

**NOBILITY
UNDER
THE
SULTANS
OF
DELHI**

A.D. 1206-1398

S. B. P. NIGAM

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Nobility
under the Sultans of Delhi
A.D. 1206-1398

S. B. P. Nigam
PH. D.



MUNSHIRAM MANOHARLAL

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*Respectfully dedicated to
Professor K. S. Bhatnagar
ex-Dean, Faculty of Arts, Agra University*

Preface

For all forms of institutional study the writer is faced with a spate of problems but the foremost is the availability of relevant evidence on which such a study should necessarily be based. For historical institutions, however, such data is all the more necessary. This is lamentably meagre so far as the study of the institution of Turkish nobility in India is concerned. Indigenous sources are completely absent and whatever knowledge we have at present is wholly inadequate to enable us proceed on scientific lines. This is, however, no reason why an attempt be not made to enquire into the various aspects of this institution for the Turkish nobles in India were great empire-builders. In fact it were they who laid the most vital foundations on which the Great Mughals raised their magnificent superstructure. The success of Turkish arms in India led by these nobles was a great revolution in itself. It has not only shaped the destiny of Islam in India but has also been the principal decisive factor in Indian history since the close of twelfth century.

The institution of nobility in India had its origin and sources deeply rooted in the state system of Ajam where the Turkish arms had begun to wield an influential position. More often than not they guided and decided the destinies of many ruling houses in the Middle East. The Turks were great soldiers. This is confirmed by many Sanskrit classics of India foremost being the *Rajatarangini* of Kalhana. The Turk was no stranger in the land of Aryan where from times immemorial he was recruited in the army of Indian rulers. But before their coming to India as rulers, a great transformation had occurred in the social and cultural fabric of the Turks by Islam. The Turks were great fighters but they were no administrative genius. For the great task which history had assigned to them, Islam provided that vitality and cohesion which was a serious drawback in Turkish society. It gave them that religious class comparable to the Brahmins of old whose intellectual pursuits were unbeaten in all lands. Again, by supplying to them the basic principles of

administration it provided a race of administrators who could look after the civil administration once a land had been occupied by Turkish arms. And, their economic structure was cemented by the Arab trader who found in the Turk his greatest protector. Lastly, the institution of slavery which had existed in all societies since the known history of civilizations was itself transformed into a system which had all the essential features of devotion and selfless service minus its disadvantages.

Thus, superficially, it will appear that the Turks virtually grafted the government and institutions of Ajam in India without taking into consideration the psyche and deep-rooted customs and usages of the land. But this hasty observation is removed the moment we retrace our steps and closely examine the progress of Turkish arms and institutions in India. The Islamic institutions went through a revolutionary change in their Indian environment. But the greatest change was brought about in the concept of Muslim sovereignty. In the Middle East the absolute nature of monarchy had been a reality but in India it was a nightmare. This evolution of the concept of sovereignty is the greatest contribution of the Turkish nobility. It prevented those who had the reins of power to work against the larger interests of the Turkish nobility.

The military conditions in India also prevented the growth of Muslim institutions. Although the principal Rajput families had been wiped out yet the local chieftain arrested the progress of Turkish arms deeper into the fabric of Indian society. They constantly waged a guerilla warfare against the Turks. These were not struggles for independence. The truth is that under Turkish rule the masses and peasants never formed any potent threat to the Turkish arms. They were by instinct and resources incapable of constituting a formidable military force to be reckoned with. The numerous revolts in the Doab which are recorded as having been suppressed by the Turkish nobles were not peasant revolts or mass upsurge against the Muslims as pointed out by the learned editors of *The History and Culture of the Indian People*. They were revolts of Rajputs and other martial tribes then inhabiting the Doab, struggling to regain and recompose their power. These revolts were nothing more than the wriggles of a half-beaten or half-dead snake. In this attempt to regain power many tribes vanished simply because

they refused to see that diplomacy and tact and not exhibition of military strength was their chief forte in that hour of trial. The Turks on their part, conscious of the danger from these quarters regarded the Rajputs (and not the Hindus in general) as their arch enemies. They left the masses and peasants to bask under their benign shadow in order to isolate the Rajputs and thus render them less dangerous. The term Hindu used by the chroniclers must, therefore, be understood in its limited extent.

Perhaps the Rajput also knew that to oust the Turks was a Himalayan task beyond the limited resources at his command. But he thought he could certainly make his stubbornness felt by the invader and advantageously turn it into a bargaining counter. Sooner or later, therefore, the local Turkish nobles and the Rajput chiefs came to a common understanding on the principle of 'live and let live'. The Turkish nobility struck this compromise because simultaneous to their wars with the local chieftains they were engaged in a constant tug-of-war with the crown over the real control of sovereignty. In such a crisis he could always find in Rajputs his real supporters and sometimes the only protector.

The Rajputs having thus come to terms with the Turkish nobility, the Hindu traders and commercial classes also took the change as a blessing in disguise. In fact, where the Rajput had failed the Vaish succeeded in controlling and often purchasing the Turkish nobility by rendering such essential services of banking and trade to the state as the unity of economic structure demanded. And behind the protecting arms of the Rajput and the Vaish stood the Brahmin along with the massive superstructure of the entire Hindu society built up by his ancestors.

It is now clear that the Turkish arms constituted by the nobility having failed to disturb the inner ring of the Hindu society, concentrated mainly in developing an urban civilization with military strength as its nucleus power. But this fact has led many members of the Aligarh school to found wildest theories of medieval socialism. The changes brought by the early Turks and later on by Ala-ud-din Khalji are interpreted as socialist revolutions. But in the presence of almost bewildering evidence to prove that the local administration continued to be changeless, although there were occasional digressions, is a clear nega-

tion of this theory. On the contrary we are sure that the rich were getting richer and the poor poorer under the Turkish system of government. What socialism could mean in an age when means of production had not changed is anybody's guess.

The political synthesis having failed, religion provided some consolation to both the warring groups among the Hindus and the Muslims. And that was the only possible way to bring an accord at the cultural level between two social systems which had customary laws diagonally opposed to each other. Here unfortunately, the *Ulema* stepped in, always raising the cry of 'Death or Islam' which has been a popular slogan to raise the morale of the muslim fighting class. They were never sick of suggesting this precept to the rulers. Had such means been adopted in times of war, one could have lightly dismissed them as merely slogans having propaganda value but the tragic part of the affair is that the *Ulema* proposed this policy in peaceful days. The sceptical spirit of the historian naturally exclaims—Is this Islam?

To draw any final conclusions out of the meagre data we have at our disposal is to attempt an impossible task but the following pages are devoted to a study of the institution of nobility as fully as possible so far as its political aspect is concerned. In placing my views before the scholars I do not lay any claim to originality or to have arrived at finality.

I consider it my bounden duty to express my profound sense of gratitude to Dr S. A. A. Rizvi, my supervisor, who despite his own official duties and personal engagements, kindly went through the many drafts of the thesis prepared by me and offered valuable suggestions from time to time. I am also grateful to Dr Parmatma Saran, the veteran historian of Medieval Indian History, whose scholarly discussions enabled me to arrive at a logical understanding of the subject. I would also like to offer my thanks to Professor S. Nurul Hasan who kindly spared his time to discuss a number of topics covered in the thesis and some very valuable hints on use of historical data contained in the contemporary chronicles. In revising my thesis I was much benefitted by the comments of the examiners, Professors M. Habib and Hasan Askari to whom I extend my gratefulness. My thanks are also due to Professor K. S. Bhatnagar, retired Dean, Faculty of Arts, Agra University whose

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advice has been available to me while working on the subject and whose comments have been very useful to me for further shaping my work.

S. B. P. NIGAM

Udaipur
August 19, 1967

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Abbreviations

Aff :	<i>Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi</i> of Afif
BMM :	British Museum Manuscripts
FS. :	<i>Futuh-us-Salatin</i> of Isami
Firishta :	<i>Gulshan-i-Ibrahimi</i> of Abul Qasim Hindushah Firishta
F.F. :	<i>Futuh-i-Firuzshahi</i> of Firuzshah Tughluq
Hodivala :	<i>Studies in Indo-Muslim History</i> , Vol. I
IOM :	India Office Manuscripts
IHC :	Indian History Congress
JIH :	<i>Journal of Indian History</i>
MIQ :	<i>Medieval India Quarterly</i>
MF :	<i>Miftah-ul-Futuh</i> of Amir Khusrau
MT :	<i>Muntakhab-ut-tawarikh</i> of Abdul Qadir Badayuni
MA :	<i>Matla-ul-Anwar</i> of Amir Khusrau
QS :	<i>Qiran-us-Sadain</i> of Amir Khusrau
Raverty :	English Translation of <i>Tabaqat-i-Nisiri</i>
TF :	<i>Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi</i> of Ziya-ud-din Barani
TN :	<i>Tabaqat-i-Nasiri</i> of Minhaj-i-Siraj
TM :	<i>Tarikh-i-Mubarakshahi</i> of Yahiya bin Ahmad Sarhindi
Taj :	<i>Taj-ul-Maasir</i> of Hasan Nizami

Introduction

Since the last quarter of nineteenth century there has been a spate of historical works by competent scholars bearing on medieval Indian History. Works based on these original material have also been pouring in rapidly stimulating further research. From biographical works, dynastic histories and stray articles, greater emphasis is now being laid to the study of institutions. Moreland's researches into agrarian relations can well claim to be among pioneer works in the field. Indian scholars have also not lagged behind in making their own contribution to this branch of historical research. Dr R. P. Tripathi made a valuable study of some main institutions of the Sultans of Delhi and those of the early Mughals. He confined himself to the study of the institution of the *Wazarat*, the revenue administration and the concept of sovereignty. Nevertheless, he pointed out the direction in which further research work on parallel institutions was called for. Next to him, but in no way less substantive, have been the works of Dr Ibn Hasan and Dr Parmatma Saran. *The Studies in Medieval Indian History* of the latter author occupies a high place in the scholarly world for its thought-provoking contents and scientific interpretation of the various institutions and political forces at work specially during the Sultanate period. Mention may also be made of valuable work done by Dr K. M. Ashraf and Dr I. H. Qureshi. It is, however, noticeable that works on the institutions of the Sultanate period have been comparatively meagre as compared to the Mughal period, perhaps, because of the paucity of relevant source material. It is only with the help of scattered data and stray remarks in the political chronicles of the period that the study of the institutions of the Sultanate period can be undertaken.

The need for the study of the nobility under the Sultans of

Delhi cannot be over-emphasized, for the history of the Sultanate period is to a great extent, the history of the achievements and failures of the Turkish nobility. None of the kings in the early Turkish period had a recognized heredity connecting them to any of the royal houses of Turkistan or Persia. In other words, the kings during the Sultanate period were themselves nobles, having risen to power through sheer dint of merit and practical statesmanship. In carving out a dominion the influential nobles were helped by the members of their own classes, and ethnic considerations as well as selfish motives ensured success to them. Social, religious and economic factors played an important role in the formation of groups, but as time passed the exclusiveness of particular interest disappeared; different groups freely intermingled and made them broadly based and secular in character. This also led to numerous troubles and gave rise to many problems peculiar to the Sultanate period alone. The study of the nobility under the Sultans, therefore, surpasses any other institution—even the monarchy itself.

As to the choice of the period, a word is necessary. That it begins in A.D. 1206 is obvious for though the entire northern Indian region had been completely subjugated by the Turks between A.D. 1191-1206, it was only in A.D. 1206 that a sovereign power was established in India under them. Prior to it, and during the lifetime of Sultan Muizz-ud-din Muhammad bin Sam, the nucleus of political power continued to be in Ghazni. It was only after his death in A.D. 1206 that Sultan Qutb-ud-din Aibak held *de facto* power over the Indian dominions of the Ghorid invader. Since then, there was a continuity in the institution of the nobility down to the invasion of Timur in A.D. 1398. This continuity in ranks, designations, racial extraction and hereditary descent made the Turkish nobility a unique institution in the annals of the Sultanate period. An analysis of the institution is bound to shed interesting light on different aspects of the institutions of the Turkish Sultans of India.

Sources

Before we proceed to the actual study of our subject it is necessary to analyze various sources in order to assess their comparative merit as the basis of our study.

(i) Principal Contemporary Chronicles

For the history of the Ilbari Turks, the most important work is Minhaj-i-Siraj's *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*. Born about the year A.D. 1193 the author was intimately connected with the family of the Ghorids since his childhood. His father held the post of *Qazi-i-Lashkar* in the army under Sultan Muizz-ud-din Muhammad bin Sam in 1186-87, Minhaj himself entered the service of Sultan Iltutmish in 1228 and was first of all appointed Qazi of Gwalior. Under the successors of Iltutmish too, Minhaj-i-Siraj played a very important role and, therefore, his knowledge about the events since his coming to India was firsthand. He began writing his work sometime in the reign of Sultan Nasir-ud-din Mahmud and brought down the narrative upto A.D. 1260.

This work is invaluable for the study of the nobility since a considerable portion of it is devoted to the career of nearly all the prominent nobles of Sultan Muizz-ud-din Muhammad bin Sam and Sultan Shams-ud-din Iltutmish who had patronized Minhaj-i-Siraj and conferred many favours on him. In his zeal to exalt them, he deliberately suppresses facts and often gives a distorted version of the story. He turns the defeat of Malik Nusrat-ud-din Taisi at the hands of Rana Chahar Ajari into victory by repeating the event several times in the narrative to impress upon the readers that his patron came out successful in the engagement. Similarly, his account of Ulugh Khan Balban which is the longest among the biographies of nobles is full of eulogies for his patron. In the eyes of his contemporaries, and also later on after his death, Balban was considered to be an intriguer and a ferociously revengeful person. But Minhaj-i-Siraj presents him before us as a paragon of virtues. The affair of Malik Imad-ud-din Raihan will always remain an unsolved riddle to us because Minhaj-i-Siraj has deliberately suppressed many facts unfavourable to his patron. Full of contempt for Imad-ud-din Raihan, he throws the entire blame upon him for the temporary downfall of Balban. Again, Minhaj-i-Siraj does not mention the careers of those nobles against whom he is badly prejudiced e.g. Jamal-ud-din Yaqut, Imad-ud-din Raihan and Qutlugh Khan. It is needless to say that an intimate knowledge of these nobles who played a prominent part in contemporary politics must have thrown much light on the political

and administrative history of the period as also on the condition of the nobles who were admitted to the organized group of the Turkish nobility from newly converted Muslims of other races.

His approach to the various personalities of the period is coloured by the fact that he himself was an active figure in contemporary politics and his interest was bound with one or the other party. Though himself an eminent theologian holding the highest rank in the judiciary, he did not, in the interest of the state, fail to expose the intrigues and the scramble for power on the part of the *Ulema*. Despite his shortcomings, his work occupies a very important place among the contemporary histories. His sources of information were many and he took great pains to collect and sift the material relating to the lives and careers of the nobility. But for his painstaking and careful analysis, we would have been deprived of the knowledge of a number of political forces at work during the thirteenth century. His work also throws considerable light on the detailed working of the administrative machinery, appointments, promotions and service conditions of the times.

The historical *Masnavis* of Amir Khusrau also occupy an important place in the historical literature of the thirteenth century on account of the author's firsthand knowledge of contemporary events. Born in the year 1253, Amir Khusrau soon attained a literary eminence by his extraordinary poetic genius as also due to the high connections of his family with the court and the nobility. Khusrau's father, Saif-i-Shamsi (Amir Saif-ud-din Mahmud), held a respectable position under Iltutmish and his successors. After his death, Amir Khusrau was brought up by his maternal grandfather, Imad-ul-mulk Rawat-i-Arz, a high-ranking noble of the reign of Balban. Amir Khusrau later entered into the service of Balban's nephew and *Barbak* Malik Ala-ud-din Kishli Khan and thereafter went to Multan to serve at the court of Prince Mahmud, son and heir-apparent of Balban. After Mahmud's death, Amir Khusrau came back to Delhi and remained in the service of Muizz-ud-din Kaiqubad, Jalal-ud-din Khalji, Ala-ud-din Khalji, Qutb-ud-din Mubarak Shah and Ghiyas-ud-din Tughluq. Being intimately connected with the affairs of the court, he had firsthand knowledge of the nobility and the part played by it in contemporary politics. All his historical *Masnavis* are replete with authentic data for our study.

The first and foremost of the historical *Masnavis* of Amir Khusrau is the *Qiran-us-Sadaini* written in the year 1289 at the command of Sultan Muizz-ud-din Kaiqubad to commemorate the historical meeting between him and his father Sultan Nasir-ud-din Bughra Khan, on the banks of Saryu in Avadh (688H/1289). Amir Khusrau himself accompanied Sultan Muizz-ud-din and was an eye-witness to the proceedings in Avadh. Apart from the cultural and social life of the nobility, he gives vivid accounts of the convivial parties, and the temper, behaviour and the role of the nobility in that historic event. Of political events too, he gives a firsthand picture of the role of Malik Nizam-ud-did, the *Amir-i-Hajib*; whom Bughra Khan tried to win over to his side by threats and promises followed by negotiations for effecting an understanding and meeting between the father and the son. The *Masnavi* throws a flood of light on contemporary events and has been copiously utilized for our study.

The *Miftah-ul-Futuh*, sometimes called the *Fath-nama* or *Fath-ul-Futuh*, completed by Amir Khusrau in 690H/1291, contains an account of the victories of Sultan Jalal-ud-din Khalji during the first year of his reign and forms part of his third *diwan*, entitled the *Ghurrat-ul-Kamal*. The poet held the post of *Mushafdar* in the court of Jalal-ud-din Khalji and hence he had firsthand knowledge of the events narrated in the poem. It gives a faithful account of the rebellion of Malik Chhajju, the nephew of Balban and the *Muqti* of Kara, and the part played by the nobility.

Of considerable importance is the *Masnavi*, entitled *Dewal Rani Khizr Khan*, also known as *Munshur-i-Shahi*, or *Ashiqæ* or *Ishqia* completed in 715H/1316. It comprises the love-story of Prince Khizr Khan, the son and heir-apparent of Sultan Ala-ud-din Khalji, and the daughter of Raja Karan of Nehrwala, with a continuation of 319 lines written at some time subsequent to Mubarak Shah's death. It deals with Khizr Khan's estrangement from his father, his confinement in the fortress of Gwalior, his blinding by Malik Kafur and his execution at the command of Qutb-ud-din Mubarak Shah. According to the preface to the work, Khizr Khan, who was a regular visitor to the *Khanqah* of Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya, himself commissioned the poet to write the poem for him. Apart from being a unique piece of poetic composition, the *Masnavi* is invaluable for the history of

the last years of the reign of Ala-ud-din Khalji and of events subsequent to his death. The rivalry of Malik Naib and Alap Khan, who was Khizr Khan's maternal uncle, has been dealt with at some length. The conspiracy of Malik Naib to remove Khizr Khan from his path has also been adequately dealt with. Amir Khusrau, however, attributes the execution of prince Khizr Khan to his refusal to part with Dewal Rani, whose hand Sultan Qutb-ud-din coveted whereas Barani, Isami and other historians explain it as a direct result of the abortive conspiracy of Malik Asad-ud-din.

Completed about the year 720H/1320 and the last and the best of Amir Khusrau's historical *Masnavis*, is the *Tughluqnama*. Since it was written at the ripe old age of about seventy years, it exhibits the perfection of the art of Amir Khusrau. It gives a detailed account of the rise of Khusrau Khan, his conspiracy and coronation and of the rebellion of Ghazi Malik and his victory over Khusrau Khan in two battles. The real importance of the *Masnavi* for our study is an account of the relationship and the reactions of the *Alai* nobles against Khusrau Khan. It clearly mentions the names of the supporters in both the camps and why they chose a particular course in that awkward situation which was the question of life and death for them. All subsequent historians, e.g. Yahiya, Badayuni and Firishta, have profusely drawn upon the *Tughluqnama* for the history of that critical period. The value of the *Masnavi* is further enhanced on account of the paucity of details of the period in Barani's *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*.

Apart from the historical *Masnavis* discussed above, Amir Khusrau also wrote a history of the reign of Ala-ud-din Khalji in ornate prose, known as the *Khazain-ul-Futuh* or as the author calls it the *Tarikh-i-Alai*, completed in 711H/1311-12. The work is mainly devoted to the conquests made by Ala-ud-din Khalji and his generals, the economic measures undertaken by the Sultan to ameliorate the lot of his people and the administrative reforms to root out corruption from the Government though details are very meagre. It is, therefore, not of much importance for the purposes of this study though it gives here and there a few valuable details about the life and career of Malik Naib and a few other nobles. It however, gives the connected chronology of the *Alai* reign and is, therefore, very valuable

as a corrective to Barani's narrative.

The *Nuh Sipahr* (The Nine Skies) of Amir Khusrau composed in 718H/1318, written at the command of Sultan Qutb-ud-din Mubarak Shah also contains a chapter dealing with the nobility. In chapter IV of the work, the poet gives valuable advice to the nobility exhorting them to cultivate various virtues, which as the author thinks, may be useful in the efficient discharge of their duties. He specially wants them to be loyal and faithful to their monarch, a quality which was most sought after by rulers in that age. The chapter also contains valuable advices for the kings.

Among the primary sources of the history of the Turks, the *Futuh-us-Salatin*, written by Isami, also occupies a prominent place. The author who was a contemporary of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq completed this work in Persian verse in the year 750H/1349-50 and dedicated it to Ala-ud-din Abul Muzaffar Bahman Shah Sultan. The author's family was intimately connected with the Ilbaris since the days of Iltutmish when one of his ancestors, Fakhr-ul-Mulk Isami, who was the *Wazir* of the Khalifa of Baghdad, came to the court of Iltutmish and was honoured with a high appointment at the court. His son Sadr-ul-Kiram Isami got the title of *Zahir-ul-mamalik* and the post of *Vakil-i-Dar* in the reign of Sultan Nasir-ud-din Mahmud. His son *Sipahsalar* Izz-ud-din Isami was the *Khas Hajib* under Sultan Balban. Isami, who was born in 711H/1311-12, was from his very childhood brought up by *Sipahsalar* Izz-ud-din who died at the age of ninety years while going from Delhi to Deogiri in the reign of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq at the time of the transfer of the seat of Government. The family did not fare well under the reign of the Tughluqs who confiscated two villages near Delhi which had belonged to the family since the days of Sultan Iltutmish. Isami's history of the Tughluqs is, therefore, not free from personal bias. But a number of authentic sources now lost were at his disposal and he gives valuable details of the history of the Ilbaris and the Khaljis. It is Isami who gives the story of the murder of Malik Qutb-ud-din Ali Ghorî, a very high-ranking noble of Sultan Nasir-ud-din Mahmud by Balban. Again it is he who tells us that Sultan Nasir-ud-din was poisoned by Balban, a fact which is also confirmed by Ibn-i-Battutah. The work is replete with anecdotes

which give interesting glimpses of the social and cultural life of the period. However, the apparent prejudice of the author against Muhammad bin Tughluq has reduced the historical value of the work so far as the history of the Tughluqs is concerned.

Our next important authority, Ziya-ud-din Barani, the author of the *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, must have been born about the year 684H/1285, since his age in 758H/1357, when he finished the *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, was 74 years. His father Muid-ul-mulk was deputy to Prince Arkali Khan in Jalal-ud-din Khalji's reign. In the first year of Ala-ud-din Khalji's reign he was entrusted with the *Niyabat* and *Khwajagi* of Baran. His paternal uncle, Malik Ala-ul-mulk, was *Kotwal* of Delhi and was a great confidant and advisor of Sultan Ala-ud-din Khalji. Barani's maternal grandfather, *Sipahsalar* Husam-ud-din, *Wakil-i-Dar* to Malik Barbak, was appointed by Balban to the *Shahnagi* of Lakhnauti. Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq, whom Zia-ud-din Barani served as *Nadim* for 17 years and 3 months, was his patron. He was personally known to many top-ranking nobles of the court, prominent among whom were the *Wazir* Khan-i-Jahan Ahmad Ayaz and Malik Qabul Khalifati. After the Sultan's death, Barani fell into disgrace and the courtiers of Firuz Tughluq managed his banishment from the court. He had to undergo great hardships on account of the machinations of his enemies, a fact he has repeatedly mentioned in his works.

Barani started to write his works at an age when his memory had started fading. He, therefore, does not pay adequate attention to narrate the events chronologically. He himself admitted the defect in his introduction to the account of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq. For him, history was of value in practical politics as lessons from it were to be used as correctives to their policies by rulers and administrators. He handles events skilfully with a view to draw some kind of moral from them. The historicity of the discourses of Balban with Sultan Muhammad and Bughra Khan, those of Bughra Khan with Kaiqubad, and of Sultan Ala-ud-din with Qazi Mughis of Bayana or his own conversations with Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq can be questioned but this much is certain that they are of the utmost importance for the proper evaluation of the ideas and beliefs of an important section of contemporary theologians and sufis.

Ziya-ud-din was a great devotee of Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya and also a friend of literary luminaries such as Amir Khusrau and Mir Hasan Sijzi besides a host of others whom he mentions in his narrative. There can be little doubt regarding the authenticity of his sources, some of which he mentions at the beginning of the reign of each monarch.

Barani's narrative starts in the first year of Balban's reign (A.D. 1266) and therefore a clear lacuna of six years is left in the continuity of the history of the Ilbari Turks which was brought down to 1260 by Minhaj-i-Siraj. This lacuna has not been filled since then, although many historians like Isami, Yahya and Ibn-i-Battutah give valuable details of the period. He has failed to do proper justice to the most powerful element in the politics of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries—the nobility. He gives short notices of the prominent nobles but says nothing about their rise and fall. For the life and career of the nobles who lived in the court of Balban, Barani did not possess adequate information. He gives short biographies of only four of his nobles, viz. Malik Ala-ud-din Kishli Khan, Imad-ul-mulk Rawat-i-Arz, Malik-ul-umara Fakhr-ud-din Kotwal and Amir Ali Sarjandar Hafim Khan, out of a list of thirty-seven which he appends before starting his narrative on Balban. In these short notices he only concentrates on details about their charity, bravery and social life. Similar treatment is given to the reigns of Jalal-ud-din Khalji and Ala-ud-din Khalji after which even such casual and short notices stop. The notices of the nobles of the reign of Firuz Shah, are full of personal details but their contributions to contemporary politics is ignored. He seems to flatter everybody who could plead his case before the Sultan more or less successfully such as Malik-ul-Umara Shikarbak Dehlan-i-Sultani who helped him and recommended his case to the Sultan. Prince Fath Khan, who was a minor when Barani finished his work also used to help him.

In assessing the work of Barani, we must not, however, forget the stupendous task before him. His history roughly covers a period of ninety years (1266-1357) with the account of eight monarchs during whose reign the ranks of nobility continued to swell with the succession of each sovereign with the result that it became rather impossible to give separate notices for each one of them. Barani could not have done it without doub-

ling the size of his work and also without an unwelcome deviation from the general historical trend of his narrative. He had no means of collecting the vast information spread over a period of ninety years required for a biographical account of the nobles of the period who had already become a complicated institution, ever-changing and ever-expanding. But in one respect Barani's history surpasses all other contemporary and secondary sources. Studied individually, the lists of nobles given by Barani for each reign, are just a collection of names of the nobles but examined comparatively, they tell the story of the rise and fall of various classes of the nobility as clearly as spoken words. Besides, the only source of Barani's knowledge was his own memory and it must be said to the great credit of the old and disappointed historian that he utilized that source very well. Posterity shall always hold him high among the historians of medieval India.

Barani's narrative in the *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi* is brought down to the sixth year of Sultan Firuz Shah's reign, that is upto A.D. 1357 and our next contemporary authority for the reign of Sultan Firuz Tughluq is Shams Siraj Afif. His great grandfather, Malik Saad-ul-mulk Shihab Afif was appointed *Amaldar* of Abuhar in the Firuzpur district by Sultan Ghiyas-ud-din Tughluq. His father was in the service of Firuz Shah, at one time as *Shah-nawis-i-Khawasan*, at another time in the *Wazir's* office. Shams Siraj Afif himself later entered the Sultan's service in the *Diwan-i-Wazarat* and used to go to the Sultan's court occasionally to pay his respects. He also accompanied the Sultan in his hunting expeditions. His knowledge for most of the reign of Firuz Shah is, therefore, firsthand.

Apart from the political history of the period, Afif devotes a separate chapter dealing with detailed biographies of principal nobles of the court of Firuz Shah. But for the diligence, with which he collected material and gave minute details about their affairs, habits, quarrels and relations with the Sultan himself, it would perhaps have been difficult to assess the role of the nobility under Firuz Tughluq whose reign is most significant for the study of the subject. Afif has surpassed Barani in more than one respect. He so skilfully gives us relevant anecdotes bearing light on the history of the period that it is not difficult to form our own estimate of the events. The account of the quarrel

between *Khan-i-Jahan* Maqbul with Malik Ain-ul-Mulk Multani and that of Malik Kabir with Malik Mujir Abu Rija may be cited as examples. Many more are spread here and there throughout the narrative. Afif gives full accounts of only six of the principal nobles of the court viz. *Khan-i-Jahan* Tatar Khan; *Khan-i-Jahan* Maqbul, the *Wazir*; Malik Naib Barbak; Saiyid-ul-Hujjab, the *Nadim*; Malik Shams-ud-din Damghani, the *Muqti* of Gujarat but the account of many more may be gathered from his narrative. No other contemporary or late historian throws so much light on the nobles of Firuz Shah and in this respect the work of Afif is of exceptional merit.

The *Futuh-at-i-Firuzshahi* said to have been written by Sultan Firuz Tughluq himself occupies an important place among the contemporary histories of the Tughluqs. It gives an adequate idea of the Sultan's piety and his obscurantism. Although nothing can be guessed from the work about the nobility, it is quite certain that the *Ulema* had a fine day throughout his reign—a fact also confirmed by Afif.

The *Tarikh-i-Mubarakshahi* of Yahiya bin Ahmad bin Abdullah Sirhindi which was compiled in A.D. 1434 also occupies an important place among contemporary histories of the Delhi Sultanate but it is more useful for the reigns of the Saiyids. As indicated by him in the preface, he relied on earlier works written in various preceding reigns for his account of the reign of the earlier Sultans. However, he has given many additional details about the administrative and political history of the Turkish Sultans. It throws some new light on the activities of the nobles too.

(ii) *Minor Contemporary Chronicles*

Among the minor works on the political history of the periods mention may first be made of the *Taj-ul-Maasir* of Khwaja Hasan Nizami who migrated to India from Khurasan during the time of Qutb-ud-din Aibak. He began his work in A.D. 1205 and brought it down to A.D. 1227. The greatest value of the work lies in its being contemporary as the author was an eye-witness to many of the events. The work has been written in a highly ornamental prose which was considered to be an art in that age. The historical narrative is embellished with similes and metaphors and a highly ornamental diction. Whatever its value may

be as a piece of literature, its historical value lies in valuable accounts which are not to be found in any other work. The author does not give any separate notices of any of the nobles of Qutb-ud-din or Ilutmish but his narrative provides numerous clues to the part played by them in the early stages of the establishment of the Turkish kingdom in India.

The *Tarikh-i-Fakhr-ud-din Mubarakshah* written by Fakhr-i-Mudabbir, also known as Fakhr-i-Mudir, and dedicated to Sultan Shams-ud-din Ilutmish, is also a valuable source for the history of the early Turks. Not much is known about the author but he might have been born about A.D. 1164-65. The above book he dedicated to Sultan Shams-ud-din when he was quite old. Thus, the probable period of his life may be placed between A.D. 1165 and 1236. Like Hasan Nizami, he was also a contemporary of the early Turks and was an eye-witness of most of the events. He was present at Lahore at the coronation of Qutb-ud-din Aibak. Details relating to the history of the nobility are, however, not given and therefore, it is of little use to us.

(iii) Works on Institutions

As the study of the nobility under the Turks is primarily the study of an organized group, it is necessary to take notice of those works on polity and public administration which were directly connected with the activities of the king and his courtiers in particular and the lower classes in general. Among such works written during the period of our study, the foremost is the *Adab-ul-Harb Wash-Shujaat* written by Fakhr-i-Mudabbir, whose *Tarikh-i-Fakhr-ud-din Mubarakshah* has been noticed above. It deals with the methods and the techniques of war as followed by the Turks in considerable details, but the work also comprises an account of the principles governing high appointments specially of the *Wazir* who is described as the nerve centre of the administrative machinery. It emphasizes high birth and descent as the main criteria for holding high offices. It gives detailed instructions for the appointment of the *Wazir* and his duties. Similarly, it advises the kings to be kind and considerate in dealing with the nobility, slaves and his subjects and lays great emphasis on doing justice to the afflicted. The work over-emphasizes the profes-

sion of a soldier and looks down with contempt on the artisans like weavers—perhaps as a consequence of the Turk's consciousness of class distinctions and social bias.

Though different in style and nature, the *Ijaz-i-Khusraui* of Amir Khusrau is a unique work of its kind that throws much light on the society and institutions, specially the nobility, under the Ilbaris and the Khaljis. Amir Khusrau finished this monumental work in the year 719H when he was about 70 years of age. The *Ijaz-i-Khusraui* is a collection of letters written for the guidance of posterity. This class of literature, called *Insha*, was very popular in those days, and, as Amir Khusrau himself mentions, nine different styles of *Insha* were developed by various scholars. The letters in the *Ijaz-i-Khusraui* written to historical personalities give some political details too, but their value is marred by the ornate language employed by the author. It contains five chapters, of which the fourth and fifth alone are of some value. The fourth chapter (*risala*) contains a valuable letter of Badr Hajib to Prince Khizr Khan. It also contains a *farman* issued by Sultan Ala-ud-din Khalji on his accession to the throne in A.D. 1295. The fifth chapter has only two letters of importance. The first is the proclamation (*Fathnama*) issued by Sultan Ghiyas-ud-din Balban after his victory over Tughril in Lakhnauti, and the other is a letter written by the author from Avadh in 687H to one Najm-ud-din Hasan.

Another famous work on *Insha* is that of Malik Ain-ul-mulk Mahru whose *Insha-i-Mahru* or *Munshaat-i-Mahru* as Afif calls it, earned fame as a work of literature in the author's own lifetime and has continued to be of great importance through the ages. Shams Siraj Afif also found the work to be of considerable importance. Ain-ul-mulk Multani had very long and meritorious service to his credit and served both the Khaljis and the Tughluqs in various capacities. During the reign of Firuz Shah, he held the post of *Mustaufi-i-Mamalik* the duties of which he discharged with ability. He wrote many works but the *Insha-i-Mahru* alone has survived to commemorate his literary and administrative skill. The total number of letters in the *Insha-i-Mahru* is 133. The first twelve letters were written on behalf of Sultan Firuz Shah Tughluq to high-ranking nobles. A significant letter is that of Malik-us-Sharq Shihab-ud-

daulah. The rest have been written by the author himself to contemporary nobles, learned men, *Mashaikh* and *Ulema*. The letters throw much light on the social, economic and religious conditions of the time. They indicate the power that the bureaucracy enjoyed in handling the affairs of the state. They also throw a flood of light on the mutual relations of the nobles. Since the book was written by a very high-ranking noble of the court, it has an element of authenticity and added interest which is lacking in the *Ijaz-i-Khusravi*. It provides a practical specimen of the style of official correspondence actually in vogue and popular among the educated classes of those times.

Of much academic interest is another work of Ziya-ud-din Barani called the *Fatawa-i-Jahandari*. The work is a compilation of instructions on various branches of administration and the advices offered are put into the mouths of historical personalities whom Barani regarded as ideal. In this short but important work, Barani tries to lay down the shapes and form of the ideal Muslim government based on Islamic traditions of his own conception and understanding. It, therefore, naturally contains material full of contempt for the Hindus. Sultan Mahmud Ghaznavi was an idol of his dreams of an ideal Islamic state and he attributed many exploits to the Sultan which are not confirmed by history. Sources quoted by him regarding the reign of Mahmud of Sanjar are of anecdotal character and seem to be spurious. He apparently studied some works on practical politics and morals in his young age which he could not recollect when he started writing the work at the fag end of his life.

It has been argued by Professor Habib as follows:

The great claim Barani makes for himself is that of the wisest of thinkers on State affairs. Till about the time of Sher Shah, everyone who read the *Firuzshahi* acknowledged Barani's wisdom. Then, the circumstances of the country and the thoughts of educated people changed. Barani, though still valued as a historian, was ignored as a political teacher. Today no precept of Barani has any practical value. But the wisest of political thinkers—Plato, Aristotle, Mechiavelli, Karl Marx,—are only wise for their time. No one is wise for all

times. Barani's political wisdom is confined to the period of the Delhi Sultanate.

It must, however, be pointed out that Barani never achieved any eminence during his own lifetime and in the *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, he laments the non-recognition of his works. In fact, he sought recognition by Sultan Firuz Shah through the intercession of high nobles. There can be no denying the fact that Barani was wise as a political mentor neither for his age nor for ours. His work is a jumbled collection of confused and ill-digested ideas emanating from a frustrated mind. Numerous contradictions in his own ideas and the practical experience provided by the age of Barani is a clear proof that his ideas could not be taken seriously in his own lifetime. It cannot be taken as a practical guide for understanding the institutions of that age nor can it be accepted as an established theory of state based on any rational ideas. Barani repeatedly emphasizes the principle of high breeding in prescribing the criteria for the nobility but throughout the period it was rejected again and again since exigencies of the time demanded a more rational approach based on talent and fitness. Barani was one of the members of the higher class and it was natural that being conscious of his high nobility he should lament the comparatively lower status given to him than to many nobles of indigenous stock. In fact, Barani belonged to that class of orthodox Muslims who could not adjust themselves to the changing times and suffered in consequence.

The *Dastur-ul-Albab fi Ilm-il-Hisab* written by Haji Abdul Hamid Muharrir Ghaznavi in the year 760H for the guidance of his son Rukn-ud-din is also a work of considerable merit. Though the work is devoted to mathematics and accountancy, it gives valuable information relating to the procedure and administration of the Revenue Ministry, its various offices, their duties, the mode of account-keeping and the taxes which were levied by the state. It specially mentions the duties and requirements of the *Wazir*, the *Mushrif*, the *Mustaufi*, the *Barid*, the *Nazir* and the *Wuquf*. The functions of all other minor officials are adequately explained in the work. It is of much value for a knowledge of the criteria for the evaluation of achievements of the nobility in the reign of Sultan Firuz Shah Tughluq.

(iv) *Works on Religion and Mysticism*

The *Malfuzat* or the discourses of the saints are of considerable historical interest because they throw much light on the social and religious conditions of the age in which they were written. They judged every event from their own idealistic point of view and paid little heed to the actual needs of the times. They are often based on inadequate information on political events and are not free from personal prejudices against the *Ulema* and other classes. Of the authentic *Malfuzats*, the *Fuwai-ul-Fuwad* of Amir Hasan Sijzi is of immense value. The author was a disciple of Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya and a contemporary of Amir Khusrau and Zia-ud-din Barani. It contains records of the occasional discourses of Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya. Barani speaks very highly of the author and his *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, testifies in unequivocal terms the popularity that Sijzi's work had achieved in his times. The work was finished in the year 722H and soon became popular with the mystics as well as with Muslims generally. It has been extensively used in mystical works.

The *Khair-ul-Majalis* of Hamid Qalandar, written in the year 1354, also occupies an important place in the mystical literature of the fourteenth century. The book records the conversations of Shaikh Nasir-ud-din Chiragh-i-Delhi, the disciple and successor of Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya. He was born in 1267 in Awadh and joined the mystic order at the age of twentyfive and began preaching in Avadh. He left Avadh for Delhi at the age of fortythree and became the Shaikh's disciple. During the reign of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq, the Shaikh was held in great veneration by all Muslims and accompanied the Sultan in his last campaign in Sindh. He played an important part in raising Firuz Shah Tughluq to the throne but died in 1356, a few years after his accession. Following the example set by Amir Hasan Sijzi, he commenced writing the *Khair-ul-Majalis* with the consent of the Shaikh. It contains an account of 100 conversations of the saint and became very popular in his lifetime. The bulk of the material contained in the work relates to the life of Shaikh Nasir-ud-din Chiragh-i-Delhi and the subject throughout is Muslim mysticism. It, however, throws some light on the social and economic conditions of the age for a large number of Muslims visited him to discuss their problems. It

has been pointed out in the contemporary chronicles of Firuz Shah that foodstuffs were very cheap during his reign but from the *Khair-ul-Majalis* it appears that food was not as cheap as in the reign of Sultan Ala-ud-din Khalji with the result that even the Sufis and saints who led a retired life often felt much difficulty in procuring provisions for their livelihood.

Of equal historical merit is the *Siyar-ul-Auliya* of Saiyid Mubarak Alvi Kirmani popularly known as Amir Khurd, a disciple of Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya. He was brought up under the care of the famous shaikh and his ancestors too were closely related to Shaikh Farid-ud-din Ganj-i-Shakar of Ajodhan and Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya. When, during the reign of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq, the seat of Government was shifted from Delhi to Daulatabad, the family of Amir Khurd and his three uncles had also to shift to Deogir. The intimate connection which the family of Amir Khurd maintained with the most famous sufi saint of the age made him competent to deal with the lives of famous saints. His family was also related to many nobles of the court and this gives an added interest to the *Siyar-ul-Auliya*. It contains short biographies of the spiritual preceptors of Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya, the Shaikh himself, and many of his disciples. The book, however, mentions many marvels of these saints which diminishes its credibility and enshrouds the personality of these saints with mystery. His account of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq is full of personal bias and prejudice.

(v) *Travels and Statistical Accounts*

The Travels of Ibn-i-Battutah, who remained at the court of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq from 1334 to 1342, is of outstanding value in more than one respect. Apart from the valuable details it gives about the court and the city of Delhi, his account of many nobles of the court, ignored by other contemporary writers, has made his work invaluable for the study of the nobility. The author was a native of Tangiers and was widely read and travelled which gave him an immense capacity of close observation. He himself was honoured by the Sultan by appointment as Qazi of Delhi and also went with the Sultan on many expeditions. He knew the nobility very closely and his account contains authentic information about their do-

ings. Since he was a foreigner, his account of the nobles is all the more important because it has an air of objectivity. An extraordinary example of his capacity to study and understand events is his account of the revolt of Ain-ul-mulk Multani, the *Muqti* of Avadh. Ibn-i-Battutah tells us that it was on account of the unflinching loyalty and military zeal of the Khorasanis in the royal camp that decided the issue against Ain-ul-mulk. Ibn-i-Battutah gives account of several revolts which are more reliable than the account of Barani or Isami. He gives at least a dozen examples of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq's injustice and brutal character. But he does not want his readers to see only one side of the picture. He gives almost an equal number of illustrations to exhibit the Sultan's kindness and love of justice. Coming to the nobility, he gives every sort of detail about them which have been very valuable for the purpose of this study. He tells us about their pay and emoluments, their richness, their rivalries with each other, and the corruption rampant in their ranks in the face of the strict discipline and the enforced condign punishments meted out, by the Sultan. The work also throws much light on the Sultan's relations with the *Ulema*. It is difficult to find a single line that is not of absorbing interest and even when he deals with purely personal matters, as for example the funeral of his daughter or his indebtedness to the moneylenders of the capital, he arrests our attention on account of the interest they involve about the social and economic life of the country.

Besides, he also gives valuable details about the reign of the former sultans. It is from him that we know about the justice of Iltutmish, the role of the populace of Delhi in raising Raziya to the throne, her death at the hands of the Hindus, the early career of Sultan Balban and his conspiracy in poisoning Sultan Nasir-ud-din. Again, it is from him that we know that Sultan Muhammad Tughluq conspired to bring about the death of his father and the causes that lay behind this rivalry.

Another work of somewhat similar nature is the *Masalik-ul-absar fi Mamalik-ul-Amsar* of Shihab-ud-din al Umari. He was born on June 12, 1301. Educated at Damascus and Cairo, he was considered to be one of the most learned men of his time. He never visited India but he based his statistical and other data on the authority of people who had been to India and

whom he mentions as his source of information. He also consulted many books for his information on India specially the *Tuhfat-ul-Albab* and the *Taqvim-ul-Baldan*. The value of information given by him cannot be over-emphasized. The author of *Subh-ul-Asha* heavily drew upon his information for the contents of his own work. It gives valuable details about the flora and fauna of India and other geographical data. He also gives many valuable details of the army and the administration. The industries of Delhi also receive a notice. But the work is invaluable for our study on account of the considerable amount of statistical data it gives about the nobility, their economic condition, ranks, pay and emoluments, the privileges held by them and the number of horses and troops which each one of them was entitled to hold according to his rank. Both in its approach and in its handling of historical and statistical data, the work is unique of its kind.

(vi) Important Secondary Sources

Although the secondary sources bearing light on the history of the Turks are sizable, many of them are repetitive. But the works of Abdul Qadir Badayuni and Firishta contain some additional information which is of considerable importance for our study. Abdul Qadir Badayuni was born on August 21, 1540. He was introduced into the court of Akbar in the year 1574 and did valuable work by translating many Sanskrit works into Persian. He composed his famous *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh* in the year 1595-96 and although it covers the period from A.D. 997 to A.D. 1596 the work is of special interest on account of the additional information it contains which was drawn by Badayuni from works which are not extant now. For the history of the Turks, it contains valuable material, specially for the reign of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq whose administration of justice he mentions with special interest. It is from him that we learn that in the books of history the Sultan was termed both as *Adil* and *Qatil* according to the approach of the chronicler. He profusely utilized the literary and theological works of the period and has given detailed biographical notices of poets with specimens of their verses.

