# HISTORIANS OF MEDIEVAL INDIA

## Studies in Indo-Muslim Historical Writing

by

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LUZAC & COMPANY LTD
ORIENTAL AND FOREIGN BOOKSELLERS AND PUBLISHERS
46 GREAT RUSSELL STREET,
LONDON, W.C. 1
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1960

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# پروفیسر محمد اقبال مجددی کا مجموعہ
## پنجاب یونیورسٹی لائبریری میں محفوظ شدہ

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# PREFACE

During the last generation, British historians studying the history of Britain and of Europe appear to have become more self-conscious in their work than at any time since the days of Lord Acton and Professor J. B. Bury. They have shown themselves anxious to display to their readers the technical procedures they employ in attempting to write a true and intelligible account of the human past ; they have also been ready to write the history of history itself—the narration of how major historical themes have been studied, the discovery of the general panoramic impressions of the human past which succeeding generations of historians have formed for themselves and the analysis of how currents of action, thought and feeling outside the world of historical scholarship have been related to such currents within it. In this movement of thought, the late Professor R. G. Collingwood with his *An Autobiography* and *The Idea of History* and the present Master of Peterhouse, Professor H. Butterfield with his *The Whig Interpretation of History*, *The Englishman and His History*, *Man on His Past* and *George III and the Historians* have been leading figures. British professional philosophers, other than Professor Collingwood, who was also a distinguished historian in his own right, have likewise begun to turn their attention to problems of historical epistemology as for example, Mr. W. H. Walsh in his *An Introduction to Philosophy of History* and Mr. P. Gardiner in his *The Nature of Historical Explanation*.

A similar willingness to take the reader into the workshop to see how historians try to turn their evidence into history has not been shown by British historians of Muslim India or by those Hindu and Muslim scholars who have followed in their footsteps, not because they felt they had anything to hide, but because they felt they had nothing important to reveal. For them, history was written from the testimony of 'authorities' and 'sources' whose nature was such as to make comparatively straightforward the writing of political history, the kind of history in which they, as historians, were chiefly interested. For them, bias in their 'authorities' and 'sources' meant only the degrees of mendacity or cupidity or fanaticism or self-interest shown by the authors ; the more subtle categories of that which Professor Butterfield has called 'involuntary distortion', of what is involved in being a human being in history and not a 'noble savage', did not (for reasons briefly suggested in Chapter I) engage their attention.

This monograph, a revised version of a thesis successfully presented for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of the University of London, is a first attempt at a more detailed study of the 'involuntary distortions' inherent in the manner in which five Indo-Muslim historians treated the past. (They are not of course singular in this.) It is no more than a prolegomena to that more authoritative and comprehensive critique with which, perhaps, another scholar, better equipped, may one day replace the famous compendium of Sir Henry Elliot and Professor John Dowson and the no less valuable commentary thereon by S. H. Hodivala. I have attempted no more than an examination of the motives and technique of five historians of the period of the Delhi Sultanate, Ẓiyā' al-dīn Baranī, Shams al-dīn Sirāj 'Afīf, Yaḥyā ibn Aḥmad Sirhindī, Amīr Khusrau and 'Iṣāmī; a brief explanation of some of those characteristics (in Chapter VII) and (in the last chapter) the presentation of certain considerations, proceeding from the previous analysis of the historians, in re-inforcement of the present trend towards the study of the cultural history of medieval Muslim India. Since 1947, this trend has been particularly striking in the work of the department of history of the Muslim University, Aligarh, and in the *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*.

I would like to emphasise that the brief and tentative survey of previous trends and methods in the study of medieval Muslim India is intended to do no more than make the emphasis in the standard test books more intelligible in terms of events contemporary to them and in terms of a certain methodological approach to historical writing itself. I ask the indulgence of readers, particularly of those qualified to speak on the contribution in Urdū, for the inadequacies of that survey. The necessary references to the work of living scholars are intended to be purely illustrative; they are, of course, indicative of the debt which all students of medieval India owe to that work.

My heavy general obligations to the writings of the late Professor Collingwood and to those of Professor H. Butterfield, whose pupil at Peterhouse I was, will be evident to all students of historiography. Professor Bernard Lewis, the Chairman of the Publications Committee of the School of Oriental and African Studies, read carefully and criticised the book in manuscript; his insistence that its findings be related to the wider world of Muslim historiography and Islamic studies resulted in considerable improvements being made to the original text. To Professor A. K. S. Lambton I owe such knowledge of Persian as I have acquired, certain references to Persian historians outside India in Chapter VII (given in an unpublished paper) and the correction of

several errors in rendering Persian into English. (I am, of course, responsible for any that remain.) Professor C. H. Philips has provided much good advice and encouragement; that this book has reached the stage of publication at this time is largely due to his stimulus. He also read earlier drafts of the work in the thesis stage and greatly improved their style and manner. I have also been much helped in the development of my ideas on Ẓiyā' al-dīn Baranī by discussions with Professor Muhammad Habib of the University of Aligarh and Professor A. B. M. Habibullah of the University of Dacca. To the staff of the India Office Library (and particularly to Mr. Greenaway, now retired), and to the staff of the Library of the School of Oriental and African Studies, I offer my appreciation of innumerable services willingly rendered. I am grateful to my friend and colleague Professor A. L. Basham for his invaluable help in the correction of proofs. My wife has typed a difficult manuscript, assisted in the compilation of the index and suggested many improvements. This book is dedicated to her. Lastly, I gratefully acknowledge the help the Publications Committee of the School of Oriental and African Studies has given me by meeting the cost of publication.

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London, 1959

## POSTSCRIPTUM

In 'Sultan Iletmiş' in Adi Hakkinda', *Belleten* xiv, 56, Ankara, 1950, pp. 567–588, Hikmet Bayur has shown conclusively that the correct form of the name of the Delhi sultan conventionally known as 'Iltutmish' is 'Iletmish'. Failure to examine this article in time has made inevitable the adoption in this monograph of the conventional but incorrect form.

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CHAPTER I

# THE MODERN STUDY OF MEDIEVAL MUSLIM INDIA

## *Some Reflections on Trends and Methods*

FROM the time of Akbar until the last generation, the study of the history of medieval Muslim India has been primarily the study of historians by historians. In this, there has been an interesting continuity between the native historiographical tradition developed and maintained by Muslim and Hindu scholars writing in Persian and Urdū (and, very occasionally, in Arabic) and the European tradition developed and maintained by British scholars and by Muslim and Hindu scholars writing in English with a European training.

The native tradition is exemplified, in Persian, by the well-known sixteenth and seventeenth century Muslim historians, Niẓām al-dīn Aḥmad, 'Abd al-Qādir Badā'ūnī and Muḥammad Qāsim Hindū-Shāh Firishta and, in Urdū, by the nineteenth century figure Zakā-Allāh. In their reconstruction of Indo-Muslim history before their own time, these writers did not go to the raw material of history—to the general evidence of their own senses, to documents, remains and inscriptions, for example, but exclusively to the works of their predecessors as historians. Thus, in the *Ṭabaqāt-i-Akbarī* (1001/1592–3), far from working up his own account from an independent examination of the surviving evidence other than the historiographical, Niẓām al-dīn Aḥmad relied upon the testimony of such earlier historical works as al-'Utbī's *Ta'rīkh-i-Yamīnī* (*c.* 411/1020), Minhāj al-Sīrāj Jūzjānī's *Ṭabaqāt-i-Nāṣirī* (657–8/1259–60) and Baranī's *Ta'rīkh-i-Fīrūz Shāhī* (758/1357). So too for the medieval period did Zakā-allāh rely mainly upon Firishta's *Gulshan-i-Ibrāhīmī* in his Urdū *Tārīkh-i-Hindūstān* (1875).

Far from attacking, or merely weakening the native tradition by a different example, the earliest British writers on medieval India if anything strengthened it. Thus the 'Muhammedan' portions of James Mill's *History of British India* (1817), of G. R. Gleig's *History of the British Empire in India* (1830) and of Mountstuart Elphinstone's *History of India* (1841) were largely founded on the testimony of Firishta in first Dow's and then Briggs' translations. Nor did developments in the study of the history of medieval Muslim India which occurred in the second half of the nineteenth century do more than

widen the range of medieval Muslim historical writing upon which the writer with an European outlook or training could draw. In the eighteen-sixties there began to be published, under the ægis of the Asiatic Society of Bengal in its *Bibliotheca Indica* series, edited printed texts of the principal medieval Indo-Persian histories. Then, between 1867 and 1877, there appeared Sir Henry Elliot's and Professor John Dowson's *History of India as Told by Its Own Historians*, eight volumes of translations into English from the Persian and Arabic of Indo-Muslim historians and Arab travellers who had written between the middle of the ninth and the middle of the nineteenth centuries A.D. The arduous labour undergone and devotion to scholarship displayed by the editors of the *Bibliotheca Indica* series and by Professor Dowson in sifting, arranging and translating Sir Henry Elliot's posthumous papers, have left their mark upon the study of medieval Muslim India in this century. The indebtedness of the near-contemporary European or European-influenced historian to these compendia of historiographical material may be seen in such standard works as, for example, S. Lane-Poole's *Mediaeval India under Mohammedan Rule* (1903), Vincent Smith's *Akbar, The Great Mogol* (1917), Pringle Kennedy's *A History of the Great Moghuls* (1905 and 1911), the *Oxford History of India* (1919), Professor Ishwari Prasad's *History of Mediaeval India* (1925) and the third and fourth volumes, *Turks and Afghans* (1928) and *The Mughul Period* (1937) of the *Cambridge History of India*.

All these authors used the data provided by Elliot and Dowson and by the *Bibliotheca Indica* series almost to the exclusion of any other except European travellers' accounts. It is important to appreciate, however, that writers on the history of medieval Muslim India were not driven to this dependence upon one variety of historical data by the absence of any other. In archæology the work of General Cunningham and Sir John Marshall, in epigraphy that of J. Horovitz and in numismatics that of Edward Thomas, S. Lane-Poole and J. Nelson Wright, not to speak of the studies of lesser-known students in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, for example, reveal that the almost exclusive concentration by the historians mentioned upon the use of literary evidence was a self-imposed limitation. Moreover, it was not true that the only literary evidence available to scholars was that provided by the works of medieval Muslim historians. The India Office Library, the British Museum and the library of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, to mention only the most accessible, contained many works on Indo-Muslim religious observance, jurisprudence, mysticism and 'political thought' as well as collections of belles-lettres and poetry.

The narrow evidential basis of the 'standard' histories of the Muslim period is still more striking when one reflects upon the data available in 'Hindu' languages, epigraphy and architecture. It is sufficient to draw the reader's attention to the wealth of epigraphical material drawn upon by H. C. Ray in his *Dynastic History of Northern India* (1931 and 1935), or to the devotional literature utilized by J. E. Carpenter's *Theism in Medieval India* (1921), or Westcott's, Keay's, Prem Chand's and Rabindranath Tagore's work on Kabīr.[1]

It was not only that the majority of students of medieval Indo-Muslim rule confined their attention to one class of source material; they also confined their aims to the writing of one form of history, the political, and in one mode, the narrative. Doctors Lane-Poole and Vincent Smith, Sir Wolseley Haig and Sir Jadunath Sarkar, for example, have tended to depict the history of medieval India under Muslim rule as a succession of battles, rebellions and of depositions of one Muslim soldier of fortune by another. In general, they have not attempted to discuss the idiom of medieval Indian political life against the general background of Muslim and Hindu conceptions of the nature and purpose of government or against the backcloth of the caste, class, tribal, racial or economic structure of medieval Indian society. The working hypotheses of most modern historians—that a society must be studied in its own terms and that all aspects of the life of a people, a society or a civilization are to be assumed to be interconnected and interdependent—seem not to have greatly influenced the study of medieval Indian history. Only in such small, general and comparatively recent works as Professor H. Dodwell's *India*, (1936) W. H. Moreland's and A. Chatterjee's *Short History of India* (first edition, 1936) and Dr. T. G. P. Spear's *India, Pakistan and the West* (1949) has there been any sustained attempt to see Indian medieval history in the round and to examine, beneath the surface political turmoil, the social forces which might make, to the modern student, that turmoil intelligible. But even these volumes would not pretend to have thrown much light upon the nature and course of Muslim religious and cultural activity in medieval India and their possible relationship with the forms and assumptions of political life.

Even more unexpected is the divorce of the Muslim part of the history of medieval India from the study of Islam as a religion and as a system of thought in its wider extra-Indian setting. Thus, the discussion of

[1] See: G. H. Westcott, *Kabir and Kabir Panth*, Cawnpore, 1907; Prem Chand, *Translation of the Complete Bijak of Kabir*, Monghyr, 1911; F. E. Keay, *Kabir and His Followers*, London, 1931; R. Tagore, *100 Poems of Kabir*, London, 1914.

the posture of the sultans of Delhi and of the Mughal pādshāhs towards the Muslim religious establishment—of such questions as whether, for example, the Delhi sultanate was in any sense a theocracy or whether Akbar's religious activities were unislamic, was kept isolated from a general consideration of the background of Islamic ideas on government as they had developed historically and from a consideration of the actual currents of religious thought and feeling in the Muslim community in Akbar's time. In such a standard work as Vincent Smith's *Akbar, The Great Mogol*, no attempt is made to examine what constituted orthodoxy and unorthodoxy among Muslims of that time, or to describe the content of the religious controversies in which Akbar was involved in the light of developments in Muslim thinking outside India. It seemed to be assumed that Indian Islam was more Indian than Islamic and that it was proper to interpret the aspiration of Islam to be both a religious and a political order as in practice an aspiration merely to be a political order.

Of course, the study of medieval Islam as a civilization with a total impact on Hindūstān was not wholly neglected by scholars even when, as during the first forty years of this century, narrative political history dominated modern historiography on medieval India. In the latter half of the nineteenth century, E. Rehatsek and C. E. Sachau, W. Crooke and F. W. Thomas; in the twentieth century, Sir Thomas Arnold, Dr. Murray Titus, W. Ivanow, H. Goetz, Sir John Marshall, Father H. Heras, A. A. A. Fyzee, Maulānā Abū'l Kalām Āzād and Mohammad Wahid Mirza, and nearer independence and partition, Professor Muhammad Habib, Professor A. B. M. Habibullah, Dr. Khaliq Ahmad Nizami and Dr. Zubaid Ahmad have directed their attention to the religious and cultural aspects of the Muslim 'presence' in India. But it would not be unfair to say that their contributions, however important individually, did not (before 1947) control the main thrust and the direction of historical work on medieval India. For example, their work did not have any appreciable effect upon the form, technique and scope of such standard general histories as the Oxford and Cambridge Histories of India, upon Professor Ishwari Prasad's *History of Mediaeval India* or, since independence and partition, upon Mr. J. C. Powell-Price's *History of India* (1955). However, the appearance of Dr. Spear's and S. M. Ikram's *Cultural Heritage of Pakistan* (1955) and the volume *The Struggle for Empire* (1957) in the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan series *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, may be signs of a sea change. But certainly until 1947, a kind of Gresham's Law has appeared to operate in the study of medieval Indo-Muslim history,

with one or two text-books of political history tending to drive out of intellectual circulation many articles on cultural history in learned periodicals.

It is interesting to note when the scale and momentum of the study of the non-political features of medieval Indian life, however limited their influence, have been at their greatest. Broadly speaking, that study was most intense first when British rule in India appeared most assured and then when it was clearly ending or had in fact ended; it was least intense when the political future of the sub-continent was still an open question. Thus, the main work of Rehatsek, Sir Thomas Arnold, W. Crooke, the pioneer archæological and epigraphical and architectural studies of Cunningham, Marshall and Horovitz belong to the period before 1914. This too was the great period of the study, by Englishmen, of the languages, religion and the anthropology of India, the period of such luminaries as Sir Richard Temple, Sir George Grierson, B. C. J. Ibbetson and H. A. Rose when the urge was still to know more and more about more and more of Indian civilization, when India was a mystery to be invaded rather than to be evaded.

But during the nineteen-twenties and the nineteen-thirties, although useful work in Indo-Muslim numismatics and archæology was still being done, it could not be said that the earlier enthusiasm for the religion and culture of India, still less of Muslim India, was, among British scholars, being maintained. It is difficult to point to one work by a British scholar on either the religious, the social or the cultural history of Indian Islam during this period, and, were it not for the figure of W. H. Moreland, the economic sphere would be as empty. It was left to the American, Murray Titus, or to the White Russian, W. Ivanow, or the German, Hermann Goetz, among Europeans, to carry on the earlier traditions. For the greater part of these two decades, the picture among Indian scholars who had come under European influence was little different. The books which made the most stir were either 'straight' political histories, or administrative histories (e.g. Professor R. P. Tripathi's *Muslim Administration*, 1936, or Dr. Ibn Hasan's *Central Structure of the Mughal Empire*, 1936). Religion came in for attention only where it touched, or appeared to touch, politics. Hence, the interest in what is called Akbar's religious policy or Aurangzeb's religious policy, visible in such works as S. R. Sharma's *Religious Policy of the Mughal Emperors* (1940) (parts published earlier in the Indian Historical Quarterly), Zahir ud-din Faruki's *Aurangzeb and His Times* (1935) and in S. M. Jaffar's *The Mughal Empire from Babur to Aurangzeb* (1936).

Then, although the swing was not signalized by any one major work which might bring the various trends into focus, about the time of the beginning of the Second World War a movement towards the study of the religious and cultural history of the peoples of the sub-continent during the medieval Muslim period was perceptible both in periodical literature appearing in English and also occasionally in monographs. There was the interest in the activities of the *ṣūfī* mystics evinced by Professor Muhammad Habib at Aligarh and now maintained by Dr. Khaliq Ahmad Nizami. There was the more direct interest in the religious life of Indian Islam during Mughal times (and particularly in Akbar's reign), shown in, for example, Makhanlal Roychaudhuri's *Din-i-Ilahi* (1941) and in Burhan Ahmad Faruqi's *The Mujaddid's Conception of Tauhid* (1940). There has been growing curiosity about the religious activities of Dārā Shikūh and of Shāh Walī-allāh both in India and, since 1947, in Pakistan. Bikram Jit Hasrat, Fazl Mahmud Asiri and Muhammad Da'ud Rahbar have been important contributors in this respect with their articles in *The Visva-Bharati Quarterly*, the *Visva-Bharati Annals* and the *Muslim World*.[1] Once again, it cannot be said that British scholars have taken any prominent place in this shift of attention. Not much work has yet been done on the social aspect of medieval Indian history, particularly on the pre-Mughal period, but here again, W. H. Moreland apart, the early surveys have been made by Indo-Muslim scholars—for example, Kunwar Muhammad Ashraf in his *Life and Conditions of the People of Hindustan*, 1200–1550 (1936). In recent years, too, in the universities of both India and Pakistan, there have been a growing number of theses devoted to topics in social history.

But, significant as these intellectual currents may be for the future of medieval Indo-Muslim studies and for the stimulation of younger scholars, they cannot be said yet to have gathered that force required to sweep away into the limbo of neglected scholarship the standard general histories which have held the field since the beginning of the twentieth century and which, without exception, are political in character.

Three possible explanations for the undoubted preference for political history among the writers of monographs and large-scale works on medieval Muslim India come to mind. First, that there was, in fact, no question of a preference at all—that history meant for the historians

[1] See : B. J. Hasrat, 'Dārā Shikūh,' *Visva-Bharati Quarterly*, V, 3, November, 1939, and following issues; F. M. Asiri, 'Shah Wali Allah,' *Visva-Bharati Annals*, IV, 1951, and Muhammad Da'ud Rahbar, 'Shāh Walī-ullāh and Ijtihād,' *Muslim World*, XLV, 4, October, 1955.

of medieval India political history and could only have meant political history; second, that contemporary political considerations influenced consciously or unconsciously the choice of medieval historical themes and third, that the existence of a certain kind of 'ready-made' historical evidence—namely the apparently political histories written by medieval Indian Muslims themselves—impelled the modern historian towards writing political history as a *genre* likely in the circumstances to yield clear, intelligible and reasonably conclusive results without the need to employ difficult and possibly idiosyncratic historical techniques.

The first possible explanation is plausible at first, but not at second, sight. It is true that British historians were responsible for starting the study of Indian history along Western lines and that, in the nineteenth century at least, British historiography was, in spite of Buckle and Lecky, predominantly political and constitutional—a commentary upon British political and constitutional success. Hallam, Macaulay, Froude, Stubbs, Freeman, Gardiner, Lecky, Seeley and Creighton, and later the contributors to the overwhelmingly political *Cambridge Modern History*, these would light the undergraduate along his way, and when he came to the study of Indian history, James Mill, Mountstuart Elphinstone, Sir Henry Elliot, Sir William Hunter and Sir Alfred Lyall. But while it is true that the efforts of (mainly) continental scholars to extend the range of historical study beyond the political—the efforts, for example, of Riehl, Freytag and Burckhardt—appear to have had no perceptible effect on British historians generally, and while British historians of Muslim India manifested a remarkable indifference to the work and the technique of continental scholars of Islam, for example, Wellhausen, Goldziher, and Snouck Hurgronje, whose work illumined Islam as a total civilization and who brought the light of German-inspired Higher Criticism to bear upon it, it is difficult to sustain the thesis that historians such as Stanley Lane-Poole, Vincent Smith, W. Irvine, Sir Denison Ross, and Sir Wolseley Haig chose, in their general histories of India, to concentrate on the political story other than by deliberate choice. They were acquainted with the work of Cunningham, Burgess and Marshall in the realm of archæology, of Sir Richard Temple on Indian folk lore, of W. H. Moreland in the economic history of the Mughals and of the attempt, under the presidency of Rapson, to give a rounded picture of the history and civilization of ancient India in the first volume of the *Cambridge History of India*. Indian students, too, were fully aware that history was not synonymous with political history. Professor Ishwari Prasad, for example, in the

preface (1925) to the first edition of his *History of Mediaeval India* remarks that 'broadly speaking, history deals with the life of man in its varied aspects, and in this sense the History of Medieval India is not merely a story of court intrigues and palace conspiracies, but a record of brilliant achievements in the field of conquest and administration, and of great social and religious movements'.[1]

The evidence for the second hypothesis, that the political bias of modern historiography on medieval Muslim India is explicable in terms of contemporary political interest or political pride appears to be altogether stronger. Indeed, a case could be made for the hypothesis that the historiography on medieval Muslim India since Sir Henry Elliot's day is itself a commentary upon the modern political history of the sub-continent. In his preface to the first volume of *The History of India as Told by Its Own Historians*, Sir Henry Elliot regards the works of medieval Indo-Muslim historians as revealing the ineffable superiority of British rule. The British need have had no qualms over their moral title to dominion in India.

'Though', Sir Henry Elliot informs us in his preface of 1849, 'the intrinsic value of these works may be small, they will still yield much that is worth observation to any one who will attentively examine them. . . . They will make our native subjects more sensible of the immense advantages accruing to them under the mildness and equity of our rule. If instruction were sought for from them, we should be spared the rash declarations respecting Muhammedan India, which are frequently made by persons not otherwise ignorant. . . . We should no longer hear bombastic Baboos, enjoying under our Government the highest degree of personal liberty, and many more political privileges than were ever conceded to a conquered nation, rant about patriotism and the degradation of their present position. If they would dive into any of the volumes mentioned herein, it would take these young Brutuses and Phocians a very short time to learn, that, in the days of that dark period for whose return they sigh, even the bare utterance of their ridiculous fantasies would have been attended, not with silence and contempt, but with the severer discipline of molten lead or empalement . . . we shall find that a perusal of these books will convey many a useful lesson, calculated to foster in us a love and admiration of our country and its venerable institutions . . . these considerations . . . will serve to dissipate the gorgeous illusions which are commonly entertained regarding the dynasties which have passed, and show him that—notwithstanding a civil policy and an ungenial climate, which forbid our making this country a permanent home, and deriving personal gratification or profit from its advancement—notwithstanding the many defects necessarily inherent in a system of foreign administration, in which

[1] Repeated in the second edition, Allahabad, 1928, p. E.

language, colour, religion, customs and laws preclude all natural sympathy between sovereign and subject—we have already, within half a century of our dominion, done more for the substantial benefit of the people, than our predecessors, in the country of their own adoption, were able to accomplish in more than ten times that period ; and, drawing auguries from the past, he will derive hope for the future, that, inspired by the success which has hitherto attended our endeavours, we shall follow them up by continuous efforts to fulfil our high destiny as the Rulers of India.'[1]

Other British writers on the medieval Muslim period shared Sir Henry Elliot's pride in the British political achievement in India, convinced indeed, that that was *the* British achievement in India. Among them we must list Dr. Vincent Smith and Sir Wolseley Haig, who shared Elliot's view that medieval Muslim society was morally inferior and its rulers inefficient tyrants ; indeed, that the people of the middle ages were merely preparing themselves for conquest by a more humane and enlightened civilization and could, from their own historical writings, be seen to be doing so. For them, medieval Muslim Indian history does not attain significance, except as a sequence of cautionary tales, until the Europeans and in particular the East India Company appear on the scene. There is little doubt, too, that the fact that so many British writers on the medieval (as indeed on the modern) period were not academic historians but officials accustomed to approach Indian problems as problems of government and administration, delayed the reception, among historians of India, of wider concepts of the scope of historical study in England evident in the work of Professors R. H. Tawney and G. M. Trevelyan, Sir Lewis Namier, Sir John Clapham and Sir George Clark, and in a field where the materials available are analogous to those for medieval India, of R. G. Collingwood and Sir Frank Stenton. Sir Wolseley Haig, Sir William Hunter, Sir Alfred Lyall, William Irvine, Henry Beveridge and Sir Richard Burn had all had official experience to influence their later academic activities.

What is more remarkable than British historians' lack of sympathetic interest in the internal workings of medieval Indian society, is their lack of interest in what their fellow British scholars of Islam were doing in the study of the wider Islamic world. Apart from Sir Thomas Arnold, who was fully in touch with the whole world of European Islamic scholarship and who contributed important pioneer studies of the role of the *ṣūfīs* in Muslim India in his *The Preaching of*

[1] *Bibliographical Index to the Historians of Muhammedan India*, Vol. 1, Calcutta, 1849, Preface, xx–xxx, *passim*.

*Islam* (second edition, 1913), no British scholar has arisen to emulate in the study of Indian Islam the achievements of E. G. Browne, R. A. Nicholson, Sir Hamilton Gibb or Professor Arberry in the study of Muslim thought in Persia and the Arab countries. (It is interesting to note that those foreign to India who have interested themselves in the religious and cultural history of medieval Muslim India, e.g. E. Rehatsek, E. C. Sachau, W. Ivanow and Dr. Murray Titus, were not British by birth, and, furthermore, that French and Dutch colonial rule in north Africa and Indonesia did not carry with it a similar limitation of interest in Islamic studies—witness the work, for example, of Quatremère, Defrémery, Carra de Vaux, Snouck Hurgronje, de Goeje and Wensinck.)

The Montagu declaration of 1917, the introduction of provincial dyarchy and the non-co-operation movement, all of which at the very lowest estimate signalized a more active rôle for the people of India in the determination of the political future of the sub-continent, exercised a subtle—and sometimes not so subtle—influence upon contemporary writing on medieval India. There was a sharper awareness of different communal identities and an urge to call up the past to the support of present ambitions and policies. The contemporary struggle with the British was accompanied by the desire to rebut insinuations by British historians considered derogatory to Indian dignity—the insinuation, for example, that the people of the sub-continent were unsuited to self-government or to parliamentary democracy;[1] there was the desire, too, to make qualitative comparisons between the British and the Muslim or the Hindu Raj, in terms of liberty and welfare. In general, the political struggle of the nineteen twenties and the nineteen thirties, whether between the British and the Indian national Congress, or between Hindus and Muslims, tended to press the study of the medieval Muslim period down harder into the political or the communal groove.

At first, political *parti pris* is not communal in quality. Although A. Yusuf Ali in his *The Making of India* (1925) regards the Muslims as having 'brought a better organization and a manlier culture into India',[2] he is at pains to stress the secular nature of Mughal dominion with a view to uniting Hindus and Muslims in the dimension of liberal-nationalism. Indeed, in his preface he tends to doubt the authenticity of those reports of past atrocities which would disturb communal

[1] For this, cf. the medieval Muslim chapters of Dr. Vincent Smith's *Oxford History of India*, 1st ed., 1919.
[2] p 81.

harmony.[1] In his *History of Mediaeval India* (1925) written for Indian college students, Professor Ishwari Prasad devotes himself mainly to political history, sees the political issues of the medieval period indeed in terms of Hindu-Muslim relations and betrays pride in the resilience of Hindu culture under Muslim political domination ;[2] but the latter had merits over that of the British as the Muslims made their permanent home in India and did not drain the wealth of the country abroad.[3]

The urge among Muslims to justify to their non-Muslim contemporaries (and indeed to themselves) the historical record of their community in South Asia is evident in such works of the nineteen-twenties and nineteen-thirties as Professor Muhammad Habib's *Mahmud of Ghaznin* (1927), Dr. Muhammad Nazim's *The Life and Times of Sulṭān Maḥmūd of Ghazna* (1931), Zahir ud-din Faruki's *Aurangzeb and His Times* (1935) and Professor S. M. Jaffar's *The Mughal Empire from Babur to Aurangzeb* (1936). In the first, Professor Habib attempts to correct what he says was a then recent tendency among Muslims of the sub-continent to adore Sulṭān Maḥmūd as a saint. The sultan is rather to be regarded as a foreigner to India and as an imperialist, not as a *mujāhid*. A similar approach is adopted by Dr. Nazim, except that Muslims are asked to regard Maḥmūd as a great Muslim political hero. Awareness of the importance of contemporary Hindu-Muslim relations provides the undertow of the book. Mr. Faruki is concerned to defend Aurangzeb from charges of intolerance and bigotry. He argues that Aurangzeb did not antagonize the Hindus ; it was rather the Hindus who antagonized Aurangzeb. Such apparently anti-Hindu measures as Aurangzeb took, were, says Mr. Faruki, taken for political not religious reasons. The effect of the political struggles of the nineteen-thirties is also very evident in Professor Jaffar's work. He writes consciously to promote communal harmony.[4] He portrays Akbar as a liberal nationalist and Aurangzeb as a defender of the Muslim faith only against his better inclinations. If the Hindus had not been froward, Aurangzeb would not have been forced to appeal to the religious sentiments of his community in order to preserve Mughal political supremacy.

Without doubt the urge to write the political history of medieval Muslim India must be related in part to the contemporary struggle both to free India from British rule if necessary by presenting a united front of both Hindus and Muslims and to free Muslims from the fear

[1] Preface, p. v.
[2] e.g. pp. 472, 501.
[3] p. 526.
[4] Preface, p. viii.

of Hindu political domination. But that cannot be the whole explanation. As anyone who has had experience of suggesting topics for historical investigation could confirm, the urge towards political history is connected with the conceived state of the evidence available. The known existence of a large body of medieval Muslim historical writing about the fortunes of sultans and soldiers, produced by men who were often themselves near the centres of power, was believed to give solidity, structure and assurance to interpretations in the sphere of political history which were not enjoyed by those in any other sphere of historical investigation. Though not himself a medievalist, Professor H. Dodwell expressed the convictions of medievalists about the value of the Indo-Muslim medieval histories when he said, 'the advent of Islam begins a great series of Indian chronicles . . . the Muslim chronicles are far superior to our own (English) medieval chronicles. They were written for the most part not by monks but by men of affairs, often by contemporaries who had seen and taken part in the events they recount . . . the Muslim period is one of vivid living men whereas the Hindu period is one of shadows.'[1] Implicit in this statement is the assumption that the mere reading of these medieval chronicles and histories will immediately give a vivid impression of the actual history of the time, in effect immediate insight into the character of the transactions related therein. In other words, that the medieval Muslim chronicles of India need less 'processing' than other varieties of historical evidence before they can be made to yield intelligible history.

That this assumption has been made by the authors of existing standard works and monographs may be confirmed from those standard works and monographs. Examples are taken from the pre-Mughal 'sultanate' period, since an examination of Muslim histories of this period is the purpose of this book. The assumption is made both in the main narrative itself and in those appendices or introductory discussions of the 'source material' which, under the influence of modern European historiography, form part of those books. 'To realize Medieval India,' says Dr. Stanley Lane-Poole,[2] 'there is no better way than to dive into the eight volumes of the priceless "History of India as Told by its own Historians" which Sir H. M. Elliot conceived and began and which Professor Dowson edited and completed with infinite labour and learning. It is a revelation of Indian life as seen through the eyes of the Persian court annalists.' It is true that Dr.

[1] *India*, vol. 1, pp. 22–3.
[2] *Mediaeval India under Mohammedan Rule*, preface, pp. v–vi.

Lane-Poole proceeds to qualify his statement by saying that, 'It (Elliot and Dowson's work) is, however, a mine to be worked, not a consecutive history, and its wide leaps in chronology, its repetitions, recurrences, and omissions, render it no easy guide for general readers.' Even so, in using the term 'mine' Dr. Lane-Poole implies that Elliot and Dowson's collection provides material ready for use. A similar belief is detectable in the preface to the first edition of Professor Ishwari Prasad's *History of Mediaeval India* [1] where he declares that Elphinstone's and Lane-Poole's work must be superseded because more material has come to light since their day. Moreover, he adds, 'In preparing this volume I have relied mainly upon original authorities. I am not so presumptuous as to think that I have improved upon Elphinstone and Lane-Poole, to whom I must gratefully acknowledge my indebtedness, but I may claim to have thrown a fresh light upon many an important problem, to have suggested fresh view-points and to have supplied information which has hitherto been inaccessible to the general reader. In order to achieve this end, I have consulted, as the footnotes will show, numerous MSS. and printed texts in Arabic, Persian and Sanskrit. . . . I may add that I have carefully investigated the evidence before me and have based my opinions upon actual facts.' This would appear to be a repetition of the 'mine of facts' assumption.

This methodology of culling ready-made facts, perhaps one should say of mining ready-made facts from historical data, has been called the writing of history from authorities, and has appeared to be the 'common sense' theory of history writing. Professor R. G. Collingwood has defined in his *Idea of History* what that theory is.[2]

> 'According to this theory, the essential things in history are memory and authority. If an event or a state of things is to be historically known, first of all someone must be acquainted with it; then he must remember it; then he must state his recollection of it in terms intelligible to another; and finally that other must accept the statement as true. History is thus the believing someone else when he says that he remembers something. The believer is the historian; the person believed is called his authority.' . . . 'This doctrine implies that historical truth, so far as it is at all accessible to the historian, is accessible to him only because it exists ready made in the ready-made statements of his authorities. These statements are to him a sacred text whose value depends wholly on the unbrokenness of the tradition they represent. He must on no account tamper with them. He must not mutilate them; he must not add to them; and, above all, he must not

[1] pp. E and F in the second edition, Allahabad, 1928.
[2] *The Idea of History*, Oxford, 1946, pp. 234–5.

contradict them. . . . The authority may be garrulous, discursive, a gossip and a scandal-monger; he may have forgotten or omitted facts; he may ignorantly or wilfully mis-state them; but against these defects the historian has no remedy. For him, on the theory, what his authorities tell him is the truth, the whole accessible truth and nothing but the truth.'

No writer on the history of medieval India has acted wholly upon this naïve theory of the way to reach historical truth, although some, e.g. Dr. Mahdi Husain, have used terminology now and again which might suggest it.[1] They have not hesitated to interpolate narrative and explanatory hypotheses into the material supplied by their 'authorities' or to reject some testimony in favour of other or to make allowances for bias and distortion by contemporary or near-contemporary writers. A very few examples of a general phenomenon must suffice. Thus, Dr. Lane-Poole doubts whether Baranī was really giving an historical account of the decisions of a 'council' which, he says, sat day and night in 'Alā' al-dīn Khaljī's reign considering how to prevent revolt. He doubts whether the opinions put forward in the council were actually put forward, or whether they were merely the *ex post facto* deductions of the historian Baranī.[2] Then again, Dr. Mahdi Husain refuses to accept the version of the death of Ghiyāth al-dīn Tughluq given by 'Iṣāmī in his *Futūḥ al-Salāṭīn*.

The majority of the modern historians have in fact treated the medieval Indo-Persian histories as 'sources' for political history compiled by the method of 'scissors and paste'. Again, we may look to Professor Collingwood for a succinct and pointed definition of the assumptions underlying the writing of history from 'sources'.

'The method by which it proceeds is first to decide what we want to know about, and then to go in search of statements about it, oral or written, purporting to be made by actors in the events concerned, or by eyewitnesses of them, or by persons repeating what actors or eye-witnesses have told them, or have told their informants, and so on. Having found in such a statement something relevant to his purpose, the historian excerpts it and incorporates it, translated if necessary and recast into what he considers a suitable style, in his own history. As a rule, where he has many statements to draw upon, he will find that one of them tells him what another does not; so both or all of them will be incorporated. Sometimes he will find that one of them contradicts another; then, unless he can find a way of reconciling them, he must decide to leave one out; and this, if he is conscientious, will involve him in a critical consideration of the contradictory authorities' relative degrees of trustworthiness.'

[1] e.g. *The Rise and Fall of Muḥammad bin Tughluq*, London, 1938, pp. 248, 250.
[2] *Mediaeval India under Mohammedan Rule*, p. 101.

After adding that the method of 'scissors and paste' was the only historical method known to the later Greco-Roman world or to the Middle Ages, Collingwood writes that in the seventeenth century it was realized that a systematic examination of authorities was necessary in order to determine their credibility.

> 'As soon as it became understood that a given statement, made by a given author, must never be accepted for historical truth until the credibility of the author in general and of this statement in particular had been systematically inquired into, the word "authority" disappeared from the vocabulary of historical method, except as an archaistic survival; for the man who makes the statement came henceforth to be regarded not as someone whose word must be taken for the truth of what he says, which is what is meant by calling him an authority, but as someone who has voluntarily placed himself in the witness-box for cross examination. The document hitherto called an authority now acquired a new status, properly described by calling it a "source", a word indicating that it contains the statement, without any implications as to its value. That is *sub judice*; and it is the historian who judges. This is "critical history", as it was worked out from the seventeenth century onwards, and officially acclaimed in the nineteenth as the apotheosis of the historical consciousness.'[1]

According to this theory then, historical truth derives not from the acceptance of testimony but from the acceptance of certified testimony. The historian should preface his use of testimony by a 'screening' process. That this historical methodology has been the one most normally employed by historians of medieval Muslim India may be confirmed from an examination of their works. For example, Professor Ishwari Prasad's *History of the Qaraunah Turks in India* evaluates in an appendix some of the evidence used, as follows :—

> 'Barani's Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi is the only extant authority which gives a full account of the first two Tughluqs. . . . As a contemporary Barni, who was in the service of the state,[2] had unique opportunities of acquainting himself with the affairs of the Sultan of Dihli. Though he had his own limitations as a member of the class of "ulama" he supplies pretty full information about many important events. In dealing with Muhammad Tughluq's reign he abandons the chronological method and selects the most important topics of the reign for discussion. It would not be right to infer from this division into topics that he sought to establish a preconceived thesis.[3] To understand his attitude towards Sultan Muhammad, it is necessary to bear in mind the canons of historical writing followed in medieval India. Most of those who wrote

[1] op. cit., pp. 257–9, *passim*.
[2] Not in the sense that he was a military or bureaucratic officer; Baranī was a courtier or boon companion (*nadīm*) of Muḥammad ibn Tughluq. [P.H.]
[3] But see Chapter II, pp. 24–25, 36–38. [P.H.]

historical works belonged to the class of 'Ulama and looked at things from the theological point of view. They praised those who followed the formulas of the orthodox school and condemned those who acted contrary to them. . . . Barani belonged to this school. He was well pleased with Ghiyās because he was an orthodox Muslim who patronized his co-religionists and reduced the Hindus to poverty and submission. But he changes his tone in describing the reign of Sultan Muhammad. He bestows lavish praise upon him for his great qualities of intellect and character and expresses his bewilderment at the bold and visionary schemes which he pursued to the detriment of his empire. Barani wrote under official patronage.[1] He was aware that Firuz had a tender regard for his cousin's reputation and, therefore, although he praises the Sultan for many things, he finds it impossible to forgive him for his disregard of the 'Ulama and to understand his plans and policies which were so original and in advance of the age. For matters which did not affect his order or the religion of Islam he is perfectly reliable and although he is always deficient in chronology and careless in his methods or arrangement he records the annals of the reign with considerable accuracy and truthfulness.' [2]

But even when a ' source ' has undergone ceremonial purification in the manner adopted by Professor Prasad, the incorporation of its statements in an historical narrative as they stand after their test for honesty and bias, will not necessarily yield historical truth as, according to the theory, it must do. One reason must be obvious ; the source writer could have been honestly mistaken even though his statements are nowhere contradicted, manifestly incredible or apparently made in bad faith. The historian can never on the basis of a ' certified source ' assert more than that something is probably true because he has no reason to suppose otherwise. As with the writing of history from ' authorities ', the historian is still a believer and what he writes will fall below what is required by the canons of critical thinking which here demand that he shall set down only what the evidence *obliges* him to believe.

