

desired to throw off the yoke of Delhi and assumed an attitude of secret hostility. Meanwhile Husain made an attempt once more to recover his lost kingdom, but he was again defeated and expelled from Jaunpur. The veiled hostility of his Afghan barons convinced the Sultan of the danger of placing them in positions of power, and he decided for obvious reasons to make over charge of Jaunpur to his eldest son Barbak Shah. The countries of Kalpi,⁸ Dholpur,⁹ Bari¹⁰ and Alapur¹¹ were subdued, and their chiefs paid homage to the Sultan. After some time an expedition was undertaken to chastise the refractory Raja of Gwalior who was compelled to pay a tribute of eighty lakhs of *tankas*, but the strain proved too great for the health of the Sultan. On his return march, he was attacked by fever, and after a short illness died in the neighbourhood of Jalali in 1488.

As the founder of the new dynasty and the restorer of the waning prestige of the Delhi monarchy, Bahlol deserves a high place in history. The stress of perpetual war left him no time to turn his attention to the work of civil organisation, but the wars that he waged and the victories that he achieved once more made the Muslim power respected and feared by the people of Hindustan. In personal character Bahlol was far superior to his immediate predecessors; brave, generous, humane and honest, he was devoted to his religion and followed the letter of the law with the strictest fidelity. He was singularly free from ostentation; he never sat upon the throne bedecked with jewels and diamonds in gorgeous robes like other mediæval rulers, and used to say that it was enough

Bahlol's
achievement.

⁸ Kalpi is a city in the Jalaun district in the United Provinces of Agra and Oudth.

⁹ Dholpur is a State between Agra and Gwalior.

¹⁰ Bari is a town in the Dholpur State 19 miles west of Dholpur.

¹¹ Alapur is in the Gwalior State near Morena.

for him that the world knew him to be a king without any display of royal splendour on his part. He was king to the poor and no beggar ever turned away disappointed from his gate. Though not a man of learning himself, he valued the society of learned men and extended his patronage to them. His love of justice was so great that he used to hear personally the petitions of his subjects and grant redress. He kept no private treasure and ungrudgingly distributed the spoils of war among his troops. Towards the men of his tribe he behaved without any kind of reserve or restraint, and fraternised with them as if they were his equals in position and dignity. But as the old adage reminds us, familiarity breeds contempt, the Afghan nobles chafed and fidgetted under the restraints that had to be imposed upon them in the interests of good government and disregarded their chief. It was with great difficulty that Bahlol's successor, Sikandar, was able to hold in check their turbulent and factious spirit. The author of the *Tarikh-i-Daudi*¹² describes the character of Bahlol in these words:

"In his social meetings he never sat on a throne, and would not allow his nobles to stand; and even during public audiences he did not occupy the throne, but seated himself upon a carpet. Whenever he wrote a *firman* to his nobles, he addressed them as *Masnad Ali*; and if at any time they were displeased with him, he tried so hard to pacify them that he would himself go to their houses, ungird his sword from his waist, and place it before the offended party; nay, he would sometimes even take off his turban from his head and solicit forgiveness, saying 'If you think me unworthy of the station I occupy, choose some one else, and bestow on me some other office.' He maintained a brotherly intercourse with all his chiefs and soldiers. If any one was ill, he would himself go and attend on him."

¹² Elliot. IV, pp. 436-37.

Sikandar's
accession to
the throne.

After Bahlol's death his son Nizam Khan was elevated to the throne under the title of Sikandar Shah by the amirs and nobles, though not without a dissentient vote.¹³ Bahlol who had provided for his eldest son at Jaunpur perhaps intended that after his death his third son Nizam Khan should succeed him, but the Afghan nobles objected to Nizam's accession on the ground that his mother was a goldsmith's daughter and that her son was more of a plebeian than a prince. Nizam Khan was summoned to the imperial camp lest he should assume the title of king, but he was warned by his mother and his supporters not to do so. The nobles, some of whom supported Barbak Shah and some Azam Humayun, son of Shwaja Bayazid, Bahlol's eldest son asked the Sultan to assert his authority and peremptorily demanded his presence in the camp. Nizam Khan delayed to obey on the ground that he was making preparations for the journey. In the meantime Bahlol died and Ziba, Nizam's mother, remonstrated with the nobles why they thwarted her son's succession to the throne. Isakhan, Bahlol's first cousin, could not brook the insult and told her that a goldsmith's daughter's son was unfitted to wear the imperial diadem—a sincere but ill-timed rebuke which brought to the slighted widow the sympathies of Khan-i-Khanan Farmuli and a few other nobles. A party of Nizam Khan at once formed itself and on July 17, 1489 he was proclaimed king under the title of Sikandar Shah. The sovereign-elect gave a splendid feast to celebrate his coronation, and conferred gifts and robes of honour upon the Amirs and officers, who swore fealty to him as their lawful liege-lord. Sikandar was a bigot by temperament, and it was probably his orthodoxy which was considered as a special

¹³ The date of accession is 17th Shaban, Friday, 894 A.H. = 17th July, 1489 A.D.

Tabaqat-i-Akbari, Lucknow text, p. 159.

qualification by those who elected him to the throne. Like his father, Sikandar energetically set himself to the task of preserving and extending the authority of the Delhi empire—a step which brought him into conflict with several vassals and chieftains who wielded considerable power. The author of the *Waqiat-i-Mush-taqi* draws a graphic picture of the condition of Hindustan during this period.¹⁴

“One half of the whole country was assigned in *jagir* to the Farmulis, and the other half to the other Afghan tribes. At this time the Lohanis and Farmulis predominated. The chief of the Sarwanis was Azam Humayun and the principal chieftains of the Lodis were four:—Mahmud Khan who had Kalpi in *jagir*; Mian Alam to whom Etawah and Chandwar were assigned; Mubarak Khan whose *jagir* was Lucknow; and Daulat Khan who held Lahore. Among the Sahu Khails, the chiefs were Husain Khan and Khan Jahan, both from the same ancestor as Sultan Bahlol; Husain Khan, son of Firuz Khan, and Qutb Khan Lodi Sahu Khail, who flourished in the time of Sultan Bahlol.

“The districts of Saran and Champaran were held by Mian Husain: Oudh, Ambala and Hodhna by Mian Muhammad Kala Pahar; Kanauj by Mian Gadai: Shamsabed, Thanesar, and Shahabad by Mian Imad: Marahra by Tatar Khan, brother of Mian Muhammad: and Hariana, Desua, and other detached *Parganas* by Khwajagi Shaikh Said.

“Among the great nobles of Sultan Sikandar’s time was Saif Khan Acha-Khail. He had 6,000 horse under him, and was deputy of Azam Humayun, Jagirdar of Karra, who used to buy 2,000 copies of the Quran every year, had 45,000 horse under his command, and 700 elephants. There were also Daulat Khan Khani, who had 4,000

¹⁴ Elliot and Dowson, IV, pp. 545, 547-48.



cavalry; Ali Khan Ushi, who had 4,000 also; Firuz Khan Sarwani, who had 6,000. Amongst other nobles there were 25,000 more distributed. Ahmad Khan also, the son of Jumal Khan Lodi Sarang Khani, when he was appointed to Jaunpur, had 20,000 cavalry under him."

The Sultan himself marched against Alam Khan, the governor of Rebari, who fled at the approach of the royal army, and his fief was conferred upon Khan-i-Khanan Lohani. Negotiations were opened with his brother Barbak Shah who had assumed the title of king of Jaunpur with a view to asking him to acknowledge the suzerainty of Delhi. Barbak Shah with haughty disdain rejected these overtures of peace and began to make preparations for war which he had already known to be inevitable.

Sikandar marched against Barbak and was opposed his general Kala Pahar (black rock)—probably so called because of his prowess in battle—

War with Jaunpur.

who was defeated and taken prisoner. Sikandar treated him with great courtesy, and Firishta relates that the unprincipled general at once went over to the side of the enemy and fought against his old master. The troops of Barbak, astounded by the defection of one of their own leaders, lost heart and fled from the field of battle. Barbak himself sought refuge in Badaon but he was pursued by the imperialists who compelled him to surrender. As Husain Shah Sharqi was still in Bihar, making plans and conspiring with local chieftains to recover his throne, the Sultan judged it expedient to reinstate his brother in charge of Jaunpur, but associated some trusty Afghan noblemen with him in the administration with a view to imposing some sort of check upon his ambitions.

Having settled the affairs of Jaunpur, the Sultan marched towards Kalpi where he deprived his nephew Azam Humayun of his fief and conferred it upon Mahmud Khan Lodi. The chief of Gwalior and the

governor of Biyana and Agra¹⁵ were subdued next, and the Sultan returned to Delhi sometime in 1492.

Although Sikandar's army was invariably successful, the Zamindars of Jaunpur and the contiguous territories seemed to have developed formidable strength. So irresistible did they become that Barbak Shah had to leave Jaunpur and seek refuge with Muhammad Khan Farmuli better known as Kala Pahar. The Sultan proceeded against the Zamindars and fought a highly contested engagement with the Sultan's forces, but they were defeated, and enormous booty fell into the hands of the victorious army. Barbak was again reinstated in authority and arrangements were made for the proper government of the country. But as soon as the Sultan turned his back, he received the news that Zamindars had again risen in revolt, and that Barbak had proved incapable of effectively checking their aggressions. The Sultan was so offended at Barbak's incapacity to administer affairs that he deputed some of his leading officers to bring the prince in chains to court.¹⁶ This peremptory order was implicitly carried out, and the

¹⁵ Agra was included in the fief of Biyana at this time, and the fort was held by Haibat Khan Jalwani who was subordinate to Sultan Sharf, governor of Biyana.

Dorn, *Makhzan-i-Afghana*, p. 56.

¹⁶ The head and front of Barbak's offence seems to have seen his want of capacity for administering the affairs of a province which was seething with discontent. The authors of the *Makhzan-i-Afghana* and the *Tarikh-i-Daudi* say that when the Sultan heard that Barbak Shah was unable to hold Jaunpur against the Zamindars, he ordered Muhammad Khan Farmuli, Azam Humayun, Khan-i-Jahan, and Khan-Khanan Lodi to put him in chains and bring him a prisoner to Delhi. Firishta who is more detailed in his information than either of the two authorities named above supports them.

Dorn, *Makhzan-i-Afghana*, p. 57.

Tarikh-i-Daudi, Elliot, IV, p. 461.

Briggs, I, p. 570.



unfortunate Prince was placed in charge of Haibat Khan and Umar Khan Sherwani virtually as a state prisoner.