The *Gulshan-i-Ibrahimi* of Muhammad Qasim Hindushah Astarabadi, who is popularly known as Firishta, is much valued

on account of the comprehensive account it gives about the Turkish rulers of India. Firishta first entered the service of Sultan Murtaza Nizam Shah (*circa* 1565-1588) where he was much encouraged. In 1589, he entered the service of Sultan Ibrahim Adil Shah of Bijapur to whom he dedicated his work which was finished in 1607.

The importance of the work for the period of our study lies in the additional details he gives in the work. He mentions the work of one Ain-ud-din Bijapuri as the author of the *Mulhiqat-i-Tabaqat-i-Nasiri* which is not extant now. No other author mentions this work but Firishta gives a few details in his work which he based on this book. Besides Firishta also used contemporary literary and mystical sources of the period and has drawn upon the spurious *Malfuzat* too.

A list of other and relatively less important secondary authorities utilized in the preparation of this work will be found in the bibliography appended at the end.

The Ilbari Nobility as King-makers

Since the very inception of Turkish rule in India, the Turkish nobility played an important role not only in carving out a strong Turkish empire but also in shaping the government of that empire. The rise of this nobility was, however, quite accidental, and in order to understand its development and the various stages of its evolution in India, it is necessary to trace the circumstances which created the Delhi Sultanate.

After the first victory of Sultan Muizz-ud-din Muhammad bin Sam over the Chauhan ruler, Prithviraj, an incessant military activity followed under the able generalship of his lieutenants left in India, who by the time of Muizz-ud-din's death brought the entire Northern India under their control. His success in bringing this vast country under his rule was not the achievement of a single man like the establishment of the Mughal empire by Babar but a joint effort of the Muizzi nobles who all fought in the name of Sultan Muizz-ud-din.

In Northern India and Gujarat, Qutb-ud-din Aibak made great conquests by capturing Meerut, Delhi, Banaras, Thankir and Nahrwala in succession. Sindh, Uchha and Multan were the scenes of military activity of Malik Nasir-ud-din Qabacha who was always intent upon acquiring new additions to the territory assigned to him. In Bayana and Gwalior, which occupied a key position in Central India, Malik Baha-ud-din Tughril made frequent attacks on Gwalior and ravaged that territory to bring its hostile rulers to submission. The richer and more prosperous provinces of Northern India having been occupied by the prominent nobles of the Muizzi court, the less favoured Khalji nobles found it difficult to satisfy their ambitions in the territories already conquered. They, therefore, of necessity chose eastern

India comprising the territories of Bihar, Bengal and Assam as their province of activity. The comparative ease with which Malik Muhammad Bakhtiyar Khalji conquered these provinces is too well-known a story to be given here. After he had established himself in Bihar, a large number of Khaljis flocked together around his banner to carve out a Kingdom of their own.¹

The accidental death of Sultan Muizz-ud-din let loose forces of disintegration in the Turkish empire and created those fissiparous tendencies among the *Muizzi* nobles which became a dominant feature of the Sultanate. An immediate problem arose out of the succession question, for Muizz-ud-din had not left any legitimate heir to his empire.² After his death in March 1206, his nephew, Sultan Ghiyas-ud-din Mahmud, granted to Qutb-ud-din Aibak, a *chatra*, raised him to the rank of Malik and conferred the territories of India upon him,³ thus carrying out the will of the late Sultan who had nominated Qutb-ud-din as his successor in India.⁴

Qutb-ud-din's accession to the throne was without dispute in India where all the *Muizzi* nobles recognized him as their overlord and offered instant allegiance.⁵ But Malik Yilduz who became the ruler of Ghazni after Muizz-ud-din's death and also held the territory of Sunam and Samana, picked up a quarrel with Qutb-ud-din. This conflict was, however, not on account of the sovereignty of Hindustan but it was only a boundary dispute between their respective kingdoms—concerning Lahore and a battle took place between them which did not, however, disturb the *status quo*.⁶

¹ *TN*, p. 147.

² *TN*, pp. 131-2.

³ *TN*, p. 140; *Fakhr-i-Mudabbir*, pp. 31-2; *Taj.*, p. 210a.

⁴ *Taj*, p. 85 b; *Fakhr-i-Mudabbir* says that Sultan Muizz-ud-din had declared Qutb-ud-din as his heir-apparent to the Indian Empire in A.D. 1205 after the victory over Khokhars (*Fakhr-i-Muddabir*, pp. 28-9).

⁵ *Taj ul Maasir*, p. 120; *Tarikh-i-Fakhr-ud-din Mubarakshah*, pp. 31-2. Badayuni, whose testimony cannot be taken seriously says: "with the consent of the nobles of Hindustan he established himself as Protector of the Kingdom of Delhi" (*Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh*, Vol. I, p. 55). Yahiya who generally follows *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri* says that he was conferred *Chatra* and *durbash* by Sultan Ghiyas-ud-din Mahmud of Ghazni and also the title of Sultan (*Tarikh-i-Mubarakshahi*, p. 14).

⁶ *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, p. 140. On a previous occasion Minhaj says that Sultan Qutb-ud-din had to fly away from Ghazni as the Turkish nobles there

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The fundamental question in connection with the succession of Qutb-ud-din Aibak is its validity. Leadership and ability to wield the sword had already been recognized as a potent factor which decided successions in the Muslim world of West Asia. Heredity and investiture by the Khalifa were of course recognized as adding a halo of legitimacy to a succession won by the sword. Qutb-ud-din himself, like Iltutmish and Balban, never sought to create a myth about his high pedigree. The investiture by the Khalifa was usually at the Khalifa's own initiative but it was also sought by ambitious adventurers in many cases. Qutb-ud-din, however, did not seek the investiture himself. Perhaps he did not consider it at all necessary to legalize his position since he was already invested with full sovereignty by Ghiyas-ud-din and could assert his claim by an appeal to arms as actually happened when Yilduz attempted a trial of strength. The main reason why his sovereign authority was not questioned should, however, be sought in the organization of the nobility created by Muizz-ud-din. In its initial stages in India the Turkish nobility was nothing more than an organized armed camp in which the command of the leader was the only law and abject obedience the only discipline. The nobles had as yet no vested interest of their own beyond the freedom to acquire more and more territories.

These conditions continued throughout the reign of Muizz-ud-din and Qutb-ud-din. But as they settled down and stability led to the creation of a permanent civil administration, the nobility began to be transformed into a feudal bureaucracy intent upon safeguarding its interest by any and all means. That spirit of joint adventure and the will to fight for a common cause was submerged by the more powerful sentiments of greed for wealth and lust for power. Besides, lack of religious sanction or legal right to accession behind Qutb-ud-din's sovereignty left a permanent impress on the Turkish nobility in India.

Even up to the time of Qutb-ud-din's death, the Sultanate of Delhi was yet in the making, for large chunks of territory in Northern India conquered by different generals of Sultan Muizz-

opposed him. They invited Yilduz to occupy Ghazni (*Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, p. 135). *Taj-ul-Maasir* says that a daughter of Yilduz was married to Qutb-ud-din in A.D. 1193. He also mentions the fight of the two but does not give precisely the cause of conflict (*Taj-ul-Maasir*, p. 210a).

ud-din in his name were still separate from each other and not parts of an integrated empire. It was an empire jointly owned by different nobles, each sovereign in his own area of influence, and owning only a nominal allegiance to Qutb-ud-din Aibak. As co-slaves of Muizz-ud-din, they regarded themselves as equals of each other and strongly detested the idea of the overlordship of any one of themselves over the others. Muizz-ud-din's death was naturally followed by disunity among his slaves. Qutb-ud-din too died shortly afterwards. His pre-occupation with subduing the minor Rajput states hardly left him any time to engage in any serious consideration of the problem of succession after him. Lastly, of the powerful nobles of the *Muizzi* court who held various territories under their sway, two namely, Malik Baha-ud-din Tughril and Malik Bakhtiyar Khalji died before the accession of Qutb-ud-din. The other two, Taj-ud-din Yilduz and Nasir-ud-din Qabacha were related to him by marriage and did not threaten his position. In fact, there seems to have been some tacit agreement between all the three to honour each other's territorial possessions. Nevertheless, during the lifetime and after the death of Muizz-ud-din the principle of nomination was the guiding principle and it was not questioned either in Ghazni or in India. Had Qutb-ud-din not died accidentally, he might have exercised his discretion likewise by nominating his successor though it is doubtful if his choice could have fallen on any noble other than his own son.

In order to avoid widespread confusion and rebellion, the nobles raised Aram Shah, son of Qutb-ud-din, to the throne although Nasir-ud-din Qabacha who was nearest to the capital (which was then at Lahore) advanced towards Lahore in the hope that the nobles would choose him. Besides being an eminent noble of Sultan Muizz-ud-din he was also a son-in-law of Qutb-ud-din. The latter had, however, desired Iltutmish another son-in-law and *muqti* of Badayun, to succeed him.⁷

⁷ *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, p. 141. *Taj-ul-Maasir* is totally silent about this will of Qutb-ud-din. Moreover, it is highly unlikely that such a will could have been made by him since he met an accidental death. Further, Hasan Nizami is totally silent about Aram Shah's claim which is inexplicable. If Qutb-ud-din's attitude towards both of his sons-in-law is taken as criteria for his choice between the two, then Nasir-ud-din Qabacha seems to have been held in greater affection and confidence for it was he whom he left

Accordingly, the nobles at Delhi, chief among whom was *Sipah-salar* Ali Ismail who was *Amir-i-Dad* of the city, invited Iltutmish from Badayun who ascended the throne at Delhi in A.D. 1210-11. The choice, however, did not find favour with some of the *Muizzi* and *Qutbi* nobles, who supported the cause of Aram Shah. They left Delhi with their soldiers and collected outside it under the leadership of Sarjandar Turki.⁸ Iltutmish, however, redeemed the choice by defeating the confederacy which apparently was very weak. Aram Shah was captured and probably Iltutmish had him executed.⁹ In the provinces, too, the nobles opposed his succession for sometime and raised the standard of revolt but they were subdued one after another.¹⁰

The succession of Iltutmish to the throne of Delhi marks an important epoch in the evolution of the Turkish nobility in India. For the first time, it asserted the right of the nobility to elect their own leader and assert it by force of arms. Secondly, it weakened the principle of nomination and heredity as the basis of sovereignty. Thirdly, it established that nobles posted in Delhi and not at Lahore and elsewhere had the right to choose their leader. Thus it is from the time of Iltutmish's ac-

as his deputy in Delhi when Qutb-ud-din went to Ghazni in 1193 to pay his respect to Sultan Muizz-ud-din.

⁸ *Taj-ul-Maasir* says: "Sarjandar Turki, who was the leader of all sedition, and who opened his hand to shed the blood of the Musalmans, with an army of blood-thirsty Turks broke out into open rebellion." His other associates who opposed Iltutmish were Aqsungar Khitta and Taj-ud-din Farrukhshah both of whom were killed in the battle but Sarjandar Turki fled by way of the river Yamuna and was never heard of again. The nobles who supported the cause of Iltutmish were Malik Izz-ud-din Bakhtiyar, Nasir-ud-din Mardanshah, Hazabbar Umar (*Taj-ul-Maasir*, pp. 219b-24b). Minhaj-i-Siraj is silent about supporters of Aram Shah but mentions only *Sipahsalar* Ali Ismail, the *Amir-i-Dad* of Delhi who along with some other nobles invited Iltutmish from Badayun to assume the sceptre at Delhi (*Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, p. 170).

⁹ *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, p. 170, Minhaj has deliberately suppressed the fact of Aram Shah's murder by Iltutmish due to his gratitude to the latter. Isami seems to believe that Aram Shah met a natural death and that Iltutmish was not a usurper but his statement cannot be deemed as unbiased for his ancestor Malik Fakhr-ul-Mulk Isami was patronized by Iltutmish (*Futuh-us-Salatin*, p. 105). Firishta, however, maintains that Aram Shah collected the troops of his father and attacked Delhi where Iltutmish had set himself as a monarch but was defeated and killed (Firishta, p. 64).

¹⁰ *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, p. 170.

cession that Delhi becomes the political nucleus of the Turkish empire. It is here that all the revolutions were to be staged in the future. Nevertheless, Iltutmish did not mean to destroy the other powerful principalities existing in India e.g. those of Yilduz, Qubacha and the Khalji principality in Lakhnauti. Although Yilduz and Qubacha were a powerful threat to his existence in India, he himself did not take any initiative to provoke them into open conflict. That both these chiefs continued to rule in their own territories long after the accession of Iltutmish is a clear proof that he believed in the principle of co-existence. But the later defeat of both of them not only expanded the dominions of the Delhi Sultanate but also enhanced its prestige in the international world so much so that the then Khalifa of Baghdad sent in A.D. 1229 a *Khilat* to Iltutmish thus conferring a religious sanctity on his overlordship over the Indian dominions.

The contribution of Iltutmish in establishing a sovereign state in India and the creation of a new class of nobility are many and varied. In the first place, it was he who consolidated the entire northern region into a well-knit political entity known as the Delhi Sultanate. Besides the hectic military activity that marked his career, he found time to create a new class of able administrators who upheld the Turkish state both during his lifetime and afterwards. Like Sultan Muizz-ud-din Muhammad bin Sam, who left a race of conquerors in India, Iltutmish left a band of able and trusted administrators most of whom were drawn from his slaves on the principle of ability and merit. The interests of the nascent Turkish state demanded that it should be steered by the ablest hands. He had, therefore, rightly chosen his nobles from amongst his own slaves who had a record of distinguished service under him.

Barani suggests that Iltutmish annihilated many *muizzi* nobles in order to secure the throne.¹¹ But this is far from the truth. In fact a number of *Muizzi* nobles who were junior to him were patronized by him and held high offices during his lifetime and after his death.¹² Dr Tripathi correctly remarks: "In spite of his power he professed his shyness to sit on the throne or to lord it over the great Turkish commanders who, he said, were

¹¹ *TF*, p. 550.

¹² See statement in Appendix B.

his equals. It was not sheer hypocrisy, for in fact the position of the sovereign ruler at that time was not more than that of an exalted peer."¹³ But as a clever leader of men, Iltutmish always avoided any situation in which his nobles united to form a force to threaten his own existence. And naturally, therefore, he adopted a policy of divide-and-rule to play the nobles against each other by creating rival groups among the nobility. During his lifetime, however, these dissensions were not much on the fore. But as soon as he died and the incapacity of Iltutmish's weak successors allowed a free play of their energies, these powerful groups emerged challenging each other for supreme power. With all the praise for his statesmanship in administration and generalship, it must be admitted that as the real founder of the Delhi Sultanate, Iltutmish sowed the seeds of dissension among the nobility, leaving unhealthy traditions among its ranks. Again by making the royal office hereditary, he sought to minimize the chances of conflict and bloodshed by an appeal to arms. But the principle sapped the nobility of its vitality by creating a system in which the leadership of the sovereign was more important than his capacity to rule. In order that the Turkish state should be saved from aggression as well as internal dissensions and hostile elements it was necessary that the Turkish camp was not left without leadership of a trained and experienced person who could keep them united under all circumstances. After Iltutmish, want of effective leadership caused the Turkish state to shake to its foundations. Nevertheless, Iltutmish tried to build up the Sultanate on the principle of right and justice and his recognition of the personal merit of his slaves and nobles was perhaps guided by his own example for he himself achieved the highest political power from an humble servant of Qutb-ud-din.¹⁴

At the death of Sultan Shams-ud-din Iltutmish, the Turkish nobility was a united and compact body. This is illustrated by the ease and unity of action with which the accession of Sultan Rukn-ud-din Firuz was achieved. He appears to have been the unanimous choice of all although Minhaj-i-Siraj informs us that on return from the Gwalior expedition in A.D. 1232 Iltutmish

¹³ *Some Aspects of Muslim Administration*, pp. 27-8.

¹⁴ *TN*, pp. 165-9.

ordered Taj-ul-mulk Mahmud, the *Mushrif-i-mamalik*, to issue a decree declaring princess Raziya, his daughter, as his heir-apparent.¹⁵ It is, however, doubtful whether Iltutmish really wanted Raziya to succeed for Minhaj says that after the victory of Bamiyan in A.D. 1235-36 the Sultan brought prince Rukn-ud-din from Lahore to Delhi in order that people might know him intimately. This means that the Sultan wanted Rukn-ud-din to succeed after him and had rescinded his earlier will. This was confirmed when the amirs raised prince Rukn-ud-din to the throne. The reason why all the nobles supported Rukn-ud-din was that his mother, Khudawand-i-Jahan Shah Turkan, who was a Turkish slave girl was the chief queen in the harem and she used to confer lavish presents upon the nobles of the court in order to win their support for her son. No wonder, therefore, that the nobles unanimously upheld the cause of Rukn-ud-din after the death of Iltutmish. This also proves that the nobility was reckoned a great force by all in the matter of succession. But this does not mean that the Sultan was not free to make a choice of his courtiers. A number of confidants of Rukn-ud-din who had served under him during his governorship of Lahore were honoured with promotion in rank and grant of titles. Malik Ain-ul-mulk Husain Ashari, the *Wazir* of Nasir-ud-din Qabacha who was the prince's *Wazir* was conferred the title of Baha-ul-mulk and the post of *Mushrif-i-mamalik*, and Malik Ikhtiar-ud-din Yuzbak Tughril Khan became the *Amir-i-Majlis* and thereafter *Shahna-i-Pil* of the Sultan.¹⁶

All seemed to be quiet and peaceful after the succession of Rukn-ud-din Firuz Shah but no sooner had the nobles left Delhi for their respective *iqtas*, than the Sultan began to lead a life of sensuous pleasure and indulgence. The real authority began to be wielded by his mother, Shah Turkan, who interfered too much in the affairs of the state so much so that she caused royal orders and decrees to be issued in her own name. Moreover, she tortured and put to death many favourite ladies of Iltutmish which alarmed the nobles. She put the last straw on the camel's back by causing the death of prince Qutb-ud-din (another son of Iltutmish).¹⁷ This caused widespread revolt throughout the

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 184.

¹⁶ *TN*, pp. 183-262.

¹⁷ *TN*, pp. 183.

realm.¹⁸ Khwajah Nizam-ud-din Junaidi, the *Wazir*, who too had turned against the Sultan deserted him and joined the disaffected nobles. The Sultan led an army against the rebel nobles of the Punjab. The Turkish slave soldiers who constituted the vanguard of the army rose in mutiny and killed a number of Tajik officers of the army prominent among whom were Taj-ul-mulk Mahmud, the *Dabir*, Baha-ud-din Husain Ashari, Karim-ud-din Zahid, Ziya-ul-mulk, the son of Nizam-ul-mulk Muhammad Junaidi, the *Wazir*, Nizam-ud-din Shafurkhani, Khwajah Rashid-ud-din Malkani, Amir Fakhr-ud-din, the *Dabir* and a number of other Tajik officials. Meanwhile, in the capital, Raziya, whom Iltutmish had nominated as his successor in 1232, began to oppose Shah Turkan, the mother of Rukn-ud-din, who was planning to arrest her and put to death. The plot, however, leaked and the people of Delhi invaded the royal place, arresting Shah Turkan. This compelled the Sultan to return to Delhi but when he reached the suburbs of Delhi the soldiers constituting the van of his army and many nobles went over to Raziya and raised her to the throne.

Minhaj-i-Siraj, who is our only contemporary authority throws all the blame over Shah Turkan for the fall of Rukn-ud-din. All the later historians have followed in the footsteps of Minhaj-i-Siraj and thus the true cause of the whole trouble has been submerged by the sentimental approach of Minhaj-i-Siraj. That Shah Turkan had become aggressive and acted on her own initiative and free will in administration cannot be denied but the fact that the Tajik nobles mostly posted in the capital had also an unbridled influence over the Sultan seems to be the real cause of the trouble. The Sultan's patronage of these nobles which is clear from the promotions after his coronation and the murder of Tajik nobles in the royal camp referred to above further confirms the conviction that the Tajiks were gaining power much to the dismay of the Turkish nobles most of whom were posted in the *iqtas* and who had raised Rukn-ud-din to the throne.

Nevertheless, it is difficult to dislodge the burden of responsibility shared by Shah Turkan in the downfall of her own son. Mean and jealous, she hastened the ruin of her son and set the ball rolling towards a catastrophe that rocked the Turkish Sulta-

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 183-4; *TM*, pp. 21-2.

nate for a decade. But Sultan Rukn-un-din was not less responsible for his fate. Though possessing the admirable qualities of kindness and benevolence, he neglected the affairs of the state and plunged into a life of vice and indulgence. Even if his mother had not assumed the reigns of Government in her hands, some of the powerful nobles would have risen to bring about his downfall.

The great significance of the reign of Sultan Rukn-ud-din Firuz Shah is the emergence of the Turkish nobility as a powerful group as against the Tajik nobles of the court who held many key appointments. In fact the mass murder of Tajik nobles was the culmination of a long-drawn cold war which was at its lowest ebb during the reign of Iltutmish on account of the Sultan's domineering personality.¹⁹ The result was that the nobles now suffered from mutual distrust and began to be organized into racial groups, the only bond of unity which could protect them from the fate already met by Tajik nobles. In this tussle for power, the Ilbaris got out victorious on account of their superior position due to the patronage given by Iltutmish who too was one of them. The history of the successors of Iltutmish is the history of the rise and fall of many groups such as the Abyssinians and the newly converted Muslims who were in minority.

Raziya's accession to the throne was, however, not acceptable to many nobles prominent among whom were the *Wazir*, Nizam-ul-mulk Muhammad Junaidi, Malik Ala-ud-din Jani, Malik Saif-ud-din Kuchi, Malik Izz-ud-din Muhammad Salari who besieged the city with their troops for a considerable time. Their opposition to the succession of Raziya was mainly due to the fact that they were not consulted before her accession to the throne. The names of the nobles who supported Raziya are not known but she had very weak following in the provinces. One of the supporters was Malik Nusrat-ud-din Taisi, the *muqti* of Avadh who advanced to relieve her but was intercepted in the way and died. Another was Malik Izz-ud-din Balban Kishli Khan who was likewise arrested by the dissident nobles while fighting for Raziya's cause along with other Shamsi Turk slaves. He was soon released and honoured by Raziya.

The dissidents, however, do not seem to have sponsored any candidate although a number of Iltutmish's sons were still surviv-

¹⁹ *TF*, p. 39.

ing. Meanwhile Raziya continued to create division in the hostile camp by making lavish promises to nobles. She even came out of her palace and pitched her camp near the Yamuna and frequent skirmishes were exchanged between both the rival parties. After sometime she succeeded in winning over two of the disaffected nobles namely Malik Izz-ud-din Muhammad and Malik Izz-ud-din Kabir Khan-i-Ayaz who entering secretly one night into Raziya's camp planned to summon Malik Jani, Malik Saif-ud-din Kuchi and Nizam-ul-mulk Muhammad Junaidi and quell the sedition by taking them into prison. The plot, however, leaked out and these nobles fled for their life. Two of them, Malik Saif-ud-din Kuchi and his brother Fakhr-ud-din were, however, overtaken by the galloping horsemen of Raziya and put to death in prison. Soon after, Malik Ala-ud-din Jani was killed near Payal and his head was sent to the capital. Nizam-ul-mulk also retired to Sirmur hills where he died shortly after.

It is now clear that the Turkish nobles betrayed their Tajik rivals and had many powerful members of the latter's party annihilated by a clever strategem. But they were far from being subdued and in the distribution of offices the Tajiks bagged a number of coveted appointments at the court.

Secure on the throne, Raziya now made a number of appointments to high offices. Khwajah Muhazzab-ud-din, a Tajik, who was the *Naib Wazir* was promoted to the Wazirship of the empire. Malik Saif-ud-din Aibak who was the chief architect in breaking the confederacy against Raziya was conferred the title of Qutlugh Khan and made *Ariz-i-mamalik* but he could not long enjoy this appointment due to his sudden death. He was succeeded by Malik Quth-ud-din Husain, son of Ali Ghuri an influential noble of Iltutmish. Malik Izz-ud-din Kabir Khan-i-Ayaz who too had joined Raziya's camp alongwith Saif-ud-din was given the most important *iqta* of Lahore and Malik Kishlu Khan Saif-ud-din Aibak became *Naib Sarjandar*.

It is clear from the conduct of the nobles who supported Raziya that they did so with the presumption or clear understanding that Raziya being a woman will be a tool in their own hands. But their expectations were not realized as Raziya renounced the Purdah, began to hold open durbar and rule actively. To the nobles, all this appeared scandalous. Moreover, she appointed Malik Kabir Ikhtiyar-ud-din Aitigin to the post of

Amir-i-Hajib and Malik Jamal-ud-din Yaqut, the Abyssinian who was the *Amir-i-Akhur* to attend upon her. These appointments were resented by the nobles who began to feel jealous of both of these nobles now coming into prominence and wielding influence on account of racial prejudices.

Raziya's actions in the capital also caused much disaffection among the nobles, and, strangely enough, the first to show disobedience to her authority was Malik Izz-ud-din Kabir Khan-i-Ayaz, the *muqti* of Lahore who raised the standard of revolt in 1239-40. Raziya left Delhi with a strong army and brought him to submission. But Raziya's greatest weakness lay in her own camp. In fact the rebellion of Kabir Khan-i-Ayaz had offered the nobles who were against her a fit opportunity to avenge their jealousy against her Abyssinian favourite but the unexpected submission of Malik Kabir snatched out that opportunity. They were, however, clever enough to cause troubles for Raziya and soon instigated Malik Ikhtiyar-ud-din Altuniya the *muqti* of Tabarhinda to rebel. Raziya again set out from the capital to punish Altuniya but on reaching there the Turkish nobles in her camp turned hostile and killed Malik Jamal-ud-din Yaqut and arresting Raziya threw her in confinement in the fort of Tabarhinda. But even in her adversity, Raziya knew how to fight her cause and showed that presence of mind and shrewdness of character which the sons of Iltutmish so badly lacked. She at once proposed her marriage with her gaoler, Malik Altuniya,²⁰ which was duly contracted. She now collected a large force consisting of the Jats and Khokhars and then advanced upon Delhi where the nobles had set up Sultan Muizz-ud-din (another son of Iltutmish) on the throne.²¹ She was, however, defeated,

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 251-2.

²¹ *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, p. 191. Ibn-i-Battutah says that Muizz-ud-din and Raziya were born of the same mother (*Travels*, p. 166). This might be the reason why he was chosen as the successor of Raziya because it would satisfy both the supporters and opponents of Raziya. Nevertheless, the proposal was strongly opposed by Malik Ikhtiyar-ud-din Aitigin whom Raziya had promoted to the post of *Amir-i-Hajib*. He was assassinated and Malik Badr-ud-din Sunqar Sufi Rumi was promoted to the post of *Amir-i-Hajib*. Other supporters of Raziya in the court were Malik Izz-ud-din Muhammad Salari and Malik Quraqush who had earlier helped Raziya. They left Delhi and joined her but their combined troops were defeated by the forces of Muizz-ud-din Baharam Shah. Raziya was captured and put to death.

captured and put to death in the ensuing battle.

The short reign of Raziya proved how tact and diplomacy could play the very powerful nobles and turn them into a docile element. It also proved the extreme racialism of the Turkish amirs who were loathe to see anybody except their own kin to approach the sacred person of their sovereign. Had Raziya chosen one of the Turkish amirs as her spouse soon after her succession, she might have pleased the Turkish nobles but then it would have also meant the slipping away of real power from her own hands which, being ambitious and wise, she was not prepared to sacrifice at any cost. Her policy of patronizing the non-Turkish Amirs like Jamal-ud-din Yaqut appears to be guided by the necessity of weakening the irksome and domineering influence of the Turkish nobility who had no respect for the crown. Her successors too tried to get rid of them by patronizing rival elements at the court but the last of the successors of Iltutmish, Sultan Nasir-ud-din, ultimately had to reconcile himself with the realities of the situation when he surrendered unconditionally to the dictates of his powerful Turkish nobles.

Although Muizz-ud-din Bahram Shah was raised to the throne with the unanimous consent of the nobles, the real power was wielded by Malik Ikhtiyar-ud-din Aitigin who was to act as Regent (*Naib*) to the young king for one year. Khwaja Nizam-ul-mulk Muhazzab-ud-din continued as *Wazir* and Muhammad Iwaz as *Mustaufi-i-Mamalik*.²² All the three formed the triumvirate which was to rule the kingdom on behalf of the Sultan. This arrangement though agreeable to the sponsors of the new reign could not satisfy many who had expected a great deal for themselves by the change. Above all, the Sultan himself was not prepared to accept a status that did not make him a *de facto* ruler.²³ He accordingly hatched a plot within two months of his accession in consultation with Malik Badr-ud-din Sunqar

²² TN, p. 191.

²³ There was yet another reason why the Sultan so much hated Malik Ikhtiyar-ud-din. In order to strengthen his position the Malik had married a sister of the Sultan after which he began to keep triple *naubat* and an elephant at his residence, a royal prerogative and thus gave enough offence to the king. The enemies of the Malik made capital out of this (*Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, p. 192).

Sufi Rumi,²⁴ to do away with the triumvirate as a result of which Ikhtiyar-ud-din was treacherously murdered, but the *Wazir* Nizam-ul-mulk Muhazzab-ud-din escaped with minor injuries. The Sultan now appointed Malik Badr-ud-din Sunqar to the post of *Amir-i-Hajib*. Muhazzab-ud-din continued as *Wazir* and professed abject submission and faithfulness but was every moment planning the Sultan's downfall.²⁵ He succeeded in turning the Sultan against Badr-ud-din who apprehending danger began to plan his dethronement. On Monday, the 27th August, 1242, Badr-ud-din held a secret meeting at the residence of Sadr-ul-mulk Saiyid Taj-ud-din Musavi, the *Mushrif-i-Mumalik*, in which were also present *Qazi-i-Mamalik* Jalal-ud-din Kashani, Qazi Kabir-ud-din, Shaikh Muhammad Shami and many other notable amirs. They made the terrible blunder of taking the *Wazir* into confidence. A better opportunity could not have been afforded to the *Wazir* to bring about the downfall of the *Amir-i-Hajib*.²⁶ He apprised the king of the situation who immediately ordered the transfer of all the principal participants in the conspiracy. Badr-ud-din was deprived of his post of *Amir-i-Hajib* and transferred to Badayun as the *muqti* of that place. *Qazi-i-Mamalik* Qazi Jalal-ud-din Kashani was deprived of his post altogether. Qazi Kabir-ud-din and Shaikh Muhammad Shami immediately left the capital to save their lives. After an interval of four months, Badr-ud-din returned to the capital in order to make amends to the king but he was arrested and put to death along with Sadr-ul-mulk Saiyid Taj-ud-din Ali Musavi.

The leniency of the Sultan in meting out punishment to the nobles guilty of high treason clearly points out to the inherent weakness in his character in dealing with opposition effectively. The king, instead of probing into the real cause of the dissatisfaction of nobles alienated those who had brought him to the throne. He thus played the game of the *Wazir* who was secretly planning his downfall and met with signal success in weakening the king by removing some of his powerful supporters. Very soon he succeeded in turning many more nobles against the Sultan by a clever strategem, this time resulting in the dethrone-

²⁴ *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, pp. 273-4.

²⁵ *TN*, p. 192.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 192. Minhaj says that he used to issue orders without obtaining the King's permission.

ment of the Sultan.

If anyone can be held responsible for the downfall of Sultan Muizz-ud-din Bahram Shah, it was the Sultan himself. Owner of many good qualities that make a successful monarch, he was devoid of tact, and was a bad executor of his designs. Above all he lacked discretion which is so necessary for a politician to choose his friends and advisers and locate his enemies. This is illustrated by the manner he carried through the revolution he sought to affect by assassinating the *Wazir* and the *Amir-i-Hajib* Ikhtiyar-ud-din Aitigin. The *Wazir's* escape from death left an unhealing wound in his heart and since that day he bore an unforgotten grudge against the Sultan and proceeded shrewdly to bring about the Sultan's downfall. It is no wonder, therefore, that in choosing the next successor and his courtiers he was the chief arbiter.

Simultaneous to the fall of Muizz-ud-din Bahram Shah was perpetrated another revolution by Malik Izz-ud-din Balban Kishli Khan, a son-in-law of Iltutmish, who finding everything in confusion entered the royal palace and assumed sovereignty. His accession to the throne was even proclaimed in the city but other nobles and Khwajah Muhazzab-ud-din, the *Wazir* did not accept him as sovereign. With unanimous decision, the nobles raised Ala-ud-din Masud Shah, the son of the late Sultan Rukn-ud-din Firuz Shah to the throne. Malik Izz-ud-din Balban Kishli Khan also submitted to their decision. The nobles distributed all the important posts among themselves.²⁷ Khwajah Muhazzab-ud-din, the *Wazir*, was confirmed in his office but assumed almost dictatorial powers. This annoyed other nobles of the court who had him murdered soon afterwards. With the fall of Khwajah Muhazzab-ud-din, the back of Tajik party at the court was broken resulting in the clear emergence of the Turkish group with Balban on the lead as the only powerful group at the court. No drastic changes were made in the administrative set-up at Delhi except that *Sadr-ul-mulk* Najm-ud-din Abu Baker became the *Wazir* and Ulugh Khan Balban became the *Amir-i-Hajib*.²⁸

It is obvious that the Sultan was a mere puppet in the hands

²⁷ TN, p. 198.

²⁸ TN, p. 199.

of his nobles and the death of the *Wazir* meant only a change of masters so far as the king was concerned. Mindful of what had happened in the past to his predecessors, he made a bid to seek supporters both from his own family and other minor ranks of the nobility. He first of all released his two uncles from imprisonment viz. Prince Nasir-ud-din and Jalal-ud-din, and assigned to them the two *iqtas* of Bahraich and Kannauj respectively.²⁹ This is the first instance when a sovereign thought of seeking supporters from his own kith and kin. In an age when all canons of diplomacy and statecraft demanded that the ruling king should annihilate all possible claimants to the throne, it was a novel idea to set them up as its supporters. Sultan Ala-ud-din Masaud Shah though younger in years must be given the credit of creating a precedent which has no parallel throughout the history of the Sultanate. But the initiation of this new policy becomes clear when we examine the circumstances in which the new sovereign was placed. The power and influence of the nobles being known to the Sultan, he made a temporary successful bid to reduce the power of the nobility in order to secure the throne permanently for his house.

The Sultan also enlisted the support of Malik Izz-ud-din Tughril Tughan Khan, the *muqti* of Lakhnauti who had practically become independent, by conferring many favours on him.³⁰ In order to counter-balance the power of the Turkish nobles, the Sultan began to patronize Abyssinians³¹ who though a weak element could be counted upon for that reason for their loyalty to the crown. He never lost sight of his principal object of getting rid of the domineering groups of the court. Minhaj-i-Siraj, who had suffered much under the Sultan,³² tells us that the Sultan was secretly planning to murder many nobles of the court on the advice of some inexperienced soldiers in the army but

²⁹ *TN*, p. 199.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 199.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 201; Minhaj-i-Siraj does not point out who actually were the accomplices of the Sultan. But Yahiya has made this point clear by saying: "a number of Abyssinians and worthless persons had gained access to the presence of the Sultan and used to influence him in the committal of unworthy acts and habits so much so that (the practice of) killing the amirs and seizing their chattels was gaining place in his nature; and he was steadfast in resolve (in that habit)".—*TM*, pp. 34-5.

³² *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, pp. 198-9.

could not achieve his object. The nobles secretly invited prince Nasir-ud-din from Bahraich³³ and raised him to the throne. The sudden change in the attitude of the Sultan is not understandable on account of the silence of Minhaj-i-Siraj. But the extreme secrecy maintained in bringing prince Nasir-ud-din to the capital indicates a deep conspiracy on the part of the nobles. It also explains that the nobles kept a close watch over the activities of the Sultan and avoided to come into open conflict with him for they had no faith in support from the army. They had clearly realized that their very existence was in danger if they allowed the Sultan to continue any longer.

With the accession of Sultan Nasir-ud-din Mahmud started a new phase in the politics of the court and nobles. Despite constant internecine quarrels, the Turkish state was now pretty well established and the passage of time had brought new elements in its politics. Nearly all minor racial groups e.g. those of the Tajiks and Abyssinians had been annihilated or rendered impotent by merging their interests with one or the other group. At every initial stage in its relationship with the crown, the Turkish nobility had come out victorious by dictating its own terms to the former. Nevertheless, at every stage the change was only possible after a bloody contest costing many prominent heads. This too had an important effect in so far as it now prevented the nobility to seek a change or enforce its terms by force of arms. This explains the secret and the bloodless nature of the change brought about by the accession of Nasir-ud-din Mahmud. It also partly explains why in the affair of Imad-ud-din Raihan, a compromise formula was evolved by the Turkish nobility to avoid an armed conflict. Another change in the situation was brought about by the number of survivors of Iltutmish. After Ala-ud-din Masud only two princes of the royal blood had survived both having their supporters among the Turkish ranks which was now sharply divided into two distinct parties, the one led by Ulugh Khan Balban and the other by Qutlugh Khan.³⁴ The nobility could not now afford to dispose off their

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 201 *TM*, p. 32. Also see article by S. K. Banerjee: Some aspects of Muslim Polity in Early Mediaeval India (1236-46); *JIH*, Vol. VI (1939-40) pp. 295-304.

³⁴ Though Qutlugh Khan was a very important figure at the court, Minhaj-i-Siraj does not give a separate notice of this noble for he was a

sovereign by treachery and trickery because its removal would have resulted in a headlong collision between the powerful factions of the nobility. As they were not yet prepared to accept one of their own colleagues as their overlord, they adopted the only course of arriving at a compromise both with the crown and among themselves. The most important factor which for sometime past had been inactive was the revival of the influence of the harem. In the accession of Sultan Nasir-ud-din and subsequent politics of the court, his mother played a vital role so much so that it would not be wrong to call Qutlugh Khan's clique as the harem party.

At the time of his accession, Sultan Nasir-ud-din was still in his teens and was, therefore, not experienced enough to be able to exercise his own discretion. Since his succession was brought about by the machinations of Ulugh Khan Balban, he was naturally allotted the most coveted post in the court, that of the *Amir-i-Hajib*, and he further strengthened his position by entering into a matrimonial alliance with the king.³⁵ On account of this union, the rank of Balban and many of his associates was enhanced.³⁶

For several years the politics of the court remained apparently stagnant. But the fact that in 1252-53 when the Sultan led an expedition towards Lahore to capture Multan and Uchha, Imad-ud-din Raihan was able to secure the banishment of Ulugh Khan Balban from the court with the help of many Turkish nobles,

rival of Balban. However, for a short biography of Qutlugh Khan based on the general narrative given by Minhaj, see Appendix D.

³⁵ *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, p. 293. Balban was already aligned to the house of Iltutmish by ties of marriage as one of the daughters of Iltutmish was married to him. Minhaj-i-Siraj is totally silent on this point and, therefore, Raverty is of opinion that it was not Ulugh Khan but Izz-ud-din Balban Kishli Khan who was the son-in-law of Iltutmish. Yahiya is also silent on this point but Badayuni and Firishta both assert that Ulugh Khan Balban Khurd was the son-in-law of Iltutmish.

³⁶ The rank of Balban was raised from Malik to that of a Khan. His brother, Ala-ud-din Kishli Khan Aibak who was *Amir-i-Akhur*, became *Amir-i-Hajib*. Malik Taj-ud-din Sanjar Tabar Khan was appointed *Naib Amir-i-Hajib*, Ala-ud-din Ayaz the *Amir-ul-Hujjab*, Tabar Khan Zanjani, the son of Minhaj-i-Sirai became *Naib Vakil-i-dar*. Ikhtiyar-ud-din Aitigin Mui-i-Daraz who was the *Naib Amir-i-Akhur* became the *Amir-i-Akhur*. Qazi Jalal-ud-din Kashani was recalled from Avadh and was made the Chief Qazi of the realm (*Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, pp. 293-4).

prominent among whom being Qutlugh Khan, the *muqti* of Bayana, proves the existence of an atmosphere of seething discontent in the court and the underground preparations which were going on in Qutlugh Khan's favours by his supporter, Imad-ud-din Raihan.³⁷ A great reshuffling of offices at the court followed in which Imad-ud-din Raihan and Qutlugh Khan and many of their associates were promoted.³⁸

The new arrangement, however, could not last long. A number of followers of Balban who had suffered with his downfall induced him to invade Delhi about the middle of the year 1254 and their combined troops led by Ulugh Khan Balban, Malik Irsalan Khan, the *muqti* of Tabarhinda and many other Turkish nobles encamped at Tabarhinda. They were joined by Malik

³⁷ The antecedents of this courtier are not known because out of sheer contempt for him, Minhaj-i-Siraj does not give a separate account of this noble. However, he seems to have already occupied a place of influence at the court. His associations with Qutlugh Khan the step-father of Sultan Nasir-ud-din prove that he must have come from Bahraich. He was a Hindu convert and the fact of his being castrated proves that he was also associated with the harem of the Sultan. After Balban's downfall, he was appointed the *Vakil-i-dar*, a key post in the royal household. His sympathies with Qazi Shams-ud-din of Bahraich whom he recalled from Bahraich and appointed Qazi of the realm also proves that he had a soft corner for the people of Bahraich, his native place (*Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, p. 217). After his downfall he was sent to Budaun but ultimately to Bahraich where he was killed by the *Muqti* of Kannauj Malik Taj-ud-din Sanjar Mah Peshani, in A.D. 1255 (*Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, pp. 304-05). Raverty surmises: "Rayhani is a common proper name of men among the Muhammadans of Egypt and now commonly given to slaves according to Lane but the term Rayhani means a seller of flowers, and probably, this sustart's father followed such an occupation." (Raverty, p. 829. f.n. 9).

³⁸ Imad-ud-din was appointed *Vakil-i-dar*, Qazi Shams-ud-din Bahraichi was appointed *Qazi-i-Mamalik*, Malik Izz-ud-din Balban, the son-in-law of Qutlugh Khan was appointed *Naib Amir-i-Hajib* but appears to have worked actually as *Amir-i-Hajib* for that post was appointed to the infant prince Rukn-ud-din who could have held it only in name. Irsalan Khan was given the *iqta* of Ucca, Multan and Tabarhinda which formerly belonged to Malik Sher Khan Sunqar a cousin of Ulugh Khan Balban. The *Wazarat* was given to Sadr-ul-Mulk Najm-ud-din Abu Bakr, a man of Qutlugh Khan's party. Minhaj correctly sums up the whole change thus: "Everyone holding an office or employment which appertained to Ulugh Khan-i-Azm's patronage was removed and transferred; and the established affairs of a quiet kingdom were deranged by the pernicious counsel of Imad-ud-din Raihan." (Raverty, pp. 827-8)

Jalal-ud-din Masud, the Sultan's brother whom they set up as a candidate. It is, however, very doubtful that they seriously wanted Nasir-ud-din to be replaced by their own candidate because Jalal-ud-din was a man of vacillating nature and, moreover, Ulugh Khan was tied with Nasir-ud-din by a matrimonial alliance. It appears that Jalal-ud-din was set up as a bargaining counter to achieve the end of his supporters. Once in power, they thought they would need him no more. The scheme worked out as they wished. The Sultan also proceeded from Delhi to suppress their rebellion but reconciliation was arrived at by peaceful negotiations as a result of which Imad-ud-din Raihan was removed from the court and assigned the *iqta* of Budaun and thereafter, that of Bahraich.³⁹

A fresh distribution of loaves and fishes followed to the great disadvantages of Qutlugh Khan's party. At this juncture (beginning of the year 1255), Qutlugh Khan married the mother of the Sultan. This must have deeply offended the Sultan who was now a grown-up man having children. In the capital the event must have caused enough sensation compromising the prestige of the Sultan. There was nothing legally wrong with the marriage because Islam does not prohibit remarriage of widows. But royal prestige and decorum rendered such a marriage very undesirable. It had definitely a political aspect in the existing condition, and there can be no denying the fact that in the capital Qutlugh Khan's party lost many sympathizers. Above all it definitely alienated the king who was their main support. Perhaps Qutlugh Khan thought that this matrimonial alliance will strengthen his position and he might himself claim the throne but he failed to see the other complications of the marriage. Thus, far from proving a fruitful adventure, the marriage shattered all hopes of political advancement of Qutlugh and his party.

The Sultan, in order to save his face in the capital, transferred Qutlugh to Avadh, the only honourable way to remove him and his mother from the capital.⁴⁰ But Qutlugh Khan continued the

³⁹ TN, pp. 301-02. For a detailed discussion of the rise and fall of Imad-ud-din Raihan see Dr P. Saran's article 'Politics and personalities in the Reign of Nasir-ud-din Mahmud, the slave, in *Studies in Medieval India* (Delhi, 1952), pp. 223-43.