There are, however, considerations of a more general kind which should prevent an historian surrendering his intellectual independence to his ' sources '. First he is driven to adopt the source-writer's criteria of relevance and intelligibility and is obliged to see events and personalities in the same dimension as he did. The modern historian is indeed committing himself, where his source-writer is a student of the past, to the proposition that the nature of historical explanation does not change from age to age or from place to place and that what satisfied, in this context, the medieval Indo-Persian historian as a reason for

[1] It would be more correct to say that he wrote in hope of official patronage. [P.H.]
[2] *A History of the Qaraunah Turks in India*, pp. 344–5.

what happened in history, will satisfy him. If everything is ascribed to the will of God, for example, it is difficult to see what other explanation, on the theory, the later historian can adopt. Not for him the search for economic or social forces, not for him the re-interpretation of the history of an episode upon different premises. The limits of his vision are determined by the spectacles—or the blinkers—his sources provide. Should the historian surrender himself to his sources in this way, he will often find himself unable to give an intelligible account of the past. His source may not mention something either because it is known to all his contemporaries, or because it would be injudicious to mention it. Thus, as Professor Collingwood shows in his *Roman Britain*,[1] Julius Caesar nowhere states what his motive was in making the Roman expedition of 55 B.C., nor does any other source supply us with the information ready-made. If the historian merely waits upon his material cap-in-hand, he will never be able to understand why Caesar invaded Britain in that year. He must put his evidence to the question, his question, forcing it, by means of an examination of its selectivity, its silences and its assumptions, among other things, to yield up evidence in answer to the problem the historian is trying to solve. That it is possible for the historian to do this, inspection of Professor Collingwood's methods of deducing the conclusion that Caesar intended to conquer the whole of Britain will reveal.[2] It is not for the present writer to say that the conclusion is a compelling one, only that it was reached by scientific reasoning and not merely by accepting testimony because there was no reason not to accept it and that it was a conclusion to the asking of a question which the historian, *qua* historian could not avoid asking.

That these objections have not appreciably disturbed the confidence of most modern historians of medieval Muslim India in the method of writing history from sources, has been due in part to a belief that, with all their shortcomings, the medieval Indo-Muslim historians were, in the final analysis, trying to write something that the modern historian could recognize as history; that, in fact, the medieval historian meant what he said in the way that a modern historian would have meant it; that, in fact, he was interested in presenting a story of human action intelligible in terms of human nature and of human personality; that, in fact, not much in the way of translating from one mental world to another was required. Certainly these would seem to

[1] R. G. Collingwood and J. L. N. Myres, *Roman Britain and the English Settlements*, second edition, reprinted, Oxford, 1941, p. 32.
[2] See op. cit., pp. 32–4.

have been the premises upon which Sir Wolseley Haig wrote the larger part of the third volume of the *Cambridge History of India*. These, too, seem to have been Dr. K. M. Ashraf 's premises in referring to Amir Khusrau's *Khazā'in al-Futūḥ* in his *Life and Conditions of the People of Hindustan, 1200–1550*, as a source for the reign of Sulṭān 'Alā' al-dīn Khaljī.[1]

> 'The Khazā'in-ul-Futūh, in particular,' he says 'has a value of its own. Here the author gives a systematic account of the first fifteen years of Sultan 'Ala ud-din Khalji and it appears from its topographical and other details that the author was a personal witness of some at least of the scenes even of those in the distant south. It is the only contemporary history of the period and the facts are narrated with admirable accuracy and wealth of detail. On the whole we can agree in our estimate of Amir Khusrau with Professor Cowell that although his style is full of exaggeration and metaphorical description, the facts are given with tolerable fidelity.'

The purpose of this monograph is to show the weakness of the premise that the medieval Indo-Muslim historian and the modern historian inhabit essentially the same world of ideas on historiography, that their notion of the treatment of history was so essentially similar that the modern historian may, after allowing for the bias of partiality and perhaps for some local and temporary tricks of style, some preference for exaggeration and hyperbole, some attempts at concealment or some efforts at blandishment, regard their statements as capable of being built up in their purified form (that is, with their credibility established by the methods of ' critical history ') into a true, intelligible and satisfying interpretation of the history of medieval Muslim India.

Five medieval Indo-Muslim writers, whom modern historians have regarded as the most important sources for the political history of the Delhi sultanate between the middle of the thirteenth century A.D. and the middle of the fifteenth century A.D. have been chosen for examination. They are: Ẓiyā' al-dīn Baranī, Amīr Khusrau Dihlawī, 'Iṣāmī, Shams al-dīn Sirāj 'Afīf and Yaḥyā ibn Aḥmad Sīhrindī. They are sufficiently different to be discussed individually and sufficiently alike not to destroy the unity of treatment. As this is an essay in the problem of writing the history of medieval India in the light of the Muslim historiography of the period rather than an essay in Muslim historiography *per se*, no exhaustive comparison of modes of Muslim historical writing outside India, whether preceding or contemporary with the writers named above, has been attempted. Some indications

[1] 'Life and Conditions of the People of Hindustan 1200–1550.' *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* (Letters), I, 1935, pp. 114–5.

of possible parallels and comparisons have, however, been given in Chapter VII, and in various footnotes.

As treatment in a strict chronological order of writing does not appear particularly meaningful in the context, the three prose authors, Barani, 'Afif and Yaḥyā ibn Aḥmad, have been treated first, followed by the two verse writers, or predominantly verse writers, Amīr Khusrau and 'Iṣāmī.

## CHAPTER II

# THE TREATMENT OF HISTORY BY ẒIYĀ' AL-DĪN BARANĪ IN THE *TA'RĪKH-I-FĪRŪZ SHĀHĪ*

ẒIYĀ' AL-DĪN BARANĪ has appealed to all modern students of early Muslim medieval India as the most important historian who wrote under the ægis of the Delhi sultanate. His importance has, however, been variously estimated. For Professor John Dowson, he was a welcome deviation from the usual groove of Muslim historian because he

> 'yet has a care for matters besides the interests of his religion and the warlike exploits of the sovereign representatives of his faith. He freely criticizes the actions and characters of the kings and great men of the time, dealing out his praises and censures in no uncertain terms.'[1]

For Professor Ishwari Prasad,[2] Dr. Mahdi Husain,[3] and Professor Habibullah,[4] he is invaluable because he is the principal if not the only authority or source for the period embraced by his *Ta'rīkh-i-Fīrūz Shāhī*. For Mr. W. H. Moreland [5] and Dr. I. H. Qureshi,[6] his significance is that of a recorder of agrarian, administrative or economic information from an official's angle of vision. Mr. Hasan Barani [7] and Shaykh Abdur Rashid,[8] have also emphasized that Baranī claims attention as an historian in his own right and not merely as a sole surviving purveyor of testimony who has had greatness thrust upon him by the accidents of time and climate and the needs of later historians.

For Baranī's *Ta'rīkh-i-Fīrūz Shāhī*, completed in 758/1357, is the vigorous and trenchant expression of a conscious philosophy of history which lifts Baranī right out of the ranks of mere compilers of chronicles and annals. Baranī wrote history as no mere pastime. He was at least seventy-four lunar years old when he completed the work. The *Ta'rīkh-i-Fīrūz Shāhī* glows with the conviction that, in the dimension of eternity, the most valuable offering the author can make to his con-

[1] *The History of India as Told by Its Own Historians*, Vol. III, London, 1871, Preface, p. vii.
[2] *A History of the Qaraunah Turks in India*, Allahabad, 1936, pp. 344–7.
[3] *The Rise and Fall of Muḥammad bin Tughluq*, London, 1938, pp. 248–250.
[4] *The Foundation of Muslim Rule in India*, Lahore, 1945, pp. 11–12.
[5] *The Agrarian System of Moslem India*, Cambridge, 1929, pp. 27 *et seq.*
[6] *The Administration of the Sultanate of Dehlī*, Lahore, 1942, pp. 12–13.
[7] 'Ziauddin Barani,' *Islamic Culture*, XII, 1, Jan., 1938.
[8] 'Zia ud-din Barni, a Study,' *Muslim University Journal*, Aligarh, 1942.

temporaries is a true and significant account of the past and that in the *Ta'rīkh-i-Fīrūz Shāhī* this offering is being made.

This general conviction of the value of historiography which gives life and fire to the *Ta'rīkh-i-Fīrūz Shāhī* is stronger for its connexion with Baranī's personal predicament. This connexion has not been given due weight in some previous assessments of the *Ta'rīkh* which have either ignored the question of his literary motives or have tended to assume that disinterested search for historical knowledge believed to be characteristic of the modern generation of historians.

Baranī was well-connected with Delhi ruling circles. His father Mu'ayyid al-Mulk was *nā'ib* to Arkalī Khān, second son of Sulṭān Jalāl al-dīn Khaljī; his paternal uncle Malik 'Alā' al-Mulk was *Kotwāl* of Delhi under Sulṭān 'Alā' al-dīn Khaljī and a prominent royal counsellor. His maternal grandfather, Sipah Sālār Ḥusām al-dīn, had been appointed to the *shāhnagī* of Lakhnautī by Sulṭān Balban. Baranī himself became a *nadīm* or boon companion of SulṭānMuḥammad ibn Tughluq for seventeen years and three months. Despite his family background there is no evidence in his own work or in Amīr Khwurd's biographical *Siyar al-Auliyā'* that he held any military or administrative appointment. Baranī says, in the *Ta'rīkh-i-Fīrūz Shāhī*, that after the death of Sulṭān Muḥammad ibn Tughluq (752/1351) he fell on evil days and became the object of the enmity of evil wishers who secured his banishment from court. Had it not been for the kindness of Sulṭān Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq, Muḥammad ibn Tughluq's successor, and his reluctance to listen to Baranī's slanderers, Baranī 'would have slept in the lap of my Mother Earth'. Baranī laments the tricks which Fate has played upon him and poignantly recalls his happy days as a young man at the court of Jalāl al-dīn Khaljī where he witnessed gay convivial parties in contrast to his miserable old age. In his *Na't-i-Muhammadī*, a work in praise of the Prophet, Baranī states that he was for five months imprisoned in the fortress of Pahtez.[1]

Whatever the independent assessment of the degree of Baranī's misfortunes (and the *Siyar al-Auliyā'* written during the reign of Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq implies that he received a subsistence allowance from the sultan and that his poverty at death was due to piety rather than dire necessity)[2] there is no doubt that Baranī himself felt wronged and disappointed when he wrote the *Ta'rīkh-i-Fīrūz Shāhī*. Nevertheless he is inclined here and there in the *Ta'rīkh* to attribute his fallen

[1] See Professor Nurul Hasan, '*Saḥifa-i-Na't-i-Muḥammadī* of Ẓia ud-dīn Barnī,' *Medieval India Quarterly*, 1, 3–4 (1954), p. 100.

[2] Muḥammad ibn Mubārak Kirmānī, *Siyar al-auliyā'*, lith. Delhi 1302/1885, p. 313.

state in part to his own moral failings and to regard the *Ta'rīkh* as in part an atonement for past sin. That sin apparently consisted in not speaking out against the actions of Sulṭān Muḥammad ibn Tughluq during the latter's lifetime.[1] Elsewhere he says he will now speak out in order to propitiate the Divine Wrath and to secure himself a good hearing on the Day of Judgment.[2] But divine forgiveness was not the only reward for which Baranī hoped through the composition of the *Ta'rīkh-i-Fīrūz Shāhī*. If only, he says, he were able to bring his *Ta'rīkh* to the notice of Sulṭān Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq then he would be freed from anxiety and from the calumnies of his foes.[3] Baranī's motives for writing the *Ta'rīkh-i-Fīrūz Shāhī* were certainly not academic but practical. However, they were practical because Baranī's conception of the role of historiography was practical; because he believed that he was offering to God something which would open the eyes of mankind to God and, to the sultan, something which would benefit him in this world and the next. 'My life', he says,[4] 'has been spent in a minute examination of books; and in every science I have studied many literary works both ancient and modern, and after the science of Quranic commentary, the study of tradition (*ḥadīth*), jurisprudence (*fiqh*) and the mystic path (*ṭarīqa*) of the (*ṣūfī*) shaykhs, I have not seen as many benefits in any other form of learning or practical activity as I have in the science of history.' For *ta'rīkh* to Baranī is true religion and morality teaching by examples, an indispensable study for the good life. It warns readers to avoid the base and contemptible. It is knowledge of the annals and traditions of prophets, caliphs, sultans and other great men of both religion and government. It loses its value if it concerns the deeds of mean and unworthy persons. Indeed, such persons usually have no taste for it and its study does not advantage them.

Baranī lists[5] seven benefits which the study of history confers upon readers. First it gives mankind an acquaintance with the heavenly books, the word of God which contain most of the tradition of the deeds of prophets, the best of men, and of the annals of sultans mentioning their acts of oppression. History is that science which provides a capital stock of examples for those with eyes to see. Second, it is the twin brother of the science of *ḥadīth* which is indispensable for a knowledge of the words and deeds of the Prophet and is necessary in order

[1] *Ta'rīkh-i-Fīrūz Shāhī*, *Bibliotheca Indica* ed., Calcutta, 1862, pp. 466–7.
[2] *TFS*, pp. 237–8.
[3] *TFS*, pp. 124–5.
[4] *TFS*, p. 9.
[5] *TFS*, pp. 10–13.

to confirm the reliability of narrators of *ḥadīth*. If the traditionist is not also an historian he will not know the transactions of the Holy Prophet or his Companions whose privilege it is to report *ḥadīth* and he will not be able to distinguish sincere from insincere Companions and real from false followers of the Companions; if he is not also an historian those transactions will not be proved, he cannot report the *ḥadīth*, and cannot discharge his duty of explaining the traditions. It is also the province of history to relate the circumstances of the age of the Prophet and his Companions and to explain and analyse that which strengthens the hearts and confidence of both ancient and modern members of the Muslim Community. Third, history is a means of strengthening the reason and the judgment by the study of the experience of others. Fourth, a knowledge of history comforts and gives strength to sultans, nobles and *wazirs* in times of stress and calamity because they are able to see what others have done in like circumstances and adopt their remedies, avoid worrying about hypothetical dangers, and recognize warnings. Fifth, a knowledge from history of the traditions and of the deeds of Prophets and the vicissitudes they encountered will induce patience and resignation and prevent the hearts of Muslims from despairing amid misfortune and distress. Sixth, through a knowledge of history the character of the saved, the just and the virtuous becomes firmly fixed in readers' hearts and the evil, the base, the rebellious, the tyrannical, and the havoc they wreak become known to sultans, ministers and kings of Islam. History proves to them the fruits of good conduct and the results of bad in the management of worldly affairs. Thus sultans and rulers are induced to follow good courses of action, not to indulge in tyranny and oppression and not to escape the obligations of the servanthood of God. The benefits of their right actions are spread among the people at large. Seventh, history is a necessary foundation of truth. It is a true narration of good and evil, justice and oppression, obedience and rebellion, virtue and vice, so that readers may take warning and understand the benefits and the injuries of worldly rule and thus follow virtuous paths and avoid evil.

Thus Baranī [1] conceives history to have a didactic religious purpose. The essentially Muslim religious idiom of his thought is indeed underlined by his criteria for the truthful and accurate historian. Since Baranī says there is no written proof for historical traditions, readers can only trust the historian himself and only then if he is an orthodox Muslim as, for example, Ibn Isḥāq, author of *Siyar al-Nabī*, or Imām

[1] Baranī, however, is not being original; see Chapter VII, pp. 112–114.

Wāqidī, author of the *Kitāb al-Maghāzī*. Whatever persons worthy of trust have written has been given credence by others but whatever has been written by self-willed persons of unknown parentage has not been trusted. Indeed some people of wrong religion, for example, the *shī'a* and *khawārij* have woven lying tales about the Companions of the Prophet. One of the great advantages of historical writing, however, is that it enables readers to distinguish between *sunnīs* and the *shī'a*, the truthful from the lying, and faithful followers of the true religion from imposters.

Baranī insists that an historian will show forth his piety and right belief by stating the truth without fear or favour. For what he writes he will be accountable to God on the Day of Judgment. In sum then, for Baranī the duty of the historian is to teach 'the lessons of history'.

Baranī intends that his own *Ta'rīkh-i-Fīrūz Shāhī* should fulfil this conception of the historian's office. 'I have experienced much difficulty in writing this history', he says, 'and expect to receive justice from fair minded people. This work is a collection of many meanings. If it is read as history, people will find in it the annals of sultans and kings. If rules, regulations and healing prescriptions are sought therein it will not be found wanting. If in this history are sought the advice and precepts of worldly rules, they will find more and better here than by the study of other books. Whatever I have written I have written truthfully and honestly and this history is worthy of credence. As I have set down an epitome of many pregnant meanings, this history ought as a matter of duty to be followed as an example.'[1] Or again, 'I, Ẓiyā' Baranī, the author of the *Ta'rīkh-i-Fīrūz Shāhī*, have done wonders in writing this book and people who know history (who have become as rare as the Phoenix and the Philosopher's Stone) know that no one has produced a work like the *Ta'rīkh-i-Fīrūz Shāhī*, which is a collection of annals and of principles of temporal government . . . if this history is weighed and compared against others and my trouble judged fairly, it will be seen that in every line, indeed in every word, I have recorded the frivolities and the strangenesses of the established rules contained in the annals and traditions of sultans, together with the benefits and injuries brought about by the rule of temporal monarchs, whether openly or by implication, whether by overt or covert expressions.' Baranī is even more explicit that his *Ta'rīkh* has been so composed as to teach right conclusions when he enters upon his treatment of the reign of Muḥammad ibn Tughluq. 'In this history', he says, 'I have written of the affairs of government

[1] *TFS*, p. 23.

and of the important imperial enterprises of Sulṭān Muḥammad ibn Tughluq, (but) I have not concerned myself with the arrangement in order of every victory, or every event or every revolt and uprising, because wise men are innately capable of considering carefully and taking due warning from a study of the affairs of government and the enterprises of rulers, and the ignorant and senseless, who have no desire or inclination to study circumstances of good and evil and who do not know that history is "The Queen of the Sciences" through their own innate disposition and lack of understanding, even if they read the volumes containing the story of Abū Musaylima [1] and repeated them, would not be able to gain any benefit from them or take heed from them.' [2] Baranī then is writing for those who see the same truths in life as he sees.

Fully to define the precepts and principles which Baranī wished to teach in his *Ta'rīkh-i-Fīrūz Shāhī*, it is necessary to relate that work to another, the *Fatāwa-yi-Jahāndārī*, also written during his last years in exile from court. Indeed, the two works form the reverse and the obverse of the same ideological coin. Baranī wrote both works in order to educate Muslim sultans, and in particular the sultans of Delhi, in their duty towards Islam. The *Fatāwa-yi-Jahāndārī* is, however, even more overtly didactic than the *Ta'rīkh-i-Fīrūz Shāhī* for it is couched in the form of advice by Sulṭān Maḥmūd of Ghaznī to his sons and to the 'kings of Islam', supported by anecdotes in the Persian *fürsten-spiegel* tradition. The *Ta'rīkh-i-Fīrūz Shāhī* shows what happened in the history of the Delhi sultanate between Balban and Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq when, according to Baranī, the content of that advice was regarded or disregarded.

The *Fatāwa-yi-Jahāndārī* expresses a coherent politico-religious philosophy. God has delegated power in this world to a partnership between prophets and kings, the descendants respectively of Shīth and Kayūmarth, the sons of Adam. Indeed 'religion and kingship are twins'.[3] In Sulṭān Maḥmūd's day (sc. Ẓiyā' al-dīn Baranī's) these two

[1] A prophet of the Banū Ḥanīfa in Yamāma, contemporary with Muḥammad. See article 'Musailima' in the *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Leiden, 1953, p. 416.

[2] *TFS*, p. 468.

[3] *Fatāwa-yi-Jahāndārī*, India Office Library Persian, MS. 1149, folio 18*a–b*, fol. 242*b*–243*a*. Derived from pre-Muslim Iranian tradition, this is a familiar dictum in Islamic writing on government, e.g. Firdausī, *Shāh-Nāma*, vol. VII, ed. Said Nafīsī, Teheran, 1935, p. 1995; Fakhr al-dīn al-Rāzī, *Jāmi' al-'ulūm*, lith. Bombay, 1323/1906, p. 219; Niẓām al-Mulk, *Siyāsat-Nāma*, ed. C. Schefer, Paris, 1891–93, p. 55; Niẓām-i-'Arūdī, *Chahār Maqāla*, ed. Mīrzā Muḥammad, London, 1910, p. 55; Naṣīr al-dīn Ṭūsī, *Akhlāq-i-Nāṣirī*, lith. Lahore, 1865, p. 167. See also, R. Levy, *An Introduction to the Sociology of Islam*, vol. I, London, 1931, p. 304; I. Goldziher, *Streitschrift des Gazālī gegen die Bāṭinijja-Sekte*, Leiden, 1916, p. 102, for the references there given.

delegated powers cannot be combined in the person of a king.[1] Kings must not abuse the dignity conferred upon them by God and employ their office for the satisfaction of their own worldly desires. Without high religious aspirations, a ruler cannot lay claim to be the deputy and shadow of God upon earth. But although the office of temporal government is of divine institution, in the *Fatāwa-yi-Jahāndārī*, Baranī insists that in the history of the Muslim community only the first four ' rightly-guided ' caliphs have been true Muslim rulers.[2] They alone, through their personal acquaintance with the Prophet and the tremendous impact of his example, have been able to follow his *sunna* and combine personal poverty, humility towards God, and the duties of rulership.[3] For after their deaths mankind became progressively more corrupt and it was impossible to rule without recourse to the methods of the pre-Muslim kings of Persia, who surrounded themselves with pomp and awe and relied upon might and majesty to win obedience.[4] Baranī states that their way of life and that of true religion are in clear opposition.[5] Moreover, after the four rightly guided caliphs, rulers, beginning with the Ummayads, gained authority by military force without the consent of the Muslim community, appointment by their predecessors, or a diploma of investiture by the caliph. The problem for Baranī is how such rulers may justly claim their subjects' obedience and escape eternal punishment although their power is *prima facie* unislamic in origin and character.

Baranī's solution of this dilemma is briefly that, irrespective of the actual basis of their power, sultans and kings must employ that power in the protection and maintenance of Islam or in the achievement of a state of social peace and order in which Islam can flourish.[6] Thus a true Muslim sultan is one who enforces the Sharī'a, who suppresses

[1] *FJ*. fol. 98*b*–99*a*.

[2] Cf. Baranī's near contemporary Shaykh Hamadānī, *Zakhīrat, al-Mulūk*, India Office Persian MS. 1130, fol. 76*a* ; for the place of this doctrine in medieval Muslim political thought, see T. W. Arnold, *The Caliphate*, Oxford, 1924, pp. 107–8, and H. A. R. Gibb, ' Some Considerations on the Sunni Theory of the Caliphate,' *Archives d'Histoire du droit oriental* (Brussels), III, 1947, p. 404, and (Chapter I) ' Constitutional Organization : the Muslim Community and the State ', in *Law in the Middle East*, ed. M. Khadduri and H. J. Liebesny, Washington, 1955, pp. 23–4.

[3] *FJ*, fol. 87*b*–88*a*. This strongly *ṣūfī* motif is paralleled in Shaykh Hamadānī, op. cit., fol. 78*a*, 81*b*–84*a*.

[4] Cf. Al-Ghazālī, *Naṣīḥat al-Mulūk*, ed. Jalal Huma'i, Teheran, (solar) 1315–17/ 1936–38, p. 79.

[5] *FJ*, fol. 44*b*–45*a*, 88*b*–89*b*, 98*a*–100*a*, 136*a*.

[6] Again, Baranī is repeating a major theme in medieval Muslim thought on government, both in India and outside. See, for example, Ibn Taymiyya, *Siyāsa-Sharī'a*, trans. H. Laoust as *Le Traité de droit public d'ibn Taimīya*, Beyrouth, 1948, pp. 18, 22, 173–4 ; also, Fakhr-i-Mudabbir, *Ādāb al-Mulūk wa Kifāyat al-Mamlūk*, India Office Library Persian MS. 647, fol. 1*b*-2*a* ; al-Ghazāli, *Naṣīḥat*, pp. 39–40, and Shaykh Hamadānī, *Zakhīrat al-Mulūk*, fol. 75*a*, 82*b*–83*a*, 93*b*.

unorthodoxy, and who abuses the infidel, particularly the Hindu infidel. He should, moreover, dispense strict justice and appoint only pious Muslims to office. The appointment of persons of evil belief, those in fact upon whom God has frowned at the time of their creation, is an indication of an unregenerate usurper.[1] The true Muslim sultan should also avoid unislamic punishments. He may resort to capital punishment for an offence for which the *Sharī'a* does not prescribe death only in the last resort, where the stability of his government (and therefore the conditions of the safe practice of Islam) is in danger. If he is not an hereditary ruler, he should never kill the supporters of his predecessor. Baranī further insists—and the significance of this will become evident in his treatment in the *Ta'rīkh-i-Fīrūz Shāhī* of the reign of Muḥammad ibn Tughluq—that as mankind has been created with contradictory qualities, so must the king know when to employ his own contradictory qualities in the interests of Islam and peace.[2] Thus towards those who have been created gentle and submissive and faithful to Islam he must show himself gentle and generous, while towards those who have been created froward and unbelieving, he must employ violence and terror. A virtuous Muslim sultan is he who understands the different created dispositions of men and the appropriate way of treating them.[3]

Also in the *Fatāwa-yi-Jahāndārī*, Baranī offers in the interests of religion prescriptions for a stable kingdom—a strong and contented army, a well-filled treasury, an equitable system of taxation and an efficient intelligence system for reporting acts of injustice and oppression by the 'over-mighty subject'. If a king or sultan follows Baranī's advice and despite all his outward pomp remains inwardly humble and dutiful before God, then he may still hope for salvation in the next world with some prospect of not being disappointed.[4]

[1] *FJ*, fol. 68*a*–*b*, 205*b*–206*b*, 216*b*–219*b*.
[2] *FJ*, fol. 193*a*–194*b*, 197*b*.
[3] There are repeated echoes of Greek political thought, as mediated and understood by al-Fārābī and Naṣīr al-dīn Ṭūsī, in Baranī's repeated insistence that the ruler must treat each man according to his character and aptitudes, maintaining them in their appropriate classes and seeing that each has only the employment for which he is innately fitted. There are, however, more specifically Islamic overtones in Baranī's than in Naṣīr al-dīn Ṭūsī's exposition; Baranī stresses God's agency in allotting men their different dispositions and emphasizes that a man's occupation is an index to his moral and religious status in the sight of God. Cf. Baranī, *FJ*, 55*a*–58*b*, 216*b*–217*b*, and Naṣīr al-dīn Ṭūsī, *Akhlāq-i-Nāṣirī*, lith. Lahore, 1865, pp. 145–6, 168–9. Drawing as he did in the *Fatāwa-yi-Jahāndāri* from pre-Muslim Iranian tradition, Baranī was also doubtless influenced by the 'class consciousness' of Sassanian society—see, for example, the anecdote of Khusrau Naushīn-rawān and the shoemaker with clerkly ambitions for his son, *Shāh-Nāma*, ed. Turner Macan, Calcutta, 1829, vol. IV, pp. 1777–9.
[4] *FJ*, 242*a*–244*b*, *passim*.

Baranī expresses his precepts for sultans in the *Ta'rīkh-i-Fīrūz Shāhī* in two ways. First, he puts ideas similar to those of the *Fatāwa-yi-Jahāndārī* into the mouths of some of the historical personages of the *Ta'rīkh-i-Fīrūz Shāhī* and, second, he creates an embodiment of his ideals and ideas in the person of Sulṭān Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq after whom the work is named and to whom it is dedicated. Baranī depicts him as the ideal sultan. 'The author of the *Ta'rīkh-i-Fīrūz Shāhī*, in the interests of truth and not by way of singing praises, would inform those who have a knowledge of the annals and traditions of former sultans, that, from the day when Delhi was conquered and Islam appeared in Hindūstān, from the time of Muḥammad ibn Sām, there has been no sultan more clement, more modest, more compassionate, more kind, more aware of his duty and more pure in his Muslim faith than Fīrūz Shāh.' [1] Or later, 'I have not seen another sultan to equal the sultan of the day, Fīrūz Shāh, in meeting the just claims of Muslims or in having a care for the mandates of the *Sharī'a*.' [2] Thus Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq never shed the blood of true Muslims (nor, says Baranī rhetorically, of anyone else), always cherished the pious, appointing to office and patronizing virtuous and holy men. He never permitted depraved or low persons and contemners of God to have a hand in the affairs of the Muslim community. He certainly understood the desirability of not killing or ill-treating the aides and officials of previous sultans.

In order to bring home to his readers, and indeed perhaps to advise and warn Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq himself, of the truth of these teachings on the duties of sultans and kings towards Islam, Baranī wrote an account of the reign of Sulṭāns Balban, Mu'izz al-dīn Kayqubād, Jalāl al-dīn Khaljī, 'Alā' al-dīn Khaljī, Quṭb al-dīn Mubārak Shāh Khaljī, Ghiyāth al-dīn Tughluq and Muḥammad ibn Tughluq, in such a way as to convey the impression that in so far as those rulers acted in accordance with Baranī's precepts they prospered and in so far as they defied them they, or their families, suffered distress, failure and even death. The *Ta'rīkh-i-Fīrūz Shāhī* reads in fact as a parable or a medieval morality play, as a symposium of one-act moral melodramas, one for each reign except Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq's, when the perfect age had dawned. This effect Baranī achieves by a chosen sequence of events, by outright comment, or more usually by placing in juxtaposition a passage in which his politico-religious ideas are expounded and a narration of events which betray whether or not those ideas are being followed or flouted with consequent success or failure for the agents. It is impossible to separate Baranī's data from his interpretation of them, their

[1] *TES*, p. 548. [2] *TES*, p. 561.

status in his thought from the perspective in which he views them. In his treatment of the past, his mind appears to have worked somewhat as follows: he knew from common report or personal observations the fate, let us say, of Balban's family, or of 'Alā' al-dīn Khaljī's family, or of the enterprises undertaken by Muḥammad ibn Tughluq. Believing in divine ordination and divine punishment, Baranī assumed that their fate or lack of success was explicable only by their wrongdoing in the sight of God. Wrongdoing consisted in not obeying or in neglecting religious truth. What Baranī believed was religious truth. Therefore neglect of Baranī's notions provided the historical explanation of what happened to these personages. Baranī, therefore, selected his data in order to prove his preconceptions. He looked at history with the eye of faith. It is his highly personal interpretation of the past—for the *Ta'rīkh-i-Fīrūz Shāhī* is an interpretative history—which gives the life and colour to Baranī's text and which has set it apart from every other early medieval Indo-Muslim historical work. This interpretation will now be examined in detail, reign by reign.

### *The Drama of Balban's Reign (1266–1287): The Story of a Sultan who Saw the Truth but as Through a Glass Darkly.*

In Sulṭān Balban Baranī depicts a ruler who is aware of his duty towards Islam but who is not always able fully to perform it. Balban indeed is made a mouthpiece for many of the ideas of the *Fatāwa-yi-Jahāndārī*. Thus, in conversation with his courtiers, Balban quotes Sayyid Nūr al-dīn Mubārak Ghaznawī's advice to Iltutmish to exalt Islam, enforce the *Sharī'a*, where possible destroy idol-worship (and where not possible make the life of the unbeliever very uncomfortable), and prevent the corruption of orthodoxy by heresy (particularly by Greek philosophy).[1] Lastly sultans must dispense justice and curb oppression. Balban also repeats the dogma of the *Fatāwa-yi-Jahāndārī* that God-fearing sultans do not associate with unworthy persons lest their subjects hold them lightly and true religion suffer. Then Balban expresses contempt for any sultan who consorts with musicians, minstrels or money-changers and thereby forfeits his claim to be the deputy of God. If sultans lower their dignity by associating with low companions they endanger the stability of the realm and the supremacy of Islam.[2] Balban reiterates this advice in another conversation, this

[1] *TFS*, pp. 41–44, cf. *FJ*, fol. 9*a*, 10*b*–11*a*, 118*b*–120*b*; see also: *TFS*, pp. 98, 102.
[2] *TFS*, pp. 34–35; cf. *FJ*, fol. 68*a*–68*b*, 205*b*–206*b*, 216*b*–219*b*.

time with his son Muḥammad during the last of the latter's annual visits to Delhi before his death in battle with the Mongols.[1]

According to Baranī, Balban was, in many respects, as good as his word—indeed even better, for he obeyed several of Baranī's precepts which he did not himself utter. Thus he always employed about him persons of the right moral and religious timber. He refused to countenance the appointment of a Hindu as a *mutaṣarrif* in Amroha.[2] He was fearless in the punishment of crime by the highly placed.[3] Balban also preserved that gravity of demeanour and aurora of personal awe which Baranī recommends for God-fearing sultans. He avoided frivolous pursuits, was a total abstainer, devoted himself to religious observance and sought the company of holy men.[4] He cherished his own servants and those from former reigns. At one time he did order two thousand *iqṭā'dārs* of Iltutmish's time to forfeit the income from their villages because they were no longer fit to perform their military duties, but after a highly emotional appeal by the *kotwāl*, Fakhr al-dīn, Balban rescinded his decision, weeping at the thought that he had nearly been unkind to men as old as he himself.[5]

Baranī implies that in so far as Sulṭān Balban obeyed these precepts, whether expressed or implied, he prospered. Thus during his reign Balban was able to amass sufficient military strength to give Delhi immunity from Mongol attacks, end the depredations of the Mewatīs in the Doāb and suppress a rebellion in Bengal.

But Baranī does not wish to leave the impression that Balban was the best of sultans, an example to be imitated. Baranī depicts Balban as in fact falling some way short of perfection. Thus, although Balban reiterated, as in his fatherly talks with his sons Muḥammad and Bughrā Khān, the necessity of obeying the *Sharī'a*, the tone of his advice implies that he himself was not able to do so. Indeed, Baranī charges him with putting political expediency above adherence to the *Sharī'a*. His chief offence on this score was the killing of Muslims by the sword, by hanging, drowning, and poisoning. One of his worst deeds was the poisoning of Sher Khān, a trusty captain against the Mongols. Baranī says that Balban will have to answer for crimes of this kind on the Day of Judgment and moralizes over the extinction of Balban's family after his death. Baranī makes Balban appear as altogether too 'bloody, bold and resolute' in his rule. The suppression of Tughral's rebellion in Bengal is described rhetorically in such a way that it

[1] *TFS*, pp. 69–80.
[2] *TFS*, pp. 36–37.
[3] *TFS*, pp. 40–41.
[4] *TFS*, pp. 33, 46–47.
[5] *TFS*, pp. 61–64; cf. *FJ*, fol. 223*a*–231*a*.

appears that Balban, not enjoying an ideal character, was obliged to rely for success on 'blood and iron'. In giving advice to his son Bughrā Khān, Balban implies that he lives in a corrupt age, for no God-fearing *'ulamā* remain to help keep a ruler on the right path.[1] Another of Balban's weaknesses was that he was merely able to keep the Hindus within bounds and not utterly to destroy them as Baranī's doctrines would have all sultans do. Pious rulers and Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq should beware of imitating Sulṭān Balban.

### *The Reign of Sulṭān Mu'izz al-dīn Kayqubād (1287–1290): The Evils of Wine, Women and Song.*

In Baranī's account of this reign he does not find it difficult to explain why this young sultan soon met with an ignominious death and the family of Balban at Delhi with extinction. Overtly and covertly he depicts Sulṭān Mu'izz al-dīn Kayqubād as a sinner against nearly all the commandments in Baranī's decalogue. He is given to a gay and dissolute life, is ignorant of his duties towards Islam, pays no heed to religious men and surrounds himself with worthless advisers. The consequences soon manifest themselves. His subjects imitate his wild and licentious behaviour, as, according to Baranī's dogma, they must, and sedition and unbelief appear in the realm. It was a mystery to Baranī how Delhi escaped heavenly calamity during his reign.[2] Worthy nobles from Balban's time are dimissed and Mu'izz al-dīn gives for a time a doting confidence to a wicked favourite, Niẓām al-dīn, nephew of the *kotwāl* of Delhi, who himself offends Baranī's principles by having ambitions above that station in life to which God has called him. Despite advice from his father Bughrā Khān, in typical Baranī idiom[3], the heedless sultan is drawn inexorably towards the violent end which wise men know awaits him. He falls victim to a paralysis brought on by excess and is slain by his servants. The sultanate passes from Balban's family to the Khaljīs. The moral of this reign is clear. Sultans must be grave and diligent in the performance of their religious duties, avoid bacchanalian revels, and promote only worthy men to office.

### *The Drama of the Reign of Sulṭān Jalāl al-dīn Khaljī (1290–1296): the Tragedy of a Good Man with Two Achilles' Heels.*

Sulṭān Jalāl al-dīn Khaljī Baranī depicts as a sympathetic character and endows him with many of the virtues Baranī demanded in a ruler.

[1] *TFS*, p. 94. [2] *TFS*, p. 167.
[3] *TFS*, pp. 151–156.

Nevertheless he is allotted his meed of failings, which explains why he is assassinated by the minions of his nephew 'Alā' al-dīn Khaljī on the banks of the Ganges. However, Baranī's account of the reign reads like a tragedy which he would rather not have written. He remembers his own boyhood happiness under Sulṭān Jalāl al-dīn and his impassioned denunciation of those responsible for his death is perhaps a measure of his own feelings of regret and self-pity at his fall from grace and his banishment from the court life which he had loved so well.[1]

The virtues which Baranī attributed to Jalāl al-dīn Khaljī were piety, humility, compassion towards Muslims, extreme reluctance to sacrifice their lives in battle, kindness towards his servants, patronage of virtuous and the avoidance of worthless and irreligious advisers, including Baranī's chief aversions—philosophers.[2]

But Jalāl al-dīn had two principal shortcomings. First, he killed a holy man, Sīdī Maula, and second, although he knew better, he was unable to emulate Maḥmūd of Ghaznī as a warrior for the faith and a scourge of the Hindus, being obliged to tolerate the open flaunting of unbelief beneath his palace and to content himself with the levying of *kharāj* and *jizya* from the Hindus.[3] Indeed Baranī depicts Jalāl al-dīn Khaljī as lacking in that perspicuity which in the *Fatāwa-yi-Jahāndārī* he teaches is indispensable for sultans—the perspicuity which enables a sultan to judge correctly when to be mild and when to be severe, depending upon his assessment of the characters with which different sorts and conditions of his subjects have been endowed.