The Sultan himself proceeded towards Chunar and suppressed the Hindu Zamindars, but his losses were heavy owing to bad roads and want of provisions. His cavalry was decimated by famine and disease, and the Zamindars of Jaunpur, who knew of the disorganised condition of the royal army, sent word to Husain Sharqi to make once more a bold bid for his ancestral dominions. Accordingly Husain appeared in the field of battle at the head of a large force, assisted by the disaffected Hindu chieftains of the neighbourhood, but in a battle near Benares he was defeated by the Khan-i-Khanan, and his army was put to flight. Husain Shah himself fled towards Lakhnauti where he passed the remainder of his life in obscurity, and with his final discomfiture the dynasty of Malik-us-Sharq Khwaja Jahan ceased to exist. Bihar easily came into the hands of the Khan-i-Khanan in 1495, and the whole country was settled by the Sultan, who appointed his own officers to carry on the work of government. The death of Khan-i-Jahan Lodi occurred at this time, and the Sultan conferred upon his eldest son, Ahmad Khan, the title of Azam Humayun. Having put his forces in order, the Sultan marched against the ruler of Bengal, who sent his son to oppose his advance, but as neither side was determined on war, a treaty was concluded by which both parties agreed not to encroach upon each other's territories, and the king of Bengal promised that he would afford no shelter to fugitives from Hindustan. The king appointed Azam Humayun to realise tribute from the chieftains of Tirhut and conferred the government of Bihar upon Dariya Khan whose father Mubarak Khan Lohani had lately died at Darveshpur.

Sikandar next turned his attention to the Afghan chiefs who held large jagirs. The accounts of some of the leading Afghan officers were inspected by the Sultan, and there were

Against the
Afghans.

startling disclosures.¹⁷ This policy gave umbrage to the Afghans who looked upon audit and inspection as an encroachment upon their privileges. The king's attempts to suppress them with a high hand led Haibat Khan and others to form a conspiracy against him, and, having finished their nefarious plans, they induced Prince Fatah Khan, the king's brother, to join them. But the Prince was prudent enough to consult his mother and Shaikh Kabuli, both of whom warned him against such a dangerous course, and asked him to divulge the whole plot to the king. The Prince acted according to their instructions, and terrible penalties were inflicted upon the conspirators.

In 1405 Sikandar repaired to Sambhal where he stayed for four years with a view to enjoying the bracing climate of that country and to exercising an effective control over the intractable Afghan fief-holders in the north.

While the Sultan stayed at Sambhal, several expeditions were undertaken to suppress the sporadic insurrections of the provincial governors.

Minor rebellions. At Delhi, Asghar, whom the king had left as his vicegerent, rebelled, but he was quickly defeated by Khwas Khan, the governor of Machiwara.¹⁸ The Princes of Gwalior and Dholpur were subdued after a stubborn fight which lasted for several days.

Experience had impressed upon the Sultan the necessity of making the place where the city of Agra now stands the headquarters of the army so that he might be able to exercise more effective control over the fief-holders of Etawah, Biyana, Kol, Gwalior and Dholpur. With this object in view, he laid the foundations of a new town on the site where the modern city of

Foundation of
Agra.

¹⁷ Firishta writes that defalcation was discovered in the accounts of these chiefs.

¹⁸ Machiwara is a town in the Samrala tahsil of the Ludhiana district in the Punjab, 27 miles from Ludhiana, Imp. Gaz., XVI, p. 224.



Agra stands in 910 A.H. (1504 A.D.). The author of the *Mukhzan-i-Afghana* writes that the Sultan appointed "judicious and intelligent commissioners" who carefully examined both sides of the view from Delhi to Etawah and Chandwar and finally fixed upon the site of the present city. A splendid town gradually rose upon the chosen spot, and afterwards the Sultan also took up his residence there.¹⁹

Next year (911 A.H.=1505 A.D.) on July 6, a most violent earthquake occurred at Agra which shook the earth to its foundations and levelled many beautiful buildings and houses to the ground. The chronicler of the reign writes, "It was in fact so terrible, that mountains were overturned, and all lofty edifices dashed to the ground: the living thought, the day of judgment was come; and the dead, the day of resurrection."²⁰ No such earthquake had occurred before, and the loss of life was appallingly heavy.

The remaining years of Sikandar's life were spent in suppressing Rajput revolts and the infructuous attempts at independence made by his own governors in the various parts of the empire. The tendency to revolt was so common that the Sultan found it impossible to secure the permanent loyalty of his Muslim vassals, to say nothing of Hindu chiefs, who naturally desired to rid themselves of Muslim domination. Gwalior and Dholpur gave trouble again, and the Sultan marched in person to deal with the rebellious chiefs. The siege of Narwar²¹

¹⁹ The author of the *Tarikh-i-Daudi* writes that the Sultan generally lived at Agra. Formerly it was only a village.

Allahabad University MS., p. 42.

²⁰ Dorn, *Makhzan*, p. 62.

Tarikh-i-Daudi, Allahabad University MS., p. 69.

The earthquake occurred on Sunday, Safar 3, 911 A.H. (7th July, 1505 A.D.)

²¹ Narwar is in the Gwalior State in Central India, Imp. Gaz., XVIII, p. 396.

in 1506 was a determined trial of strength between the imperialists and the Hindus, but the latter had to give way before the concentrated attack of the Muslims. Treachery was not wanting in the Muslim camp, and it transpired that certain Muslim officers were carrying on a secret correspondence with the beleaguered garrison. This led the Sultan to push on the siege with considerable vigour, but when the provisions ran short, the Hindus surrendered. The conquest of Narwar prepared the way for other conquests in the central region, and the fort of Chanderi was captured and entrusted to Afghan officers, who forthwith proceeded to settle the country. A year later in 1510 Muhammad Khan governor of Nagor,²² against whom reports had reached the Sultan, forestalled his enemies by making a timely submission, and caused the Khutba to be read in the name of the Sultan.

The Prince of Chanderi, who was a feudatory of Malwa, expressed a desire to accept the vassalage of Delhi through the efforts of Bajahat Khan. The Prince was allowed to remain nominally in possession of the city, but the administration was entrusted to the leading Afghan officers.

The last expedition was undertaken by the Sultan at the instance of Ali Khan of Nagor, who had conspired with Daulat Khan to secure the fortress of Ranthambhor for Delhi. But Ali was a treacherous man; he turned against Sikandar and asked the governor (Daulat Khan) not to yield.²³ He was deprived of

²² The *Makhzan* gives 916 A.H. (1510 A.D.) and *Firishta* gives 915 A.H.

Dorn, p. 64.

Firishta, Lucknow text, p. 185.

²³ It is not clear why Ali turned against the Sultan.

The author of the *Tabqai-i-Akbari* simply says, 'for some reason he became hostile.'

Lucknow text, p. 169.

Firishta says: "Disappointed in the attainment of some objects on which he had calculated as a reward for having brought this affairs."

Lucknow text, p. 186.



his fief which was conferred upon his brother Abu Bakr. Sikandar returned to Agra and in 923 A.H. (1517 A.D.) he summoned a council of his principal governors, nobles and officers in order to devise means to put down the Prince of Gwalior. But, when he was making these preparations with his usual vigour, he fell ill and died on the 7th Zilqada, 923 A.H. (December 1, 1517 A.D.).²⁴ He was succeeded by his son Ibrahim Lodi.

Sikandar had little time to introduce reforms or undertake civil organisation, for he was busily engaged all his life in waging war against hostile neighbours and rebellious governors. Yet he accomplished much; and from the accounts of Muslim chroniclers we learn that his exceptional abilities enabled him to effect the centralisation of authority in his own hands. The Afghan chiefs were kept under control, and their individualistic tendencies were firmly suppressed. The audit and inspection of accounts, so distasteful to the Afghans, was strictly enforced, and cases of de-

²⁴ The *Makhzan* gives only the year 923 A.H.

Dorn, p. 65.

Firishta gives 7th Zilqada, 923 A.H.

Lucknow text, p. 186.

Badaoni alone gives the 17th Zilqada.

Ranking, *Al-Badaoni*, I, p. 425.

The *Tarikh-i-Daudi* and the *Tabqat-i-Akbari* both support Firishta.

Allahabad University MS., p. 99.

Tabqat, Lucknow text, p. 170.

Sikandar got a disease which slowly increased. But, in spite of his illness, he continued to work. At last, his condition became so bad that he could not swallow even a morsel of food, nor could he drink water.

Briggs says (I, p. 585) that the Sultan got quinsy, but it is not mentioned in the text.

The date of the Sultan's death is given in a chronogram which gives the total 923.

falcation and embezzlement were severely punished.²⁵ After the Bengal campaign, when Mubarak Khan Lodi's accounts were examined, no indulgence was shown to him, and the balance was exacted with great rigour. Even the king's brothers were made to share their authority with his officers and nobles, and this dual system was adopted, lest the princes concerned should try to make themselves independent.²⁶ The Sultan's *firmans* were received by the provincial governors at a distance of two or three *krohs* from the headquarters and were then read to the assembled people, if they were not of a confidential nature—a fact which clearly indicates the awe and respect in which Sikandar was held.²⁷ A well-regulated system of espionage was maintained and the most trivial details of what the people said and did were reported to the Sultan with such minuteness that the over-credulous generation of Sikandar began to credit him with supernatural powers.²⁸ The Sultan himself appointed the personal retainers of the great Amirs for he had little confidence in their loyalty. But the interests of the poor were always protected. The corn duties were abolished, agriculture was encouraged, and traders and merchants were allowed to carry on their business in perfect security without any molestation. Every year the Sultan ordered a list of the poor and the indigent to be drawn up and gave them six months' provision according to their need. On certain days such as the *Id*, *Ashura*, and the anniversary of the Prophet's death, prisoners were released unless they were convicted of embezzlement of public funds or misappropriation of other people's money. No one

²⁵ *Makhzan-i-Afghana*, Dorn, p. 59.

²⁶ *Makhzan*, p. 56.

²⁷ *Tabqat*, Lucknow text, p. 170.

Tarikh-i-Daudi Allahabad University MS., p. 40.

²⁸ *Tabqat*, Lucknow text, p. 170.

Makhzan, p. 67.



was arbitrarily deprived of his jagir, and an established custom was never abrogated. The Hindu Zamindars were held down by force, and the roads and highways were freed from robbers. How well organised and regulated the administration was can be gleaned from the following passage in the *Tarikh-i-Daudi*.

“The Sultan daily received an account of the prices of all things and an account of what had happened in the different districts of the Empire. If he perceived the slightest appearance of anything wrong, he caused instant inquiries to be made about it . . . In his reign, business was carried on in a peaceful, honest, straight-forward way. The study of belles-letters was not neglected . . . Factory establishments were so encouraged that all the young nobles and soldiers were engaged in useful works . . . All the nobles and soldiers of Sikandar were satisfied: each of his chiefs was appointed to the government of a district, and it was his especial desire to gain the good-will and affections of the body of the people. For the sake of his officers and troops, he put an end to war and dispute with the other monarchs and nobles of the period, and closed the road to contention and strife. He contented himself with the territory bequeathed him by his father, and passed the whole of his life in the greatest safety and enjoyment, and gained the hearts of high and low.”