⁴⁰ TN, pp. 220-303.

struggle for supremacy from Avadh for which he was warned several times but to no effect. Imad-ud-din who was posted to Bahraich strengthened his hands by supporting him. Imad-ud-din was, however, soon defeated and killed in Bahraich by Malik Irsalan Khan Sanjar Chasht, the *muqti* of Kannauj.⁴¹ His death rendered Qutlugh Khan very weak.⁴² He was ordered to go to Bahraich but refused compliance of the royal commands. Instead, he began his depredations in the directions of Kara Manikpur. He was defeated by Malik Bek Timur but could not be captured. Losing all hope in that quarter, he moved towards the Punjab and joined his son-in-law, Malik Izz-ud-din Balban, the *muqti* of Uchha and Multan.⁴³ They now set up Malik Jalal-ud-din Masud, the Sultan's brother, as their candidate and marched towards the capital where a number of Qazis and nobles secretly invited them. But Ulugh Khan Balban, outwitted their plan by getting them removed from Delhi.⁴⁴ The plan of Qutlugh Khan's party having thus failed, they now submitted for pardon. On October 7, 1258, Malik Irsalan Khan and Qutlugh Khan presented themselves at court. They were assigned the *iqtas* of Kara Manikpur and Lakhnauti respectively. It must be admitted that in dealing with these nobles the Sultan and Ulugh Khan Balban acted with utmost leniency.⁴⁵

The account of the reign of Nasir-ud-din Mahmud is not known after the year 1260 as the *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri* comes to an end in that year. Barani, who is our next authority, does not throw any light whatever on the history of the period. From Isami, we learn that Balban had the Sultan poisoned who died in 1266 at the age of forty years,⁴⁶ clearing the way for himself.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 305.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 222-307.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 223-4, 307-08.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* p. 312.

⁴⁶ *Futuh-us-Salatin*, pp. 161-3. Isami says that Sultan Nasir-ud-din had two grown-up sons who once quarrelled with the sons of Balban which led Balban to poison the Sultan in order to avenge his insult. Ibn-i-Battutah mentions an interesting anecdote saying that the downfall of the dynasty of Iltutmish at the hands of one of the slaves was predicted by the astrologers of Iltutmish but Balban could not be detected as provi-

Thus, since the downfall of Imad-ud-din Raihan, Balban had strengthened his power and emerged out of the struggle as the most outstanding and powerful figure.

It is thus clear that after the death of Sultan Iltutmish, the nobles had played a decisive role in the succession to the throne at every stage. In this connection, Barani's analysis is that "after the death of Sultan Shams-ud-din, his Chihalgani slaves became powerful. The sons of Sultan Shams-ud-din possessed no virtues of the princes. They had no capacity of administration. Due to the influence of his Turkish slaves, the amirs and wazirs and their descendants were destroyed by various methods."⁴⁷

The cause of the rapid downfall of the successors of Iltutmish may thus be traced first to their own weak characters and secondly to their inexperience and incapacity to direct the administration of the country. The disunity among the Chihalgani nobles of Iltutmish which formed the main bulwark and the rank and file of the early Turks was another cause of the complication. However, Barani describes this disintegration chiefly to prove that all was right when Balban came to power as he mentions immediately after the passage quoted above. According to him, the credit of restoring the lost glory and prestige of the crown which had been jealously built up by Iltutmish goes to Balban. To him also goes the credit of establishing and upholding those rules for a strong administration based on the principles of nobility of blood and the sacred laws which since a long time were kept in abeyance, thus restoring the strength of the nascent Turkish state. But judged objectively and in the light of the facts given by Barani himself, this view is baseless for it was Balban's jealous will to strengthen his own position that removed one after another the great pillars of the Turkish state that supported it. Balban, in order to build up his power sought to destroy the Turkish nobility which was the main source of strength of the Turkish Sultanate in India.

dence willed otherwise (*Travels*, p. 170). Yahiya is of the view that Sultan died a natural death after a brief illness which view is also endorsed by Badayuni (*Tarikh-i-Mubarakshahi*, p. 39; *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh*, Vol. I, p. 94). But in the alleged autobiography of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq, Balban is termed as a usurper which again confirms Isami and Ibn-i-Battutah (*Tughluq Kalin Bharat*, Part I, Appendix A). Firishta also says that the Sultan died of short illness (Firishta, p. 74).

⁴⁷ *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, pp. 27-8.

As a necessary corollary to enforce this policy of rehabilitating the prestige of the crown, Balban launched upon a policy of ruthlessness in order to strike awe in the hearts of his nobles who dared not raise a finger against him. He meted out very harsh punishments to those who were guilty of breach of his orders or wanton cruelty against their slaves, and domestic servants.⁴⁸ It is, however, evident that such severe discipline could be enforced only on weaker nobles and Balban probably did not succeed in commanding respect from the Shamsi nobles who were his equals. In order to get rid of them, he resorted to the most heinous method of political assassination and in doing so he did not show any regard to kinship or consideration for the past services of such nobles. This gradual annihilation of his own class points to the fact that probably Balban was planning to make the throne secure for his son. But this in effect only weakened the supporters of the house of Balban, and want of effective leadership among the Ibaris was the real cause of the downfall of Balban's successors. The early Turkish state established by the Ibaris thus died of suicide.

Much has been said about the usual hatred of the Turkish nobles against the neo-Muslim nobles. The accounts of Minhaj-i-Siraj and Barani clearly seem to confirm this but the actual state of affairs appears to be that Balban too, like the successors of Iltutmish, patronized neo-Muslim nobles and in fact he was silently building up a distinct class of neo-Muslim nobles on the pattern and policies of Sultan Iltutmish which would not only support the house of Balban but would also serve as a counter-check over the ambitions and recalcitrant Shamsi nobles. This is clear from the narrative of Barani for the reign of Muizz-ud-din Kaiqubad. It was a job for Nizam-ud-din an upstart of the older order of the nobility to annihilate the neo-Muslim nobles. However, it must be admitted that like all human beings Balban could not see too far. No one can plan for all times to come and provide for every eventuality. As would be seen later,

⁴⁸ *TF*, pp. 40-1, 65. One of the victims was Sher Khan Sunqar who avoided to come to the capital or he knew he will be secretly put to death like other Chihalgani nobles of Iltutmish. This was enough to raise Balban's indignation. Barani says that he resorted to their secret murder lest their open execution might lead to rebellion and disloyalty (*Ibid.*, pp. 45, 47).

it were those neo-Muslims and foreign elements of the nobility who were to bring the great revolution in the near future and to usher in a new era of conquest and consolidation. History has strange ways of working out evolution of societies and institutions. Out of the seemingly hostile elements it carves out institutions that are at once superb and majestic.

However, the greatest disservice which Balban did to the cause of his own house was the reversal of the relationship between the crown and the nobility which had existed between the two since the days of Qutb-ud-din and Iltutmish. It has been noticed already that both these monarchs regarded the nobility as their equals. This notion of *primus inter pares* was the basic foundation of the Ilbani state. But in Balban's theory of sovereignty, there was no place for any co-sharers. He seems to have successfully tried to build up a myth about his personality by associating his ancestry with the legendary king Afrasiab of Ajam and raised the dignity of kingship by maintaining a sacrosanct aloofness from the nobility. He demanded abject submission from the nobility by striking terror in their hearts.

The master plan of Balban which he was executing with great political acumen would have been successful but for the sudden death of his eldest son and heir-apparent to the throne, Sultan Muhammad, in 683H at the hands of the Mongols.⁴⁹ The Sultan was crushed by this one stroke of fate. He fell seriously ill and died shortly after leaving the state leaderless and once again, the era of anarchy supervened. Three days before his death, the Sultan called Fakhr-ud-din Kotwal, Khwaja Hasan Basri, the *Wazir*, and other faithful nobles and exhorted them to raise Kai Khusrau, the son of the late Sultan Muhammad, who was the *muqti* of Multan.⁵⁰

Hardly had the corpse of Balban been lowered into the grave than the nobility again became engrossed in political intrigues. They paid no heed to the will of the Sultan. Instead they decid-

⁴⁹ *TF*, pp. 109-11. Amir Khusrau was also present during the calamity following the death of *Khan-i-Shaheed* and was himself made a prisoner by the mongols. He composed a *marsiya* on his death giving details of the event (*Hukum-ul-Hikam*, I.O.Ms. 1187; f. 78). Amir Hasan Sijzi, another contemporary poet, also wrote an ode on his death which has been reproduced by Badayuni (Vol. I, pp. 131-7).

⁵⁰ *TF*, pp. 121-2; *TM*, pp. 51-2.

ed to raise prince Muizz-ud-din Kaiqubad to the throne. Barani does not make it clear as to why the nobles so flagrantly rejected Kai Khusrau. He only says that the cause of this dislike concerned the ladies of the harem which Barani deliberately wants to conceal. Probably Kai Khusrau was an illegitimate child or the child of a concubine of the royal household. This fact being known to the nobles, they completely discarded the idea of his succession. Balban too must have known it but perhaps he did not want the succession to pass out of his line and seeing no alternative he exhorted the nobles to support the cause of Kai Khusrau.⁵¹ But many nobles of the court prominent among whom were Khwajah Hasan Basri, the *Wazir*, Malik Qiwan-ud-din Ala Dabir, and Malik Bag Sadiq were not in favour of rescinding the will of the late Sultan but they were removed from the capital. Kaiqubad, the son of Bughra Khan was now placed upon the throne and assumed the title of Muizz-ud-din.

The accession of Sultan Muizz-ud-din Kaiqubad inaugurated a period of disintegration of the early Turkish rule which though short, let loose the forces of unrest and disunity among the nobility and ultimately sounded the death-knell of Ilbari rule in India. Barani correctly assesses the situation of the nobility after the accession of Kaiqubad by pointing out that, within a year of the death of Sultan Balban, his nobles "entered into a duel of mutual annihilation and in this ignoble act many faithful servants of the crown were completely wiped out". The Sultan's indifference or rather inexperience in state affairs led to his nobles gaining the upper hand in the administration. In a short time, Malik Nizam-ud-din, who was only *Dadbak* and *Sar Naib-i-Mamalik*, became the *de facto* ruler. This naturally made the Balbani nobles who were holding high and respectable posts to be concerned about his rise to power. They clearly discerned that taking advantage of the inexperience of the Sultan in the affairs of the state, Malik Nizam-ud-din was trying to make a clear bid for the throne which would not only jeopardize their own interest but might lead to their complete annihilation.

And their apprehension was not baseless, for Malik Nizam-ud-din was secretly though cautiously, making his own way clear for a *coup de etat*. He first of all had Kai Khusrau, the

⁵¹ *TF*, pp. 121-2; *TM*, p. 52; *FS*, pp. 184-5; *Travels*, pp. 175-6.

muqti of Multan and the king's brother murdered treacherously.⁵² The murder of the prince dismayed the nobles and spread a terror of Nizam-ud-din among them. His next target were those neo-Muslim nobles of the capital who were originally mongols and had embraced Islam during the reign of Balban. They were all holding posts of power and confidence under Sultan Muizz-ud-din. On a false pretext of conspiring against the king, he obtained his consent for their confinement and execution, an order which was carried out soon afterwards.⁵³

After these ghastly murders, Nizam-ud-din spotted out a number of old amirs who were Balban's friends and had them arrested on the pretext that they used to keep intimate relations with the executed neo-Muslim *amirs*. They were transported to different forts of the empire as state prisoners and there put to death. Old slaves of the days of Balban were thus annihilated root and branch.⁵⁴

Having annihilated the above nobles, Nizam-ud-din now laid his net for Malik Shahak, the *muqti* of Multan, and Malik Tuzki, *muqti* of Baran, and *Ariz-i-Mamalik*. These were the two most powerful and respected nobles of Balban whom now Nizam-ud-din did away with secretly. It appears that he had them poisoned for the slightest suspicion would have alarmed them and it would have been difficult for Nizam-ud-din to lay hands on them. But their death in mysterious circumstances clearly betrayed who their murderer was.

The news of these developments in the capital caused legitimate alarm in Lakhnauti where Bughra Khan, the father of Sultan Muizz-ud-din had become independent ruler of Bengal under the title of Nasir-ud-din when Kaiqubad ascended the throne. He could not tolerate an upstart like Nizam-ud-din dethroning his son. Bughra Khan, therefore, proposed a meeting with his son in Avadh.⁵⁵ Amir Khusrau, the author of the

⁵² *TF*, pp. 132-3; *FS*, pp. 195-7; Yahiya does not mention this event. Strangely enough, Badayuni places the murder of prince Kai Khusrau after the massacre of neo-Muslims which according to Barani occurred first.

⁵³ Barani: *TF*, pp. 133-4. From Yahiya's account it appears that apart from the neo-Muslim Amirs, some Turkish Amirs who were holding high appointments at the court were also murdered (*TM*, p. 53). Badayuni closely follows Yahiya.—*MT*, pp. 158-9.

⁵⁴ *TF*, p. 134.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 140.

Qiran-us-Saidain, who is a contemporary authority, however, assigns a different reason for the meeting. He says that Sultan Nasir-ud-din proceeded from Lakhnauti towards the capital and occupied all territory upto Avadh. Alarmed by the movements of his father, Muizz-ud-din also proceeded accompanied by his amirs.⁵⁶ When the two forces came face to face, Sultan Nasir-ud-din sent message to Nizam-ud-din exhorting him to be loyal to the house of Balban by supporting him as the legitimate successor of Balban. But these overtures for peace, went unheeded. The nobles of Kaiqubad knew that the success of Nasir-ud-din would mean a reshuffling of the coveted portfolios held by them and secondly it would be impossible to assert their will on him as he was a grown-up and experienced man. Having failed to achieve his desire Bughra Khan made the best of the bad bargain. The result was a meeting between the two sovereigns. Nasir-ud-din accepted his son Muizz-ud-din as his overlord and after imparting valuable advices on diplomacy and statecraft and also secretly suggesting his son to do away with Nizam-ud-din departed for Lakhnauti.⁵⁷

Kaiqubad was deeply moved by the sage counsels of his father but no sooner had he reached Delhi than his old daily routine was revived. Due to excessive indulgence in drinking and debauchery, the Sultan became ill and was gradually confined to bed. The growing power of Nizam-ud-din led him to decide for the latter's removal from the capital and he ordered him to go to Multan. Fearing that he might be murdered as many nobles of the realm were now against him, Nizam-ud-din delayed compliance with this order. This was a good opportunity for his opponents to take revenge. They obtained orders from the Sultan for his execution and killed him by administering poison to him at one of the convivial parties.⁵⁸

However wise the advice of Sultan Nasir-ud-din was, it can not be denied that at the time there was hardly anyone to re-

⁵⁶ QS, pp. 64-74. Isami says that Bughra Khan became angry at the accession of his son and therefore, he proceeded from Lakhnauti to assert his right (FS, pp. 186-7). Ibn-i-Battutah also confirms this view (*Travels*, pp. 177-8). TM, pp. 51-2; TM, pp. 159-60.

⁵⁷ TF, p. 156. Ibn-i-Battutah also suggests that meeting between the two Sultans was not pre-arranged and that reconciliation followed only when the armies of the two were face to face (*Travels*, pp. 177-8).

⁵⁸ TF, p. 170; FS, p. 197.

place Nizam-ud-din and his removal therefore only hastened the downfall of the rule of the Ilbari rulers. The Sultan now called Malik Jalal-ud-din Khalji, who was the *muqti* of Samana and Sarjandar at the court, and appointed him *Ariz-i-Mamalik* a post which from this time overshadows the importance of that of *Amir-i-Hajib*. He was also conferred the title of Siyasat Khan.⁵⁹ Malik Aitimur Kachhan was appointed *Barbak* and the post of *Vakil-i-Dar* went to Malik Aitimur Surkha. Other nobles in the court who were contributory to the downfall of Nizam-ud-din also received enhancement of their ranks.⁶⁰

Soon after this major shake-up at Killukheri, the Sultan fell seriously ill by an attack of paralysis. His condition deteriorated day by day, thus providing a ground for the ambitions of mutually warring nobles. Finding the disease of the Sultan incurable, they now enthroned the Sultan's five-year old son Kaikaus under the title of Sultan Shams-ud-din.⁶¹

While every noble of the court was competing for power, Malik Jalal-ud-din Khalji, who was *Ariz-i-Mamalik*, started recruitment to the army in order to use it for the *coup de etat* which he was planning in the near future. Meanwhile, Aitimur Kachhan and Aitimur Surkha, who were *Barbak* and *Vakil-i-Dar* respectively, decided to clear their own way by removing some nobles who they thought were the main stumbling block. They accordingly prepared a list of such nobles with Malik Jalal-ud-din's name at the top. It was decided first to murder Jalal-ud-din by inviting him into the royal palace. Aitimur Kachhan proceeded to his residence at Bharpur, a few miles away from the capital. But one of the members of the Turkish party disclosed the plot to Jalal-ud-din who at once collected all the Khalji nobles with his troops at Bharpur. When Aitimur Kachhan arrived at his residence, he was beheaded before he could utter

⁵⁹ *TF*, p. 170; *FS*, pp. 200-03. It says that Jalal-ud-din was conferred the *iqta* of Pail which he administered along with his brother Shaihab-ud-din. But some nobles intrigued to get Jalal-ud-din arrested. But the Sultan set him free raising his status all the more by granting him the title of Imad-ul-Mulk. The entire administration now began to be run by him. This naturally caused dissatisfaction among the Turkish nobles, who, led by Malik Aitimur Surkha and Malik Aitimur Kachhan began to plot the downfall of Jalal-ud-din Khalji.

⁶⁰ *TF*, p. 171.

⁶¹ *Ibid.* p. 171.

a single word.⁶³ The sons of Jalal-ud-din Firuz Khalji forced their entry into the royal palace and sent Sultan Shams-ud-din to his ailing father. Malik Aitimar Surkha followed the hostile troops but was killed in action.⁶³

A general riot now ensued in the city against the Khaljis and the mob led by Balbani nobles proceeded towards Bharpur to relieve the Sultan from confinement. In the rise of the Khaljis, they saw their own downfall. At this moment, Malik-ul-Umara Fakhr-ud-din Kotwal tried his utmost to quell the mob. This was more on account of self-interest rather than loyalty to the cause of Jalal-ud-din. The sons of Jalal-ud-din had arrested the sons of Fakhr-ud-din who were in the royal palace and sent them to Bharpur. Lest they should be murdered, Fakhr-ud-din thought it wise to enter into the list of Jalal-ud-din's supporters. Partly on account of his tact and partly also due to the respect in which he was held by the populace of Delhi, the riot was brought under control.⁶⁴ A number of Turkish nobles now became faithful to Jalal-ud-din's cause and in a short time the Khaljis organized themselves into a formidable force. Two days after Jalal-ud-din had Sultan Muizz-ud-din murdered by a trusted *Amir* whose father had been executed during Muizz-ud-din's reign. Malik Chhajju, the nephew of Sultan Balban and the only potent claimant to the throne was conferred the *iqta* of Kara and transferred to that place. All the nobles accepted the the suzerainty of Jalal-ud-din who proceeded from Bharpur with the entire force and the nobles who had joined his camp, and arrived at the royal palace of Kilukhari where he was enthroned on June 13, 1290.⁶⁵

The accession of Jalal-ud-din was a great revolution. The way the throne passed away from the Ilbaris into the hands of the Khaljis who were quite different in many respects to their predecessors was a great revolution in itself. However, considered in the light of the circumstances created by Balban himself and

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 172. Isami gives a different story and says that the visit of Aitimar Surkha was prompted by the abduction of Sultan Shams-ud-din Kaikaus by a son of Jalal-ud-din Khalji (*FS*, pp. 203-08). Yahiya says that Jalal-ud-din had Aitimar Kachhan already murdered before this event and gives Aitimar Surkha as the noble who went to Jalal-ud-din (*TM*, pp. 60-1).

⁶³ *TF*, p. 172; *FS*, pp. 203-06.

⁶⁴ *TF*, p. 172; *FS*, pp. 206-08.

⁶⁵ *TF*, p. 175; *MF*, pp. 6-7.

the plight of the Ilbari nobles, it is no wonder that the Ilbaris had to face a very powerful element after the death of Sultan Balban. Before his death, Balban himself had annihilated the ablest among the Ilbaris and thus by his own suicidal policy had drained the strength of his government.

Another cause of their stalemate was their narrow attitude with which they dealt with the neo-Muslim *amirs* who held a very high position on account of their faithful service in the later days of Balban. Whether they were Hindu converts or Mongols who adopted Islam of their own free will, they were all alike for the Ilbaris. In their scheme of administration, the Ilbaris could not tolerate anyone who did not belong to their racial stock. This hatred became still deeper when their existence in high state offices was badly jeopardized by the indigent Muslim nobles. The cases of Jamal-ud-din Yaqut, Imad-ud-din Raihan and the neo-Muslim *amirs* point to the same hypothesis—that they were not tolerated by the Ilbaris in high offices. But this could not go on for ever. Almost a continuous stream of migrations from the north-western frontier due to the Mongol raids in Transoxiana and Central Asia, Muslims of all races came pouring in throughout the reign of the Ilbaris. Added to this were newly converted Muslims in India who too, for economic reasons expected the state to give them a legitimate place in the government of the country. A fair deal being denied to them they set themselves up against the Ilbari regime. This necessarily reduced the pure Ilbari nobility into a hopeless minority. The times required a drastic change in their policy and attitude. It was essential that they should enrol new votaries to their rank by making room for them in sharing political power. To the Ilbaris who were generally guided by tradition rather than by reason, it never occurred that the time required a re-evaluation of the entire situation as regards the distribution of power.

Evolution of Nobility under the Khaljis*

To a superficial observer, the *coup de etat* of 19th Muharram 689 A.H. (February 1, 1290) might appear a sporadic attempt on the part of Khaljis to usurp power from the Ilbari Turks but the rise of the Khaljis to a position of power and prestige has a long background commencing from the advent of the Turkish rule in India. Both the *Taj-ul-maasir* and the *Adab-ul-Harb-wash-Shujaat* mention that there were many Khaljis in the army of Sultan Muizz-ud-din Muhammad bin Sam who had distinguished themselves in many campaigns.¹ Minhaj-i-Siraj, author of the *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, closely traces out the careers of the principal Khalji nobles of the *Muizzi* army. Among the prominent ones were Muhammad Bakhtiyar Khalji,² Malik Izz-ud-din Muhammad Shiran Khalji,³ Malik Ala-ud-din Ali Mardan Khalji⁴ and Malik Husam-ud-din Iwaz Husain Khalji⁵ all of whom established themselves in Lakhnauti as successors of Malik Bakhtiyar Khalji. During the reign of Qutb-ud-din Aibak, Governors of Lakhnauti owed nominal allegiance to the Sultan but

* For origin of the Khaljis, see *Zafar-ul-Waleh*, p. 197; *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, Vol. I, p. 116; *Muntakhab-ut-tawarikh*, Vol. I, p. 167. Also see K. S. Lal: *History of the Khaljis* pp. 11-6; Shaikh Abdur Rashid: *The Origin of the Khalji Sultans of Delhi*, IHC, 2nd (1938), pp. 297-303; A. Banerjee: 'A Note on the Succession of Firuz Shah', *Indian Culture*, 2 (1935-36), pp. 47-52; Iqtidar Husain Siddiqi: 'Rise of Afghan Nobility Under the Lodi Sultans (1451-1526)', *Medieval India Quarterly*, Vol. IV, pp. 114-5, f.n. 6. Also see his article on the 'Nobility Under Khalji Sultans', *Islamic Culture*, January 1963, pp. 52-66.

¹ *Taj.*, p. 186a; *Fakhr-i-Mudabbir*, pp. 31-2.

² *TN*, pp. 146-56; *Taj.*, p. 186a.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 157-8.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 158-60.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 160-4.

after his death Lakhnauti became an independent kingdom.⁶ Iltutmish too patronized some Khalji nobles, foremost among whom were Malik Qazal Khan Daulatshah Khalji, the *muqti* of Lakhnauti, Malik Izz-ud-din Bakhtiyar Khalji,⁷ and Malik Ikhtiyar-ud-din Iranshah Khalji.⁸ Iltutmish, however, did not tolerate the independent status of Lakhnauti, and in the year A.D. 1225, he led an expedition against it compelling Ghiyas-ud-din Iwaz Khalji to submission.⁹ Iwaz soon broke out in rebellion but was defeated by Malik Nasir-ud-din Mahmud, the eldest son of the Sultan. The province was governed by Malik Nasir-ud-din till his sudden death in 1229,¹⁰ when Malik Hussam-ud-din Iwaz Khalji seized it declaring independence. The Sultan himself led an expedition against him and after defeating him placed Malik Ala-ud-din Jani in the charge of the *iqta* of Lakhnauti.

With the appointment of Malik Ala-ud-din Jani, the Khalji supremacy in Bengal came to an end and in the court too they ceased to hold any influence. No Khalji noble seems to have held any important office under the successors of Iltutmish; except that in the reign of Sultan Nasir-ud-din Mahmud (A.D. 1246-66) one Jalal-ud-din Khalji Khan Malik Khani, who was the *muqti* of Kara and Lakhnauti is mentioned in the list of his nobles but nothing more is known about him. But during the reign of Balban, the Khaljis made a steady progress in the court and the *iqtas*. Both Jalal-ud-din and his brother Shihab-ud-din Khalji entered into the service of Sultan Balban and held many responsible posts under him. Malik Shihab-ud-din died during the reign of Balban, but Jalal-ud-din rose to power and eminence on account of his victories over the Mongol raids. After Balban's death he was appointed *Ariz-i-mamalik*, a key appointment at the court. His subsequent career and the contribution of Malik Chhajju and Fakhr-ud-din Kotwal in supporting his cause have already been mentioned in the previous chapter.

It will thus be noticed that though the Khaljis could not

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 141.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 177.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 177.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 171.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 180-1.

establish themselves firmly during the ascendancy of the Ilbari Turks, they did begin to play a prominent role under the leadership of Jalal-ud-din Khalji, under whom they came to wield considerable power and influence at the court since the reign of Balban. Nevertheless, they were still in a minority and therefore were compelled to seek the cooperation and enlist the support of the Muslims in general and of the Ilbari Turks in particular.

After Jalal-ud-din's accession to the throne, he fully recognized the importance of public opinion in Delhi which disapproved strongly of the cold-blooded murder of Muizz-ud-din Kaiqubad and his son and had already shown its resentment by a riot which could be quelled only by the influence of Fakhr-ud-din Kotwal, one of the most trusted nobles of Balban. At the court too, the part played by Malik Chhajju, the nephew of Balban, in helping Jalal-ud-din rise to power left no doubt in the mind of the Khalji leader that the Ilbari faction in the court and the provinces was still strong enough and could not be ignored. No wonder, therefore, that in choosing his team at the court and distribution of the *iqtas* in the realm, the Ilbaris received a fair treatment. Thus among the nobles of Sultan Muizz-ud-din, who were patronized by Jalal-ud-din, was Khwaja Khatir who became the *Wazir*, and Fakhr-ud-din Kotwal who had contributed so much to the success of the Khalji revolution was confirmed in his appointment to the post of *Kotwal* of the capital. Amir Ali Sarjandar Hatim Khan confirmed to hold Avadh in *iqta* and Malik Chhajju was likewise confirmed in his appointment as the *muqti* of Kara Manikpur. Besides, many important civil appointments were given to the old Balbani nobles who were well-versed and experienced in the art of running administration.¹¹

In fact in all subsequent political changes when two power-

¹¹ *TF*, p. 177; *TM*, p. 62. A comparison of the list of the nobles of Sultan Muizz-ud-din Kaiqubad and Sultan Jalal-ud-din Khalji reveals that out of the forty and odd nobles of the former thirteen are included in the list of nobles of the later (Appendix C). This clearly indicates that in the struggle for power many nobles adopted an attitude of neutrality in order to save their necks and past experience suggested that this was the only reasonable approach. They, however, at once threw their lot with Jalal-ud-din Khalji. This indicates that the racial factor had considerably weakened.

ful factions at the court struggled for power, the saner elements in the nobility sought to be neutral as far as possible.¹² Jalal-ud-din followed the policy of winning support of these nobles, because reconciliation seemed to be the only practical approach for strengthening his own position. Their number as well as the dearth of trained personnel among Khalji ranks who could shoulder the responsibilities of a great empire were facts which could not be ignored by the Khalji leader.

Nevertheless, the Sultan fully recognized that as creators of the new order, the Khaljis had a right to get the lion's share of the spoils and he did all in his power to create a new order of nobility based on the principle of blood-relationship by distributing some of the most coveted posts to the prominent members of his tribe.¹³ But this kindled the lust for power in the younger generation of the Khaljis who expected much out of the revolution. Had not the sons of Jalal-ud-din acted promptly in crushing the power of the Ilbaris who were led by Malik Aitmar Surkha and his brother Malik Aitmar Kachhan, Jalal-ud-din would have been done to death within the precincts of the royal palace of Muizz-ud-din. In fact, it were they who seated Jalal-ud-din on the throne, and thrust power in his hands. And after his accession also, it were they, and chiefly the Sultan's

¹² After the murder of Sultan Jalal-ud-din Khalji, a number of nobles went over to Ala-ud-din deserting the cause of their master in order to seek the favour of the new master (Barani, p. 244). But he says that out of all the Jalali nobles, three alone remained neutral and did not seek Ala-ud-din's favour. They were Malik Qutb-ud-din Alwi, Malik Nasir-ud-din *Shahna-i-pil* and Malik Amir Jamali (Barani, p. 251). Later on in the struggle between Khusrau Khan and Chazi Malik, Malik Mughlati, the *Muqti* of Multan, Muhammad Shah Lur, the *Muqti* of Siwistan, Malik Hoshang, and last but not the least, Malik Ain-ul-mulk Multani maintained an attitude of neutrality and did not side with either party (*Tughluqnama*, pp. 59-67).

¹³ The Sultan's uncle, Malik Hasin, received the title of Taj-ul-Mulk. To his brother, Malik Khamush, he gave the title of Yughrush Khan and appointed him *Ariz-i-Mamalik*, Malik Aziz-ud-din, the Sultan's nephew (brother's son) became the *Qurbeg-i-Maimana*. Malik Ala-ud-din Gurhasp, his nephew and son-in-law became *Akhurbeg-i-Maimana* and *Amir-i-Tuzuk*. Another nephew, Almas Beg was appointed *Amir-i-Akhur*. Malik Ahmad Chap entitled Kishli Khan, who was his sister's son, became the *Barbak* and the *Sarjandar-i-maimana*. The Sultan's three sons also received honours and titles worthy of their position (Barani: *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, p. 117; *Tarikh-i-Mubarakshahi*, p. 62; *Miftah-ul-Futuh*, p. 13).

second son Arkali Khan, who most expeditiously suppressed the revolts of Malik Chhajju and Sidi Maula. Time and again, Malik Ahmad Chap, the *Barbak* and Sultan's sister's son who was still young in years, delivered sermons on diplomacy and statecraft to the Sultan indicating the advisability of strict measures against the recalcitrant Balbani Amirs and pressing him again and again to abandon the policy of reconciliation in order to annihilate the older nobility by a firm and strong hand. But Jalal-ud-din did not find himself strong enough to implement the ideas of Ahmad Chap though their importance he could seldom question. He tried to dismiss his arguments on the grounds of piety and fear of retribution in the other world but in reality he abhorred the very idea because of the flow of blood which the policy involved and the consequent repercussions that were bound to follow. Another reason why the Sultan could not subscribe to his views appears to be the influence of the old Balbani nobles who did not like to risk their position and hence favoured a *status quo*. A close scrutiny of the short notices of the principal Jalali nobles given by Barani reveals that many of them were men of influence and literary taste and had risen to power because of the special patronage of the Sultan who himself was a man of letters.¹⁴ By nature these men were peace-loving and their influence must have played a considerable part in preventing the younger faction among the Khaljis to have their own way.

The reconciliatory attitude of the Sultan was, however, taken as a sign of weakness and the Ilbaris made two vigorous attempts

¹⁴ *TF*, pp. 202-04. He clearly says that Malik Fakhr-ud-din Kuchi, who was *Dadbak* of the Sultan constantly remained in his company and was one of his advisers. Incidentally it may also be pointed out that it was Malik Fakhr-ud-din Kuchi who advised the Sultan to desist from any armed action against Ala-ud-din Khalji when the latter was reported to have acquired great wealth from the invasion of Deogir (Barani, pp. 226-7). Men of letters who received high offices under Jalal-ud-din were Malik Qutb-ud-din Alwi, Malik Taj-ud-din Kuhrami, Malik Muid Jajarmi, Maliks Sad-ud-din *Amir-i-Bahar*, Khwaja Jalal-ud-din Amir Chah *Naib Wazir*, Maulana Jalal-ud-din Bhakkari, the *Mustaufi-i-Mamalik* (Barani, p. 202). Badayuni adds the names of Amir Arsalan Katibi, Saad Mantaqi, Baqi Khatib and Qazi Mughis Hanswi among other literary luminaries of the court of Jalal-ud-din (*MT*, Vol. I, p. 181). The Sultan's love for poetry is also testified by Barani who says that the Sultan himself used to compose verses called *Dubaiti* (*TM*, pp. 67-8; *Muntab-ut-tawarikh*, pp. 181-2).

to regain their lost glory. The revolt of Malik Chhaju was the first united effort on the part of the Ilbaris to win back their lost glory. In this struggle, Malik Amir Ali Sarjandar Hatim Khan,¹⁵ the *muqti* of Avadh also cooperated with him. They were joined by many nobles of lesser importance who were loyal to the house of Balban.¹⁶ Apart from the active support of these nobles, Malik Chhaju expected some help from those posted in the capital, as people still held some soft corner for the claims of Balban's successors in their heart.¹⁷ The revolt, as is well-known, was suppressed by the able generalship of Prince Arkali Khan, the Sultan's second son.¹⁸

This revolt, however, did not open the eyes of the Sultan who continued to further the efforts of reconciliation by granting these rebellious nobles another lease of life. He only transferred them to distant *iqtas*, Malik Chhaju receiving Multan.¹⁹ Had the Sultan been a little cautious at the very beginning, he should have assigned the *iqtas* to Balbani nobles of doubtful loyalty to distant places thus ruling out all chances of a united effort on their part to form a coalition against the Khaljis.

This lenient policy of the Sultan was much resented by the younger party among the Khaljis who had borne the real burden of the struggle against the Ilbaris.²⁰ They were of opinion that this was a sufficient pretext to annihilate those Ilbaris who viewed the rise of the Khalji power with jealousy and contempt. Once again, Malik Ahmad Chap advised the Sultan to be strict in dealing with the rebels but all his words fell on deaf ears.²¹

But the kindness and consideration shown by Jalal-ud-din fanned the ambitions of his courtiers and eminent nobles began to criticize his policy. In one of the drinking parties held at

¹⁵ For Hatim Khan's life and influence in Balban's court see *TF*, pp. 118-9.

¹⁶ Prominent among those who supported the cause of Malik Chhaju were Malik Ulughchi, son of Malik Targhi, Malik Tajudar, Malik Ahjan who all held high appointments under Balban (*Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, p. 181); *Miftah-ul-Futuh*, p. 80 says that Hindu Rais and Rajas in the Doab also cooperated with Malik Chhaju.

¹⁷ *TF*, p. 181.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 181; *Miftah-ul-Futuh*, pp. 6-20.

¹⁹ *TF*, p. 184.

²⁰ *Miftah-ul-Futuh*, p. 6-20.

²¹ *TF*, p. 192.

the residence of Malik Taj-ud-din Kuchi, one of the nobles said to him: "It is you who deserve kingship and not the Sultan." Other nobles too extolled Taj-ud-din and swore allegiance to him. All this was communicated to the Sultan. Instead of awarding condign punishment to them for fomenting rebellion, he contented himself by severely reprimanding their conduct and transferred them to their respective *iqtas* banning their entry into Delhi for one year.²² Once again, the Sultan's weakness and lack of foresight prevented him from dealing with the disgruntled Balbani nobles effectively and the Sultan had to pay a heavy price for pursuing his reconciliatory policy.

The dark shadows of Malik Chhajju's revolt had hardly flitted away when a last though abortive attempt was made to dethrone the Sultan which was backed by many nobles of Balban who were facing starvation due to unemployment. This time the leader of the conspiracy was Sidi Maula,²³ an eminent Muslim saint, who had settled down in Delhi in the first year of Balban's reign and had become an influential figure among the common people and the elite of the city due to his lavish distribution of alms and food to the needy. Qazi Jalal Kashani, another prominent citizen of Delhi, had become his fast friend and constantly lived with him. Many other Balbani nobles who were mostly junior at the late Sultan's court and who were now facing unemployment became his great supporters. Kotwal Biranjtan and Hafiya Paik whose salaries during the reign of Balban were 1,00,000 *jitals*, and who were now facing starvation due to unemployment also flocked together around him. Many respectable nobles who had been dismissed by Jalal-ud-din used to live in his *Khanqah*. They entered into a conspiracy to murder Sultan Jalal-ud-din and apportion big and important *iqtas* and

²² *Ibid.*, p. 192.

²³ Not much is known about the life of Sidi Maula. Barani says he came to Delhi in the first year of Balban's reign and earned fame far and wide on account of his charity and chastity. He was a disciple of Shaikh Farid-ud-din Ganj-i-Shakar of Ajodhan who had warned him not to befriend great *maliks* and *amirs* of the court. According to Budayuni, he was a native of Ajam (*Muntakhab-ut-tawarikh*, pp. 169-70; *Futuh-us-Salatin*, pp. 215-6; *Tarikh-i-Mubarakshahi*, pp. 65-7). But Firishta who seems to have drawn upon the works of *Sadr-i-Jahan* Gujarati and Ain-ud-din Bijapuri says that he was a native of Jurjan (Firishta, p. 92). He further adds that the sons of the late Fakhr-ud-din Kotwal also joined Sidi Maula.

posts among themselves. But the plot leaked out due to the lack of proper organization and prompt action.

The circumstances under which Sidi Maula was executed leave a lot of doubt about the real nature of the conspiracy. That many disgruntled Ilbari nobles used to visit his *Khanqah* is undisputed but the Khalji nobles too visited him. Possibly the young Khalji party laid the trap to entangle Sidi Maula in a conspiracy in order to extirpate those Ilbari nobles who lived in the capital and posed a potent threat to the existence of the Khaljis. There might have been little truth in the *mala fide* intentions of Sidi Maula himself but the Khalji nobles were certainly not mistaken in locating their true enemies and accomplished their task with the greatest diplomatic acumen.

The late Professor S. H. Hodivala has propounded a novel explanation to the conspiracy of Sidi Maula.²⁴ His arguments may be summarized as follows:

(i) Sidi Maula appears to have been a tool in the hands of one of the two warring factions at the court of Sultan Jalal-ud-din Khalji led by his two sons Shaista Khan and Arqali Khan respectively for a possible contest for the throne.

(ii) Sidi Maula was probably well-known for diplomatic chicanery as is clear from the advice given to him by Shaikh Farid-ud-din Shakarganj to be away from the *Maliks* and *amirs* at the court.

(iii) Sultan Jalal-ud-din Khaljis' great age made it advisable for all parties in the state to be prepared for the political crisis which would be the immediate consequence of his demise.

(iv) Both the sons of the Sultan were candidates for the succession to the throne and were, therefore, busy collecting their adherents.

(v) Shaista Khan-i-Khanan had allied himself with the ecclesiastical party headed by Qazi Jalal Kashani and also with a section of the old Balbani bloc.

(vi) The members of the Balbani bloc considered Arqali Khan as their arch-enemy as it was he who had suppressed the rebellion of Malik Chajju.

(vii) The sumptuous feasts and open house kept in the name of the Sidi for the people of Delhi was to win over the sympathy

²⁴ *Studies in Indo-Muslim History*, Vol. I, pp. 267-8.

of the people.

(viii) The entire expenses of these lavish feasts were met by Shaista Khan and the disaffected Balbani Amirs.

(ix) The untimely death of Shaista Khan led the party to choose Sidi Maula as their leader and dethrone the Sultan by murdering him but the plot leaked out.

(x) The fact of these rivalries is also confirmed by the fact that the chief interest in annihilating the members of this party was taken by Arqali Khan.

This theory of the learned Professor sounds quite probable at the outset but a close examination of the evidence would reveal that the entire argument is based on mere conjecture. In the first place there is no direct evidence of any enmity between Arqali Khan and Shaista Khan. In fact, the successful culmination of the Khalji revolution was the result of the united effort of the two princes. Secondly, Jalal-ud-din Khalji had already declared Shaista Khan as heir-apparent to the throne and there was no opposition to this official declaration of the successor. Thirdly, as a result of the discovery of the conspiracy no Khalji noble of the court is exposed before us. Only disaffected and unemployed Balbani nobles are prominently brought out in the narrative of Barani. Fourthly, the interest shown by Arqali Khan to crush the conspiracy was natural. He had shown equal ferocity and aggressiveness in fighting with the nobles of Muizz-ud-din Kaiqubad and Malik Chhajju. Finally, the argument that Sidi Maula appears to have been well-known for his intriguing proclivities as is evident from the anecdote of Farid-i-Shakarganj mentioned by Firishta is hardly creditable because we know nothing about the past record of Sidi. It simply indicates that the fate of many dervishes during the reign of Iltutmish led the Shaikh to give this friendly advice to a foreigner.

The fact of the matter appears to be that Sidi Maula was an innocent person whose *Khanqah* was made a bed of intrigues by the Balbani nobles. The conspiracy was nipped in the bud perhaps on account of the lack of military support and delay on the part of the conspirators. The Sidi being a noble man at heart wanted to save the lives of these people by expressing complete ignorance of the fact. The more deeply we examine the facts the more surely we are convinced that Sidi Maula

died an innocent death. But one thing is clear. There might have been little truth in the *mala fide* intentions of Sidi Maula himself but the Khalji nobles were certainly not mistaken in locating their true enemies and accomplished their task with the greatest of diplomatic acumen.

The success against the Ilbaris allowed the younger Khaljis to nurse the satisfaction that, after the death of the old Sultan who was nearing eighty years of age, they will have their own way under the leadership of Arkali Khan. They hardly knew that the real enemy lay within their own camp. The Sultan's nephew and son-in-law, Malik Ala-ud-din Khalji, the *muqti* of Kara, cherished the desire to seize the throne on the evil advice of his associates most of-whom were the compatriots of Malik Chhajju in his revolt and were released or pardoned by the Sultan.²⁵ The victory over Malik Chhajju, in which Ala-ud-din led an important wing of the Khalji army, and his conquests and exploits in Bhilsa fed his ambitions like wild fire and he looked forward for further conquests on his own initiative in fulfilment of his secret desire to capture the throne. And why should he not? The greatest truth established by the Khalji revolution of 1290 was, firstly, the total disregard of the hereditary right to kingship; and, secondly, that the Crown would belong to anybody who had the courage to pick it up with his sword. Subsequent events gradually paved the way for his ultimate succession to the throne, and when the Sultan raised him to the post of *Ariz-i-mamalik* also adding Avadh to his *iqtas* in recognition of his victory over Bhilsa, Ala-ud-din found himself very near the throne. This was the turning point in his career for Jalal-ud-din had put him in the very position from which he himself had picked up the sceptre. It suggested to Ala-ud-din that the throne was now at an arm's length. A step more and the whole empire of Hindustan would lie under his feet.

But in the execution of his designs Ala-ud-din had to count mainly on his immediate associates. These were, firstly, the old Ilbari nobles posted in Kara and Avadh who wanted to use Ala-ud-din as a tool for bringing the downfall of Jalal-ud-din and therefore, who could be counted upon for their unflinching support and loyalty to Ala-ud-din. Of these Malik Ala-ul-mulk was the foremost in whom Ala-ud-din found a great adminis-

²⁵ TF, p. 222.

trator and a man of great foresight whose contribution to Ala-ud-din's rise need not be recounted here.²⁵ Secondly, Ala-ud-din pinned his faith on his nearest kin—his brother Almas Beg for example—whose execution of the conspiracy to kill the Sultan was at once brilliant and barbaric.

The original plan of Ala-ud-din and his associates appears to have been to prepare for an open contest for the throne by accumulating enough money to win supporters and to collect a formidable army. It was with this end in view that Ala-ud-din got the payment of the *Fawazil* of Kara and Avadh postponed for one year, and immediately after return from the capital, he launched upon his historic expedition to Deogir. Even after the return from the expedition, his advisers were not certain as to what course to adopt and it was after an on-the-spot study of the situation at the court by his brother Almas Beg that the cruel and treacherous conspiracy to murder the Sultan was hatched. Needless to say, that Ala-ud-din was advised not to take the risks of an open contest. Jalal-ud-din still commanded the good wishes and support of those generals in the army who were enjoying his filial love and treatment.