Thus, after the slaying of Sīdī Maula, which is itself accompanied by divine portents of anger and forthcoming doom—the skies darken and a drought occurs [4]—the tragedy of the reign moves swiftly to a climax. Heedless of all warnings of the treachery of his nephew 'Alā' al-dīn, his very virtues of kindness and compassion blinding him to the truth,[5] Sulṭān Jalāl al-dīn goes to his fate by the Ganges. Baranī does not fail to point out however that those who slew Jalāl al-dīn were themselves to suffer the penalty for their crime during the next reign.

### *The Drama of the Reign of 'Alā' al-dīn Khaljī (1296–1316): the Snares and Delusions of Worldly Success for its own Sake.*

The personality of Sulṭān 'Alā' al-dīn made a powerful impression upon Baranī, who clearly adjudged him to have been the most powerful

[1] *TFS*, pp. 200–201, 205–206, 235–236.
[2] *TFS*, pp. 176–178, 185, 192, 196–197, 201–204, 205–206.
[3] *TFS*, pp. 216–217; cf. *FJ*, fol. 118*b*–120*b*, 202*b*.
[4] *TFS*, p. 212.
[5] *TFS*, pp. 224–225.

and successful sultan of Delhi, in the world's coinage, with whom he had been acquainted. The twenty years of his reign are given the lengthiest treatment of any comparable period in the *Ta'rīkh-i-Fīrūz Shāhī*. It would indeed appear not only from Baranī, but from other historians, Amīr Khusrau, 'Iṣāmī and 'Afīf, that at no time before the Mughal empire was the influence of the ruler of Delhi greater in Hindūstān than in 'Alā' al-dīn Khaljī's time.

It was of the greatest significance to Baranī to establish the right moral to be drawn from the account of 'Alā' al-dīn's reign, otherwise the recollection of his outstanding worldly success might lead others astray. For Baranī depicts 'Alā' al-dīn as fundamentally wicked. Readers must be left in no doubt as to the real causes of 'Alā' al-dīn's achievement and as to their limitations.

Certainly, as Baranī records them—and his rhetoric is as lush in describing the successes as it is in describing the failures of 'Alā' al-dīn—those achievements could have led the short-sighted and unwary into an unjustified admiration for the sultan. 'Alā' al-dīn succeeded in buying his way to the throne after his murder of Jalāl al-dīn Khaljī. He successfully repulsed, or his subordinates successfully repulsed, the most serious Mongol raids against the territories of the Delhi sultan since the time of Iltutmish. He was able to raid south India and obtain the acceptance of Delhi's hegemony by the principal rulers of India south of the Vindhyas. He conquered the most important fortresses of Rājasthān. He escaped attempts upon his life with miraculous good fortune. He suppressed revolts. He devised successful measures against sedition and intrigue among his nobles, he raised the largest army hitherto seen in Muslim India and fortified the north-west approaches to Delhi. He raised the land revenue demand to new heights and controlled the prices of a large number of basic commodities. He acted in ways dear to Baranī's heart, among them his prohibiting alcoholic drink and his measures against wealthy Hindus. For a time he was blessed by the assistance of good ministers and by the presence in his dominions of many learned and pious men, fugitives from Baghdād and Khurāsān.

But for Baranī none of the glories of the reign are in any way attributable to the character of Sulṭān 'Alā' al-dīn Khaljī himself.[1] Fundamentally he is a wicked sultan. He omits to perform his personal religious observances. He has an ambition to become a prophet himself.[2] He regards the mandates of the Holy Law and those of worldly government (*mulk-dārī wa jahānbānī*) as distinct, and prefers

[1] *TFS*, pp. 295–297, 341. [2] *TFS*, pp. 262–263.

to follow the latter.[1] He kills Muslims; he allows the defilement of mosques[2]; he does not associate with the pious and towards the end of his reign appoints irreligious and wicked men to office. When indeed he does perform actions which Baranī's canons command—such as taking measures to impoverish Hindu *zamīndārs*, or the curbing of cheating and chicanery among traders—they do not redound to his credit because they are done from the wrong motives—for his own worldly glory and success and not for the supremacy and welfare of Islam. Baranī brings this out most clearly in the dialogue between the sultan and Qāẓī Mughīth al-dīn.[3]

How then does Baranī explain 'Alā' al-dīn's success? Worldly men, he says, may attribute it to the sultan himself. Religious men, however, know that it was dūe to the presence in the realm of the Chishtī saint, Shaykh Niẓām al-dīn Auliyā', whose benedictions and spiritual blessings (*barakāt*) spread virtue and enlightenment among the faithful.[4] He was the 'efficient' cause of the sultan's apparent success; in his curbing of sedition and his control of the Hindus 'Alā' al-dīn was merely an unwitting agent of the Divine Will. Needless to say 'Alā' al-dīn did not appreciate the *shaykh* or understand his place in the Divine Order and wilfully neglected to visit him.

For his many sins and for his blindness to the virtues of Shaykh Niẓām al-dīn Auliyā' the family of the sultan was to pay a terrible price. Fate first deceived 'Alā' al-dīn and then destroyed him. A wicked servant, Malik Kāfūr, secured the banishment of Khiẓr Khān, eldest son of 'Alā' al-dīn, and removed others in the path of his ambition. Baranī reports 'Alā' al-dīn Khaljī himself as dying of suspected foul play.[5] After his death, Malik Kāfūr blinded Khiẓr Khān and his brother Shādī Khān, imprisoned another brother, Mubārak Khān and threatened to exterminate the whole of 'Alā' al-dīn's family. The moral Baranī wishes his readers to draw from the reign seems clear. Worldly success is a chimera unless it is founded upon obedience to God, a true religious spirit, and deference towards holy men.

[1] *TFS*, p. 289.
[2] *TFS*, p. 299.
[3] *TFS*, pp. 289–297.
[4] *TFS*, pp. 324–325. On the notion of *baraka*, the miraculous power radiating from a saint (*walī*) or his tomb and which extends to the control of battles, see E. Doutté, *Magie et Religion dans l'Afrique du Nord*, Alger, 1909, pp. 439–449; O. Depont and X. Coppolani, *Les Confréries Religieuses musalmanes*, Alger, 1897, pp. 84, 114; also, J. Wellhausen, *Reste Arabischen Heidentums*, Berlin, 1897, pp. 139–140; J. Chelhod, 'La Baraka chez les Arabes ou l'influence bienfaisante du sacré', *Revue de l'Histoire des religions*, CXLVIII, 1, July–September, 1955; on the worship of saints in Islam generally, see the article '*walī*' in the *Shorter Encyclopædia of Islam*, pp. 629–631.
[5] *TFS*, pp. 369.

### *The Drama of the Reign of Quṭb al-dīn Mubārak Shāh Khaljī (1316–1320): Justice Swift and Sure.*

As with the reign of Sulṭān Mu'izz al-dīn Kayqubād, the brevity of the reign of Quṭb al-dīn Mubārak Shāh Khaljī is mirrored by the brevity of Baranī's account of it. The explanation of the sultan's murder is not difficult to find. After Malik Kāfūr, 'Alā' al-dīn Khaljī's favourite was murdered by *payks* of the palace guard, Quṭb al-dīn Mubārak Shāh ascended the throne, only to give himself up to licence. Also, he allowed himself to fall under the influence of an unworthy favourite of Hindu stock, Khusrau Khān Barwārī, in face of the expressed forebodings of wise men and loyal courtiers. Moreover, the sultan had a contretemps with Shaykh Niẓām al-dīn Auliyā', and forbade his courtiers to visit him at Ghiyāthpur.

The upshot was that Khusrau Khān Barwārī plotted against and slew the infatuated sultan and introduced a reign of infidelity at Delhi.[1] However, a warrior for the faith and a loyal servant of the Khaljīs, Ghiyāth al-dīn Tughluq, sprang forth to rescue Islam from the indignities which the feckless behaviour of Quṭb al-dīn Mubārak Shāh had brought down upon it, and Khusrau Khān Barwārī, after a struggle, was defeated and slain. The moral of the reign was evident. Sultans must avoid licence and self-indulgence and not promote unworthy servants.

### *The Reign of Ghiyāth al-dīn Tughluq (1320–1325): An Interlude with a Good Sultan.*

Baranī depicts Sulṭān Ghiyāth al-dīn Tughluq as a saviour of Islam and as a perfect Muslim sultan. His account of the reign does not read as a parable but as an idyll, which makes the sultan's death under a collapsing pavilion appear inexplicable.

Unlike 'Alā' al-dīn Khaljī, Ghiyāth al-dīn Tughluq always did the right things for the right reasons.[2] He was pious in religion, obeyed the dictates of the *Sharī'a*, dispensed justice, never listened to heretics, and allowed no unworthy thoughts to enter his head. He patronized good men, appointed worthy officers and was kind towards the supporters of previous sultans if they were men of character and true religion. He adopted measures of revenue collection which assured the government a buoyant income and the realm a prosperous agriculture.

As a consequence of his excellent character and good deeds, Ghiyāth al-dīn Tughluq had no need to rule by fear of the sword; the people

[1] *TFS*, pp. 406–411.

[2] *TFS*, pp. 429, 440–441, 542.

devoted themselves to religion and the Hindus were kept in their place. Even highway robbers gave up their occupation and beat their swords into ploughshares. Corn was cheap and plentiful and the land became fertile through the sultan's activity in digging irrigation channels.

Baranī's interpretation of the reign of Ghiyāth al-dīn Tughluq throws light upon the question whether he concealed a knowledge of Muḥammad ibn Tughluq's complicity in causing his father's death under the pavilion at Afghānpur. He depicts the sultan in glowing terms as a true Muslim ruler. There are, therefore, no religious reasons which might explain his death. If Baranī had believed that death to have been by foul play, on the analogy of his treatment of other reigns, signs and portents would have probably appeared in his account and some wicked acts recorded. But all was sweetness and light. Therefore, it seems likely that the historian's genuine mystification and surprise at the death of a pious Muslim ruler found expression in his well-known phrase describing the events leading to Ghiyāth al-dīn Tughluq's death—' A thunderbolt of heavenly calamity fell upon the people of the earth '.

### *The Drama of the Reign of Muḥammad ibn Tughluq (1325–1351): The Story of a Well-meaning Man who Fell Among Thieves.*

Ẓiyā' al-dīn Baranī's interpretation of the personality and actions of Muḥammad ibn Tughluq—as a monster of paradox, a mixture of opposites, a man who brought great talents only to the service of ruinous passions and whose intemperate and wayward genius left the sultanate of Delhi weaker than he found it—has found its way into several modern textbooks.[1] But Baranī's character sketch of Muḥammad ibn Tughluq is too closely related to Baranī's general religious and political philosophy and to his own personal experiences to be accepted at its face value as an interpretation upon which modern historians may rely to give an intelligible history of the reign.

To Baranī, Muḥammad ibn Tughluq's reign was a mystery. For seventeen years and three months, Baranī tells us,[2] he was a *nadīm* or boon companion of the sultan who treated him with great kindness and generosity. Yet Muḥammad ibn Tughluq's reign was disfigured by many revolts and Delhi had lost all control of events south of the Vindhyas by the time of the sultan's death in 752/1351. Although

[1] e.g. *Cambridge History of India*, vol. III, chapter VI; *Oxford History of India*, pp. 238–240.
[2] *TFS*, p. 504.

the sultan died in his bed, an air of failure clung around the court in the last years of the reign. How could Baranī explain this contrast between Muḥammad ibn Tughluq's kindness to him personally and his troubles as a ruler ? He seemed reluctant to undertake the task and the general tenor of his account suggests that he was torn between a sense of gratitude towards a patron and a stern conviction of a duty to be performed to God and to man.

Baranī's explanation of the difficulties of Muḥammad ibn Tughluq is couched in terms of the dogma developed in the *Fatāwa-yi-Jahāndārī*, that sultans should be a mixture of contradictory qualities and know when to employ them. Sultans should moreover know how to act according to an ethical golden mean. But Muḥammad ibn Tughluq, Baranī implies, never knew the proper occasions for severity and the proper occasions for leniency. He was punctilious in his personal religious observances but nevertheless tortured and executed true *sunnī* Muslims. He desired to join the office of prophet to that of sultan.[1] He patronized philosophers, neglecting the study of prophetic tradition. He expatiated on the necessity of sultans appointing worthy aides but his deeds in this respect belied his words. His generosity was proverbial but bestowed on the wrong persons.

As a victim of false beliefs and a prey to wicked advisers, Muḥammad ibn Tughluq is depicted, by a deliberate selection of material, as undertaking foolish, ill-conceived enterprises which ruined his kingdom and weakened his authority. Such were the enhancement of the revenue demand in the area of the Doāb, the proposal to move the capital from Delhi to Deogir, the issue of copper coinage, a proposed conquest of Khurāsān and the expedition to Qarāchīl in the Himālayan foothills from which only ten horsemen returned alive. Baranī follows this deliberate attempt at a causal explanation of Muḥammad ibn Tughluq's troubles with deliberately selected examples of rebellion which reduced the sultanate to chaos.[2]

In this predicament Muḥammad ibn Tughluq is represented as resorting to more and more ferocious punishments and to appointing more and more worthless officials to reorganize the administration.[3] But these actions only worsen the situation. Baranī thereupon gives the sultan his greatest opportunity—of hearing Baranī's wisdom from Baranī's own lips. 'Late one night,' says Baranī,[4] 'he summoned this

[1] *TFS*, p. 459, viz., '*wa pādshāhī rā bā payghāmbarī jam' kunad*'.
[2] *TFS*, pp. 478–479.
[3] *TFS*, pp. 499–504.
[4] *TFS*, p. 509.

humble supplicant and said, "O man, you see what revolts are breaking out on all sides; they give me no concern, but men will say they all arise from the sultan's excessive punishments. I am not one to be turned from punishment by what men say or by rebellion. You have read many histories. Have you seen anywhere for which crimes rulers have executed the offenders?"' Baranī replied by quoting Jamshīd as saying that capital punishment was justified for apostasy, wilful murder, adultery between married people, conspiracy, heading a revolt, aiding and abetting the king's enemies and acts of disobedience which would definitely upset the stability of the realm. In reply to Muḥammad ibn Tughluq, Baranī goes on to add that the Prophet Muḥammad sanctioned the death penalty for the first three offences and that the other death penalties were for sultans to apply as they deemed politically expedient. Jamshīd said, however, that, rather than inflict capital punishment, kings had been known to appoint *wazīrs* to devise courses of action in which it was not necessary for subjects' blood to be shed. Muḥammad ibn Tughluq then said that Jamshīd's prescriptions were all very well in their day, but in his day men had grown froward and turbulent. He would have no *wazīr* to devise rules to obviate the shedding of blood.[1]

Baranī then rhetorically describes a realm afflicted by endemic revolt. But Baranī gives the sultan a last chance to reform when the latter asks Baranī's advice again. This time, Baranī quotes the example of former rulers who had abdicated or who had turned over the government to their *wazīrs* when all hope of restoring confidence between rulers and ruled had disappeared.[2] Muḥammad ibn Tughluq replies that should the affairs of his kingdom go as he would wish he is willing to hand over power to Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq, Malik Kabīr and Aḥmad Ayāz and go on the pilgrimage to Mecca. But his subjects have greatly vexed him, and he his subjects. The treatments he tries have no effect. The more the people rebel, the more he, Muḥammad ibn Tughluq, will inflict punishment.

Baranī, in keeping with his character as a thesis writer, then brings his account of the reign swiftly to an end; Muḥammad ibn Tughluq has disregarded his advice a second time; it is better, Baranī seems to imply, that the sultan should make way for a worthier man, Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq. Muḥammad ibn Tughluq dies of a digestive complaint while on an expedition to Thatta and the ideal sultan Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq, amid threatening disaster and confusion, takes over to lead his followers from the wilderness of Sind to the green pastures of Delhi.

[1] *TFS*, p. 511.

[2] *TFS*, p. 521–522.

The morals from Muḥammad ibn Tughluq's reign then are that rulers should know how to employ their contradictory qualities, should act according to the golden mean, should prefer traditionists to philosophers or 'rationalists', should promote only worthy servants and should avoid killing Muslims for crimes not punishable by death under the *Sharī'a*.

Baranī's conception of the nature and role of historical writing in the scheme of knowledge should now have become clear. Baranī regards *ta'rīkh* as a compendium of hints for God-fearing Muslim rulers; indeed more, as the writing on the wall for those with eyes to see. It is an essential guide to religious truth, it is an essential element in the study of the Divine Will for mankind in those areas of life not already clearly provided for by those other vehicles of Islamic revelation—the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth*.

For Baranī, therefore, the study of history is not the study of a purely human past; Baranī is not interested in all the peculiarities or particularities of the human story, in the differences rather than the similarities of age and age, men and men. He sees the past as a battle-ground between good and evil and men as combatants upon that field of battle. Baranī treats history as a branch of theology.

In methodology as well as in aim, Baranī's religious assumptions are in evidence; the facts of history are what reliable religious men have reported them to be. They are not ascertainable by a process of methodical doubt and questioning of evidence but by passionate belief in the testimony of virtuous men. He reveals his attitude clearly at the beginning of the *Ta'rīkh-i-Fīrūz Shāhī* when he says that he will not disagree with anything Minhāj al-dīn ibn Sirāj, a man of right religion has said in the *Ṭabaqāt-i-Nāṣirī* as this would only confuse the latter's readers. When he does not rely upon his own recollections—as largely he does from the reign of Quṭb al-dīn Mubārak Shāh onwards—he relies upon what his relatives or Amīr Khusrau and Amīr Ḥasan have told him, as mediated of course by his own mind. Although Baranī is far from employing the *isnād* technique of the great traditionists, his attitude towards his data is that of a believer in received truth.

If these conclusions as to the basically religious idiom of the *Ta'rīkh-i-Fīrūz Shāhī* are accepted, the status of the *Ta'rīkh* as an authority or a source as defined in Chapter I, will have to be reconsidered. Such a reconsideration is attempted in Chapter VIII.

## CHAPTER III

# THE TREATMENT OF HISTORY BY SHAMS AL-DĪN SIRĀJ 'AFĪF IN THE '*TA'RĪKH-I-FĪRŪZ SHĀHĪ*'

IT is relevant to the study of 'Afīf's idea of history that only use and convenience (to which this book adheres) have attached the title of '*Ta'rīkh-i-Fīrūz Shāhī*' to this work. 'Afīf himself, who did not refer to it by this name, appeared to regard it as part of a large historical composition in which he treated of the *manāqib* (good qualities) of Sulṭān Ghiyāth al-dīn Tughluq, Sulṭān Muḥammad ibn Tughluq and Sulṭān Muḥammad ibn Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq, and of the destruction of Delhi by 'Mongol' (i.e. Tīmūr's) incursion ten years after the death of Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq. These other parts are now lost. Moreover, the extant version of what he wrote about Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq is by no means complete. According to 'Afīf's own list of contents[1], the '*Ta'rīkh-i-Fīrūz Shāhī*' comprised five *qisms* each of eighteen *muqaddimas*. The *Bibliotheca Indica* edition is in fact the nearest to being complete; it breaks off in the fifteenth *muqaddima* of the fifth *qism*, later than any manuscript the writer has been able to examine or have examined. It is impossible therefore to be sure that 'Afīf's conception of history is fully expressed in the portion extant and any interpretation of it must necessarily be tentative. Caution is particularly required in any attempt to detect 'Afīf's motives for writing history.

'Afīf certainly wrote after the sack of Delhi by the forces of Amīr Tīmūr,[2] but of his own life at the time the '*Ta'rīkh-i-Fīrūz Shāhī*' reveals nothing but that he was an old man. He states that he was twelve years old when Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq had two stone pillars (pillars of Aśoka) moved from Topra and Mīraṭh to Delhi. According to the *Sirat-i-Fīrūz Shāhī*,[3] completed by an anonymous author in 772/1370–1, this removal occurred in 769/1367, which would make the year of 'Afīf's birth 757/1356. 'Afīf does not convey that he was in any employment when he wrote; the '*Ta'rīkh-i-Fīrūz Shāhī*' is not suffused by any sense of disappointed ambition or neglected merit. Although 'Afīf came of an official family—his father was

[1] '*Ta'rikh-i-Fīrūz Shāhī*,' *Bibliotheca Indica* ed., Calcutta, 1891, pp. 31–36.
[2] The event is mentioned on p. 314 of *TFS*.
[3] *Sirat-i-Fīrūz Shāhī*, Bānkīpur MS, fol. 104*b* (Folio 105 as numbered in the India Office Library Roto 34).

employed at one time as *Shab-nawīs-i-khawāṣṣān* [1] and at another in the *dīwān-i-wizārat* [2] but he does not mention holding any official post himself. The event which had left the deepest mark upon his mind appears to have been Tīmūr's invasion of Hindūstān.[3] It is possible that he wrote at length about the virtues of sultans who ruled Delhi before that event in order to dwell nostalgically upon Delhi's golden past, but the evidence is not wholly conclusive that this was so. Perhaps 'Afīf was satisfied that it was merely his duty to record great deeds for the edification of his readers.

The use of the term '*manāqib*' (merits, virtues) by 'Afīf as a title for his work on Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq and other sultans of Delhi does, however, provide the key to the idiom of the '*Ta'rīkh-i-Fīrūz Shāhī*'. *Manāqib* is specially used in Muslim literature to refer to the merits and activities, of a miraculous sort, of famous holy men in Islam, heads of schools of jurisprudence and founders of mystic orders in particular.[4] The *manāqib* literature is a species of pious biography for the edification of future generations; its precise characteristics as biography will become evident as this discussion of 'Afīf's *Manāqib-i-Fīrūz Shāhī* proceeds, for 'Afīf's work is not untypical of the genre. It is, however, unusual to find the *manāqib* form applied to the lives of sultans [5]; that 'Afīf did so may be a further indication of the strong *ṣūfī* undertones of medieval Indo-Muslim historical writing.

Certainly, 'Afīf opens the '*Ta'rīkh-i-Fīrūz Shāhī*', in the manner of a biography of a mystic. God has, he says, created two worlds, this one and the next wherein may repose those who worship Him and keep His Commandments. Out of His Divine Bounty He has communicated some of His Divine Purposes to mankind through the Prophet Muḥammad and has made him sultan of both worlds. But the Prophet, like a true *ṣūfī*, does not crave this power and has delegated it to *'ulamā* and *mashā'ikh* on the one hand and to pious sultans on the other. Far-sighted sultans, adds 'Afīf, have followed the example of leaders of religion (*imāmān-i-dīn*). As the *maqāmāt* of the people of the mystic path are of particular value, 'Afīf will, he says, set down ten

[1] *TFS*, p. 127; S. H. Hodivala, *Studies in Indo-Muslim History*, Bombay, 1939, p. 314, suggests that the office required the keeping of the muster roll of the special slaves in attendance on the sultan, particularly of those bound to perform night duty.
[2] *TFS*, p. 197.
[3] e.g. *TFS*, pp. 21–22, 76, 82, 133, 185, 292–293, 427–428.
[4] See article, *manāḳib*, *Encyclopædia of Islam*, Leiden and London, III, 1936, p. 227.
[5] Of the twenty-six separate works having *manāqib* as part of the title, listed by Storey in *Bio-bibliographical Guide to Persian Literature*, London, 1953, p. 1369, twenty-three relate to the lives of *ṣūfīs*, other members of the religious classes, prophets and 'Alī ibn Ṭālib and none to those of sultans. See also E. Levi-Provençal, *Les Historiens des Chorfa*, Paris, 1922, pp. 48–50, 221, 223–224, 267, 326–327.

*maqāmāt* which are peculiarly appropriate for rulers.[1] The use of the term *maqāmāt* to describe qualities desirable in rulers indicates that 'Afīf intended to write in a manner befitting a biographer of a pious *ṣūfī* rather than of a politic sultan. A *maqām* (plural, *maqāmāt*) or 'station' is a technical term for certain stages through which the mystic must pass on the Way to God. Among them are *tauba*, or turning to God in repentance, *wara'* or abstinence from what is unlawful and *riẓā'* or complete resignation to the will of God. They are essentially inner moral attitudes which the mystic must acquire by his own efforts—unlike the *aḥwāl* or 'states' which are the gifts of God.[2]

The first of 'Afīf's *maqāmāt* is labelled *shafaqat* or compassion for God's creatures which all righteous sultans possess. The second, *'afw*, or forgiveness of the sins of others from a wholesome fear of God. Again this is a quality in particular demand from sultans. The third, *'adl* and *faẓl*, capacity for justice and wisdom; the fourth, *muqātila* and *muḥāriba* or readiness to do battle against the baser self and the forces of evil, and to fight for true religion; the fifth, *ithār* and *iftikhār*, or generosity and the power to raise people in dignity; the sixth, *'aẓamat* and *ra'b*, power and majesty, the capacity to overawe the froward and the infidel for true religion's sake; the seventh, *hushyārī* and *bīdārī*, presciencé and vigilance in seeking and serving the good and in preventing lust for the things of this world; the eighth, *intibāh* and *'ibrat*, circumspection and ability to set an example; the ninth, *fatḥ* and *nuṣrat*, victory and success over both the evil within oneself and over the enemies of Islam and of the realm, the tenth and last, *kiyāsat* and *firāsat*, sagacity and ability to foresee what is in the interests of religion and government in unforeseen circumstances. For forty years, 'Afīf then says, Sulṭān Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq displayed *kiyāsat* and *firāsat*, for forty years when 'not a leaf stirred on the tree of dominion'. 'Afīf continues in this eulogistic strain, using *musajja'* or rhyming prose, for the greater part of the *Manāqib-i-Fīrūz Shāhī*.

Unlike previous sultans of Delhi who advised and resorted to the use of the sword to maintain their dominion, and who paid no heed to the fact that the stability of kingdoms rested with the command of God and that it was not right to deprive any man of life after all the

[1] *TFS*, p. 4.

[2] See L. Massignon, *Essai sur les origines du lexique technique de la mystique musulmane*, 2nd ed., Paris, 1954, p. 41; Margaret Smith, *An Early Mystic of Baghdad*, London, 1935, pp. 197, 223; Fritz Meier, 'Die Wandlung des Menschen in Mystischen Islām' in *Eranos-Jahrbuch*, XXIII, 1954, p. 109; also, Shaykh 'Alī Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-Maḥjūb*, trans. R. A. Nicholson, 2nd ed., London, 1936, pp. 180–181.

travail that his mother had suffered to bear and rear him, Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq, the seal of the sultans of Delhi, resorted to justice and fair dealing to win the hearts of men. He was indeed the *imām* of the age, 'Afīf adds, during whose forty years of rule (note the symbolic number) no Mongols crossed the Indus to attack Dehli and no rebellion marred the tranquillity of the realm. As an old and venerable man said to 'Afīf when both were performing their ritual ablutions one morning by the river Jumna, as soon as Fīrūz died men would see that the misfortunes of the whole world had been subject to him. (That is, he had protected mankind from them by his presence on earth.) And so it turned out; within a few years of his death, the 'Mongols' had plundered Delhi and there were happenings at Mecca which prevented Muslims from performing the rites of pilgrimage. 'Afīf wishes his readers to understand that the subject of his memoir is no ordinary man but a *walī*, a Friend of God.[1] It is unlikely that the form and manner of the life-story of a saint will be couched in the same idiom as the life-story of a worldly ruler of men. 'Afīf does not aim to describe the formation of a human personality under the pressure and the stimulus of circumstances. Indeed circumstances are a mere backcloth against which God-given qualities may shine more brightly.

'Afīf's account of Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq's life before his accession reads and is intended to read as hagiology, full of signs and portents of coming greatness. Events are mentioned for their symbolical import. The personalities of his father and mother are so described that the reader may appreciate that it was ordained that they should have a '*shaykh-sulṭān*' and '*imām-malik*', a '*hādī-pādshāh*', for a son. His father, Sipah-Sālār Rajab, was endowed with every good quality. Sulṭān 'Alā' al-dīn Khaljī had marked him and the two other Tughluq brothers for swift preferment.[2] His uncle, Ghiyāth al-dīn Tughluq, desired to find a bride for Sipah-Sālār Rajab and selected the daughter of one of the neighbouring Hindu *rānas*. The latter returned a haughty reply to the proposal, whereupon Ghiyāth al-dīn Tughluq marched upon his patrimony and demanded the year's revenue at once. Hearing from her grandmother of the distress which Ghiyāth al-dīn's action was causing the *rāna's* people, Bībī Nayla, daughter of the Hindu *rāna*, decided to sacrifice herself for her father's subjects and marry Rajab, an action to be expected of one destined to be the mother of Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq.[3]

[1] *TFS*, pp. 21–22.
[2] It is noteworthy that 'Afīf's view of Sulṭān 'Alā' al-dīn Khaljī, unlike that of Ẓiyā' al-dīn Baranī, is favourable.
[3] *TFS*, pp. 38–39.

Eventually, in 709/1309, Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq was born. At the age of seven his father died and he was taken under the wing of Ghiyāth al-dīn Tughluq and educated as future sultans should be educated. His life is described now as full of portents of manifest destiny. During the period of preparation holy men prophesied his accession to the throne and predicted that after his death Delhi would be sacked.[1] Muḥammad ibn Tughluq gave him further training in the arts of kingship and when, says 'Afīf, he appointed four deputies over his kingdom, Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq was naturally one. Although Muḥammad ibn Tughluq imposed some trials upon him, this was not through ill-will but out of a desire to educate him.[2]

'Afīf describes Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq's accession as though a holy man were entering upon a spiritual inheritance. Muḥammad ibn Tughluq died in Sind leaving his army beset by 'Mongols' and confronting disaster. The *maliks*, *shaykhs* and *'ulamā* accompanying the army agreed together that without an *imām* to lead them they were doomed. Delhi was far off and their enemies encircled them. Accordingly the sceptre had to be entrusted to Fīrūz Shāh. Fīrūz Shāh was, however, piously reluctant to accept the honour and protested his preference for going on the pilgrimage to Mecca. At last one of the nobles grasped him by the arm and sat him on the throne. After saying his prayers, calling upon God to aid him and weeping profusely, eventually Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq was crowned. But even then he refused to wear royal attire over his mourning dress for Muḥammad ibn Tughluq.[3] 'Afīf's account is reminiscent of the circumstances in which a *ṣūfī* disciple took over headship of a mystic order from his spiritual director, not of how the leaders of an army facing destruction hastily chose the person best qualified to extricate them—although, in their refusal to consider Dāwar Malik, a grandson of Ghiyāth al-dīn Tughluq, and nephew of Muḥammad ibn Tughluq, that consideration was, 'Afīf implies, not absent.[4]

But Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq had to face opposition. Muḥammad ibn

[1] *TFS*, pp. 27–28.
[2] *TFS*, pp. 42–43.
[3] The theme of the pious man giving an example of humility by refusing worldly office, is a standard *motif* in Muslim piety. See A. J. Wensinck, 'The Refused Dignity,' in *'Ajab-Nāma : A Volume of Oriental Studies presented to Edward G. Browne*, Cambridge, 1922, pp. 491–9. Cf. Amīr Khusrau on Ghiyāth al-dīn's reluctance to become sultan after the defeat of Khusrau Khān, below, p. 87. The view (e.g. Agha Mahdi Husain, *The Rise and Fall of Muḥammad bin Tughluq*, London, 1938, pp. 41–43) that the testimony of Amīr Khusrau and, following him, Baranī, is sufficient by itself to establish the reluctance of Ghiyāth al-dīn Tughluq to assume the sultanate must now be called into question.
[4] *TFS*, pp. 45–46.

Tughluq had sent Khwāja Jahān Aḥmad Ayāz from Thatta to Delhi to act in his absence. When the latter heard of Muḥammad's death, he raised a son of the late sultan to the throne. 'Afīf, however, did not treat this situation as essentially a political conflict but as a religious conflict between a representative of the spiritual world, Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq, and a representative of the temporal, Khwāja Jahān. The latter was not wicked but merely unfortunate in living on a lower religious and moral plane than Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq. For in whatever Fīrūz Shāh did in this situation he was guided by a divinely bestowed sagacity. During the march from Thatta to Delhi, he kept silent and an outwardly unworried calm about Khwāja Jahān's activities. He chose the route via Deopālpur rather than that through Gujarāt because that was the way Ghiyāth al-dīn Tughluq had marched upon Delhi against Khusrau Khān Barwārī, a good omen. Despite Khwāja Jahān's 20,000 cavalry, his cause, under Divine disapproval, did not prosper and his supporters began to desert him. Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq obtained success without a battle. 'Afīf observed that this can only occur by the favour of God and not through the efforts of man. Khwāja Jahān, realizing Divine disfavour, decided to surrender, and pleaded that resistance to Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq could only endanger the honour of the virtuous Muslim ladies of Delhi. He presented himself, abjectedly attired, before Fīrūz Shāh, who received him compassionately as befitted a ruler assured of Divine Favour.

'Afīf's treatment of history is brought into sharp relief by his account of the sultan's acquiescence in the execution of Khwāja Jahān. His own instincts, which were those of a *ṣūfī shaykh*, were to forgive Khwāja Jahān and restore him to the *wizārat*.[1] However, the nobles insisted on the execution and threatened all to go on the pilgrimage to Mecca if it was not carried out. Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq reluctantly consented and the fallen *wazīr* was executed in every circumstance of piety. 'Afīf admonishes his readers to take heed, but as he has already acquitted Khwāja Jahān of malevolence and Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq of vindictiveness, it is difficult to see what specific warning he believed the events did convey. He himself merely eulogizes the sultan's kindness and compassion and reports that Khwāja Jahān died piously.

In recounting the events of the reign, 'Afīf, though paying heed to a very general chronological sequence of events, does not attempt to place them in a close chronological order, although within particular episodes he does (but without dates) narrate a story in detail. His main

[1] *TFS*, p. 72.

aim is to put Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq in the most favourable light possible, whatever he does ; in effect, to show the sultan to be acting as may befit those moral stations (*maqāmāt*) which he set forth at the beginning of the work. Thus he weeps profusely at the sight of the slain during his first expedition to Bengal, a considerable undertaking in which he employed an army of eighty thousand men—a fact to be noted in view of 'Afīf's later picture of Fīrūz as a mild and pacific ruler. His motives for undertaking the two expeditions to Bengal, one in 754/1353–54 and the other in 760/1359–60, are given in purely formal terms—he goes, first in search of fame and second, in answer to the cries of the oppressed.[1] His expedition to Thatta, seven years after the second campaign in Bengal, is undertaken after his ministers' advice that it is good to imitate one's predecessor (Muḥammad ibn Tughluq) and to revenge one's relatives, and that it is a rule for kings to go and conquer enemy strongholds every year.[2]

As Fīrūz Shāh goes to war according to rule, so he abstains from war according to rule. Invited by Muslims from Ma'bar to intervene in the affairs of that region, Fīrūz Shāh refused and was regaled with a formal discourse by his *wazīr* on the advantages of kingship and the losses sustained by fighting fellow Muslims. The advantages are first, that one may nurture and show sympathy to *sunnī* Muslims and make the protected people contented, and second, that one may extirpate unbelief, root out the seditious and conquer kingdoms. The disadvantages are that every step a Muslim takes towards capturing a Muslim fort, or towards harming Muslims, is written down by God in the Book of Deeds ; that money collected to strengthen Islam is spent in weakening it ; that thousands of Muslims are put in jeopardy without good cause ; that good and valuable lives are spent in wrongdoing ; that the honour of Muslim women is endangered ; that illegal wealth is thereby gathered into the treasury ; that other Muslim sultans are encouraged to war against the Muslim community ; that such deeds between rulers of good qualities are not admirable ; that through such acts of foolishness, thousands upon thousands of enemies are made, for each one of whom answer will have to be made on the Day of Judgment ; and last that such war will bring shame upon the Prophet on the Day of Judgment. On hearing Khān-i-Jahān's catalogue of injuries to the faith caused by war, Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq's eyes filled with tears and he vowed never again to go to war against his fellow Muslims.[3] For forty years, says 'Afīf, Fīrūz avoided injuring Muslims.

In keeping with his character study of an ideal sultan, 'Afīf lauds

[1] *TFS*, p. 143. [2] *TFS*, p. 192. [3] *TFS*, pp. 265–266.

Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq for his generosity towards his subjects, which he depicts as unmarred by any political calculations. His whole reign was an age of bounty for the officials and the soldiery. A mystic, Shaykh Ṣadr al-dīn, nephew of Shaykh Bahā al-dīn Zakariyya, one day informed the sultan that, at the moment of death, pious men have two anxieties, one religious and the other worldly. The religious anxiety was whether they would go to paradise or to hell, and the worldly was the fate of their wives and children. Shaykh Ṣadr al-dīn said that Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq had gone far in removing that anxiety in his reign.[1] Thus, unlike 'Alā' al-dīn Khaljī for example, Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq was willing to assign villages to his soldiers as pay. All the income of the kingdom was divided among the *khāns*, *amīrs* and *maliks*, who were allowed to enjoy all the revenue of their assignments. Fīrūz Shāh also showed great leniency towards those troopers who did not maintain their horses ready for instant military service.[2] His other bounties included : allowing the income of the soldiery to be enjoyed by a son, a son-in-law, a slave, kinsmen and wives, in that order [3]; the cancellation of the debts owing to the treasury through Khwāja Jahān's scattering of largesse to buy support while Fīrūz Shāh was in Sind ; the provision of dowries for the daughters of poor parents [4] ; the finding of employment for the workless.[5] During Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq's reign all classes of the people enjoyed boundless prosperity, thanks to the goodness and bounty of their ruler.

'Afīf eulogizes the sultan as a patron and disciple of the mystics. Indeed, Quṭb al-dīn Manwar went further than calling him a patron and described him as a crowned *ṣufī* himself.[6] As early as the return march from Thatta to Delhi after his accession, Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq had distributed largesse to the holy men of Multān and paid a visit to Shaykh Farīd al-Ḥaqq's tomb at Adjodhān. When he reached Delhi safely, Shaykh Nāṣir al-dīn pointed out that he had been delivered from peril at Thatta and that he should send some acknowledgment of his deliverance to Shaykh Quṭb al-dīn Manwar, through whose spiritual province he had passed. Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq promptly did so. Then before every expedition the sultan used to visit the tombs of the saints near Delhi and pray for divine assistance. 'Afīf himself witnessed the sultan's devotions on these occasions. The tomb of Shaykh Niẓām al-dīn Auliyā' was particularly singled out by Fīrūz for his visits. The sultan would distribute alms and appoint a superin-

[1] *TFS*, pp. 96–97.
[2] *TFS*, pp. 299–300.
[3] *TFS*, p. 96.
[4] *TFS*, p. 180.
[5] *TFS*, p. 334.
[6] *TFS*, pp. 22–23.

tendent to have charge of each tomb and look after the poor. 'Afīf's own father was among those so appointed.[1] Then 'Afīf relates how the sultan begged Shaykh Nūr al-dīn to settle in his new capital of Fīrūza. Although the saint refused, Fīrūz Shāh still hoped that his spiritual blessings would ensure the prosperity and safety of Fīrūza. But the sultan's more striking act of deference to the mystics, one which indeed revealed fully his claim to be included among men, was the shaving of his head, beard and moustache at the suggestion of Sipah-Sālār Mas'ūd Ghāzī of Bahrā'ich, who appeared to him in a dream.[2] After that 'tonsure' the religious qualities of the sultan manifested themselves more purposefully than ever and war was waged upon all unlawful practices in the realm.