Sikandar did much to infuse a fresh life and vigour into the administration, but the state once more assumed a theocratic character and officially imposed Islam upon the Hindus. The case of Bodhan Brahmana of Kaithan illustrates the intolerance and bigotry of the state and the great power which the *Ulama* had acquired under Sikandar. The head and front of the Brahmana's offence was his declaration in the presence of certain Musalmans that his faith was as good as that of the Prophet. A council of divines was summoned by Sikandar which recommended either conversion to Islam or

death.²⁹ The Brahmana courageously refused to embrace Islam and perished for the sake of his conscience. To men like Bodhan, the Hindu martyrs of the middle ages, who cheerfully suffered death for the sake of their convictions, the Brahmanical religion in India owes not a little of her vitality and vigour.

But it would be unfair to judge Sikandar by the standards of our own day. Religious toleration was unknown even in Europe in his age, and the most pious and orthodox divines of the Catholic Church employed the rack and the Inquisition in order to put down heresy. Only four years after Sikandar's death, that sombre Hapsburg, Charles V, vindicated his devotion to the ancient church by declaring the founder of the Reformation out of the pale of his empire.

It will be interesting to know what manner of man was this most remarkable ruler of the Lodi dynasty.

Personality of
Sikandar.

All Muslim chroniclers have bestowed lavish praise upon Sikandar, because his fanatical zeal for the faith so well agreed with their own religious ideals. But the detailed account of Nizam-ud-din Ahmad who is always balanced in his estimates is supported by Firishta who has also utilised certain contemporary chronicles.³⁰ The Sultan was a man of handsome appearance, fond of chase, and well-versed in the accomplishments suited to men

²⁹ The name of Bodhan is variously spelt in various texts. The Lucknow text of Firishta (p. 182) has Bodhan of Kaithan.

Briggs has Boodhun resident of Kataen near Lucknow.

It is Budhen of Katbhur in the *Makhzan*, p. 65.

In Elliot (IV, p. 464) it is Laudhan of Kaner.

The author of the *Tarikh-i-Daudi* writes that the Sultan was greatly interested in religious discussions. He held the meeting of the Ulama at Sambhal, who gave a verdict against the Brahmana: on his refusal to accept Islam, he was put to death, and the learned casuists were handsomely rewarded.

³⁰ Firishta says, he consulted a contemporary work known as the *Farhang Sikandari*, although his account seems to be a reproduction of the *Tabqat-i-Akbari*. The author of the *Tabqat* wrote before all others; therefore he must have used some contemporary chronicles.

of his rank. All authorities agree in saying that he was intensely devoted to the interests of the faith. He associated with Mullahs and Maulvis, and his uncompromising attitude towards other faiths manifested itself in his attempts to persecute the Hindus and to banish idolatry from the land over which he ruled. So great was his zeal for the faith that he once ordered the temples of Mathura to be destroyed and sarais and mosques to be built in their stead. The author of the *Tarikh-i-Daudi* writes that idols were given to butchers who made them into meat-weights.³¹ The Hindus were not allowed to bathe at the ghats on the bank of the Jumna and a royal Ordinance was issued prohibiting barbers from shaving the heads and beards of the Hindus in accordance with their usual custom.³² Prayers were publicly held; and the glory and triumph of Islam was proclaimed in all quarters.

Although Sikandar was a narrow-minded bigot, he was not devoid of the higher qualities of heart and mind. He felt for the poor and distressed, and every year doles of charity were distributed among the poor from the treasury, and the kings's example was followed by the opulent among his subjects. He had an innate love of justice. He listened to the petitions of the aggrieved persons and disposed of cases according to their merit. He kept himself in touch with all that happened in his kingdom, and issued detailed instructions to the provincial governors and insisted upon their being faithfully carried out. The affairs of the market were carefully watched, and the rates of prices were daily reported to him. Whenever there was any doubt or suspicion, he at once interfered and took care to see that the goods were sold in the proper manner. His devotion to the faith led him to despise vulgarity and frivolity, and no man of dissolute character was ever allowed to have access to him. He possessed a retentive memory which

³¹ *Tarikh-i-Daudi*, Allahabad University MS., p. 39.
Dorn, *Makhzan*, p. 66.

³² *Tarikh-i-Daudi*, Allahabad University MS., p. 39.

enabled him to store a great deal of useful knowledge. He extended his patronage to learned men and himself wrote verses in elegant Persian under the *non-de-plume* of Gulrukh. It was by his order that Mian Bhua translated into Persian a Sanskrit work on medicine which was entitled the '*Tibb-i-Sikandari*.'³³

The Sultan was a conservative by temperament. He never abrogated an established custom, and always attached importance to a man's birth in conferring public offices. The author of the *Tarikh-i-Daudi* relates a curious anecdote of him that, when he took his supper after mid-night, he called in his presence seventeen learned men who squatted on the ground in front of him. Food was served before them, but they were not allowed to partake of it, and when the Sultan had finished, they took their dishes to their homes. Probably he acted in this manner with a view to maintaining the dignity of his office. However depressed the Ulama may have felt in his presence, they must have thoroughly relished their dinner on getting back to their homes.

During his lifetime Sikandar maintained order by his firm policy and held the turbulent barons in check, but after his death when the crown passed to a man who was inferior to him in ability and character, the forces which he had controlled broke loose and undermined the foundations of the empire.³⁴

³³ *Tarikh-i-Daudi*, Allahabad University MS., p. 43.

In Elliot (IV p. 451) the name of the Sanskrit work is given as *Argar Mahabadak* which seems to be a corrupted form of some treatise on Ayurveda.

The author of the *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi* says that Mian Bhudh got together fine calligraphists and learned men, and employed them in writing books upon every science. He brought books from Khorasan and gave them to learned men. The physicians of Khorasan and Hind were brought together and they compiled a new treatise after consulting numerous works on medicine. The book so compiled received the name of *Tibb-i-Sikandari*.

³⁴ For an account of the Afghan barons see *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi* in Elliot V, Appendix G, pp. 534—549.

The character of the Afghan Government changed under Ibrahim. He was a man of headstrong and irritable temper, who by his insolence and hauteur alienated the sympathies of the Afghan nobles.³⁵ The Afghans looked upon their king as a comrade a little more than the *primus inter pares* and not as a master and willingly accorded to him the honours of a feudal superior. Men of the Lohani, Farmuli and Lodi tribes held important offices in the state. They had always been turbulent and factious; and their position and influence had enabled them to form conspiracies against the Crown. Their loyalty to their king fluctuated according to the strength or weakness of the latter. Sikandar had kept them under firm control and severely punished them when they flouted his authority. But when Ibrahim, who was by no means an incompetent ruler,³⁶ attempted to put down their individualistic tendencies with a high hand in order to make his government strong and efficient, they protested and offered resistance. As Erskine observes, the principal fief-holders looked upon their jagirs "as their own of right, and purchased by their swords rather than as due to any bounty or liberality on the part of the sovereign."³⁷ Ibrahim was confronted with a difficult situation. The territory of the empire³⁸ had increased in extent; the feudal aristocracy

The author of the work, Shaikh Rizqulla Mushtaqi, was born in 897 A.H. and died in 989 A.H. (1492—1581 A.D.) He gives a detailed account of Khan-i-Jahan Lodi, Mian Zain-uddin, Khwas Khan, and many other nobles of Sikandar's reign. The last Afghan baron mentioned is Mian Maruf Farmuli.

³⁵ *Tarikh-i-Daudi*, Allahabad University MS., p. 113.

Dorn, *Makhzan-i-Afghana*, p. 70.

³⁶ *Tabqat-i-Akbari*. Lucknow text, p. 173.

³⁷ Erskine, *History of India*, I, p. 406.

³⁸ At the death of Sikandar the boundaries of the empire were at follows:—Towards the south-east the empire reached the borders of Bengal; near Agra, Dholpur, Chanderi and

had become ungovernable, and the elements of discontent which had accumulated for years silently beneath the surface began to assert themselves. The Hindus, dissatisfied with Sikandar's policy of religious persecution, heartily hated the alien government which offended against their most cherished prejudices. The problem before Ibrahim was somewhat similar to that which confronted the Tudors in England towards the close of the fifteenth century. But he lacked that tact, foresight, and strength of will which enabled Henry VII to put down with a high hand the over-weening feudal aristocracy which tended to encroach upon the royal domain. His drastic measures provoked the resentment of the half-loyal nobility and paved the way for the disruption of the Afghan empire. But Ibrahim is not wholly to blame. The break-up of the empire was bound to come sooner or later, for even if Ibrahim had kept the nobles attached to himself, they would have tried to set up small principalities for themselves, and reduced him to the position of a titular king, a mere figure-head in the midst of warring factions and cliques. There were no elements of stability in the government, and Ibrahim's indulgence would have hardly improved his position. He might have succeeded temporarily in arresting the progress of the forces of disruption, had he been more cautious in his policy and adopted *festina lente* as his principle of action in dealing with his own proud and discontented fellow-tribesmen. But he alienated them by attempting to govern too much, and his promiscuous ill-treatment turned his own kinsmen against him with the result that they plotted and intrigued to bring about his speedy overthrow.

Though Ibrahim was jealous of the influence of the barons and tried to crush them with a high hand, he never neglected the interests of the people. During

Biyana were included in it. The Punjab acknowledged the sway of Delhi, and in the central region the empire extended as far as Bundelkhand.



his reign, the crops were abundant and the prices of all articles of ordinary use were incredibly low. The Sultan took grain in payment of rent, and all the fief-holders and nobles were asked to accept payments in kind. No scarcity of grain was ever felt, and the author of the *Tarikh-i-Daudi* writes that a respectable man's services could be obtained for five *tankas* a month and a man could travel from Delhi to Agra on one Bahloli which was sufficient to maintain himself, his horse, and his small escort during the journey.³⁹

As has been said above, Ibrahim had by his indiscriminate severity alienated the sympathies of the Lodi Amirs, who conspired soon after his accession to place his brother Prince Jalal upon the throne of Jaunpur. In pursuance of this plan, the Prince marched from Kalpi and assumed charge of the government of Jaunpur. But this arrangement was highly disapproved by Khan-i-Jahan Lodi, one of the most high-minded Amirs of Sikandar. He sharply reprimanded the nobles for their impolitic conduct, and pointed out the dangers of a dual sovereignty to the empire. The Afghan nobles acknowledged their mistake and sent Haibat Khan to Prince Jalal in order to persuade the latter to withdraw from Jaunpur, but Jalal refused to do so. The Sultan, then,

Prince Jalal's
revolt.

³⁹ *Tarikh-i-Daudi*, Allahabad University MS., p. 137. Elliot, IV, p. 476. A schedule of prices is also given in the above work which is as follows:—

One Bahloli	10 <i>mans</i> of corn.
"	5 <i>sirs</i> of ghee.
"	10 yards of cloth.