The murder of Jalal-ud-din at once threw the whole camp into confusion. It was a blow to the Khalji nobility at the court itself who were not prepared for such a contingency. In this confusion, the weakness of the supporters of Jalal-ud-din clearly gave way to the firm attitude of Ala-ud-din who did all to win most of them to his side. But the decisive blow to their cause was given by Malika-i-Jahan, the dowager empress herself, who without assessing the whole situation and without obtaining the advice of the nobles, created confusion worst confounded by raising her youngest son to the throne. Another reason which may be attributed to the weakness of the Jalali nobles was that they were less loyal to the house of their benefactor than to their own self-interest. It has already been pointed out earlier how neutral nobles in the court of Sultan Muizz-ud-din joined hands with Jalal-ud-din in forming his team of administrators. They acted similarly when they realized that Ala-ud-din and not Arkali Khan was the rising man of the hour. But Ala-ud-din knew them very well. For the time being he was interested in

²⁵ Other near associates of Ala-ud-din were Malik Asghari *Sardawatdar*, Malik Juna *Dadbak* and Ikhtiyar-ul-din Hud (*TF*, p. 237).

breaking up the Jalali camp and so kept quiet but once secure on the throne, he tore off the mask of loyalty worn by these nobles and dealt them and the associates of Arkali Khan in like manner.

Whatever may be said about this cold-blooded policy of Ala-ud-din in seizing political power, it will have to be admitted that need of the hour was a strong man of action and in one sense Ala-ud-din may be regarded as the child of the circumstances of the age. Jalal-ud-din's rule did not make any sweeping change in the social structure of the nobility. In effect it was only the continuance of the system left by the Ilbaris which attached too much emphasis on racial taboos and religious prejudices. Jalal-ud-din's rule was both reactionary and unprogressive as it failed to channelize the forces of the time demanding fresh conquests and expansion of the Turkish empire to give place to younger generation and new elements in the nobility who had no opportunities to rise and seek the fulfilment of their ambitions. Ala-ud-din fully vindicated his position by sweeping conquests thus bringing out the Turkish nobility out of the limited scope of progress pushing them on to the path of glory and prosperity.

The reign of Ala-ud-din Khalji is divided into two periods marked by two different trends in the development of the Khalji nobility. In the first period, he is engaged in rooting out the old Jalali nobles and creating a new class of nobles mainly based on blood relationship and personal service. But the real power is never allowed to be shared by anybody except the Sultan and his four generals all of whom were his nearest kin. Since the success of his *coup* was brought about by his close associates, they were the first recipients of high favours and formed the select faction which directed the affairs of the state.²⁷ But the

²⁷ Almas Beg, the Sultan's brother and the Chief architect in bringing about the downfall of Jalal-ud-din was conferred the title of Ulugh Khan and appointed to the most coveted post of *Amir-i-Hajib*; Malik Aizz-ud-din, his cousin became head of the *Diwan-i-Insha*; Yusuf, the sister's son of the Sultan became Zafar Khan and was made *Ariz-i-mamalik*; Sulaiman Shah, the brother's son of the Sultan, received the title of Ikit Khan; another nephew (Brother's son) of Sultan was conferred the title of Qutlugh Khan. Malik Khamush, his uncle became Yughrush Khan and Malik Nusrat, another relative became Nusrat Khan and appointed *Kotwal* of the Capital. (TF, pp. 247-8).

needs of an expanding empire compelled him to choose his team of civil administrators from among the old Ilbari nobles who impressed him by their loyal service. The case of Ala-ul-mulk, who was made *Kotwal* of the capital, has already been noticed but a number of nobles who had served under Muizz-ud-din Kaiqubad also found place under the new administration as is indicated by the list of Ala-ud-din's nobles.²⁸ Many more were introduced who hailed from newly conquered territories—Malik Kafur for example. But in giving them authority, Ala-ud-din always kept a close watch upon them for he had already seen what indifference in dealing with the disgruntled nobility meant. His ruthless suppression of the neo-Muslim nobility who raised a cry against the extortionate demands of his brother Ulugh Khan clearly indicates that the Sultan wanted to strike terror in the hearts of those who questioned his authority in the slightest measure.²⁹

In fact he could neither tolerate any opposition from any quarter nor could he treat the nobility as an equal to his sovereign authority because he had risen to power primarily through his own efforts. He, therefore, ruled with absolute authority caring little for any group. In fact, his early policy had been mainly directed towards annihilation of those groups which presented a united threat to his existence. Both the Jalali and the neo-Muslim nobles met their doom on account of suspicion they created in the mind of their new master.³⁰ But this suspicion of the Sultan reached unprecedented dimensions when he began to think of doing away with Zafar Khan, one of his own trusted

²⁸ *TF*, pp. 240-1.

²⁹ The important thing to bear in mind in connection with this rebellion is that it were the neo-Muslims alone who were subjected to torture in order to surrender the spoils of war which legitimately formed their share of *Khums*. This shows that there was no law except the order of the Sultan who seldom tried to go deep into the logic of things. See his discourse with Qazi Mughis-ud-din of Bayana regarding *Khums* (*TF*, pp. 292-3).

³⁰ Barani clearly says that after the removal of Arqali Khan and Qadr Khan from the scene, Ala-ud-din ordered confiscation of the property of those Jalali nobles who had earlier joined him. Thus nearly all the Jalali nobles were annihilated root and branch with the exception of three viz. Malik Qutb-ud-din Alwi, Malik Nasir-ud-din Ranah and Amir Jamali (*TF*, pp. 250-1).

nobles.³¹ He was, however, removed from his path as though by divine assistance and Ala-ud-din was saved from an unhappy embarrassment.

There is a strange phenomenon discernible in the politics of the Khaljis that the methods adopted by Ala-ud-din for his accession to the throne were taken as legitimate precedents to bring about his own downfall. This explains the many rebellions initiated by the members of his own family, which occurred during his reign. In the year 1301, his nephew Ikit Khan rebelled while the Sultan was encamped at Tilpat³² and soon after Amir Umar and Mangu Khan, the nephews (sister's sons) of the Sultan who held the *iqtas* of Budaun and Avadh, also rebelled. Both these revolts were suppressed and the rebels put to most cruel death symbolic of primitive cannibalism.³³

These successive revolts made the Sultan alive to the situation and he immediately set himself to the task of imposing curbs on the power of the nobility. A general order of confiscation of property of many nobles in the court and the *iqtas* was issued which was executed with utmost severity so that in a few months the nobility was left with little riches. The department of intelligence was reorganized in order to work more efficiently so as to keep the Sultan well-posted with the doings of the nobility. Wineshops were ordered to be closed forthwith and a policy of total prohibition was imposed.³⁴ Lastly, the Sultan ordered that matrimonial alliances among the nobles could be entered into only by his permission.

³¹ Isami, p. 261. Isami, however, does not mention this jealousy between the two. According to him in the thick of the battle Ala-ud-din sent Ulugh Khan to re-inforce Zafar Khan in his fight with the Mughals but Ulugh Khan deliberately made delay with the result that Zafar Khan was totally overpowered by the Mongols. Ala-ud-din was aggrieved at the death of such a brave general (*FS*, pp. 254-69).

³² *TF*, 272-7; *FS*, pp. 276-9. From Isami's account it appears that the real conspirator was Qutlugh Khan, Ikit Khan's brother, who instigated him to rebel. Barani does not mention Qutlugh Khan in the list of the Sultan's nobles. Badayuni also says that the rebellion was planned with the help of neo-Muslims and mentions Qutlugh Khan who was executed (*MT*, pp. 191-2).

³³ *TF*, pp. 276-8.

³⁴ Badayuni says that the cause of the adoption of the policy of prohibition was the execution of Qazi Baha-ud-din which the Sultan had ordered in a fit of intoxication (*MT*, pp. 186-7).

But the most significant change in the Sultan's policy towards the nobility was the creation of a new class of nobility on which he could rely absolutely. The Sultan had already lost his trusted associates, viz. Zafar Khan,³⁵ Alap Khan and Ulugh Khan, but by his good luck other able generals like Malik Naib Hazar Dinari rose up and made great conquests. It was to this class of his nobility to which Ala-ud-din now turned for support. Malik Kafur Hazar Dinari popularly known as Malik Naib became more and more powerful and the Sultan's carnal attachment to him weakened the roots of the administration. He was made commander of the forces and the *Wazarat* of the realm was also conferred on him. This caused enmity between him and Alap Khan, the maternal uncle of Khizr Khan, the heir-apparent. Malik Naib was naturally much hated by the nobles of the various *Diwans*.³⁶

The new class of his nobles recruited on the basis of personal services and loyalty to the Sultan owed its rise to power to this policy of the Sultan.³⁷ It is, however, not clear how much power Ala-ud-din wanted this new group to wield for although he had given considerable power to the Malik Naib, his reluctance to concede to the murder of Alap Khan, his brother-in-law and the father-in-law of the heir-apparent prince Khizr Khan, tends to show that he exercised caution over the activities of his new class of supporters.³⁸ In any case, the event of Alap Khan's murder clearly proves that Malik Naib was following an underhand policy of annihilating the principal Khalji nobles to continue and consolidate his own position built up during the reign of his patron. His success in removing Sharaf Qaini and the two sons of Malik Qiwan-ul-mulk Ala Dabir from responsible

³⁵ Barani does not mention the circumstances of the death of Ulugh Khan. Isami says that Ala-ud-din had him murdered by administering poison as Ulugh Khan was planning to capture the throne after he heard an unconfirmed report about the death of Ala-ud-din (*TF*, pp. 285-6; *FS*, pp. 280-2).

³⁶ *TF*, p. 337.

³⁷ That Malik Naib was extremely loyal to the Sultan is amply illustrated by the fact that he refused Ikit Khan's entry into the royal harem unless he showed him the severed head of Sultan Ala-ud-din (*TF*, p. 274). Another of the Sultan's bodyguards who was of indigenous origin was Manik who had saved the Sultan's life when Ikit Khan's men were attacking the Sultan.

³⁸ *TF*, p. 368.

posts in the court,³⁹ and many more whose names are not given by Barani whom he got executed as also the appointment of people who did not descend from the Turkish aristocracy clearly points out to a planned attempt on the part of Malik Naib to curb the power of the Khalji nobles. Moreover, he knew clearly and correctly that after the death of his patron his downfall would be immediate unless a faction loyal to him alone was developed in place of the prominent Khalji nobles. He, therefore, struck at the very root of his rivals by clearing out Alap Khan and other influential nobles from his path.

One question, however, is very significant: Malik Naib did not try to hold the throne himself. Perhaps he thought that the odds were too heavy against him. He therefore, raised a puppet, Prince Shihab-ud-din who was hardly five years of age and gave out to the world that the late Sultan had rescinded his earlier will and declared Shihab-ud-din as the heir-apparent.⁴⁰ About the authenticity of the will there will ever remain a mystery. It is very strange that no contemporary writer, not even Barani and Amir Khusrau, supply definite information about the true nature of the will but this³⁹ much is certain that Malik Naib forged it or obtained it from the dying Sultan with a definite political purpose behind it. Had he survived for a longer period, he might have possibly tried to remove the dummy Sultan from his path and seize power himself, thus removing that show of legitimacy by which he wanted to delude the nobles of the court. Having thus secured real power in his hands, Malik Naib proceeded to remove all possible obstacles in his path, a logical continuation of his policy to annihilate the influential nobles in the realm who were his sworn enemies. Khizr Khan and Shadi Khan who were already incarcerated in the Gwalior Fort were blinded and their mother, Malika-i-Jahan was deprived of all the jewellery and personal treasure.⁴¹ In all the three *diwans*, he ordered the old rules to continue but appointed inexperienc-

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 368.

⁴⁰ *TF*, p. 372. Isami says that Prince Umar Khan known as Sultan Shihab-ud-din was the son of Ram Deo's daughter Jhitai who was one of the royal consorts of Ala-ud-din (*FS*, p. 342; *Travels*, p. 189). Firishta who based his account on a work by Sadr-i-Jahan Gujarati which is not extant now also says that Malik Naib showed the will of Sultan to the nobles (*Firishta*, p. 123).

⁴¹ *TF*, p. 373.

ed slaves and eunuchs to serve where once ability was the sole criterion for appointment. He now planned to kill all the *Alai* nobles throughout the realm by inviting them to the royal palace. He was, however, soon removed from the scene by a treacherous plot meeting a well-deserved end.

The murder of Malik Naib and consequent enthronement of Sultan Qutb-ud-din Mubarak Shah gave a sigh of relief to those nobles of the court who were loyal to the house of Ala-ud-din. Though young in years, the new Sultan was endowed with much commonsense and realized the necessity of winning the nobility by relaxing the severe laws imposing restrictions on them. Immediately on accession to the throne, he issued a general amnesty to all the prisoners and also abolished severe punishments introduced in the market and the *Diwan-i-Wazarat* etc. The emoluments of the nobles were increased and villages and lands which were confiscated during the late reign and included in the *Khalsa* were restored to their former owners.⁴²

These acts of benevolence helped to establish his rule on firm foundations but it is significant that the nobles of the empire looked upon the change of Government in the capital with caution and Isami says that when Sultan Qutb-ud-din ascended the throne he sent a personal message through Tughluq (probably Ulugh Khan later known as Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq) to Malik Ain-ul-mulk who was then besieging Chittor commanding him to invade Gujarat at once which was in confusion. But Ain-ul-mulk, along with other nobles of the army, did not give any weight to his command. Tughluq, therefore, advised the Sultan to send *Khilats* and *farmans* to all the nobles and *iqta*-holders individually.⁴³ These unusual acts of beneficence were followed by conferment of titles and new appointments in which process the Sultan showed great discretion by distributing key appointments to the old *Alai* nobility in order to further strengthen his position.⁴⁴

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 382.

⁴³ *FS*, pp. 354-9.

⁴⁴ Malik Dinar *Shahna-i-Pil Alai* was given the title of Zafar Khan and the Sultan took his daughter in marriage. He was given the *iqta* of Gujarat. To his maternal uncle, Muhammad Maulana, he gave the title of Sher Khan. Maulana Zia-ud-din, the son of Maulana Baha-ud-din Khattat, who had taught him calligraphy, was appointed to the post of *Sadr-i-Jahan* with the title of Qazi Khan. Malik Qurabeg was appointed

In the distant provinces of Gujarat and Deogir, which were suffering from disorder and lawlessness following the mismanagement under Malik Naib, he brought the situation under control by appointing able men in the two *iqtas*. This all-out effort to streamline the administration won laurels from all, great and small. It proved to the great astonishment of the elder statesmen of the capital that the Sultan could rise to the occasion whenever necessary and that he possessed a good deal of intelligence in recognizing men of talents. The Sultan revived the post of *Wazarat* which in the last years of Sultan Ala-ud-din had been abolished conferring it upon Malik Wahid-ud-din in recognition of his services in bringing the situation in Gujarat under control.⁴⁵

But Ala-ud-din had left behind a rich legacy of unhealthy political traditions and personal vices for Qutb-ud-din to fight with. To the young Sultan, these were forces potent enough to keep him and his realm continuously disturbed. As has already been pointed out, the great truth established by the Khalji revolution was the setting aside of the principle of legitimacy in the succession to the throne. In the first year of Qutb-ud-din Mubarak Shah, an attempt was made to dethrone him by Malik Asad-ud-din.⁴⁶ The plot was, however, discovered and Malik

to several posts at a time. His three sons were also given various posts and assignments under him. Malik Fakhr-ud-din Juna, the son of Ghazi Malik, became *Amir-i-Akhur*. Malik Qasr became *Khas Hajib*, Malik Asbah, *Qurbeg Maisara* and Malik Lakhi Maho, *Qurbeg-Maimana*. Bashir Muizzi became *Naib Khas Hajib*. Beg Rozmani became *Sarjandar Maimana*. Hasan Beg was appointed to the post of *Sarjandar Maisara* and Khwaja Haji Shab Nawis, became *Naib Ariz Mamalik* (TF, p. 381; TM, pp. 82-3).

⁴⁵ TF, p. 398.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 392. Barani says that Malik Asad-ud-din hatched out this plot in order to usurp the throne himself. But Ibn-i-Battutah says that Malik Asad-ud-din's intention was to enthrone a ten-year old son of Prince Khizr Khan who was then in the camp with Sultan Qutb-ud-din. After the plot had been unearthed, that child was put to a cruel death by the orders of the Sultan (*Travels*, pp. 192). Dr K. S. Lal, however, is of the opinion that Khizr Khan could not have had a ten year old son in A.D. 1318 and that the plot was hatched to enthrone Asad-ud-din himself or Malik Shahin, the *Naib* of Delhi, in the absence of Sultan Qutb-ud-din. This according to him is also supported by numismatic evidence as the issue of bullion coin from Delhi struck in 718H in the name of one Shams-ud-din Mahmud Shah suggests (*History of the Khaljis*, pp. 331-3). But this is incorrect. These bullion coins are definitely those of Malik Yaklakhi who

Asad-ud-din put to instant death along with his associates in the camp. This conspiracy made the Sultan aware of the possibilities of disloyal intrigue within his own camp and he took the grim decision to put his helpless and destitute brothers then imprisoned in the Gwalior fort to death.⁴⁷ After this, no noble had the courage to give him any advice in matters of administration. Like his father he too had grown very suspicious and ordered capital punishment on the slightest pretext to those suspected of treason. He had thus executed Zafar Khan, his father-in-law, the Governor of Gujarat, without any potent cause. The next victim of his wrath was Malik Shahin, another father-in-law.⁴⁸

As a necessary corollary to his suspicion of the members of his own house and the old *Alai* nobility, the Sultan began to encourage his own personal slaves to positions of power and prestige. Khusrau Khan, who had already received favours from the Sultan, began to rise to power. His successful campaigns in Mabar further enhanced his prestige and though the *Alai* nobles, who were jealous of him, tried to involve him into an alleged conspiracy against the Sultan, they singularly failed to share the implicit faith which the Sultan placed in Khusrau Khan. He thus had many nobles of the court transferred to different *iqtas* and obtained favours and key appointments to men of his own tribe. The *Alai* nobles saw this with the greatest contempt but could do nothing on account of the Sultan's refusal to listen to reason or see realities with his own eyes. Out of sheer fear for their lives, they flocked around Khusrau Khan to seek his favour.⁴⁹

rebelled in Deogir, assuming the title of Shams-ud-din as clearly mentioned by Isami (*FS*, pp. 365-8). These coins have nothing to do with the revolt of Asad-ud-din or Malik Shahin.

⁴⁷ *TF*, pp. 392-3; *Deval Rani Khizr Khan*, pp. 264-87. Amir Khusrau makes the most startling revelation that Khizr Khan was ordered to be put to death because he refused to part with Deval Rani whom Qutb-ud-din desired to enter his harem. Isami is totally silent regarding the fate of Khizr Khan but makes a passing mention of the conspiracy of Asad-ud-din who was put to death (*FS*, pp. 362-4; *Travels*, pp. 193-4). He bases his account on the information given by Qazi Zamir-ud-din Mubarak, the Qazi of the fort of Gwalior who was an eye-witness.

⁴⁸ *TF*, pp. 395-6.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 402-09.

How Khusrau Khan brought about the death of the Sultan and himself ascended the throne is a well-known story. The role of the Khalji nobility during the critical reign of Sultan Qutb-ud-din must be considered a potent factor in bringing about his downfall. It was faithful no doubt. Nor was there any dearth of ability and talent in its ranks but its greatest weakness was its extreme docility. Throughout the reign of Ala-ud-din, and specially during his later years, it had been rendered helpless, disunited and economically broken by the suspicious nature of Ala-ud-din and also by his strict regulations that discouraged hoarding of riches by the nobles and contracting matrimonial alliances between themselves. It had ceased to have any effective influence over the Sultan and the extremely vicious atmosphere created by the sensuousness of the Khalji Sultans which kept the nobility away from the king further weakened its ranks. They had become totally egotistic and any opposition by them of the Sultan's favourite slaves was an invitation to untold misery and disaster.

The Alai state was a police state depending on sheer force. Thus, Ala-ud-din had created a system in which the personal vigilance by the Sultan over all the departments of the government and espionage and terror was the essence of administration. It always required a personality to direct and make it work. In other words, the system did not function automatically for want of a machinery of checks and balances. The moment the personality required to work it or the motive power was removed it toppled down like a house of cards. Like all despotic governments, the empire of the Khaljis hung on the slenderest thread of terror and espionage. It had no real foundations as shrewdly expressed by Shaikh Bashir Diwana after the death of Ala-ud-din.⁵⁰

Before we pass on to the immediate political problems which confronted the Khalji nobility after the assumption of power by Khusrau Khan, it is appropriate to examine a recently propounded view which seeks to draw an analogy between the reigns of

⁵⁰ *TF*, p. 378. Also see R. P. Tripathi: *Some Aspects of Muslim Administration in India*, p. 54; S. R. Sharma: *Studies in Medieval Indian History*, article on 'A Medieval Experiment in Totalitarianism', pp. 89-102; P. Saran: *Studies in Medieval Indian History*, article on 'The Economic Policy and Price control of Ala-ud-din Khalji'. p. 145-87.

Sultan Qutb-ud-din Mubarak Shah and Sultan Muizz-ud-din Kaiqubad, of course with certain limitations. It has been pointed out by Dr S. C. Misra that "the reign of Mubarak Shah is reminiscent of that of Kaiqubad. In both cases, weak and worthless rulers succeeded unusually assertive ones; in both cases, the consequence was the supplantation of one dynasty by another. Both Sultans allowed themselves to be dominated by strong lieutenants who ultimately connived at their downfall."⁵¹

It may be pointed out at the first instance that if at all an analogy has to be drawn, it should first concern itself with the political forces at work in the reign of the two Sultans. During the reign of Muizz-ud-din Kaiqubad, inability on the part of the nobles to cooperate in furtherance of the interests of the house of Ilbaris, was the main reason of their downfall and in this respect the policy of Balban himself was responsible. Again, the need of the hour was the immediate expansion of the Turkish State in order to provide opportunities to the new aspirants for power and prestige whose ambitions needed to be polarized. It was necessary to divert the attention of the nobility from the narrow outlook into which it had come to indulge to the wider horizons of conquest and expansion. The Turkish state demanded immediate *libensraum* in order that the new class of nobility which had settled in India due to constant migration from the west might find a legitimate scope for their energies and ambitions. The Ilbaris failed to realize this need and continued to indulge in a policy of mutual jealousy and mutual annihilation leading up to their downfall.

In the reign of Sultan Qutb-din Mubarak Shah, the need of the state was not expansion or polarization of the energies of any rising class. Instead, the administrative policy for an already vast empire required the creation of a system of checks and balances which would enable the sovereign to play the warring members of the nobility against each other, thus providing an automatic safety-valve against undue domination of the sovereign's personality by any particular individual or group. But the policy of suspicion and the patronage of one class in preference to other followed by the Sultan ultimately rendered neutral the class of people who could have saved the house of Khal-

⁵¹ Misra, S. C.: *The Rise of Muslim Power in Gujarat*, p. 42.

jis. Thus, the real difference worthy of notice is the political situation and the underlying political currents during the reigns. A personal equation between the two Sultans is meaningless.

A significant factor to note during the reign of Mubarak Shah is his pursuance of the policies of his father under the force of certain analogous circumstances. Like him, Mubarak Shah too had launched upon a career of conquest and similarly in the beginning of his reign he was guided by the principle 'blood is thicker than water' in choosing his team of administrators but in both cases similar circumstances—the revolt of their own kin—led them to encourage a new class in order to outwit the other, and strangely enough, in both these cases the rise of the new class was the result-of the personal vices of the two.

Although the temporary success of Khusrau Khan had brought him to power, yet his downfall was a foregone conclusion. On account of his personal life, which was full of scandals, and the lack of real administrative talent among the Barwaris who were his natural supporters, it was impossible to hold the *Alai* nobles under control for long. They were all drawn from a race of administrators and conquerors who hated the Barwaris both on account of their indigenous origin as also for the treacherous manner in which they had come to power killing their own master who had created them. Khusrau Khan's personality could not command the respect of the Turks and they hated him as their predecessors under the Ilbaris had hated Imad-ud-din Raihan. Khusrau Khan too knew this and though he pinned his faith in the members of his own tribe, he correctly realized the need for wooing the support of the *Alai* nobility.

Most of the appointments in the *iqtas* and the capital were confirmed and no changes were made so that he could stabilize his own position.⁵² He also realized the value of popular sup-

⁵² In order to win the *amirs* of the late Sultan, Malik Ain-ul-mulk Multani who was not his accomplice, was conferred the title of Alim Khan, Malik Taj-ul-mulk continued in the *Diwan-i-wazarat*. Malik Wahid-ud-din the *wazir* of Gujarat continued in his old appointment and the sons of Malik Qirabeg retained their respective appointments. Malik Ikhtiyar-ud-din Sambal was bestowed the title of Hatim Khan. Kamal-ud-din Sufi became the *Vakil-i-Dar*; Malik Fakhr-ud-din Juna (the son of Ghazi Malik and later Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq) who was *Akhurbeg* during the reign of Qutb-ud-din was promoted to the post of *Amir-i-Akhur*.

port in the capital and perhaps remembering the methods of Ala-ud-din he opened the doors of his treasury and bestowed riches on the population of the capital and relaxed many of the strict laws of the *Alai* period. A large number of Alai nobles rallied under his banner perhaps because of the unpopularity of the past rulers and the comparative ease and comfort which they now enjoyed. The epithets and condemnation levelled by Barani on Khusrau Khan need not mislead us at all, for these are the views of the orthodox Muslims who wanted to see a Muslim of pure Turkish origin installed at Delhi. It must be noted that Khusrau Khan did not persecute the Muslims in the capital nor himself renounce Islam. He was a great devotee of Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya and is said to have presented rich gifts to the *Khanqah* of the Shaikh since the days of his master. Again, he did not expect or seek any support from the Hindu Rais and Ranas because he knew that they would likewise discard him and refuse to accept him as their overlord.

The Alai nobles, however, were divided among themselves for any armed action against Khusrau Khan. While some nobles at the court secretly joined Ghazi Malik, others remained neutral like Malik Ain-ul-mulk Multani and Malik Wahid-ud-din Gujarati. Many openly supported Khusrau's cause for they were not sure about the intentions of Ghazi Malik. Security of their position was the sole criteria with them and they naturally staked all to hold it. It is no wonder, therefore, that Ghazi Malik had to fight two hotly contested battles to win a clear victory. The defeat of Khusrau Khan in the final contest, however, was much due to the desertion of Malik Ain-ul-mulk Multani who decided to remain neutral in order to gain irrespective of the fact as to who won ultimately. The defeat of Khusrau Khan was thus occasioned by the weak nature of the confederacy supporting his cause. But the decisive factor in this contest was the able generalship of Ghazi Malik and his decision to strike Khusrau Khan before it was too late. In forming an effective opposition to fight Khusrau he made earnest efforts to gain supporters from different *iqtas* of the realm and the success which attended his labours opened a new era which culminated in the perfection of the institution of nobility.

A number of maliks who were not loyal to him were arrested and put to death (*TF*, p. 410; *TM*, p. 88).

Evolution of Nobility under the Tughluqs*

The revolution that was brought about by the joint effort of a section of *Alai* nobles did not bring about any drastic change in the set-up of the new dynasty under the Tughluqs for obvious reasons. Sultan Ghiyas-ud-din Tughluq ascended the throne with the unanimous consent of the nobles. Perhaps that choice was a *fait accompli* because of many reasons. Firstly, Ghiyas-ud-din was a respectable old *Alai* noble who had distinguished himself in many battles against the Mongols. Secondly, it was he who took the initiative to organize an effective confederacy of the *Alai* nobles to root out the regime of Khusrau Khan, and lastly it was his military skill and experience that weighed heavily against Khusrau's forces which ultimately resulted in his downfall. Thus, the change of dynasty from one tribe to another was not followed by a corresponding change in the rank and file of the nobility as was the case after the change-over in A.D. 1290. The reason is obvious. The Tughluqs were not

* For the origin of the Tughluqs see Ishwari Prasad: *History of the Quraunah Turks in India*, pp. 1-8; Mahdi Husain: *Tughluq Dynasty*, pp. 16-24; Ishwar Topa in his work *Politics in Pre-Mughal India* says that Ghazi Malik was a Hindu convert on the grounds that after the battle with Khusrau Khan, he did not order a general massacre of the Hindus who were his associates. Ibn-i-Battutah says that Ghazi Malik came to India during the reign of Sultan Ala-ud-din (*Travels*, pp. 201-02). *Amir Khusrau who is definitely better informed says that Ghazi Malik started his career under Jalal-ud-din Khalji (Tughluqnama, pp. 137-8)*. In the alleged memoirs of Muhammad Tughluq, he is reported to have come to India sometime after the accession of Sultan Balban. Firishta who made express enquiries at Lahore from people who had knowledge of the Tughluqs says that the father of Sultan Ghiyas-ud-din Tughluq was in the service of Turkish slaves of Sultan Ghiyas-ud-din Balban and married a Jat woman. Sultan Ghiyas-ud-din Tughluq was the off-spring of this union (Firishta, p. 130).

fighting against any section of the Khalji nobility. Instead, they were fighting against those whom they considered as the usurpers¹ of the crown belonging to their master. The war against the Barbars was given the colour of a Jihad against the sacrilege committed by Khusrau Khan's forces. It cannot be guessed exactly what would have been the case if the Tughluqs had usurped the throne directly from the Khaljis just as the Khaljis got hold of it from the Ilbaris. All the important appointments were conferred on the old *Alai* nobility, and Ghiyas-ud-din considered himself only a *primus inter pares*, a position which created a great deal of trouble during the reign of his son and successor, Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq.³

The accession of Ghiyas-ud-din Tughluq gave a sign of relief to many *Alai* nobles who had groaned and grumbled under the rule of Khusrau Khan. The Sultan paid due attention to the rehabilitation, prestige and position of the old *Alai* nobility. All the old nobles and chief officers of Ala-ud-din were given *iqtas* and employment and were treated as his own boon companions.³ He not only tried to satisfy the *Alai* nobles but also honoured respectable and old nobles of Ilbaris like Khwaja Khatir and Khwaja Muhazzab who had held the office of *Wazir*-

¹ That the Tughluqs regarded Khusrau Khan as an usurper is clearly pointed out by Sultan Mahammad in his alleged autobiography wherein he is termed 'Mutaghallib' (the usurper). It was against his illegitimate assumption of power that Ghazi Malik had organized his confederacy (*Tughluq Kalin Bharat*, Part I, Appendix A). Also see *Tughluqnama* in which Sultan Ghiyas-ud-din Tughluq is reported to have told a gathering of the *Alai* amirs after the battle with Khusrau Khan that he waged the holy war for the sake of Islam and also to avenge the death of his master and raise a legitimate successor to the throne (*Tughluqnama*, pp. 138-9).

² Barani clearly says that Sultan Ghiyas-ud-din considered his nobles *Khwaja Tash* (co-slaves) because he and the nobles had served under one and the same king. For a full discussion see Ishwar Topa: *Politics in Pre-Mughal Times*, pp. 178-83. According to him Ghiyas-ud-din regarded kingship a joint responsibility of the king and the nobles.

³ That Ghazi Malik did not penalize those who did not help him against Khusrau Khan is clearly borne out in Amir Khusrau's account which says that Malik Muhammad Shah Lur, the *muqti* of Siwistan, and Malik Hoshang, the *muqti* of Jalor, who lent no support to him were treated kindly after the accession of Ghazi Malik and assigned suitable *iqtas* (*Tughluqnama*, pp. 64-5). He further says that all the *Alai* nobles who had fought on the side of Khusrau Khan were pardoned by Ghazi Malik (*Ibid.*, pp. 135-6).

ship in earlier regimes and who still survived. This clearly shows that the Sultan followed a broad-based policy towards the nobility.

His policy of accommodation and consideration for the nobles naturally led to a true understanding between the two. No rebellion or opposition worth the name is heard of during his short reign of four years and four months, except a sporadic attempt by Ubaid, the poet, in A.D. 1321 during his son's expedition to Arangel which was put down easily and the rebels given exemplary punishment.⁴

During the short reign of Ghiyas-ud-din Tughluq, most of which was spent in reorganization of the central administration and recovery of such distant *iqtas* as Lakhnauti and Arangel, there hardly came any moment in which the Sultan came in conflict with the nobility. But things were not destined to go on so smoothly during the reign of his successor Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq. In the beginning he made appointments to various posts in the court and distributed *iqtas* to nobles who were his close associates. But, on the whole, the arrangement existing in his father's time was left undisturbed.⁵ This routine affair

⁴ *TF*, pp. 447-9. He says that Ubaid, the poet, and Shaikhzada Damishqi who were close friends of Ulugh Khan instigated the *Alai* nobles in the camp to rebel telling them that they were to be murdered if they did not take cautions. Ibn-i-Battutah, however, says that Ulugh Khan himself was responsible for the rebellion (*Travels*, pp. 208-10). Isami who gives a detailed account of the rebellion says that Ubaid who was also an astrologer told Ulugh Khan during the siege that the fort would be captured on a certain date and time. When the time arrived for its capture according to his prediction, he in order to save his neck took recourse to fomenting a rebellion in which he succeeded. Then rebellion was suppressed through the efforts of Malik Muiz Abu Riza and the loyal Hindu Rajas who captured the rebels and sent them to the Sultan (*Futuh-us-Salatin*, pp. 392-400). Yahiya also testifies that Ubaid was a past-master in mischief-making (*TM*, p. 94; *MT*, Vol. I, pp. 222-3; also see Hodiwala, Vol. I., pp. 291-2).

⁵ Malik Firuz, the Sultan's cousin, was appointed *Naib Barbak*; Malik Ahmad Ayaz, the officer-in-charge of the palace was appointed *Wazir*, Malik Qabul became Malik Kabir. Malik Sartej became *Imad-ul-Mulk*; Malik Maqbool became *Qiwam-ul-mulk*, Malik Khurram Munir obtained the title of *Zahir-ul-Juish*; Hamid Komli became *Razi-ul-mulk*; Malik Pindar Khalji became Qadr Khan and assigned the *iqta* of Lakhnauti; Malik Husam-ud-din Abu Riza became the *Wazir* of Lakhnauti; Malik Izz-ud-din Yahiya became the *muqti* of Satgaon; Maulana Qawam-ud-

over, the Sultan now launched upon a series of schemes and drastic reforms which have formed the subject of the wildest controversies among learned scholars. One significant coincidence, however, is that nearly all scholars agree that it was the Sultan's peculiar character alone which was the cause of so much upheaval in the empire in which the nobility unsuccessfully tried to shake off the unbearable control which the Sultan tried to impose and exercise as a sovereign. An attempt to study his complex nature is therefore very essential.

In the eyes of the contemporary and later historians who generally belonged to the orthodox school it was Muhammad bin Tughluq himself who was responsible for the hostility that the nobility displayed against him and consequent disintegration of the Tughluq empire. But a critical study of his dynamic personality would reveal that the statement is only partly correct. The Sultan was born and brought up in a highly intellectual and literary atmosphere. He had seen and lived with such elites as Amir Khusrau and Amir Hasan and a host of other writers of the *Alai* period who possessed liberal tendencies. He was impressed by the rationalists, possibly of the *Mutazila* school, and logicians of his times like Saad *Mantaqi*, Ubaid, the poet, Najm Intishar, the philosopher and Aleem-ud-din, the master conversationalist who believed in the supremacy of reason.⁶ To them any idea, however sanctified, which could not stand the test of reason, was worthy of rejection. This was the beginning of a sort of eclecticism in Indian Islam, and the Sultan, convinced of his beliefs and ideas, sought to inject them in the nobility but they were far behind him in intellectual capacity and therefore, could not see eye to eye with him.

In the execution of his reforms, Muhammad legitimately expected cooperation from his nobles, but, in this expectation, his

din became Qutlugh Khan and was appointed *Vakil-i-Dar*. His eldest son became Alap Khan and received the *iqta* of Gujarat; Maulana Kamal-ud-din the brother of Qutlugh Khan became *Ain-ul-mulk*. Nizam-ud-din Kamal Surkh became *Mukhlis-ul-mulk*; Shihab-i-Sultani became *Taj-ul-mulk*; Maulana Yusuf became *Davar-ul-mulk* and a royal princess was given in marriage to him. Malik Qiran became *Safdar-ul-mulk*; Malik Begi got the post of *Sar-Dawatdar*; Maulana Shahab-ud-din Abu Riza became *Malik-ul-Tujjar* and received the state of Nausari (*TF*, pp. 354-5; *TM*, pp. 99-100).

⁶ *TF*, p. 465.

nobles totally betrayed his confidence. Had he allowed a fair share in the administration and sought their advice perhaps his schemes would have been executed in a better way. But they met a dismal failure like all good schemes badly executed. There was nothing basically wrong with the ideas that his fertile brain produced in unbroken succession. The transfer of the seat of Government, the introduction of the token currency, the imposition of the increased taxes in the Doab and elsewhere were not at all impracticable but due to lack of foresight and bad execution on the part of the nobles they failed to yield the desired result. Failures, however, annoyed the Sultan and he lost the balance of mind and the capacity of understanding things in their true perspective which alone saves statesmen away from committing errors of judgment. He never accepted that there was anything impossible in the world. This led to severe punishment of the people and the nobles alike.

Frequent revolts of his nobles throughout the reign is a clear example of this ideological conflict between him and his nobles. Moreover, they had attained a position of influence during his father's regime which he wanted to revise and reform. The nobles were used to consider the king as *primus inter pares* while the Sultan wanted them to consider him the shadow of God upon earth and tender him abject submission such as was the case with the Ilbaris or the Khaljis.⁷ The idea itself was not new but the nobility, who thought that it was due to its united efforts and cooperation that the Tughluqs came to power, was not prepared to accept any position inferior to the Crown. It was this conflict for sharing the real power and sovereignty that was the root-cause of the rebellions of Malik Bahram Aibah, the *muqti* of Multan,⁸ Malik Baha-ud-din Gurshasp⁹ and Malik

⁷ The attitude of the Sultan towards kingship is clearly revealed in his alleged memoirs wherein emphasis is laid on the legitimacy of the institution of kingship through election. The true king among mankind was the Khalifa who was the representative of God on earth. In placing himself directly under the then Khalifa, the Sultan tried to prove to the world the sanctity of the office and its divine nature to the world. This is also proved by many legends which he caused to be engraved on his coins (*Tughluq Dynasty*, pp. 519-20).

⁸ *TF*, pp. 478-9. Isami who gives a detailed account of this rebellion says that it was on account of sheer misunderstanding that the affair took the shape of a rebellion and Bahram Aibah wrote to the Sultan not

Ain-ul-mulk Multani. Thus the beginning of disaffection among his nobility was started first among the nobles who had held a place of honour and confidence during the reign of his father. They naturally expected that in the reign of his son they will not only be treated with equality but will also be given a respectable position. The Sultan could neither grant them equality of status nor the respect that arose from such a position.

His unbending and uncompromising spirit is revealed in the letter he wrote to Malik Bahram Aibah entitled Kishli Khan, the *muqti* of Multan, when the latter rebelled in 1333-34. Malik Kishli Khan wrote to the Sultan on the eve of the battle: "Your Majesty has suspected this (Kishli Khan) faithful servant on faith in the words of foolish messengers. If your Majesty would go back towards the capital, I would continue to bow down in reverence and submission and would send the fixed revenue demand every year. But if your Majesty would insist on invading my territory, just as Afrasiab had invaded Iran, then let it be clear to Your Majesty that what fear Rustam can have of the

to take any armed action against him, offering submission by implication. But the Sultan insisted on his personal attendance which frightened Bahram Aibah and he decided to fight (*FS*, pp. 433-43). Ibn-i-Battutah says that it was the Sultan who provoked Bahram Aibah by sending to him the skin of Baha-ud-din Gurshasp for being paraded at Multan but Bahram Aibah ordered them to be buried which annoyed the Sultan who was otherwise very respectful to him and used to address him 'uncle'. Bahram Aibah collected a very formidable force and the Sultan could only win the battle through a clever strategem. Ibn-i-Battutah's account is based on eye-witnesses and he gives a very heart-rending story of the cruelties meted out to the people of Multan (*Travels*, pp. 321-5).

⁹ In the printed text of *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi* (Bibliotheca Indica- Barani does not mention this revolt but in the Rampur manuscript of the work it has been mentioned and he calls Baha-ud-din as sister's son of Ghiyas-ud-din Tughluq (p. 286). Isami gives a detailed account of the revolt and says that he was the nephew of Sultan Ghiyas-ud-din Tughluq. He took shelter with the Rai of Kampila who was defeated and Gurshasp was captured and flayed alive (*FS*, pp. 424-31). Ibn-i-Battutah traces his exact relationship with the Sultan by saying that he was the son of the sister of Sultan Ghiyas-ud-din Tughluq and confirms the account given by Isami and cruel manner in which he was put to death (*Travels*, 318-21). The cause of the revolt is, however, not certain. Isami says that Baha-ud-din rebelled because he noticed a change in the Sultan's attitude towards him but Ibn-i-Battutah says that after the accession of Sultan Muhammad, Baha-ud-din did not pay his respects to him and did not recognize him as overlord.

armies of Afrasiab." To this undiplomatic and impertinent communication, the Sultan gave the blunt reply: "O Blessed and Wise: Do not oppose those whom God has given power and position. He had given me the empire of India. When I see any tree rising beyond its limits, I cut down its head with my axe and plant another tree. If you want to save thy life, do not oppose me. If thy good fortune shows thou the right path then thou should come to my camp. He who would fight with me cannot fly away.... If thou wouldst offer submission, thy life will be spared otherwise thou wouldst forfeit thy life and property along with thy men."¹⁰

This attitude of despotism, though not a novel idea in the fourteenth century, was, however, a clear departure from the precedent established by Sultan Ghiyas-ud-din Tughluq who held his nobles in respect and treated them as his equals. This accompanied by the severe punishment awarded even on suspicion led the nobles to revolt. The Sultan, though much worried over these happenings did nothing positive to check them, though it cannot be admitted that he had no precedent before him for Ala-ud-din Khalji, when confronted with a similar problem had constituted an enquiry and made adequate arrangements for preventing rebellions. Sultan Muhammad did nothing of the kind. To spot out rebels and those who criticized his policies he established a *Diwan-i-Siyasat* which had a bloody record throughout the reign.¹¹

As though his unpopular schemes and the strict discipline imposed on the nobles were not enough to shrink the number of his followers, he introduced quite a new element in the nobility by patronizing foreigners. His patronage of foreigners led to the creation of a schism at the court. The old nobility constituted mainly of the older noble families found their privileges circumscribed to a great extent by the presence of this generously patronized foreign element at the court. The Sultan appears to have created this class particularly to counterbalance the influence of the disgruntled *Ghiyasi* nobles who more often than not chose to defy his authority. The greatest strength of this class of nobility was its local influence and their ability to muster supporters among Hindu rajas and petty local officers and Zamin-

¹⁰ FS, pp. 436-7.

¹¹ TF, p. 497.

dars to form a fighting force against the Sultan. The foreigners had no such antecedents and their personal loyalty to the Sultan was assured because they owed their position chiefly to the patronage of the Sultan. This patronage of foreigners which was naturally at the cost of the nobles of the Indian origin was resented by all but none had the courage to oppose him. But they were at daggers drawn with these foreigners and considered them as their sworn enemy. The fact seems to be that there was a constant conflict under the Sultanate between the hereditary principle inherent in the very concept of an aristocracy and the practice of *ad hoc* creation of nobles and denial of hereditary succession and power to nobles by the Sultans. If the monarchy was to be based upon the principle of legitimacy and heredity, the nobility naturally desired that their own power and position should also be based upon these principles and when they saw it threatened they revolted by the king's friends or by foreigners.

A glaring instance of this enmity is provided by the case of Malik-ul-Tujjar Shihab-ud-din Ghaznavi. The Sultan had conferred the *iqta* of Khambayat upon him and also promised him to appoint his *Wazir*. When Khan-i-Jahan Ahmad Ayaz, the *Wazir*, heard this he became very jealous of Malik-ul-Tujjar since his very existence was in danger. Moreover, Khambayat formed his *iqta* and yielded a lucrative annual revenue. The loss of such a rich *iqta* and the fear of consequent loss of power and influence drove him to have the Malik murdered while he was coming to the court from Khambayat.¹²

Ibn-i-Battutah gives details of many eminent foreigners in his court who received riches, honours and high appointments. Among his Khorasani nobles the foremost was Malik Ala-ul-mulk Fasih-ud-din Khorasani. Other foreigners of note were Azd-ud-din Shavanqari, Shaikhzada Isfahani, Shaikhzada Damishqi, Shaikhzada Nihavandi, Shaikhzada Bistami and Malik Sanjar

¹² *Travels*, pp. 244-7. Another example is provided by Ibn-i-Battutah in his own case. He was heavily indebted to the moneylenders of the capital who used to haunt him for the recovery of their loan. The Sultan granted him a sum of 55,000 *Tankaha* to pay off the entire loans and sent the order to the Khwaja-i-Jahan. But the payment was delayed for many months due to the delaying tactics in the *diwan* and the *Wazir's* disinterestedness (*Travels*, pp. 408-21). Also see the differences between Aziz Khammar and Amir Shams-ud-din Badakhshani of Amroha (*Travels*, pp. 439-40).