In keeping with the formal orthodox idiom of *faẓā'il* literature, 'Afīf eulogizes Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq as a scourge of unorthodoxy and as a defender of the faith. He received a robe of honour from the 'Abbāsid caliph in Egypt with the distinction that, unlike Sulṭān Muḥammad ibn Tughluq, he did not seek it.[3] 'Afīf described him as the seal of the sultans as Muḥammad was the seal of the prophets. In harmony with this status, he abolished practices against the Muslim Holy Law such as painting, sculpture, the use of gold and silver vessels and the levying of unauthorized taxes and dues. 'Afīf states that Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq also levied *jizya* from the Hindus, which no Delhi sultan had done before. The sultan also showed deference to the opinion of the *'ulamā* and consulted them on such problems as the appropriate punishment for a brahman who committed apostasy or the lawful taxes the state might levy from the proceeds of its irrigation schemes. Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq is also depicted as meticulous in his personal religious observances, a model to his courtiers of God-fearing monarch. Before he died he began to free deserving slaves, as Muslims are enjoined to do.

In keeping with his character as an orthodox sultan, Fīrūz Shāh was a great builder. He built not only fortified cities such as Fīrūza and Fatḥābād but also many mosques and tombs. Towards the end of his life he repaired many mosques and, in accordance with the tradition of the Prophet, appointed *imāms* and *mu'azzins* to them. He built rest houses for travellers and appointed men of pure *sunnī* faith to have charge of them. He founded hospitals and assigned revenue for their upkeep. 'Afīf is particularly eulogistic when he recounts how Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq sets up a gong to strike out the time, dilating on the

[1] *TFS*, pp. 194–196. [2] *TFS*, p. 372. [3] *TFS*, pp. 273–274.

advantages to religion of such a gong—how, for example, regularity in prayer and in keeping the fast of Ramaẓān became possible.[1]

Such a sultan, 'Afīf recounts, was endowed with servants who were kind, polite and generous in giving away the state revenues. In Khān-i-Jahān Maqbūl, a Hindu convert from Telingaṇa, he was blessed with a peerless *wazīr*.[2]

'Afīf describes Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq as presiding over an age which witnessed many marvels. Thus among the wonders of the reign which 'Afīf states he witnessed himself were a dwarf only one *gaz* or twenty-four finger breadths high, two black giants so high that a normal person only reached to their waists, two bearded women, a sheep with only three legs, a black crow with a red beak and feet, a white parrot with black feet and beak, a cow with five legs and a cow with the hooves of a horse.[3]

'Afīf thus has written, for the most part (the qualification will be discussed later) a panegyric of Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq. But, in writing his panegyric, 'Afīf did not, it seems, intend to display the sultan triumphantly overcoming all the successive vicissitudes of his reign for his treatment is topical not chronological. The sequence of topics in the '*Ta'rīkh-i-Fīrūz Shāhī*' is grouped into five *qism* as follows: first *qism*, from the birth of Fīrūz Shāh to his accession; second *qism*, an account of the two expeditions to Lakhnautī and to Jājnagar and Nagarkoṭ; third *qism*, an account of the expedition to Thatta, the capture of Jām and Bābiniyya and the institution of a gong for sounding the time; fourth *qism*, the abstention of Fīrūz Shāh from major expeditions and his devotion to winning the hearts of his people; fifth *qism*, an account of how Fīrūz Shāh underwent the tonsure, of the death of the prince Fatḥ Khān, of the greatness of some of the *khāns* and *maliks* of the time and a description of the end of Fīrūq Shāh's period. It is unlikely that the reign did shape itself into the phases which 'Afīf suggests, of a period of warlike activity followed by a period of peaceful consolidation for the expedition to Bengal and Lakhnautī, to Jājnagar, Nagarkoṭ and Thatta were widely spaced and, according to the *Ta'rīkh-i-Mubārak Shāhī*, the sultan was obliged to send punitive expeditions into Katehar in 782/1381–2. 'Afīf rather wishes to display the sultan first as a successful leader in war but with humane instincts, and then as a reformed character, a gentle and pacific father of his people.

For 'Afīf's '*Ta'rīkh*' is essentially an effort to superimpose upon

[1] *TFS*, pp. 254–259. [2] *TFS*, pp. 394–398. [3] *TFS*, pp. 384–388.

events a pattern which is required by the demands of a literary *genre* rather than by the need to make their sequence intelligible in terms of human predicament and decision. In every circumstance, the *manāqib*, or good qualities of the subject of the memoir must be displayed to advantage. Whatever he does is right and is right because he does it. Moreover an action is right regardless of the circumstances. Thus in recounting how Fīrūz Shāh first waged war in Bengal, Thatta, Jājnagar, and Nagarkoṭ, 'Afīf is interested only in displaying formal motives for the sultan's decisions—the desirability of responding to the call of the oppressed for assistance, of revenging one's relatives or of warring against the infidel or of going to war every year. He is not concerned to reconstruct the particular historical situations in a manner capable of explaining why such motives could be responsible for action at a particular time. Even when an action is explicable in political and military terms, as, for example, the decision to abstain from further military adventures after the expedition to Thatta, which 'Afīf says Fīrūz Shāh took because the army was in disarray, it nevertheless has to be given a pious veneer by Khān-i-Jahān expounding the injuries of war to Islam.

In similar vein 'Afīf's account of Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq's many acts of benevolence towards his subjects reads as a fairy story right outside the world of politics and war. Since there was a crowned saint presiding over the fortunes of the Delhi sultanate, there was no need, apparently, to consider the practical consequences of a wholesale alienation of the state revenues to the military and bureaucratic classes—if 'Afīf understood such terminology, as indeed he appears not to have done. If he mentions 'Alā' al-dīn Khaljī as a sultan of Delhi who disapproved of the conferment of villages in assignment for the payment of the soldiery because such assignments might finance local independence, he does so only to point a contrast with the days when a holy sultan was ruling, when apparently such a risk might safely be ignored.[1]
So too, the cheapness of living in the reign of Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq is contrasted with that in the reign of 'Alā' al-dīn Khaljī only in order to indicate that that prevailing in Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq's time was superior because it was effortless, being brought about by Fīrūz Shāh's qualities rather than by his measures.[2] The sultan is not placed in an economic and political environment and displayed to advantage there, overcoming economic and political difficulties. The choices with which he is confronted and the decisions he makes do not belong

[1] *TFS*, pp. 95–96.

[2] *TFS*, pp. 293–294.

to that order of experience. 'Afīf is not concerned so to reconstruct the past as to explain historical events in terms of human volition.

But although Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq is, for the greater part of the '*Ta'rīkh-i-Fīrūz Shāhī*' the cynosure of attention and his actions alone give unity to the work, 'Afīf is not concerned to present him as an individual, human figure, exercising a peculiar, individual influence upon the events of his time. 'Afīf is not so much interested in the sultan's personal characteristics as in his conformity to an abstract ideal. Thus what 'Afīf eulogizes in Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq's fulfilment of the specifications of the true Muslim ruler—one who enforces the *Sharī'a*, abases the infidel, shows deference to holy men, is kind and generous to his servants, to orphans and the poor and who avoids killing fellow Muslims. 'Afīf writes, indeed, hagiology according to certain formal criteria which emphasize the personification of certain general Muslim virtues as the highest form of virtue and capacity to which a human being may aspire. He wishes Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq to be seen as a stereotype of the perfect man whose perfection consists in his distance from humanity. He is a tailor's dummy, rather than a figure of flesh and blood.

Thus for 'Afīf there is no organic relation between the biography of Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq and the history of his time. History exists only to reveal what existed before history—that is, Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq's divinely created, perfect nature. History, that is events, does not itself mould and develop the sultan's characteristics, it merely provides a stage for their manifestation. It was known and foretold almost as soon as the sultan was born that he was destined to be the man of his age. Nor does Fīrūz Shāh, the human being, through his acts influence the history of his time. The realm is prosperous, prices are low, the sultan receives recognition from the caliph not because he acts, but because he exists. The presence of a saint in north India and a regime of peace and prosperity are connate concomitants, not historical causes and effects. For 'Afīf, these phenomena are merely complementary aspects of the great, divinely ordained, order of Being.

As a corollary, 'Afīf's work does not betray the assumption that it is the historian's aim to record change. Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq is as he has always been *in posse*, and the situations in which he reveals his nature succeed each other rather than grow out of each other, as is evident from the topical arrangement of the '*Ta'rīkh-i-Fīrūz Shāhī*' with its abrupt transition from episode to episode, without chronology or with the merest bow in the direction of chronology. Events may succeed one another, but the order of their succession is of no particular

significance for the historian whose task it is to record the features of an age when an *imām* is ruling.

In general then 'Afīf finds intelligibility in history only by looking beyond history itself to the whole order of divine creation. This is not a clumsy circumlocution for divine decree intervening directly in the course of events, for although such direct, *ad hoc* intervention undoubtedly is invoked by 'Afīf to explain the success of Fīrūz Shāh over Khwāja Jahān [1] or the enmity between prince Muḥammad Khān and Khān-i-Jahān,[2] as has been seen, he more usually attributes events to the influence of holy men. Nor is Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq the only holy man to whom 'Afīf attributes responsibility for historical events. For example, it was the *barakāt* of the *ṣūfī* saints who lived near Hānsī which were responsible for that town's immunity from plunder by the 'Mongols' (Tīmūr's troops).[3] 'Afīf hopes to be able to say more on this topic for it is one of the principal reasons for his writing (presumably he did so in that portion of his work he calls the *Kharāb-i-Dihlī*). However, Divine Creation appears to 'Afīf to be inscrutable, for he is sometimes bewildered at its decrees, as for instance when one Shams al-dīn Abū Rijā' was appointed by the sultan to the *dīwān-i-wizārat* and turned out to be a rascal.[4]

But the eulogy along stock Muslim ethical and religious principles of an ideal human stereotype is for 'Afīf very much a self-conscious mode of literary expression, deliberately chosen by the author. The '*Ta'rīkh-i-Fīrūz Shāhī*' is not entirely of one piece as a literary work. It is true that it is 'Afīf's aim to record the wonders of a reign, but some of those wonders do not redound to the credit of the sultan. Fīrūz Shāh is sometimes shown to have had feet of clay. For with 'Afīf's desire to preserve a memorial of a golden age under an ideal sultan vies occasionally his concern over the destruction of Delhi by Tīmūr's forces, a concern which betrays itself in intermittent flashes of suggestion as to its origins in the events of earlier reigns.

'Afīf is interested in the behaviour of certain officials in the *dīwān-i-wizārat*, possibly because his father had held the post of *Shab-nawīs-i-khawāṣṣān*. He attributes some of the responsibility for the troubles after the death of Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq to the behaviour of Shams al-dīn Abū Rijā, appointed by Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq after a shady career in the provinces, to be *Mustaufī-i-mamālik* or 'auditor-general of provincial expenditure'.[5] 'Afīf, who witnessed the whole episode, says Abū

[1] *TFS*. pp. 66–67.
[2] *TFS*, p. 427.
[3] *TFS*, p. 82.
[4] *TFS*. p. 456.
[5] For the duties of the *Mustaufī-i-mamālik* see S. H. Hodivala, *Studies in Indo-Muslim History*, Supplement = Volume II, Bombay, 1957, p. 31.

Rijā was appointed to the *dīwān-i-wizārat* because the sultan had grown suspicious of its other members. Abū Rijā' began to act as a busybody and to treat even the *wazīr* brusquely. He bullied one official to death and upraided others for their lack of wit and competence. But he began to overreach himself and take bribes.[1] The *wazīr* Khān-i-Jahān seized his opportunity and exposed Abū Rijā' to the sultan. He was severely bastinadoed and eventually exiled. 'Afīf recounts the fall of Abū Rijā' in vivid narrative, free of much of the stylized eulogy of the remainder of the work. He says that perhaps, by the decree of God, the sedition which afflicted Delhi after Fīrūz Shāh's death arose through Abū Rijā'.

His concern with the troubles after Fīrūz Shāh's death is also evident from a brisk piece of chronology towards the end of the work, after he has recounted the story of the revolt of Shams al-dīn Dāmghānī in Gujarāt. In 781/1379 many nobles died, in 782/1380 Shams al-dīn Dāmghānī's sedition occurred in Gujarāt and in 783/1381 Abū Rijā's promotion to the *dīwān*. Until 785/1383, there was trouble over his behaviour, in 786/1384, the sultan fell ill, in 789/1387, open conflict occurred between Prince Muḥammad Khān and Khān-i-Jahān, in 790/1388, the death of Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq.[2] A further example of 'Afīf's human concern at the events after Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq's death is his innuendo that perhaps that sultan's zeal for collecting slaves and distributing them over the provinces was somehow responsible for the strife after his death.[3] Or again he refers to the strife between Khān-i-Jahān and Muḥammad Khān, or the quarrel over the fortune collected by 'Imād al-Mulk in Muḥammad Shāh's reign.[4]

But such statements are more by way of being asides, casual surmises, or *post hoc ergo propter hoc* deductions than carefully considered explanations sustained by reference to evidence. 'Afīf, unlike Ẓiyā' al-dīn Baranī, is no writer of theses, offering a coherent interpretation of how and why things happen in history. It may be that Tīmūr's sack of Delhi was a ' great divide ' across which 'Afīf strained his gaze to catch a glimpse of former periods of happiness and prosperity ; it may be that he bewails the revolution of time [5] or notes the inscrutability of the Divine Will which allows calamity to descend upon the people of Delhi ; he may bewail the behaviour of Abū Rijā' in the *dīwān-i-wizārat* or the enmity between Prince Muḥammad Khān and Khān-i-Jahān ; but he does not interpret the past in such a way as to teach specific ethical principles and courses of action. The past is a

[1] *TFS*, pp. 473–474. [2] *TFS*, pp. 497–498. [3] *TFS*, p. 272.
[4] *TFS*, p. 440. [5] e.g. *TFS*, p. 264.

spectacle of true religion, not a school of true religion. Although 'Afīf couches his eulogy of the sultan in Muslim idiom and shows great deference to the mystics, in his historical work he accepts Islam rather than preaches it.

In technique 'Afīf is an historian writing from 'authorities'. He accepts the word of reliable informants for his information. 'Reliable narrators and well-informed reporters have said to this frail historian Shams al-dīn Sirāj 'Afīf' or 'thus have said honourable narrators in good tradition to this frail historian Shams al-dīn Sirāj 'Afīf'. 'Afīf does not argue from his evidence in order to decide upon disputed issues. There is a significant passage showing his way of dealing with a controversial historical issue dealing with Khwāja Jahān Aḥmad Ayāz's action on hearing of the death of Muḥammad ibn Tughluq in Sind. Apparently there was disagreement among contemporaries whether Khwāja Jahān Aḥmad Ayāz raised Muḥammad ibn Tughluq's infant son to the throne out of malice towards Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq or out of ignorance of events in Sind. 'Afīf states that those who ascribed his action to malice were wrong and that he had heard the truth—that Khwāja Jahān was faced with disorder in Delhi and had to act quickly to prevent chaos—at one of Kishwar Khān ibn Kushlū Khān Bahrām Abiyya's gatherings.[1] 'Afīf prefers one statement to another on the ground that he trusts Kíshwar Khān more than other reporters. Similarly he disputes the suggestion made by unnamed 'infidels' that both Muḥammad ibn Tughluq and Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq visited an idol at Jamālamakhī to place a canopy over its head because his own father told him it was a lie, because both sultans were good Muslims and because it is a duty of Muslims not to believe such stories about one other.[2] Thus, as with Ẓiyā' al-dīn Baranī, 'Afīf's criteria for ascertaining historical truth are ultimately religious.

Where 'Afīf does not give common report or precise authority of others for the statements in his work, he relies upon his own eye-witness. That alone guarantees the truth of his assertions. As has been seen earlier, the result is a highly impressionistic view of the troubles which came upon Delhi during the latter years of the reign of Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq.

This concludes our study of 'Afīf's '*Ta'rīkh-i-Fīrūz Shāhī*'. It has not attained to the coherence of the interpretation in the previous chapter of Ẓiyā' al-dīn Baranī's *Ta'rīkh-i-Fīrūz Shāhī*, principally because this work is only a part, and by 'Afīf's account, a small part

[1] *TFS*, pp. 50–51.

[2] *TFS*, pp. 186–187.

of his historical writing and, even then, is not complete in itself. The most coherent account which can be given of the work, and probably of 'Afīf's other work, is that he aimed to preserve the impression, in the *manāqib* idiom, of a golden age for the Delhi sultanate before the calamity of 801/1398–1399.

CHAPTER IV

# THE TREATMENT OF HISTORY BY YAḤYĀ IBN AḤMAD SĪHRINDĪ IN THE *TA'RĪKH-I-MUBĀRAK SHĀHĪ*

THE value which modern historians of medieval India have attached to this history has been a scarcity value. In the words of the late doyen of medieval Indo-Muslim history, Sir Jadunath Sarkar, prefaced to Professor K. K. Basu's translation into English,[1]

> 'The Tārīkh-i-Mubārak Shāhī by Yaḥyā ibn Aḥmad Śihrindī, in spite of its small size and lack of literary pretensions, is a work of exceeding value, being the primary source of information for one particular period of Delhi history,[2] namely the reigns of the sultans of the Sayyid dynasty. . . . Thus he is our most original authority for a period of thirty-five years 1400–1434, or even longer, as he supplements the meagre information of Afīf from about 1380 onwards. What enhances his value is that he is the "only source of all our knowledge of the Sayyid period. All later writers have been directly or indirectly indebted to him for the history of the troublous times which followed the invasion of Timur . . . (his work) covers that hiatus of about sixty years which Col. Lees thought it would be difficult to fill up from contemporaneous historians. The whole account of the Sayyid period in Nizāmuddin Ahmad's Tabaqāt-i-Akbari is a mere reproduction of the statements of Tārīkh-i-Mubārakshāhī very often copied verbatim. Badayuni follows it very closely. Firishtah often borrows its very words". (Dowson.).'

Sir Wolseley Haig appears to have agreed with this judgment, for Chapter VIII of the third volume of the *Cambridge History of India* is almost wholly based upon the *Ta'rīkh-i-Mubārak Shāhī*.

The main body of the *Ta'rīkh-i-Mubārak Shāhī* was written not long before Sha'bān 831/May 1428[3] but was given an 'event by event' continuation by the author until Rabī' al-Ākhir 838/November–December 1434. Nothing is known of Yaḥyā ibn Aḥmad beyond what he reveals in the *Ta'rīkh-i-Mubārak Shāhī* and that is extremely meagre. He implies that he was not already a courtier at Delhi when he wrote, although he hoped perhaps to become one as a reward for writing his history.[4] He gives no indication of his age, education and previous

[1] The *Tārīkh-i-Mubārakshāhī* by Yāḥiyā bin Aḥmad bin 'Abdullah Sirhindi, trans. K. K. Basu, Baroda, 1932, foreword, p. v.

[2] The unpublished general history, the *Ta'rīkh-i-Muḥammadī* by Muḥammad Bihāmad Khānī, completed in 842/1438 and extant in British Museum Persian MS. Or. 137, deals mainly with the fortunes of the local Muslim rulers of Kālpī in that part of the work covering the same period as the Sayyid rulers of Delhi. [P. H.]

[3] *Ta'rīkh-i-Mubārak Shāhī*, Bibliotheca Indica ed. Calcutta, 1931, p. 211.

[4] *TMS*, pp. 3–4.

life. The work itself does not suggest a bureaucratic background; the details of the military expeditions of the Sayyids might indicate a military career at some time. All this, however, is hardly more than speculation. There seems from the text of the *Ta'rīkh* only the most slender reasons for accepting Sir Jadunath Sarkar's view that the author was a *shī'a*. It is true he calls down God's Blessing upon the 'Commanders of the Faithful', al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn, but this is prefaced by similar invocations of God's Blessing upon Abū Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthmān and is followed by the tradition 'My companions are like stars, whomsoever you follow, you take the proper path'.[1] It should be recalled that by Yaḥyā ibn Aḥmad's time, *sunnīs* felt and expressed respect for al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn.

Yaḥyā ibn Aḥmad's motives for writing appear simple. He wished, he says, to have the honour of being allowed to do obeisance to the ruler of Delhi of the day, the Sayyid Mubārak Shāh, but was deterred by the fact that he had no suitable offering to make him. So he collected from different histories stories of Indo-Muslim sultans until the accession of Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq and thereafter whatever was witnessed by trusty narrators and put them together in this book which he called the *Ta'rīkh-i-Mubārak Shāhī* in the hope that the sultan would look at it and reward its author.[2] Yaḥyā ibn Aḥmad thus wrote to win patronage from a reigning sultan. He regarded *ta'rīkh* as a suitable literary offering for a ruler from whom one had expectations.

The *Ta'rīkh-i-Mubārak Shāhī*, which broadly aimed to give an account of the fortunes of Islam in Hindūstān from the time of Muḥammad ibn Sām of Ghor to Yaḥyā ibn Aḥmad's own day, is avowedly based upon previous Muslim historical works for the period before 1351. Unfortunately Yaḥyā ibn Aḥmad does not state every work he utilized but among them appear to have been the *Ṭabaqāt-i-Nāṣirī* by Minhāj al-Sirāj Jūzjānī and Baranī's *Ta'rīkh-i-Fīrūz Shāhī* and others no longer extant. He specifically refers to Amīr Khusrau's *Qirān al-Sa'dayn*.

Yaḥyā ibn Aḥmad is, however, not a copyist pure and simple of earlier *ta'rīkh*. He had his own principles of selection. These are to record deeds by sultans and soldiers, arranged under the reigns of the sultans of Delhi. (He treats Mu'izz al-dīn Muḥammad ibn Sām and Quṭb al-dīn Aybak in effect as founders of the sultanate of Delhi.) Yaḥyā ibn Aḥmad is a chronicler of action, a spectator of the surface of events, a recorder of a succession of deeds by men of the sort to

[1] *TMS*, p. 2. [2] *TMS*, pp. 3–4.

whom his history is addressed. He is presumably the kind of writer to whom students refer when they speak of medieval Indo-Muslim 'chroniclers'. The *Ta'rīkh* may, in fact, be described as a regional Muslim chronicle. Thus he records, in chronological order, the accessions of sultans, appointments to office, marches and countermarches, the occurrence of battles, sudden death, the suppression of rebellions, within the general ambit of the activity of the sultans of Delhi. In this he is doubtless addressing himself to the interests of his intended patron.

Yaḥyā ibn Aḥmad's idiom in treating history may best be appreciated by quotation *in extenso*. His accounts of part of the reign of Balban, of part of the reign of 'Alā' al-dīn Khaljī and of a time when he ceased to rely upon earlier histories have been chosen.

### *'An account of Ghiyāth al-dīn Balban.*[1]

When Sulṭān Nāṣir al-dīn died, the *amīrs* and *maliks* spent three days in mourning and performed the duties of lamentation. On the third day, 13th Jamādī al-awwal 664 A.H. they seated Ghiyāth al-dīn Balban on the throne of the sultanate in the White Palace. The "pillars of the state" *wazīrs*, *maliks* and *amīrs* paid him homage. When, in the days Balban was a *khān*, the reins of the kingdom were in his hands, the whole country was pacified by him. In the very same year, he set off in the direction of Koildakir and, having settled the trouble in that area, returned. After that he led an expedition in the direction of Kūh-Pāya Santūr and put the chiefs of that area to the sword. At Makar Kachūrī he founded a fort; having named the new fort he returned to the capital. Afterwards he went into the area around the capital and also built a fort there. By successive marches he proceeded in the direction of the Jūd Hills. Both sons of the ruler of the Jūd Hills joined him. Some time afterwards he determined to lead an expedition to Hindūstān. When he reached the banks of the Ganges he erected a fort at Battyālī and Bahrā'ich. Then news of the death of Sher Khān the *muqṭa'* of Lakhnautī arrived. Lakhnautī was conferred upon Amīn Khān. Ṭughral became his deputy. From thence he (Balban) returned in the direction of Delhi. After that he led an army to Lahore and reconstructed the fort of Lahore which had been destroyed by the accursed Mongols in the time of Sulṭān Mu'izz al-dīn Bahrām Shāh. Having sent there the people of the villages, the leaders of prayer, the *qāḍīs*, the descendants of the Prophet, the lower orders and the merchants, he caused Lahore to be inhabited. In the midst of this expedition an illness took hold of the sulṭan so that no one saw him for several days on end. People became suspicious and rumours were spread abroad. When this news reached Lakhnautī fighting occurred between Ṭughral and Amīn Khān, between whom there was disagreement. Ṭughral was victorious. Amīn Khān became a prisoner in his hands. Ṭughral took on the attributes of sovereignty and

[1] *TMS*, pp. 39–41.

called himself Sulṭān Mu'izz al-dīn. When a few days had passed, four royal letters were issued to Amīn Khān, Ṭughral, Jamāl al-dīn Qandazī and Abtakīn Musā in those parts (Lakhnautī). The contents of these mandates were that " for a few days, unpleasant days for us, a slight illness had taken hold of us. God Most High quickly granted a speedy cure. We ordered the drum of rejoicing to be beaten, tents to be erected and the people, both high and low, to give themselves up to rejoicing. Prisoners are to be freed and the *'ulamā* to be given cause for pleasure. If anyone is under arrest before the *dīwān-i-qaẓā*, for a claim against him, nevertheless give him money from the treasury and set him free." When this order reached Ṭughral he took his army towards Bihār and imprisoned Abtakīn, Jamāl-al-dīn Qandazī and Amīn Khān at Nārkīla.'

Or his account of the first year of the reign of 'Alā' al-dīn Khaljī.[1]

'Sulṭān 'Alā' al-dīn Muḥammad Shāh was the son of Malik Shihāb al-dīn Khaljī. When Sulṭān Rukn al-dīn went to Multān, 'Alā' al-dīn, with the assent of the *amīrs* and *maliks*, ascended the throne at the royal palace on 22nd Zū'l Ḥijja of the aforesaid year. About the same time he came to the Red Fort and gave titles and offices to each according to his due. As for example, Almās Beg, his brother, to whom he gave the title of *Amīr Ḥājib-i-Bārbak* and Ulugh Khān. Malik Harnumār became *Wakīl-Dār* Amīn Khān and Malik Suneh became Naksh Khān and Malik Amājī became Arslān Khān. The *iqṭā'* of Sāmāna was entrusted to Arslān Khān. Yūsuf, a nephew of the sulṭan became Ẓafar Khān, Sunjar Harbun became Alp Khān as did Sulaymān Shāh. A second nephew by the sultan's brother was given the name of Qutlugh Khān. Malik Khānush became Bughrash Khān, Malik Nuṣrat, Nuṣrat Khān; Malik Tāj al-dīn Kūjī received the style of Tamghāj Khān, Fakhr al-dīn Kūjī the style of Bughrā Khān, Maulānā Tāj al-dīn the office of *Sar-parda-dār*. In the month of Muḥarram A.H. 696, Sulṭān 'Alā' al-dīn sent Ulugh Khān and Alp Khān to Multān to deal with Arkalī Khān and Sulṭān Rukn al-dīn. When Ulugh Khān reached Multān, they were unable to offer opposition and took refuge in the citadel. The inhabitants of Multān asked for quarter and sought peace. They seized Arkalī Khān and Sulṭān Rukn al-dīn and brought them to Ulugh Khān who took them with him to Delhi. When Ulugh Khān reached Abuhar a compelling order was issued (by Sulṭān 'Alā' al-dīn) that Arkalī Khān and Sulṭān Rukn al-dīn were to be blinded with a needle. When Alp Khān had handed them over to the *kotwāl* at Hānsī, he was to come to the capital. The orders were obeyed. Aḥmad Chap and Alghū were likewise blinded and sent to Gwālior. Malik Harnumār received the *iqṭā'* of Multān and Ulugh Khān reached the royal capital.'

That there is no difference of idiom when Yaḥyā ibn Aḥmad is no longer dependent on written materials may be observed from the following passage.[2]

[1] *TMS*, pp. 71–72. [2] *TMS*, p. 207.

> 'In the midst of these affairs it reached the ears of the Servant of the Exalted Standards that Mukhtaṣ Khān, brother of Sharqī, had arrived at Etāwa with a large army and many elephants. As soon as he heard this news the Servant of the Exalted Standards sent Malik al-Sharq Maḥmūd Ḥasan with 10,000 brave and experienced horsemen against Mukhtaṣ Khān. Maḥmūd Ḥasan, having raided with his forces at the place where the army of Sharqī had bivouacked, arrived. Mukhtaṣ Khān was apprised of the situation. Before the arrival of the victorious army he turned back and joined his brother. Malik Maḥmūd Ḥasan remained there a few days longer as he wanted to make a night attack on Sharqī's army. As however the latter was on the *qui vive* it was not possible, and he (Malik Ḥasan) returned and joined the Delhi forces.'

In general then, Yaḥyā ibn Aḥmad Sīhrindī has stripped down his account of the past to a bare record of the outward physical manifestations of action by sultans and nobles. History is a succession of military and political events. For although Yaḥyā ibn Aḥmad almost certainly had access to Ẓiyā' al-dīn Baranī's *Ta'rīkh-i-Fīrūz Shāhī* (a comparison of the two accounts of the reign of Muḥammad ibn Tughluq suggests that) he omits all mention of 'Alā' al-dīn Khaljī's economic measures. Then, Baranī's moralizing and the invented conversations between great personages also find no place in the *Ta'rīkh-i-Mubārak Shāhī*. The nearest Yaḥyā ibn Aḥmad approaches to repeating Baranī's judgments is in his account of the reign of Muḥammad ibn Tughluq, where he follows Baranī in attributing the troubles of the reign to the enhancement of the revenue demand, the Qarāchīl expedition, the removal of the capital from Delhi to Daulatābād and excessive severity towards rebels. However, he gives two other reasons—Tarmāshīrīn's invasion and famine—which Baranī either does not mention or underplays in importance, which suggests no great interest in Baranī's historical interpretations.

Yaḥyā ibn Aḥmad's whole approach to historical writing appears casual and indifferent. It is of no great moment to him as it was to Baranī that the record should be kept straight. He often invokes the Arabic formulae at the end of his account of each reign 'And God (alone) knows the truth', or 'God alone knows'.[1] Or when he gives a list of causes for the troubles of Muḥammad ibn Tughluq's reign he rounds off by adding that it is improper to narrate the errors of the great, although the great and powerful should take heed from such narration. He does not, however, indicate specifically how that heed should be taken.

But it would be against reasonable expectation that Yaḥyā ibn

[1] e.g. *TMS*, pp. 16, 21, 23, 82, 140, 180.

Aḥmad Sīhrindī, a Muslim, would write a wholly unintelligible chronicle of events which happen, so the speak, only by spontaneous combustion. As is evident from his preface in praise of God, the Prophet, the first four caliphs, Ḥasan and Ḥusayn and from his decision to narrate the fortunes of Islam in Hindūstān from the time of Muḥammad ibn Sām of Ghor, his work is set in an essentially Islamic framework. The Will of God has therefore its place in his view of the past. Divine decree was thus responsible for the fatal fall of Quṭb al-dīn Aybak from his horse at Lahore in 607/1210.[1] God awarded victory to Shams al-dīn Iltutmish against Tāj al-dīn Yildūz.[2] He kept one Malik Qaraqash out of the hands of the Mongols around Lahore.[3] He ordained the death of Sulṭān Nāṣir al-dīn Maḥmūd and restored 'Alā' al-dīn Khaljī to health. He raised men up and cast them down. He took a hand in bringing retribution upon the slayers of Sulṭān Mubārak Shāh in 831/1428.[4]

However, it is evident both from the wording and from the context of these statements of Divine Intervention in history that Yaḥyā ibn Aḥmad makes them as a matter of form rather than from any deep conviction of Divine Governance of the world. He says what is expected of any conventional Muslim. Although no Muslim would commit the blasphemy of believing that God's Will was predictable or related by contract or by blandishment to human deeds, an historian such as Baranī did believe that a partial communication of the Divine Purpose for man had been made through the Prophet, the *Sharī'a*, the *ṭarīqa* of the *ṣūfīs* and in *ta'rīkh*, and although man could not expect salvation by works, he might live in the hope that the Divine Will was not wholly capricious, even if it was inscrutable. But Yaḥyā ibn Aḥmad's God in history appears to be quite capricious in His interventions.

Occasionally and without much conviction, Yaḥyā ibn Aḥmad Sīhrindī attributes events to human actions and decisions. The causes he suggests for Muḥammad ibn Tughluq's difficulties provide the most noteworthy examples.[5]

> 'And in these times all the efforts of preceding sultans, and especially of 'Alā' al-dīn Khaljī, were for the assertion of Islam. Compassion towards religion, the spreading of prosperity in the countryside, the security of the roads, the pacifying of the people and the firm governance of the provinces, all that now had been changed into the weakness of Islam, the infirmity of the Faith, the crimes of the irreligious and corruptions of

[1] *TMS*, p. 15.
[2] *TMS*, p. 17.
[3] *TMS*, p. 31.
[4] *TMS*, pp. 237, 238–239.
[5] *TMS*, pp. 113–115.

the rebellious, terror along the highways, distress of the people, insurrection in the provinces of the kingdom. Injustice in place of justice, infidelity in place of Islam had taken root. The causes of this were many. First, Tarmāshīrīn Mongol sacked towns and plundered the people and after that those provinces did not recover prosperity. Secondly, the land tax was increased ten per cent or five per cent and the livestock were branded. Consequently, people deserted their homes and cattle and the wicked gained in strength. Afterwards, the countryside was plundered and ruined. Thirdly, drought and famine over the whole countryside, such that no rain fell for seven years or cloud was seen in the sky. The fourth reason or decline was the removal of the entire population of Delhi to Daulatābād, the bringing of people from the fortified towns of the environs into the capital and the sending of them back again. The goods and chattels which had come down to them from their forefathers were left in their homes and they set out equipped only for their needs on the journey. Afterwards, their effects never reached them and they were unable to acquire others. Neither the capital nor the towns of the provinces became prosperous. Fifthly, a force of 80,000 horsemen were sent to the mountain of Qarāchīl, 80,000 apart from camp followers that is. At one stroke, they all entered the jaws of death and were all killed. Not two horsemen returned. Such an army was not collected again. Sixth, whenever someone revolted in fear of his life, people of the area affected were killed and some revolted through fear. In sum, the provinces were devastated and rebels gained in strength. They began to shed blood and no one prevented them because the sulṭan had so ruined his army and his following that no one had any means of subsistence. Seventh, the people of the capital and of the provinces, *amīrs*, *maliks*, nobles, *'ulamā*, *mashā'ikh*, the *Sayyids*, the rich and the poor, the famous, the artisans, the cultivators, headmen and hired labourers were all smitten by the sword of violence, oppression and tyranny. The corpses of the slain formed a heap before the sultan's door so much that the executioners became worn out from dragging away the bodies of the slain. The affairs of the kingdom fell completely into disorder.'

Earlier, the deposition of Sulṭān 'Alā' al-dīn Mas'ūd Shāh, son of Iltutmish, was attributed to his neglect of the affairs of the kingdom and his falling under the influence of negro slaves and others of low origin.[1] The preference of the nobles for Mu'izz al-dīn Kayqubād over Khusrau Khān after the death of Balban is attributed to their fear of Khusrau Khān's worthless disposition.[2] Malik Fakhr al-dīn Jauna (later Muḥammad ibn Tughluq) and Ghāzī Malik (Ghiyāth al-dīn Tughluq) revolted against Nāṣir al-dīn Khusrau Khān out of loyalty to the family of 'Alā' al-dīn Khaljī and because they deemed Islam in danger.[3] The troubles which afflicted Delhi during the reign of the grandson of Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq, Sulṭān Tughluq Shāh, are attributed

[1] *TMS*, p. 34. [2] *TMS*, p. 52. [3] *TMS*, pp. 88–89.

to the latter's youth and inexperience.[1] Sulṭān Mubārak Shāh, Yaḥyā ibn Aḥmad's hoped-for patron, pursued the ruler of Jaunpur as far as Gudrang, after the latter had attacked the territory of the Delhi sultan, only to desist when, for the reason that the two sides were Muslim, his *maliks* and *amīrs* interceded for mercy. But the mention of these reasons for historical events is incidental; it is no part of Yaḥyā ibn Aḥmad's purpose to offer a sustained analysis or a deliberately conceived explanatory reconstruction of the past designed to make it intelligible in terms of human volition and decision. Events happen first in Yaḥyā's account and causes are occasionally dragged in afterwards to explain them. One must not seek for intelligibility in a more detailed knowledge of the events themselves, but in extraneous forces.

Although the author of the *Ta'rīkh-i-Mubārak Shāhī* writes as a somewhat disinterested spectator of the past, viewing it as a rather mysterious course of events, he nevertheless adorns his chronicle with a number of morals, almost as though he were obeying the literary canons of his time. They read indeed as conscious artifice adopted to gratify the expectations of the reader, a form of marginal comment upon the story, from outside the story. They read as if history permits rather than compels men to draw certain conclusions from the record of human actions. The conclusions which Yaḥyā ibn Aḥmad wishes to draw are of the snares and delusions of wordly success. The more man becomes attached to worldly vanities, the more catastrophic his undoing. The world is not to be sought, it is to be avoided. It is a chimera of illusory success and phantasmagoria. Indeed, Yaḥyā ibn Aḥmad implies that the only useful lesson to be derived from the study of history is that there should be no more human history.

The attitude to life which informs the *Ta'rīkh-i-Mubārak Shāhī* is expressed clearly in a comment of the author upon the assassination of Mubārak Shāh, his hoped-for patron, in 1428. Yaḥyā ibn Aḥmad writes,[2]

> 'It is perfectly evident to one with insight, that this cruel world breaks the knot of friendship and sincerity, and discordant time fails to redeem its pledge of sympathy. First, like drunkards, it bestows without merit and cause, and then, like young children, it shamelessly snatches back its gift although the recipient has done no harm to the donor. Every great man who wishes to wax strong and powerful it throws down into ignominy and every ruler who succeeds, accompanied by honour and respect, will find that all his trouble will only make him one with the impure earth.

[1] *TMS*, pp. 142–143. [2] *TMS*, p. 235.

Who shall yearn for converse with the world,
With whom has it kept its agreements that it will keep them with us too ?

The aim of writing these warnings and of employing these figures of speech is that statesmen and rulers should never be deceived by the artifice of worldly dominion, so unworthy of imitation, and never be deluded by the favours and blandishments of this treacherous sphere.'

Or again,[1]

'It is evident to those with certain knowledge and cool experience that the shameless heavens and conspiring time bring forth in playful fancy all manner of tricks from behind the cloth of two colours and the magic veil and display them before the eyes of the vain and short sighted.

Odious in appearance is this deceitful polluted world.
Every morning it revolves in splendid impudence.

In sum, let it not be concealed from the perspicuous eye of every generous man whose eye is open that one should not be misled, through the negligence of youth, by giving oneself to this harridan of fourteen years, nor should he trust the flattery and fraud of this abominable assassin, nor should he pin his faith on the actions of this bawdy strumpet (the world). Do you not see what valiant champions and ruling kings have been borne from their thrones into their coffins ? Many a laughing damsel of the garden of elegance and grace, and many a young bride from the meadows of delicacy has she taken from the spring season of their youth and laid them prisoner in the earth of destruction with a swift blow from the autumn wind.

Every particle of dust you see about
You see so many Solomons brought by the wind.'

Throughout his *Ta'rīkh*, when he considers the moment opportune, Yaḥyā ibn Aḥmad repeats and amplifies these warnings. Thus, after recording the death of Mu'izz al-dīn Muḥammad ibn Sām of Ghor, he says,[2]

'It is reported that after his death, the sultan left 1,500 maunds of diamonds, the most precious of jewels, in his treasury. The quantity of cash and other jewels may be inferred from this fact alone. Nevertheless, except for his good deeds, he took nothing with him. Born with nothing, he likewise left this fleeting world with nothing.
Of those jewels which it is impossible to count
What did either Sām or Farīdūn carry away ?'

Then after the death of the deposed Sulṭān Rukn al-dīn Fīrūz Shāh, he writes,[3]

'Oh, much accursed be this hunchback (the world)
Who nurtures and then kills so many of this sort (sultans).'