The Bahloli succeeded to the previous function of the *paisa*. Abdul Fazl declares its value to be 1/40th of a rupee and its weight as 1 *tolah*, 8 *mashas*, 7 *rattis*.

Thomas, *The Chronicles*, p. 360.

See the account of the *Zubba-ut-tawarikh* regarding the cheapness of prices in Ibrahim's reign in Elliot's *Historians*, I, p. 292. He supports the author of the *Tarikh-i-Daudi*.

sent Shaikhzada Mahmud, Malik Ismail, and Qazi Hamid-ud-din Hajib to induce him to return but the Prince again excused himself on one pretext or another.⁴⁰ These negotiations having failed, Ibrahim issued a *firman* in which he ordered the Amirs not to pay any heed to Jalal's authority and threatened them with severe punishments, if they failed to comply with the royal mandate. The more influential among the Amirs were conciliated by gifts and presents and were detached from Prince Jalal. Deprived of this support, he allied himself with the Zamindars and with their help improved the condition of his army. He described his brother as a usurper and disturber of peace, and appealed to Azam Humayun for assistance. Azam Humayun who had a grudge against the Sultan joined him, and the combined armies proceeded to Oudh, where they overpowered the governor, Said Khan, a son of Mubarak Khan Lodi, and compelled him to retreat to Lucknow. Ibrahim confined all his brothers in the fort of Hansi, and himself marched against Jalal whose strength was considerably diminished by the desertion of Azam Humayun. Kalpi was besieged; the contest was carried on with great vigour for some time and the fort was dismantled. Jalal fled towards Agra where the governor opened negotiations with him and offered him the undisturbed possession of Kalpi, if he waived all claims to sovereignty.⁴¹ When Ibrahim came to know of this treaty which was concluded without his consent, he "owing to his unlimited pride, violent temper and youthful temerity" not only disapproved of it, but issued orders for the assassination of the rebellious Prince. Jalal fled to the Raja of Gwalior for protection.

⁴⁰ These circumstances have been mentioned differently by the author of the *Tarikh-i-Salatin-i-Afghana*.

Elliot, V, pp. 8-9.

See the editor's note on page 9.

⁴¹ The *Makhzan-i-Afghana* says (p. 73) that Jalal was pacified by Malik Kakar with soft words, while Firishta says that Adam Khan, the governor of Agra, offered terms of peace to Jalal without consulting Ibrahim.



Ibrahim returned to Agra and devoted himself to the management of the affairs of his kingdom. The rebellion of Jalal and the intrigues of the Afghans embittered his disposition, and he became more arbitrary in his methods. He dismissed his father's famous minister Mian Bhua from office and cast him into prison where he died shortly afterwards.⁴² Having set his affairs in order, the Sultan sent Azam Humayun to reduce the fort of Gwalior, which was captured after a prolonged siege, and Raja Man Singh, whom Firishta describes as a man of "great valour and capacity," acknowledged the suzerainty of Delhi. Jalal fled towards Malwa, but on being coldly received by Mahmud Khilji, he proceeded towards Garh Kantak,⁴³ but on the way he was captured by the Zamindars of Gondwana, who resisted his movements and sent him in chains to Ibrahim. The royal captive was conveyed to the fortress of Hansi, but on his way to that abode of misery he was quietly assassinated by the king's orders.

The Sultan recalled Azam Humayun and the other nobles from Gwalior on mere suspicion, and cast him and his son Fatah Khan into prison, and deprived his other son Islam Khan of the governorship of Kara-Manikpur.⁴⁴

Azam's disgrace alarmed the other nobles who joined his banner and incited him to raise the standard of rebellion. So acute was the discontent caused by Ibrahim's policy that in a short time the rebels collected a large army which consisted of 40,000 cavalry, 500 elephants and a large body of infantry, while the royal forces numbered only 50,000. The hostile forces drew themselves in battle array, but withdrew to their camps when Shaikh Raju Bokhari, a holy man, offered

⁴² There is a suspicion that he was poisoned to death.

⁴³ Garra-Kantak (Garh Kantak) in Elliot's translation of the *Tarikh-i-Salatin-Afghana*. Elliot, V, p. 12.

⁴⁴ Ahmad Yadgar in his *Tarikh-i-Salatin-Afghana* speaks of him as governor of Agra.

to settle the dispute. The rebels demanded the release of Azam Humayun and agreed to disband their troops, if these conditions were fulfilled. When these terms were communicated to Ibrahim, he flew into a rage, and not only disapproved of the proposed terms of peace, but sent a *firman* to Dariya Khan Lohani and other nobles to take vigorous measures in order to exterminate the rebels. The combined forces of Bihar, Ghazipur, and Oudh marched against the rebels who took no steps to prevent them from effecting a junction. A desperate fight raged between the royalists and the insurgents of which a graphic account is given by the author of the *Makhzan-i-Afghana*.

"Dead bodies, heap upon heap, covered the field; and the number of heads lying upon the ground is beyond the reach of recollection. Streams of blood ran over the plain; and whenever for a length of time, a fierce battle took place in Hindustan, the old men always observed, that with this battle no other one was comparable; brothers fighting against brothers, fathers against sons, inflamed by mutual shame and innate bravery: bows and arrows were laid aside, and the carnage carried on with daggers, swords, knives and javelins."⁴⁵ At last, Islam Khan lay dead on the field of battle; Said Khan was captured and the rebels were defeated with heavy losses.

Mewar had by this time become the most powerful of the Rajputs states, and its ruler Rana Sanga was well-known for his prowess in battle all over Hindustan. For the invasion of Mewar,

Ibrahim organised a large army which was placed under such tried generals as Mian Husain Khan Zarbakhsha, Mian Khan-i-Khanan Farmuli, and Mian Maruf with Mian Makhan as commander-in-chief. When the royal army reached the Rana's territory, the Sultan wrote to Mian Mukhan asking him to imprison Mian Husain and Mian Maruf and send them to court. Mian Husain got scent of this foul design, and set at

⁴⁵ Dorn, *Makhzan*, p. 76.

naught all attempts made by Mian Makhan to catch hold of him. Alarmed for his safety, Husain opened negotiations with the Rana and went over to him with a thousand horsemen. Mian Maruf remained loyal to the Sultan in spite of the cruel treatment he meted out to his vassals. Mian Makhan proceeded to the field of battle at the head of a large force consisting of 30,000 horse and 300 elephants to encounter the Rajput host. The Hindus charged the Muslim army and repulsed it with heavy losses. In this plight, Mian Makhan received a proposal from Mian Husain expressing his willingness to join the imperial colours, if Mian Maruf were sent to him at midnight fully equipped for battle. The latter advanced towards the enemy's camp and was joined by the ungrateful traitor Husain. The combined forces made a surprise attack upon the Rana's army, and "the sound of horns and kettle drums withdrew the cotton from the ears of their senses, and the Rajput chieftains were dismayed." The Afghans fell upon the Rajputs with irresistible fury and killed a great many of them. The Rana, though wounded succeeded in effecting his escape, but his followers who were left on the field were put to the sword. Maruf and the treacherous Mian Husain were honoured by Ibrahim who "loaded them with a hundred expressions of favour and good will."⁴⁶

⁴⁶ None of our authorities except the *Tarikh-i-Salatim-i-Afghana*, the *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, and the *Tarikh-i-Daudi* mentions this expedition. Nizam-ud-din, Badaoni and Firishta are silent on the subject. We look in vain for a corroboration of this account in the Rajput chronicles. That there were frequent wars between Delhi and Mewar is established by Rajput evidence. But it is very difficult to form a definite opinion about the result of these wars, for neither the Rajput nor the Muslim chroniclers would record a defeat of their party. Speaking of war between Ibrahim and Rana Sanga, Tod writes: "Sanga organised his forces with which he always kept the field, and ere called to contend with the descendant of Timur, he had gained 18 pitched battles against the kings of Delhi and Malwa. In two of these he was opposed by Ibrahim Lodi in person, at Bakrol and Ghatoli: in which last

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Ibrahim now tried to destroy the feudal chieftains in his empire in order to strengthen his position, but the attempt recoiled on himself and led to his ruin. The cruel treatment he meted out to them has already been mentioned. The veteran Mian Bhua had fallen a victim to his wrath, and Azam Humayun had been treacherously assassinated in prison. Even the greatest barons trembled for their safety, and Dariya Khan, Khan-i-Jahan Lodi, and Husain Khan Farmuli, fearing lest similar fate should overtake them, broke out into open rebellion. Husain Khan Farmuli was assassinated in his bed by some holy men of Chanderi, and his tragic death made the Afghan nobles bitterly hostile to the Sultan and convinced them of his perfidious designs. Dariya Khan's son, Bahadur Khan, assumed the title of Muhammad Shah, struck coins in his name, and collected a large force with which he successfully resisted the attempts of the Sultan to crush him.⁴⁷ The baronial discontent reached its climax when Ibrahim cruelly treated the son of Daulat Khan Lodi. The latter was summoned to the court, but he excused himself on the ground that he would come later with the treasure of the state and sent his son Dilawar Khan to avert the wrath of the Sultan. He was taken to the prison where he was shown

battle the imperial forces were defeated with great slaughter, leaving a prisoner of the blood-royal to grace that triumph of Chittor."

Tod's *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan* edited by Crooke, I, p. 349.

From Rana Sanga's exploits mentioned in bardic chronicles and his enormous military resources—which are admitted even by Muslim writers—we may conclude with sufficient reason that the statement of Ahmad Yadgar regarding the victory of the Delhi forces over the Rana is apocryphal, unless it is corroborated from some other independent source.

⁴⁷ Muhammad Shah had a large force which consisted of 100,000 men according to the *Makhzan-i-Afghana* and *Firishta*. *Firishta* says, he held the fief of his father as far as Sambhal.

Dorn, *Makhzan*, p. 76.

Briggs, I, p. 597.



the victims of royal caprice suspended from the walls. To the young Afghan who trembled with fear at this awful spectacle, the Sultan observed: "Have you seen the condition of those who have disobeyed me?" Dilawar Khan who understood the warning these ominous words conveyed, bowed his head in profound submission and quietly escaped to his father to whom he communicated all that he had seen at the capital. Alarmed for his safety, Daulat Khan addressed through his son Dilawar Khan an invitation to Babur, the ruler of Kabul, to invade Hindustan.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ The accounts of four authorities greatly differ on this point. The *Makhzam* (p. 77) says, Daulat Khan formed an alliance with Ghazi Khan and other Amirs of the Punjab and through Alam Khan addressed an invitation to Babur. Firishta simply says, Daulat Khan, seeing no safety for his family, revolted from the king and solicited Babur, the Mughal Prince, who then reigned in Kabul, to attempt the conquest of Hindustan. The invasion of Babur was preceded by the arrival in India of Prince Alauddin (Alam Khan), who had fled from his brother Ibrahim Lodi, and was then residing at Kabul. Alam Khan proceeded towards Delhi and was defeated by Ibrahim.