Badakhshani.¹³ They became an influential element at the court. The Sultan used to call them 'Aziz', a word generally used for relatives.¹⁴ Many of them had entered into matrimonial relations with him. Of the relatives who were foreigners, Ibn-i-Battutah mentions three viz. Malik Saif-ud-din entitled Amir Ghadda who was an Arab. Another was Sharaf-ul-mulk Amir Bakht and the third was Shaikhzada Bistami and Malik Mughis Ibn Malik-ul-muluk. To each of these the Sultan gave his sisters in marriage.¹⁵ The Sultan also solemnized the marriage of the two daughters of Khwaja-i-Jahan Ahmad Ayaz with the two sons of Khudavandzada Qiwan-ud-din who was the Qazi of Tirmiz.¹⁶ Among the nobles who held important *iqtas* besides his relatives were Shams-ud-din Badakhshi, the *muqti* of Amroha and Malik Ala-ul-mulk Khorasani, the *muqti* of Lahri.¹⁷ Their decisive role was exhibited in the Sultan's fight with Malik Ain-ul-mulk Multani, the *muqti* of Avadh. The Khorasanis in the Sultan's army imposed a crushing defeat over the forces of Ain-ul-mulk.¹⁸

The Mongols too were patronized by the Sultan. The failure of the scheme of transfer of the seat of government from Delhi to Daulatabad, which was mainly adopted to save the empire from the frequent Mongol invasions, led Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq to adopt a reconciliatory attitude towards the neo-Muslim Mongol nobles with the result that except for the invasion of Turmashirin, no major Mongol invasion is mentioned in his reign. Every year, large numbers of Mongols used to come to his court and were honoured with gifts and *iqtas* in the realm.¹⁹ The Mongols, however, caused great trouble in the last years of his reign.²⁰ The reign of the Sultan is also very significant for the rise of the Afghans. Although their influence in the court is not significant, a number of Afghan nobles are recorded to have risen under him.²¹

In patronizing the foreigners, however, the Sultan definitely

¹³ *Travels*, pp. 109, 254, 301, 55; *TF*, pp. 487-8, 61.

¹⁴ *Travels*, pp. 98, 225, 393, 427.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 98, 273, 282, 283, 367-8; *TF*, pp. 487-8.

¹⁶ *Travels*, pp. 120-1, 284.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 112-3, 393-4, 436.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 341-55.

¹⁹ *TF*, pp. 462-99.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 534-8.

²¹ For detailed examples see chapter 6.

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overlooked the interests of the older nobility who formed the bulk of his retinue. They naturally wielded considerable influence in the *iqtas*. Though pitted against the foreigners at the court, they refused to yield their position and interests in the provinces where many of them successfully set up independent kingdoms—Lakhnauti,²³ Mabar²³ and Deogir,²⁴ for example—all of whom passed away one after another. The failure of the Sultan to suppress the rebellions in these territories had the most demoralizing effect on the army and his nobility. On all sides and almost in every province, the nobles rose in rebellion. But Sultan Muhammad refused to see the reality of the situation. As rebellion after rebellion disrupted the administration of the country, the Sultan lost his balance of mind and began to indulge in cruelty all the more severely. To the end of his life, his creative energy was diverted to the suppression of revolts and fighting the most formidable element in every state—the people. In fact, he refused to learn the fundamental basis of every stable government—that it rests on faith and not fear.

One fact, however, is very significant. In spite of numerous rebellions throughout the realm which were fomented in succession for the last two decades of his reign, there was perfect peace and amity in the royal camp. No rebellions are heard of in the capital which were so frequent in the reign of the Ilbaris and the Khaljis. His army and the nobles at the court always gave proof of their devotion and selfless service. In fact the Sultan was much perplexed due to these distant rebellions and used to think over the problem seriously but his greatest weakness was that he could not compromise his principles. Neither could he tolerate strong nobles who would try to assert themselves in opposition to his policies. But the role of the Sultan's nearest confidants led by *Khan-i-Jahan* Ahmad Ayaz, the *Wazir*, was the most disgusting, who was nicknamed the master butcher,

²³ *TF*, p. 480. Isami, though a contemporary, does not mention this event. Ibn-i-Battutah is also silent perhaps because none of them regarded Bengal as a dependency of the Delhi Sultanate or have forgotten to mention it in view of other important rebellions in the vicinity of Delhi which attracted the Sultan's immediate attention. Yahiya who mentions this revolt in detail with some additional information than Barani's says the territory was under the Sultanate (*TM*, pp. 106-07).

²³ *TF*, pp. 480-1; *FS*, pp. 469-70; *Travels*, pp. 497-502.

²⁴ *TF*, pp. 497-502.

for, Barani says that the grand *Wazir* had been the cause of death of many innocent people.²⁵ The main reason seems to be that the Sultan had given too much power of administration to the nobles forming the inner circle in his court in whom he placed his absolute reliance.²⁶ Even during his absence his *naibs* exercised full powers. Afif mentions the instance of Malik Mujir Abu Riza who was the *muqti* of the territories around Delhi and whom Malik Kabir, the *naib*, got executed while the Sultan was absent on the expedition to Thatta. Later on, the Sultan gave *ex post facto* sanction to the punishment awarded to Malik Mujir.²⁷ Another example of high-handedness of the trusted nobles of the Sultan, is afforded by the cruel manner in which Aziz Khammar ordered mass execution of the subordinate officers, an act which was later on confirmed by the Sultan.²⁸ The blood-thirstiness of the officers who controlled the *Diwan-i-Siyasat* must have struck the hearts of the people with terror. Torture exercised in bringing out confession, and the execution of innocent persons on trifling charges presents a gloomy picture of the reign of Sultan Muhammad and made his rule intolerable to the ruling class. Fear of condign punishment frequently led the nobles posted in distant *iqtas* to risk death by open defiance of the Sultan's orders, rather than invite death through the executioner's blade, whenever they failed to discharge their duties according to the Sultan's expectations. That these were very unpopular among the masses is proved by the immediate abolition of these practices by Sultan Firuz Tughluq.²⁹

The complete absence of the influence of the harem, so powerful during the rule of the Ilbaris and the Khaljis, is almost astonishing during the reign of Sultan Muhammad Tughluq, specially in view of the fact that the Sultan had four surviving brothers and an equal number of sisters who were married to

²⁵ *TF*, p. 504.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 531-2. He says that three nobles of the court viz. *Khan-i-Jahan* Ahmad Ayaz, Malik Qabul Khalifati, and Malik Firuz, the *Khas Hajib* were chosen by the Sultan who raised them above all the nobles of the court in honour and prestige and, therefore, they wielded considerable power at the court. Malik Qabul died shortly before the death of the Sultan (*Ibid.*, p. 523).

²⁷ Afif, pp. 452-4.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 503-04.

²⁹ *TF*, pp. 572-3.

his influential nobles. After his accession none of his younger brothers raised any rebellion nor did the Sultan indulge in wanton cruelty and extinction of his brothers or relatives with the single exception of the execution of his step-brother Masud who was suspected of conspiracy against the Sultan.³⁰

Nor is the influence of the slaves discernible much in the politics of the court. Sultan Muhammad had seen the rise and fall of the Khalji empire and as a wise man took lessons from it. It appears that on account of the patronage of foreigners, the slave system did not receive much encouragement during the reign. Perhaps the Sultan realized that the slave system had failed as a basis of sovereignty and administration.

One element, however, which was the necessary corollary to Muhammad's policy of establishing a centralized administration directly controlled by the sovereign was the rise of a very strong bureaucracy throughout his realm. It was this wing of the government, composed chiefly of the *Amiran-i-Sada*, who though petty and powerless united together with one voice to condemn his reign which had put them all to the greatest task unknown in history. Perhaps it was too much for them to meet the demands of the Sultan. Everywhere this unjustified and arbitrary assessment of revenue was resented both by the peasantry and the tax-collectors and led to widespread revolts. The Sultan was embittered against these revenue officials by their disloyal intrigues to decrease the revenue and appropriate a considerable share of the revenue themselves. When he appointed Aziz Khammar to the government of Malwa, he clearly gave him instructions to be strict with the *Amiran-i-Sada* of his territory—an advice which was carried through with unprecedented and diabolical gusto.³¹ Everywhere in his empire there was only one story, namely the revolt of the *muqtis* with the help of the *Amiran-i-Sada*, who were ever ready to lend their support to anybody who would strike for independence from Delhi. The vastness of the empire necessitated tactful and mild treatment of the nobility and the bureaucracy posted in the distant provinces. But death was the minimum punishment in the code of Sultan Muhammad.³² He considered the dis-

³⁰ *Travels*, p. 292.

³¹ *TF*, pp. 503-54.

³² *TF*, p. 500.

obedience of his orders worse than high treason for it more often than not foiled his basic schemes. Nobody would challenge his high ideals of administration and burning ambition for conquest but then his ideals and objects were unachievable in that age and Muhammad did not belong to that age. No wonder, therefore, if such a capable ruler should have wasted his life in toil and troubles in fighting forces which were beyond the physical control of any living being, however richly gifted.

The sudden and unexpected death of Sultan Muhammad near Thatta caused great consternation in the camp. The nobles in the army under the leadership of his cousin, Malik Firuz (Sultan Firuz Tughluq), decided to make a hasty retreat towards the capital abandoning the siege of Thatta for the time being. Since the retreating army faced dangers around, the nobles raised Firuz Tughluq, the *Amir-i-Hajib* of the late Sultan to the throne. This move, was, however, resented by Khudawandzada, the sister of the late Sultan Muhammad Tughluq, who represented to the nobles in the camp that in view of the existence of her son, Daver Malik, the election of Firuz was unlawful and unjust. The nobles conveyed their reply to Khudavandzada through Malik Saif-ud-din Khujū, telling her that her son being incapable, they could not accept him as king in a critical situation when the lives of the Maliks and the entire camp were in danger. The proposal thus died a natural death for want of a strong support. This unanimous choice was also supported by the *Ulema* present in the camp.³³

Though the accession of Sultan Firuz was hailed by all in the camp, it had a mixed reception in the capital where *Khan-i-Jahan* Ahmad Ayaz, who undoubtedly held great influence over the nobility set up a seven-year old child of obscure origin on the throne, declaring him to be the son of the late Sultan.³⁴ The choice of the *Wazir* was accepted by the nobility in Delhi reluctantly knowing full well that Ahmad Ayaz being old and weak, would fail in asserting his will on all the prominent nobles in the Sultan's camp the moment they reached the vicinity of Delhi. Perhaps the *Wazir* was annoyed because he was not consulted in such a vital matter as succession to the throne. His

³³ *TF*, p. 536; *Afif*, p. 44-5; *TM*, p. 118; A. Banerjee: 'A Note on the Succession of Firuzshah', *Indian Culture*, 2 (1935-36), pp. 47-52.

³⁴ *TF*, p. 539.

conduct is, however, indefensible on account of the practical difficulties involved in consulting him. Shams Siraj Afif gives the true account of the conduct of *Khwaja-i-Jahan* Ahmad Ayaz which he had heard from Kishwar Khan, son of one Kishlu Khan Bahram, one of the nobles at the court. He asserts that the *Khwaja-i-Jahan*, who was on terms of great intimacy with Firuz Shah received a false report that Tatar Khan and the *Amir-i-Hajib* Firuz Shah were missing and either dead or prisoners. After the days of mourning were over, the Khwaja, believing this report to be true, placed a son of Sultan Muhammad Shah upon the throne and thus committed a great blunder.³⁵ But, on the other hand, it must be noted that the accession of Firuz Tughluq was a *fait accompli* because Sultan Muhammad during his lifetime had declared Firuz Shah as his successor and heir-apparent. This fact being known to all, many of the influential nobles joined the Sultan deserting Ahmad Ayaz and a bloody contest was thus averted.³⁶ The whole significance of this episode is that the official nobility again came to have a say in the question of succession, but anarchy was luckily averted for want of a strong support in favour of Ahmad Ayaz.

The peaceful accession of Sultan Firuz was a unique feature of his reign for all past history showed that no accession was achieved without troubles, rebellions and bloodshed. But the most significant consequence of this peaceful change was the ushering in of a liberal policy based on accommodation and goodwill. In choosing his team of administrators the Sultan conspicuously disregarded all notions of racial superiority or kinship. His courtiers were drawn from a heterogeneous stock of Mongols, Afghans, slaves, newly converted Hindus, all of whom had a distinguished record of service under Sultan Muhammad.³⁷

³⁵ Afif, pp. 51-4.

³⁶ The nobles who deserted Ahmad Ayaz and joined Sultan Firuz were Malik Maqbool, Malik Qabtagha, Amir Mehan, Malik Mahmud Bak, the *muqti* of Sunam and Samana, Shaikhzada Bistami, Nathu Sondhal, Hasan, Husam Adhang and some other advisers of Ahmad Ayaz. The *Wazir*, himself felt repentant and offered submission. He was transferred to Samana but was murdered on the way by Malik Sher Khan (Afif, pp. 66-71; *TF*, pp. 545-7; *TM*, pp. 122-6).

³⁷ Malik Qiwam-ul-mulk who had deserted *Khan-i-Jahan* Ahmad Ayaz and joined the Sultan after his accession was made the *Wazir*. The Sultan's eldest son prince Firuz was appointed to the post of *Barbak*. Another son,

This liberal policy naturally led to absence of any racial group automatically providing those checks and balances which were necessary for an efficient and smooth running of the despotic Governments in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Throughout the reign of the Sultan, no powerful group could emerge on account of this unique character of the nobility. It is, therefore, no wonder that Firuz Shah enjoyed a long and prosperous reign of about forty years. With a single exception, and that too in the later part of his reign, no rebellion took place which could have seriously challenged his crown.³⁸

Apart from the heterogeneous character of the nobility, the nobles individually were left undisturbed in the fulfilment of their ambitions. They had only to favour the religious class which was gaining strength. At the head of the administration Qiwam-ul-mulk *Khawaja-i-Jahan* Maqbool, whose ability and loyalty are proved beyond doubt by the perfect efficiency and peace which he maintained at the capital during the six years of absence of the Sultan when he laid siege to the fort of Thatta.¹⁹ Another was Malik Ain-ul-mulk Multani, the *Mustaufi-i-mumalik*. A host of other key personalities at the court have been mentioned by Barani⁴⁰ and Afif⁴¹ who in efficiency and loyalty were next to none. It was their passing away one by one at the close of Firuz Shah's reign that let loose the forces of indiscipline and disorder in the junior ranks of the nobility leading ultima-

prince Shadi Khan, was appointed *Vakil-i-Dar*. The Sultan's brother Malik Ibrahim was appointed *Naib Barbak*. Another brother Malik Qutb-ud-din received the title of Malik-ul-Umara and became the *Sipahsalar*. Malik Nizam-ul-mulk became *Naib Wazir-i-mamalik*. Malik Ali, sister's son of the Sultan became the *muqti* of Rath. Malik Razi became the *Ariz-i-mamalik*. Malik Saif-ul-mulk was appointed *Amir-i-Shikar-i-Maimana* and Malik Dahlan to the post of *Amir-i-Shikar-i-maisara* (TF, pp. 575-8; TM, pp. 119-20; *Tarikh-i-Muhammadi*, BMM, pp. 416b and 417a).

³⁸ This revolt of Malik Shams-ud-din Damghani occurred in 1380-81. He was a relative of Zafer Khan, the *muqti* of Gujrat. Damghani was, however, arrested and put to death by the *Amiran-i-Sala* of Gujarat (Afif, pp. 499-502).

³⁹ Afif, pp. 237-8. In the account of *Khan-i-Jahan* Maqbool, Afif says that during the first seven years of his rule, the Sultan hardly remained for 13 days in the capital but the administration was carried on peacefully by the *Wazir* (Afif, p. 399).

⁴⁰ TF, pp. 578-86.

⁴¹ Afif, pp. 389-492.

tely to the disintegration and downfall of the Tughluqs.⁴²

The most significant change brought about by the accession of Firuz was the change in the status of the nobles and their place in administration. Firuz gave them a respite from the position of control which Muhammad bin Tughluq exercised over them and granted them a place in the administration which they always coveted and fought to possess. He gave full liberty to the nobles for the exercise of initiative in their activities. So much bureaucratic independence of the central authority often led to corruption and nepotism in the administration as specially Firuz often overlooked even the glaring mistakes of his nobles and ignored complaints of their misconduct. In course of time, such lapses led to deterioration in the efficiency and loyalty of the nobility who began to sacrifice the interests of the empire to their own selfish ends. This had its evil effects specially in the army to which entry now became very easy. The maintenance of descriptive rolls of the soldiers was not insisted upon, and even the disabled were able to get enlisted. Moreover, those soldiers who had been granted lands and villages in lieu of salary used to present their servants and hirelings at the time of the annual inspections and this kept their *iqtas* or *imlak* intact.⁴³ With the accession of Sultan Firuz, vigorous military activity ceased and it was seldom that the army was sent upon arduous expeditions to distant territories. The nobility which used to be trained in the hard school of experience by constant military activity ceased to be efficient. Heredity which was made the most important criteria for appointment to such key posts as that of the *Wazir*⁴⁴ further curbed the chances for rising talents. No wonder, therefore, that the Turkish state which had once warded off successfully some of the mightiest armies of the Mongols, could not face the first attack of Timur.

So, the comparative ease and smoothness with which Firuz ran his administration is not indicative of the fact that all was right with his bureaucracy. The nobility at the court often came to clashes with each other whenever their mutual interests

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 497. He says that in the year 781H (1379-80) prominent nobles of the court died and their dead bodies were brought to the capital for burial but he does not mention them by name.

⁴³ *TF*, pp. 553-4.

⁴⁴ *Aff*, pp. 404-05.

differed. In minor affairs, Firuz Shah tried to ignore the issues and let the nobles have their own way or entrusted the matter to be dealt with by the *Wazir*. But when powerful and high-ranking nobles came into clash, it was a difficult affair for the Sultan to settle the issues amicably. In such embarrassing situations, he generally gave his decisions in favour of the stronger party. The enmity of Malik Ain-ul-mulk with the *Wazir* is a glaring example in point.⁴⁵ This affair stirred many nobles in the court who thought their existence depended not on their ability but on the sweet will of the *Wazir*. They organized themselves and tried to turn the Sultan against the *Wazir* but the Sultan refused to yield.⁴⁶ He tried to smoothen matters by further efforts to patch up rivalries and enmities in the ranks of the nobility and to bring about an accord. This was, however, a weak policy because the nobles required to be dealt with with a firm hand so that they did not work against the interests of the state. But Firuz Shah's weakness continued to fan mutual enmities and rivalries at the court, and, by the time the younger *Khan-i-Jahan* succeeded his father, the nobility had begun to be organized into two opposite camps—one under the *Wazir* and the other under prince Muhammad Khan.⁴⁷ Earlier in the reign the *Khan-i-Jahan* came into grips with Malik Shams-uddin Abu Rija, the *Mustaufi-i-Mumalik* and in the fight for annihilating each other, the *Wazir* won because of the unqualified support of the Sultan.

The history of the successors of Sultan Firuz Shah is a sickening tale of intrigues, counter-intrigues, murders and mutual annihilation of the nobility in order to raise men of its own choice to the throne. This period of about a decade which rendered the Tughluq empire weak and politically impotent is

⁴⁵ Afif, pp. 406-15. During the reign of Sultan Firuz, Ain-ul-mulk held the post of *Mushrif-i-Mumalik*. Although he discharged the duties assigned to him with diligence and care yet disagreement arose between him and the *Khan-i-Jahan*. The matter took a serious turn and although the Sultan tried to bring accord between them he had ultimately to yield to the request of the *Wazir* and dismissed Ain-ul-mulk from his post. But later on considering his long services and reputation for honesty, he granted him the *iqta* of Multan but the Malik accepted it with the proviso that the *Wazir* will have nothing to do with the administration of that Province.

⁴⁶ Afif, pp. 415-9.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 454-92.

likened to the period immediately following the death of Sultan Iltutmish. As has already been noticed earlier, the Turkish government remained in a state of constant flux due to the weak and incapable successors of Iltutmish. Similar was the case with the successors of Firuz Tughluq. They were quite incapable of handling the vast empire whose centralized administration was the pivot around which the whole machinery revolved. It cannot be said that this highly centralized machinery which achieved perfection during the reign of Sultan Firuz Tughluq was dependent upon a personality like that of the Khalji state. For Firuz was not a despot but an easy-going monarch acting on the advice of his nobles. The nobility in its turn contributed as much as was possible to maintain and uphold the stability of the Tughluq empire which was their mainstay. They knew it fully well what disintegration would mean to them and to their dependents who too were well-paid from the state exchequer. But the successors of Firuz failed either to understand the need of the hour or control the nobility which was the main bulwark of the empire.

The hereditary character of the nobility during the reign of Sultan Firuz Tughluq was a strong point in favour of its stability but there was another side of the picture also. The nobility tended to appropriate as many posts and assignments for their own progeny and dependents that talent and ability were given no credit in infusing new blood into the administration. The assignments, salaries and high posts held by the sons of *Khan-i-Jahan* Maqbool is a case in point.⁴⁸ Numerous examples may be cited to confirm this view. This naturally led to nepotism and corruption in the rank and file of the nobility—the mainstay of the empire.

It has already been pointed out that the heterogeneous character of the Tughluq nobility during the reign of Sultan Firuz was a distinguishing factor that served as a system of checks and balances and the nobles could never organize themselves into any powerful homogeneous group based on either race or linguistic affinity. But this good point too which was the greatest asset to the Tughluq empire became its greatest weakness. In the absence of any organization and stability, numerous small groups under the leadership of different nobles rose to seek

⁴⁸ *Aff*, pp. 297-8.

power. Though these groups were incapable of bringing stability to the empire, yet they were quite capable of liquidating it.

A potent factor which was unnoticeable in its repercussions during the early years of Firuz's reign was the growth of the institution of slavery. It is known that Sultan Firuz was very fond of collecting slaves so much so that he had opened a separate department known as the *Diwan-i-Ariz-i-Bandgan* to look after thousands of slaves who were captured in military campaigns or presented by the nobles to the Sultan every year on auspicious occasions. At the end of his reign, the number must have reached over a lakh. All of them used to get stipends and received manumission during the lifetime of Sultan Firuz and played a vital part in bringing the downfall of the Tughluq dynasty. These slaves gradually acquired a respectable status equal to the nobility due to loyal service, weakened the hereditary nobility which could not put up equal numbers to assert their precedence. In fact, this new class of nobles which became conscious of its power drove the Tughluq state to the gates of ruin. This new class of nobles had no chances of any rise or making its mark so long as the upper class in the nobility existed. It must first annihilate the privileged nobles in order to justify its own existence. This self-interest led to the mutual annihilation of the nobles during Firuz's successors. It is no wonder, that the mighty empire of the Tughluqs toppled down with the slightest jerk.

The Character of the Turkish Nobility

The determination of the character of nobility under the Turks has been a favourite theme of scholars many of whom have assigned a feudal character to it by calling the territorial assignments granted to them as fiefs and the Sultanate of Delhi itself as a feudal organization. A close analogy is also drawn between the Turkish nobles and the barons of feudal Europe, and the provincial satraps are represented as the eastern counterparts of the Duke of Normandy and Burgandy. Although there are many points of resemblance between the two and the principal element—that of military service and contributions in lieu of territorial assignments—is present in both the systems, but these seeming analogies disappear the moment the two systems are examined closely.

The opposite view that it would be incorrect to give the Turkish nobility the character of feudalism had been asserted long ago by W. H. Moreland in his article, 'Feudalism in the Moslem Kingdom of Delhi'¹ and recently by Professor Abdur Rashid in an article read before the 24th session of the Indian History Congress argued that in the thirteenth century there were hardly any elements in the Turkish Government which could give it a feudal character.²

In order to examine both views objectively and scientifically, it is necessary first to examine the feudal system in Europe for it is obvious that the system was perfected in Europe between

¹ Moreland, W. H.: 'Feudalism in the Moslem Kingdom of Delhi', Vol. VIII, April 1928, pp. 1-8; Banerjee, A. C., A note in Provincial Government under the Sultanate of Delhi', *JIH*, Vol. V (1938-39), pp. 255-60.

² Rashid, Abdur : *Feudalism in the Thirteenth Century under the Sultanate of Delhi* (unpublished).

the thirteenth and the sixteenth centuries after which the growth of the mercantile system and scientific advancement gradually broke it as it was mainly based on agricultural economy.

Two things are essential for the study of any institution. Firstly, the change in the circumstances which bring into being new institutions, and, secondly, the already existing institutions which begin to be transformed to meet the new needs.

The prevailing need of the later Roman and early medieval society was protection—protection against the sudden attacks of invaders or rebellious peasants, against the unwarranted demands of Government officers, or even against the legal but too heavy exactions of the government. The protection which the government normally furnished to the weak freeman and the small landowner could no longer be obtained. He must seek protection wherever he could get it, and pay the price demanded for it. Thus the failure of the Government to perform one of its most primary duties was the main cause of the growth of feudalism in Europe.

The system which the need for protection seized upon had long existed in the Roman empire and was represented by the legal relationship existing between the Roman landlord and his subjects which was known by the terms *commendatio* and *beneficium*. 'Commendatio' signified the act of placing oneself under the protection of some powerful man to be maintained by him and to serve him; and yet to remain free. The 'beneficium' was a kind of land tenure granted on payment of a nominal rent or no rent at all. From seventh century onward it became usual to grant 'benefices' to those who commended themselves to the landowner in order to provide for their livelihood.

This system of legal relationship became perfected in course of time by usage and the necessity for active military service attracted many men of high estate into the rank of vassals. The efficacy and efficiency of the system made these benefices permanent and hereditary which later on developed into privileges of the landowners.³ Side by side, military service, which was at

³ The development of these privileges has also a chequered history throughout the European sub-continent. The author of the article: 'Feudalism' in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* is of the view that the real foundation of these feudal privileges is provided by the immunity suggested by the Roman practices. By the grant of an immunity to a pro-

first only a condition for the grant of benefices, became an essential feature of the feudal system.

It must, however, be pointed out that the system differed in many ways from one country to another throughout and it is improper to call it a 'system'. But certain broad features of the system are discernible throughout Europe which have been aptly summed up in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* as follows: "Feudalism in its most flourishing age was anything but systematic. Great diversity prevailed everywhere, and different facts and customs are found in every lordship. But underlying all the apparent confusion of fact and practice were certain fundamental principles and relationships, which were alike everywhere. The chief of these: the relation of vassal and lord; the principle that every holder of land is a tenant and not an owner, until the highest rank is reached, sometimes even the conception rules in that rank; that the tenure by which a thing of value is held is one of honourable service, not intended to be economic but normal and political in character; the principle of mutual obligation of loyalty, protection and service binding together all the ranks of this society from highest to the lowest; and the principle of contract between lord and tenant, as determining all rights, controlling their modification, and forming the formation of all law."⁴

This was in brief the foundation of the feudal system as it existed in Europe and to search its counterpart in India in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, it is necessary first to find out whether these elements were present in the Indian system under the Sultans.

As has been pointed out by Moreland long ago, the termino-

prietor the royal officers, the court and his representatives were forbidden to enter his lands to exercise any public function there. The duties which the court should perform passed on the proprietor, who now represented the government for tenants free and unfree. In the course of long period characterized by a weak central government it was not difficult to enlarge the rights which the lord thus obtained, to exclude even the King's personal authority from the immunity, and to translate the duties and payments which the tenant had once owed to the state into obligations which he owed to his lord. Thus the vassals gradually assumed the judicial and other administrative authority which they formerly held as merely agents of the King.

⁴ *Encyclopaedia Britannia*, Vol. IX, article on 'Feudalism', pp. 204-07.

logy used in the chronicles of the Sultans of Delhi for feudal institutions is very confusing. The first set of terms is the *Wilayat* and *Wali*—the first broadly meaning a territory and the second meaning the governor of that territory.⁵ The term *Wilayat* itself conveys different meanings: It may mean (1) a definite portion of the kingdom, that is a province; (2) an indefinite portion of the kingdom, that is a tract or region; (3) the kingdom as a whole; (4) a foreign country; (5) the home-country of a foreigner. The *Wali* or the governor, however, held only a bureaucratic position and accordingly had no permanent vested interest in the territory which he administered on behalf of the king as his deputy or agent.⁶

A second set of terms which was more popular and current with the chroniclers are the *iqta* and the *muqti* which have been freely translated into English as 'fiefs' and 'feudal chiefs' by various translators. The ordinary meaning of the *iqta* in Indo-Persian literature is an assignment of revenue conditional on military services.⁷ In the chronicles too, the term conveys the same meaning⁸ though it may be noted that the *iqtas* were of different sizes and were also granted by the Sultans for many purposes other than administrative or military. Thus *iqtas* were granted for the maintenance of religious houses (*Dargahs*), tombs of saints and Sultans, mosques and also to persons for

⁵ *Agrarian system of Moslem India*, p. 216.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 217.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ Minhaj-i-Siraj, our earliest authority on the subject, is totally silent on this point but from the chronicles of later historians like Barani, Isami, Afif and Ibn-i-Battutah it is clear that Iltutmish granted a large number of assignments for maintenance of religious houses etc. Barani clearly says that Ala-ud-din resumed all assignments viz. *milk*, *inam*, *wazifa*, *idrar*, *mafruz* or *waqf* lands granted by the previous rulers (*Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, pp. 283-4). But these were restored by Qutb-ud-din Mubarak Shah (Barani, pp. 382-3). Isami also says that immediately after accession, Sultan Ghiyas-ud-din Tughluq ordered resumption of *aima*, *idrar*, and *inam* villages in order to replenish the treasury as a result of which Isami also lost two villages granted to his ancestors by Iltutmish (*Futuh-us-Salatin*, pp. 389-91). But during the reign of his son, Muhammad Tughluq, large assignments were made towards religious endowments (Ibn-i-Battutah: *Travels*, pp. 135, 159, 276, 388, 389-400, 406-07, 428-35). Firuz Tughluq's benevolence is affirmed both by Barani (pp. 537-9, 543, 555, 558-61) and Afif (pp. 129-31, 179-81, 349-53, 359-60) as also by the Sultan himself in his memoirs (*Futuh-i-Firuzshahi*, pp. 20-1).

their livelihood (*Madad-i-Maash*) who were devoted to religious or literary pursuits. All the assignees of *iqtas* were, however, not called the *muqtis*, a term which is used only for persons who held the administrative charge of the territories. The *muqti* was invariably master of a large territory (the *iqta*) which was governed on behalf of the king and contributed his own share of the military contingents fixed by the king. The question for decision is whether the *muqti's* position was feudal or bureaucratic.

It may be pointed out first that the nobility under the Turks since the very beginning was somewhat of a heterogeneous character though the Ilbaris dominated the scene during the thirteenth century on account of the patronage granted to it by the monarchs who themselves were Ilbaris. The absence of any well-established and hereditary nobility forced them to choose their supporters out of their slaves on the basis of loyalty and personal service. The condition was, however, bound to change due to passage of time and it soon assumed a hereditary character both under the Khaljis and Tughluqs. But this hereditary nobility owed its *existence due to royal patronage and not as a matter of right*. Though the entire history of the nobility is full of conflict with the crown in order to assert their own rights, yet it is difficult to concede the argument that the nobility acquired its political position due to the decline or weakness of the monarchy as in Europe. In fact the crown continued to be the fountainhead of sovereignty and power from whom they derived their strength and they had frequently to submit to the royal authority whenever and wherever they were found wanting in loyalty or administrative slackness. In other words, the nobility owned its position not to the weakness but due to the strength of the crown. They were part of an administrative machinery and had no separate existence as such.

Apart from the subordinate position of an administrative character, the *muqti* had no territorial position of his own and no claim to any particular region. He was appointed by the king and could be removed or transferred to another charge at any time.⁹ The king could dismiss him from the appointment

⁹ During the reign of Iltutmish, Malik Ala-ud-din Jani, the *Muqti* of Lakhnauti was dismissed for fomenting rebellion against the Sultan (*Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, p. 238) Balban used to remove the *Muqtis* by getting

altogether at will. The assignees had no territorial connection with the *iqtas* and they could be posted anywhere by the king from Multan to Lakhnauti.¹⁰ The administrative nature of the *muqti's* position need not be proved for he was not only the supreme commander of the military affairs of the area but was also responsible for the collection of revenue, dispensation of justice, maintenance of communications and other matters connected with civil administration. The civil and military character of the *muqti's* position is also clear from the reign of Muhammad bin Tughluq when the *muqtis* had to arrange food-stuffs during the famine. Ain-ul-mulk, the *muqti* of Avadh, supplied grains to the army of the Sultan during his stay in Swargadwari. In Firuz Shah's reign, the *muqti* of Gujrat was punished for failure to arrange supplies to the army of Firuz Shah.¹¹

The military contingents maintained by the *iqtadars* were paid directly out of the revenue of the state and hence were servants of the crown. But it may be pointed out that there was no uniform system of fiscal administration throughout the Sultanate period. Working back on a statement of Barani¹² regarding confiscation of *iqtas* of old soldiers who were not fit for military service it may be concluded that Iltutmish distributed these *iqtas* in lieu of military service. This, as we have seen, was abolished by Ala-ud-din Khalji but again restored by the Tughluqs. But they seem to have continued both the systems simultaneously because Afif speaks of *Wajahi* and *Ghair Wajahi* soldiers enrolled in the army of Firuz.¹³

Though the system of maintenance of troops was revised a number of times, but from administrative as well as defence point of view, the *muqti* commanded them as an agent or deputy of the king. They were expected to be loyal to the king and not to the *muqti*. There are numerous instances during our

them murdered through various devices. The case of Malik Tamar, the *Muqti* of Irij and Chanderi, who was dismissed by Sultan Qutb-ud-din Mubarak Shah Khalji is well-known (Barani: *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, p. 401). The instances of transfers are so numerous that they need no mention here. Also see Tripathi: *Some Aspects of Muslim Administration*, p. 245.

¹⁰ TF, p. 427.

¹¹ TF, pp. 80-1; Afif, p. 220.

¹² TF, pp. 60-1.

¹³ Afif, p. 296. Moreland, pp. 27-31; Tripathi, pp. 247-9; Dey, U.N. : *Administrative System of the Delhi Sultanate*, pp. 91-2.

period of study when the local militia not only non-cooperated with the rebellions of recalcitrant *muqtis* but sometimes proved true to their salt by executing them. It is sufficient here to point out a few of the principal instances. During Ala-ud-din's reign the soldiers of Amroha quelled the rebellion of Haji Maula in Delhi. The rebellion of Malik Umar and Mangu Khan, the sister's sons of the Sultan was likewise arrested by the local officers.¹⁴ In the reign of his son, Qutb-ud-din Mubarak Shah, the local militia in Gujarat thwarted the attempt of rebellion by Malik Husam-ud-din and sent him to the court after arresting him.¹⁵ It is difficult to choose the numerous cases of rebellions during Muhammad Tughluq's reign which were nipped in the bud by local officers but the case of the *muqti* of Kara is a glaring instance. In Firuz's reign there is a solitary instance of Shams-ud-din Damghani, the *Wali* of Gujarat who was put to death by the local officers for fomenting rebellion against the Sultan.¹⁶ But in many cases the *muqti* on account of the local influence or personality commanded the loyalty of the troops and tried to utilize the local militia for their own selfish end. The constitutional position, however, with regard to the control of the troops was well-defined and well-marked so that it was quite clear that the troops belonged to the sovereign. It was perhaps this fact that led Ala-ud-din Khalji to keep his uncle totally uninformed about his movements, when he decided to invade the Deccan.¹⁷

Even the collection of revenue and the expenditure met out of it for local administration was not a discretionary affair in the hands of the *muqti*. All accounts of income and expenditure maintained by him were audited and misappropriation or defalcation was severely dealt with under all the monarchs.¹⁸ The *muqti* was directly responsible to the revenue department which was under direct control of the Prime Minister. The *muqti* could not appropriate a single shell out of the state revenue apart from the legitimate expenditure approved by the revenue ministry. Neither could he impose new taxes nor recover any discre-

¹⁴ TF, pp. 277-8.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 393.

¹⁶ Afif, pp. 501-02; *Some Aspects of Muslim Rule in India*, pp. 245-6.

¹⁷ TF, p. 222.

¹⁸ TF, pp. 556-74, 431. Afif, pp. 458-9; *Dastur-ul-Albab fi Ilm-il-Hisab* (*Medieval India Quarterly*, Vol. I. Nos. 3 & 4, pp. 86-9).

tionary levy without the consent of the crown. He received a fixed amount of the revenue as his own pay and emoluments beyond which he could appropriate nothing.

It is, however, extremely doubtful whether the discretion used by the *muqti* in civil administration was not used to own financial or political benefit and the fact that in times of crisis occasioned by the weakness of the monarch the *muqtis* tried to raise the standard of revolt and become overlords of their own territory indicated that the *muqtis* were always inclined to make capital out of the Sultan's weakness. The establishment of the provincial dynasties in Bengal, Gujarat, Malwa and Deogir afford ample proof of the fact that the *muqtis* always had the advantage of the weakness of their monarchs which they utilized for their own selfish ends. In any case, however, it did not change the central structure of the Delhi Sultanate but only established the recognized principles of sovereignty in the person of the monarch. Moreland has aptly summed up the position in the following words:

The *muqtis* position indicates on the face of it a purely bureaucratic organization. We have officers posted to their charges by the kings, and transferred, removed or punished, at his pleasure, administering their charges under his orders, and subject to the strict financial control of the Revenue Ministry. None of these features has any counterpart in the feudal system of Europe.

The broad features of the system which now emerge from the above discussion may be set forth as follows:

(i) Like the Teutonic 'commendatios', ambitious military adventurers attached to themselves numbers of fighting men in their homelands to carve out principalities for themselves at home or abroad.

(ii) On success, they distributed the conquered lands among their chief lieutenants, having their own followers, to consolidate their hold. But they also tried to prevent these lieutenants from turning their assignments into principalities.

(iii) But the system did not work as designed because the 'Feofees' were a heterogeneous mass and not an integrated

class, and so pulled down their liegelords also to a common ruin.

(iv) However, the system resembled European feudalism in as much as the actual tillers of the soil were reduced to serfdom with little difference between them and the European serf.

The salient features of both the *muqtis* under the Sultans and the feudal landlords under the European system being known let us now examine the differences between the two to bring out the extent to which the former may be recognized as parallel to the latter.

The first and the foremost striking difference between the two systems was that whereas in Europe feudal order arose as a result of the weakness of the monarchs, in India the Turkish nobility owed its genesis to the strength of the Sultans. By force of circumstances the monarchs in Europe were compelled to share their powers with the nobility but in India, the Turkish Sultans created it in order to uphold the Sultanate as pillars of the empire. Moreover, in grafting the system of government of the middle eastern countries in India they had perhaps no alternative or workable precedent. But after having created it they jealously guarded their own rights and thwarted all attempts of the nobility to share sovereignty. Frequent threats from the western border helped the despotic Sultans to maintain their strength by concentrating all powers in their own hands. Had the Turkish state founded by Iltutmish been granted a longer life, the minor powers delegated to the nobility might have been converted into established rights. But Iltutmish's government was founded on military force and not on the people's acceptance or prescriptive rights and tradition. It could last *only* if it remained militarily powerful but its internal organization was such that it could never remain so. On the other hand, Rajput states had this strength but lacked military strength. So they *did* last for scores of years as fugitive governments even after their formal extinction—for example Rathors, Chauhans and Chandelas etc.

The difficulty in controlling the activities of the *muqtis* often led the Sultans to make frequent changes in their rules of service. And it was perhaps on this account that they tried the system of 'farming' or assignment of *iqtas* under agreement or contract to pay a stipulated sum of money. This was

specially tried by the Tughluqs who in order to reap the maximum benefit resorted to this mode of collection of revenue. This was, however, not a new innovation. The system of 'farming' was prevalent since the days of the prophet and was also resorted to by Umar, the second Khalifa. It was known as *Khiraj-i-Muqatiah*.¹⁹ Thus the whole system was a mixture of 'farming' and 'compounding'. The *Makatibat-i-Rashidi* points out that Ala-ud-din Khalji bestowed an *iqta* of four villages on Khwajah Rashid-ud-din, envoy of Ghazan Khan of Persia and issued instructions to the revenue officers to remit through trusted merchants, their revenues to the Khwajah in his homeland.²⁰ This instance indicates that the holders of *iqtas* were not required to collect the revenues themselves. But such *muqtis* were not required to render any military service or have any permanent rights in the *iqtas* placed in their charge.

In other vital respects too, the Turkish system was poles apart from its European counterpart. The privileges enjoyed by the European feudatories were totally absent in the Turkish system. Privileges or *maratib*, as they are called, enjoyed by the Turkish nobility like keeping of a *chatra*, *durbash*, standard and drum were not, strictly speaking, privileges because they hardly yielded an economic benefit to their owner. Moreover, these *maratib* were only honours conferred in recognition of services.²¹ They were rights sanctioned by the state, whereas in Europe privileges were rights acquired against the state. Another significant difference was that, whereas the privileges granted to European feudal lords depended on the possession of land and were, therefore, local, those granted to the Turkish nobility depended on the possession of an office and did not change on account of transfers or promotion. The privileges of the Turkish nobility had nothing to do with the *iqtas* or assignments granted to them for their benefit.

To conclude this discussion, it seems difficult, if not impossible, on account of the paucity of contemporary material on the subject to express any opinion with confidence. But, what-

¹⁹ *Dastur-ul-Albab fi Ilm-il-Hisab*, MIQ, Vol. I. Nos. 3 & 4, pp. 66-7. Also see T. W. Juynball's article on 'Kharaj' in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Vol. II, pp. 902-03.

²⁰ See Appendix E.

²¹ For detailed instances see chapter 8.

ever data we possess, provides a strong support to the bureaucratic nature of the Turkish nobility. On the other hand, the system had also a few resemblances with the feudal order though much modified. The difference appears to be on account of the fact that India in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries was much different than Europe. Moreover, the Turkish nobility was yet an infant institution with no historical background of its own in India. The Turks who were more familiar with the bureaucracies of the Middle East specially of Egypt and Persia, could not do better than engraft it in India for their own benefit. But the system never achieved any maturity in the country due to the frequent dynastic and political changes.

Another reason why the Turkish nobility was so different from the European feudal order was that the origin of the Turkish nobility was based on the tribal character of the Muslim societies in the Middle East. Generally engaged in varied professions other than agriculture, the loyalty of the Turkish servants was always attached more to the person than to the land of their overlord. Their career, rise and downfall depended on the will of their sovereign and not the land they received from him for the geographical features of the Middle East countries provided little promise to the land. In Europe, the land provided a major source of employment to its agricultural classes. It was obvious that economic interest of the owners of land should vest in the land and not outside it, hence, the entire structure of privileges and ownership of land revolved around the agricultural economy. To draw a parallel between institutions having their very origin opposed to each other, is to expect the two parallel lines meet. On the basis of the data handed down to us we are bound to conclude that the Turkish nobility was more bureaucratic than feudal.

Organization of Nobility

The necessity for the study of the organization of the nobility under the Sultans of Delhi is essential because from the very beginning of the Turkish rule it played a crucial part in the history of the Sultanate period. Even in those days, contemporary historians could point out with precision such powerful groups among the nobility as the Chihalgani slaves of Iltutmish, the neo-Muslim and Barwar nobles of the Khaljis and the *Amiran-i-Sada* of the reign of Mohammad bin Tughluq who organized themselves into a formidable force. Other groups composed on the basis of race described in the chronicles were the Abyssinians, Khorasanis, Afghans and Mongols. But these accounts only give a very vague picture of the institution as it then existed. In order to understand the institution, it is essential to trace out the basis, if any, on which it rested.

Many eminent scholars have studied the subject, the pioneer among whom was Kunwar Mohammad Ashraf who sought to discover the basis of the organization of the Turkish nobility. He was of the opinion that, broadly speaking, the Turkish nobility could be divided into two major groups—the *Ulema* and the *Umrah*. "Just at the commencement of the Muslim rule," he says "there was an almost indiscriminate commingling of the upper Muslim classes, which were mainly composed of the *Ulema* and the religious class in general the *Ahl-i-qalam* (what might be described as the intelligentsia), and the *Ahl-i-Tegh* or soldiers."¹ Of course, there were minor groups of nobility also below the above two in rank, and Mr Ashraf enlists about a

¹ *Life and Condition of the People of Hindustan*, p. 170.

dozen in all² but, since they hardly stood with the two major groups in comparison to their power and prestige, it is safe to leave them as unimportant units. To call the aristocrats in general, all *muqtis*, the leaders of the various classes and even the 'royal pages', 'menials' and 'guards' as minor groups in the aristocracy is to make the entire attempt at classification simply ridiculous.

By far the most influential element in the Delhi Sultanate was the nobility who led the Turkish forces to conquests. The members of this group generally started their career as slaves of the Sultan or another noble, and, by faithful service, achieved the rank of an *Amir*. From this stage onwards, they were honoured with fresh title like *Malik*, *Khan* etc. depending on their achievements. The individuals' rank was decided by the *iqta*, the *maratib* and the titles he held as well as his official position at the court. The offices and *iqtas* he held were not hereditary and could be rescinded and confiscated at will by the sovereign. The nobility under the Delhi Sultanate had no rights against the state, and had no other alternative except to live as loyal supporters of their sovereign or as independent rulers. Thus, in the opinion of Dr Ashraf, the nobility was reduced to the status of a hired bureaucracy which could not exist without their sovereign.