[1] *TMS*, p. 222. [2] *TMS*, pp. 12–13. [3] *TMS*, p. 23.

After the deposition of Raẓiyya the reader is informed,[1]

'Every head that the celestial globe raises up
It will likewise throw a noose around the neck of that very same.'

The deposition and death of the youngest son of Iltutmish, Sulṭān Mu'izz al-dīn, is commented upon as follows,[2]

'Build not upon the foundations of the courtyard of this old world, which has two gates, for it is transitory.'

On the imprisonment and death of Sulṭān 'Alā' al-dīn Mas'ūd Shāh,[3] he writes :

'This world is the shore of the ocean death, so terrible to the mind.
Have a care, fear the wave of the ocean and do not put your feet upon that shore.'

The elegy on the death of Muḥammad, son of Ghiyāth al-dīn Balban, which the *Ta'rīkh-i-Mubārak Shāhī* attributes to Amīr Ḥasan and which is quoted with approval, is a further lament on the inconstancy of destiny and the deceits of fate which one moment bestows and the next deprives quite capriciously.[4] On the death of Ghiyāth al-dīn Balban the moral is reinforced [5] :

'The heart of the world has no constancy
Hold off from the world for it has no stability.'

In his account of the slaying of Jalāl al-dīn Khaljī by 'Alā' al-dīn Khaljī and his associates, Yaḥyā ibn Aḥmad is quite dispassionate, detached and unemotional. He merely offers, as a verse, the following sentiments on that event which, as has been seen, had quite another effect on Ẓiyā' al-dīn Baranī.[6]

'Have you seen what this tyrannical sphere and its stars have done ?
Do not mention the heavens, nor their revolutions, nor time.
How it has cast the sun of the kingdom into the dust
Let dust be upon the brilliant sun of the celestial sphere.'

When Sulṭān Mubārak Shāh Khaljī sends Shihāb al-dīn, the infant son of 'Alā' al-dīn Khaljī, into exile, Yaḥyā ibn Aḥmad ruminates : [7]

'As long as the world exists, such things happen and will go on happening,
In the end, the very same thing will happen to all.'

Instead of agreeing with Baranī's *Ta'rīkh-i-Fīrūz Shāhī* in passionate denunciation of Khusrau Khān Barwārī from whom Ghiyāth al-dīn

[1] *TMS*, p. 27. [2] *TMS*, p. 32. [3] *TMS*, p. 34.
[4] *TMS*, p. 44. [5] *TMS*, p. 52. [6] *TMS*, p. 70.
[7] *TMS*, p. 82.

Tughluq 'saved' Delhi, Yaḥyā ibn Aḥmad merely remarks upon natural ingratitude in man and the folly of putting trust in anything. He states that, during the Khusrau Khān interlude, the Hindus gained an upper hand but without showing any loathing for the event or perturbation at it. He is interested chiefly in preaching the folly of worldly vanities.

> 'A tree whose nature is essentially bitter,
> If you plant it in the garden of Paradise,
> And water it from the river of Paradise,
> Or sprinkle its roots with honey and pure milk,
> At the end when its offspring appears,
> The fruits of that too are all bitter,'[1]

Nor is Yaḥyā ibn Aḥmad very excited by the way Ghiyāth al-dīn Tughluq met his end under the hastily constructed pavilion at Afghānpur. He appears more interested in repeating a warning from Shaykh Muḥī al-dīn Niẓām al-Ḥaqq to the sultan that 'Delhi is far off' even to a victorious and successful ruler. No one should be deluded by apparent success.[2]

> 'If you place the world under your feet,
> At the end of it all you lie in your place' (the earth).

Neither is Muḥammad ibn Tughluq condemned by Yaḥyā ibn Aḥmad for his alleged errors. After all the mighty end in the same place as the poor and humble—the grave.

> 'He who does not, from worldly pride and pomp, walk upon the bare earth
> In the end he too becomes dust and people pass over him.'[3]

In keeping with the detachment and indifference which these quotations reveal, Yaḥyā ibn Aḥmad does not bewail the invasion of the territories of the sultan of Delhi and the sack of the capital by Tīmūr in 801/1398. He is quite fatalistic in his attitude to the whole episode, at the time of which it is permissible to suppose he was himself alive. Even if he was younger than thirty years when he wrote the larger part of his work, or even if he were not born by 801/1398, it is almost certain that memories of that incursion would have been fresh in the minds of his contemporaries and informants. But his only comment upon it was, 'We belong to God and we are contented with His Decree.'[4]

It is difficult to explain Yaḥyā ibn Aḥmad's repeated call to his readers to avoid the snares and delusions of the world, other than by

[1] *TMS*, pp. 86–87.
[2] *TMS*, pp. 96–97.
[3] *TMS*, p. 117.
[4] *TMS*, p. 116.

regarding him as obeying one of the conventions of Muslim historiography, both within and outside India. There is no evidence that he was so disillusioned at the assassination of his hoped-for patron in 838/1434 that he sought to assuage his chagrin in bitter asides on the disappointments which are all the world has to offer. Indeed he deemed it worth while to continue the chronicle of events beyond that date, presumably in hope of reward from the new sultan, Muḥammad Shāh. Nor is there any reason for believing that there may be a connection between the decline in the power and prestige of Delhi following Tīmūr's invasion in 801/1398–99 and disillusion in the author at the diminished position of men of his class. The general tenor of the work, the absence of biographical references, of personal laments, of any sustained interpretation of why events occurred, do not suggest that Yaḥyā would write history to relieve his feelings or to establish an organic relationship between past and present. Moreover, there is no evidence to suggest that the reduction in the power of the sultans of Delhi meant also a reduction in the privileges of the Muslim educated class. Political disunity and impotence did not mean, in fifteenth-century India, social upheaval and economic chaos.

Yaḥyā ibn Aḥmad was simply making a literary offering, in a form his readers liked to see, to a royal patron. As a comparison with 'Iṣāmī's *Futūḥ al-Salāṭīn* suggests, a popular religious moral, such as the avoidance of the vanities of a wicked world, was what Indo-Muslim readers liked to read. The *Ta'rīkh-i-Mubārak Shāhī* indeed is a work aimed at pleasing the reader more than at satisfying any inquiring spirit in the author and as such is a collection of interesting literary curiosities rather than a sustained piece of exposition by an author determined to impose himself upon his material. History for Yaḥyā ibn Aḥmad is a body of transmitted fact, not to be questioned, but to be adorned at random by suitable saws and conventional morals in verse form.

## CHAPTER V

# THE TREATMENT OF HISTORY BY AMĪR KHUSRAU DIHLAWĪ

Amīr Khusrau, 651/1253–725/1325, is the most prolific of the writers studied in this monograph and it is important to indicate the range and extent of his literary output in order to judge how far history claimed his attention.[1] Tradition current in the time of Firishta had it that Amīr Khusrau wrote ninety-two separate works in all. If this is true—and verification appears impossible on the evidence available—then a considerable portion of his work has perished, for to-day only the following remain. First, five *dīwāns*, viz. *Tuḥfat al-Ṣighar*, poems of adolescence, *Wasaṭ al-Ḥayāt*, poems of middle life (from about the age of twenty to thirty-four), *Ghurrat al-Kamāl*, or poems of maturity collected originally in 693/1293 but including poems of later date, *Baqiyya-yi-Naqiyya* completed after 715/1315, (since it contains an elegy on Sulṭān 'Alā' al-dīn Khaljī), and *Nihāyat al-Kamāl*. Second, *Khamsa* comprising *Maṭla' al-Anwār* completed in 698/1298, *Shīrīn-i-Khusrau* and *Majnūn-Laylā*, both also completed in 698/1298, *Ā'īna-yi-Sikandarī*, completed in 699/1299 and *Hasht Bihisht*, completed in 701/1301. Third, *Rasā'il al-I'jāz* or *I'jāz-i-Khusrau*, a treatise on elegant prose composition in five *risālas*, the first four completed in 682/1283 and the last in 719/1319. This contains many specimen documents and letters mostly composed by Amīr Khusrau himself. In addition Amīr Khusrau made a collection of Shaykh Niẓām al-dīn Auliyā's sayings in four parts, of which the first was presented to the *shaykh* in 719/1319. Of these works listed above, one historical poem, the *Miftāḥ al-Futūḥ*, forms part of the *Ghurrat al-Kamāl*.

The works in which Amīr Khusrau treats avowedly of past human actions are the *Qirān al-Sa'dayn* completed in Ramaẓān 688/1289, a *mathnawī* on the meeting of Sulṭān Mu'izz al-dīn Kayqubād and his father Nāṣir al-dīn Bughrā Khān in 686/1287 on the banks of the Sarjū in Awadh, the *Miftāḥ al-Futūḥ*, a *mathnawī* on four victories of Sulṭān Jalāl al-dīn Khaljī, completed in 690/1291, the *Khazā'in al-Futūḥ*, a prose account of the victories of Sulṭān 'Alā' al-dīn Khaljī completed in 711/1311–1312, the *Duwal Rānī Khiẓr Khān*, a *mathnawī*

[1] Indebtedness for what follows is acknowledged to: Mohammad Wahid Mirza, *The Life and Works of Amir Khusrau*, Calcutta, 1935 and C. A. Storey, *Persian Literature, A Bio-bibliographical Survey*, II, 3, London, 1939, pp. 495–499.

on the love story of Khiẓr Khān, son of 'Alā' al-dīn Khaljī and Duwal Rānī, daughter of Rāja Karn of Nahrwāla, completed in 715/1316 but with a continuation written after the death of Sulṭān Mubārak Shāh (720/1320) telling of Khiẓr Khān's estrangement from his father, his confinement in the fortress of Gwālior, his blinding by Malik Kāfūr and his murder. Next, the *Nuh Sipihr*, completed about 718/1318, a *mathnawī* describing some of the memorable deeds of Sulṭān Quṭb al-dīn Mubārak Shāh Khaljī but consisting chiefly of a description of his court, and of the languages, flora and fauna of India. Lastly, the *Tughluq-Nāma*, a *mathnawī* on the victory of Ghiyāth al-dīn Tughluq over Khusrau Khān in 720/1320.

Amīr Khusrau then, although he wrote much about the past, was not, *prima facie*, by first inclination an historian. Throughout a long life he wrote, judging in terms of bulk alone, more work avowedly poetical than avowedly historical, more works of imagination than of fact ('fact' here conceived as 'what human beings have actually done'). This chapter will consider whether, in his treatment of the past, Amīr Khusrau showed himself to be more historian than poet, or more poet than historian.

It should be recalled that Amīr Khusrau occupied a place at the very centre of affairs. His father had been an *amīr* in the service of Sulṭān Iltutmish and his mother was a daughter of 'Imād al-Mulk, who became a high official in Balban's reign. During that period, Amīr Khusrau attached himself first to 'Alā' al-dīn Kishlū Khān, Balban's nephew, then to Balban's younger son Bughrā Khān and then to Balban's eldest son, Nuṣrat al-dīn Sulṭān Muḥammad. It was during his service with this prince that Amīr Khusrau was taken prisoner by the Mongols. In the time of Sulṭān Mu'izz al-dīn, Amīr Khusrau took service under Ḥātim Khān, later *muqṭa'* of Awadh. In the reign of Jalāl al-dīn Khaljī, he was appointed *muṣḥaf-dār* and given a stipend of twelve hundred *tankas*. In the reign of 'Alā' al-dīn, Amīr Khusrau did not improve his position at court, but in the reigns of both Quṭb al-dīn Mubārak Shāh Khaljī and Ghiyāth al-dīn Tughluq he received generous largesse from the ruler.

It will have been noted that the historical works of Amīr Khusrau extend, in the dates of their composition, from 688/1289 to some time between 720/1320 and 725/1325 (the *Tughluq-Nāma*). They are pieces written for the occasion rather than integrated parts of a general historical work. Indeed, Amīr Khusrau is the only historian under discussion in this monograph who does not attempt a conspectus of the past and whose treatment of the past lacks unity of theme and

chronology. It may be asked whether this disjunction between his six historical works betrays some important difference in his motives for writing, whether in fact it betokens a difference in response by Amīr Khusrau to the differing personal situations in which he found himself during a long life. Perhaps too an examination of the circumstances occasionally impelling Amīr Khusrau to write history over thirty-five years might reveal important background political, religious or social changes occurring in his lifetime among both Muslim and non-Muslim peoples in India. In other words it may be asked if Amīr Khusrau's reconstruction of the past was provoked by a need to understand and to act upon some contemporary problem.

Plainly it was not. Amīr Khusrau wrote about the past either because he was requested to do so or because he hoped for reward or because he wished for literary fame in death as in life. Thus, in the *Qirān al-Sa'dayn*, Amīr Khusrau says that, having accompanied Sulṭān Mu'izz al-dīn Kayqubād on the royal expedition to meet his father Bughrā Khān, he remained two years in Awadh while Mu'izz al-dīn returned to Delhi. When Amīr Khusrau returned to his family in Delhi, two days after his arrival, the sultan sent for him, appointed him a *nadīm*, or confidant, and asked him to write the story of the meeting with Bughrā Khān. This request was the immediate cause of the composition of the poem.[1] In the *Miftāḥ al-Futūḥ*, Amīr Khusrau gives as his motives for writing the desire to give the sultan of the day, Jalāl al-dīn Fīrūz Khaljī, a token of gratitude for past favour and a proof of the poet's devotion. In addition Amīr Khusrau wished to leave something worth while and lasting behind him.[2] The *Khazā'in al-Futūḥ* was written in hope of gaining the favour of Sulṭān 'Alā' al-dīn Khaljī. The *Duwal Rānī* was begun because Khiẓr Khān one day sent for Amīr Khusrau, gave him his own rough draft of the story of his love for Duwal Rānī and asked him to render it into verse.[3] The *Nuh Sipihr* was begun after Sulṭān Quṭb al-dīn Mubārak Shāh had sat one day with his courtiers discussing the merits of various poets, both bygone and contemporary. The sultan accounted for the appearance of great poets like Khāqānī, Unṣurī and Firdausī by the encouragement they received from generous rulers. He himself, as Amīr Khusrau says, would give 'vast treasures' to whomsoever would write the history of his reign.[4] Amīr Khusrau thereupon undertook the task although he was, according to his own

[1] *Qirān al-Sa'dayn*, lith. Cawnpore, 1871, pp. 169–171.
[2] *Miftāḥ al-Futūḥ*, text, *Oriental College Magazine*, Lahore, Feb. 1937, p. 45.
[3] *Duwal Rānī Khiẓr Khān*, School of Oriental and African Studies Library, Persian MS. No. 18729, p. 49.
[4] *Nuh Sipihr*, text, Calcutta, 1950, p. 46.

statement,[1] more than sixty (lunar) years old. He says that although he had served three sultans previously, namely Sulṭāns Mu'izz al-dīn Kayqubād, Jalāl al-dīn Khaljī, and 'Alā' al-dīn Khaljī, yet never before had he received as much largesse as from Sulṭān Quṭb al-dīn Mubārak Shāh. The last of Amīr Khusrau's historical works was also written at the behest of the sultan of the day, Ghiyāth al-dīn Tughluq.[2]

The hope or the certainty of receiving royal patronage does not necessarily preclude an historian from making a valuable, critical contribution to the study of the past. It would be easy to dismiss Amīr Khusrau as a typical Muslim court poet and eulogist, but it would be unwise. Great men and rulers attract the courtiers they deserve. If sturdy-minded and conscientious, it is conceivable that they would wish histories to be presented to them wherein the virtues and vices of the great are held up before mankind for edification and instruction. If religious, they might wish for a further revelation of the ways of God in history and if scholarly, knowledge of how things have happened. To write under the patronage of kings may establish a presumption of guilt against an historian's veracity and independence; it does not necessarily prove him guilty. It is desirable to investigate first the standards of the time to which a court writer was expected to conform. It seems appropriate therefore to describe the contents of three of Amīr Khusrau's historical works in some detail. Again it must be emphasized that they are essentially *pièces d'occasion*.

*Qirān al-Sa'dayn.*

The *Qirān al-Sa'dayn*, or 'Conjunction of the Two Planets', completed in Ramaẓān 688/September 1289, reads as a number of descriptive poems joined into one by means of *ghazals* expressing the poet's feelings upon the various episodes in the story which he has been describing. These *ghazals* are in various Persian metres and give aesthetic variety to the work.

The poem opens with praise of God and the Prophet, a description of Muḥammad's ascent into heaven (the *mi'rāj*) followed by an eulogy of Sulṭān Mu'izz al-dīn Kayqubād, the inheritor of the virtues of his grandfather Balban. Victory and success smile upon him from every side and his justice adorns every clime. Next Amīr Khusrau gives a florid description of Delhi, the capital of the realm, of the 'Congregational Mosque' whose minarets reach unto the skies, and of a water tank marvellously beneficial to the people of Delhi. Amīr

[1] *NS*, p. 48.
[2] *Tughluq-Nāma*, text, Haydarābād, 1352/1933, p. 13, (of text of *mathnawī*).

Khusrau then boasts, on behalf of Sulṭān Mu'izz al-dīn Kayqubād, of the military power of the sultan of Delhi and of the peace, justice and good order which flourished throughout the kingdom.[1] But this tranquillity was disturbed by rumblings of trouble from the east. Nāṣir al-dīn Bughrā Khān, ruler of Lakhnautī, having heard that his son Mu'izz al-dīn had been accepted by the nobles as sultan of Delhi, raised an army and set his face towards Delhi. There follows in the poem an elaborate description of the winter season. The flavour of the original may be conveyed a little by translating an extract: [2]

'When the monarch of the firmament laid a hand on his bow he sent a large arrow into the cold clime
The arc of the heavens became like a dwelling, from its warmth his arrow gave fire to the heavens.
The arc kept revolving, it was not stationary
By that means the sun gave heat to the world such that from the sun's heat the world became enwrapped in fire.
Every quarter of the globe became fiery.'

Amīr Khusrau then paints a picture of the various ways of keeping warm in cold weather—fires, warm clothes and taking part in festivities. The young sultan, Mu'izz al-dīn was much given to festivities and spent much time in drinking. Consequently sedition arose. News came of Bughrā Khān's movements in the east.[3] Sulṭān Mu'izz al-dīn bestirred himself and mustered an army by summoning his nobles to attend the court with their contingents of soldiers. Early one Tuesday in Zū'l Ḥijja the sultan set forth from Delhi, travelling by very easy stages. The poem too moves at a leisurely pace as Amīr Khusrau depicts in elaborate metaphor and simile the royal place of Hazār Sutūn, the royal encampment, the seasons of autumn, spring, the New Year and of the royal amusements marking these events in the calendar. News arrived of an invasion from the north-west frontier by an army of Mongols and, after some formal stereotyped dialogue between the sultan and his muster-master, 30,000 horse were dispatched to combat it.[4] Another interlude in the account of action then occurs in which the poet speaks of the beauty and design of the black, the red, the white and the green umbrellas of state, the *dūrbāsh*, the state sword, the royal bow, the arrows 'like rain' and the red and black standards.

The poem then resumes the account of events by telling how Mu'izz al-dīn Kayqubād recommenced his leisurely progress towards the east, carousing the while. During a halt on the borders of Tilpat

[1] *QS*, p. 27.
[2] *QS*, p. 29.
[3] *QS*, p. 34.
[4] *QS*, pp. 48–49.

and Afghānpur 1,000 Mongol captives arrived from the north-west. Amīr Khusrau depicts their appearance in language of passionate distaste—their faces were like fire, heads scraped like a pen, eyes so narrow and piercing that they would have made a hole in a copper vessel. Their smell was more foul than their colour, their faces more vile than their backs, resembling soft leather bottles all wrinkled and bent, their noses extended from cheek to cheek and their mouths from ear to ear, their nostrils were like decayed graves or an oven full of water after a storm. Their hair from the nostrils hung down to their lips and their moustaches were excessively long.[1] These captives were put to death.

The sultan continued in the direction of Awadh with, according to Amīr Khusrau, every trapping of pomp and circumstance. Bughrā Khān decided to send an envoy to his son to discover whether his intentions were peaceful or not. He was to represent that he, Bughrā Khān, was the rightful heir to the throne of Delhi, which, in effect, Mu'izz al-dīn only obtained in his father's enforced absence. All the messages which follow sound like stereotyped formal discourses on fatherly love and filial duty rather than actual interchanges between two sultans with armies at their backs.

Sulṭān Mu'izz al-dīn gave his father's messenger a haughty reply, reminding him that he was bequeathed the throne by his grandfather Balban. If his father comes against him with the sword, then of the sword he shall have his fill. After this exchange of family pleasantry, Amīr Khusrau describes the season of summer and of the melon. At length the army of Delhi reached Awadh and encamped by the river Sarjū. Bughrā Khān saw his son among his troops on the other side of the river and burst into tears. He sent a messenger to his son with an expression of greetings which was brusquely repulsed; the young sultan himself shot an arrow at the boat carrying the messenger.[1]

The action of the *Qirān al-Sa'dayn* is now dominated by an exchange of messages between father and son. Bughrā Khān could not, says Amīr Khusrau, sleep at night for fear that there might be war between father and son.[2] He sent a message to Mu'izz al-dīn Kayqubād 'opening the secrets of his heart', reminded him of his youth and alleged that he really obtained his crown through his father. Mu'izz al-dīn 'waxed hot' and replied that kingdoms were obtained by the sword and by

[1] *QS*, p. 72; it should be recalled that while in the service of Muḥammad, a son of Balban, Amīr Khusrau was for a time a captive of the Mongols.
[2] *QS*, pp. 85–86.
[4] *QS*, p. 87.

the decrees of fate, not by inheritance. In any event Balban had bequeathed the throne of Delhi to him.[1]

Bughrā Khān replied with a warlike declaration and boasted of his army's readiness for battle and its possession of large numbers of elephants which were more than a match for the opposing cavalry. He urged Mu'izz al-dīn to give up his kingdom as he was not worthy of it. If his son decided on war then he, Bughrā Khān, would not hesitate to take up the challenge. On the other hand kindness would be repaid by kindness, but only on condition that he and his son exchanged thrones.[2] Mu'izz al-dīn then answered that his father's elephants would find his cavalry too much for them, and used as one of his arguments that in chess an elephant (bishop) was worth less than a knight.[3] Nevertheless although he possessed such military might he did not wish to harm his father. 'If the jewels of peace could but be strung, he would wear the ring of slavery in his ear with entire satisfaction.' However, he still maintained his right to the kingship although with less emphasis and bluster. At the end of this message the young sultan indeed offered to throw his crown at his father's feet, if only his father would come and collect it.

Bughrā Khān's heart was melted by this expression of filial respect and devotion and he renounced all claim to the throne of Delhi. He requested an interview with his son, which was granted. Mu'izz al-dīn Kayqubād said, 'What though my crown reached to the moon, my head would be under thy foot.' An elaborate description follows, first of the meeting of Bughrā Khān's second son Kaykā'ūs with Mu'izz al-dīn Kayqubād and then of the latter's son Kayūmarth with Bughrā Khān. At this latter meeting, the interview between the two sultans was arranged.

This interview, the climax of the whole poem, is depicted with every artifice of pathos and of stereotyped emotion of which Amīr Khusrau was capable. A rich description of the boat which bore father towards son and of the actual river crossing precedes the account of the meeting itself.

'The boat of the King flew swifter than an arrow
And in the twinkling of an eye crossed the river
As soon as the King reached the other side
He saw his pearl on the bank of the stream.
He wished in the burning of his restless heart
To leap ashore and clasp it to his breast.
He wanted to be patient, but patience did not come

[1] *QS*, p. 90. [2] *QS*, p. 93. [3] *QS*, p. 94.

He did not want tears but they kept coming all the same.
Mu'izz al-dīn was on the other side, performing all the offices of regal courtesy.
As he saw his astonished father, so the more he himself became astonished.
He leapt forward scattering tears from his eyes
Bughrā Khān hurried forward too and clasped him in his arms.
Thirsty, they mingled two seas of affection,
Thirsty, from their eyes came a continual flood.'[1]

Expressing the most tender affection for each other, father and son agreed that the dispute between them was all a terrible misunderstanding and that the other was indeed the lawful sultan of Delhi. They were completely reconciled. Amīr Khusrau, overcome by the spectacle of such paternal and filial devotion, bursts into a *ghazal* entitled 'Happy the moment when the lover gains the beloved'.

After 'the conjunction of the two planets' the historical action in the poem withers away. Lavish presents were exchanged between father and son and lavish entertainments celebrated their reunion. Amīr Khusrau celebrates in typically florid idiom the torches used at royal banquets, lamplight, the twenty-seven mansions of the moon, the astrological position of the heavenly constellations at the time of the 'conjunction of the two planets', and goes on to describe wine, the royal flagon, the 'cup that cheers', the cup-bearer, the harp, the flute, the singers and the festive table at court.

A further interview between Mu'izz al-dīn and Bughrā Khān follows, at which the latter advises his son on how to govern. 'They both sit together like the sun and the moon.' This advice is formal and morally stereotyped. If the young sultan has occasion to punish, let him not punish the weak. Let him forgive wherever possible.[2] He should be ready to punish those who are 'really' his enemies. He should distinguish carefully between those who are only his friends to his face and those who are not. He should watch over his subjects with solicitude. Since the sultan has become the shadow of God on earth he should be a shadow over his subjects also. Above all, he should dispense justice towards them.[3] The sultan should give thanks to God for His bounty towards him. He should never act so that he feels ashamed at God's door. He should speak with a pure tongue, avoiding bad language and he should remember that a sultan's negligence hurts his subjects. By all means drink some wine but not to the point of

[1] *QS*, p. 113. Acknowledgments are due to E. G. Cowell, 'The Kiran-us-Sa'dain of Mir Khusrau,' *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, XXIX, 1860, p. 235.
[2] *QS*, p. 154.
[3] *QS*, p. 155.

drunkenness. Sultans are moral exemplars, their servants imitate them.[1]

The armies 'of east and west' then move off in opposite directions but not until Sulṭān Mu'izz al-dīn Kayqubād and his father have had a last interview with, says Amīr Khusrau, *no one else present*.[2] At this interview Amīr Khusrau says that Bughrā Khān admonished his son, in general terms, to beware of certain unnamed evil counsellors. The two monarchs then parted with every outward sign of distress, Mu'izz al-dīn Kayqubād resorting to wine for solace. Sulṭān Mu'izz al-dīn then returned to Delhi by easy stages during the rainy season. This journey is elaborately described as is the royal entry into Delhi. Amīr Khusrau on his own admission could not have been present at this triumphal entry.

The poem draws to a close with the details of the author's own movements after the meeting in Awadh and with an account of how he came to write the poem. It ends with an expression of Amīr Khusrau's weariness at writing poetry, with an 'essay on the vanity of human wishes' and with a passionate declaration that he did not write the poem for the sake of gold but for fame. All his words will, in effect, be merely so many links in the chain around his neck on the Day of Judgment.

*The Khazā'in al-Futūḥ.*

This, the only prose history written by Amīr Khusrau, provides perhaps the most apposite body of evidence upon Amīr Khusrau's treatment of history, as it would be unreasonable not to expect some poetic licence in his other histories written in verse. The *Khazā'in al-Futūḥ* has been much valued [3] as the only history extant which was written in the reign of Sulṭān 'Alā' al-dīn Khaljī.

The *Khazā'in al-Futūḥ* is divided into short sections each with a title heading informing the reader what literary allusions, metaphors and similes may be expected in that section. The account of action in the *Khazā'in al-Futūḥ* is thus subordinated from the very beginning of the work to aesthetic effect. The work begins with a florid doxology in praise of God the Lord of Victory, and of His Prophet, supported by appropriate quotations from the Qur'ān, followed by praise of Sulṭān 'Alā' al-dīn Khaljī and by an extravagant expression of the author's humility and incompetence.

[1] *QS*, p. 158.
[2] *QS*, p. 160.
[3] by, for example, K. S. Lal, *History of the Khaljīs (1290–1320)*, Allahabad, 1950, p. 393.

Amīr Khusrau then proceeds to indicate the character and scope of the *Khazā'in al-Futūḥ*. In a section headed ' Allusions to the word of God and verses of the Qur'ān ' Amīr Khusrau says,[1]

> ' In this book which has been gilded by the title of " The Treasure House of Victories ", from (the time of) the conquest of Deogir when the *alifs* of God's word " Verily to Us is the Victory " were called the arrows of Muḥammad's religion until (the time of) the capture of Arangal, when the *nūns* of the Victory *sūra* described the bows of the victorious army, with the key of the sciences (only) one in a hundred of the underlying realities has been made manifest. From the incisive words in these pages the sword is made brilliant, and its effects are as stated in the Quranic verse, " And We have sent down iron wherein is great might and many uses for men." In its jewels, it may become clear and evident how many Hindu regions have disappeared from the pages of the face of the earth as a result of that " Chapter of Iron ". I shall explain also, to what extent, as a result of the " Verse of Light ", the unjust deeds of unbelief have been cleared from the path of religion.'

Under the heading ' Allusions to the Caliphs' Amīr Khusrau writes: ' I shall also narrate some of the notable and significant events of the temporal rule of this caliph (Sulṭān 'Alā' al-dīn Khaljī) who is Muḥammad in name, Abū Bakr in truthfulness and 'Umar in justice. I shall show how, like 'Uthmān, he collected the merciful words of God in the book of existence and how, like 'Alī, he opened the gate of knowledge in the Medīna of Islam, Delhi.'

Amīr Khusrau then gives an elaborately phrased account of 'Alā' al-dīn Khaljī's first expedition to Deogir in 695/1295–6 and of his accession to the throne. The assassination of the previous sultan, mentioned by Baranī and 'Iṣāmī, is not recorded here by Amīr Khusrau. He deals with the accession as follows, under the heading ' Allusions to the story of Moses '.

> ' Since the will of God was such that this Mosaic Muḥammad should seize the power of the sword from all infidel Pharaohs, should dig from the earth the immense treasures of the *rāīs*, should give help in the slaughter of the infidels, should cause the calf-worshipping Hindus to consider the sound of the cow contemptible and, with the bow of Shu'ayb become the shepherd of all his subjects by the decree of God the late Alf Khān was sent to him as Aaron had been sent to Moses. The good news that " We will strengthen your arm with your brother and give you both a kingdom " was wafted to the ear of his felicity, so that with the auspicious advice of his brother he ascended the throne on the day of fragrance in the second half of the blessed month of Ramaẓān 695/ July 1296.'[2]

[1] *Khazā'in al-Futūḥ*, British Museum Persian MS. Add. 16839, folios 3*b*–4*a*.
[2] *KF*, fol. 5*b*–6*a*.

Amīr Khusrau then exalts the art of ruling over the art of conquest. 'Alā' al-dīn Khaljī so highly excelled in the qualities of a ruler, as well as of a conqueror, that no pen or tongue can describe his powers. The author will however mention some of the good practices of 'Alā' al-dīn as a ruler. These include the maintenance of a full treasury, the lavish distribution of largesse, the reduction of the heavy tax on sales in order to reduce the price of necessities for the people and the setting of overseers to watch for sharp dealing by bazaar merchants. Marvellous to relate also was the sultan's justice. Next, says Amīr Khusrau, 'Alā' al-dīn curbed the drinking of wine and the peregrinations of prostitutes. Never indeed was there such peace and good order as during this reign.[1] He punished necromancers who drank human blood and extirpated an unlawful religious sect guilty of incestuous practices. He kept the price of corn low by storing grain and releasing it on the market at times of scarcity. He established a cloth mart and a fruit mart where the people were able to buy at fair prices.[2]

Next Amīr Khusrau gives an account of the religious buildings erected, repaired or extended by the sultan. It is (freely) translated as typical of his treatment of events in the *Khazā'in al-Futūḥ*.

'Because of the shortage of stone, people scurried hither and thither throughout the kingdom in search of it. Some struck the base of mountains, so much were they enamoured of their search for stone that they tore at the mountain like lovers. Some were keener than steel in uprooting the foundations of unbelief. Having sharpened their steels they applied them in holy war to the idol temples of the *rāīs* and with blows of iron they devoted their strength with as much vigour as possible to the breaking of the stones. Wherever an idol temple had engaged in an act of devotion the strong tongue of the spade in well founded argument removed the foundations of infidelity from the heart so that, at once, that idol temple in gratitude performed the Muslim rite of bowing in prayer.'[3]

With the stone thus obtained, says Amīr Khusrau, the new construction was carried out. This new building also included repairs to the Delhi fort and the erection of other forts. Lastly, in his account of 'Alā' al-dīn Khaljī's meritorious deeds, Amīr Khusrau mentions the cleansing of the Ḥauẓ-i-Shamsī or water tank. Rain did not, however, come after the tank had been dredged, so 'Alā' al-dīn, like Moses, prayed to God for water. His prayer was answered.

'After this,' writes Amīr Khusrau, 'I shall set in motion the key of my mouth, which is adorned by tiny teeth, and open up with celestial

[1] *KF*, fol. 9*b*. [2] *KF*, fol. 11*a–b*. [3] *KF*, fol. 12*b*.

fortune the gates of victory of this world conqueror and write a few "chapters" about the conquests and successful sieges of the "Alexander of the Age".' The first victories recorded by Amīr Khusrau are those against the Mongols. The story is one of unalloyed and unending success. The following passage is typical of the author's style and methods of recording victory. It is headed 'Allusions to war and to festivity'.

'When they filled the battle area with thousands upon thousands of goblets of wine from the filthy blood of the Tartars they ordered the jackals of the desert to make merry on the waters' edge and they made them become lion catchers. After shedding the execrable blood of the carcass eaters of Qaydū, who are also Turks of the tribe of Qay (vomit), the armies of the caliph of the age, laden with victory and good fortune, prepared to return to do homage. The late lamented Ulugh Khān (May God give him pure drink!) first however held a pleasure party to commemorate the great victory and scattered gold and jewels among his comrades of war and festivity. Then, intoxicated with happiness they spurred their horses so that they might kiss the ground before Sulṭān 'Alā' al-dīn. The captives, who had been as sweetmeats for elephants in rut, they executed in the place where they were drinking.'[1]

Four victories against the Mongols are described in this hyperbolic style which, it will be conceded, is not intended to convey information about the strategic, tactical or technical steps towards those victories or about their geographical location.

Amīr Khusrau, disregarding chronology, now proceeds to a panegyric on the victories of Sultan 'Alā' al-dīn in Gujarāt, Rājasthān, Mālwa and Deogir. '"Allusions to the sea and rain." When the contamination of the blood of the infidel Mongols on the sharp sword of the great lord of land and sea had become very great, he wished to clean off the accumulated filth in the great sea.'[2] Hence in Jamādī al-Awwal 699/February 1299, 'Alā' al-dīn Khaljī ordered an army to be sent to Gujarāt 'to destroy the temple of Somnath'. 'Then they made the idol temple of Somnath bow in reverence towards the holy *Ka'ba* and when they threw the spectre of the shamefaced idol temple into the sea, it was as if the idol temple had first said its prayers and then performed its ritual ablutions.'[3]

Then in a single campaign Ranthambhor was conquered and 'by the decree of God the land of infidelity became the land of Islam'. In Amīr Khusrau's words, 'When the sky-rubbing canopy of the Shadow of God cast its shade over the hill of Ranthambhor, the conqueror of

[1] *KF*, fol. 17*b*. [2] *KF*, fol. 22*b*. [3] *KF*, fol. 23*a*.

the world, like the sun, stood over the unfortunate in his heat, and cast the days of their lives into decline.' [1]

After that, 'Alā' al-dīn's army turned its attention to the citadel of Mandū and to the conquest of Mālwa.

> ' When the spearmen of the victorious army had with their spears put antimony into the eyes of the *rāīs* many great *zamīndārs* who were more sharp sighted threw aside their boldness and impudence from fear of the stone-splitting arrows of the Turks and came with open eyes to the sublime threshold and turned that threshold into antimony by rubbing their black pupils upon it. They thus saved their bones from becoming antimony boxes for the dust.'[2]

(The whole of the passage dealing with the conquest of Mālwa is replete with allusions to eyes.)

'Alā' al-dīn Khaljī then resolved to conquer Chitor. Amīr Khusrau's treatment is as follows :

> ' " Allusions to various colours." On the day that the yellow faced *rāīs*, from fear of the green swords, sought refuge in the red court which is marked by victory, the Sanjar of the kingdom—may he always be on the cushion of success and his fame as a warrior remain evergreen—was still crimson with rage. When he saw the green, herbage-eating *rāīs* trembling with fear like the trampled and withered grass under the royal tent, although the *rāī* was a rebel, yet the silver of his royal manners did not allow any hot wind to blow upon him. All the sultry wind of his wrath was vented against the other rebels and he ordered that wherever a black Hindu was found he should be cut down like dry grass.'[3]

A description of the campaign against Arangal follows.

> ' Now I will describe the conquest of Tilang in such a way that the feet of the imagination will become lame in following my pen. After conquering many regions of the south, the brilliant judgment of the sultan of east and west decided that the swarms of Arangal must be trampled under the crescent horseshoes of the army and on 25th Jamādī al-Awwal 709/31st October 1309, guided by an auspicious star, the Naushīn-rawān of the age, together with the red umbrella of the shadow of God, commissioned the Buzurj-mihr of the world, with a star of state around which the skies pivot and a retinue as numerous as the planets, to direct the horses of success to the south.'[4]

The march itself is described with a wealth of ingenious artifice and allusion. At one point Amīr Khusrau writes,

> ' Everywhere the way was narrower than the string of a musical instrument and darker than a beauty's twisted locks. The " reed " was so narrow along its length that if the wind made a sound in it the air would scrape its way out with difficulty.'[5]

[1] *KF*, fol. 24*a*.
[2] *KF*, fol. 26*b*.
[3] *KF*, fol. 30*b*.
[4] *KF*, fol. 35*b*.
[5] *KF*, fol. 38*a*.

Eventually Arangal was reached and an onslaught was made upon the citadel.

> '"Allusions to water animals." The crocodiles of the water in their armies were waiting in ambush for the armour-backed fish. When they came upon them, with blows of their sharp arrows they caught them in a fish trap. With the blows from the enemies' maces and clubs on their tortoise-like armoured horses, they drew in their heads; the heads of the Hindus rolled like crocodiles' eggs on the fish-backed earth. In an instant all those mermen had been drowned in blood and had fallen in the manner of fish already ritually pure. Those half killed by the spears or the arrows cried out like frogs when bitten by snakes.'[1]

Siege engines had to be used for the reduction of the fort before the Rāī would yield and offer tribute. This he did in a monologue expressing sentiments which were undoubtedly all Amīr Khusrau's.

> 'The Rāī represented that for the bronze Hindu to resist the valour and bravery of the iron bodied Muslims was as if a beautiful lad with a silver body were to demand the gold of Pulādwand from Rustam. As this is so your servant Laddar Deo has been forced to lay aside his own valour and bravery. Fear of the sultan's Hindī sword has turned me pale, indeed my body of stone has become golden in the rays of his sun. I send this very petition which I have myself drawn up, to be allowed to render obedience and money at the place where obedience is to be proffered. I hope that those who have been sent by the king, the bestower of the world, will intercede for me at the court and report that fear of the sultan has rendered the broken body of this servant even more lifeless than this golden portrait and that I shall only feel signs of life when the winds of the mercy of his highness shall blow over this body without a soul. Finally, if the key of treasures and of precious things has unlocked the satisfaction of the servants of the sultan, the refuge of the world, there exists that measure of gold that could gild all the mountains of Hind. All that immense store of treasure is for the king of kings and I will not turn my face to it again. And if the world-adorning intelligence of the sultan will give back, out of his indulgent and well directed levity, a few gold pieces to this bashful Hindu, he will have given him a dignity among all the red-faced *rāīs*. Who is there who does not desire gold? The second Alexander has such a mirror that he can turn his back on gold in the confidence that his sword has attracted all the gold in the world. The proverb is true as regards his sword that the magnetized stone draws iron and the magnetized iron draws gold.'[2]

Thus Arangal surrenders and Amīr Khusrau dilates at length on the wealth of gold and elephants which the army of Delhi obtained as booty. Neither the brush of the artist or the pen of the panegyrist can describe it.

