.

Another point of strength in his administration was that of his espionage system. This was fairly efficient and well-organised. But it was all meant to serve the sovereign and not the people. But the administrative measure for which Balban deserves real credit was his organisation of frontier defence. The existence of a line of fortresses on the frontier line served as bulwarks of protection even under his successors, the Khaljis and Tughlaqs.

## ABBREVIATIONS

Minhaj—Tabaqat-i-Nasiri of Minhaj-i-Siraj.  
ASB. Text.

E and D—History of India as told by its own  
Historians, by H. M. Elliot, Edited by J.  
Dowson. 8 Vols.

Raverty.—Minhaj, Tr. into English by Major  
H. G. Raverty.

Barani—Zia-uddin Barani's *Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi*, ASB Text.

JASB—Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal.

CHI—Cambridge History of India.

ASB—Asiatic Society of Bengal.

### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Raverty, p. 823 (end of page) for an unconscious but realistic confession of Minhaj "May Almighty God.....preserve the Sultan of Sultans Nasiruddin..... Mahmud Shah upon the throne of sovereignty, and Ulugh Khan-i-Azam, in the audience hall of power." Later chroniclers like Zia Barani and Wassaf also fully corroborate this fact. Vide Barani, ASB Text, 26, lines 5 to 2 from bottom, and E and D, III, 98; Wassaf in E and D, III, 67.

<sup>2</sup> For evidences of Minhaj's deliberately false statements, suppression of facts and gossips see Raverty, pp. 473—481, 535 f.n. 1 : 604, f. n. 1; 293, f.n. 5.

<sup>3</sup> Raverty, 829-'30; E and D. II. 371 et seq.

<sup>4</sup> E and D., II, p. 371, as correctly pointed out by Raverty, p. 829, fn. 2, has erroneously made all who had retired to their closets stay at home for six months, while the text only says that Minhaj alone had to suffer that hardship.

<sup>5</sup> Wolseley Haig (CHI., III) says that Raihan maintained a band of ruffians. This is not warranted by the text. Raverty's rendering of the passage in question is also misleading. The most probable and reasonable sense of the text is that Qazi Minhaj was afraid of being put to humiliation in the midst of those Indian courtiers who must have commenced to assemble at the Friday prayers since their accession to power. Under the circumstances it is no surprise that the Qazi

uses strong language against them. The text does not contain any equivalent of the word "villain" or "ruffian". The words of text are :

حال ایہیں ضعیف ہرین جملہ بود کہ از دست چور آن چہاست  
متعدیان کہ مخصوص بعباد الدین دیتھان بودند مدت ششماہ...

The word (متعدیان) only means those who were capable of going beyond proper limits, and belonged to the party of Raihan. This need not be taken too literally; due allowance should be made for the Qazi's profound hatred of Raihan, and his natural inclination to heighten the effect in this case. It is utterly baseless to assume that ruffians were maintained by Raihan to molest all the Turks in the streets. Indeed it is inconceivable that the Sultan, a Turk himself, could have allowed Raihan to behave in this fashion. Shortly after, we find Minhaj moving to the Sultan's camp and staying there, which would have been impossible if Raihan had been oppressing the Turks as is wrongly supposed. Minhaj nowhere suggests that he could not stir out of his house at all. He only says that he was afraid of going to the mosque for Friday prayers.

<sup>6</sup> The evidence of how Mahmud rode to the throne over the corpse of his own nephew and his greatest benefactor in life will be adduced presently in this paper. As regards Balban we have enough evidence, also to be adduced later, that he poisoned his son-in-law the king, Nasiruddin Mahmud. And in corroboration of his bloody usurpation of the throne we have the evidence of no less a person than Balban's son Bughra Khan himself. In the course of his admonitions to his son Sultan Kaiqubad at their meeting in Awadh, Bughra Khan said; "I know, if you do not, how my father had to wade through blood to attain the kingdom of Dihli, and himself several times narrowly escaped destruction, and how some years elapsed before he secured the empire which was the object of his ambition, and how he wrested it from the hands of men possessed of all the advantages of birth and wealth and previous renown

who had divided the land of Shamsuddin among them and made it their pray, and who rose up against him from every quarter,—and how it was only by a long course of stratagems and devices that he eventually crushed his opponents." (See Barani, ASB. Text, 149-150; JASB, Vol. XL (1871) No. 3., 203-204).