The other and the next in importance according to Dr Ashraf were the *Ulema* who were a distinct class in themselves. But to regard them as part of the nobility is perhaps wrong because the *Ulema* were never active participators in the politics of the Sultanate. Their role in politics was secondary and normally amounted to lending their support to the stronger party in the tussle between the crown and the nobility. This has been fully discussed in chapter 7. In fact, what Dr Ashraf aimed at was a study of the Muslim aristocracy as a whole which included a very wide range of the sophisticated gentry of the Sultanate irrespective of the fact whether they were members of the political machinery or not. Another difficulty in accepting the classification suggested by Dr Ashraf is that it is based on the principle of occupation. But, on close scrutiny of the system as it then existed, certain salient features peculiar to this institution are revealed which prove that it would be a mistake to accept

² *Ibid*, p. 171.

the basis of the organization of the nobility as propounded by Dr Ashraf. Moreover, with the advent of the three principal dynasties of the period spread over two centuries, their organization was effected to a great extent by the introduction of new elements and the destruction of the old nobility from time to time. To study these changes closely and their impact on the organization of the nobility, it is first necessary to examine them separately under the three dynasties.

Organization of Nobility Under the Ilbari Turks

There is much semblance of truth in the view of Professor Habib that the Indo-Turkish slave bureaucracy of the thirteenth century was a sort of joint family organization in its early stages.³ Nearly all the prominent members of this class of nobility were Turks, though Khaljis and Taziks too formed a significant wing.⁴ These were organized as powerful groups but the Turks, being patronized by Sultan Muizz-ud-din Muhammad bin Sam, got the best of the fertile territories of Hindustan as the field of their operation and the Khaljis were driven, due to neglect and want of patronage, to seek remote lands in far-off provinces of Assam, Bihar and Bengal. This racial composition is a distinguishing feature of the Turkish nobility and remained so upto the end of the reign of Sultan Muizz-ud-din Kaiqubad.

By far the most important, and next only to the group of the Ilbari Turks, was the group of foreigners called the Taziks who since the very beginning held very influential posts at the court. Driven by the conquering Mongol hordes and the consequent political upheavals in Central Asia, many princes of royal blood and families belonging to high nobles settled down in India in search of employment and were treated very kindly by Iltutmish

³ Professor Habib's introduction to Elliot and Dawson's *History of India*, edited by K. A. Nizami, pp. 95-6.

⁴ Minhaj-i-Siraj mentions the name of Qutb-ud-din Aibak, Malik Nasir-ud-din Qubacha, Malik Baha-ud-din Tughril and Malik Shams-ud-din Iltutmish among the Turkish nobles of Muizz-ud-din. Many more are mentioned in the list of Iltutmish's nobles (TN, pp. 137-46). The Khalji nobles of Muizz-ud-din who made a mark in India but were discarded by the Ilbaris were Malik Bakhtiyar Khalji, Malik Izz-ud-din Muhammad Shiran Khalji, Malik Ala-ud-din Mardan Khalji and Malik Husam-ud-din Iwaz Husain Khalji. Many more of lesser importance are mentioned by Minhaj-i-Siraj in the account of the above Maliks.

and his successors. Minhaj-i-Siraj mentions Malik Firuz Shah Iltutmish, the prince of Khwarizm, Malik Ala-ud-din Jani, the prince of Turkistan and Malik Izz-ud-din Hamza Abdul Jalil among the list of nobles of Sultan Iltutmish who were Taziks. Nizam-ul-mulk Kamal-ud-din Junaidi the *Wazir* and his *naiib* Khwaja Muhazzab-ud-din, were also Taziks.⁵ More Tazik nobles of the court are brought to light by Minhaj-i-Siraj in his account of the reign of Rukn-ud-din Firuz Shah wherein he points out that the Turkish soldiers martyred Taj-ul-mulk, the *Dabir*, *Munsharif-i-Mamalik*, Baha-ul-mulk Hussain Ashari, Qiwam-ud-din Zahid, Ziya-ul-mulk, the son of the Nazim-ul-mulk Junaidi, Nizam-ud-din Shafurqani, Khwaja Rashid-ud-din Malkani, Amir Fakhr-ud-din, the *Dabir*, and a number of other Tazik officials.⁶ Firishta mentions one Malik Fakhr-ul-mulk Isami, the *Wazir* of Baghbad, who held that post for thirty years, and who came to India during the last years of Iltutmish's reign. Iltutmish received him with great honour and gave him the post of *Wazarat* in his court.⁷ Although many Taziks were rooted out from their position during the reign of Iltutmish's successors, they still held important posts under Sultan Nasir-

⁵ *TN*, pp. 177-9.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 183. Mr S. M. Ikram says that Taziks were Persian-knowing Turks and dominated the court on account of their learning and capacity for civil administration. On the basis of this criteria he regards Qazi Minhaj-i-Siraj as a Tazik but Minhaj's affinity with the Ilbaris is known to us and it is difficult to concede this argument. Moreover, the complete absence of separate notices of the prominent Tazik nobles at the court is a conclusive proof that Minhaj was not a Tazik at all. Lastly, it is the Turkish nobles whose exploits and political achievements are highlighted in his narrative and Taziks receive casual notice only when it is almost unavoidable.

⁷ Firishta, p. 67. He is apparently Malik Isami, the ancestor of the author of *Futuh-us-Salatin* (*FS*, pp. 127-8). One of the sons of Malik Fakhr-ul-mulk known as Sadr-ul-Kiram Isami held the title of *Zahir-ul-Mamalik* and the post of *Vakil-i-Dar* at the court of Sultan Nasir-ud-din Mahmud. The son of Sadr-ul-Kiram Isami, was the *Khas Hajib* and *Vakil-i-dar* of Balban (*TF*, p. 36). Firishta further says that nearly fifteen princes of the royal blood belonging to the territories of Turkistan, Transaxiana, Iraq, Azarbaijan and Persia came to Delhi as refugees during the upheaval caused by Chingez Khan. All of them held responsible posts at the court of Balban who assigned them different parts at the city for their habitation (Firishta, p. 66). Also see *TN*, p. 166; *TF*, p. 27 for the patronage of foreigners by Iltutmish.

ud-din Mahmud and made common cause with the Ilbari Turks in bringing the downfall of Imad-ud-din Raihan.⁸

The number of Hindu nobles who were tributaries and used to attend the royal court as such was numerous though their political role is negligible.⁹ The case of Rai Danuj who helped Balban in capturing Tughril, the *muqti* of Lakhnauti, and who was treated with honour at the court¹⁰ is a clear indication that Balban left the Hindu tributaries in peace though they had little influence at the court or in the politics of the realm. During the reign of Sultan Muizz-ud-din Kaiqubad, the number of Rais and Rajas who were his tributaries was numerous.¹¹ Soon after Muizz-ud-din's death, when Sultan Jalal-ud-din sent an army against the rebel Malik Chajju of Kara, the eminent Rais-Piram (Bramha) Deo Kotla and Rai Bhim Deo helped the latter on account of their loyalty to the house of Balban.¹²

Another group of nobles, though very insignificant was that of the Abyssinians. In the reign of Qutb-ud-din Aibak Malik Kamyaz Rumi, possibly an Abyssinian, was the *muqti* of Avadh and was deputed to punish the recalcitrant Khalji nobles of Lakhnauti.¹³ Another was Malik Sinan-ud-din Chatisar, also known as Habsh, *muqti* of Sindh and Debal, who was in the employ of Sultan Nasir-ud-din Qabacha, who after the latter's defeat at the hands of Iltutmish, entered the service of the latter.¹⁴ The Abyssinians came into prominence in the reign of Raziya. The affair of Jamal-ud-din Yaqut proved that the Ilbaris could not tolerate any outsider to approach the person of their sovereign. With his death, it appeared that for the time being the Abyssinian influence at the court receded but in the reign of Sultan Ala-ud-din Masud Shah, again, they attained a position of power and influence, though it was short-lived.¹⁵

⁸ TN, p. 300.

⁹ TF, p. 31.

¹⁰ TM, pp. 42-3.

¹¹ TF, p. 41; QS, pp. 35-6.

¹² TM, pp. 59-60. MF, pp. 14-20. Also see Husain, Agha Mahdi: *The Hindus in Medieval India*, IHC, 1939 p. 712-24. Sharma, S. R.: *Hindu Cooperation with Early Muslim Expansion in India*, IHC, 1945, pp. 109-15.

¹³ TN, p. 158.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 173. Also see Hodivala, p. 214-5.

¹⁵ TM, p. 31. It is really very strange that Minhaj-i-Siraj an eye-witness

The newly converted Mongols, called the neo-Muslims, were also a significant wing of the nobility under the Ilbari Turks though their influence was more pronounced during the latter part of their reign. In the list of nobles of Sultan Ghiyas-ud-din Balban, two Mongols¹⁶ held the post of *Sarishtahdar-i-Maimana* and *Sarishtahdar-i-Maisara* whereas a third Malik Aitman Surkha is also mentioned but his rank is not known.¹⁷ During the reign of Sultan Muizz-ud-din Kaiqubad, they held many important assignments.¹⁸ The Ilbaris being very jealous, had most of them murdered in cold blood.¹⁹

A beginning was also made by the Afghans to rise under the Ilbaris. They formed a significant wing in the army of Muizz-ud-din Muhammad Sam Ghorī who led twelve thousand Afghan horsemen in the battle against Prithviraj Chauhan.²⁰ Their leader was Malik Mahmud Lodi, whose brother Malik Shahu was also patronized by Muizz-ud-din.²¹ Niamat Ullah, the author of the *Makhzan-i-Afghani* says : "Shihab-ud-din conquered a large part of the country around Lahore and fought with the non-Muslims. The Almighty out of graciousness and favour gave the Muslims victory over the non-Muslims. On his way back from the country of Hind, he founded the fort of Sialkot and having summoned Ali Karmakh from Lahore, put him in charge of it. He appoint-

to the events of the reign of Sultan Ala-ud-din Masud Shah, should have totally omitted to mention that powerful factor in contemporary politics. The Abyssinians must have been supported by a powerful wing of the Ilbari nobility seeking to reassert power. The secret movements of prince Nasir-ud-din Mahmud from Bahraich who travelled in the night to avoid detention prove that the party led by Balban did not want to come in conflict openly with the Abyssinians.

¹⁶ TF, p. 24. Both of them bear the name Malik Targhi.

¹⁷ TF, p. 24.

¹⁸ One of the neo-Muslim nobles was Malik Aitimar Kachchan whose role in the struggle with Jalal-ud-din Khalji has already been recorded. Others were Malik Turmati, *Shahna-i-pil*, Malik Nasir-ud-din Ulughchi, and Malik Hizbar-ud-din, a descendant of Qatlugh (TF, p. 126).

¹⁹ TF, p. 133. Yahiya gives the names of those neo-Muslim nobles who were killed as a result of this conspiracy. They were Malik Beg Sariq the *Amir-i-Hajib*, Malik Ghazi, *Vakil-i-Dar*, Malik Kareem-ud-din *Naib Bar'bak*, Malik Bahram *Akhurbak*, Malik Javarji *Sarjandar* were exiled (TM, p. 53. MT, Vol. I, p. 57).

²⁰ Niamat Ullah : *The Mukhzan-i-Afghani*, Eng. tr. by Nirodbhushan Roy, p. 12.

²¹ *Ibid.* p. 13.

ed Malik Shah, a brother of Malik Mahmud to populate this town and himself returned to Ghazna. He honoured Malik Mahmud with various marks of favour and assigned to him the power of acquiring and bestowing, of seizing and liberating. The ascendancy of the Lodis dates from that time."²² The Afghans were also patronized by Qutb-ud-din Aibak who "raised many of them to the position of nobles".²³ During the reign of Iltutmish and his successors, the Afghans hardly made any progress and they do not find any place in their list of nobles. As Balban placed great confidence in them, there were three thousand soldiers in Balban's army who distinguished themselves in military operations against the Hindus of Kohpaya.²⁴ He also handed over the newly founded fort of Jalali to the Afghans.²⁵

Organization of the Nobility under the Khaljis

The racial organization of the nobility was a distinctive feature of the Khalji nobility too. Though Jalal-ud-din tried to reconcile as far as possible the old Turkish nobility of the days of Balban, he distributed all coveted posts to the Khaljis most of whom were his relations. The old organized racial group of the Ilbaris, however, did not sit idle and made a number of attempts to dethrone the Khaljis. But due to their weakness and want of leadership, they failed to assert themselves.

During the short reign of Jalal-ud-din Khalji, the neo-Muslims received great patronage. In fact many of them who had held some offices under the Ilbaris were confirmed in their appointments by Jalal-ud-din.²⁶ But a large number of them were introduced in the second year of the Sultan's reign. In 1291-92, Abdullah, the Mongol who was the grandson of Chingiz Khan, invaded India but a truce was arrived at between him and Sultan Jalal-ud-din Khalji.²⁷ The Sultan gave in marriage one of his daughters to Ulughu, a high-ranking noble in the army of Abdul-

²² *Ibid.*, p. 13.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

²⁴ *TN*, p. 315.

²⁵ *TF*, p. 58.

²⁶ In the list of nobles of Jalal-ud-din Khalji many neo-Muslims find a place. These were Malik Umar Surkha, Malik Targhi *Sarjandar*, Malik Taju *Sarishtadar* and Malik Ulughchi, the *Muqti* of Kol (*TF*, p. 174).

²⁷ *TF*, p. 218.

lah. Many more Mongol *Amiran-i-Hazara* and *Amiran-i-Sada* embraced Islam and decided to settle in Delhi. Sultan Jalal-ud-din fixed their salaries and gave them villages in *Inam* and *Iqta*. They settled in the muhallas of Indarpat, Kilokhari and Ghiyaspur.²⁸ In the fight with Malik Chhajju, the neo-Muslim nobles played an important role. Malik Ulugheli, commonly known as *Kik* led an important wing of the Khalji army and fought with great gallantry.²⁹ Many neo-Muslims, who had come to fight on behalf of Malik Chhajju joined the Khaljis in the thick of the battle under the leadership of the son of Qaracha.³⁰ They also played an important part in the reign of his successor Ala-ud-din Khalji whose diabolical treatment of the neo-Muslim nobles practically annihilated them as a force to be reckoned with.

Ala-ud-din clearly discovered the strength and weakness of this system and like Balban tried to break any group which attempted to reassert itself. The actual measures taken by him in the furtherance of this policy have already been mentioned. He not only suppressed the Ibaris, who had been enjoying some patronage under Jalal-ud-din,³¹ but he did away with the entire camp of Khalji nobles who were the supporters of Jalal-ud-din.³² He then cleared his camp of the Mughal nobility by adopting a systematic policy of genocide against them.³³

Hindu converts to Islam who rose higher and higher in the service of Ala-ud-din Khalji, however, formed a very powerful wing of the nobility under him.³⁴ They almost invariably entered the Sultan's service as slaves as indicated by the careers of Malik Naib Kafur Hazar Dinari, Khusrau Khan, Malik Shahin (*Naib Barbak*), Malik Yaklakhi³⁵ and Malik Ahmad Jhitam who

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 219, *MT*, Vol. I, p. 173.

²⁹ *MF*, pp. 13 and 17.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 15-6.

³¹ *TF*, pp. 272-82; *FS*, pp. 276-8.

³² *TF*, pp. 250-1.

³³ *TF*, pp. 252 and 334-6; *FS*, pp. 254-5. *MT*, Vol. I, p. 195.

³⁴ Amir Khusrau says that Sultan Qutb-ud-din Mubarak Shah gave to Hasan who descended from Hindu family the title of Khusrau Khan and appointed him his *Wazir* (*Tughluqnama*, pp. 17-8).

³⁵ Amir Khusrau clearly says that Malik Yaklakhi came of a Hindu family (*Tughluqnama*, pp. 68-70). Malik Kafur Marhata, Malik Diwan, *Shahna-i-Pil* and Malik Manik were other Hindu converts in the court of Ala-ud-din (*TF*, p. 241).

was probably the son of Rai Rayan Ram Deo.³⁶ It has been pointed out elsewhere that Ala-ud-din Khalji encouraged this new class of his nobles in order to counter-balance the influence of his Khalji nobles. In any case they commanded great influence during the reign of Sultan Qutb-ud-din Mubarak Shah but in a zeal to hold power and beat their rivals they outdid their role resulting in their own ruin.

Although Barani mentions a number of nobles of Jalal-ud-din who appear to be foreigners migrated to India from the west, it is doubtful if they could organize themselves into a powerful group. The reason is not far to seek. About a century of Turkish rule in India had created many aristocratic families which had many advantages to rise in the administration since they could count upon all sorts of influences to support them. The foreigners, therefore, could not rise above these faithful and well-entrenched families. In the reign of Jalal-ud-din, Malik Muid Jajarmi and Malik Saad-ud-din *Amir-i-Bahr*³⁷ appear to be foreigners as it is difficult to find their previous career under the Ilbaris. Similarly, under the reign of Ala-ud-din, Sharaf-Qaini, who was head of the *Diwan-i-Wazarat* was a foreigner who met a tragic death due to the enmity of Malik Naib.³⁸ But as mentioned already, these foreign elements were neither organized into a group nor they had any major say in the administration beyond fulfilling the wishes of their sovereigns.

The Afghans who had made some mark under the Ilbaris made further progress under the Khaljis. Ala-ud-din Khalji admitted them into the ranks of his nobility. Foremost among the Afghans was Malik Ikhtiyar-ud-din Yal Afghan.³⁹ He continued to hold a position of respect during the reign of Sultan Qutb-ud-din Mubarak Shah and made his mark in the expedition against Mabar led by Khusrau Khan.⁴⁰ Another Afghan of

³⁶ FS, pp. 286-7. Also see article by Lal K. S.: *Political Condition of the Hindus Under the Khaljis*, IHC, 1946, pp. 232-7 and Shaikh Abdur Rashid's note on the nationality of Malik Naib in *Medieval India Quarterly*, Vol. I, July 1950, pp. 72-3.

³⁷ TF, p. 199.

³⁸ TF, p. 337.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 240.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 339. Also see the article by Iqtidar Husain Siddiqi on *Rise of the Afghan Nobility under the Lodi Sultans, 1451-1526*. *Medieval India Quarterly*, V. (1961), pp. 114-5.

repute, who was also a great literary figure of Ala-ud-din's reign, was Maulana Abdul Kareem Sherwani who was the teacher of Shaikh Nasir-ud-din Hidayat.⁴¹

Organization of Nobility under the Tughluqs

By the time of the advent of the Tughluqs, the principle of racialism had been completely discarded as many forces were at work which discouraged the rise of any particular group. Firstly, the Tughluqs were themselves foreigners in India with hardly any aristocratic antecedents previous to the reign of the Khaljis. Secondly, they had to rely on the old Khalji nobility on account of the support rendered by them in bringing the Tughluqs into power. The principle was further weakened due to an entirely new policy of Muhammad bin Tughluq to make his administration broad based. He encouraged foreigners, Hindus, Mongols, Khorasanis and the Arabs but never allowed them to organize themselves against him. Thus in spite of the hatred and contempt in which he was held by the *Ulema* in particular and Muslims in general, he continued to hold his own in all matters, political or administrative, with the result that when he died, his camp was a conglomeration of men belonging to different races—Mughals, Afghans, Hindustani Muslims etc.—all of whom unanimously consented to the succession of Firuz Tughluq, his cousin.

Firuz paid back their loyalty in the same coin and in trying to satisfy all the elements to hush criticism, he created a heterogeneous nobility. The system worked well as by good fortune, his team of expert and loyal administrators kept the interests of the State above their selfish interests. Thus, in the reign of Sultan Firuz Tughluq, racial or tribal considerations which were the cementing force of the nobility had been replaced by loyalty to the sovereign. But, then in the absence of the bond of loyal unity, the nobility became a prey to personal vices and individual ambitions of its members. Thus, the original basis of the nobility went through a number of metamorphoses before the institution came to be based on loyal service and respect to the Sultan who was the fountain of power.

Coming to the actual composition of the nobility under the Tughluqs, let it be pointed out that in the beginning when

⁴¹ *Khair-ul-Majalis*, Aligarh, p. 282; *Siyar-ul-Arifin*, p. 92.

Sultan Ghiyas-ud-din ascended the throne, the bulk of the nobility was the same as had held high places under Ala-ud-din Khalji and his son Sultan Qutb-ud-din Mubarak Shah. This has already been illustrated in an earlier chapter in which appointments made by Sultan Ghiyas-ud-din after his accession have been dealt with. These nobles continued in the main to hold office during the reigns of Muhammad Tughluq and Firuz Tughluq. Sultan Ghiyas-ud-din not only patronized the old Khalji nobles who were his colleagues but he also respected those experienced nobles of the reign of Balban and Muizz-ud-din Kaiqubad who were still surviving.⁴²

Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq, however, added three distinct elements to the old nobility. First of all, he patronized foreigners among whom were the Khorasanis and Arabs.⁴³ He gave them high appointments in administration and used to call them *Aziz* or dear. Many became his relatives by marriage bonds.⁴⁴ Ibn-i-Battutah mentions a number of such men who received patronage in his court. They played a significant part in the politics of the court. Among his Khorasani nobles, the foremost was Malik Ala-ul-mulk Fasih-ud-din Khurasani. Other foreigners who held very high appointments under him were Azd-ud-din Shavanqari, Shaikhzada Isfahani, Shaikhzada Damishqi, Shaikhzada Nihavandi, Shaikhzada Bistami and Malik Sanjar Badakshani.⁴⁵

The Afghans too made a marked progress during his reign, Malik Ikhtiyar-ud-din Yal Afghan who has been noticed earlier in connection with the nobility under Ala-ud-din Khalji continued to hold the position under Muhammad bin Tughluq. Malik Makh Afghan, his younger brother, was sent by Ghiyas-ud-din to the expedition against Warangal in A.D. 1321 under the leadership of his son Prince Ulugh Khan.⁴⁶ Other notable Afghan nobles of Muhammad bin Tughluq were Malik Khattah

⁴² *TF*, p. 427. He mentions the names of *Khwaja Khatir*, *Malik-ul-Wuzra Junaidi* and *Khwaja Muhazzab Buzurg* who had the posts of *Wazarat* and *Naib Wazarat* etc. during the reign of the Ilbaris. According to the *Tarikh-i-Masumi* Ghiyas-ud-din granted *Bhakar* to *Khwaja Khatir* (*Tarikh-i-Masumi*, Poona, 1938, p. 46).

⁴³ *TF*, pp. 462, 487-8.

⁴⁴ *Travels*, pp. 98, 273-82, 283, 367-8.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 109, 254, 301, 55; *TF*, pp. 487-8, 461.

⁴⁶ *TF*, pp. 448-9.

Afghan, Jalhu Afghan, Tughan-al-Afghan, Bahram Afghan, Mandi Afghan and last but not the least Malik Shahu Lodi.⁴⁷ His successor, Sultan Firuz Tughluq continued to patronize the Afghans and prominent among them were Malik Afghan, Malik Daud Khan Afghan, the *Muqti* of Bihar, Malik Muhammad Shah Afghan, the *Muqti* of Tughluqpur, Malik Bali Afghan and Yasin, son of Malik Shahu Afghan.⁴⁸

The Hindus, too, became active participators in the administration of the Tughluqs specially during the reign of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq. Barani mentions a number of them holding high appointments under him.⁴⁹ The name of Ratan, whom the Sultan gave the title of Azim-us-Sindh is well-known.⁵⁰ Another was Gulchandra who fought on the side of Sultan Ghiyas-ud-din in the struggle with Khusrau Khan.⁵¹ Dhara, another Hindu was made *Naib Wazir* of Deogir by Sultan Muhammad.⁵² Another influential noble was Bharan, the *muqti* of Gulbarga who was murdered by his subordinate Muslim officers on account of hatred.⁵³ The position, however, was reversed in the reign of Firuz Tughluq whose bigotry hardly left any chances for the rise of Hindu nobility. Although he himself was born of a Hindu mother, his fanaticism led him to forced conversions throughout his reign. His maternal uncle, Rai Bhirhu Bhatti, was the only Hindu at the court and he too held an insignificant appointment.⁵⁴

The Mongols too attained a respectable position under the Tughluqs and Muhammad bin Tughluq granted them immense riches and honours.⁵⁵ Many of them were given high rank in the army, prominent among whom was Kalghi.⁵⁶ Sultan Firuz Tughluq too continued to patronize them and two of them, Amir

⁴⁷ *TM*, p. 101; *FS*, pp. 439-40, 472, 501, 503.

⁴⁸ *Tarikh-i-Muhammadi*, pp. 41a, 417a; *Insha-i-Mahru*, letter no. 120. *TM*, pp. 133-4; Iqtidar, Husani Siddiqi: 'Rise of the Afghan Nobility under the Lodi Sultans', *MIQ*, Vol. IV (1961), pp. 115-7.

⁴⁹ *TF*, pp. 501-05.

⁵⁰ Ibn-i-Battuta : *Travels*, pp. 105-07.

⁵¹ *FS*, pp. 374-5, 382-3.

⁵² *TF*, p. 501.

⁵³ *FS*, pp. 484-7.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 103-04.

⁵⁵ *TF*, pp. 461-2.

⁵⁶ *FS*, p. 501.

Qabtagha Amir Mehman and Malik Muazzam Amir. Ahmad Iqbal held high appointment in his court.⁵⁷ The bulk of the nobility, however, continued to be drawn out of the old nobility on the principle of heredity. But the Tughluqs, like their predecessors, continued to recognize merit and personal service as a fair criteria for appointment to respectable posts and many slaves in the reign of Sultan Firuz Shah Tughluq attained to positions of authority.⁵⁸

Though racialism, which was the principal element of the early Turkish nobility, was gradually discarded due to force of circumstances, the element of heredity which too had established itself during the Ilbari rule began gradually to be perfected and by the time of the Tughluqs it had become the most powerful element in determining the organization of nobility. That dearth of the hereditary nobles which during the reign of the Ilbaris had forced the Sultans to choose influential members of the bureaucracy out of a band of trusted slaves and domestic servants had long withered away and a hereditary class had gradually stepped into the arena of politics. It was already a recognized principle for recruitment of the members into judiciary and high ecclesiastical appointments as well as those of the *Wazarat* and *Naib Wazarat*.

In India, the principle was quite well established and was more rigid than the system obtainable among the Muslims due to caste distinctions. During the reign of Iltutmish, which is frequently referred to by scholars to illustrate the principle of survival of the fittest, heredity was considered a sound criteria for the appointment of nobles to high posts. The enquiry which he ordered into the ancestry of his *Wazir* Khwaja Nizam-ul-mulk Kamal-ud-din Junaidi and Jamal Marzuk, the superintendent of the royal mint at Kannauj, has already been referred to elsewhere.⁵⁹ But many princes of the noble blood had flocked around his court and were included in the list of his nobles. The successors of Iltutmish could not maintain that respect for heredity as the Shamsi nobles, collectively called Chihalganis, had the upper hand, but during the reign of Balban, again

⁵⁷ *TF*, pp. 484-5.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 579-83.

⁵⁹ *TF*, pp. 38-9.

heredity was given due weight.⁶⁰ But Balban stressed the principle of heredity too much and traced his own ancestry from the legendary king Afrasiyab.⁶¹ He thus went to a ridiculous extent in enforcing this principle perhaps because he himself was descended from a low origin and wanted the nobility around him to believe that he had inherited noble blood in his veins. However, during the reign of his successor Kaiqubad, many members of the bureaucracy, who could not make their way forward during the reign of Balban, achieved the rank of *Maliks* and Barani mentions the name of Malik Kamal-ud-din Mahiyar, whom Balban had discarded like an outcaste among the nobles of Kaiqubad.⁶²

Of the Khaljis and Tughluqs there is ample proof already cited that they adopted both the principles of heredity and talent for the appointment to high political and ecclesiastical posts. This was due to the fact that neither of the two had been slaves. A century of the slave rule in India had already created a hereditary nobility which tried to assert itself for economic reasons. There were frequent clashes too among them to gain the favour of the ruling monarch in order that they may remain intact in their position and power. During the reign of Sultan Firuz Tughluq, many nobles along with their sons were recipients of *iqtas* and high government posts from the Sultan. Thus hereditary nobles had become a distinct class of the nobles during the reign of the Tughluqs.

This, however never meant that the king had ceased to exercise the power to create new nobles out of his slaves bought or captured in wars who impressed him by their loyal and faithful service. The example of Malik Maqbool, Qiwan-ul-mulk, Bashir Sultani who were all nobles created by royal prerogative clearly point out to the fact that new and healthier elements were frequently admitted to the ranks of the nobility. Once admitted to the oligarchy of the aristocrats, their progenies obtained the status of nobles by virtue of their birth.

It would now be clear from the above analysis that the nobility was organized and reorganized again and again during the long period of two hundred years that cover the reign of Ilbaris,

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 126.

the Khaljis and the Tughluqs by the method of trial and error. From the tribal and racial considerations, and the principle of survival of the fittest, it gradually transformed itself into that of heredity but without questioning the right of the Sultans to add fresh ranks into the nobility. Thus the institution went through a number of metamorphoses before it became perfected, based on sound principles of medieval polity. On the basis of the above analysis, we may classify the nobility on the following lines:

- (i) Nobles by birth or hereditary nobles; and
- (ii) Nobles created by royal prerogative.

This division of nobility, however, ignores a considerable part of the aristocracy composed of wealthy merchant class, the tributary zamindars and rais and men of letters who earned their livelihood by patronage of the Sultans and his influential nobles. Though they held no position of influence at the court by virtue of their wealth or intellectual achievements, they were held in respect in the society in general and aristocratic groups in particular. The wealthy merchant class tried to seek the favour of the nobility and the king in order to receive favour and recognition in society. They influenced the nobility and were influenced by it in turn in their social and cultural standards. Barani speaks of the Sahas of Delhi who had become rich through the profession of moneylending and whose wide clientele included the *Umara* of the capital who were famous for their charity. Other classes, like the Brahmins and the Thakurs who were very prosperous, adopted the way of the nobility and were held in great respect by the populace. It is obvious that during peaceful days, the aristocracy among the Hindus and Muslims met each other and were impressed by the ways and habits of living of each other. In fact, the number of these merchants, tributary zamindars and men of letters taken together was more than the two groups of nobles classified above and were in no way backward in social status. They must, therefore, be recognized as forming separate groups of the nobility. Since, however, they remotely form the subject of our study, they have been left aside.

Nobility, Ulema, and the Crown

Turkish rule in India was not very different from the general set-up of other Muslim governments in the Middle East during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries when the *Ulema* held an important position. In India too, the *Ulema* occupied a significant place in the administrative set-up though they were not ranked equal to the higher echelons of Turkish governing class. Specially in the judiciary, they virtually held a monopoly. But as advisers to the crown in determining the policy affecting religious matters they played a leading part since the very beginning. The expansion of Islam into foreign lands raised many problems on which the *Shariat* was totally silent. In many cases its application was not only impracticable but also inadvisable. The *Ulema* employed by the kings to interpret the *Shariat* law so diametrically opposed to the interests of the state that they tried to ignore it. Professor Habib rightly remarks: "Under these conditions, wise kings adopted a policy of compromise and moderation. They paid a lip-homage to the *Shariat* and admitted their sinfulness if they were unable to enforce any of its provisions; they kept the State-controlled *mullas* disciplined and satisfied; over the whole field of administration, concerning which the *Shariat* is silent or nearly silent, they made their own laws; if the traditional customs of the people were against the *Shariat*, they allowed them to override the *Shariat* under the designation of *Urf*. Thus state laws, called '*Zawabit*', grew under the protection of the monarchy. If these laws violated the *Shariat*, the principle of necessity or of *istehsan* (the public good) could be quoted in their favour. And the back of the *Shariat* was broken for the primary reason that it had provided no means for its own development."¹

¹ *The Political Philosophy of the Delhi Sultanate*, pp. 136-7.

But the rejection of the *Shariat* principles did not minimize the importance of the *Ulema* as a group. Religion is the basis of the Muslim society and it is natural that the interpreters of the sacred law should occupy a privileged position. This was really not a new conception in India where the Brahmins had always held a prominent position in the state. In fact, the *Ulema* were less privileged than the Brahmins under Hindu kings so far as their relations with the king were concerned because like other subjects of the Sultans, they were not above law. They could be punished for crimes and wrongs not in conformity with Islam and the *Shariat*. However, they held a very high position in the days of the Sultanate, although there were occasions when they had bad days as for example in the reign of Ala-ud-din Khalji and Muhammad bin Tughluq. Even in those days of their powerlessness, however, they did not cease to be part of the religious oligarchy of the theologians, ascetics, Saiyids and Pirs.² Their influence on the Sultan and the nobles themselves was by no means insignificant. In dealing with these classes they tried to gain their support as also afforded support where it was demanded, which often made them into hypocrites.

In their dealings with the nobility and the crown, the *Ulema* often transgressed the clear provisions of the sacred law and created precedents in order to please their patrons.³ This provoked bitter criticism from sovereign and the elite alike. Sultan Balban lamented the want of truthfulness and right conduct on the part of the *Ulema*. According to him the *Ulema* were divided into two groups—firstly, there were the *Ulema-i-Akhirat* like Sufi saints, *pirs* etc. and secondly, the *Ulema-i-Duniya* also known as the *Ulema-i-Zahiri*, who hankered after worldly gains due to their selfishness, greed and hypocrisy.⁴ His son Bughra Khan, too, warned his son Kaiqubad to beware of the crafty *Ulema* who advised kings according to their likes and

² *The life and Conditions of the People of Hindustan*, pp. 172-6.

³ *TF*, pp. 466-7. Barani who also belonged to the category of the *Ulema* himself admits that on account of hypocrisy and selfish motives as also for fear of their lives the *Ulema* never spoke the truth before Sultan Muhammad as in the *Shariat*. In the account of Sultan Ala-ud-din, too, he conveys a similar idea through the pen of Maulana Shams-ud-din (*Ibid.*, pp. 298-9).

⁴ *TF*, pp. 154-5.

dislikes giving little value to the principles of right and justice.⁵ The elite of the period too held a very poor opinion of the *Ulema-i-Zahiri*. Amir Khusrau speaks very ill of them and categorically condemns their ignorance of the principles of Islamic jurisprudence. Devoid of true learning and human virtues, they simply owed their existence to shameless flattery of the sovereigns and the nobles of whom they were paid servants.⁶

For the first two decades of the establishment of the Turkish rule in India, we do not come across the influence of the *Ulema* in the affairs of the Sultanate nor their relationship with the crown is discernible from the known facts of contemporary history. After the death of Sultan Qutb-ud-din Aibak in A.D. 1210 however, the *Ulema* began to exercise influence in politics. We have already seen that, in Delhi, the nobles had invited Iltutmish, the son-in-law of Qutb-ud-din and the *muqti* of Budaun to ascend the throne. But his eligibility to succeed to the empire of his late master was challenged by the entire camp of jurists led by the Chief Qazi Wazih-ud-din Kashani before an assembly of distinguished nobles who doubted the free status of Iltutmish. It was however, met cleverly by Iltutmish who showed to the assembled nobles, the letter of manumission issued to him by his late master during the time of Sultan Muizz-ud-din Muhammad bin Sam.⁷ This set at naught the opposition of the ecclesiasts. The significance of this event must not be minimized because it was the first attempt of the *Ulema* to assert their right to the choice of their sovereign.

This was not, however, all. The *Ulema* tried to shape the policy of the state also in other respects. As members of the judiciary, they had a major say in the administration of the state but they sought to establish a purely Islamic state in India. Barani informs us that when Delhi was conquered and became the abode of a large number of the learned *Ulema* from the west, they saw that the Hindus were being tolerated by the Sultans against the *Shariat*. They accordingly led a delegation to Sultan

⁵ *TF*, pp. 164-5.

⁶ *MA*, pp. 50-86.

⁷ *Travels*, p. 164. Minhaj-i-Siraj does not mention the name of Qazi Wajih-ud-din in the *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri* but clearly points out that after the battle with the Gakkhars, he issued orders to Qutb-ud-din for manumission of Iltutmish in recognition of his bravery (*Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, pp. 169-70).

Ilutmish and urged him to offer to the Hindus the choice of 'death or Islam'. The Sultan referred the matter to the *Wazir* Nizam-ul-mulk Junaidi who said that, as the country had then been recently conquered, the Mussalmans were very few in number and if the Hindus were confronted with 'death or Islam' they might unite and kill all the Muslims. However, he argued, when the Muslim government was well-established and the Muslims grew in number, it would be possible to offer such a choice to the Hindus.⁸

But the most emphatic and clear-cut elucidation of the views of the *Ulema* of the duties of the state is propounded in the discourse which Shaikh Nur-ud-din Mubarak Ghaznavi⁹ had with Ilutmish as reported by Barani.¹⁰ The ideas developed by the Shaikh may be summarized as follows:

(i) All idolators are classed in the category of *Kafirs* and the *Shariat* regards them as the enemy of Allah and the prophet Muhammad. They should be destroyed root and branch through the application of force. If this is not possible for some reason, then at least they should not be allowed to lead a life of respect and luxury in Muslim dominions.

(ii) In all the territories where Muslim rule has been established, the Sultan should totally eradicate the life of sin led by the Muslims. In this advice, emphasis is laid on the suppression of prostitution through state machinery.

(iii) The Sultan should entrust the duty of administering the sacred law as propounded in the *Shariat* to such people of high pedigree who are God-fearing and who themselves are living a life of asceticism having few mundane desires. Again, there should be no liberty to the Philosophers as distinguished from the theologians, to propagate their own ideas among the people.

(iv) Lastly, the Sultan should always be intent upon doing justice to the subjects.

⁸ Barani: *Sahifa-i-Naat-i-Muhammadi* translated into English by Dr S. Nurul Hasan, *Medieval India Quarterly*, Vol. I, Nos. 3 & 4, pp. 101-03. In the *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, and the *Fatawa-i-Jahandari* also, Barani emphasizes a similar philosophy of intolerance against the Hindus.

⁹ For a short life sketch of Shaikh Nur-ud-din Mubarak Ghaznavi see *Akhbar-ul-Akhiyar*, p. 28.

¹⁰ *TF*, pp. 41-4.

Those precepts have been elaborated in detail by Barani in the *Fatawa-i-Jahandari*,¹¹ but he admits that none of the Sultans of Delhi were capable of following these precepts on account of many difficulties in their way.¹²

But so far as the relations of the Sultan to the *Ulema* are concerned, all was not well; and Barani tells us that Sultan Iltutmish got Qazi Saeed, Qazi Imad, Qazi Husam and Qazi Nizam murdered who were the sister's son of Qazi Shams-ul-Ulema Gardezi, the chief Qazi of the realm.¹³ The enmity between Najm-ud-din Sughra, whom Iltutmish appointed to the post of Shaikh-ul-Islam, and Shaikh Jalal-ud-din Tabrizi and Shaikh Qutb-ud-din Bakhtiyar Kaki is too well-known to be mentioned here.¹⁴ It is really strange that though the theologians raised objections to the nomination of Raziya as the successor of Iltutmish, they ultimately agreed to that choice on his persuasion. During Raziya's reign, the *Ulema* do not seem to have enjoyed much political power or were not organized in a group to be reckoned with in the political set-up of the empire.¹⁵ But they did play an important part in negotiating a settlement between her and the disaffected nobles led by Nizam-ul-mulk Junaidi, the *Wazir* and Malik Izz-ud-din Muhammad Salari which proves that they at least commanded a position of respect in the court circles.¹⁶

¹¹ *Fatawa-i-Jahandari: op. cit.*, pp. 43-9.

¹² Barani: *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, pp. 44-5.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 550. He is totally silent about the cause of Iltutmish's differences with these *Ulema* but Isami says that, due to the high regard shown by the Sultan to Qazi Hamid-ud-din Nagori, two *muftis* of the court viz. Qazi Saad and Imad bore enmity against him. They urged the Sultan to stop Qazi Hamid-ud-din from holding *Sama* but failed in their attempt to let him down (*Futuh-us-Salatin*, pp. 117-9).

¹⁴ *Siyar-ul-Auliya*, pp. 54-5; *Fuwaid-ul-Fuwad*, pp. 143-4.

¹⁵ Minhaj-i-Siraj mentions the trouble created by the followers of Nur Turk in the capital during Raziya's reign but it was more a religious and communal riot than a political upheaval or a demonstration against Raziya's succession (*TN*, p. 189). *Fuwaid-ul-Fuwad*, pp. 198-9; *Akhbar-ul-Akhyar*, p. 74. Also see *Some Aspects of Religion and Politics in India During the Thirteenth Century*, pp. 293-4 and Hodivala pp. 219-20.

¹⁶ *TM*, p. 25. Yahiya says: "at length, peace was effected at the intervention of the priests and the Shaikhs of the city". Minhaj-i-Siraj who is a contemporary authority is totally silent about the part taken by his own class in this affair.

Their emergence as an effective political group was, however, inevitable for their appointments to high judicial posts enabled them to exercise a significant influence over the king and the nobility. By the time of Muizz-ud-din Bahram Shah (1240-42), they made their existence felt and played an important part in the political affairs of his time.¹⁷ In the revolution caused by the murder of Malik Ikhtiyar-ud-din Aitigin, the *Naib* Badr-ud-din Sunqar came out successful and he along with Qazi Jalal-ud-din Kashani, Qazi Kabir-ud-din and Shaikh Muhammad Bistami tried to oust the Sultan. The plot was, however, discovered and Qazi Jalal-ud-din was dismissed from his post. Qazi Kabir-ud-din and Shaikh Muhammad Bistami fled away from the capital for their life.¹⁸ This deeply estranged the *Ulema*. It also partly explains why the Shaikh-ul-Islam, Qazi Saiyid Qutb-ud-din, betrayed the Sultan when entrusted with the delicate mission of negotiating a settlement with the disaffected nobles of Bahram Shah.¹⁹ The details and the results of this conflict have been mentioned elsewhere²⁰ but it points out to two broad conclusions:

- (a) that the *Ulema* had made their mark as an organized group by the time of Sultan Muizz-ud-din Bahram Shah, and
- (b) that this group was divided in its ranks as each followed a policy to further its own ends by influencing the Sultan and

¹⁷ *TN*, p. 192; *TM*, p. 26. Earlier a sister of Sultan Muizz-ud-din Bahram Shah was married to the son of Qazi Nasir-ud-din but the marriage had been rescinded on the princess's own request.

¹⁸ *TN*, p. 193; *TM*, p. 30.

¹⁹ In November 1241, the Sultan appointed Minhaj-i-Siraj to the highest judicial post of the realm, which made many of the aspirants of the post, among whom was also Qazi Saiyid Qutb-ud-din, jealous of him. In February 1242 when the nobles rebelled against the Sultan in the Punjab, he sent Saiyid Qutb-ud-din to pacify the *amirs*. Instead of negotiating the affairs he further complicated them by his misrepresentations. When the rebel armies arrived in the vicinity of Delhi, the Sultan again sent Qazi Minhaj-i-Siraj along with other Qazis to negotiate with the nobles but the mission failed (*TN*, pp. 196-7).

²⁰ A solitary yet significant event of this reign has been mentioned by Minhaj-Siraj concerning the execution of Qazi Shams-ud-din Mihir at the instigation of a Durvesh named Ayub of Turkish origin whom the Sultan held in high regard (*TN*, p. 195).

tried to make the best out of the situation to promote its selfish ends.

Simultaneously with the fall of Sultan Muizz-ud-din Bahram Shah came the fall of the clique led by Minhaj-i-Siraj who was a supporter of the late regime. Four days after the deposition of the Sultan he also laid down the office of Chief Qazi of the realm which was conferred on Qazi Imad-ud-din Muhammad Shafurqani on June 5, 1242.²¹ Minhaj-i-Siraj had to leave Delhi and went to Lakhnauti along with his family presumably to settle down as his life was in danger or his removal from the post of *Qazi-ul-Quzzat* of the realm was too humiliating for him to remain in Delhi. But he again returned to Delhi on July 11, 1245, after about three years of absence and appointed to the principalship of the Nasiriya college along with two other appointments on the recommendation of Ulugh Khan Balban who had been appointed to the post of *Amir-i-Hajib*.²²

After the accession of Sultan Nasir-ud-din Mahmud, Balban continued to hold the post of *Amir-i-Hajib* but no mention is made about any change in the judicial offices which proves that the *status quo* was maintained in this branch of the administration also. As a consequence, Minhaj-i-Siraj, who had been of the favourites of Balban, received increase in the assignments of lands and honours.²³ But at the court, Imad-ud-din Raihan had by now risen to power and appointed to the post of *Wakil-i-dar*. He was one of the great confidants of Sultan Nasir-ud-din. First of all, he got Qazi Imad-ud-din Shafurqani dismissed from the post of Qazi of the realm and sent to Budaun where he was put to death on March 25, 1249, by the intrigues of Imad-ud-din Raihan. The vacancy caused by the removal and death of the Chief Qazi was filled by Qazi Jalal-ud-din Kashani, the Qazi of Avadh, on September 20, 1249.²⁴ He, however, died on

²¹ TN, p. 198. No details about the life and antecedents of this *Alim* are given by Minhaj as he was his opponent.