[1] *KF*, fol. 42*b*.

[2] *KF*, fol. 48*b*–49*a*.

The action of the *Khazā'in al-Futūḥ* ends with a panegyric of Malik Kāfūr's campaigns in Ma'bar, in the very south of India, so distant, says Amīr Khusrau, that a man travelling at speed can only reach it after a journey of twelve months. No arrow belonging to a warrior for the faith had reached there before, but the high-soaring ambition of the 'world conqueror', 'Alā' al-dīn, was such that he decided that a test of the marksmanship of his army should be made in that area and that they should spread there the faith of Muḥammad. Typical of Amīr Khusrau's treatment of the expedition to Ma'bar is the following passage, headed 'Allusions to the *Shāh-Nāma*'.

> 'The face of the earth, from the different varieties of horsemen looked like the pages of the *Shāh-Nāma*. You would have said the sky has rained Bahmāns or that a flood of Suhrābs and Bihzāns was moving from one place to another. A hundred thousand Rustams with their bows appeared on every side. Some of them were so red-haired that you could not have painted them even with the blood of Siwāsh. There were Gurgins who, with the fury of Ardshīr might pound into dust the bones of a tiger with a blow of the fist; and lions like Barzīn who could have made a headstall for Rakhsh with the skin of Gūdurz.' [1]

The destruction of the temples of Ma'bar is told in Amīr Khusrau's most florid eulogy, while the booty gained was beyond all but the author's powers to describe. Further extracts are perhaps not needed in order to bring out Amīr Khusrau's treatment of the past. The *Khazā'in al-Futūḥ* ends with prayers that the sultan will accept the work and that God will conceal from man any defects in it. Lest anything should appear contrary to the Qur'ān in the *Khazā'in al-Futūḥ*, Amīr Khusrau ends with the *shahādat* and an appeal for divine blessings.

*The Tughluq-Nāma.*

The *Tughluq-Nāma*, the last of Amīr Khusrau's historical poems, is the story of Ghiyāth al-dīn Tughluq's seizure of the throne of Delhi from Khusrau Khān in 720/1320 couched in the idiom of a religious and moral melodrama. Ghiyāth al-dīn Tughluq is depicted therein as a warrior for the true faith, a very exemplar of Muslim virtue [2] striving against the forces of darkness, as personified by Khusrau Khān, an infidel Hindu, amid the indifference of many other nominal Muslims. It should be noted that Amīr Khusrau says that the work was produced at the bidding of Ghiyāth al-dīn himself.[3]

[1] *KF*, fol. 58*b*.
[2] *Tughluq-Nāma*, text, Haydarabad, 1352/1933, p. 14.
[3] *TN*, p. 13.

The action of the poem opens with criticism, in formal Islamic moral terms, of Sulṭān Quṭb al-dīn Mubārak Shāh Khaljī, whom it will be observed from the *Nuh Sipihr* was, while alive, eulogized by Amīr Khusrau in equally formal Muslim terminology. However, Amīr Khusrau now writes : [1]

> ' Wine and love, drunkenness and youth,
> Pleasure and dalliance, happiness and power—
> Who will give a thought to the future
> When such winds blow in his head.'

Perspicacity and watchfulness, says Amīr Khusrau, are the very essence of government. Wise men foresaw that trouble was impending in the realm and that the life of Quṭb al-dīn Mubārak Shāh was no longer safe. The young sultan promoted Ḥasan Khusrau Khān, a Hindu, to high office, giving him a canopy and standard of state, but he became a tyrant despite the sultan's generosity towards him. He gathered a band of seditious Hindus around him. The sultan would not listen to any warnings of Khusrau's treacherous designs and went so far as to give him the keys to the palace. Inevitably the ungrateful wretch plotted against Quṭb al-dīn [2] and on the night of the new moon in Jamādī al-Akhir 720/July 1320 the sultan's quarters were forced and he himself was slain by Khusrau Khān and his minions.[3] After some discussion among the nobles, Khusrau Khān seized the throne.

Amīr Khusrau then soliloquizes upon the snares and delusions of the world and upon the tergiversations of fate.[4] This introduces a pathetic account of the killing of the two eldest and the blinding of the three youngest brothers of Sulṭān Quṭb al-dīn Mubārak Shāh. Khusrau Khān's men ran amok in the royal harem and the young princes were torn away from their sobbing mothers. These young princes had been, says Amīr Khusrau, brought up in accordance with the best principles of Muslim education, the three eldest being great readers of the Qu'rān. Indeed when the two princes were about to be slain they asked for water to perform their ceremonial ablutions.[5]

Fulminations against the nobles who accepted the *fait accompli* then follow. All the officers of the army wished to pay allegiance to Khusrau Khān with the exception of Ghiyāth al-dīn Tughluq at Deopālpur. He lamented bitterly the fate of 'Alā' al-dīn Khaljī's family and from the very outset determined, from mere loyalty to the royal house, upon vengeance. His son Muḥammad was however separated from

[1] *TN*, p. 16. [2] *TN*, p. 19. [3] *TN*, pp. 19–21.
[4] *TN*, p. 23. [5] *TN*, p. 31.

him, being at Delhi as an officer at court. Muḥammad was himself ill disposed to accept Khusrau Khān's *coup d'état*.

Muḥammad ibn Tughluq sent one 'Aḷī Yaghdī to his father to obtain advice and instructions. He was told to flee from Delhi as soon as possible. Accompanied by a few retainers, Muḥammad ibn Tughluq succeeded in slipping from Khusrau Khān's clutches and in arriving safely at his father's headquarters in Deopālpur. He was able to report that infidelity and apostasy had raised their heads in Delhi and that idol worship was rife.[1] It had become a religious obligation upon the faithful to slaughter the benighted.

Khusrau Khān was extremely disturbed at the news of Muḥammad ibn Tughluq's escape from Delhi. After a session with his advisers he decided to execute the remaining members of Sulṭān Quṭb al-dīn Mubārak Shāh's family and to distribute lavish largesse among the people in order to win support. 'Those faithless vile dogs hastened toward the innocent young princes and used their swords like butchers upon sheep.'[2] Khusrau Khān in a council dilates upon Ghāzī Malik's (Ghiyāth al-dīn Tughluq's) prowess in war, particularly against the Mongols. Yūsuf Ṣūfī, one of the Muslim nobles supporting Khusrau Khān was sent with a threatening message to Ghiyāth al-dīn Tughluq. For his pains he had his head struck off by that irate warrior for the faith.[3]

Following several verses in praise of penmanship, Amīr Khusrau tells how Ghiyāth al-dīn Tughluq addressed letters to several other prominent nobles of the realm asking for their support in the uprooting of infidelity. Each letter began in the name of God and went on to appeal to the memories of office and profit enjoyed by the nobles under Sulṭān 'Alā' al-dīn Khaljī. The nobles addressed were called upon to perform such deeds with the sword against the usurper that men would never forget them.

Immediately after receipt of Ghiyāth al-dīn Tughluq's letter and after telling his own subordinate officers of the impious events at Delhi, one of the nobles thus addressed, Malik Bahrām, decided to join Ghiyāth al-dīn.

Another noble, however, Amīr Mughlatī of Multān sent a reply to Ghiyāth al-dīn pointing out that the latter was not superior to him in office and honour and he declined to assist in the Holy War against Khusrau Khān.[4] However, Ghāzī Malik was able to stir up trouble

[1] *TN*, p. 44.
[2] *TN*, p. 47.
[3] *TN*, p. 52.
[4] *TN*, p. 62.

among Mughlatī's retainers and the *amīr* was killed fleeing from them.

Muḥammad Shāh, *muqṭa'* of Siwastān, approved Ghiyāth al-dīn Tughluq's enterprise but was not able to lend any effective help. Amīr Hushang sent only a half-hearted reply.

'Ayn al-Mulk Multānī, who was at Delhi, informed Khusrau Khān of the receipt of Ghiyāth al-dīn Tughluq's letter. However, in reply to a second appeal he indicated his sympathy with the movement against Khusrau Khān but stated that it would be inexpedient for him ('Ayn al-Mulk) to move openly yet. When Ghāzī Malik marched against Delhi, that would be the time for action.[1]

The response of another of the nobles, Malik Yak Lakhī, addressed by Ghiyāth al-dīn Tughluq was entirely hostile. Amīr Khusrau called him a Hindu. His heart was certainly black. Not only did he profess allegiance to Khusrau Khān, but also he dared to attack Deopālpur itself. However, Malik Yak Lakhī's army and the people of Sāmāna rose against him and he was slain.

Amīr Khusrau, having depicted Ghiyāth al-dīn Tughluq as practically the only pure-hearted loyal Muslim in the kingdom who was willing to act according to his convictions, now relates three dreams which Ghiyāth al-dīn experienced when preparing for the coming struggle against Khusrau Khān. These dreams all portended success.[2] More tangible evidence of coming victory was provided by the capture, with the help of God, of a caravan travelling from Multān to Delhi laden with horses and treasure for Khusrau Khān.

Amīr Khusrau now bursts into a panegyric on Ghiyāth al-dīn, the holy warrior and records in formal stereotyped eulogy the activities of his army in preparing for war. Hearing the tidings of Ghāzī Malik's preparations, Khusrau Khān, his morale already much shaken, decided upon a bold counter stroke. He sent his army against Deopālpur. The ensuing battle between his forces and those of Ghiyāth al-dīn Tughluq is described in terms of a conflict between infidel dogs and pious Muslims. Since Ghāzī Malik held the key to truth and virtue there was nothing to fear. Putting his faith in God and in the righteousness of his cause, he sallied forth to battle amid scenes of great enthusiasm. The forces of Khusrau Khān, under the command of an apostate, the Khān-i-Khānān, broke and fled, many being slain or captured. The Muslims among the Delhi army who were captured had to suffer the harsh reproaches of Ghāzī Malik's 'warriors for the faith'.[3] Ghiyāth

[1] *TN*, p. 67. [2] *TN*, pp. 72–76. [3] *TN*, pp. 99–100.

al-dīn Tughluq himself treated the prisoners with all solicitude, visiting one of the captives, Malik Tīmūr, and binding up his wounds with his own hands.[1]

Ghiyāth al-dīn then moved upon Delhi, where chaos reigned. On his march people flocked to his banner from every side. When his soldiers captured gold destined for Khusrau Khān, Ghiyāth al-dīn, as befitted a faithful Muslim, expressed doubts as to whether, according to the Holy Law, this loot should be distributed among his followers as war booty.

Meanwhile depression pervaded the court of Khusrau Khān in Delhi. For days the 'usurper' would not speak to anyone. How indeed was the situation to be recovered when God had clearly intimated that Ghāzī Malik was destined to win? Eventually, however, he and his counsellors held a meeting to discuss what should be done to ward off impending doom. Khusrau Khān expressed a desire to come to terms but one of his counsellors replied that there was no coming to terms with a man approaching with a drawn dagger. Now he must await the turn of fortune's wheel like a good gambler. Let Khusrau Khān spend lavishly the treasure amassed by his predecessors in equipping a new army and put all to the arbitrament of a second battle. Hence Khusrau Khān distributed vast sums to his retainers and to their troops, Hindu and Muslim alike, but, says Amīr Khusrau, money cannot purchase loyalty or assuage fear.[2] However, an army was gathered and encamped on the banks of the Ḥauẓ-i-Khāṣ of Delhi.

On the last evening of Rajab 720/5th September 1320, Khusrau Khān decided to give battle to the forces of Ghāzī Malik and before dawn his forces moved to the attack. 'Ayn al-Mulk Multānī deserted Khusrau Khān and marched off with his forces to the *iqṭā'* of Mālwa. The entire right wing of Khusrau Khān's army was however composed of Muslims, some of whom Amīr Khusrau sorrowfully names.

Ghāzī Malik was somewhat taken by surprise by Khusrau Khān's onslaught, but hastily summoned a council of war. His followers took an oath to stand by him to the death. The commanders of the various contingents then took up their positions on the field of battle and Ghiyāth al-dīn Tughluq was able to review his army in confidence of victory. But the victory was hardly gained. In the course of it Amīr Khusrau makes it plain that Muslim did not fight Muslim with any enthusiasm.[3] Hindus were given no quarter by Ghāzī Malik's troops but Muslims were spared wherever possible. Readers of the *Tughluq-*

[1] *TN*, pp. 101–102. [2] *TN*, p. 113. [3] *TN*, p. 128.

*Nāma* are assured that only Hindus who obtained wealth in the last days of Khusrau Khān's rule were plundered.

After the victory, Ghiyāth al-dīn Tughluq entered Delhi, prostrating himself before the palace of the Khaljīs. He held a meeting with the important people of Delhi to discuss the succession to the sultanate. In an address to the assembled notables, Ghiyāth al-dīn Tughluq recalled that he had been a faithful servant of the Khaljīs as far back as the days of Sulṭān Jalāl al-dīn. He himself owed everything to them and he had tried to render faithful service in return. In reply, his audience recounted his services as a guardian of the realm against the Mongols and requested him to mount the throne.[1] Ghiyāth al-dīn replied that he only took up arms against Khusrau Khān out of his sense of obligation to the Khaljī family and not with any thought of seizing the throne for himself. His natural feelings had caused him to resent the usurpation of the throne of Delhi by an infidel. There were many others qualified to be sultan, let one of them be chosen. The assembly pressed him, however, to accept the throne, unanimously offered, and pointed out the evil precedent of Abū Muslim who was killed by his own nominee to power, Ja'far. Let the real power behind the throne exercise that power openly for fear of losing it. Ghiyāth al-dīn Tughluq was reluctantly convinced by this argument and with a show of resistance agreed to become sultan.[2]

The *Tughluq Nāma* ends with an account of the execution of the Khān-i-Khānān and of his master Khusrau Khān himself. The latter, when captured and brought before the new sultan was reproached for his ingratitude towards his patrons, the Khaljīs, and for his wicked deeds since Sulṭān Quṭb al-dīn Mubārak Shāh's assassination. Khusrau Khān replied that if unfitting things (which Amīr Khusrau does not specify) had not been done to him, he in turn would not have committed unfitting acts.[3] In any event, the usurpation of the sultanate, the slaying of the royal princes and his resistance to Ghiyāth al-dīn Tughluq were all due to other knaves who had led him astray. He asked to be spared though to be blinded. Ghiyāth al-dīn Tughluq would have none of that and ordered him to be executed and his head to be exposed to the jeers of the populace.

From this description of three of Amīr Khusrau's historical works (and reference to his others will suggest later that his treatment of the past in the *Qirān al-Sa'dayn*, the *Khazā'in al-Futuḥ* and the *Tughluq-*

[1] *TN*, pp. 137–139.
[2] The theme of the refused dignity again ; see p. 44, n. 3.
[3] *TN*, p. 149.

*Nāma* is not exceptional) it becomes evident that the poet wrote about the past in order to please rather than to understand, to preach or to instruct. He was indeed a court poet who wrote to gratify authority and thereby to earn his living. But in trying to leave some literary monument to the glory, power, virtue and beneficence of a royal patron, Amīr Khusrau expected also to leave a memorial to his own greatness as a poet and man of letters. Throughout his life Amīr Khusrau sang hired tunes, felt no shame in his craft but rather exulted in his own virtuosity. If eulogy endless and unalloyed was expected by one's patrons, at least, thought Amīr Khusrau, 'let the form, manner and technical excellence of my eulogies be superior to all others.' For Amīr Khusrau's avowed *métier* in life was poetry, and it may in fact be placing him in the wrong universe altogether to apply historians' criteria to any of his writings about the past.

The past to Amīr Khusrau appears from his historical poems and the *Khazā'in al-Futūḥ* to have been a spectacle, a pageant, the centre-piece of which was occupied by sultans, their courtiers and servants, performing stock good or stereotyped grand deeds. While they live, Amīr Khusrau's sultans can do no wrong. After their death, however, criticism is allowed to creep in, particularly if that criticism is necessary to eulogize the next sultan.[1] But otherwise Amīr Khusrau's patrons or expected patrons act victoriously and religiously while alive and their opponents, unsuccessfully and impiously. In the *Khazā'in al-Futūḥ* and the *Tughluq-Nāma*, for example, it will have been observed that neither Sulṭān 'Alā' al-dīn Khaljī nor Ghiyāth al-dīn Tughluq could do any wrong nor their enemies do any right, except perhaps to submit to them. The past is either all white or all black with unsullied good warring against unmitigated evil.

Amīr Khusrau, in his treatment of history, does not conceive of human individuals as acting in, or being acted upon by historical situations as modern historians would conceive them. For him (and this is generally true of medieval Muslim historians and biographers) human characteristics are created outside the world of time and events, that is, by God; events merely betray what those characteristics are, they do not mould them, nor are they themselves moulded by them. History is not the story of a developing, changing human nature in action, developing and changing in interaction with its environment, but a spectacle of Divine Ordination. The individual is depersonalized, dehumanized; Amīr Khusrau's figures, whether virtuous or vicious,

[1] e.g. *Tughluq-Nāma*, op. cit., pp. 16–18.

are as statues polished for an exhibition; they are gods or devils, not men.

Assuming, as Amīr Khusrau does, that the dispensing of justice and kindness, the maintenance of peace, the showing of filial devotion or of loyalty to one's 'salt' are virtues, then Sulṭāns Mu'izz al-dīn Kayqubād, Bughrā Khān, Jalāl al-dīn Khaljī,[1] 'Alā' al-dīn Khaljī, Quṭb al-dīn Mubārak Shāh and Ghiyāth al-dīn Tughluq are all exemplars of such virtues and were always such. It is perhaps noteworthy that the qualities idealized by Amīr Khusrau appear to belong to a static, almost ossified, state of society wherein the different sorts and conditions of men perform traditional functions in obedience to traditional norms of conduct. To Amīr Khusrau at least life does not appear to have been lived on the edge of a volcano, although it must be emphasized that Amīr Khusrau's vision was restricted to court and to educated circles of society. Certainly none of the poet's works on the past suggest that they were crisis literature. Life to him appears to be much as it has always been and always will be.

This sense of personal security and almost of abstraction from the events of the time which is found in Amīr Khusrau may to some extent have determined that he should not write history in order to prove a thesis about truth and life. His works indeed invariably begin with praise for an almighty, inscrutable, impenetrable God, for the Divine Mercy and goodness in sending His Prophet to enlighten mankind and show it a little of His Way. But the reader is often left with the feeling that Amīr Khusrau uses these religious exordia as opportunities for a display of poetical versatility. God appears often to be praised in metaphor and simile, in vocabulary and imagery appropriate to the main theme of the poem. Thus in the *Duwal Rānī*, the power and goodness of God are celebrated in terms suitable to love and lovers,[2] while in the *Nuh Sipihr* (the nine heavenly spheres) the language invokes thoughts of the firmament and of the heavenly design of the starry universe.[3]

The treatment of historical events by Amīr Khusrau does not suggest that he believed that the study of the past was a necessary foundation of, or guide to, religious truth. He was for many years a disciple of Shaykh Niẓām al-dīn Auliyā' and in both the *Duwal Rānī*[4] and the

[1] See *Miftāḥ al-Futūḥ*, text, *Oriental College Magazine*, Lahore, May 1936, pp. 64–65.
[2] *Duwal Rānī*, School of Oriental and African Studies Library Persian MS., 18729, pp. 5–8.
[3] *Nuh Sipihr*, text, Calcutta, 1950, pp. 1–9.
[4] *DR*, p. 19.

*Nuh Sipihr* [1] he praises the spiritual qualities of this mystic. Yet he does not infuse his account of events with the mystic attitude to life nor treat of events as if they proved the necessity of following in, say, the steps of Shaykh Niẓām al-dīn Auliyā'. Occasionally, he recommends withdrawal from the world and a watchful suspicion of worldly success, but, in his historical writings at least, little real conviction may be detected. Amīr Khusrau appears to enter with gusto upon the task of poetic composition immediately before him. As a *murīd* of Shaykh Niẓām al-dīn Auliyā', it may be that he was secretly disgusted with court life and with the deeds of the great, but the evidence of his historical works suggests he enjoyed life as he found it.

That is not to say that Amīr Khusrau does not recommend certain general courses of action to his heroes. In both the *Duwal Rānī* and the *Nuh Sipihr*, for example, he gives moral advice to Sulṭāns 'Alā' al-dīn Khaljī and Quṭb al-dīn Mubārak Shāh. In the *Duwal Rānī* [2] 'with some presumption but in the office of a well wisher' Amīr Khusrau advises 'Alā' al-dīn not to be harsh in government and to open strong-holds not so much by force as by the favour of heaven. He should rule through affection and not fear, he should spare the sword of punishment but abase the oppressor. In the *Nuh Sipihr*,[3] Quṭb al-dīn Mubārak Shāh and his nobles are advised to look towards God, to follow the *Sharī'a*, to take good advice, to acquire constancy in adversity, perspicacity and vigilance and to devote themselves to the welfare of the people. It was important too that the sultan should devote himself to the cause of justice. But Amīr Khusrau does not prove these rather formal religious and ethical concepts from history. In his writings men are not seen to flourish or to decay because in history they regard or disregard these precepts. They remain formal, abstract judgments of value and may perhaps be justly regarded as rather conventional. Amīr Khusrau makes no attempt, for instance, to indicate which classes of action are just or unjust. In effect he tells his readers to be good, at most to be good Muslims. What these concepts are to mean in practice is presumably left to the memory, good taste and religious sense of his readers.

In the final analysis, history, the actual events of the past, is unintelligible to Amīr Khusrau, except on the assumption that God wills everything. But his idea of Divine Causation is quite arbitrary, events happen, so to speak, by spontaneous combustion. Nor do they appear to happen through some process of human decision intended, according

[1] *NS*, pp. 23–28. [2] *DR*, pp. 26–31. [3] *NS*, pp. 226–243.

to the prevailing circumstances, to produce some humanly conceived situation. This will perhaps have been made clear in the description of the *Qirān al-Sa'dayn* and the *Khazā'in al-Futūḥ*. But the unintelligibility of events viewed in a context of human action, may also be observed in the *Duwal Rānī*, for example. Describing the accession of earlier sultans of Delhi in the thirteenth century A.D., Amīr Khusrau writes,[1] 'As in the west a pole arose (Quṭb al-dīn Aybak) so in the east a light of religion (Iltutmish) arose.' Later, 'When that shining light in darkness went, the star of Fīrūz Shāh (Rukn al-dīn Fīrūz) arose. When six months passed of that reign, like a child of eight months his success died, and since there were no worthy sons good opinion turned to Raẓiyya.' However, in her fourth year, fate turned over a new leaf and God decreed that Bahrām Shāh should come to the throne.[2] But heaven was hard upon him too and after two or three years he gave way to Mas'ūd. He in turn, without cause shown, gave way to Nāṣir al-dīn whose reign was a wonder to behold. Then 'in order to assist the distressed sufferers from oppression' (Amīr Khusrau has just eulogized the previous reign!) Ghiyāth al-dīn Balban mounted the throne.[3] The passage of the throne from Shams al-dīn, son of Sulṭān Mu'izz al-dīn Kayqubād, to Jalāl al-dīn Khaljī is treated in no more illuminating way, historically. 'Since this child was inexperienced in the ways of the world, the world found rest in the hands of an experienced ruler.' Such mercy, exclaims Amīr Khusrau, did Sulṭān Jalāl al-dīn Khaljī show the world that now he is dead, may mercy such as his be found in every succeeding age![4] But since fortune grew disgusted with his success, another revolution occurred in the kingdom and 'fortune sent that king spinning down upon an executioner's mat'.

The same kind of explanation of events and human actions will have been observed in the *Khazā'in al-Futūḥ*. 'Alā' al-dīn Khaljī invaded Gujarāt because he wanted to wash his bloody sword in the sea.[5] The second expedition against Deogir was undertaken because Rāī Rām Deo was a wild horse needing to be broken. Siwāna was conquered because the sultan's cavalry were tired of inactivity. Arangal was invaded because the sultan willed it so for unspecified reasons. In the *Tughluq-Nāma* too, Ghiyāth al-dīn Tughluq acted as he did either through divine decree or because of his innate excellence. Amir Khusrau's historical characters resemble Mr. Podsnap's foreigners—'They do, Sir, as they do.'

Amir Khusrau does not employ a systematic critical method of

[1] *DR*, p. 57. [2] *DR*, p. 59. [3] *DR*, p. 60.
[4] *DR*, p. 62. [5] *KF*, fol. 22*b*.

using evidence of past events. Usually he does not mention his sources of information, although in the *Duwal Rānī* he says that Khiẓr Khān, in asking him to write the story of his love for Duwal Rānī, gave him a draft outline, full of Hindi words.[1] In the *Khazā'in al-Futūḥ* the poet says that he was present at the capture of Chitor, but his account of this episode presumably as an eye-witness betrays no differences in either style or context from any other section of the *Khazā'in al-Futūḥ*. It has been said [2] that Amīr Khusrau accompanied Malik Kāfūr's armies on the Deccan campaigns. There does not appear to be any internal evidence in Amīr Khusrau's historical works for this hypothesis. His descriptions of events and places are so florid and fanciful that it requires intuition to relate any particular piece of the *Khazā'in al-Futūḥ* to any particular geographical area or topographical detail on the army's line of march. Probably the poet merely took old campaigners' recollections and common report and gave them a hyperbolic dress. Moreover, unlike Baranī, and to a lesser degree 'Afīf, he does not quote the sayings of men of orthodox belief as having special significance. Indeed, it may be said that in all Amīr Khusrau's historical works the reader has to take the author's word for the truth of the statements he is making.

For Amīr Khusrau wrote about the past to fulfil not a practical, or a moral, or a religious, or an academic purpose, but to fulfil an aesthetic purpose. He wrote not in order that man should know what man has done and should, therefore, leave undone, or that he should know how the present came to be, or that he should know what is the will of God, but that he should be diverted and amused. He wrote in order that his readers and his hearers (and the poetry of the time was intended to be recited in company) should have their memories, as Muslims and as courtiers, as warriors and royal servants, revived and stimulated. He wished to arouse their appreciation of literary skill and artifice, to have their sense of verbal subtlety titillated. He wrote not to interest the intellect, but to excite the emotions, the emotions of Muslims and of courtiers who lived in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Hindūstān. In the third *sipihr* of the *Nuh Sipihr*, Amīr Khusrau, with a wealth of illustration, proves the superiority of Hindūstān over all other countries.[3] This *sipihr* does not suggest that Amīr Khusrau was a religious bigot, but rather that he wrote in Muslim phraseology as much

[1] *DR*, pp. 49–50.
[2] Principally by 'Abd al-Qādir Badā'ūnī, *Muntakhab al-Tawārīkh*, *Bibliotheca Indica* text, I, p. 197.
[3] *NS*, pp. 147, *et seq.*

to gratify his readers as to express deep personal convictions. But from the *Tughluq-Nāma*, for example, it will be seen that he did not find the idiom of Muslim melodrama uncongenial; certainly Amīr Khusrau never looked beyond the Islamic revelation for an explanation of the meaning of life. As a Muslim, however passive, speaking to Muslims, he was able to draw upon a vast treasure-house of Muslim folk and religious lore and to enhance, no doubt, the Indian Muslim's sense of belonging to a universal culture and not merely to a local immigrant sect. A study of Amīr Khusrau as poet lies outside the scope of this monograph, but a casual examination of his language in his historical poems suggests the great part he played in maintaining the cultural unity and distinctness of the Muslims in Hindūstān. This he did, as has been seen, not by a critical examination of the historical events in which Muslims were concerned, but by appealing to imagination and emotion and to his patrons' own vanity and vain-glory. To conclude, Amīr Khusrau did not write history—he wrote poetry.

## CHAPTER VI

# THE TREATMENT OF HISTORY BY 'IṢĀMĪ IN THE *FUTŪḤ AL-SALĀṬĪN*

The *Futūḥ al-Salāṭīn*, written, according to the author's own statement,[1] between 27th Ramaẓān 750/10th December 1349 and 6th Rabī' al-Awwal 751/14th May 1350, is, by any token, a remarkable literary achievement. Over eleven thousand couplets, in the metre of Firdausī's *Shāh-Nāma*, survive, giving a conspectus of the deeds of Muslims in Hindūstān from the time of Maḥmūd of Ghaznī to the author's own day. It is also of interest because, although the *Futūḥ al-Salāṭīn* was written seven or eight years before Baranī's *Ta'rīkh-i-Fīrūz Shāhī*, the two works are entirely independent of each other, in a manner which is not true of any other two of the works treated in this monograph. This is, however, not remarkable, as 'Iṣāmī had, by his own statement, lived twenty-five years in the Deccan before he produced the *Futūḥ al-Salāṭīn*.[2] Moreover, as will be seen, 'Iṣāmī wrote under the patronage of a ruler who had thrown off the rule of Delhi, whereas Baranī was essentially the Delhi courtier. The *Futūḥ al-Salāṭīn* was used by later Mughal historians, notably by Niẓām al-dīn Aḥmad in his *Ṭabaqāt-i-Akbarī*.

The information about 'Iṣāmī's life which is found in the *Futūḥ al-Salāṭīn* is meagre and what he says about his parentage is not corroborated by other evidence. The name 'Iṣāmī appears itself to have been a *takhallus* or pen name of the author. As Sayyid Ṣabāḥ al-dīn points out in an interesting series of articles in the Urdū periodical *Ma'ārif*,[2] there is no independent evidence establishing the truth of 'Iṣāmī's claim to have had one 'Iṣām, said to have been a chamberlain (*ḥājib*) at the court of Numar ibn Munẓir an ancient Arab King of 'Irāq, or one Fakhr al-Mulk 'Iṣāmī, said to have been a *wazīr* at the court of the later 'Abbāsid caliphs and at the court of Iltutmish, as ancestors. 'Iṣāmī does not speak of his father but says that he moved from Delhi to Deogir (Daulatābād) in the company of a ninety year old grandfather, 'Izz al-dīn, who, however, died pathetically at Tilpat

[1] *Futūḥ al-Salāṭīn*, text ed. A. S. Usha, Madras University Islamic Series No. 9, University of Madras, 1948, p. 618.
[2] *Ma'ārif*, August, 1939, pp. 109 *et seq.*; Sept., 1939, pp. 201 *et seq.*

on the first stage of the journey.[1] 'Iṣāmī does not say how he spent his life after he arrived at Daulatābād until the age of forty,[2] when he wrote the *Futūḥ al-Salāṭīn*, but it would appear he employed some of his time in literary activity which did not win recognition.

When he began the *Futūḥ al-Salāṭīn*, 'Iṣāmī was a disappointed writer in search of a patron. Under the heading ' An indictment of the times and its people ', 'Iṣāmī complains bitterly of the prevailing low standards of literary taste, the sycophancy of literary critics and the plight of good, capable authors like himself who have something valuable to say but find the world unfriendly and themselves entirely at the mercy of malignant critics.[3] It would seem that some of his earlier writings, unnamed and no longer extant, had been ill-received. 'Iṣāmī says that he was so disgusted with life that he intended to quit Hindūstān and ' go on a pilgrimage to Mecca '—a conventional way of expressing dissatisfaction. He implies that he has sacrificed his finer feelings in order to remain in Hindūstān and write the *Futūḥ al-Salāṭīn*.[4] The world should recognize that he has suffered great travail and appreciate his work accordingly. 'Iṣāmī takes great pains to acquaint his readers with the difficulties which attend authors in general and himself in particular. Literary composition is a very vale of tears. He calls upon mankind indeed to fix its thoughts on God and to reject the vanities of the world, for clinging to the desires of this life only brings suffering, as he in his search for literary fame has discovered.[5]

Nevertheless, 'Iṣāmī declares, the faculty of eloquence and composition is endowed by God and indeed descends upon chosen men like a revelation, as he has found himself. For one night a venerable old man appeared to him in a dream after he, 'Iṣāmī, had retired to rest, having put his literary fate in the hands of God. This old man said that he was always watching over 'Iṣāmī and advised him to bear his literary disappointments with fortitude as a patron would appear when the time was ripe. He quoted the example of the ancient Persian poet Khusrau whose pen wrote like magic when once a faithful patron, Bahrām, had at last appeared. 'Iṣāmī awoke from the dream like a giant refreshed and realized that it had been the poet Niẓāmī who had spoken to him.[6]

But 'Iṣāmī was not yet completely easy in his mind and repeatedly asked himself whether he should leave Hindūstān and go on a pilgrimage. He was wifeless, childless, friendless and without relatives.

[1] *FS*, pp. 447–448. [2] *FS*, p. 616. [3] *FS*, pp. 12–13.
[4] *FS*, pp. 13–14. [5] *FS*, pp. 14–15. [6] *FS*, pp. 17 *et seq.*

If he died now he would leave no memorial behind him. He wished above all else to find a true friend who would smooth his way for him and save him from making the irrevocable decision (to leave Hindūstān) which he would rather not make.[1] Although he had cast his eyes in every direction, he saw no one of the required purity of life and morals.

But, one morning, after months of fretful waiting, a messenger arrived from one Qāẓī Bahā al-dīn, the chief *qāẓī* of the Bahmanī sultan of the Deccan, 'Alā' al-dīn Ḥasan Bahman Shāh. 'Iṣāmī realized that this was the moment he had been waiting for. He went along to pay his respects to the *qāẓī* and found to his joy that his hopes were not to be doomed to disappointment. 'Iṣāmī explained his circumstances and mentioned his unused talents. Qāẓī Bahā al-dīn agreed that ' such a nightingale was fit to sing only in a sultan's garden ' and he undertook to introduce 'Iṣāmī to 'Alā' al-dīn Bahman Shāh.[2]

'Iṣāmī therefore dedicated the *Futūḥ al-Salāṭīn* to a reigning sultan in the desire to win his patronage and in the hope of lasting literary fame. He avowed his determination to be a Firdausī to 'Alā' al-dīn Bahman Shāh's Maḥmūd of Ghaznī and to offer him, in the *Futūḥ al-Salāṭīn*, a *Shāh-Nāma* worthy of the Bahmanī sultan's name and fame.[3]

'Iṣāmī wishes to make it clear to his readers that he has imposed his own ideas of form and content upon the data from which he composed his *Futūḥ al-Salāṭīn*. He is no slavish follower of authority, no mere copyist of received report and tradition. In his own words :

' But I have not supplied the needs (of readers) in such a way that the guests rise satiated from my table. One should satisfy wants to the extent and as long as it gives pleasure and gratifies the wishes of those of mature taste. . . . All those stories which have come down to me from my narrators, my mind saw no help but to put them down. The stories from ancient history I set down in order in this history. Again, from what I found in books, I also only a little deviated when setting it down. I drew on to this string, like an assayer, the many valuable scattered pearls. In research into ancient tales, I took great trouble with every word. I sought stories of the kings of Hindūstān from intelligent friends. I referred everything to the histories and when I saw everything consonant with " first principles " and deduction therefrom, I strung each one of these gems on a string in that place I considered most suitable. When I saw gems other than those fine gems, which were not so lustrous, I made them brilliant with the bounty of my skill and then gave them a place on this string.'

[1] *FS*, pp. 20–22. [2] *FS*, pp. 22–24. [3] *FS*, pp. 608–610.

The task ahead then is to discover the strings on which 'Iṣāmī strung his polished gems, in other words, to discover his mode of treatment and selection in presenting a picture of the past.

In his choice of subject matter, 'Iṣāmī does his best to fulfil his declared intention of writing an Indo-Muslim work to peer Firdausī's *Shāh-Nāma*.[1] That is, after a brief mention of how kingship descended from Adam through such luminaries of the Iranian 'national' epic as Kayūmarth, Ẓaḥḥāk, Manuchihr, Kayqubād, Kaykhusrau, Gurshasp, Darius, a brief reference to Alexander's conquest of Irān and the princes of the Sassanian dynasty and an even briefer reference to the Prophet, and to the Caliphs, he devotes the vast bulk of the *Futūḥ al-Salāṭīn* to a stirring account of the deeds of Muslim rulers and soldiers in Hindūstān. The work glows with pride at the achievements of Muslims in Hindūstān. Indeed, before the main body of the work, there is a remarkable exordium in praise of the Turks for having invaded Hindūstān and having brought Islam there. If Muslims living in India do not offer thanks to-day for the glorious deeds of their Muslim forbears yesterday they will 'receive a slap on the back of the neck from the unbelievers to-morrow'. 'Iṣamī rhetorically asks his readers and hearers who first blazoned forth Islam, who first attacked Lahore and Multān, who conquered Gujarāt, who sold (*sic*) Jaypāl in Khurāsān, who conquered (among other places) Delhi, Lakhnautī, Awadh, Tirhut, Deogir and Ma'bar? If time gives the author the opportunity, he will give the answers.[2]

Not for 'Iṣāmī, however, does the story begin with the Arab invasion of Sind. Maḥmūd of Ghaznī is the first great Muslim hero in Hindūstān whose martial successes 'Iṣāmī wishes to celebrate. The significant history of Islam in India began with him and was continued by, among the principals, Muḥammad ibn Sām, Quṭb al-dīn Aybak, Iltutmish, 'Alā' al-dīn Khaljī and Ghiyāth al-dīn Tughluq, all eulogized as warriors for the faith and pillars of orthodox Islam. The line of true Muslim heroes ends in 'Iṣāmī's own day with his patron, the first Bahmanī sultan.

As 'Iṣāmī's declared intention of emulating Firdausī portends, the *Futūḥ al-Salāṭīn* is not concerned with the story of Islam in India as a faith, a doctrine or a form of society. Writing a second *Shāh-Nāma* to please a royal patron, 'Iṣāmī concentrated upon retailing the

[1] It is interesting to note that a contemporary of 'Isāmī's in Persia, Ḥamdallāh Mustaufī, completed a *Ẓafar-nāma* in 735/1334–5 (British Museum Or. 2833) written in the same *mutaqārib* metre as the *Shāh-Nāma*, intending it to be a sequel covering the history of Islam.

[2] *FS*, pp. 28–31.

stirring deeds of Muslim sultans and their servants, their military triumphs, their appointments to power and place and their acts of public beneficence and display. 'Iṣāmī wrote to stir the memories and to delight the sensibilities of men who had themselves, or whose ancestors had repelled or suffered Mongol invasion from the north-west or who had warred against the Rājputs in Rājasthān or against the Hindu kingdoms of the Deccan. The majority of the sultans of Delhi are honoured by eulogies of their bravery, sagacity, piety and generosity, eulogies which are often garnished [1] by anecdotes and legends intended to put the sultan in the best light to those who succeed him. Occasionally, 'Iṣāmī adopts the *manāqib* style, modelled, he says, upon the *Shāh-Nāma*. His eulogy of Iltutmish is given below :

> 'In the *Shāh-Nāma* the old one of Ṭūsī mould, in every story that joyfully he wrote, although he described the character of many things, described as well these four things. Among the kings he continually praised Farīdūn and Kay with might and main. He describes Rustam among the stubborn, his horse and weapons and his leopardskin coat. Yes, whatever was pleasing to God, all his qualities were rolled off his tongue. And if there were no victories from God, where will fortune be a companion to Farīdūn ? When God, the Sagacious does not give victory, what of Rustam, of his horse, of his leopard skin ? In brief, like the sun upon the earth, Shāh Iltutmish, that sun of the temporal and spiritual worlds, made his capital at Delhi and led his army to the farthest limits of that kingdom. In that city one splendour became evident, yes, there is delight in the new city. Many genuine descendants of the Prophet arrived there from Arabia, many traders from Khurāsān, many painters from China, many learned men Bukhārā born, many ascetics and devotees from every clime, from every kingdom and of every sort, artisans, from every town and every stock, those with silver bosoms, many assayers, knowledgeable in precious gems, numberless sellers of jewels, Jewish doctors and physicians from Rūm, many learned men from every part. In that auspicious city they gathered, they came like moths around a candle. The city became a *ka'ba* of the eight quarters of the world. His territory became the *dār al-Islām*. I have heard that the founding of this city caused the standards of the faith to reach the moon. He was a masterful and wise king, clement and of high aspiration. All this was the rise of a Shāh Maḥmūd, of the star of a Shāh Mas'ūd. When in India such a city rose up adorned, so that in pride it became a garden of paradise, in it he built a mosque and began outside it a water tank. That tank was called the Ḥauẓ-i-Shamsī whose water came from a sun spring. The minaret in that mosque of purity rose like a tree in paradise. A wall was erected around the city protecting it against thieves and the devil. Night and day that deputy of God engaged heart and soul himself in the work of building the city.' [2]

[1] e.g. *FS*, pp. 90–92.