<sup>7</sup> Compare for instance the rapturous eulogies bestowed on the Sultan by 'Qari Muh. Bashiruddin Pundit' in his *Hindi Qurun-i-wasati*. On page 276 of his book Pundit Saheb adduces the following incident to prove the extreme courtesy and goodness of Sultan Mahmud. It is said that a certain *amir* pointed out a few errors in the copy of the Quran made by the Sultan. The Sultan although conscious that the *amir* was in the wrong still erased the inaccurate words pointed out by the *amir* only in order to avoid wounding the feelings of the man. This incident affords an amusing and instructive contrast to the Sultan's conduct in the political intrigues by which he managed to capture the throne.

<sup>8</sup> Zia Barani bears unmistakeable testimony to this fact when he says quite plainly that Balban kept his master Nasiruddin only as a puppet (نابوکه). Vide E. and D., III. 98; Text (ASB), 26.

<sup>9</sup> Wassaf (in E. and D., III, 67) says that the Sultan's brother Malik Jalal-uddin governor of Qanauj was convinced of the designs of Balban and had warned him that Balban was secretly aiming at the throne. Minhaj significantly maintains silence in regard to this matter making only the terse statement that Malik Jalal-uddin Masud came to interview the king while the latter was returning to Dihli. Vide E. and D., II, 349.

There is however a definite proof of Balban's design to capture the throne, at all costs. It is mentioned in the *Seir-ul-Auliya* that when Sultan Nasiruddin accompanied by Balban, while moving against the Khokhars, reached the vicinity of Naharwala or

Ajodhan, the young king expressed a desire to pay a visit to the Saint Farid-uddin Ganj-i-Shakar of Pakpatan. But Ulugh Khan made excuses and dissuaded the Sultan from going to the Saint and himself went with presents professedly on behalf of Nasiruddin but in reality to take his blessings for his desire of capturing the throne, which was burning in his innermost heart. After making the offerings Balban sought and received the Saint's blessings for the object on which he had set his heart. (Vide *Seir-ul-Auliya* by Sayyed Muh. Mubarak, Urdu Translation pp. 71-72; also Ferishta, N. K. Press Text, p. 388 and Urdu Tr. p. 593).

<sup>10</sup>. A very apt illustration of the real character and disposition of Sultan Mahmud can be seen in the following incident. In March 1260 the Sultan's forces had again to move towards the Hauz-i-Rani (Rani's Reservoir) in order to crush the rebellion of the Hindus of Mewat. Describing the might of Turks and the terrible punishment which by the orders of the Sultan they inflicted upon the 'infidels', Minhaj exultantly says: "After that some of these rebels they cast at the feet of the elephants, and made the heads of Hindus, under the heavy hands and feet of those mountain-like figures, the grain in the orifice of the grinding mill of death; and by the keen swords of the ruthless Turks, and the life-ravishing executioners, every two of these Hindus were made four, and, by scavengers... a hundred and odd rebels were flayed from head to foot, and at the hands of their skinners, they quaffed, in the goblet of their own heads, the *Sharbat* of death. Command was given so that they stuffed the whole of their skins with straw and suspended them over every gate-way of the city.

In short, an example of retribution was made such as the plain at the Rani's Reservoir..... never remembered the like of, and the ear of no hearer ever heard a tale so terrible as that." See Raverty, p. 855.

Referring to this incident Raverty, on the same page in foot-note 5, comments, 'We must make allowances for the age in which this occurred, but



what an idea it gives us of the merciful disposition, and amiability of "*the king of the World*" and "*copier of the Kurans*, if he had any authority."

We need only add that this incident was only one of the long tale of similar one's which filled the career of the 'Khan-i-Azam' Balban. with the active or passive consent of his *subservient master* the Sultan. Had our modren authors paid due attention to these facts they would have seen that their saintly Sultan's real character was undiluted selfish ambition and self-interest at the altar of which he was prepared to sacrifice, without the least qualms of conscience, all human norms of life as well as the nearest of his relatives, friends and benefactors. It would be hard to find an example of greater ingratitude, ruthlessness and unscrupulousness even in that age. And yet we have such meaningless and baseless estimates of the man as the following: "The unenviable fate of his predecessors, the loss of real power and the gloom caste by the Mughal menace accentuated his religiosity, and he found solace in copying the Quran and such other pious acts." (*What these acts were no one knows.*) "For about two decades he played the king in a most dignified manner and died a natural death leaving happy memories and a good name." (See *Some Aspects of Muslim Administration*, by R. P. Tripathi pp. 32-33). There is no authority for the solemn assertion that Nasir-uddin Mahmud died a natural death. On the other hand there are strong evidences to raise the presumption that Mahmud was poisoned by Balban. The 'happy memories and good name' were in truth the memories of his ingratitude, opportunism and self-seeking for the sake of which he could go to the length of throwing away his own mother.

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