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 199-200.

²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 211-6.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 213. Between the death of Qazi Imad-ud-din Shafurqani and the appointment of Jalal-ud-din Kashani there is a gap of six months and it is not known who worked as the Chief Qazi during the interregnum. The post must have been kept in abeyance to find out a man of Imad's choice. Since however, at this time Balban's star was in the ascendent,

February 10, 1250 and was succeeded by Minhaj-i-Siraj who belonged to the party of Balban.

The improving fortunes of Balban caused jealousy among other nobles and it has already been noticed how on March 3, 1253, Balban was dismissed from the post of *Amir-i-Hajib* and was directed to proceed towards his *iqta* of Hansi.²⁵ In the reshuffling of offices and *iqtas*, Minhaj-i-Siraj was also deprived of his post which was then conferred on Qazi Shams-ud-din of Bahraich on September 22, 1253, on the recommendation of Imad-ud-din Raihan, the *Wakil-i-dar*.²⁶ Minhaj was, however, honoured a year later on May 16, 1254, probably on the recommendation of the new *Wazir*, Sadr-ul-mulk Najm-ud-din Abu Bakr, who had been appointed to the post on April 25, 1254.²⁷ His former appointment to the post of Chief Qazi of the empire was conferred only after the downfall of Imad-ud-din Raihan and the consequent rise of Balban.²⁸ Another major appointment was made to the post of *Shaikh-ul-Islam* by conferring the post on Qazi Jamal-ud-din Bistami on August 18, 1255.²⁹

In May 1255, when the Sultan's step-father Malik Qutlugh Khan rebelled in Avadh and joined Malik Kishlu Khan who then proceeded towards the capital to oust the Sultan, Qazi Qutb-ud-din who had been deprived of the post of *Shaikh-ul-Islam*

his daughter having been married to the Sultan on August 2, 1249, it is possible that Qazi Jalal-ud-din actually belonged to the party of Balban who brought him to the capital to strengthen his position at the court against Imad-ud-din Raihan. The fact that after the death of Qazi Jalal-ud-din on February 10, 1251, Minhaj-i-Siraj succeeded him, further strengthens this contention.

²⁵ *TN*, p. 217.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 217-8.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 218. Minhaj-i-Siraj does not say clearly that it was on account of the *Wazir's* intercession that he received the appointment but the context makes this presumption strong.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 220.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 220. This post was not a political appointment but a religious office the incumbent of which advised the administration on religious matters. The post was seldom hereditary and high reputation was the greatest criterion for eligibility to the post. But some posts were hereditary. Qazi Jamal-ud-din Bistami and Qazi Kabir-ud-din, the correct nature of whose appointment is not known, died in June, 1259 and their posts were conferred on their sons. In August, 1259 Imam Hamid-ud-din Margila, another Qazi, died and his post was given to his son. This shows the hereditary nature of ecclesiastical appointments (*TN*, p. 226).

and Qazi Shams-ud-din Bahraichi, who was dismissed from the post of the Chief Qaziship of the realm, sent secret messages to the rebels from the capital to the effect that should they come to Delhi, its gates would be thrown open to them. Balban who got an inkling of this conspiracy sent urgent messages to Delhi urging the Sultan to remove these Qazis from the capital which was given effect to at once with the result that the rebels met a signal defeat when they appeared before the capital.³⁰ For the rest of the reign of Sultan Nasir-ud-din, there is hardly any other mention concerning the part played by the *Ulema* in the politics of the court.

When Balban ascended the throne he patronized the *Ulema*, specially the *Ulema-i-Akhirat*, which was probably due to their influence in his early life.³¹ He specially patronized Maulana Burhan-ud-din Balkhi, Qazi Sharaf-ud-din Walvalji, Maulana Siraj-ud-din Sanjari, and Maulana Najm-ud-din Damishqi, and on every Friday after saying his prayers he used to pay a visit to the residence of Maulana Burhan-ud-din and sought his advice on all temporal matters.³² Besides, there were a host of other *Ulema* who were the recipients of his bounty, prominent among whom have been listed by Barani.³³ In order to honour the Qazis of his army he had given them the title of *Harmain*.³⁴ In administration too, he valued their advice and when he ordered an *en masse* execution of the associates of Tughril at Lakhnauti, the people approached him through the *Qazi-i-Lashkar* on whose recommendation he forgave them and desisted from perpetrating that heinous crime.³⁵ Nevertheless, he fully realized the limitations of the *Shariat* and its applicability to the state laws and confessed

³⁰ *TN*, pp. 223-4.

³¹ *TF*, pp. 46-7. An anecdote in the *Fuwaid-ul-Fuwaid* mentions how Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya held him in respect on account of his religious leanings (*Fuwaid-i-Fuwaid*, pp. 231-2). Ibn-i-Battutah also tells an anecdote relating to Balban's early life in which his devotion to the *Ulema* is emphasized (*Travels*, p. 171). In one of the discourses with his son Bughra Khan, Balban recalled the teachings of Qazi Jalal-ur-rus of Baghdad in which he emphasized that the Sultans should treat the *Ulema* with honour (*TF*, pp. 101-06).

³² *TF*, p. 46.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 111.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 47. *Harmain* is the name given to the two holy cities of the Muslims—Macca and Medina.

³⁵ *TF*, p. 44.

that it was impossible in his time to carry on *Jahandari* and *Jahanbani* according to the sacred law.³⁶

The ruthlessness of Balban in treating his great Maliks hardly left any chance for the *Ulema* to pit their strength against that of the Sultan. Considering discretion as the better part of valour, they decided to remain aloof from politics by adjusting themselves to the will of the Sultan. By the reign of Muizz-ud-din Kaiqubad, they had much deteriorated and tried to receive benefits from the sovereign and his nobles by every degraded means unworthy of their respectable position. Bughra Khan specially warned his son Kaiqubad to beware of such selfish *Ulema*.³⁷

The dynastic revolution of 1290, which brought the Khaljis to power, did not immediately affect the interests of the *Ulema* for Sultan Jalal-ud-din Khalji, the new ruler, was a pious and God-fearing person. Although Barani gives a description of the political appointments made by the new monarch, no mention is made of his judicial appointments. Qazi *Sadr-i-Jahan* Jalal-ud-din Kashani of the late reign was, however, replaced by Qazi Ziya-ud-din Savi who is mentioned in the list of the nobles of Jalal-ud-din. However, other respectable Qazis of the late reign seem to have continued to hold their former position. Qazi Fakhr-ud-din Naqila, who had distinguished himself during the reign of Sultan Balban, requested the Sultan to assume the title *Almuja-hid Fi Sabi Lillah* to be recited in the Khutba. The Sultan, however, rejected the request and confessed that he himself had got it sponsored through his queen, the *Malika-i-Jahan*.³⁸

The Sultan's kindness and leniency in administration led to a number of revolts to foment as has already been noticed earlier.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

³⁷ *TF*, pp. 154-5. During his talk with his son, Sultan Muizz-ud-din Kaiqubad, Bughra Khan said: "I have heard a number of times from my father that the *Ulema* are of two kinds. *Ulema-i-Akhirat* are those whom God keeps away from the world and worldly pleasures. *Ulema-i-Duniya* are those who roam about like dogs after temporal gains due to their greed and covetousness. They are hypocrites and give different rulings in different cases. They indulge in such types of deplorable work and the wise among kings is he who does not act according to the dictates of the *Ulema-i-Duniya*."

Balban's classification of the *Ulema* of his age is correct and in the present discussion we are only concerned with the activities of those *Ulema* who delved into politics, i.e. *Ulema-i-Duniya*.

³⁸ *TF*, pp. 196-7.

In the capital, the abortive revolt of Sidi Maula was the only event involving the *Ulema*, among whom Qazi Jalal-ud-din Kashani was prominent for he had been deprived of his appointment.³⁹ But Sidi Maula seems to have been hardly guilty of any complicity in the affair. The trial and execution of Sidi Maula, however, quelled all opposition of the *Ulema*.

The reign of Sultan Jalal-ud-din Khalji did not last long and his murder threw many of his loyal supporters into great straits. When Ala-ud-din Khalji occupied Delhi, he confirmed all the major ecclesiastical appointments at the court made by the late Sultan in order to avoid any resistance to his succession by the *Ulema*. Finding themselves in a precarious condition, the sons of Jalal-ud-din opened negotiations for a settlement through Shaikh Rukh-ud-din.⁴⁰ But Ala-ud-din's generals treacherously arrested them proving that they had little regard for the *Ulema* and *Shariat*.

Certainly the *Ulema* had a very bad time during the reign of Sultan Ala-ud-din.⁴¹ Unlettered and unsophisticated, he was so much filled with pride of conquests that he even thought of founding a new religion. In this connection he used to say:

God Almighty had given four friends to Prophet Muhammad with the help of whose strength he founded a new religion which will keep his name alive till the day of judgment. After the death of Prophet, whosoever calls himself a Mohamadan,

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 210.

⁴⁰ *TF*, p. 249.

⁴¹ Strangely enough, Barani attributes the success of Ala-ud-din to Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya (Barani, p. 325). But the empire of Ala-ud-din toppled down during the lifetime of the Shaikh. To whom should be attributed its downfall? In another place, Barani says that Sultan Ala-ud-din had great respect for the Shaikh and when in 1309-10 no news arrived in the capital of Malik Naib's expedition in the Deccan, he sent Malik Qirabeg and Qazi Mughis of Bayana to the Shaikh to know if through his supernatural powers of *Kashf* he could apprise him of the news of the expedition. The Shaikh communicated the news of the victory and conquest to the Sultan. Barani further says that during the concluding years of his reign the Sultan had become a great devotee of the Shaikh but they never met each other (Barani, p. 366). Many nobles of the court became the Shaikh's devotees but the Sultan did not object to it (Barani, p. 345). Firishta also says that the Sultan used to send letters to the Shaikh every day and prayed for his bounty (*TF*, p. 119).

considers himself a follower of his religious order. I too have been blessed with four friends. First is Ulugh Khan, second Zafar Khan, third Nusrat Khan and fourth Alap Khan. On account of my good fortune they have achieved fame like kings. If I like, I can found a new religion with the help of these four friends. The dread of my sword will make everybody follow my religion which will immortalize my name and the name of my friends till the day of judgment.⁴²

In the convivial parties he used to utter the above words in intoxication and often discussed it with his nobles. It is clear that Ala-ud-din recognized the force religion had over the masses and thought it to be the only stable means of immortalizing his name.

The *Ulema* were much frightened over his schemes of founding a new religion but could not raise a finger owing to the ruthlessness and cruel nature of the Sultan.⁴³ But Ala-ul-mulk, the *Kotwal* of Delhi who had been a close adviser and confidant of the Sultan since the days he was the *muqti* of Kara took courage to warn the Sultan from giving practical shape to his wild schemes. Barani says that Ala-ul-mulk pointed out to the Sultan that religion and politics were two different things. Religion was primarily the concern of the Prophets and was born from divine inspiration and not by planning or wisdom. If the Sultan tried to impose his own ideas of religion on the masses they would turn against him and withdraw allegiance resulting in widespread rebellion and confusion. Once these forces of lawlessness and anarchy were let loose there would be no limit to it and it might then be too late to control the situation. He therefore, advised the Sultan to desist from such impracticable ideas.⁴⁴ Ala-ud-din was considerably moved by this advice and decided to drop the scheme entirely.⁴⁵

Among the confidants of Ala-ud-din Khalji were also Qazi Mughis-ud-din of Bayana, Maulana Zahir Lang and Maulana Mushid Kuhrami who constantly kept his company. But Qazi Mughis of Bayana was foremost and his discourses with the Sultan on religion and statecraft are too well-known to be re-

⁴² Barani: *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, pp. 262-3.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 264.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 265-6.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 267.

peated here. Qazi Mighis took courage to speak the truth when asked for giving his opinion recorded in the *Shara* regarding treatment of Hindus, imposition of taxes, embezzlement of public funds, the ownership of the spoils of war or *jihad*, expenditure on harem and treatment of the recalcitrant and disloyal soldiers who did not come for routine check-up when called for the muster roll of the army. Qazi Mughis pointed out to the Sultan the respective provisions in the *Shara* saying that the orders passed by the Sultan were totally against it.⁴⁶

But Ala-ud-din Khalji was an extremely practical man of action and possessed immense experience and totally rejected the views of the Qazi pointing out the impracticable nature of the provisions. He told the Qazi: "I know not whether these laws are sanctioned by our faith or not; but whatever appears expedient to me at the time, that I order, and as far what many happen to me on the approaching day of judgment, that I know not. But O, Maulana Mughis, one thing I do not forget in my prayers to God, and I often say 'O God, Thou knowest that my kingdom suffers nothing if any man sleeps with the wife of his neighbour; or that it is no loss to me, if anyone drinks wine; and that I feel no grief, if anyone commits a robbery, for he won't steal anything from my inheritance or that if anyone takes advances of money and does not go to his work, the work will yet go on, even if ten or twenty people are lazy. With regard to these four things I certainly act according to the orders of the Prophet. But the people of these times, from one to a lac, nay to five hundred lacs and one thousand lacs, do nothing but talk and boast, caring neither for this world nor the world to come.'" ⁴⁷

The popular opinion among the *Ulema* of the time was naturally against the Sultan. His disregard for them is clearly proved by the appointment to the post of *Sadr-i-Jahan* of Malik-ut-

⁴⁶ *TF*, p. 290. Here too, Ala-ud-din is advised to offer the Hindus the choice of 'Death or Islam'. No other contemporary historian confirms the views expressed by Barani and it appears that these extreme views are the figment of Barani's own imagination. A similar advice is put into the mouth of Maulana Shams-ud-din who told the emperor that he acted against the *Shara* in choosing the Qazis of his realm who were full of avarice and greed and administered law with spurious precedents and earned money by applying the provisions of *Shara* incorrectly (*TF*, pp. 198-9).

⁴⁷ *TF*, p. 296.

Tujjar Hamid Multani, a personal servant of the Sultan, who along with his father had rendered selfless service to him in the palace on minor posts. He belonged to a low family and the *Ulema* did not hold him in respect. He was the main target of the wrath of Qazi Shams-ud-din whose views appear to be a fabrication of Barani's fertile imagination.⁴⁸ The post of *Sadr-us-Sudur* lost all prestige and Barani regrets that on account of this unworthy appointment, the future Sultans also did not make enquiries into the character and antecedents of the later Qazis who were appointed to the post of *Sadr-us-Sudur*.⁴⁹

Although the number of the *Ulema* during the reign of Sultan Ala-ud-din was comparatively larger on account of huge migrations from the west, yet they did not develop into a political force to be reckoned with.⁵⁰ In fact, whatever groups were formed during the rule of the Ilbaris broke down under the ruthless rule of Ala-ud-din Khalji. Opposition was impossible and no *Ulema* had the courage to organize any group against him or join his nobles who themselves were frightened of him. But compared to the reign of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq, the *Ulema* were certainly better off because Ala-ud-din neither interfered in their affairs nor tolerated their interference in administrative matters. Both kept at an arm's length from each other.

Of the short reign of Sultan Qutb-ud-din, the son and successor of Sultan Ala-ud-din, nothing is recorded about the role of the *Ulema* but Barani says that Sultan Qutb-ud-din hated Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya because his step-brother, Khizr Khan, had been a regular visitor to the Shaikh's *Khanqah*. The Sultan used to utter indecent words for the Shaikh and looked at him with contempt when once by chance they met each other at the

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 298-9.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 531-52.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 341-57. Barani gives a very long list of the *Ulema*, *Mashaikh*, *Muzkirs*, and jurists of the reign of Ala-ud-din who lived in Delhi and other parts of the empire. Though the list includes only select personalities of the realm it confirms the view that the *Ulema* were well off during his reign. The *Khair-ul-Majalis* also records an anecdote containing a conversation of Qazi Hamid-ud-din regarding the good old days of Ala-ud-din (*Khair-ul-Majalis*, *Majlis*, 55). Ibn-i-Battutah also records that the people of Delhi had great respect for Ala-ud-din because of the cheapness of articles in his reign (*Travels*, p. 184).

Khanqah of Shaikh Zia-ud-din Rumi.⁵¹ In order further to exhibit his enmity towards the Shaikh, he patronized Shaikhzada Jam, a rival of Shaikh Nizam-ud-din, and made him one of the great confidants of the court.⁵²

The rise of Khusrau Khan in the reign of Sultan Qutb-ud-din, however, made most of the nobles sympathetic towards the Sultan because they knew fully well that Khusrau Khan was secretly working for his downfall. But none had the courage of open his mind before the Sultan and apprise him of the evil intentions of Khusrau Khan owing to the Sultan's bad temper and his extreme infatuation for Khusrau. But the *Sadr-i-Jahan*, Qazi Ziya-ud-din, who had taught Sultan Qutb-ud-din handwriting in his boyhood said to the Sultan: "Every night the Barwars assemble in the palace of Khusrau Khan and make preparations. I have heard from many people that Khusrau Khan is hatching a plot. All the maliks are aware of his evil designs but on account of Your Majesty's fear no one dares to speak. I am fully confident about your Majesty's kindness. Whatever I have seen and heard is brought to your notice. Your Majesty is aware that during the days of Sultan Ala-ud-din if anybody drank excess water, it was reported to the Sultan but inside your Majesty's palace a group of persons are conspiring against the throne but Your Majesty had no knowledge of it. If Your Majesty ordered an enquiry into the whole affair which concerns your august life, it would neither affect the good administration nor decrease the love for Khusrau Khan. If nothing is brought about as a result of the enquiry then Your Majesty may rest your confidence in Khusrau Khan a thousand times more than now and if something is revealed out of it, it will save the life of Your Majesty.' Since, emotions ruled the wisdom of Sultan Qutb-ud-din, these words fell flat over his ears and he dismissed the Qazi when Khusrau Khan expressed his faithfulness to the Sultan."⁵³ The Qazi and the Sultan were both murdered soon after.

When Khusrau Khan became Sultan, he tried to win the

⁵¹ *TF*, p. 396.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 396.

⁵³ Barani : *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, pp. 404-05. The authenticity of this conversation is very doubtful because these words were uttered in privacy and the Qazi was murdered soon after.

support of the *Ulema* by lavish presents and being a devotee of Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya, he frequently gave money to the Shaikh's *Khanqah*. Though the *Ulema* prayed in their hearts for the downfall of Khusrau, yet they did not have the courage to oppose him openly and when one of the Qazis consented to perform the marriage ceremony of one of the Chief Queens of Sultan Qutb-ud-din with Khusrau Khan, not a single dissenting voice was raised by any *Ulema*, but after the defeat of Khusrau Khan when Ghazi Malik ascended the throne he punished the Qazi for solemnizing the marriage which was against the provisions of the *Shara*.⁵⁴

During the reign of Sultan Ghiyas-ud-din Tughluq, Qazi Kamal-ud-din was the *Sadr-i-Jahan* and Qazi Shams-ud-din was appointed to the post of qaziship of the capital.⁵⁵ None of these played any significant part during his reign but the Sultan's differences with Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya have been mentioned by the author of the *Siyar-ul-Arifin*. He says that when Khusrau Khan was distributing money to the Shaikhs of Delhi, he sent a sum of five lakhs of *Tankahs* to Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya who accepted it as Khusrau Khan was a devotee of the Shaikh. The amount was then and there distributed among the *faqirs* and poor people. When Malik Ghazi came to the throne he asked the Shaikh to return the money to replenish his treasury but he could not do so for obvious reasons.⁵⁶

Another reason of the differences between the Sultan and Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya is mentioned by Amir Khurd, the author of *Siyar-ul-Auliya*, who says that Shaikhzada Husam-ud-din and Qazi Jalal-ud-din Lavanji instigated the Sultan to call for a *Mahzar* to decide whether the hearing of *Sama* which was frequent in the Shaikh's *Khanqah*, was according to the *Shara*. In this connection, they presented the ruling (*Fatawah*) given by Qazi Hamid-ud-din Nagori and other books in support of *Sama*. When the *Mahzar* started Qazi Jalal-ud-din, who was *Naib Hakim*, warned the Shaikh to desist from *Sama* but the Shaikh cursed him for uttering inappropriate language as a result of which he was removed from the appointment within a few days. The Sultan, who was also present during the *Mahzar*,

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 426.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 428.

⁵⁶ SA, p. 88.

did not give any decision. The event was a total defeat for the rivals of Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya and henceforth the Sultan did not interfere in the private life of the Shaikh.⁵⁷ This remained a cause of difference throughout his reign. Sultan Tughluq hated the Shaikh like Sultan Qutb-ud-din though for different reasons, and the famous saying "Delhi is yet far off" is attributed to the Shaikh in connection with the Sultan's return from Lakhnauti.⁵⁸

As has already been pointed out Sultan Muhammad, the eldest son and successor of Sultan Ghiyas-ud-din Tughluq, was unpopular among the Ulema on account of his rational thinking and refusal to apply the religious precepts in the administration of the country. Barani says : "What can be more deplorable than this that while ordering the execution of the Muslims, one may totally ignore the orders of the *Shara* and the *Quran*. While ordering the execution of pious Muslims, he (Sultan Muhammad) did not consider the prohibition regarding killing of Muslims in the divine books and the sayings of a lakh and 24,000 prophets."⁵⁹ And Barani alone is not against the ruthless rule of the Sultan. Ibn-i-Battutah also speaks with contempt about the cruelty of the Sultan specially because he did not care for the provisions of the *Shara* and acted according to his own convictions.⁶⁰

Ibn-i-Battutah has cited a few examples,⁶¹ of atrocities of Muhammad bin Tughluq on the *Ulema* but only a superficial examination of the evidence shows that the punishments awarded to the *Ulema* and others were for definite crimes and charges punishable with death. On the other hand, Ibn-i-Battutah also mentions examples of justice which proves that the Sultan was very conscious about doing justice to his people.

It is, however, true that in dispensing justice he treated the *Ulema* and the ordinary people alike and it is no wonder, therefore, that in some chronicles he is termed by the nickname of

⁵⁷ *Siyar-ul-Auliya*, pp. 526-32.

⁵⁸ *TM*, p. 97.

⁵⁹ *TF*, p. 40.

⁶⁰ *Travels*, pp. 290-1. The author of *Masalik-ul-Absar* also mentions the contradictory character of the Sultan which corroborates Barani and Ibn-i-Battutah.

⁶¹ *Travels*, pp. 292-314.

Sultan-i-Qatil while in others he is known as *Sultan-i-Adil*.⁶³

Though the Sultan was very critical about the life and conduct of the *Ulema*, he was an extremely pious and religious man and said his prayers with punctuality and celebrated festivals of Id etc. with the greatest pomp and show. Not only did he himself obey the provisions of the *Shara* in daily life but expected his people also to observe them with the sanctity attached to them.⁶³ In order to enforce them, he issued very strict orders. Men guilty of absence from the Friday prayer or guilty of infringing the rules of the *Shara* were awarded condign punishment. At one time, he had a man executed for not saying his prayers.⁶⁴ He had issued orders that only taxes sanctioned by the sacred law need be imposed.⁶⁵ This might have been one of the causes of the imposition of land cesses by him to replenish the deficit in the treasury. In fact the Sultan was always concerned about the welfare of the religious class and held them in high respect. Ibn-i-Battutah, when appointed as Qazi of Delhi, himself received monetary gifts and favours several times.⁶⁶ Besides, he mentions the Sultan lavishly distributing money to Shaikh Rukn-ud-din, who brought the investiture of the Abbasi Khalifa from Egypt, Wazir Tirmizi, Nasir-ud-din, Abdul Aziz Ardveli, Shams-ud-din Andghani, Azd-ud-din Shavanqari, Qazi Majd-ud-din Burhan-ud-din Saghraz, Haji Kaon, and Ibn-ul, Khalifa Amir Ghiyas-ud-din Muhammad.⁶⁷ And last but not the least was Khwaja Ziya-ud-din Barani, who was the *nadim* of the Sultan.⁶⁸

Apart from these favours shown to the *Ulema*, the Sultan also offered them political appointment. Ibn-i-Battutah says: "It was his policy to appoint Jurists, Shaikhs, Sufis and other respectable people to high government offices. This was because no one, except those who were learned and pious among the

⁶³ *MT*, pp. 239-40.

⁶³ *Travels*, pp. 287-8. This order does not appear to have been given shape because Afif says that a number of illegal taxes were remitted by Sultan Firuz Shah (Afif, pp. 374-9). This is also confirmed by the emperor himself in his memoirs (*FF*, p. 5).

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 286-7.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 287-9.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 246.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 248-66.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 467.

muslim, alone could get Government posts."⁶⁹

Although the Sultan was a great devotee of Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya, which even caused him a rift with his father,⁷⁰ yet his relations with the successors of the Shaikh were not cordial.

At the end of his reign, when the Sultan was encamped at Thatta, he called Shaikh Nasir-ud-din, a Khalifa of Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya, and other saints to Thatta but did not treat them with the respect they deserved. It is said that they were involved in a deep conspiracy to oust the Sultan.⁷¹

Shaikh Qutb-ud-din Munawar of Hansi was another distinguished Khalifa of Shaikh Nizam-ud-din. The Sultan twice sent *Inam* and a *farman* conferring two villages to the Shaikh which he declined but after much pressure from Malik Firuz Barbak and Khwaja Ziya-ud-din Barani, the historian, he accepted 2,000 *tankas* which he distributed among the poor.⁷² The Sultan had heard much about the supernatural powers of Shaikh Fakhr-ud-din Zarradi, and when he decided to shift the capital to Deogir, he called him and said: "I want to defeat the descendants of Chingez Khan. Please, assist me in this holy work." The Shaikh replied: "Insha Allah" (If God wills). The Sultan became angry and said that it was an evasive answer. The Shaikh said that it was the appropriate manner for making future promises.

⁶⁹ Ibn-i-Battutah: *Travels*, p. 294. This statement of Ibn-i-Battutah, however, is not wholly correct for Barani regrets the high appointments conferred on Hindus and other personal servants of the Sultan (*TF*, p. 505). The appointment of Shaikh Muizz-ud-din, son of Shaikh Ala-ud-din of Ajodhan, to the *Wazarat* of Gujarat is an illustration of the political appointments given to the *Ulema*. The Sultan showed great respect to Abdul Fath Shaikh Rukn-ud-din a resident of Multan to obtain his blessing for victory over Malik Kishli Khan of Multan (*FS*, p. 438). After the victory over Kishli Khan, the Sultan ordered a general slaughter of the prisoners of war and the residents of Multan. When Shaikh Rukn-ud-din heard this he at once interceded for the forgiveness of the Sultan who stopped Malik Kabir forthwith (*FS*, pp. 442-3).

⁷⁰ *Siyar-ul-Auliya*, p. 228.

⁷¹ *Siyar-ul-Auliya*, pp. 245-6. He was popularly known as *Chiragh-i-Delhi*. The book *Khair-ul-Majalis* is dedicated to him. Barani also says that the Sultan called a number of *Ulema* from the capital along with their family from Delhi when he heard of the death of Maik Kabir, his *Naib* in the capital but is silent about the cause of their summons and the treatment given to them by the Sultan (*TF*, p. 523).

⁷² *Siyar-ul-Auliya*, pp. 250-5. Ziya-ud-din Barani does not mention this event in the *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*.

The Sultan then offered him *Khilat* and money but he did not accept them.⁷³ Being a great believer in the Sufi order of Saints, the Sultan tried to enlist their support but failed singularly. Perhaps he thought that money could buy everything, even the principles and character of men.

In fact, the Sultan was very sincere in his religion and was convinced of the fact that as a monarch it was his duty to look to the welfare of the people and enforce virtue and righteousness among men as sanctioned by the *Quran* and the *Shara*. In enforcing the rules of right and justice, he never paid any heed to the popular opinion and the *Ulema* themselves dared not to oppose him.⁷⁴ Their selfishness and greed deterred them from contradicting him. Barani himself admits that he himself, though well-versed in the provisions of the *Shara* and *Hadis*, did not place before the Sultan the truth about his bloody actions on account of greed and temporal gains. For fear of their lives and property, and also to seek his favour and enter into his confidence, they supported the Sultan's orders which were totally contrary to law and used to quote unauthentic precedents to support his whims and prejudices.⁷⁵

His successor Sultan Firuz Tughluq was exactly the opposite of Muhammad bin Tughluq in temperament and convictions. In fact, he was religious to the extent of bigotry. Having been brought to the throne chiefly through the help of the *Ulema* present in the camp at Thatta, he himself was obliged to hold them in special favour.⁷⁶ He himself admits in his memoirs that it had become part of his nature to hold the *Ulema*, Sufis, and *Faqirs* in respect.⁷⁷ Besides he actively set himself to the task of the conversion of the Hindus by offering them exemption from the *Jiziya*.⁷⁸ He was also a great devotee of the Khalifa.⁷⁹

The administration too began to be run strictly on religious

⁷³ *Ibid.*, pp. 271-5.

⁷⁴ *TF*, p. 466.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 535-6.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 466.

⁷⁷ *TF*, p. 17. The greatest honour which Sultan Firuz Tughluq bestowed on one of the *Ulema* of his time was to grant *Chatra*, *Durbash* and other insignia of royalty to Khudavandzada Qiwam-ud-din Tirmizi who claimed his descent from the Prophet Muhammad.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

lines. In 1375-76, the Sultan on the advice of the *Ulema* of his court ordered that all taxes not sanctioned by the *Shara* should be abolished.⁸⁰ A long list of such taxes was drawn up and was read by Qazi Nasr Ullah to the public.⁸¹ Such exhibition of religiousness though very popular among the Muslim population of the time had its effect on the policy of the Sultan towards the Hindus who were put to the greatest strait on account of the bigotry of the *Ulema*. Afif relates the tragic incident that befell a resident in the capital. He says:

It was reported to the Sultan that a Brahman in old Delhi publicly indulges in idol-worship. Hindus and Muslims alike of the city go to his place and perform idol-worship. . . . It was also reported to the Sultan that he had converted a Muslim woman. He was brought to Firuzabad along with his idol. The *Ulema* declared the *Fatawa* that either he should embrace Islam or he should be burnt alive. He was asked to accept Islam but he did not. At the end, he was put on a pier of wood along with his idol. Fire was set under the wood. I, Shams-i-Siraj Afif was present in the Darbar. At the time of the evening prayer he was consigned to the fire. Since the wood was dry it caught fire easily. In great consternation, the Brahmin uttered a sigh and he was turned into ashes within a moment. Blessed is the strictness of the *Shara* which was not abrogated an inch by the Sultan.⁸²

The Sultan also asked for the *Fatawah* of the *Ulema* about the imposition of the *Jiziya* on the Brahmins who were hitherto exempted from it. They unanimously agreed that Brahmins

⁸⁰ We have seen earlier that Sultan Muhammad Tughluq also passed similar orders but it appears it had been withdrawn wholly or partly later on.

⁸¹ Afif, pp. 374-9. *FF*, p. 3.

⁸² Afif, pp. 380-1. The Hindus alone were not the subject of his persecution. The Shias who were in minority were also persecuted likewise. Dr Ishtiaq Husain Qureshi regards this tragic event as an exception and he says that the Hindus were otherwise well off. In addition to the example quoted above, the case of Nawahun, *Darogha* of Uchha is another example of persecution. Besides the *Futuh-i-Firuzshahi* said to have been the composition of the Sultan himself, provides ample evidence of Firuz's persecution of the Hindus and other sects. For details of Nawahun's incident see *Siyar-ul-Arifin*, pp. 159-60.

should not be exempted from the tax and that they had evaded this tax due to the carelessness of the employees of the former sultans. Accordingly it was ordered that *Jiziya* should be collected from the Brahmins also and officers were appointed to collect *Jiziya* from them.⁸³

The position of the *Ulema* at the court was strengthened by his favours and the high appointments conferred on them. Thus, at the head of the *Dar-ul-Qaza* was Qazi Jalal-ud-din Kirmani who controlled the entire administration of religious endowments and grants throughout the empire. Other *Ulema* who held high appointments at the court were Khudawandzada Qiwam-ud-din Tirmizi on whom he conferred the *Durbash* and other insignia of royalty. This person's nephew, Malik Saif-ul-mulk, who traced his descent from the Prophet Muhammad, was appointed the *Amir-i-Shikar* to the Sultan. Ashraf-ul-mulk who also claimed high pedigree was held in great respect by the Sultan and was *Naib Wakil-i-dar*. Another distinguished courtier among the *Ulema* was Ala-ud-din Saiyid Rasul-i-Dad who was reverted by the Sultan. In the provinces and other parts of the empire also the religious class received lavish favours and honours.⁸⁴ It is no wonder, therefore, that throughout the reign of Sultan Firuz Tughluq the *Ulema* remained his staunch supporters.

This religious attitude towards life and administration was not a new thing in Firuz Tughluq because from the days when he was a child he had lived in a deeply religious atmosphere. His uncle, Sultan Ghiyas-ud-din Tughluq, who was the *muqti* of Deopalpur, was himself a religious man and paid frequent

⁸³ Afif, pp. 382-4. Afif's account is also corroborated by Sultan Firuz Shah himself in his memoirs in which he says that in accordance with the sacred law he destroyed temples in the city of Delhi and killed those leaders of infidelity and punished with stripes until this abuse was entirely abolished (*FF*, p. 12).

⁸⁴ *TF*, pp. 579-81, Qazi Sadr-ul-mulk who was the *Muqti* of Mahoba. He was executed by his own consent by Firuz Tughluq (*Afif*, pp. 472-3). The criteria laid down by Barani in *Fatawa-i-Jahandari* for the appointment to the ecclesiastical posts especially in the judiciary seems to have been strictly followed by Firuz Tughluq. According to him high breeding and religiousness alone qualified a man to deserve these appointments and Firuz always kept these criteria before him while distributing judicial offices (*Fatawa-i-Jahandari*, India Office Mss., p. 10b, 140a).

visits to the shrines of famous saints and sufis of the age—and it was no incorrect assessment of his personality when once Shaikh Qutb-ud-din Manawar told the historian Afif that Sultan Firuz was actually a shaikh who wore a crown over his head.⁸⁵ However, the statement of Afif that, during the reign of Sultan Firuz, nobody was ever persecuted and tolerance of all sects was the guiding principle of his government is not borne out by fact. "Tolerance" he says, "has been regarded as the greatest virtue in all religions but specially so in Islam."⁸⁶ His treatment of the Hindus and Shias afford ample contradiction of the above claim.⁸⁷

That the *Ulema* had achieved prominence during the reign of Firuz Tughluq has been amply proved by the evidence already recorded but in active politics too their influence was felt to a considerable extent as is proved by the case of Malik Shams-ud-din Abu Riza, the *Mustaufi-i-Mamalik*. The details of the event have been given elsewhere in connection with his enmity with Khan-i-Jahan bin *Khan-i-Jahan*.⁸⁸ The importance of the affair, however, rests on the fact that the *Khan-i-Jahan* chose Malik Abdullah, a Qazi of Firuz's court, as instrumental in bringing about the downfall of Malik Shams-ud-din Abu Riza because the Qazi was a great confidant of Firuz.

From the evidence examined by us so far, it is clear that the political influence of the *Ulema* during the first two centuries of the Turkish rule differed, not from dynasty to dynasty, but from monarch to monarch. Orthodox monarchs, viz. Balban and Firuz Tughluq, brought them to the forefront of politics whereas despotic rulers like Ala-ud-din Khalji and Muhammad bin Tughluq totally discarded their interference in the administration. Nevertheless, throughout the period, the *Ulema* did influence the politics of their times in one way or the other. The reason is that in those days it was difficult to separate the church from the state. It has been rightly said that "the very

⁸⁵ Afif, pp. 22-3.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

⁸⁷ *FF*, pp. 7-12.

⁸⁸ *TF*, pp. 467-91. Afif attributes the downfall of Malik Shams-ud-din to the curse of Khwaja Husam-ud-din Junaidi an eminent saint of the reign of Firuz Shah (Afif, 467-71). Another example of the influence of the *Ulema* is provided by the intercession of Saiyid Jalal-ud-din Hasan Bukhari in negotiating peace with the Jam of Thatta (*Ibid.*, p. 340).

essence of Islam is that it is both a religion and a system of government—a church-state. In Islam, politics is not *merely* politics, and religion is not *merely* religion. Consequently, if one is to seek for an adequate interpretation of the political activities and military conquests of Muslim rulers, attention must always be paid to this fundamental conception of the Islamic state. While the religious motives and the objectives of the conquerors and rulers should not be over-emphasized, on the other hand they must not be ignored altogether, nor lightly set aside by the judgment that such men were inspired by the considerations of conquests and political power alone.”⁸⁹

It must, however, be clearly noted that despite the patronage given to the *Ulema* by the sovereigns and the nobility they never attained the role of king-makers like the nobility holding high political and military appointments. The reason is not far to seek. The Turkish state was still a military state. It was necessary that in order to save it from the onslaught of the Mongol raids and also to meet internal danger of rebellions and Hindu revival, affairs of the state should be directed by a soldier or a man of action seasoned in politics and military affairs. Since the *Ulema* lacked this most sought-after qualification, they could never rise to the occasion to decide the fate of the state whenever it was in a crucial stage. The more we examine the evidence at our disposal the more we are convinced that the role of the *Ulema* in times of troubles and disintegration was not of an active participator but one of a distant spectator who gained or lost according to the fate of those with whom they lined their sympathies.

To sum the whole argument we find that the political status of the *Ulema* under the Sultanate was as follows:

- (i) The *Ulema* cannot be classed as *Umrahs*.
- (ii) Due to the nature of the Islamic state, they were an important element in the administration and sometimes in the reigns of some Sultans, they even played an eminent part in politics.
- (iii) But usually they—the *Ulema-i-Duniya*—were in a minor wheel in the administration kept well under check by the abler Sultans.

⁸⁹ *Islam in India and Pakistan*, p. 14.

(iv) However, the case of the *Ulema-i-Akhirat* was different. They never interfered in politics, deliberately kept themselves aloof from kings and nobles, and their influence, even when great on particular Sultans, was personal and moral.

Service Conditions, Privileges and Administrative Training

It may be pointed out at the very outset that if the material for the study of the institution of nobility during the Sultanate period is meagre, the paucity of the data concerning the administrative machinery is still more discouraging with the result that it is difficult to trace out with precision the exact position with regard to recruitment, promotions, punishments, pay and emoluments, service conditions and other allied matters concerning the nobility. Since no office compendium on the lines of the *Ain-i-Akbari* was compiled under any of the Sultans of Delhi, the only course left to us is to sift the available information out of the jumbled mass of historical material, however trifling yet relevant, which had unconsciously arrested the casual attention of the historian's pen. The reason for this apathy in dealing with such subtle and dry a subject as civil administration on the part of the contemporary historians was not due to want of knowledge but due to their entirely different approach to history. Medieval historiography tended to revolve around or focus its attention upon the personality of the monarch resulting in complete ignorance of those members of the bureaucracy who were an insignificant yet important cog in the wheel of administrative machinery. Even when the chroniclers were active members of the bureaucracy like Ziya-ud-din Barani, or Shams Siraj Afif, the approach did not differ much for wherever they have given details relating to the administrative machinery, they occupied themselves in explaining the broad problems and left out minor details which they considered insignificant and superfluous from their point of view in the context of those times though they have now become highly relevant in understanding the institutions of those days.

The administrative machinery which was introduced by the

Ilbari Turks in India was based upon the principles of Sasanid administration in Persia as there was hardly any indigenous precedent to copy or elaborate to suit their own administrative problems.¹ In the beginning, the territory under the Ilbaris, not properly groomed to the changed conditions, was necessarily a military camp in which immediate problems concerning the defence and safety as well as the consolidation and extension of their sovereignty decided the issues of civil and military administration. A long-term planning or the devising of a permanent machinery of administration was neither possible nor advisable.² It is in this context that the service conditions and privileges of the nobility under the Sultans have to be studied.

I. Recruitment and Promotions

(i) *The Ilbaris*: In the absence of any hereditary aristocracy, which could readily provide personnel for the high political offices of the state, recruitment was generally made from the slaves of the Sultans who had distinguished themselves as loyal and able servants of the crown.³ They were first of all put in various posts in the royal household which provided the ground for their administrative training. Having gone through a number of such appointments, they were put in charge of an *iqta* or administrative division. But it must be noted that the criterion

¹ Day, U. N.: *Administrative System of Delhi Sultanate*, pp. 24-31; Sykes, P. M.: *History of Persia*, Vol. I, pp. 461-4; Saran, P.: *Islamic Polity*, pp. 7-12; Nizami, K. A.: *Some Aspects of Religion and Politics in India During the Thirteenth Century*, pp. 23-33.

² Habibullah, A. B. M.: *The Foundation of Muslim Rule in India*, p. 231. He rightly remarks that "the state was bound to resemble the organization of an army in occupation and hence had to be, in the main, military. Its civil functions emerged only gradually and at a converse ratio to the disappearance of security problems."

³ It is incorrect to assume as K. A. Nizami asserts that the recruitment to all the classes of the nobility was entirely made out of slaves. The slaves seldom proved to be fit for high political appointments like that of the *Wazir* which was generally filled by men of high pedigree and experience alone. In fact, since the inception of Turkish rule in India, the nobility had two main classes viz. (1) *Ahl-i-qalam* and (2) *Ahl-i-Tegh* as pointed out by Fakhr-i-Mudabbir in his *Adab-ul-Harb Wash-Shujaat* (BMM f. 56b). It was from among the slaves the the *Ahl-i-Tegh* were generally recruited. See the statement in Appendix B.

for appointment as *muqti* was not the number but the duration of preliminary appointments. For further promotions to bigger *iqtas*, personal achievements during the preceding appointments were the sole criterion. These slave officers were chiefly drawn from pure Turkish stock in order to ensure submission and loyalty. In fact, the nobility of birth was considered a strong if not the sole criterion for the appointment to high political posts. But this notion of the nobility of blood was stressed to a ridiculous extent when Sultan Iltutmish ordered an enquiry into the ancestry of his *Wazir*, Khwaja Nizam-ul-mulk Junaidi, on the representation of Malik Qutb-ud-din Hasan Jhori, the *Barbak*, and Malik Izz-ud-din Salari, the *Vakil-i-Dar*.⁴ During the reign of Balban, also, the principle was vigorously applied. Balban himself traced his descent from the legendary king Afrasiab of Ajam.⁵ The instances of Jamal Marzuk,⁶ Fakhr Baoni⁷ and Kamal Mahiyar⁸ also point out to the same conclusion. That there were occasional exceptions to the above rule as illustrated in the case of Imad-ud-din Raihan, a Hindu convert, and Malik Mughlati, a Mongol, does not break the general rule. It appears that their appointment to high posts was a price for their acceptance of the Islamic creed.

(ii) *The Khaljis*: The conciliatory attitude adopted by Sultan Jalal-ud-din Khalji towards the Ilbaris did not effect any material change in the mode of recruitment and promotions of the nobility with this difference only that the key appointments at the court were given to the Khaljis who throughout the reign of the new dynasty held most of the coveted posts.

The Turkish Government was pretty well-established by his

⁴ *TF*, p. 39. Minhaj-i-Siraj is totally silent about this affair. It appears from the account given by Barani that when a general enquiry was being made into the ancestry of all persons holding responsible posts, the *Barbak* and the *Vakil-i-Dar* got a fitting opportunity to avenge their enmity with the *Wazir*. After the enquiry, 33 persons were turned out of employment on account of low breed. The author of *Jami-ul-Hikayat*, however, eulogizes the Nizam-ul-mulk and attributes high pedigree and lineage to his (*Jami-ul-Hikayat*, Urdu translation, pp. 3-10).

⁵ *TF*, p. 39.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 33-5.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 36-7.

time and the problem of recruitment did not present much difficulty. A large number of aristocratic families were already in existence in the ruling class and provided ample scope for the employment of the indigenous stock of nobles in preference to the foreigners who still continued to pour into India in a ceaseless train of migrations due to the constant Mongol incursions into Western Asia. Nevertheless, foreign elements did succeed in effecting their entry into the ranks of the Khalji nobility and the case of Sharaf Qaini, the revenue minister under Ala-ud-din Khalji, Ghazi Malik (later known as Sultan Ghiyas-ud-din Tughluq⁹ and the Mongol nobility¹⁰ patronized by Sultan Jalal-ud-din Khalji, are illustrative of the fact that these two classes provided an important though not yet very significant wing of the nobility under the Khaljis.

Hindu converts also provided a very significant group in the nobility, and in this respect too, Khalji rule marked a clear departure from the practice established by the race-conscious Ilbaris. Although the caste of Malik Naib (popularly known as Malik Kafur Hazar Dinari, the *Wazir* of Ala-ud-din Khalji) is not certain. It appears that he was a Hindu before his conversion and was in the employ of a Khwaja in Gujarat. Malik Manik who saved Ala-ud-din's life when attacked by Ikit Khan, the Sultan's nephew, was also a Hindu. The nationality of Khusrau Khan¹¹ and his Barwar associates who occupied a very important place under Sultan Qutb-ud-din Mubarak Khalji, is too well-known to require any mention.