[2] *FS*, pp. 114–115.

'Iṣāmī's style of clear, vivid narrative may be illustrated by two translations, the first containing his account of the murder of Jalāl al-dīn Khaljī at the order of his nephew 'Alā' al-dīn, and the second, telling the story of the investment of Delhi by the Mongols during the reign of 'Alā' al-dīn and their discomforted retirement.

'The next day a messenger hastily came forth. He said, "O successful commander, yesterday the army (of Jalāl al-dīn Fīrūz Shāh Khaljī) was two *farsakhs* away. To-day it was making ready to set off. I have come from the army of the shah of high lineage, O general, at midnight. In an hour that successful (sultan) will order the striking of the camp (now) at the side of the river." When Gurshāsp ('Alā' al-dīn) heard what had been done, he secretly completed his business. Another messenger hastily arrived saying, "The royal standards have appeared. The shah is seated in a royal barge underneath a black canopy. That brave warrior is coming in this direction at this very moment. Indeed, behold, he has arrived near the ford across the river." When Gurshāsp, the lord of the stirrup, heard that the king of the world was crossing the water he set out at once towards the shah accompanied by two or three trusted aides. He told one of them secretly of the event which was concealed from the rest of the world. When Jalāl al-dīn saw that soldier, he ordered his prudent boatman to pull the boat quickly to the shore. The wise realized it was an error. When the boat neared dry land, he ('Alā' al-dīn) hurried forward to perform *pāybos* to the mighty ruler. He dismounted from his much travelled horse with a few armed men around him. He hurried to perform the ceremony of *pāybos*. He kept concealed what he meditated in his heart. He advanced at a run towards the royal barge. When the shah saw that he was coming forward to ask for pardon, he got up from where he had been sitting and went to greet Gurshāsp. 'Alā' al-dīn bent forward and kissed the shah's feet. The shah raised him and he asked pardon. Holding on to 'Alā' al-dīn he drew him towards the boat, saying "O hero, of an auspicious star, be my guest for one night and make our life and heart happy and joyful". 'Alā' al-dīn, covered with shame, began to reply, "O absolute and inestimable ruler, if to-night you treat your son with kindness you will honour our blood relationship. Brighten my house for one night. With your good humour make my house a rose garden. Nothing will be lessened of your state; you will not have one man fewer in your armed retinue." At that moment the swordsman, who had been looking for an opportunity for a warlike act, when he saw that opportunity, drew his sword and cut off the head of that Khusrau of the age at one stroke. The sultan's body remaining in the boat, his head fell flying into the running water. His head was picked out of the river and swiftly placed upon a javelin. In one short break, another ruler arose; such is the way of this dangerous world.'[1]

(An account of a 'Mongol' invasion.)

'A group of oppressed men seeking redress arrived one day at the royal palace. They said, "That rascal Targhī has sent an army of

[1] *FS*, pp. 242–244.

20,000 Mongols. It has come to the borders of Hindūstān and has raised a dust in this garden." When the shah heard that that handbiting dog, whom the army of Ẓafar Khān had once defeated, was once again come to this country and was planting his inauspicious feet in Hindūstān, that lion-hearted leader said to himself, "What has that dog done as a crooked war stratagem? I must not leave the capital. I must keep my army here." Then accordingly that wary monarch ordered that the army should pitch its tents around the citadel. Then he summoned other armies from the provinces. He caused a messenger to run to every quarter. One day a dust rose high and the sun was hidden in it from fear of misfortune. The air became entirely filled with it; the world expected the Day of Judgment. Line upon line the Mongol army came on. A large number attacked upon all sides. The van, according to their custom, hooted, many beat drums and shells in every direction. When Targḥī, the base, saw tents all around the citadel, he said to himself, "This is a secure disposition. On every side that I can see, there is little way in. I must not attack here. I must win my success by a stratagem." Then he ordered that the whole of the army should invest Delhi. The Mongols stationed themselves around Delhi like a hedge of briars and thorns around a garden. I heard that these vile men, whose qualities I have earlier described, remained around the capital for forty days. The next day they sent the army away. When the Mongol force had been repelled from Delhi, an autumnal air had passed from the garden. The people of Delhi celebrated with a feast that God had preserved them from the sword of wrath.'[1]

There is little doubt about 'Iṣāmī's narrative powers, his ability to tell an interesting story.[2] But how does he make that story intelligible, particularly in relation to the expectations of modern historians?

Certainly 'Iṣāmī's treatment of the past is within a general chronological framework comparable, for the history of the sultans of Delhi, to that which can be devised from an examination of Baranī's *Ta'rīkh-i-Fīrūz Shāhī* and from coins and inscriptions of the period. But the treatment is episodic; the episodes are often unconnected; and they are usually undated. For example, the only date given for the whole of the reign of Sulṭān 'Alā' al-dīn Khaljī is that of his death. In beginning a fresh episode, the author merely says, 'When three or four days had gone by after these events,'[3] or, 'after a week,'[4] or, 'after some time,'[5] or 'one day'. 'Iṣāmī does not appear to think that close

[1] *FS*, pp. 285–286.

[2] There would appear to be the same dramatic epic quality in a history of Salāḥ al-dīn written in rhyming prose by his secretary, 'Imād al-dīn. See H. A. R. Gibb, 'Al-Barq al-Shāmī: the History of Saladin by the Kātib 'Imād ad-dīn al-Isfahānī,' *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*, 1953, pp. 90–100.

[3] e.g. *FS*, p. 291.

[4] e.g. *FS*, p. 295.

[5] e.g. *FS*, p. 369.

attention to a detailed and accurate chronology is essential to the intelligibility of his narrative. Indeed, it often appears that if the insertion of some such phrase as, 'after two or three days,' or, 'one day' is necessary to the metre of the *Futūḥ al-Salāṭīn*, 'Iṣāmī will put it in. 'Iṣāmī preferred to set down artifacts rather than facts. His events are related, more, it would seem, by the literary form 'Iṣāmī imposes upon them than by their sequence or compresence in time.

The search for intelligibility in the *Futūḥ al-Salāṭīn* in the dimension of religion and ethics might prove to be rewarding. For 'Iṣāmī, it could be that the past is a spectacle of virtue and vice, as interpreted in terms of Islam, whether orthodox *sunnī* or sectarian Islam, receiving their just reward or just punishment from God. 'Iṣāmī lived in the same period as Ẓiyā' al-dīn Baranī and could have accepted the same assumptions as to the function of historical writing as he did.

The *Futūḥ al-Salāṭīn* is written within an Islamic framework of world order and within a general acceptance of the Muslim revelation as laying down man's sole path to God, truth and righteousness. 'Iṣāmī begins with praise of God, whose Name should be put at the beginning and at the end of every human work, if it is to go forward to fruition, for God is indeed its real Author.[1] To omit to acknowledge God's existence at the beginning of an author's work is to ask for it to be scattered to the winds. 'Iṣāmī then catalogues God's characteristics as the omnipotent creator of the universe, the inscrutable ordainer of human destiny. 'Iṣāmī lays repeated and heavy emphasis on the Divine mystery of His Will and Intention towards His creatures, illustrating his statements by appropriate anecdotes.[2] Man does not know what God has willed in His Infinite Wisdom and should never presume to seek to do so. However, God has willed Muḥammad the Prophet, the best of created beings, who acts as an intercessor with God on behalf of fallible and sinful man.[3] 'Iṣāmī is here repeating the commonplaces of the *sunnī* theology of his time.

However, after describing Muḥammad's ascent to heaven, the *mi'rāj*, 'Iṣāmī eulogizes the first four caliphs of Islam and then, most significantly, proceeds to trace the transmission of their spiritual qualities, not through the later caliphs but through a succession of Muslim mystics, among whom were Ḥasan of Baṣra, Faẓl Ayāz, Isḥāq Chishtī, Abū Ḥamd Chishtī, Yūsuf Chishtī, Quṭb Chishtī, Mu'īn al-dīn Chishtī, Quṭb al-dīn Bakhtiyār, Farīd al-Ḥaqq, Khwāja Niẓām

[1] *FS*, p. 1. [2] *FS*, p. 2. [3] *FS*, p. 5.

al-dīn, Khwāja Burhān al-dīn and Zayn al-Ḥaqq. In this passage 'Iṣāmī uses the *ṣūfī* mystic technical term '*khirqa*' to denote the conferring of the mantle of discipleship by one *ṣūfī* upon another.[1]

There is little doubt that 'Iṣāmī shared the general respect of Indian Muslims of his time for the mystics and drew, for his epic, upon a common stock of tradition about the historical role of the mystics under the Delhi sultans. There is a general similarity, for example, between the accounts in 'Iṣāmī and in Ẓiyā' al-dīn Baranī, of the relationship between the *ṣūfīs* and Prince Muḥammad, son of Balban, 'the martyr prince,' and between the two accounts of the killing of Sīdī Maula by Sulṭān Jalāl al-dīn Khaljī, a deed followed in both versions by the coming of a flood and a drought.[2] Another indication of 'Iṣāmī's deference to sufism is his ascribing the sorrows which Delhi suffered at the hands of Muḥammad ibn Tughluq in part to the withdrawal from the capital of one Niẓām al-Ḥaqq, a mystic[3]; he says that every region must have its guardian holy man as well as its God-fearing ruler. But taking a total view of the *Futūḥ al-Salāṭīn*, it cannot be said that passages recording the actions or singing the praises of the mystics form more than a very small proportion of the whole.

The *Futūḥ al-Salāṭīn* is often adorned with moral injunctions to beware of taking the baubles of this world too seriously. These form part of the ethical stock-in-trade of medieval Muslim authors of whatever sectarian persuasion, and should not be taken as controlling the manner of an author's treatment of his material without positive evidence that they do.

Thus 'Iṣāmī repeatedly emphasizes the mystery of Divine Ordination and the impossibility of man's ever comprehending the vagaries of fate. The wise man will not crave for worldly pleasure and happiness for the world is a snare and a delusion. After relating a quarrel between the sons of Ulugh Khān (later Sulṭān Balban) and the sons of the then reigning sultan, Nāṣir al-dīn, followed by the death of all the parties to the quarrel and the murder of Nāṣir al-dīn by Balban, 'Iṣāmī warns that no drink at the fountain of life is without poison and that wise men should shun worldly ambition.[4] 'Iṣāmī points a similar moral after his account of the killing of Sulṭān Mu'izz al-dīn Kayqubād.[5] The treatment of the killing of Sulṭān Jalāl al-dīn Khaljī by his nephew 'Alā' al-dīn Khaljī, is also designed to suggest that wise men should cultivate an attitude of watchful indifference to the world. Previously,

[1] *FS*, pp. 7 *et seq.*
[2] cf. *FS*, 215–219 and *TFS*, 208–212.
[3] *FS*, pp. 455–457.
[4] *FS*, pp. 163–164.
[5] *FS*, pp. 296–207.

'Iṣāmī had eulogized Jalāl al-dīn as a God-fearing ruler, a scourge of the Mongols, a pious and clement sovereign.[1] However, he records his killing quite unemotionally, noting only that this event suggests that fate may play man false. Yet if man is wise he will not laugh twice at the world, for although the world is a prison for wise men, only the foolish and the feckless will laugh at it. 'Iṣāmī then calls for the cup that induces equanimity and an intelligent indifference to life's vanities.[2] 'Alā' al-dīn Khaljī is then proclaimed as a sultan to whom God gave victory and in whom Islam in India possessed a stout champion.

'Iṣāmī moralizes in the same vein after, for example, the recording of the news that 'Alā' al-dīn Khaljī's dominions had been invaded by 'Alī Beg and Tartaq and one Malik Nanak had been ordered to drive them out, after the death of Sulṭān 'Alā' al-dīn Khaljī, after the assumption of the throne by Ghiyāth al-dīn Tughluq when 'Iṣāmī wonders how one can explain why bad men, namely the late 'usurper' Khusrau Khān, are sometimes raised to power.[3] After the flight and capture of a rebel (Bahā al-dīn Gurshāsp) against Muḥammad ibn Tughluq, 'Iṣāmī says, in effect, that the wisest of us will never know what will happen next.[4] Men must keep their minds fixed on the world to come.

Yet there is ample evidence that 'Iṣāmī does not take his own advice literally and to the point of writing the whole work in order to illustrate its truth. There is his own desire for worldly literary fame; there is his own hope of royal patronage; there are his eulogies of the temporal, one might say the political, achievements of such heroes as Maḥmūd of Ghaznī, and of the victories of Prince Muḥammad, son of Balban, against the Mongols; there is his praise of Sulṭān 'Alā' al-dīn Khaljī, the murderer of his uncle, Jalāl al-dīn, whom 'Iṣāmī certainly did not regard as a blackguard richly deserving of his fate; there is his pride in the whole story of Muslim prowess in Hindūstān. Finally, there is the fact that the morals 'Iṣāmī advises have every appearance of being tagged on to the story, the icing, so to speak, on the cake. It might be said that 'Iṣāmī only draws morals from events when it suits his mood; he does not treat of events in such a way as sustainedly to enforce morals. He does not preach, but he does not mind edifying, should his material present occasion for so doing.

So the search for intelligibility in 'Iṣāmī's treatment of the past in terms of chronology and of didacticism has ended in failure. But one

[1] *FS*, pp. 226–227.
[2] *FS*, pp. 244–245.
[3] *FS*, pp. 287–288.
[4] *FS*, p. 431.

answer at least can be found within the general order of 'Iṣāmī's Muslim presuppositions. As a Muslim, 'Iṣāmī assumes Divine Ordination as the ground of everything in general and, through various media, of many things in particular.

God has ordained the physical universe, human faculties and emotions and right and wrong. Success and failure, friendship and enmity, are created by God's fiat alone. Man has no right to complain if God wills his death. No one knows except He why sometimes man attains unto the heights and at other times wallows in the dust. It is impossible to apply human criteria of justice and of injustice to his acts. In the action recorded in the *Futūḥ al-Salāṭīn* 'Iṣāmī finds God's purposes inscrutable and His Commands incomprehensible to mortal man. In a section entitled ' Second declaration of the unity of God, containing a notice of deceased sultaṅs ', 'Iṣāmī describes God as the sender of drought, the giver and the taker away of kingdoms Who raises one man up and casts another man down. When He wants to shed blood He sends a Ẓaḥḥāk. Later in the *Futūḥ al-Salāṭīn* God is invoked as the direct cause of particular events but in an arbitrary way. Thus on Maḥmūd of Ghaznī's return march from the idol-breaking expedition to Somnāth his army suffers grievously from drought, and God intervenes to send rain for the troops after prayers for it had been offered.[1] Nāsir al-dīn Qabācha of Multān was drowned ' by divine decree ' after defeat by Sulṭān Iltutmish,[2] Balban overcame Tughral of Lakhnautī by Divine ordinance, God gave Sulṭān 'Alā' al-dīn Khaljī empire. But in these invocations of Divine ordination 'Iṣāmī appears either to be obeying convention as his readers will expect of him, or merely to be making use of God's Name and Power in order to find a rhyme or to complete a verse.

'Iṣāmī is prepared to enlist magic as an explanation of what happens in history.[3] He ascribes the prosperity of the realm in the time of Sulṭān 'Alā' al-dīn Khaljī to the magical properties of some fruit that the Devil gave to a Hindu doctor of Baran as a reward for curing him of a bad pain. 'Alā' al-dīn Khaljī heard of the magic fruit, sent for the doctor and listened to the story of how the Devil had arranged for the latter to be carried off from his couch one night in order to cure him. The sultan was so impressed by the story that he rewarded the doctor handsomely and put the seed to such good use himself that the realm flourished exceedingly and there was peace in the land of the Khaljīs. It is not suggested that 'Iṣāmī believed in the efficacy of this kind of

[1] *FS*, pp. 47–48. [2] *FS*, p. 113. [3] *FS*, pp. 306–312.

magic, merely that he considered that such a story should adorn his account of the past.

'Iṣāmī often makes the past intelligible in terms of human motive and decision by means of quotation from letters or messages or dialogues between historical personages. Sometimes he claims acquaintance with the thoughts of men when communing with themselves. Thus the decision by the nobles at Delhi to set aside Balban's 'testament', declaring Kaykhusrau, son of Prince Muḥammad, to be his successor, in favour of Mu'izz al-dīn Kayqubād, son of Bughrā Khān, governor of Lakhnautī, is expressed by colloquies among the nobles in which it is stated that, by their action, they may influence Bughrā Khān not to march on Delhi, as he may consider it sufficient for the throne to be occupied by a member of his own family.[1] Then again, Jalāl al-dīn Khaljī's move towards 'Alā' al-dīn Khaljī after his raid upon Deogir, is explained in terms of a message that Sulṭān Jalāl al-dīn wished to see 'Alā' al-dīn personally to reassure him that his undertaking the Deogir expedition without the sultan's permission, and his acquisition of great wealth thereby, did not mean enmity between them.[2]

'O magician of a conqueror, I have heard that by the effort of a mature judgment you have pitched your tents suddenly at Deogir. Since you have led there a mighty army of men you have cut a difficult road with a hundred hardships. You have ruined the country and have taken much wealth and many elephants from there. Rām Dev has fallen a prisoner into your hands, he who has been a ruler in the Marhaṭṭā kingdom. Yes, since you are the son of a fortunate and brilliant father this has happened, O brave warrior. My heart and mind have become light from this news that the world is ringing with your fame. But you have fallen into error in so far as you did not inform me of your doings; but perhaps it occurred to you that we should become enemies on account of the wealth and the elephants, that we might make an Alexander ambush like Dārā and denying your relationship to us, that we might make war on you. God forbid that such a thought should enter our head at all! It was a mistake for this suspicion to cross your mind, you who are more precious than life itself. If you wish, O worthy warrior, we will send all our treasure to you. Come that we may see your beauty to the full; we are so desirous of seeing you that time will run slowly until we do. When our gaze falls upon your face, we will bestow all the treasure of the world upon you. And if you delay in what you have undertaken, we ourselves will come to your country, but not to wage war. We shall thank God that we may see your face after a short while.'

'Alā' al-dīn Khaljī refuses a request from Malik Kāfūr that Alp Khān be put out of harm's way, on the grounds that Alp Khān has

[1] *FS*, pp. 184–185. [2] *FS*, pp. 239–240.

been like a son to him and that he, 'Alā' al-dīn, does not want to besmirch his reputation on the eve of his departure for the next world.[1]

' " Oh king, through your good name I have become famous in this kingdom. Through the power of the success of the lord of the world, I have struck down the froward. I have brought many under the yoke (of obedience) and have captured many great fortresses. Now when you are girding your loins for the next world, either kill me or raise me up as your equal. My life depends on your life. What advantage is it to live, unless you live also ? Many of the members of the royal family are my enemies, night and day they are intent upon my life. As soon as they see your eyes closed (in death) they will kill me. It is certain that in the absence of the king, they will kill me with a hundred painful afflictions." When the king saw this extreme anguish he forgot his own pain, saying, " What is your opinion on this affair ? Tell me quickly what it is which will satisfy you. I have not yet gone from the scene of action. Say what you have in mind in this situation." . . . Malik Khān replied, " Alp Khān is the leader of this conspiracy and he has a strong army in the provinces. Two princes have become his sons-in-law. The foundations of his authority have become stronger. The king has said more than a hundred times that he should, therefore, go to his own *iqṭā'*. It is, however, still the position that I do not know what he has in his head now he has ignored the order of the king. He had an aversion from the courtiers. His mind has left the service of the king. He has begun to look to the death of the king. As soon as the monarch's cap has fallen in the dust, he will have no fear of the royal princes. It will be possible to imprison them in a fortress. Consider lest harm may befall." ('Alā' al-dīn Khaljī replied) " O loyal friend, it is forbidden that my sword shall be against Alp Khān, who has been in my service so long. I have looked after him like a baby at the breast ; he has also been my companion all this time. Alp Khān occupies the place of a son to me. How then can I decide to shed his blood ? You know if you have an opinion about what to do in this affair. I have handed you over to God's care. If you shed blood unlawfully, you may find your punishment from the Pure God. If you commit an act of oppression, expect the reward for it from God. What the wise Shīrāzī said when he wrote in his *Pand-Nāma*, whether you are a Kayqubād or a Khusrau, as you sow, so shall you reap. Do what you wish in this affair. Since you have the power, why ask me ? I am intent upon other business. I am girding my loins for another realm. Do not disturb me with that which in my condition, at this moment, is irrelevant to it. Since I have had à good reputation in this life, eternity may bear my fame for goodness along with it. Now, at the time of death, do not command me to act so that my reputation will be lost." '

'Iṣāmī appears to be practising a literary artifice rather than reporting what actually happened.[2] Leaving aside the issue of how he came by

[1] *FS*, pp. 337–339.
[2] Cf. D. S. Margoliouth's remarks on the use of similar devices by Arabic historians, *Lectures on Arabic Historians*, Calcutta, 1930, pp. 61–63.

the knowledge of what was alleged to have been said many years before he wrote, the motives given in the dialogues appear to belong more to the world of formal ethics and popular sentiment than to the world of action. If, for example, the nobles in Delhi were worried lest Bughrā Khān ill-treat them for not keeping the throne in his family, why did they not offer him the throne ? Was it likely that 'Alā' al-dīn would fear loss of fame for killing Alp Khān when he had already killed Jalāl al-dīn Khaljī ? It is as though 'Iṣāmī, having decided what events to set down, supplied not the reasons, but rather the kind of reasons which could possibly have been responsible for those events in terms of the expected sentiments of the age. His intention was probably to imitate the vivid but apocryphal speech which is a feature of Firdausī's *Shāh-Nāma* itself.[1]

These literary considerations contain the key to the problem of how 'Iṣāmī made the past intelligible to his readers. He made it intelligible in terms of the conventional religious and ethical expectations of orthodox Muslim readers and men of affairs in fourteenth-century India. He shows his figures acting in accordance with certain moral stereotypes, certain formal rules of good or bad conduct and certain stock responses in situations which are described, not in terms of their dissimilarities with other historical situations, but in terms of their similarities. 'Iṣāmī placed his characters in literary rather than in historical situations. They are either heroes or villains. Perhaps the manner in which 'Iṣāmī made his story meaningful may be discovered by examining his treatment of those personalities most agreeable and most odious to him.

Maḥmūd of Ghaznī was for 'Iṣāmī as for Ẓiyā' al-dīn Baranī (in his *Fatāwa-yi-Jahāndārī*), the archetype of the perfect Muslim hero, a model for imitation by succeeding generations of Muslims. Doubtless, as the patron of 'Iṣāmī's literary hero, Firdausī, Maḥmūd should be portrayed in such a way that would encourage the Bahmanī sultan to emulate him in generosity towards 'Iṣāmī himself. Thus, Maḥmūd ascended the throne of Ghaznī without difficulty and with the willing assent of the nobles. Hearing of his accession, Jaypāl, the Hindu ruler, hastened to acknowledge his overlordship.[2] But God Himself had informed the Prophet that he would be followed one day by one who would destroy the last remnants of idolatry still to be found at Somnāth,[3]

[1] Compare similar dialogues and messages in the *Shāh-Nāma*, for example ; Vullers ed. revised, Teheran, 1935, vol. V, pp. 1202–1209, 1346–1347 ; vol. VII, pp. 1810–1813, 1859–1860.

[2] *FS*, pp. 36–37.

[3] *FS*, p. 42.

so Maḥmūd invaded Hindūstān as a standard-bearer of Islam, levying *jizya* and refusing on any pretext to allow idol worship. Maḥmūd received divine aid when his army was lost on the return journey from Somnāth to Ghaznī. Anecdotes testify to his kindness and generosity, his justice, and the favour with which he was regarded both by God and by the Prophet.[1] On one occasion a stream appeared near the Masjid-i-Jāmi' to enable Maḥmūd to perform his ritual ablutions.[2]

Another hero whom 'Iṣāmī eulogizes in similar idiom, is, remarkably enough, Sulṭān 'Alā' al-dīn Khaljī. He is praised as a protector of Hindūstān from the Mongols, a scourge of the Hindus, an armed advocate of temperance, and a just protector and patron of true religion. 'When he had finished killing unbelievers, no rival to him remained in Hindūstān.' Since no one went hungry in his reign, his palace was called Sīrī (the satiated).[3]

'Iṣāmī's great villain is Sulṭān Muḥammad ibn Tughluq. Since 'Iṣāmī was writing for the Bahmanī ruler, 'Alā' al-dīn Muẓaffar, who refused to acknowledge allegiance to the Delhi sultan, this was hardly surprising; nor indeed is the large-scale treatment of Muḥammad ibn Tughluq's reign, which had not yet run its course when 'Iṣāmī wrote. But it is important to note the terms in which 'Iṣāmī maligned the chief enemy of the Bahmanī sultan and of the court circle in which 'Iṣāmī doubtless hoped the *Futūḥ al-Salāṭīn* would be read.

Muḥammad ibn Tughluq is condemned by 'Iṣāmī as a wicked man and as an evil sultan, because, 'Iṣāmī implies, he killed his father Ghiyāth al-dīn Tughluq. Moreover, he abbreviated the proper obsequies and acted the hypocrite in his public mourning.[4] He usurped a just ruler's place. He began to view his subjects with distaste and to act so cruelly and arbitrarily that revolts broke out all over the kingdom. 'Iṣāmī describes with righteous indignation how one rebel, Bahā al-dīn Gurshāsp, was skinned on the orders of Muḥammad ibn Tughluq. The reputation of the sultan for severity became such that a *ṣūfī*, Shaykh Rukn al-Ḥaqq, interceded with Muḥammad ibn Tughluq for the lives of some rebels in Multān and recommended clemency as a general rule for sultans.[5] On this occasion, Muḥammad ibn Tughluq heeded this request and freed the prisoners. ('Iṣāmī thus exhibits the good qualities of pious men for the edification of his readers.) A further act of wickedness by Muḥammad ibn Tughluq was his forcible expulsion and transportation, from mere caprice, of the inhabitants of Delhi who were forced to migrate to Deogir. This story is used as an occasion for

[1] e.g. *FS*, pp. 48–56.
[2] *FS*, p. 57.
[3] *FS*, p. 301.
[4] *FS*, pp. 418–421.
[5] *FS*, p. 443.

somewhat stereotyped abuse of oppressors. In this one act all Muḥammad ibn Tughluq's innate wickedness stood revealed. Then Muḥammad ibn Tughluq was given to venting his spite against persons of religion.[1] Furthermore, he issued copper coinage to his unfortunate subjects, not for economic reasons or for reasons of state but to harry the poor who were perfectly peaceable and law-abiding. This issue of copper coinage ruined the morals of his people for they were forced to act wrongly themselves for mere self-preservation.[2] Similarly an expedition, which failed miserably, was sent to Qarāchīl, not for military or 'political' purposes but because of the sultan's malevolent disposition towards his subjects. Characteristically, 'Iṣāmī says, Muḥammad ibn Tughluq executed the survivors. Lastly, 'Iṣāmī accuses Muḥammad ibn Tughluq of abandoning Islam in his heart and of associating with Hindu ascetics. He says that the *Sharī'a* had assented to his death and that a judgment of the *qāẓīs* had been issued against his life.[3] He views the sultan in the same light as did Baranī—as a patron of philosophers.[4] In sum, 'Iṣāmī condemns Muḥammad ibn Tughluq as a parricide, an oppressor, a hypocrite, an infidel and contemner of true religion and a corrupter of his subjects' morals.

In 'Iṣāmī's eyes then, a good sultan would be one who would not shed blood (unless it be the blood of the wicked), would be always just and never violent (except to those to whom one should be violent) and would be a true believer (presumably in the somewhat simple form of Islam in which 'Iṣāmī believed). But, it will be noted that these are all purely formal criteria of human vices and human virtue, amounting to a general injunction to mankind to be good and to be good Muslims. That the criticism of Muḥammad ibn Tughluq is no more than abuse, in formal terms agreeable to Muslim sentiment, of a man whom 'Iṣāmī had every other incentive to condemn, is evident from the fact that Jalāl al-dīn Khaljī killed a holy man and 'Alā' al-dīn Khaljī killed his uncle, and yet 'Iṣāmī praises both. Once he says[5] Muḥammad ibn Tughluq put God's and the Prophet's names at the beginning of a letter to a rebel. This is hardly consistent with the remainder of his portrait of Muḥammad ibn Tughluq as a godless and impious ruler. 'Iṣāmī's zeal was not that of a preacher. His zeal was merely to please by asking, in effect, his patron and his literate court circle

[1] *FS*, p. 459.
[2] *FS*, p. 459–461.
[3] *FS*, p. 515, viz. '*Sharī'a riẓā dādé dar khūn-i-ū . . . bi-khūnish rawān gashté ḥukm-i-quẓāt.*'
[4] *FS*, p. 510.
[5] *FS*, p. 436.

to join in the heart-warming exercise of respecting and praising an unspecified virtue and of despising and condemning an unspecified vice. In this respect 'Iṣāmī's affinities were more with Amīr Khusrau than with Ẓiyā' al-dīn Baranī.

'Iṣāmī wrote, as has been noted already, a selective account of the past, using stories, legends, anecdotes and common reports gleaned from among friends and associates. But he never specifies the source of his statements about any particular transaction. His favourite method of introducing a fresh theme or action is to say ' I have heard '. What 'Iṣāmī had heard constituted an immense body of oral and written tradition whose recension in the *Futūḥ al-Salāṭīn* far exceeds any other body of such data to be found in the works of the other writers discussed in this book. As Dr. Ṣabāḥ al-dīn has shown in an interesting set of articles in the Urdū periodical *Ma'ārif*,[1] 'Iṣāmī's recension does not always agree in detail with that found for example in Minhāj al-Sirāj's *Ṭabaqāt-i-Nāṣirī* or Baranī's *Ta'rīkh-i-Fīrūz Shāhī*. In Chapter VIII an attempt will be made to assess the significance of this for the modern historian.

In sum then, the *Futūḥ al-Salāṭīn* offers the student not critical history but historical evidence; although 'Iṣāmī exercised his own judgment in choosing his material the criteria by which he exercised that judgment were aesthetic, not critical and factual. He is interested in uttering delightfully melodious sounds in verse and in praising with extravagant, beautiful or striking metaphor and simile stock good deeds by great men whose greatness is expressible in terms not of their uniqueness but of their universality, not of their unlikeness to the ideal norm but of their complete identification with it. For 'Iṣāmī's ambition was to be a man of letters rather than to be an historian. Dr. Mahdi Husain's statement [2] that the *Futūḥ al-Salāṭīn* may legitimately be called the *Shāh-Nāma* of medieval India is not very wide of the mark. Consequently, the *Futūḥ al-Salāṭīn* is, to sum up, not a critical history, not a theology, not an ethic, but an epic.

[1] *Ma'ārif*, August, September, 1939.
[2] *The Futuh-us-Salatin*, edited by A. Mahdi Husain, Agra, 1938, preface p. 4.

## CHAPTER VII

# SOME GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS ANALYSED

It will assist the discussion, to be undertaken in the final chapter, of how the manner in which Ẓiyā' al-dīn Baranī, Shams al-dīn Sirāj 'Afīf, Yaḥyā ibn Aḥmad, Amīr Khusrau and 'Iṣāmī treated history poses problems of technique for the modern historian of medieval India, if first a brief analytical summary of the chief features of their treatment is interposed. Students of Muslim historiography produced outside India may also find such a summary useful for purposes of comparison.

As Sir Henry Elliot long ago pointed out in relation to Muslim historiography in India generally,[1] the five authors who have been discussed devote themselves to recording the action and commenting upon the deeds of 'grandees and ministers, thrones and imperial powers'. What the sultan did, where he went, what battles he fought, whom he appointed to office, who rebelled against him and what acts of beneficence he performed, this is the stuff of these accounts. None of these historians would think of taking their meals in the kitchen as the economic and social historian is reputed to do; a festive table at court was their idea of a proper observation post for historians. Indeed, as has been seen in Chapter II, for Baranī history should concern itself only with the activities of the great in both the religious and temporal spheres. But sultans, *wazīrs*, *amīrs*, soldiers and saints so completely fill the foreground of these works that the spectator not only cannot see the background, but is left unaware that a background exists.

For it is not merely that the fortunes of the powerful and great only are recorded, but that they are recorded in a purely personal way. Each man is treated as an 'island sole'; his actions are complete and perfect within themselves, they are possessions which are enjoyed through some individual right; as if a wealthy man owes his riches wholly to his personal qualities and not at all to the social usages, the laws and the attitudes which ensure that he may enjoy them in peace and security. In relation to other men at least, the characters in the Muslim histories discussed are portrayed as stark individualists. By

[1] *Bibliographical Index to the Historians of Muhammedan India*, vol. I, *General Histories*, Calcutta, 1849, p. xv.

Baranī and the others, in the words of Sir Henry Elliot, 'society is never contemplated either in its conventional usages or recognized privileges; its constituent elements or mutual relations; its established classes or popular institutions; in its private recesses or habitual intercourses.' It is true that Baranī gives a long account of measures taken by 'Alā' al-dīn Khaljī to control prices and to increase the revenue yield of his dominions. They are however described as if they were the result of the personal will and force of the sultan acting upon passive circumstances and passive people. Similarly, it is possible to detect the presence of such institutions as the *dīwān-i-wizārat*, the financial administration, from incidental references in 'Afīf, for example, but not to reconstruct its working policies and any changes in those policies, for in 'Afīf the institution is depicted either as the passive recipient of orders from the sultan or as the glass in which the qualities of Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq are refracted.

The customary, and, so far as it goes, valid explanation of this constriction of the medieval Indo-Muslim historians' horizons to the doings of the politically great and powerful, is that they were courtiers writing in the enjoyment or in the expectation of royal patronage and that in their choice of subject matter they obeyed 'market forces'. Sultans, it may be argued, prefer to hear about other sultans, particularly if they are connected to them by family, or, as 'Iṣāmī implied in his eulogium on the rôle of the Turks in Islam, racial ties. It is clear that Baranī, 'Afīf and the rest were not wounded in their 'professional pride' by writing about the deeds of men of the class to whom their patron, or expected patrons belonged; considerations of a non-economic order also had their weight in their choice of subject matter and in their biographical personal mode of treatment.

As the 'Abbāsid caliphate ceased to be the effective political power in the eastern Muslim world and, from the middle of the fourth/tenth century became a purely titular institution acting as a legitimating authority for the numerous Persian and Turkish rulers who exercised effective sovereignty, so the office of sultan came to be regarded by Muslim writers on government as the pivot of the fortunes of the Muslim community, the one institution upon which depended that political and social stability without which the Islamic revelation and the Muslim Holy Law could not be studied with a quiet mind and put into practice by the faithful.[1] The destruction in 656/1258 of the

[1] On the various phases and specifications of this development in Persia see A. K. S. Lambton, 'Quis Custodiet Custodes: Some Reflections on the Persian Theory of Government,' *Studia Islamica*, V, Paris, 1956.

caliphate in Baghdād by the Mongol Hūlāgū only tended to confirm this tendency.

Al-Ghazālī's *Naṣīḥat al-Mulūk* (*c.* 499/1105–6), Waṣṣāf's *Akhlāq al-Salṭanat* and *Naṣīḥat-i-Mulūk* [1] (first decade of the eighth/fourteenth century) and Baranī's own *Fatāwa-yi-Jahāndārī*, all look to the sultan to assume the functions in the Muslim community previously allotted to the *Khalīfa*. It was he who should guard the *Dār al-Islām*, safeguard the Holy Law, appoint God-fearing persons to office and see that the canonical taxes, the *zakāt* and the *jizya*, were levied. If the historians of the Muslim community could collect, record and publish abroad the deeds, whether good or evil according to Islamic criteria, of previous occupants of such an awesome office, they would be serving the cause of true religion.

To serve the cause of true religion, namely Islam. Therein lies one of the principal motives for Muslim historical writing. Of the historians discussed Baranī was the author most consciously interested and Yaḥyā ibn Aḥmad the least consciously interested in this purpose, but the motive was not wholly absent in any of the others, not even in Amīr Khusrau and 'Iṣāmī who did not teach any particular doctrines or principles but who contented themselves with commending virtue and reprobating vice in general. As has been made evident in Chapter II, Ẓiyā' al-dīn Baranī praised the study of history as a component of the Islamic revelation, worthy to be set beside Quranic commentary, the study of *hadīth*, of *fiqh* and of the *ṭarīqa* of the mystics. It was morality teaching by examples, a means of strengthening the judgment and the moral fibre and of detecting unorthodox belief. It should not, however, be thought that Ẓiyā' al-dīn Baranī was unique in these views on the usefulness of history, taking the total span of Islamic historiography into consideration. The *Rauẓat al-Ṣafā*, a general history written in Herāt in the second half of the ninth/fifteenth century by Mīr Khwānd, contains almost exactly the same sentiments.[2] Similar views may also be found in the *Ta'rīkh-i-Bayhaq* by Ibn Funduq, a history of the district of Bayhaq completed in 563/1168.[3] Among later works, Ẓahīr al-dīn Mar'ashī's *Ta'rīkh-i-Ṭabaristān wa Rūyān wa Māzandarān* (*c.* 881/1476) [4] and the near contemporary al-Sakhāwī's *al-I'lān*, a defence of historiography as a suitable subject in the curriculum of

[1] Found in Waṣṣāf, *Ta'rīkh-i-Waṣṣāf*, lith. Bombay, 1269/1853, pp. 484–497.
[2] *The Rauzat-us-Safa* by Muhammad ibn Khāvendshāh ibn Mahmūd, trans. E. Rehatsek, ed. F. F. Arbuthnot, London, 1891, vol. I, pp. 25–31.
[3] 'Alī ibn Zayd al-Bayhaqī (Ibn Funduq), *Tārīkh-i-Bayhaq*, text, Teheran (solar), 1317/1937, pp. 7–12 *passim*.
[4] ed. 'Abbās Shayagān, Teheran (solar), 1333/1954, p. 6.

religious studies, equally stress the religious and moral utility of historical writing in terms analagous to those of the *Ta'rīkh-i-Fīrūz Shāhī*.[1] Al-Sakhāwī's *al-I'lān* also quotes earlier authors as saying that he who writes about a saint will be with that saint in his rank on the Day of Resurrection and that the memory of pious men is a source of divine mercy.[2]

There would appear to be three main characteristics for which the Islamic or the didactic religious framework of Muslim historiography, as exemplified by the five writers discussed, was responsible. First, an almost exclusive concentration of the deeds of Muslims in Hindūstān. For Baranī, 'Afīf, Yaḥyā ibn Aḥmad and 'Iṣāmī, non-Muslims are as the furniture and properties for the stage on which the drama of the Muslim destiny and the Muslim political achievement in Hindūstān is played. The Hindus are not mentioned, for the most part, except as the passive material on which Muslims impose their will. It is the function of the Hindus to provide opportunities for the practice of Muslim virtue; they are never interesting in themselves, but only as converts, as capitation tax-payers, or as corpses. Even Amīr Khusrau, who in his *Nuh Sipihr* shows considerable interest in the languages, music and sciences of the Hindus, does so more to illustrate the interesting environment in which the Muslims in Hindūstān live than to understand Hindu civilization. Even he cannot resist pointing out that Hindus live, metaphysically, in error and in ignorance of the truth. Although none of the five authors examined prefaces his account of the fortunes of Muslims in Hindūstān with a brief conspectus of general Islamic history from the time of the Prophet (as do, for example, the *Ṭabaqāt-i-Nāṣirī* by Minhāj al-Sirāj or the *Ta'rīkh-i-Muḥammadī* by Muḥammad Bihāmad Khānī), that does not betray them as indifferent to the history of their community. For them, indeed as for Muslim historians outside India, the only significant history is the history of the Muslim community; they are historians of the *res gestæ* of the politically prominent members of a group united by ties of common faith rather than historians of the whole people of the area controlled by the Delhi sultan. They are, so to speak, the first Muslim communalists in India.