Alam Khan was Ibrahim's uncle, who had been proclaimed king under the title of Alauddin.

Ahmad Yadgar says, Dilawar Khan was sent to Babur to invite him to invade Hindustan. Babur sent Jehangir Quli Khan with 2,000 Mughal horsemen to guard the roads and ferries. On Wednesday, 2nd Shawwal (July, 1526 A.D.) he started and reached Peshawar. Here Daulat Khan presented him with 10,000 gold ashrafis and 20 elephants. When Ibrahim came to know of these proceedings, he wrote to Daulat Khan to give up his absurd project. But the latter replied that his own actions had brought Babur to Hindustan. Having mastered the Punjab, the Mughals advanced towards Delhi which was besieged by the rebels. These were scattered by the Mughals and Babur prepared for the final encounter with Ibrahim Lodi.

Tarikh-i-Saliatin-ist-Afghana, Elliot, V. pp. 25—27.

The *Tarikh-i-Khan-i-Jahan Lodi* agrees with the *Makhzam* in saying that the invitation to Kabul was sent through Alam Khan. The latter was sent with a force to Hindustan and detaching himself from other Afghans, he marched upon Delhi at the head of 40,000 men. But he was defeated

Such a proposal was welcome to Babur who had long desired the conquest of Hindustan. Daulat Khan's real motive seems to have been to use the Chaghtai prince merely as a tool in establishing his own power in the Punjab. He was asked to invade Hindustan in order to place Alam Khan upon the throne of Delhi instead of Ibrahim, and Babur started from Kabul professedly with this object in view in 1524. He advanced upon Lahore where he found a Delhi army ready to encounter him. This was defeated, and Lahore easily came into Babur's hands. But Daulat Khan who wanted the Punjab for himself disapproved of these proceedings, and though openly submissive, he intended to part company with Babur. Babur, however, suspected no treachery, he trusted him and assigned to him the fiefs of Jalandhar and Sultanpur. But owing to his hostile intrigues, Daulat Khan soon fell into disgrace. He was deprived of his fiefs which were conferred upon his son Dilawar Khan. Babur now realised that he must organise and increase his resources before embarking upon the conquest of Hindustan, and after making arrangements for the government of the Punjab he returned to Kabul. Daulat soon appeared upon the scene, deprived his son of the fief of Sultanpur and drove out Alam Khan from Dipalpur. Alam Khan went to Kabul and laid his case before Babur. Babur made a treaty with him agreeing to place him upon the throne of Delhi, provided he left him in full possession of the Punjab. Alam Khan was sent to Hindustan with instructions to Babur's generals, but he was won over by Daulat Khan, who induced him to violate the treaty which he had concluded with the Mughal Prince. The two allies marched upon Delhi at the head of a large force. A surprise night attack on Ibrahim's camp resulted in the defeat of the latter, but next morning the Sultan rallied his men and charged the enemy with great force and drove them from the field

by Ibrahim. Then the author gives an account of the battle of Panipat.

Elliot, V, pp. 106-7.

Erskine, *History of India*, I, pp. 427—32.



with heavy slaughter.

Having disposed of the Uzbeks, who had threatened Balkh, Babur turned his attention towards Hindustan. The events of the last few months had convinced him that it was impossible to hold the Punjab permanently without crushing the Afghan power at Delhi. It was clear that no confidence could be placed in the Afghans, whose treachery had been proved beyond the possibility of doubt, and Babur decided to make a bold bid for the empire of Hindustan in his own person.

He started from Kabul with 12,000 men and reached the Punjab, where he was joined by Dilawar Khan, son of Daulat Khan Lodi. The advent of Babur greatly disturbed the public mind, and Daulat Khan, whom experience had convinced of the futility of resistance, offered submission and Babur with his accustomed chivalry pardoned him and confirmed him and his family in the possession of their villages. Having broken up the Afghan faction in the Punjab, Babur proceeded towards Delhi. He writes in his *Memoirs*: "Putting my foot in the stirrup of resolution and taking in my hand the reins of faith, I marched against Sultan Ibrahim, son of Sultan Sikandar, son of Sultan Bahlol Lodi Afghan in whose possession the city of Delhi and the kingdom of Hindustan at that time were." He had received promises of assistance from Rana Sangram Singh of Mewar, but the latter does not seem to have taken his share in the campaign. The famous battle of Panipat was fought on April 21, 1526, in which Ibrahim Lodi was utterly defeated.⁴⁹ Ibrahim was himself slain in battle after a desperate fight with five or six thousand of his bravest warriors. The success against the heavy odds of Delhi was due to the "skill of the leader and to the deadliness of his scientific combination of cavalry and artillery." The victory at Panipat destroyed the power of the Lodi dynasty and transferred the empire of Hindustan from the Afghans to the Timurids.

⁴⁹ A detailed account of this battle will be given in the chapter on Babur in another volume.



CHAPTER XVIII

CIVILIZATION OF THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES

"LET there be in you a nation summoning unto the good" is a divine injunction in the Quran. The Prophet of Arabia was not merely the apostle of a new creed, but also the founder and creator of a national military state, which after his death acquired formidable power. The followers of the Prophet deemed it their highest duty to wage war against the 'infidels' for the propagation of the true faith, and these wars were won, as Professor Margoliouth observes, in the first place by science, in the second by discipline, in the third by enthusiasm.¹ The Prophet was not altogether unacquainted with the military art, and during his life-time planned and superintended campaigns against his enemies. The whole system of observances—the five daily prayers, the fast of Ramzan, and several other rites of a puritanical nature disciplined the habits of the religio-political community of which the Prophet was the recognised head and leader. The zeal of the rank and file was maintained at its highest pitch by the conviction that they were God's elect, destined to fulfil an important mission in the world. The Muslim jurists of later times laid down clearly that the object of the military organisation was war against the infidels, *viz.*, *jihad* which literally means "effort or striving"² in the cause

¹ Margoliouth, *Mohammedanism*, p. 75.

² Hughes, *Dictionary of Islam*, p. 243.

Khudabakhsh, *Orient under the Caliphs*, p. 277.

Jihad is a religious war with those who are not believers in the mission of Muhammad. It is an incumbent religious duty, established in the Quran and the tradition as a divine institution, and enjoined, especially for the purpose of advancing Islam and of repelling evil from Muslims.

of religion with a view to converting the *Darul Harb* (infidel lands) into *Darul Islam* (Muslim lands). The conquered people were entirely at the mercy of the victors, and though the Prophet showed indulgence to the Christians and the Jews,³ his followers were filled with the desire to suppress all forms of dissent. The vanquished foes were either treated with great cruelty and put to death, or compelled to embrace Islam, or had to accept the position of *Zimmis* and pay a capitation-tax. To use Professor Margoliouth's words, the Prophet's chief experiment in constructive politics was the institution of tolerated cults according to which a section of the population was granted a special status and was allowed to live on certain conditions.⁴ Great disabilities were imposed on the "infidels," and in the legislation of the pious Omar II there is a decree which laid down that the tax on trade in the case of a Christian or Jewish trader should be double of that paid by a Muslim.⁵ The annals of Tabari contain a proclamation issued by the Khalifa Al-Mutawakkil which lays down rules to regulate the dress which the Christians were to wear and the nature of the saddles in which they were to ride. Kremer refers to another decree of Omar which rigorously excluded all non-Muslims from public employment in the state.⁶ This spirit of intolerance, which was partly

Hughes, Dictionary of Islam, pp. 243—48.

Darul Harb, according to the *Ghiyas-ul-lughat*, is a country belonging to the infidels which has not been subdued by Islam.

Darul Islam is a country in which the edicts of Islam are fully promulgated.

Hughes, pp. 69-70.

The Encyclopaedia of Islam, pp. 917-18.

³ The Prophet's character to the Jews at Medina is a case in point.

Ameer Ali, The Spirit of Islam, pp. 175, 245.

Hogarth, A History of Arabia, pp. 41-42.

⁴ Margoliouth, Early Development of Mohammedanism, Hibbert Lectures, p. 99.

⁵ Margoliouth, Early Development of Mohammedanism; p. 99.

⁶ Orient under the Caliphs, p. 211.

due to religious zeal and partly to political necessity, was reflected in the institutions which the Khalifas devised for the governance of the territories in their charge, and these institutions were afterwards copied all over the Muslim world. The income of the state according to the orthodox jurists consisted of (1) the *Jeziya* from the subject populations, (2) the *Ushr*⁷ or 1/10th from the Muslims who held land of the state, (3) a tax on trade, (4) natural products taken from the subject population, (5) tribute from foreign powers, (6) 1/5th of the spoils acquired in war, (7) and the *khiraj*⁸ or land-tax from non-Muslims who held land. The officers of the Khilafat were all Muslims who followed a policy of persecution and unjust exclusion, which in the long run proved fatal to the state, and Kremer rightly observes that "this pious ruler (Omar II), the ideal of the orthodox *Ulama* and the populace destroyed the very foundations of his government by trying to restore conditions unsuited to the spirit of the age."⁹ Muslim rulers in other lands who followed a similar policy reaped the same consequences.

The advent of the Muslims in India marked the dawn of a new age. The history of the political conquest has been described in the fore-going pages. The earliest Muslims who came to India at the beginning of the eighth century were the Arabs, who were far more civilised than the Turks who followed them two centuries later. The Hindu society, which had to bear the brunt of the Arab invasion, was in a state of decline. A century of political confusion after Harsa's death had brought into existence a number of petty states which were often arrayed in hostile camps. Though politically weak, India had lost none of her philosophical and spiritual grandeur, and when the Arabs came in contact

⁷ The *Ushr* is one-tenth given to the Muslim state.

⁸ The *Khiraj* was originally applied to a land-tribute from non-Muslim tribes (Hedaya, II, p. 204), but it is now used for a tax or land-rent due to the state. Hughes, pp. 655, 269.

⁹ See Kremer's description of the Caliphate. Orient under the Caliphs, pp. 218—40.



with the Hindus, they were impressed by the profundity and sublimity of Hindu philosophical speculation. Their own civilisation seemed small in comparison with this ancient culture, so varied and wonderful, in spite of the political vicissitudes of the time. Al-Beruni has vividly portrayed the condition of Hindu society which he saw with his own eyes, and from his account we can form some idea of the high degree of civilisation attained by the Hindus. But the philosophical and religious spirit of the Hindu made him supremely indifferent to political revolutions, and consequently deprived him of that energy and capacity for practical action, which alone could have enabled him to deal with such powerful enemies as the Turks. The vast bulk of the Indian people had allowed their numerous invaders to pass, in patient, deep disdain, and when the Muslims came to India, they adopted an attitude of similar indifference. The warrior class of India, unrivalled in the history of the world for its chivalry, devotion to war, truth and honour, was torn by dissensions and could never present a united front to the foreigners. The Rajput was humbled; his political power was destroyed, and his lofty pedigree was treated with scant regard by the alien conquerors. But this conquest was merely physical, somewhat akin to the conquest of the Romans over the Greeks. The grand spiritual heritage of India remained undisturbed, and the Hindu mind felt instinctive repulsion for the Turks, who had no culture to boast of, and who were actuated as much by love of plunder and conquest as by iconoclastic zeal. Much stress has been laid upon the simplicity of the Muslim creed, and it has been said that its essentially rationalistic character had a great attraction for the Hindus of certain classes, who had been the victims of class arrogance and selfishness.¹⁰

¹⁰ Arnold, *The Preaching of Islam*, p. 413.

Farquhar says, the influence of Islam seems scarcely traceable in the literature of India before 1400 A.D. He chooses 1350 as the year when such influences began. At best, it cannot be put earlier than 1300 A.D.

It is true, the creed of Islam, so completely devoid of theological subtleties, demands no great power of intellectual comprehension and the principal doctrine which it enunciates is universally accepted. But the monotheistic idea of God—which is the cardinal doctrine of Muslim theology—was well known to the Hindus long before it was preached by the illustrious Prophet of Arabia. It is boldly set forth in the Upanisads and we find it attaining a high development in the various Bhakti cults, some of which are very old. The vedantist philosophers of the ninth century had expounded it with rare ability and acumen, and the echoes of the controversies between them and their Buddhist rivals were heard even in the middle ages in the monasteries and academies of the land.¹¹ The elaborate ceremonial purity which was inseparably associated with orthodox Hinduism strangely contrasted with the habits of the Muslim conquerors and served as a fresh cause of antipathy between the two peoples.¹² The progress

An Outline of Religious Literature of India, p. 284.

¹¹ Al-Beruni who was gifted with a highly critical and scientific mind thus writes of the Hindu belief in God:—

"The Hindus believe with regard to God that He is one, eternal, without beginning and end, acting by free will, almighty, allwise, living, giving life, ruling, preserving; one who in his sovereignty is unique, beyond all likeness and unlikeness, and that He does not resemble anything nor does anything resemble Him."

He goes on to say:—

"They call him *Iswara*; i.e., self-sufficing, beneficent, who gives without receiving. They consider the unity of God as absolute but that everything beside God which may appear as a unity is really a plurality of things. The existence of God they consider as a real existence, because everything that exists through Him. It is not impossible to think that the existing beings are *not* and that He is, but it is impossible to think that He is *not* and that they are."

Sachau, Al-Beruni's India, pp. 27, 31.

¹² Al-Beruni clearly expresses this view and it is endorsed by Ibn Batuta who visited India in the 14th century.

Al-Beruni writes of the Hindus of his day:—

"On the contrary, all their fanaticism is directed against those who do not belong to them—against all foreigners. They



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of Islam in India was due very largely not to its doctrinal simplicity, but to the fact that it was the religion of the dominant power, which sometimes enforced it at the point of the sword among the subject races. Motives of personal gain such as the desire to obtain high office in the state sometimes led men to abandon their own faith. Daily contact with Muslims who naturally wielded great influence and power and controlled the wealth of the community must have induced a large number of people to accept the doctrines of their faith, but in many cases such allegiance must have been merely nominal.¹³ Another reason which might have led some people to embrace Islam was the degrading position assigned to them in the Hindu social system which made invidious distinctions between man and man, but their number must have been infinitesimally small. Voluntary conversions to Islam, grounded on the appreciation of its tenets, were few and far between, for neither the temptations of office nor the offers of monetary reward could overcome the repugnance which the Hindus felt towards those who had deprived them of their independence and treated their religion with open

call them *mleccha*, i.e., impure, and forbid having any connection with them, be it by inter-marriage or any other kind of relationship, or by sitting, eating, and drinking with them, because thereby, they think they would be polluted. They consider as impure anything which touches the fire and water of a foreigner; and no household can exist without these two elements. Besides, they never desire that a thing which has been polluted should be purified and thus recovered, as under ordinary circumstances, if anybody or anything has become unclean, he or it would strive to regain the state of purity. They are not allowed to receive anybody who does not belong to them, even if he wished it, or was inclined to their religion. This, too, renders any connection with them quite impossible, and constitutes the widest gulf between us and them."

Sachau, *Al Beruni's India*, I, pp. 19-20.

¹³ It will be remembered that during the reign of Akbar, Rajas Man Singh and Todar Mal refused to enlist in the *Din-i-Ilahi*. The former was related to the emperor, but he gave a curt refusal. The latter, as Abul Fazl tells us, was wholly uninfluenced by Islamic ideas.

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contempt. So deep-rooted is the conservatism of the Hindus that even in our own times when class consciousness is wide awake in the lower strata of our society, voluntary conversions to Islam are rare in spite of the fact that admission to that great brotherhood implies complete equality with the highest among the faithful. For nearly five centuries the Hindus and Muslims existed as distinct units in the state. There were persecutions, partly religious and partly political, and a stubborn resistance was offered by the Hindus who had not altogether lost their manliness and vigour. No voluntary marriages are recorded between royal families, and the case of Rana Mal Bhatti's daughter, who was forcibly snatched away by Tughluq Shah in the fourteenth century, left bitter memories behind. The marriage tended to divide and not to unite the Hindus and Muslims, and the offspring of this union, Sultan Firuz Tughluq, was a bigot in whom the Hindus found a most uncompromising opponent of their faith.

The Muslim state in India, as elsewhere, was a theocracy. The king was Caesar and Pope combined in one, but his authority in religious matters was strictly limited by the Holy Law. "He is the shadow of God upon earth to whose refuge we are to fly when oppressed by injury from the unforeseen occurrences of life."¹⁴ But he is merely to carry out God's will, and the civil law which he administers is to be subordinated to the canon law. In such a state, naturally the priestly class will have a preponderating voice. The Muslim kings of Hindustan were sovereign in their own person; they struck coins and caused the *khutba* to be read in their names, though some of them invoked the Khalifa's aid to cement their title as was done by Iltutmish, Muhammad Tughluq, and Firuz Tughluq. The state rested

¹⁴ Thompson, *Practical Philosophy of the Muhammadan People*, p. 377. (This is a translation of the *Akhlaq Jalali*.)

Ameer Ali, *The Spirit of Islam*, p. 261.

He quotes from Imam Fakhruddin's remarks on the reciprocal rights of sovereigns and subjects. Also see Sarkar's *Studies in Mughal India*, p. 310.



upon the support of the military class which consisted largely of the followers of the faith. Their fanaticism was stirred up by the '*Ulama*' who impressed upon them the duty of fighting under the sacred banner by telling them that death on the field of battle would be rewarded with the honours of martyrdom. Besides the love of adventure and the hope of material advantage, the prospect of posthumous canonisation in case they died in battle led many an ardent spirit to risk his life in the cause. The '*Ulama*' naturally came to possess enormous influence in such a state. The extirpation of idolatry, the extinction of every form of dissent from the accepted dogma, the conversion of the infidel population—these came to be looked upon as the functions of an ideal Muslim state. Most of the Muslim rulers attempted to approximate to this ideal of the orthodox canonists according to their lights and opportunities. Those who tried to meet their expectations were praised lavishly by historians who were mostly members of the class of '*Ulama*'. But among the earlier kings in India Alauddin struck a new line. Like Akbar after him, he was opposed to ecclesiastical interference in matters of state. His political theory is clearly set forth in the words which he addressed to Qazi Mughis whom he consulted about the legal position of the sovereign in the state. Fully aware of the evils of a church-ridden monarchy, he enunciated a new doctrine of sovereignty and claimed to be "God's vicar in things temporal, as is the priest in things spiritual." The people acquiesced in this doctrine merely because the political situation of the time needed a strong man at the helm of the state, who would repel the Mongol attacks and keep order at home. Muhammad Tughluq's rationalism on which Barani pours his cold scorn brought about a war between him and the '*Ulama*' with the result that the latter conspired against him and thwarted all his plans. Under his weak-kneed successor they easily gained the upper hand, and persuaded him to adjust the institutions of the state in accordance with the principles laid down in the Quran. The taxes were

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reduced to the number prescribed in the Law;¹⁵ and the official agency was freely used to put down heresy and infidelity. After the period of anarchy which followed the death of Firuz, when the empire regained a settled form, the '*Ulama*' recovered their ascendancy; and under Sikandar Lodi a campaign of bitter persecution was revived against the Hindus. On the whole, during this period the '*Ulama*' continued to exercise much influence on political affairs. Indeed, it required an extraordinary strength of will to discard their advice and follow a line of action in opposition to the traditions and dogmas of the orthodox church. That the influence of the priestly order was injurious to the interests of the state cannot be denied.

The state imposed great disabilities upon the non-Muslims. Forcible conversions were ordered, but they were neither frequent nor systematic owing to the pressure of war and the recurrence of Mongol raids which often compelled the suspension of all other activities of the administration. The non-Muslims, technically called the *Zimmis*, had to pay a poll-tax called the *Jeziya* for the protection of their lives and property.¹⁶ It was a sort of commutation money which they had to

¹⁵ *Fatubat-i-Firuz Shahi*, Elliot, p. 377.

Sirat-i-Firuz Shahi, Allahabad University MS., p. 118.

¹⁶ According to the Hanafi doctors *Jeziya* is paid by the *Zimmis* as a compensation for being spared from death. By the payment of the *Jeziya* the non-Muslims purchase their lives and escape death. Agnides, *Muhammadian Theories of Finance*, LXX, pp. 398, 407. This may not be accepted on all hands. The correct view seems to be that the *Jeziya* was a military tax levied upon the *Zimmis*.

The capitation-tax which is levied by a Muslim ruler upon subjects who are of a different faith, but claim protection (*aman*) is founded upon a direct injunction of the Quran:—

"Make war upon such of those to whom the scriptures have been given, as believe not in God or in the last day, and forbid not that which God and his apostles have forbidden, and who profess not the profession of truth, until they pay tribute out of their hand and they be humbled."

Hughes, *Dictionary of Islam*, p. 248.



pay in lieu of military service. Humility and submissiveness are mentioned as their duties in the sacred law. Forcible conversion is not allowed in the Quran¹⁷ which says: "Let there be no compulsion in religion. Wilt thou compel men to become believers? No soul can believe, but by the persuasion of God." Arnold emphatically states that the existence of Christian sects and communities in countries governed by Muslims is evidence of the fact that they have enjoyed toleration, and that the persecutions which they have had to suffer on occasions have been due to some special or local circumstances rather than to a deliberate religious policy.¹⁸ This view is supported by Ameer Ali who states the Muslims position in his admirable work, "The Spirit of Islam."¹⁹ It may be conceded at once that the Prophet forbade conversion by force and enjoined preaching and persuasion as the sole method

¹⁷ Again in Chapter CIX in the Quran the Prophet says:—

"O unbelievers, I will not worship that which ye worship; nor will ye worship that which I worship. Neither do ye worship that which I worship. Ye have your religion, and I my religion."