The second consequence of the Indo-Muslim historians' acceptance of the Muslim world order and the determination of some of them, at least, actively to strengthen it by their writings, is that the past is

[1] *al-I'lān bi-l-tawbīkh li-man ẓamma ahl al-tawrīkh*, trans. F. Rosenthal, in *A History of Muslim Historiography*, Leiden, 1952, pp. 205–209, 215–260 *passim*.
[2] op. cit. pp. 235, 237.

observed through religious spectacles. Indeed, with the almost general acceptance of the fundamental doctrine of Ash'arite theology—the doctrine of an omnipotent and eternally active Sovereign Lord—by all the historians in question, this is unremarkable. Whatever happens is brought under the categories of Muslim thought whether or not religion is an element in the situation. Of course, this idiom is more dominant in some of the writers discussed than in others. In the actual treatment of events it is weakest in Yaḥyā ibn Aḥmad Sīhrindī and strongest in Ẓiyā' al-dīn Baranī. Of the problems this poses for the modern historian, more will be said in the next chapter—they are not unlike those posed by Communist practices of discussing every issue in the terminology of dialectical materialism. But in Baranī, Amīr Khusrau and 'Iṣāmī the relations between the sultans of Delhi and their Hindu subjects, the struggle for the throne between Khusrau Khān and Ghiyāth al-dīn Tughluq and the differences with his subjects of Sulṭān Muḥammad ibn Tughluq, for example, are all recorded under the guise (and of course it need not be merely a guise) of differences over religious issues, however unimpassioned or impassioned the different authors may be about them.

This draws with it the third consequence of the religious presuppositions of the Indo-Muslim historians discussed: their disinclination for facts in all their detail and in all their manifold variety. With them an ounce of religious truth weighs more than a pound of fact. Sometimes this attitude is expressed in a humble acceptance of their own ignorance—as with Yaḥyā ibn Aḥmad Sīhrindī's 'God knows best' or 'God alone knows the truth'; at other times it is expressed in Ẓiyā' al-dīn Baranī's decision not to set down all he knew about the reign of Muḥammad ibn Tughluq but only sufficient to enable readers with the right approach to life to understand the 'true inwardness' of that sultan's reign. Thus a writer like Ẓiyā' al-dīn Baranī (and he is perhaps alone among the five in this respect) in effect produced 'Whig' history in the sense defined by Professor H. Butterfield in his *Whig Interpretation of History*—a significant abridgement of the past, an organization of the past upon the assumption that what matters is not the story in all its detail and complexity, but where that story is going and the message it is carrying. A passionate judgment of values is preferred to a careful investigation into the facts of the actual process of historical change, to which all parties and not merely the 'party of light', as so conceived by the historian, contribute. Baranī, however, was not interested in investigating the subtle mediations by which his present came into being, in examining the clash of opposing viewpoints about

which the historian must try his hardest to be neutral lest he miss some strand in the skein ; Baranī wished only to attend to those facts which, in the light of his religious presuppositions, must, *a priori*, have been decisive in explaining what happened in history.

This brings the discussion to the question of how, in general, the five Indo-Muslim writers on history did explain what happened in history. All are alike in imputing to Divine Decree the final role in the determination of events. God awards victory, takes away thrones, punishes wrongdoing and decrees that a man shall die. Moreover, for 'Afīf, Yaḥyā ibn Aḥmad, Amīr Khusrau and 'Iṣāmī, the working of His Will is open and direct ; it bears directly down upon the fortunes of individuals, by so to speak, individual attention. There is no question for these authors of God's intervention being indirect or mediated through social forces. He does more than build the railway, construct the engine and provide the fuel and the staff to run the whole system ; He actually ordains, at the moment of movement, every turn of the wheels, every shovelful of coal, every operation of the signals. The whole universe is His creature. It is in keeping with this metaphysic that, for example in 'Afīf and 'Iṣāmī, God acts and provides the explanation for events through the unchangeable disposition with which He endows a man at the moment of his creation. Thus, as has been described in Chapter III, Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq acts as he does by reason of his God-given disposition. Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq's disposition is a kind of unchanging substratum in history, determining the reactions which are visible externally. Men's dispositions would not of course be omitted from any explanation of events, but the distinctive feature of those characters as depicted in the Indo-Muslim historians is that they are unchanging, they are created by God, and while they influence events and actions, events and actions do not influence them.

An important feature of the works of Baranī, 'Afīf, Amīr Khusrau and 'Iṣāmī is the deference paid therein to the *ṣūfī* mystics to whom they attribute a determinative role in history as men of God. Baranī attributed, for example, the misfortunes of Jalāl al-dīn Khaljī to the killing of Sīdī Maula and the glories of the reign of 'Alā' al-dīn Khaljī to the *barakāt*[1] of Shaykh Niẓām al-dīn Auliyā' near whose grave he was buried.[2] 'Afīf chose the *manāqib* form for his account of the reign of Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq, eulogized the sultan for his respect for prominent mystics of his time (hence his general credit in Indo-Muslim literature ?) and attributed the immunity of Hānsī from pillage by

[1] See p. 34, n. 4.
[2] Amīr Khwurd, *Siyar al-Auliyā'*, lith. Delhi, 1885, p. 313.

Tīmūr's forces to the *barakāt* of the saints buried in the vicinity.[1] Amīr Khusrau took Shaykh Niẓām al-dīn Auliyā' as his *pīr*, made a collection of his sayings, the *Afẓal al-fawā'id* and eulogized him in the *Duwal Ranī Khiẓr Khān*.[2] 'Iṣāmī traces the handing down of the mantle of discipleship (*khirqa*) from the Prophet to a mystic of his own day, Zayn al-Ḥaqq, and partly ascribed the misfortunes of Delhi under Muḥammad ibn Tughluq to the disgust by which he was regarded by a prominent mystic. Indeed the key to the practically general discredit in which Muḥammad ibn Tughluq is held in the literature of the medieval period, is probably to be found in his relations with the mystics and the reports which were put into circulation by them about him.[3] All the histories discussed provide, by implication, evidence that in pre-Mughal Muslim India at least, the mystic orders both set the tone of religious life and enjoyed harmonious relations with the orthodox *'ulamā*. The historical literature of the sultanate period in India supports the thesis of a rapprochement in Islam between orthodoxy and mysticism immediately following the life's work of al-Ghazālī.[4]

Even when historical personages appear to be acting autonomously and their own wishes and decisions appear to explain what happens, further investigation will reveal the hand of God in the background. This is particularly true of the outlook of the poets Amīr Khusrau and 'Iṣāmī. Men act as other men, orthodox Muslims, would expect them to act in certain formal situations. Thus fathers feel paternal love, sons filial devotion and guardians a sense of responsibility towards their charges. Rebels act rebelliously and unbelievers act wickedly. They all act according to rule and to rules which express a conventional Muslim expectation that the world is composed of men, some with good natures, some with evil, some born to be good fathers, good sons, good sultans and pious believers, others to be wicked rebels and contumacious infidels. Amīr Khusrau and 'Iṣāmi offer a literary dramatization of history in accordance with the ethics of orthodox Islam ; they see each situation as complete in itself and history as a succession of moments, each possessing symbolical significance.

For Amīr Khusrau and 'Iṣāmī, aesthetic considerations were paramount in explaining the past. They were concerned to see truth in

[1] *TFS*, pp. 81–82.
[2] *SOAS* Persian MS. No. 18729, pp. 15–16.
[3] See Muhammad Habib, 'Shaikh Naṣīruddīn Maḥmūd Chirāgh-i-Dehlī as a great Historical Personality,' *Islamic Culture*, XX, 2, April, 1946, pp. 138–143.
[4] As expounded, for example, by Sir Hamilton Gibb in *Mohammedanism*, London, 1949, pp. 139–143.

terms of art, as imagined rather than discovered. They were more interested in telling a good story, one which would stir the emotions, than in telling what was actually done, what people actually thought, and what they actually wanted to do. They were not interested in the drama of fact but in the fact of drama. Hence, the intrusion of dreams into the narrative of the *Futūḥ al-Salāṭīn* and the *Tughluq-Nāma*; hence the dramatic accounts of the malevolent workings of Muḥammad ibn Tughluq's mind; hence the willingness to argue from consequence to sequence with the aid of a little dogma—that if, for example, a sultan, such as Muḥammad ibn Tughluq, failed in his enterprises it must have been because he was impious, or if the armies of Bughrā Khān and Mu'izz al-dīn Kayqubād did not actually come to blows in Awadh, it must have been because sentiments of paternal care and filial devotion had governed the conduct of both father and son. It should not be forgotten too that 'Iṣāmī explicitly said that he weighed what he had read or heard against 'first principles'.

One characteristic unites all five writers in their manner of finding, or of seeing intelligibility in history. They do not find or see it in the historical process itself. Men are puppets in a drama beyond their feeble comprehension, not so much because of its vastness and complexity, but because of its starkness and simplicity; but only God knows its meaning. For Ẓiyā' al-dīn Baranī in particular, the study of history was the study of God, not of man; the past is a commentary upon the Divine Purpose for men, a vehicle of Revelation. For Shams al-dīn 'Afīf, it is a spectacle of virtue made manifest and for the poets a drama of the clash of gods or devils, but hardly of men. Of the human predicament and of the fulfilment or the frustration of human purposes these Indo-Muslim writers did not intend to write except to discover a Divine Command or to point a moral.

As a corollary of this presupposition that history happened above the heads of historical men, there was an indifference to the discovery and portrayal of human personality in all its manifold individuality. Interest concentrated on how far a man conformed to an ideal prototype, not how far he diverged. Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq, for example, was portrayed as a tailor's dummy upon which was hung the qualities of ideal rulership. Ẓiyā' al-dīn Baranī attempted to reduce Muḥammad ibn Tughluq's personality to the measurements possible for Baranī's calipers and his actions to examples of obedience or disobedience to rules which Baranī could understand. Furthermore, the idea of the development of a human character in response to his experiences, of deliberate self-discipline in response to a compelling moral, or

personal ambition, was quite alien to the cast of thought of any of the historians treated. Events betrayed but did not mould human dispositions. The historians tended to write biography with the unique individual traits omitted, offering their readers a list of stereotyped qualities in place of an integrated personality and a melodramatic sequence of episodes in which the hero or the villain figures, in place of a life story.[1] The *manāqib* genre, adopted by 'Afīf, only reinforced this tendency.

As the five historians were not concerned to describe individual personality so too they were not much concerned to describe change. Change they did of course record, but only unintentionally. The flatness of the narrative in Yaḥyā ibn Aḥmad is due to more than humility before the facts or indifference to them ; it expresses the assumption that there is little new under the sun. The names of men and sultans may change but little else. The present succeeds the past ; it is not the outcome of the past, which is, *ex hypothesi*, considered to be dissimilar to it.

It is not the main task of this monograph to offer detailed explanations of these features of Islamic historiography, but a few comments may not be inappropriate. It would appear that the presuppositions underlying what the Indo-Muslim historians wrote rested upon the foundations of Ash'arite theology. For the school of al-Ash'arī, God is the absolute sovereign who creates good and evil, belief and unbelief (in Islam), allowing some men to disbelieve.[2] The world is an arena in which good and evil co-exist in mortal combat which is never quite mortal. All human acts are by man's own acquisition but God creates them and they are by His Will. All temporally produced things are created by God ; He is the perpetually active, continually willing Sovereign of the universe.[3] There is thus no order of nature, but an endless succession of divine acts sustaining the universe.[4] As formulated by al-Bāqillānī, the universe is considered to be a totality of indestructible atoms or *monads*, kept in being, and kept in relationship with each other by the Will of God. They do not modify each other by interaction ; all change and action in the world are produced by these *monads* entering into and dropping out of existence and not by any

[1] Cf. G. E. von Grünebaum, *Medieval Islam : a Study in Cultural Orientation*, 2nd ed., Chicago, 1953, pp. 221–226, 280.

[2] *Abu'l Ḥasan 'Alī ibn Ismā'īl al-Ash'arī's Al-Ibānah 'an uṣūl ad-diyānah.* A translation with introduction and notes by Walter C. Klein, New Haven, 1940, pp. 50–51.

[3] al-Ash'arī, *Kitāb al-luma'*, trans. R. J. McCarthy, in *The Theology of al-Ash'arī*, Beyrouth, 1953, pp. 33–36.

[4] See Majid Fakhry, *Islamic Occasionalism*, London, 1958, pp. 25–48.

change in themselves or by any modification of each other. But their existence must have a cause and their juxtaposition must have a cause : that cause is God. The Will of God creates and annihilates the *monads* and their qualities and thus brings about all the motion observable in the universe. A man writes with a pen on a piece of paper ; God creates in his mind the will to write ; at the same moment he gives him the power to write and brings about the apparent motion of the hand, the pen and the appearance of ink on the paper. Not one of these events is the cause of the other. God has brought about the appearance of creation and motion by an appropriate willing of *monads*.[1]

If this was the background of metaphysical assumptions with which Indo-Muslim historians were armed (and in his *Fatāwa-yi-Jahāndārī*,[2] Barani explicitly condemns the doctrine that God does not know particulars), the absence of synthesis, of a total view of society and its interactions, should not be a matter for surprise. If society was, on the analogy of the *monads*, a fortutious concourse of atoms thrown together and kept together by the Will of God continuously exercised, and if the determining relationship was that between God and each individual man rather than that between men themselves, the absence of an organic sense of history as the story of a society, with that society having a character different from that which individuals themselves possess, need not cause surprise. It is possible that even to-day the orthodox Muslim confrontation of an omnipotent Sovereign Lord by his individual humble servants makes it difficult for Muslims to view the historical process under the categories of the workings of impersonal social forces and of the frustration of human purposes, not by God, but by the very structure of events and the weight of human and social inertia. The medieval Muslim view of history as a succession of events, of untouching moments, made significant only by their relationship to God, ill accords with presuppositions of social organism, change and process.[3]

One last theme remains to be discussed in this consolidatory chapter —the Indo-Muslim historian's attitude towards his material. It may be said, on the basis of the five historians examined, that Indo-Muslim writers on history were recorders first and researchers a long way after ; they wrote history from authority and from authority conceived in a quasi-religious sense. Although they practised, in fact, a selection of

[1] See D. B. Macdonald, *Development of Muslim Theology, Jurisprudence and Constitutional Theory*, New York, 1903, pp. 201–205.

[2] *FJ*, fol. 121*a*.

[3] On the Ash'arite denial of potentiality in nature, see S. Van den Berg, *Averroes' Tahafut al-Tahafut*, vol. I, London, 1954, p. xxii.

data—Yaḥyā ibn Aḥmad, for example, grouping his material under reigns in the *Ta'rīkh-i-Mubārak Shāhī* and Ẓiyā' al-dīn Baranī ordering each of his reigns in the form of a parable—they did not regard their task as essentially that of selecting and marshalling significant facts in response to personal curiosity about the past. They received information; they did not put evidence to the question. They respected their predecessors; they did not presume to examine their credentials or their predilections. Historical facts were something known to someone somewhere; they were not discovered by the critical thinking of the historian himself. Thus Baranī appealed to the authority of his relatives for proof of the truth of what he wrote, 'Afīf to the authority of honest narrators, Amīr Khusrau to what eyewitnesses told him. Thus 'Iṣāmī did not sift fact from tradition and Yaḥyā ibn Aḥmad appropriated without acknowledgment the work of unnamed earlier historians. Thus Baranī would not write anything which disagreed with the *Ṭabaqāt-i-Nāṣirī* for fear of confusing the latter's readers, and 'Afīf offered as the only reason for preferring one account of the actions of Khwāja Jahān Aḥmad Ayāz to another that what he heard at a certain gathering was true.

It will have been observed that some of the five writers were undoubtedly willing to subordinate fact to effect. Thus Baranī put his own views into the mouths of his personages, and 'Iṣāmī, in his testing of his data against 'first principles and correct deduction', did not scruple to include imaginary accounts of dreams in his *Futūḥ al-Salāṭīn*. However, the latter account was intended to be popular and his readers would not be deceived. It should be noted that the influence of Persian was certainly stronger than that of Arabic historiography upon these five historians. Not for them the employment of *isnād*. The influence of the *fürstenspiegel* tradition upon Baranī is manifest in his *Fatāwa-yi-Jahāndārī* and is not altogether absent in his *Ta'rīkh-i-Fīrūz Shāhī*; 'Iṣāmī himself said that his work was modelled upon Firdausī's. It should not be thought that any of these authors would have felt guilty on being charged with casualness towards historical facts. They would either, like Baranī and 'Afīf, have replied that what they wrote corroborated the great Revelation of Islam and therefore could not, on the highest level of truth, in the light of eternity, be false; or, like Yaḥyā ibn Aḥmad Sīhrindī, have humbly placed the matter in the hands of God; or, like Amīr Khusrau and 'Iṣāmī, have been incapable of understanding the charge.

## CHAPTER VIII

# THE HISTORIANS AND THE HISTORY OF MEDIEVAL INDIA

### *Some Conclusions*

In Chapter I, it was argued on general grounds, advancing considerations familiar to most modern historians and borrowing heavily from Professor Collingwood's *Idea of History*, that it is unsatisfactory to attempt to write history either from 'authorities' or from 'sources', that is from compendia of ready-made testimony as to what has happened in history or from compendia of 'certificated' testimony, that is testimony tested for credibility, honesty and partiality. It is hoped that the subsequent chapters on the treatment of history by five medieval Indo-Muslim historians (using the term in its broadest sense of those who aim to present a picture of the human past) will have reinforced those considerations in the particular field of medieval Indo-Muslim history. Those chapters will have failed in their purpose unless they have made it evident to the reader that Baranī, 'Afīf, Yaḥyā ibn Aḥmad Sīhrindī, Amīr Khusrau and 'Iṣāmī did not write in an idiom which modern historians would recognize as their own, even within that sphere of political history where the value of their works has been considered greatest. It is inadmissible consequently for the modern historian to adopt a passive attitude in relation to the data which these writers provide for the history of medieval Muslim India; what they say is not history, but the raw material of history requiring manufacture into the finished product. This chapter will seek, briefly, to substantiate this statement and to suggest some of the themes in the study of medieval Muslim India for which the evidence offered by Baranī and the other writers is, at the present stage of Indo-Muslim historical studies, most apposite.

The active rôle of the modern critical historian extends as much to matters of individual fact as to general interpretation. Thus the mere repetition of what the Muslim historians had heard, or had read, ends in contradictory or widely different testimony which—unless the modern historian thinks that the same events happened at many different times and under as many different guises as they are recorded—he must resolve by his own critical power. The medieval Indo-

Muslim historian will not do it for him. Thus, 'Iṣāmī stated [1] that Balban killed Sulṭān Nāṣir al-dīn in order to acquire the throne of Delhi, Yaḥyā ibn Aḥmad that the latter merely fell sick and Baranī, nothing on the subject. Clearly the matter cannot be left there. The question cannot be decided by treating all the accounts as 'authoritative' for that merely leaves an unresolved contradiction. The next step is that of 'source criticism'. 'Iṣāmī, it may be said, lived nearly one hundred years nearer the event than Yaḥyā ibn Aḥmad and therefore had access to more accurate information. But this does not follow; Yaḥyā might have stood at the end of a chain of transmitters, the first of whom was an eyewitness, 'Iṣāmī at the end of one, the first of whom was an enemy of Balban. The question can only be answered by the historian himself using his own powers of deduction and by testing his own system of postulates—as Professor Habibullah has done in discussing this issue. He suggests [2] that, as Balban had very close relations with Sulṭān Maḥmūd's family and had already enjoyed the insignia of royalty as *nā'ib* it was unlikely that he would kill a man who was no effective bar to his exercise of real authority. That is, Professor Habibullah can make a coherent account of Balban's career and one which fits better the total evidence available if he accepts the postulate that Balban did not kill his son-in-law, than if he accepts the one that he did. Of course, Professor Habibullah may still be wrong, but at least his conclusion is founded upon an act of critical thinking rather than upon an act of belief.

Apologies would be due for labouring the obvious, were it not that modern historians of medieval India sometimes resolve issues on which there is a conflict of testimony merely by omitting that testimony which is inconvenient or which previous historians have consented to disregard. For example, both Professor Ishwari Prasad in his *History of Mediaeval India*,[3] and Sir Wolseley Haig in the *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. III,[4] place the Khaljī conquest of Gujarāt in 697/1297 without referring to the testimony of Baranī [5] and Amīr Khusrau [6] that it occurred in 698/1299. The problem of the dating of this expedition cannot be passed over in silence.

The dangers of attempting to write history from authorities is most vividly shown in this field of study by the general acceptance of

[1] *FS*, p. 163.
[2] *The Foundation of Muslim Rule in India*, pp. 152–153.
[3] p. 191.
[4] p. 100.
[5] *Ta'rīkh-i-Fīrūz Shāhī*, p. 251.
[6] *Khazā'in al-Futūḥ*, fol. 22*b*.

Ẓiyā' al-dīn Baranī's reports of dialogues or monologues spoken by the Delhi sultans and others. As the writer has shown elsewhere,[1] a comparison of the *Ta'rīkh-i-Fīrūz Shāhī* and Baranī's *Fatāwa-yi-Jahāndārī* suggests that the sentiments uttered were Baranī's rather than those of the persons to whom they were ascribed—that they were expositions of Baranī's theories of government as expounded at greater length in the *Fatāwa-yi-Jahāndārī*. To give an example which was omitted, for reasons of space, from the author's article: when Qutlugh Khwāja invaded the territories of Delhi in the reign of 'Alā' al-dīn Khaljī, penetrating almost to Delhi itself, the *kotwāl* of Delhi, 'Alā' al-Mulk, is represented by Baranī (whose testimony is accepted by historians as various as Sir Wolseley Haig [2] and Dr. K. S. Lal)[3] as advising against a pitched battle on the ground that, in struggles between equally powerful rulers, the kings of ancient days used to avoid head-on conflicts in which whole kingdoms might be lost on the single throw of the dice. This statement, which smells of the scholar's wick (and is, in any event, followed by the inaccurate declaration that the sultan's armies were ignorant of warfare against the Mongols), finds a parallel in an anecdotal context in the *Fatāwa-yi-Jahāndārī*.[4]

The dangers of accepting Baranī as an 'authority' on the character of Muḥammad ibn Tughluq are equally evident. Many modern historians [5] of the reign have accepted Baranī's portrait of the sultan as a wonderful mixture of opposites, a tissue of contradictory characteristics, a man whose wayward and intemperate genius brought low the authority of the sultan of Delhi. As suggested in Chapter II, Baranī doubtless had excellent personal reasons for his character sketch—the contrast between the sultan's generosity towards him personally and his killing of persons whom Baranī regarded as pious and godly Muslims—not to mention the rash of insurrections with which the territories of the Delhi sultanate were undoubtedly afflicted during Muḥammad ibn Tughluq's reign. (Ibn Baṭṭūṭa's account of the sultan in his *Riḥla* has some points of similarity.) But it is part of Baranī's 'political doctrine' in the *Fatāwa-yi-Jahāndārī* that sultans ought to possess contradictory qualities, the capacity for wrath, for

[1] 'The Oratio Recta of Baranī's Ta'rīkh-i-Fīrūz Shāhī—Fact or Fiction?', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, XX, 1957, pp. 315–321.
[2] *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. III, p. 102.
[3] *History of the Khaljīs* 1290–1320, pp. 156–157.
[4] *FJ*, fol. 182*a–b*.
[5] e.g. S. Lane-Poole, *Mediaeval India under Mohammedan Rule*, pp. 124–126, 138; *The Cambridge History of India*, Vol. III, pp. 136–138; *The Oxford History of India*, first edition, pp. 238–340.

inspiring awe, and for meting out punishment to the contumacious on the one hand, and the capacity for gentleness, for forbearance and for mercy on the other. The good ruler is he who knows when and to which persons to apply the appropriate quality. Barani's criticism of Muḥammad ibn Tughluq was, in effect, that his judgment was poor, that he did not know when to be harsh and when to be kind, who merited punishment and who merited patronage. 'Iṣāmī's portrait of Muḥammad ibn Tughluq, though hostile, is not in the same terms; Muḥammad ibn Tughluq's character is all of a piece—wicked. It is not, it is suggested, for the modern historian to accept, merely because it has been offered, an historical characterization founded upon an *a priori* category of judgment and couched in rhetorical language, still less to endow it with causal force.

Turning now to a discussion of the defects of the method of writing the history of medieval Muslim India from 'sources', that is from testimony which has been put in the dock, so to speak, and given a good character after cross-examination, as credible, honest and careful witness or report, it will be found again that the differences in mentality prevent mere incorporation of even credible testimony in a modern historian's account. The modern historian may feel that however careful the 'source' has been in recounting an actual sequence of events, however great his opportunities for accurate observation, yet the plane on which he tells the story is not an historical one, that his thinking has been in another dimension altogether. As a first example of the problem, the Khusrau Khān episode of 720/1320 may be cited.

It will be recalled that Sulṭān Quṭb al-dīn Mubārak Shāh Khaljī promoted one Ḥasan, a Hindu whose caste cannot be definitely ascertained,[1] to be *wazīr* and sent him upon expeditions to south India. The favourite, however, murdered Quṭb al-dīn and assumed the throne. He was not left long to enjoy it in peace as Ghāzī Malik Tughluq, *muqṭa'* of Deopālpur, and his son Malik Jaunā (later Muḥammad ibn Tughluq) rose against him, marched upon Delhi, fought Khusrau Khān in two battles, defeating and killing him. Now the dimension in which Amīr Khusrau treats this struggle (and following him Baranī), is that of a contest between Islam and infidelity, in which the true warrior for the faith won after a fight against odds. According to Baranī, an anti-Muslim reign of terror broke out in Delhi after the murder of Sulṭān Quṭb al-dīn, idol worship was commenced in the royal palace, copies of the Qur'ān being torn to pieces and used as seats, and chaste Muslim maidens being forcibly married to Hindu

[1] See S. H. Hodivala, *Studies in Indo-Muslim History*, Vol. I, pp. 369–371.

followers of Khusrau Khān. Sir Wolseley Haig,[1] Professor Ishwari Prasad,[2] and, more recently, Mr. J. C. Powell-Price,[3] have taken their cue from Amīr Khusrau and Baranī and recounted the episode in much the same terms. But Chapters II and V will have suggested the religious colouring which Baranī and Amīr Khusrau sought, for their different purposes, to give to events. Moreover, the evidence which they themselves provide in the *Ta'rīkh-i-Fīrūz Shāhī*, the *Nuh Sipihr* and the *Tughluq-Nāma* is not itself consistent with the contention that Islam was in danger in Hindūstān from a resurgent 'Hindu Rāj'. There is no suggestion in Amīr Khusrau's *Nuh Sipihr*, for example, that Khusrau Khān was any different in his behaviour towards the southern Hindu kingdoms than any Muslim commander of the armies of Delhi. On his accession he took a Muslim name, Nāṣir al-dīn, had coins struck in the Muslim style [4] and conferred honours on a number of Muslim nobles which they apparently accepted quite willingly. Amīr Khusrau himself says that Amīr Mughlatī of Multān and Malik Yak Lakhī of Sāmāna refused to join in Ghāzī Malik's 'holy war' against Khusrau Khān. Moreover, at both battles between the latter's forces and those of the 'liberator', large numbers of Muslims fought on the 'infidel usurper's' side. It is straining credulity too far to believe that this would have occurred had the Qur'ān been treated in the manner that Baranī has stated. Whatever the motives of the different participants in this episode, it is doubtful whether they were those imputed by Amīr Khusrau in his panegyric or by Baranī in his moral melodrama.

The excerpting and combining of 'Afīf's testimony, however closely scrutinized for veracity, will also not give the modern historian an intelligible picture of the reign of Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq. It is true that much of what 'Afīf says about that sultan's activities is corroborated by other works such as the sultan's *Futūḥāt-i-Fīrūz Shāhī* and by the *Sirat-i-Fīrūz Shāhī*—but no one seems to have asked the question whether 'Afīf had access to these works before he wrote his own, and until this question is answered it cannot even be said that 'Afīf is an independent author. As has been suggested in Chapter III, 'Afīf painted a picture of the reign of Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq as a golden age in which the sultan generally acted in obedience to the dictates of orthodox Islam. Everything that he did fell under one category or another of Muslim saintly virtue. Thus he was pacific, reluctant to

[1] *The Cambridge History of India*, Vol. III, p. 125.
[2] *History of Mediaeval India*, p. 220.
[3] J. C. Powell-Price, *A History of India*, London, 1955, p. 148.
[4] H. Nelson Wright, *The Coinage and Metrology of the Sulṭāns of Dehlī*, Delhi, 1936, p. 104.

jeopardize the lives of Muslims in battle, generous to a fault towards his servants, compassionate towards widows and orphans, a contemner of unorthodoxy and a represser of innovation. Building upon 'Afīf's standard hagiological motifs and stylized panegyric, some modern historians, such as Dr. Stanley Lane-Poole [1] and Sir Wolseley Haig [2] have endeavoured to paint a picture of a mild and benevolent sultan healing the wounds inflicted upon the sultanate by Muḥammad ibn Tughluq. But there are many rocks in the way of this interpretation. Fīrūz seems to have been as warlike as any other Delhi sultan. His first expedition to Bengal occurred in 754/1353, only two years after the death of Muḥammad ibn Tughluq. Then there was the second campaign in Bengal in 761/1359–60 followed by the campaign in the Orissa region and the expeditions to Nagarkoṭ 762/1361 and Thatta 767/1366.[3] Certainly the sultans of Delhi were not normally involved in the affairs of Orissa and there seems no reason why this particular expedition should be taken out of the usual context of a buccaneering expedition by the forces of Delhi against their neighbours. It will not do merely to copy 'Afīf's comments upon Fīrūz Shāh's pacific nature and on his reluctance to hazard the lives of Muslims in war. It is the aim of the historian not merely to write a plain narrative—to ascertain what events followed which—but to write an intelligible narrative, and this, it is suggested, he cannot do for the reign of Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq merely by accepting the statements of 'Afīf, however much they may be corroborated or at least not contradicted by other data.

In the final analysis, it is this obligation to offer his readers an intelligible account of the past which should inhibit the modern historian from becoming the prisoner of his 'sources', of their level and idiom of interpretation and of their omissions. There are many questions which the historian to-day will feel impelled to ask on which he will not find ready-made statements in the Indo-Muslim historians here discussed, or, if he does, only of such a kind as will leave him unsatisfied. He will not find them or they will leave him unsatisfied because Baranī and the others were not interested in writing the same kind of history as he aims at writing. Thus, the historian to-day will not find the Khaljī period of Delhi history intelligible unless he can formulate some answer to the question why it was possible for Delhi during the reign of 'Alā' al-dīn Khaljī to conduct campaigns against Gujarāt, Rājasthān and the Hindu Deccan states and repulse attacks

[1] *Mediaeval India under Mohammedan Rule*, pp. 138–140.
[2] *The Cambridge History of India*, III, pp. 174–175, 184–185.
[3] See Hodivala, op. cit., p. 322, on the dating of these expeditions.

from the north-west as well. He will not be satisfied with Amīr Khusrau's explanation that 'Alā' al-dīn wished to wash off the blood from his sword in the sea, nor will he be satisfied with Baranī's explanation that the success the sultan enjoyed was all due to the presence in his dominions of Shaykh Niẓām al-dīn Auliyā'. Neither 'Iṣāmī nor Yaḥyā ibn Aḥmad will provide him, from their own mouths, with any explanation. Similarly, he will not find in the fulminations and in the invented reports in 'Iṣāmī of the malevolent workings of Muḥammad ibn Tughluq's mind, nor in the wry comments of Baranī, why it was that that sultan decided to move his capital to Deogir. It is true that Baranī states that the place was equidistant from the main provinces of the empire, but he does not enter into the question why Muḥammad ibn Tughluq felt the force of this fact at a particular time. Nor will he be able to understand, not the opposition which the sultan aroused, but the support which he retained until the end of his life, from the *Ta'rīkh-i-Fīrūz Shāhī* and the *Futūḥ al-Salāṭīn*. The historian to-day will need more information on the state of religion in Hindūstān in Muḥammad ibn Tughluq's day and upon the relative strength of various sects and of their involvement in politics before he will be willing to assent to the proposition that it was Muḥammad's alleged estrangement from the orthodox *'ulamā* that was responsible for many of his troubles. Similarly he will not be satisfied with the explanation of innate benevolence as a reason for Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq's granting assignments of revenue upon a large scale, if indeed he feels able to conclude that 'Afīf's rhetoric is capable of such a factual interpretation. Nor will he accept 'Afīf's suggestion that Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq's propensity for collecting slaves was a cause of the troubles which befell Delhi after his death, without more evidence of how these slaves actually behaved.

Then again, as has been generally recognized, it is impossible to use the works of Baranī, 'Afīf, Yaḥyā ibn Aḥmad, Amīr Khusrau and 'Iṣāmī as providing ready-made material on such problems as the sources of Muslim political strength in Hindūstān, on the day-to-day relations with non-Muslims, or on the progress of Muslim colonization in Hindūstān and the form it took. All these are topics on which the historian has to make his own deductions, using often, it is true, the works of these historians, but as evidence to be put to the question, not as testimony to be copied—for example, taking Baranī's passionate exhortations to a militant Muslim virtue not as statements of fact, of how the sultans and their servants actually behaved towards the Hindus, but as a measure of how they did not behave, thus needing Baranī's course of education in their duty towards Islam. The reduced

state of the ruler of Delhi under the Sayyids, the petty revenue collecting expeditions conducted near Delhi, the extreme splintering of political authority in northern India in the first half of the fifteenth century A.D., without Muslims losing their paramount position in political life, all this poses questions about the actual daily contact of Hindus and Muslims which will not be convincingly answered by piecing together the more bloodthirsty passages from Muslim historians.

It is not, however, the argument of this chapter, or indeed of this monograph, that, because of the unpolitical mentality of the Indo-Muslim historians, it is impossible to write the political history of the medieval period in India; that would be to fall into the same error, in reverse, of assuming that history can be written from 'authorities' and 'sources'. One of the postulates of this analysis is that historical events do not happen historically and are not recorded historically but are only put into an historical context by persons thinking historically—that the historian has to do all his own work himself, so to speak. It is, however, the argument of this monograph that the material which has appeared to previous generations to provide a solid basis for writing political history does not in fact do so—that we know far less about the political history of medieval India than we have thought. Doubtless, with the aid of coins and inscriptions, a chronological framework for political events can be deduced from Indo-Muslim historians much more elaborate than for, let us say, the Hindu period or for some periods of medieval European history. But chronology, essential precondition as it is to the writing of history, is not history itself, not even political history. Examination of Yaḥyā ibn Aḥmad's *Ta'rīkh-i-Mubārak Shāhī*, which contains more dates than any other of the five works examined, will support that. Even at the level of chronology too, there is sufficient discrepancy in dating between the various accounts (whose authors, as has been shown, would never conceive it their duty to argue the matter) to support Blochmann's verdict that 'our knowledge of the Muhammedan period of the country is very limited and inaccurate in details'.[1] For example, despite the best efforts of Sir Wolseley Haig [2] and Dr. Mahdi Husain,[3] it is doubtful if the last word has yet been said on the chronology of that much-written-about monarch Muḥammad ibn Tughluq.

For political history, to be intelligible, requires insight into the

[1] Quoted in S. H. Hodivala, *Studies in Indo-Muslim History*, Vol. I, Preface p. v.
[2] 'Five Questions in the History of the Tughluq Dynasty,' *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, July, 1922.
[3] e.g. *The Rise and Fall of Muḥammad bin Tughluq*, chapter VIII.

particular dilemmas, choices and decisions of politicians, and some ability to relate these to the social background, an insight which Indo-Muslim historians, by their very lack of interest in such issues, their preference for rhetoric, hagiology and conventional literary motivation, and their exclusive concern with Muslim deeds, are unlikely to give the historian, however advanced his technique and determined his abandonment of ' scissors and paste '. It may be that even when more work has been done to integrate the literary data on the period with the numismatic and the inscriptional—and to collect all the literary data, the religious, the poetical, the Hindu and the Muslim—historians will have to content themselves with a less sophisticated level of interpretation of political history than they would for a more modern period where the data are more plentiful and more directly addressed to problems of politics. Indeed the evidence which has been examined in this monograph suggests that political studies may be against the grain of the medieval period itself—that the issues which then interested educated men were not what the modern world would regard as political.

In the short run, indeed, it may be best for the historian to lower his sights and direct them upon subjects which are within the range of the evidence available. The most difficult aspect of historical research is to know what questions to ask in a sound expectation that the evidence can yield an answer which will stand the test of criticism. From the appearance of some of the modern works on the medieval Muslim period before the coming of the Mughals, it is doubtful whether any questions or the right questions, in this sense of effective questions, have been asked at all. Such works as Sir Wolseley Haig's volume of the *Cambridge History of India* are altogether too close to the medieval histories—almost a photograph of them—to satisfy the urge to understand. Then, on the other side, such a book as Professor R. P. Tripathi's *Some Aspects of Muslim Administration* asks questions about the office of *wazīr* under the Delhi sultans, its actual functions and working, which cannot, it seems to the author, be convincingly answered from the scattered references in the Muslim histories. A catalogue of names and a few eulogistic remarks do not add up to an understanding of, let us say, how the work of the *wazīr* was related in practice to that of other royal officials.

What is needed perhaps is the asking of more questions related to the mentality of the men of the period as seen in religion and culture, in the hope of remedying, indirectly, the lack of evidence, and the lack of technique on the part of the modern historian, for interpreting political issues. In the investigation of that culture, the study of the

works of Baranī, 'Afīf, Yaḥyā ibn Aḥmad, Amīr Khusrau and 'Iṣāmī will have its place alongside the study of the wealth of religious literature, both Hindu and Muslim, still extant, for in them the authors reveal, explicitly or through deduction, their religious, their ethical and their aesthetic ideas. The historian must aim, however much through limitations of his evidence and through limitations of his own capacities and sympathies he may fail, to gain insight into the mentality of people unlike himself as part of his endeavours to tell an intelligible story. As a beginning, and only as a beginning, he could do worse, in the field of medieval Indo-Muslim history, than study the mentality of Baranī and the others for its own sake. The history of thought is not the whole of history, but there is no intelligible history without it.

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**The system of transliteration of the names and works of Muslims writing principally in Arabic, Persian and Urdū is that given on p. 888 of the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1895, as allowable for India, with the modification that the diphthong ىَ is rendered as 'au', not as 'aw'. The names of Muslims writing principally in European languages have not been transliterated according to this system. They are given in the spelling the authors themselves prefer, without diacritics, and are to be found indexed under the last component of the name as spelt on the title page of their publications.**

**In the bibliography, the names of authors writing in modern Urdū periodicals have not been printed with diacritics.**