Sale, *Al Quran*, p. 503.

In Chapter II the Prophet says: "Let there be no violence in religion. Now is right direction manifestly distinguished from deceit: Whoever, therefore, shall deny Tagut, and believe in God, he shall surely take hold on a strong handle, which shall not be broken; God is He Who heareth and seeth." This passage was particularly addressed to some of the Prophet's first disciples who, having sons that had been brought up in idolatry or Judaism, would oblige them to embrace Islam by force.

Ibid., p. 31.

The Prophet has said: 'Adhere to those who forsake you; speak truth to your own heart; do good to every one that does ill to you.' Arnold, *The Preaching of Islam*, p. 420.

The Prophet says clearly that neither Jew nor Christian should be disturbed in his religion as long as he paid the tax.

For Zimmis see Hughes, *Dictionary of Islam*, pp. 710—13. *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, p. 420.

¹⁸ Arnold, *The Preaching of Islam*, p. 420.

¹⁹ Ameer Ali, *The Spirit of Islam*, pp. 246—48.

of propagating the faith, but his commands were not carried out by his zealous followers.²⁰ Instances are not rare in which the non-Muslims were treated with great severity. They were not allowed to enlist in the army even if they wished to do so. The practice of their religious rites even with the slightest publicity was not allowed, and cases are on record of men who lost their lives for doing so. Some of these kings were so bigoted that they did not allow any new temple to be built or an old one to be repaired.²¹ There were others like Sikandar Lodi who were so intolerant of idolatry as to order a wholesale demolition of temples. The principle of toleration under Muslim domination in India in the early middle ages as in Mediaeval Europe was not commonly observed. A liberal-minded ruler like Muhammad Tughluq would be traduced and condemned by the *Ulama* and charged with bartering away the honour of Islam. What the orthodox party wanted was conformity to their interpretation of the law, no matter what the consequences might be.

The Islamic state fostered luxury among the members of the ruling class. The highest offices in the state were held by Muslims, and elevation to positions of honour was generally determined by royal will and not by merit. The easy acquisition of enormous wealth and the participation in the festivities of the court led to great vices, and the Muslims towards the close of the fourteenth century lost their old vigour and manliness. The early Muslims who served Iltutmish, Balban and Alauddin were soldier-martyrs who cheerfully braved risks for the glory of Islam but their descendants, who had no inducement to work, degenerated into mediocres, who had neither the

Effects on the
people.

²⁰ In recent times Maulvi Niyamat Ullah was stoned to death by the Afghan government for certain heretical opinions.

Shortly afterwards two simple Qadian shopkeepers were stoned to death in the presence of the Superintendent of Police and fifteen constables.

²¹ *Fatuh-at-i-Firuz Shahi*, Elliot, III, pp. 380-81.

ability nor the enthusiasm of their ancestors. The partiality of the state towards them destroyed their spirit of independence, and the large *Khanqabs* or charity establishments of which Ibn Batuta and Shams-i-Siraj Afif have given detailed accounts dispensed with the necessity of earning their livelihood and made them hangers-on the state, utterly devoid of self-respect, energy, or initiative. As the Muslims were few in number, they escaped the rough toil which was the inevitable lot of the average non-Muslim husbandman. They held land and paid only one-tenth as tax (*ushr*) to the state and could thus enjoy a degree of affluence to which non-Muslims in the empire could never aspire. The effects of Muslim domination upon the Hindus were of a different kind. They fretted and chafed against the disabilities imposed upon them. The Muslim state, which was surrounded by hostile and half-subdued races, found it necessary to guard itself against a recrudescence of Hindu revolts and conspiracies and, therefore, adopted a severe policy to crush oppositions. They were overtaxed, and Zia Barani writes that Alauddin took from the Hindus of the Doab 50 per cent of their produce. The historian whose attitude is that of a typical mediaeval bigot writes with great exultation of the poverty, wretchedness, and degradation of the Hindus. They had no inducement to accumulate wealth, and the bulk of them led a life of poverty, want, and struggle, earning just sufficient to maintain themselves and their family. The standard of living among the subject classes was low, and the incidence of taxation fell mainly upon them. They were excluded from high offices and in such circumstances of distrust and humiliation, the Hindus never got an opportunity of developing their political genius to its fullest extent. Commenting upon the moral and economic decay of the subject people consequent upon the Muslim political system, Professor Jadunath Sarkar writes:—

“When a class are publicly depressed and harassed by law and executive caprice alike, they

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merely content themselves with dragging on an animal existence. With every generous instinct of the soul crushed out of them, with intellectual culture merely adding a keen edge to their sense of humiliation, the Hindus could not be expected to produce the utmost of what they were capable; their lot was to be hewers of wood and drawers of water to their masters, to bring grist to the fiscal mill, to develop a low cunning and flattery as the only means of saving what they could of the fruits of their own labour. Amidst such social conditions, the human hand and the human mind cannot achieve their best; the human soul cannot soar to the highest pitch. The barrenness of the Hindu intellect and the meanness of spirit of the Hindu upper classes are the greatest condemnation of Muhammadan rule in India. The Islamic political tree, judged by its fruit was an utter failure.”²²

It is difficult to agree with the view expressed by the distinguished historian of Aurangzeb. It is true, in the early middle ages there was much strife and bloodshed, and the wealth, honour, and religion of the subject races were treated with little regard by the members of the ruling class. It is not necessary to recount the wrongs, oppressions, and injustices of the administration. They are writ large upon the pages of history, and even the most superficial reader cannot fail to be struck by them. But they cannot be predicated of Muslim rule as a whole. During the reigns of Akbar and Jahangir, some of the greatest Hindus were born—great poets, philosophers, statesmen and warriors—who shed lustre upon the epoch in which they lived. In the pre-Mughal days arose the great teachers of the Bhakti cult like Ramanand, Chaitanya, and Nanak who gave the world their message of good will and hope. The age witnessed also the rise of a number of really first class poets who enriched the

²² Sarkar, *History of Aurangzeb*, III, pp. 296-97.

literature of their country by their noble productions. It is a striking fact that the virility and vigour of the Hindu race has survived the shocks of the numerous foreign invasions, and the presence of men like Ramānand, Chaitanya, Vidyapati, Tulsi Das and Todar Mal disproves the view that the Hindu intellect had become sterile under the stress of Muslim conquest. The Hindu mind soared to the highest pitch and gave expression to the noblest truth without caring for Muslim patronage. The philosophical and literary works of the Vaisnavite reformers and other secular writers who flourished in Mithila, Bengal, and the Deccan, constitute a legacy which the Hindu race will always treasure with pride and gratitude.

The Muslims were the favoured children of the state.²³ As everything depended upon the valour and strength of the faithful, the state accorded to them a preferential treatment. From time to time concessions had to be made to their religious demands by the state, and their interests had to be consulted before all others. Social distinctions prevailed among the Muslims, and some of the kings never appointed any but men of noble birth to high offices. Balban, who was highly punctilious in observing the etiquette of the court never countenanced upstarts, and on one occasion refused a large gift from a man named Fakhru who had amassed a large fortune by means of usury and monopolies.²⁴ Wine-drinking and gambling seem to have been the common vices in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Balban issued an edict prohibiting the use of spirituous liquor, and the example of the martyr Prince who drank wine with moderation and never encouraged any kind of foolish talk in his presence had a salutary effect upon the manners and morals of the society which gathered around

²³ For social organisation under the Musalmans, see Encyclopaedia of Islam, pp. 484—86.

²⁴ Briggs, I, p. 250.

him at Lahore. Alauddin also adopted drastic measures to combat the evil of drink and forbade gambling and all kinds of social intercourse among the nobles. As long as he lived, he strictly enforced his rules, but after his death the usual laxity prevailed. A small band of the old Alai nobles wondered at the depravity of Qutb-ud-din Mubarak's court; and Barani writes that the price of a boy, or handsome eunuch, or beautiful damsel varied from 500 to 1,000 and 2,000 *tankas*.²⁵ But the social tastes improved considerably under Tughluq Shah and his illustrious son Muhammad Tughluq, both of whom were free from the grosser vices of the age. The character of the state did not wholly deteriorate even under Firuz Tughluq, though its military vigour declined and, barring a few exceptions, mediocrity took the place of genius in all departments of the administration. The pomp and magnificence of the state was fully maintained, and Afif tells us that on every Friday after public service, musicians athletes, story-tellers, numbering about two or three thousand used to assemble in the palace and entertain the populace with their performances.²⁶ Slavery was common, and slaves of ability like Khan-i-Jahan Maqbul could rise to the highest position in the state. As wealth increased in Muslim society, the hold of religion became somewhat weaker, and superstition and ignorance began to gain ground. Firuz in his *Fatuhāt-i-Firuz Shahi* speaks of a number of heretical sects which he suppressed with a high hand, and the leaders of which he caused to be imprisoned, or put to death. The liberty of women was restricted; they were not allowed to go to visit the tombs of holy men outside the city, and Firuz showed his intolerance by prescribing drastic penalties against those women who disobeyed his edict.²⁷

²⁵ Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi*, Biblioth. Ind., p. 384.

²⁶ Shams-i-Siraj Afif, *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi*, Biblioth., Ind., p. 367.

²⁷ *Fatuhāt*, Elliot, III, pp. 370—80.



The Hindus had become degenerate with the loss of political power. Al-Beruni, writing in the eleventh century, speaks of their inordinate pride and self-conceit which is so great that if you tell them of any science or scholar in Khorasan and Persia, they will think you to be both an ignoramus and a liar.²⁸ They despised the Muslims and called them *mlecchas* or impure persons and forbade having any connection with them (foreigners), be it by inter-marriage or any other kind of relationship, because they thought that by doing so they would be polluted.²⁹ They maintained a high standard of truth and honour and preserved intact their intellectual greatness.³⁰ Rashid-ud-din in his *Jam-ut-tawarikh* speaks of the Hindus in terms of high praise. The Indians, he says, are naturally inclined to justice, and never depart from it in their actions. Their good faith, honesty and fidelity to their engagements are well known and they are so famous for these qualities that people flock to their country from every side; hence the country is flourishing and their condition is prosperous. This aristocratic society was disturbed by the Muslim conquest, and though its intellectual and spiritual leaders lived in a state of splendid isolation, the masses felt the change of masters. Political subjection was followed by social degradation. They were looked upon as the worst enemies of the alien government that had been set up in their midst. With rare exceptions they were invariably excluded from high offices, and toleration was granted to them only on condition of paying the *Jeziya*. During the reign of Alauddin, the Hindus of the Doab, largely for political reasons, were treated with severity and the *khuts*, *balahars*, *chowdhris* and *muqaddams* were reduced to a state of abject misery. Qazi Mughis-ud-din's opinion about the position of the Hindus in a Muslim state,

²⁸ Sachau, *Al Beruni's India*, I, pp. 19-20.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

³⁰ Rashid-ud-din completed his work in 1310 A.D.

which has been explained in a previous chapter, was the view of the average mediæval canonist and was acted upon by Muslim rulers in normal circumstances. "No Hindu could hold up his head, and in their houses no sign of gold or silver *tankas* or *jitals* was to be seen, and *chowedhris* and *khuts* had not means enough to ride on horseback to find weapons, to get fine clothes, or to indulge in betel." So great was the destitution of these people, writes Barani, that their wives went to serve in the houses of Muslims.³¹ The state encouraged conversions, and in describing the reign of Qutb-ud-din Mubarak Shah, Ibn Batuta, writes that when a Hindu wished to become a Muslim, he was brought before the Sultan who gave him rich robes and bangles of gold.³² The orthodox party had such a great aversion for the Hindus that Barani on seeing their slightly improved condition under Qutb-ud-din Mubarak Shah, which was due partly to the relaxation of the rules of Alauddin and partly to the pro-Hindu policy of Khusrau, laments that the "Hindus again found pleasure and happiness and were beside themselves with joy."³³ There was no active persecution under the first two Tughluqs,³⁴ but Firuz reversed the policy of his predecessors. He crowned his measures against them by levying the *Jeziya* upon the Brahmanas, who had hitherto been exempt. Afif writes that in Delhi it was of three kinds,—(1) forty *tankas*; (2) twenty *tankas*; (3) ten *tankas*. When the Brahmanas remonstrated against this step, the Sultan reduced the scale of assessment.³⁵ The Hindus profited much by

³¹ Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi*. Biblioth. Ind., p. 288.

³² Ibn Batuta, Paris ed., III, pp. 197-98.

³³ Ibn Batuta, Paris ed., III, p. 385.

³⁴ Ibn Batuta says, Daulatabad was once farmed to a Hindu for 17 crores by Muhammad Tughluq. Tome IV, p. 49.

³⁵ Elliot has mistranslated the passage in the original text. He says the tax of each man was fixed at ten *tankas* and fifty *kanis* which is not in agreement with the text. Smith (Oxford



the disorders that followed the death of Firuz, but when the Lodis established their power, they were again persecuted by Sikandar, and although there was no economic distress, they had to live like helots within the empire.

Ibn Batuta has given us an interesting picture of India in the fourteenth century, and from his narrative we learn a great deal about the social customs and manners of the time. The learned class had lost its prestige, and Muhammad Bin Tughluq, who was terribly stern in administering justice, freely punished Shaikhs and Maulvis for their misconduct. Slavery was common, but the state encouraged the practice of manumission.³⁶ To keep slave girls was a recognised fashion of the time, and Badr-i-Chach, the famous poet, had to offer on one occasion 900 *dinars* for a beautiful and accomplished girl. The traveller praises the hospitality of the Hindus and observes that caste rules were strictly observed. The Hindus were treated as inferior to the Muslims. When a Hindu came to offer his presents to the Sultan in the *Durbar*, the Hajibs shouted out '*Hadak Allah*' or may God bring you to the right path. Moral offences were severely punished and even members of the royal family were dealt with like ordinary men. Prince Masud's mother was stoned to death in accordance with the Law for committing adultery. The use of wine was interdicted, and the author of the *Masalik-al-*

History of India, p. 251) accepts Elliot's translation and incorrectly says that the tax was fixed at ten *tankas* and fifty *jitals*. The Calcutta text of Afif has

فرمان فرمود که در نقری دهگان تنک پنجاه گانی بمستانند -

which means that ten *tankas* of 50 *kanis* each should be taken. This made a reduction of 14 *kanis* per *tanka* which is certainly not an adequate concession.

The *hamza* over the word '*tanka*' in the Calcutta text shows that for one *tanka* fifty *kanis* were to be paid. If the *hamza* is wrongly placed, the passage might be interpreted to mean that instead of ten *tankas* fifty *kanis* were to be paid. This would be a substantial reduction.

³⁶ Ibn Batuta, III, p. 236.

absar writes that the inhabitants of India have little taste for wine and content themselves with betel leaves.³⁷ The same authority says, the people love to hoard money and whenever a man is asked about the extent of his property, he replies: "I do not know, but I am the second or third of my family who has laboured to increase the treasure which an ancestor deposited in a certain cavern, or in certain holes, and I do not know how much it amounts to."³⁸ Men buried their wealth as they do even now, and accepted nothing but coined money in their daily transactions. Ibn Batuta has given an interesting account of the law of debt as it prevailed in the fourteenth century, and he is supported by Marco Polo who visited India before him. The creditors resorted to the royal court to seek the king's protection in order to recover their money. When a big Amir was in debt, the creditor blocked his way to the royal palace and shouted in order to implore the Sultan's help. The debtor in this embarrassing situation either paid or made a promise to pay at some future date. Sometimes the Sultan interfered and enforced payments.³⁹ The practice of *Sati* and self-destruction was in vogue, but no woman could become a *Sati* without obtaining the king's permission.⁴⁰

³⁷ Masalik, Elliot, III, p. 581.

³⁸ Masalik, Elliot, III, p. 584.

Moreland, India at the Death of Akbar, p. 284.

He says, the accumulation of large hoards was essentially a feature of Hindu civilisation.

³⁹ Ibn Batuta, III, p. 411.

Yule, Marco Polo, II, pp. 279—80.

⁴⁰ Ibn Batuta, III, pp. 137—39.

Men drowned themselves in the Ganges and looked upon it as an act of piety. This was called *jal-samadhi*.

Dimishqi who wrote prior to Ibn Batuta also mentions the practice of drowning as an act of religious merit.

The vow of *sallekhana* among the Jains was taken with a similar motive. Men gradually left all food and died slowly.

Riding on an ass was looked upon with contempt as it is today, and a man was flogged and paraded on an ass when he was punished for some offence proved against him.⁴¹ Men believed in witchcraft, magic and miracles as they did in mediæval Europe, and the performances of the Hindu ascetics called *jogis* by Ibn Batuta were witnessed even by the Sultan. Charity was practised on a large scale, and men endowed large *khanqahs* (charity-house) where food was distributed *gratis* to the poor. Though the Sultan's purity of character had a wholesome effect on Muslim society, it does not appear that the sanctity of the marriage tie was always recognised. A man like Ibn Batuta married more than four times in a most irresponsible manner and abandoned his wives one after another.⁴² The education of women was not altogether neglected, and the traveller writes that when he reached Hanaur, he found there 13 schools for girls and 23 for boys—a thing which agreeably surprised him.⁴³

Though women were treated with great respect, the birth of a girl was looked upon as an inauspicious

Cosmographie de Chams-ed-din, Abou Abdallah Mohammed, ed. Dimichqui, p. 174.

Lewis Rice, Mysore and Coorg from the Inscriptions, p. 185.

The Arab writer Abu Zaid also speaks of the practice of self-destruction. He writes, when a person, either man or woman, becomes old and the senses are enfeebled, he begs some one of his family to throw him into fire or to drown him in water. Elliot, I, p. 10.

⁴¹ Ibn Batuta, III, p. 441.

⁴² Ibid., III, pp. 337—38.

He married four times in the Maldivé Islands. He was already married to Hur Nasab, daughter of Jalal-ud-din Ahsan Shah. She was left by Ibn Batuta, for he writes in one place: "I do not know what has become of her and the daughter she bore me." III, pp. 337—38.

⁴³ Ibn Batuta, IV, p. 67.

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event, as is illustrated by Amir Khusrau's lament over the birth of his daughter. Seclusion was recommended for women, and Amir Khusrau in his advice to his daughter asks her not to leave the thread of the spinning wheel and always to keep her face towards the wall of the house and her back towards the door so that nobody might be able to look at her.⁴⁴ We may regret the poet's inadequate appreciation of womanly dignity but the mention of the spinning wheel as a preserver of female chastity by a courtier and poet laureate is an agreeable surprise.

The customs and manners of the people of the Deccan were in many respects different from those in the north. Several inscriptions record the prevalence of trial by ordeal. Self-sacrifice and *Sati* prevailed. The practice of *Sati* was a recognized institution under all dynasties, and stone obelisks commemorating the horrid custom are still to be found in the southern country in many places. Men took vows of self-destruction, and we find cases recorded of chiefs who vowed to give their heads to God, if their army triumphed in battle.⁴⁵ Several instances are recorded of men and women losing their heads in pursuance of some vow taken.⁴⁶ The Brahmanas were treated with great respect, and the *guru* was held in high esteem. The dues payable from Brahmanas were touched and remitted. Knowledge was assiduously cultivated, and wonderful feats of memory were performed. In 1223 one Visvanath is mentioned

⁴⁴ The poet expressed his disappointment in his poem *Laila Majanu*, in these words: "I wish you were not born, and if you were, it would have been better if you had been a boy, No one can alter the decrees of fate. But my father was born of a woman and I am also born of a woman." The advice which the poet gave his daughter is also contained in his poem *Laila Majanu*.

Shibli, *Shair-ul-Ajam*, Pt. II, p. 123.

⁴⁵ Lewis Rice, *Mysore and Coorg from the Inscriptions*, Gd. 41, p. 187.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 187.

SK 249, MK 12.

who could write letters with both hands and perform a hundred mnemonic feats to the astonishment of the learned.⁴⁷ Regarding the people of Malabar in his own day, Ibn Batuta says that among Hindu princes in this part of the country the law of inheritance does not allow one's children to succeed to their father's estate. Even male heirs of the body are superseded by sister's sons.⁴⁸ This account is corroborated by Zain-ud-din, an Arab chronicler, who wrote in the time of Ali Adil Shah.⁴⁹ He clearly says that polyandry prevailed among the Nairs and excited no scandal and led to no quarrels. Only among Brahmana women observed seclusion, but the Nair women freely moved about wherever they liked.⁵⁰ From Ibn Batutu's account it appears that punishments in Malabar were extremely severe even for the pettiest offences. Theft was severely punished, and human life was sometimes taken for stealing even a cocoanut.⁵¹

During the early days of the Muslim conquest the inhabitants of India were fleeced of their wealth by the Muslim invaders, and Baihaki has mentioned the vast booty which was carried off by Mahmud of Ghazni from this country. The early Muslim rulers were occupied too much with the work of conquest. Balban was the first ruler who paid attention to the maintenance of internal

Economic condition.

⁴⁷ Lewis Rice, pp. 190—91.
Cn 203.

⁴⁸ Ibn Batuta, IV, p. 76.

⁴⁹ Zain-ud-din, *Historia dos Portugueses No Malabar* (Arabic text), p. 30.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 33.

For the customs of the Nairs, see Thurston's *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, V, pp. 307—8.

In a note Caesar Frederick, a merchant, who visited the East Indies, speaks of wives in common among the Nairs and says the king's children will not inherit their father's kingdom. *The Voyage and Travel, Haklyut*, V, p. 394.

⁵¹ Ibn Batuta, IV, p. 74.