One great lacuna in the study of the service conditions under

⁹ Ghazi Malik first of all entered the service of Ulugh Khan, the brother of Ala-ud-din Khalji and later rose to higher responsibilities under Sultan Ala-ud-din (see Chapter 4).

¹⁰ Isami mentions the name of Qamizi Muhammad Shah, Kabhru, Yalchaq and Barq who were originally Mongols and were in the employ of Ala-ud-din Khalji. They fomented mutiny during the return of Ulugh Khan and Nusrat Khan from the expedition against Rai Karan of Gujarat (*FS*, pp. 252-3). Barani mentions one Malik Ulughchi, the *muqti* of Kol, in the list of the nobles of Jalal-ud-din Khalji who was Mongol (*TF*, p. 174).

¹¹ Amir Khusrau clearly says in the *Tughluqnama* that Khusrau Khan was a Hindu whose name after conversion was Hasan (*The Tughluqnama*, p. 17). Other Hindu conversion was Hasan (*The Tughluqnama*, p. 17). Other Hindu converts who were among the influential nobles of Ala-ud-din's court were Malik Kafur Marhata Naib *Wakil-i-Dar*, Malik Dinar, *Shahna-i-Pil*, Malik Shahin, *Naib Barbak* (*TF*, pp. 240-1).

the Khaljis is the absence of information regarding the early stages through which a noble had to pass before he entered into the higher grades of nobility, but the precedent established by the Ilbaris seems to have been followed as they had to undergo a period of training by rendering personal service to the Sultan which decided their future prospects and promotions. The careers of Malik Naib, Ghazi Malik, Qazi Hamid-ud-din and Khusrau Khan are ample illustrations of this fact. But in the presence of a hereditary nobility such cases were few and far between.

A strong criterion for recruitment to the rank of the nobility which was introduced by Sultan Jalal-ud-din Khalji, and ended with him, was the literary achievements of those learned men who came to his notice—because he himself was a great patron of art and learning and could compose beautiful poetry.¹² He appointed Amir Khusrau as his *Mushafdar* or Librarian.¹³ Other men of letters who were patronized by Jalal-ud-din Khalji and who held very high appointments and *iqtas* under him, were Maulana Siraj-ud-din Sawi, the author of *Khaljinama*, Malik Qutb-ud-din Alwi,¹⁴ Malik Taj-ud-din Kuhrami, Malik Muid Jajarmi, Malik Saad-ud-din *Amir-i-Bahr*, Khwaja Jalal-ud-din *Naib Wazir* and Maulana Jalal-ud-din Bhakkari, the *Mustaufi-i-Mamalik*.¹⁵ The position, however, changed during the reign of Ala-ud-din for he did not pay much attention to learned men and this apathy on his part has been one of the great regrets of Ziya-ud-din Barani.¹⁶

Promotions were generally made at the time of accession of the new king. All the three monarchs distributed high offices to their own kith and kin and those who helped them in their accession. Besides, victory in military campaigns was another

¹² *TF*, p. 197.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 198. It appears that Ala-ud-din Khalji confirmed Amir Khusrau to the post of *Mushafdar* as the poet himself made the request to the king in one of the poems in *Dibacha Ghurrah-ul-Kamal*. But the poet was not satisfied in his appointment on account of the meagre time had at his disposal to attend to his literary pursuits.

¹⁴ Malik Qutb-ud-din Alwi was *Naib Malik*. He was famous for his charity. He spent two lakhs of *Tankas* on the marriage of his son and distributed well-dressed horses and cotton garments to a lakh of people (Barani: *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, p. 202).

¹⁵ *TF*, 6. 202.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 365-6.

criterion for promotions. Ala-ud-din's promotion to the post of *Ariz-i-Mamalik* with the addition of *iqta* of Avadh in addition to that of Kara¹⁷ after his successful invasion of Bhilsa and conferring of honours and riches to prince Arkali Khan after the victory over the forces of Malik Chhajju¹⁸ provides clear illustrations that the traditions established by the Ilbaris continued during the reign of the Khaljis.

Personal service too remained a strong criterion for the promotion to high offices and the careers of Malik Naib and Khusrau Khan show that the Khaljis had recognized one of the great truths of administration learnt by the Slaves. The slaves, however, under the Khaljis proved to be the death-knell of their empire. To the bulk of the nobility, who commanded respect on account of experience, ability and high ancestry, the indigenous element presented a great threat. The royal patronage given to them stood in their way and they bid their time in great frustration till one of them rose to assert their legitimate rights.

(iii) *The Tughluqs*: Since the downfall of Khusrau Khan was brought about by a united attempt of many Khalji nobles, there was practically no change in the mode of recruitment and promotions except that the establishment of the new dynasty opened favourable opportunities to the Tughluqs and their relatives and associates. Not only did Ghiyas-ud-din respect his colleagues who had entered the service of Sultan Ala-ud-din Khalji but his relations with the surviving members of the Ilbari nobility were also most cordial.¹⁹

His son, Sultan Muhammad, who had a mania for initiative and novelty in administration, gave high places to foreigners who were generally known as Khorasanis. He used to call them *Aziz* or dear, and held them in high honour. According to Ibn-i-Battutah many of his confidants, *Wazirs*, *Hajibs* and *Qazis*, were foreigners. Some of them had become his relatives through

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 220.

¹⁸ *TF*, p. 213.

¹⁹ *TF*, pp. 426-7. He honoured Khwaja Khatir, Malik-ul-wuzra Junaidi, and Khwaja Muhazzab Buzurg who had held very high posts under the slaves by granting them *Khilat*, *Inam*, and *Wazifa* and allowed them to sit in the Darbar. He used to seek their advice on administrative and political affairs.

marriage with Sultan's sisters.²⁰ Prominent among these were Khudawandzada Qiwam-ud-din, who had been Qazi of Tirmiz, his three brothers Imad-ud-din, Ziya-ud-din and Burhan-ud-din, sister's sons of Khudawandzada and known as Malikzada, and Badr-ud-din Fassal also came to India with him. Another was Mubarak Shah who was a respectable man from Samarqand. Arunbugha, hailed from Bukhara. Besides, Shaikhzada Bistami and Amir Saif-ud-din, to whom were betrothed two of the Sultan's sisters, were also foreigners.²¹

Slaves were patronized by the Sultan and foremost among them was Malik Kabir, who rose from the post of *Sarjandar* to the post of *Naiib-i-Mumalakat* under Muhammad bin Tughluq. The Sultan used to call him *Qabul-i-Khalifati*, i.e. 'acceptable to the *Khalifa*', on account of the fact that he had offered him to the then Abbasid caliph whom the Sultan held in great honour.²²

A great digression from the prevailing practice of conferring high appointments on Muslims alone was the recruitment of Hindus to high posts. Barani has mentioned their names with the greatest regret. The Hindus who filled high posts under the Sultan were Najba, who held *iqtas* in the territories of Gujarat, Multan and Badayun and Kishan Bazran (the correct word seems to be Narain) Indri, who was the *muqti* of Avadh.²³ Another was Ratan from Sindh who, on account of his high attainments in accountancy and calligraphy, was honoured with the title of *Azim-us-Sindh* and was given the territory of Sindh and Siwistan in *iqtas*. He was conferred a drum and a standard, privileges reserved for high nobles.²⁴

During the reign of Sultan Firuz Tughluq, recruitment to the ranks of the nobility was generally made on the principle of heredity but slaves continued to be held in high favour and many among them rose to high places of influence and prestige.²⁵ Hindus and foreigners had a bad day in his reign and he never seems to have encouraged them.

²⁰ *Travels*, pp. 97-8.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 120-1.

²² *TF*, p. 493.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 505.

²⁴ *Travels*, pp. 106-07.

²⁵ *TF*, pp. 579-83.

As to promotions, there was no general rule in the reign of Ghiyas-ud-din Tughluq and his son too promoted nobles at their own sweet will though personal service under them must have weighed heavily in deciding most of the promotions. During the reign of Firuz Tughluq heredity seems to have been the strongest criterion for promotion and many sons of the nobles rose from lower to higher posts under Firuz Tughluq. Many examples may be cited to illustrate this point. *Khan-i-Jahan* Maqbool himself was succeeded by his eldest son, Jauna Khan to the post of *Wazarat*.²⁶ All the three sons of Malik Ibrahim, the *Naib Barbak* who was the step-brother of the Sultan held the rank of a Khan.²⁷ Barani also mentions a number of *Maliks* of Firuz Shah who were sons of famous *Maliks* of his reign. Malik Kamran who was the son of Malik Tatar Khan. Malik Badr-ud-din son of Malik Daulat Shah Akhurbak and Alap Khan son of Malik Qutluq Khan.²⁸ *Tarikh-i-Muhammadi* also mentions two such amirs viz. Zafar Khan bin Zafar Khan who was known as Darya Khan, the *muqti* of Gujarat and Malikzada Firuz son of Malik Taj-ud-din the *Wali* of the *Shiqq* of Firuzpur.²⁹

II. Postings and Transfers:

(i) *The Ilbaris*: Although postings to various posts were made as routine affair, there were certain posts which had to be given special consideration on account of their political and administrative importance. In the court, these posts were that of the *Wazir*, the *Amir-i-Hajib*,³⁰ the *Wakil-i-Dar*, the *Ariz-i-Mamalik*, and the *Naib-i-Mamalik*. For these posts, administrative experience and length of service were the main criterion. None of these posts were hereditary and nearness to and affinity with

²⁶ Afif, p. 425.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 428-9.

²⁸ *TF*, pp. 527-28.

²⁹ *Tarikh-i-Muhammadi*, pp. 416-7.

³⁰ Balban, who was the father-in-law of Sultan Nasir-ud-din was *Amir-i-Hajib* during his reign. In the reign of Balban the post was filled by his nephew, Malik Ala-ud-din Kishli Khan. Relationship was, however, not the sole criterion and his successor, Muizz-ud-din Kaiqabad appointed Malik Nizam-ud-din, his confidant, to the post. He used to address Nizam-ud-din's wife as his mother. See Banerjee, A. C.: 'Some Important offices of the Sultans of Delhi', *JIH*, V (1938-39), pp. 73-83.

the Sultan combined with talents were a strong consideration for appointment. Of all the posts, that of the *Amir-i-Hajib*, also known as the *Barbak*, was most important.

During the reign of the successors of Iltutmish, the post of *Naib-i-mulk* gained considerable importance. Originally the post did not appear to have existed permanently under Qutb-ud-din Aibak and Iltutmish. The practice appears to have been that whenever the king used to lead a military expedition in person, he appointed one of his trusted courtiers as *Naib-i-mulk* to look after the affairs in the capital.³¹ This practice continued throughout the period of our study. But the post first became important in the reign of the successors of Iltutmish, when Malik Ikhtiyar-ud-din Aitigin became the *Naib-i-mulk*.³² He played a prominent role in the downfall of Raziya and accession of Muizz-ud-din Bahram Shah who confirmed him in the post of *Naib-i-mulk*³³ which post he held till his murder on Monday, July 30, 1240.³⁴ He was followed by Malik Badr-ud-din Sunqar Sufi Rumi,³⁵ who was dismissed from the post in August 1241 and transferred to Badayun.³⁶ In the reign of Sultan Ala-ud-din Masud Shah (1241-46) Malik Qutb-ud-din Husain Ghori became the *Naib-i-mulk*.³⁷ He was succeeded by Ulugh Khan Balban who continued to hold it for a long time in the reign of Sultan Nasir-ud-din Mahmud.³⁸

The post, however, ceased to exist in the reign of Balban as is clearly pointed out by Haji Abdul Hamid Muharrir Ghaznavi. He says: "It has been reported that after the death of the pious king Sultan Shams-ud-dunya-wad-din Iltutmish, his sons were

³¹ During the Gwalior expedition of 1233, Iltutmish left Raziya to look after the administration of the capital but whether she was given the designation of *Naib-i-mulk* is not known (TN, p. 185).

³² TN, p. 191. For details of the career of Malik Ikhtiyar-ud-din Aitigin see *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, pp. 252-64 where Minhaj-i-Siraj says that Raziya gave him the *iqta* of Badayun and the post of *Amir-i-Hajib* at the court.

³³ TN, p. 191. Minhaj-i-Siraj clearly says that "it was agreed with Sultan Muizz-ud-din Bahram Shah that since he was young in years, he should entrust all the business of the state for one year to one of the slaves i.e. Ikhtiyar-ud-din Aitigin."—*Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, p. 253.

³⁴ TN, p. 192.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 192.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 193-4.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 198.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 294.

minor and when they sat upon the throne of the kingdom a *malik naib* was appointed for the administration of the affairs of the kingdom and when Malik Qutb-ud-din Hasan Ghorî was appointed as *naib* he made a request to the king that a clerk should be appointed for him in the *Diwan-i-Ali-i-Wazarat*, who should report to him about the *diwan*. The writer was known as the officer in charge of the *Aiwan-i-Niabat*. This continued for a long time and during the reign of Nasir-ud-din, Sultan Ghiyas-ud-din Balban was appointed as the *naib* of the kingdom and the title of Ulugh Khan was conferred upon him. Khwaja Iftikhar-ul-mulk Sharaf-ud-din Muhammad Rashidi, the holder of the *Diwan-i-Ariz Mamalik*, was appointed in the office of the *Diwan-i-Naib*, on the recommendation of Ulugh Khan himself. A few years passed in this way and when the throne was occupied by Sultan Ghiyas-ud-din Balban, he did not confer the dignity of the *Niabat* of the kingdom upon anybody and intended to dissolve this *diwan*, and Khwaja Iftikhar-ul-mulk Sharaf-ud-daula wad-din Muhammad Rashidi, who was then the holder of this office, was appointed in the *Diwan-i-Wazarat*.”³⁹

In the vast hinterland of northern India, too, the assignments to important and big *iqtas* were made to the high and influential nobles. The *iqtas* of Badayun, Multan and Avadh were assigned only to chosen nobles. Thus, Badaun was held by Shams-ud-din Iltutmish during the reign of Qutb-ud-din Aibak, Rukn-ud-din Firuz Shah, the crown prince, Malik Izz-ud-din Tughril Tughan Khan, Malik Ikhtiyar-ud-din Aitigin, Malik Badr-ud-din Sunqar Sufi Rumi, Malik Taj-ud-din Qutlugh, Malik Izz-ud-din Balban Kishlu Khan, Imad-ud-din Raihan, Malik Taj-ud-din Sunqar Tabar Khan and last but not the least, Malik Ulugh Khan Balban.⁴⁰ Multan was not in a settled condition during the early years of the Ilbari rule as the nobles fought among themselves to acquire it. During the reign of his successor Iltutmish the *iqta* was conferred on Malik Izz-ud-din Kabir Khan which he continued to hold upto the reign of Raziya. Muizz-ud-din Bahram Shah gave it to Malik Izz-ud-din Balban-i-Kishlu Khan who was followed by Malik Sher Khan Sunqar, Balban's cousin. He continued to hold it throughout the reign of Sultan Nasir-

³⁹ *Dastur-ul-Albab fi ilm-il-Hisab, Medieval India Quarterly, Vol I, Parts 3 and 4, pp. 92-3.*

⁴⁰ *TN, pp. 141-260.*

ud-din and for a number of years during the reign of Balban when he was poisoned to death and succeeded by *Khan-i-Shaheed*, the elder son of Balban. Since then it was either held by a crown prince or a very influential noble of the court.⁴¹

Avadh was first of all assigned to Malik Husam-ud-din Aghulbak in A.D. 1193 who was succeeded by Malik Bakhtiyar Khalji during the reign of Qutb-ud-din Aibak.⁴² Iltutmish assigned it to his eldest son Nasir-ud-din Mahmud in A.D. 1226 who was followed by his brother Malik Ghiyas-ud-din Mahmud.⁴³ Raziya gave it to Malik Nusrat-ud-din Taisi who after his death was succeeded by Qamar-ud-din Qiran.⁴⁴ He was replaced by Tughan Khan in A.D. 1245 and in A.D. 1255 it was assigned to Malik Qutlugh Khan.⁴⁵ After his rebellion he was replaced by Malik Taj-ud-din Irsalan Khan. During the reign of Balban, it was first assigned to Haibat Khan until the latter was put to death under the orders of his master.⁴⁶ He was succeeded by Malik Aitigin Mui-i-Daraz Amin Khan in A.D. 1279 but he too met the fate of his predecessor for failure to subdue the rebellion of Malik Chhajju of Kara during the reign of Sultan Jalal-ud-din Khalji.⁴⁷

Transfers were made both as an administrative arrangement and also as a measure of punishment. Whenever a new Sultan succeeded to the throne, he made postings and transfers in order to satisfy those nobles who had assisted him in accession to the throne. The instances are so numerous and common that they need not be given here. But the transfers on account of punishment were few and far between. Thus, in August 1241, Malik Badr-ud-din Sunqar, the *Amir-i-Hajib*, was transferred to the *iqta* of Badayun as a measure of punishment for conspiring against the Sultan,⁴⁸ Malik Ulugh Khan Balban the *Amir-i-Hajib* was transferred in August-September, A.D. 1235 to Hansi by Sultan Nasir-ud-din Mahmud as the Sultan was dis-

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 140-234.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 147.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 180.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 242, 198.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 246.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

⁴⁷ *TF*, pp. 182-3; *MF*, pp. 8-20.

⁴⁸ *TN*, p. 194.

satisfied with him.⁴⁹ Two years later, when the nobles under Ulugh Khan Balban united to support Sultan Nasir-ud-din, he removed Imad-ud-din Raihan, the *Vakil-i-dar*, and transferred him to Badayun and thereafter, to the *iqta* of Bahraich where he met his death.⁵⁰

(ii) *The Khaljis*: Just as during the reign of the Ilbaris, a number of posts had become important because of the nature of power attached to them or the financial benefit which accrued to their incumbents, so under the Khaljis many offices gained prime importance in the administrative set-up of the empire. The post of *Amir-i-Hajib*, which was foremost under the Ilbaris, declined in importance and was taken over by the *Ariz-i-Mamalik* which illustrates the military nature of the state. It was usually conferred on a member of the royal family or a high and trusted favourite.⁵¹ The post of *Wazir* lost much of its political importance during the reign of the Khaljis and Sultan Ala-ud-din abolished it altogether during the concluding years of his reign by concentrating all the powers in his own hands.⁵² Qutb-ud-din, however, revived it by appointing Khusrau Khan to it though actual administrative responsibilities attached to the post seem to have been performed by his deputies in the *Diwan-i-Wazarat*.⁵³ Other ministerial posts were in the hands of the remaining two departments, viz. the *Diwan-i-Insha* and *Diwan-i-Risalat* which were held by Malik Hamid-ud-din and Malik Izz-ud-din both of whom were the sons of Malik Qiwam-

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 298. Minhaj-i-Siraj says that it was on account of the intrigue and jealousy of Imad-ud-din Raihan that Balban was transferred to Hansi. Balban too had been a very high noble on account of his relationship with the Sultan. His removal therefore must have been substantiated with some definite charge but Minhaj is totally silent for obvious reasons.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 202-03.

⁵¹ On his accession to the throne, Sultan Jalal-ud-din Khalji conferred this post on his brother Malik Khamush who was succeeded by Malik Ala-ud-din Gurshasp (the king's nephew and son-in-law). Ala-ud-din in his turn appointed Yusuf, entitled Zafar Khan, his sister's son to this post. After the death of Zafar Khan, the post was conferred on Ulugh Khan, the Sultan's brother. Ulugh Khan was followed by Malik Naib Kafur Hazar Dinari and during the reign of Sultan Qutb-ud-din Mubarrak Khalji, that honour was bestowed upon Khusrau Khan.

⁵² *TF*, p. 637.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 337.

ul-mulk Ala Dabir an influential noble of Balban.

The *iqtas* of Multan and Avadh (to which was also added Kara later on) continued to be important. The *iqta* of Multan had become a monopoly of the crown-prince since the days of Sultan Balban who had conferred it upon the *Khan-i-Shahid* and thereafter on his grandson, prince Kai Khusrau (Son of the *Khan-i-Shahid*). When Jalal-ud-din Khalji became king it was given to prince Arkali Khan who had been declared as the crown-prince after the death of his elder brother *Khan-i-Khanan*. Ala-ud-din had no grown-up sons and, therefore, it was conferred on his trusted nobles.

Budaun, however, lost much of its earlier importance in view of the growing importance of other *iqtas* richer in resources. Besides the above two *iqtas*, the rich territories of Gujarat and Deogir now began to occupy an important place in the administrative set-up of the empire so much so that the nomenclature of the administrative head of these posts was changed from the *muqti* to *Wazir* which signifies more or less a deputy. Probably it was due to the fact that these vast provinces were situated at a great distance from the capital and in the interest of speedy and quick disposal of vital problems that confronted the provincial satraps posted there, it was necessary to delegate more extensive powers to them. Both these territories presented greater problems of administrative and military strategy with the result that they were generally conferred on very influential and loyal nobles.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ Malik Yaklakhi, who had for years held the office of *Barid-i-Mamalik* and was an old *Alai* slave, was the first *Wazir* of Deogir appointed by Sultan Qutb-ud-din Mubarak Khalji after his victory over Harpal Deo. Malik Yaklakhi, however rebelled and was succeeded by Malik Ain-ul-mulk Multani who was for several years the head of the *Diwan-i-Insha* under Ala-ud-din Khalji. In Gujarat which had been captured in A.D. 1298-99 by Ulugh Khan, Ali Khan was appointed the first *Wazir*. He was followed by Alap Khan who was the maternal uncle of prince Khizr Khan. After his murder by Malik Naib, there was great confusion in Gujarat and Malik Hamal-ud-din Gurg who went to suppress the rebellion was killed by the rebels. After the accession of Qutb-ud-din Mubarak Shah, the *Wazarat* was conferred on Malik Taj-ud-din Turk but he could not control the matters ably and in the first year of his reign he sent Malik Ain-ul-mulk Multani to revenge the rebels of Gujarat who had rebelled after the death of his maternal uncle Alap Khan. When matters had been set aright in Gujarat it was handed over to Malik Shahin, the

Transfers as an administrative measure were seldom resorted to by the Khaljis and even as a measure of punishment it was confined chiefly to the reigns of Sultan Jalal-ud-din Khalji. In the scheme of Jalal-ud-din's administration, capital punishment was unknown and even cases of rebellion were treated very lightly. Thus, when the question of Sidi Maula's conspiracy was taken up, his associate Qazi Jalal was transferred to Budaun and was appointed Qazi of that city. Other *Khanzadas* and *Malikzadas* were also transferred to different directions after their property had been confiscated. Even in cases of open rebellion like that of Malik Chhajju, the Sultan confined the punishment to simple transfer.⁵⁵ His other associates viz. Malik Amir Ali Sarjandar, Malik Ulughchi son of Malik Targhi, Malik Tajdar, Malik Ahjan and other respectable nobles who had been presented before the Sultan under fetters and chains were ordered to be released immediately. The Sultan dined with them and probably honoured them by conferring lucrative appointments, an action which was resented by all the nobles.⁵⁶

(iii) *The Tughluqs*: Postings: During the reign of the Khaljis, many of the important posts had lost their prestige as Sultan Ala-ud-din had practically concentrated all powers in his own hands. But the Tughluqs restored them to their pristine glory. During the reigns of Sultan Muhammad and Sultan Firuz the *Wazarat* regained its prestige and became second only to the Sultan in position and power. This was perhaps due to the fact that the incumbents of these posts rendered valuable service to their monarchs. Both Ibn-i-Battutah and Isami assert that Ahmad Ayaz was the keyman in planning the murder of Sultan Ghiyas-ud-din Tughluq and he was made *Wazir* in recognition of this service. Qiwam-ul-mulk's role in bringing Firuz to the throne is too well-known and his loyalty was unsurpassed. This not only re-established the prestige of the *Wazarat* but it forced

father-in-Law of the Sultan. Zafar Khan was put to death for no fault and the Sultan conferred the *Wazarat* on Malik Husam-ud-din Murtad who was the brother of Khusrau Khan's mother. He also revolted and was recalled. The post was then conferred on Malik Wahid-ud-din Qureshi who controlled the situation ably (*TF*, pp. 305-07, 323, 368, 379, 388-9, 390-8).

⁵⁵ *Ibid.* p. 211.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 148.

Sultan Firuz to make the post hereditary.

The post of *Mustaufi-i-Mamalik*, which already existed, was another key appointment filled by men of consideration and experience throughout the reign of the Tughluqs. Sultan Ghiyas-ud-din appointed Malik Husam-ud-din to this post⁵⁷ who continued to hold it during the reign of his son Sultan Muhammad.⁵⁸ In the reign of Firuz Tughluq, it was held by Malik Ain-ul-mulk Multani who was succeeded by Malik Shams-ud-din Abu Riza both of whom became famous in their own times due to their rivalry with the *Wazir* which has been dealt with in detail elsewhere.⁵⁹

The post of *Ariz-i-Mamalik*, which had been an important appointment during the reign of the Ilbaris and the Khaljis, continued to attract similar prestige and was held generally by persons related to the Sultan.

Muhammad bin Tughluq also established two more departments in addition to the four already established by the Khaljis and the Slaves. These were the *Diwan-i-Siyasat* and *Diwan-i-Kharitadar*. Firuz added another known as *Diwan-i-Ariz-i-Bandagan* which dealt with the affairs relating to the Sultan's slaves. These must have been held by men of prestige.

Among the *iqtas*, those of Gujarāt, Deogir, Multan, and Avadh were of the greatest importance and were always held by nobles of great prestige who were held in high confidence by the Sultans. When Sultan Firuz founded the city of Jaunpur creating it into an *iqta*, it was handed over to Malik-us-Sharq, a *Wazir* of Sultan Firuz.⁶⁰ Another territory carved out as a separate administrative unit was the *Shiqq* of Firuzabad⁶¹ which later on became the *jagir* of the crown-prince and continued to command the same prestige during the reign of the Mughals.

Transfers on account of promotion and administrative arrangement were frequent but transfers as a measure of punishment were few and far between. In the reign of Muhammad bin Tughluq, the transfer of Malik Ain-ul-mulk Multani from Avadh

⁵⁷ Barani: *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, p. 423.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 454-5.

⁵⁹ See Chapter 4.

⁶⁰ Afif, p. 148.

⁶¹ It was held by Malik Tatar Khan and thereafter by Malik Taj-ud-din Turk (Afif, p. 148; *Tarikh-i-Muhammadi*, p. 417a).

to Deogir was an administrative arrangement but, on account of misunderstandings, it became the cause of a great rebellion. After his defeat Ain-ul-mulk was pardoned and given an important assignment but was transferred from Avadh. In the reign of Sultan Firuz, Tatar Khan, the *Wazir-i-Mamalik*, was once transferred to a distant *iqta* as the Sultan was dissatisfied with him but was soon recalled on his humble representations and honoured by being awarded a golden *Chatra* and *Khilat*.⁶²

III. Pay and Emoluments

(i) *The Ilbaris*: *Minhaj-i-Siraj* is totally silent about the pay and emoluments of the nobles but all payments on account of services rendered to the state were made through assignment of *iqtas* and the higher the appointment the bigger was the *iqta* assigned.⁶³ That this system introduced by Iltutmish was full of serious drawbacks has been pointed out in detail by Barani. Balban tried to reform the system by dividing the *iqtadars* into three categories and assigned revenue according to their utility to the state services. A notable distinction in pay was also according to ranks. The highest rank was that of the *Khan* who was followed by the *Maliks*, *Amirs* and *Sipahsalar*s in order of precedence.⁶⁴ Payments were also made to the nobles in cash and kind on auspicious occasions to do them honour by conferring costly *Khilats* and other valuable articles or for ren-

⁶² Afif, pp. 390-1.

⁶³ TF, pp. 60-4.

⁶⁴ TF, p. 145. It appears from this passage that every *Khan* had ten *Maliks* under him, and every *Malik* had ten *Amirs* under him. Similarly an *Amir* was the head of ten *Sipahsalar*s below whom were ten *Sarkhails* who headed a cavalry force of ten horsemen. This division of the nobility according to the number of mounted soldiers is again testified by Barani in the case of Malik Baqbaq who was an officer of 4000 cavalry (Barani: *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, p. 40). These four grades of the nobility and its decimal organization is also supported by Shihab-ud-din Al-umari, the author of the *Masalik-ul-Absar Fi Mumalik-ul-Amsar* which says: "The *Amirs* are arranged in the following classes: the highest of them have the rank of *Khans*, then *Maliks*, Then *Amirs*, then *Sipahsalar*s, then the officers." Again regarding Military nature of these ranks he says: "The *Hajibs*, the stipend-holders and officers of state belong to the military class such as the *Khans*, *Maliks*, *Amirs*. All have a rank which is proportionate to their position or offices" (*The Masalik-ul-Absar*, translated into English by Dr Otto Spies, pp. 26-8).

dering special services to the king as for example teaching the crown-princes.⁶⁵ It is, however, not known what proportion of the income from the iqtas was appropriated by the iqta-holders on account of their pay and other administrative charges. Both Minhaj-i-Siraj and Ziya-ud-din Barani testify that the nobles were famous for conferring lavish gifts on persons whom they patronized and also spent large sums of money in charity, sometimes amounting to lakhs of *tankahs* with the result that often they ran into huge debts.⁶⁶ This shows that the nobles were very highly paid officials. Minhaj-i-Siraj says that the yearly pay of the *Sarjandars* was 3,00,000 *Jitals* (copper coin) during the reign of Iltutmish.⁶⁷ The pay of Sultan Balban's Sistani guards ranged from 60,000 to 70,000 *Jitals*.⁶⁸ The pay of the nobles and other high officials may, therefore, be well imagined. The pay of Amir Khusrau's father, Amir Saif-ud-din Mahmud who served under Sultan Iltutmish and Balban was 1,200 *Tankahs* a year.⁶⁹ The pay of Kotwal Biranjtan and Hatiya Paik was 1,00,000 *Jitals* per annum.⁷⁰

(ii) *The Khaljis*: With the advent of the Khaljis, the position did not change much during the short reign of seven years of Sultan Jalal-ud-din Khalji, for he only seems to have continued the practice established by the Ilbaris. Barani says that Sultan Jalal-ud-din fixed the pay of Amir Khusrau at 1,200 *Tankahs* which had been the pay of his father, Amir Saif-ud-din Mahmud during the reign of the Ilbaris.⁷¹ The pay of a Hindu, Manadaha, who was appointed *Vakil-i-Dar* to Malik Khurram, was fixed at 1 lakh *jitals*.⁷² The pay of other nobles of

⁶⁵ *TF*, p. 144.

⁶⁶ *TN*, pp. 137-9; *TF*, pp. 119-44.

⁶⁷ *TN*, p. 237.

⁶⁸ *TF*, p. 30.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 197. Working on the basis of the pay drawn by Amir Saif-ud-din Mahmud who held the rank of an Amir in the army, the pay of Maliks appears to have been about 12,000 *tankahs* and that of Khan 1,20,000 *tankahs*.

⁷⁰ *TF*, p. 210.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 210.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 196. It may be noticed that there was no general rule regarding the fixation of pay of the nobles. It was decided by the king and his discretion was final. Thus, persons holding similar appointments under the court had their pay fixed at different rates. The arbitrary manner in

the court and the *iqtadars* is not known but they were highly paid officials. The lavishness with which one of his nobles, Malik Qutb-ud-din Alvi celebrated the marriage of his son is given in detail by Barani.⁷³ He was very famous for his charity and benevolence. Another noble, Malik Ahmad Chap, also used to distribute one Lakh tankahs in one night to the nadims and musicians of the court.⁷⁴ Malik Taj-ud-din Kuchi and his brother, Malik Fakhr-ud-din Kuchi, who held big *iqtas* were also famous for their charity and patronage of learned men and artists. Malik Nusrat Subah, who held the *iqtas* of Kanod and Jaubala, was called second Alai Kishli Khan. He surpassed all the Jalali nobles in charity and remained constantly under debt with the result that moneylenders were regular visitors to his place.⁷⁵

His successor Sultan Ala-ud-din followed a different policy, and his reign may be divided into two periods so far as the pay and emoluments of the nobility are concerned. The early policy of Ala-ud-din Khalji was to enlist their support. Dr Parmatma Saran correctly remarks: "The manner in which the new Sultan had wrested the kingdom from his dotting old uncle and had destroyed the late Sultan's family was bound to rouse feelings of horror, suspicion and detestation among all sections of his subjects. He, therefore, purchased the support of the nobility and the people of Delhi by a lavish distribution of the enormous treasures which he had brought from his Deccan expedition, and by conferring on them *iqtas*, *inams* and offices."⁷⁶ This policy was, however, reversed as soon as Ala-ud-din was secure on the throne. He reduced the pay of his nobles in order to find money for his military expeditions, and for the expenses of the standing army. Amir Khusrau, the poet, who used to get 12,000 *Tankahs* during the reign of Jalal-ud-din was paid only 1,000 *tankahs* by Ala-ud-din.⁷⁷ The salary of the

which the Sultan reduced the pay of Amir Khusrau, from 1,200 *Tankahs* to 1,000 *Tankahs* a year, illustrates this point. Later on, during the reign of Muhammad bin Tughluq, Ibn-i-Battutah repeatedly speaks of the pay of different nobles being fixed by the Sultan (*Travels*, pp. 400-01).

⁷³ *TF*, p. 202.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 202-03.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 204.

⁷⁶ *Studies in Medieval Indian History*, p. 146.

⁷⁷ *TF*, p. 210.

soldiers was also fixed at 234 *tankahs* for one horse (*Yak Aspah*). *Do-Aspah* soldiers were paid an additional amount of 78 *tankahs* for the maintenance of another horse.⁷⁸ There never was for the nobles a worse time for Ala-ud-din ordered the immediate resumption of all grants, *inams*, *iqtas* etc. to curb their power.⁷⁹ He also adopted the policy of payment of salaries in cash and abolished the system of granting *iqtas* for the purpose.⁸⁰

In times of emergency such as the Mongol invasions, the army was paid in advance to ensure loyalty. Isami informs us that the Sultan paid one year's pay in advance to each soldier before proceeding to fight Kabak, the Mongol invader. He also distributed *Khilats* and presents to the officers of the army including his Hindu nobles.⁸¹ This policy was followed by his son Sultan Qutb-ud-din Mubarak Shah when he ascended the throne. He distributed six months' pay to the soldiers and also ordered a general increase in the pay of his nobles and *Amirs*. Those artisans who used to get ten to twelve *tankahs* were now paid seventy to one hundred *tankahs*. He also restored money grants, *inams*, *waqfs* etc. confiscated during his father's reign. Learned men too received an increase in their periodical grants.⁸²

Ala-ud-din totally abolished the system of distributing *Khams* out of the spoils of war in the year 1298-99 when the army was returning from the invasion of Gujarat, thereby causing an immediate revolt of the neo-Muslim amirs of the army under Ulugh Khan.⁸³ He considered that all the spoils of war belonged to the king, and that the soldiers and officers of the army were entitled only to their pay. He emphatically asserted this right when Qazi Mughis of Bayana pointed out that the money received as spoils of war belonged to the *Bait-ul-mal*, and the Sultan could only get the amount equal to the salary of a soldier, i.e. 234 *tankahs* according to the provisions of the *Shara* laid down by the first four Khalifas after the Prophet Muhammad.⁸⁴

⁷⁸ *TF*, p. 366.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 303.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 284.

⁸¹ *FS*, pp. 316-7.

⁸² *TF*, pp. 382-5.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, pp. 252-3.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 390-1.

(iii) *The Tughluqs*: Ghiyas-ud-din Tughluq was very lenient in the matter of pay and emoluments of his nobles and *iqtadars* and made only nominal appropriations from the amount payable into the royal treasury by them over and above their pay. Nor were they put to any torture or punishment for delivering lesser amounts than demanded as was the case in the reign of the Khaljis.⁸⁵ Besides the pay, he continued the practice of payment of money in cash on occasion of a victory over any territory or enemy, on the birth, marriage or *Tathir* of a prince, and when he conferred honours on some nobles.⁸⁶ Isami also informs us that the Sultan ordered an enquiry into the pay and emoluments of all his employees and refixed it according to standards set by him. This resulted in large-scale confiscations and in many cases total resumption of the *inam* lands. Where it was proved that the money or *inam* were acquired during the reign of Khusrau Khan in order to help him and gain his favour, it was totally confiscated. Isami also lost two villages which his ancestors had received from the Ilbaris in the vicinity of Delhi. That is why he is so critical about Sultan Ghiyas-ud-din and his son Muhammad Tughluq.⁸⁷ But Barani's view is more correct and objective who says that the Sultan took this step in order to replenish the treasury.⁸⁸

His successor Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq, did not seem to have followed the general practice as he himself used to fix the pay of many of the nobles holding high appointments.⁸⁹ Besides the usual pay given to his nobles from the treasury, he also used to distribute lump sums lavishly on auspicious occasions. Thus, in the first year of his reign he distributed one year's pay to all his nobles.⁹⁰

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 432-5.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 435.

⁸⁷ *FS*, p. 390.

⁸⁸ *TF*, pp. 438-9, 431.

⁸⁹ *Travels*, pp. 400-01.

⁹⁰ Isami: *Futuh-us-Salatin*, p. 422. This was on the occasion of the invasion of Peshawar which was then held by the Mongols. The distribution of these riches was more to ensure the loyalty of the nobles than the accession of the Sultan. Isami's text is quite clear about the immediate motives of the Sultan about issuing such an order. This was also in accordance with the precedent established by Sultan Qutb-ud-din Mubarak Khalji.

The nobles were paid yearly according to their ranks. The author of the *Masalik-ul-Absar* says that the nobility was divided into many categories according to their ranks. Highest among them were the Khans, below whom were the *Maliks*, *Amirs*, *Sipahsalar*s and other officers. These ranks were graded according to the number of soldiers maintained by each. A *Khan* was required to maintain 10,000 cavalry. *Maliks* kept 1,000, *Amirs* had 100 and *Sipahsalar*s less than 100.⁹¹

These nobles were paid according to their ranks. A *Khan* got many lakhs of *tankahs* as annual pay.⁹² This was their personal pay and they were not required to meet any expenses out of it on account of expenditure on the army which they were required to maintain. Every *Malik* was paid between 50,000 to 60,000 *tankahs* and *Amirs* received 30,000 to 40,000 *tankahs*. The *Sipahsalar* got about 20,000 *tankahs* and other ranks lower than *Sipahsalar* got between 1,000 to 10,000 *tankahs*. The slaves were paid an amount ranging between 5,000 to 10,000 *tankahs*.⁹³

This general rule was, however, relaxable according to the will of the Sultan and Muhammad bin Tughluq who was very famous for his charity, frequently fixed the pay of many nobles according to his will. The *Masalik-ul-Absar* says that the post of *Shahna-i-Pil* which was filled by one of the influential nobles of the Sultan carried an *iqta* as big as Iraq.⁹⁴ Ibn-i-Battutah, who became Qazi of Delhi, was assigned two and a half villages

⁹¹ Shihab-ud-din Al-Umari: *Masalik-ul-Absar fi Mamalik ul Amsar*, Eng., pp. 28-9.

⁹² The author of the *Subah-ul-Asha* who generally follows the text of the *Masalik-ul-Absar* as its authority says that a *Khan* got 2,00,000 *tankahs* per year (*Subah-ul-Asha*, Part V, p. 94).

⁹³ *Masalik-ul-Absar*, p. 29. Ibn-i-Battutah, however says that the nobles received 1/5th of the total revenue of the *iqtas* assigned to them as their annual pay but it is not clear from his statement whether this 1/5th share included expenses of the army required to be maintained by them (*Travels*, pp. 112-3, 437-8).

⁹⁴ *Masalik-ul-Absar*, pp. 301. He says: "The Sultan has four *naibs* of whom everyone is called *Shaqq*. Everyone of them receives from 40,000 to 20,000 *tankahs*. He has four *Dabirs* i.e. private secretaries (*Katib-us-Sir*) and every-one has a city on the coast yielding large revenue." The pay of *Sadr-i-Jahan* was 60,000 *tankahs* and that of the *Shaikh-ul-Islam* was also 60,000 *tankahs* (*Ibid.*, pp. 31-2).

which yielded an yearly income of 5,000 dinars.⁹⁵ The pay of Khudawandzada Ziya-ud-din who was *Amir-i-dad*, was 50,000 *tankahs* a year.⁹⁶ Amir Bakht, who was granted the title of *Sharaf-ul-mulk*, was appointed to the post of *Mushrif-i-mamalik* which carried an annual pay of 40,000 *tankahs*.⁹⁷ Haibat Ullah, who was given the post of *Rasul-i-dar*, received an annual pay of 24,000 *tankahs*. Amir Ghadda, who was known as Malik Saif-ud-din, and was sister's husband to the Sultan, was assigned the *iqtas* of Malwa, Gujarat, Khambayat and Nahrwala.⁹⁸ Amir Ghiyas-ud-din Muhammad of Baghdad popularly known as Makhdumzada who came to the Sultan's court as representative of the Khalifa of Baghdad was assigned the territory of Kannauj and the entire revenue from Siri and other lands etc., besides a lump grant of 10,00,000 *tankahs*.⁹⁹

Direct evidence regarding pay and emoluments during the reign of Firuz Tughluq is very meagre compared to that of his predecessor but there is reason to believe that he continued the rules promulgated by Sultan Muhammad.¹⁰⁰ Immediately on accession to the throne, he ordered an increase in the pay of his nobles far above the amount of money they used to get during Sultan Muhammad's reign.¹⁰¹ He also started the system of *Wajehdari* in order to make provisions for pay out of the revenue assignments of villages.¹⁰² Besides the usual pay there were many notable exceptions to the general rule. The *Wazir*, *Khan-i-Jahan* Maqbool, received 13,00,000 *tankahs* as pay over and above the expenses of his army, servants and *Wajeh* of his sons.¹⁰³ The pay of each of his sons was fixed at 11,000 *tankahs* and that of his son-in-law, 15,000 *tankahs*.¹⁰⁴ Other nobles

⁹⁵ *Travels*, p. 388. Besides this pay he was also sanctioned an annual grant of 12,000 *dinars* for which two more villages were assigned to him (*Ibid.*, pp. 398-402).

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 402.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 401.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 279.

⁹⁹ Barani: *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, p. 496.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 402.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² *Aff*, pp. 94-6. It is not clear in what respect the new system differed from the *iqta* or assignment system. It was, however, prevalent during the reign of the Ilbaris and Balban tried to uproot it but postponed it. Ala-ud-din Khalji being every critical about the system totally discarded it.

¹⁰³ *Aff*, p. 297.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 400.

received pay ranging from four to eight lakh *tankahs* with the result that they became very rich. When Malik Shahin *Shahna*, who was the *Naib Amir-i-Majlis-i-Khan* of the Sultan died, the cash amount left by him amounted to 50,00,000 *tankahs* besides jewels, ornaments and costly robes.¹⁰⁵ Imad-ud-mulk Bashir-i-Sultani had amassed 13 crore *tankahs* out of which the Sultan appropriated 9 crores of *tankahs* when Imad-ul-mulk died.¹⁰⁶

IV. Privileges

The Turkish Sultans jealously guarded against assumption of any rights or privileges by their nobles except those granted by themselves. A strong monarch at the centre always discouraged such a practice and practically no privileges parallel to those developed under the European feudal order emerged under the Sultans. The frequent change of dynasties during the sultanate period also did not allow any privileges to grow. The constant danger of Mongol invasions and the dread of internal revolts led strong monarchs to appropriate as much power as possible into their own hands with the result that throughout the history of the Sultanate, the nobility did not possess any privilege except those granted by the king.

Nevertheless, the nobles were granted several personal privileges which they alone could enjoy so long as they were loyal to the Sultan. Thus *Chatra* and *Durbash* which were the insignia of royalty and power were often granted by the monarchs to high nobles. Other privileges were the carrying of a *Sayban*, *naubat*, *alam*, keeping of an elephant which were royal prerogatives but were frequently conferred on trusted and influential nobles.¹⁰⁷ Notable examples of such privileges were the grant of red *Chatra* to Prince Nasir-ud-din Mahmud,¹⁰⁸ and later on a green *Chatra* to prince Rukn-ud-din Firuz Shah.¹⁰⁹ In the reign of Sultan Ala-ud-din Masud Shah, Nizam-ul-mulk Mahzzab-ud-din, the *Wazir*, appropriated the privilege of keeping an elephant and *naubat* at his door.¹¹⁰ Sultan Nasir-ud-din Mahmud

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 297-8.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 297-8, 400.

¹⁰⁷ *TN*, pp. 181, 243-4; *TF*, pp. 26, 66, 92, 110.

¹⁰⁸ *TN*, p. 181.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 181-2.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 198. The privilege of keeping an elephant was also granted

granted a white *Chatra* to Ulugh Khan Balban, which could only be kept by the sovereign.¹¹¹ Balban also granted the privileges of *Chatra* and *Durbash* etc, to prince Bughra Khan when he was appointed *muqti* in Lakhnauti.¹¹²

(ii) *The Khaljis*: The position with regard to privileges remained the same as under the Ilbaris. Under Jalal-ud-din, the privileges of keeping *Chatra* and *Durbash* remained confined to the princes of the royal blood. His two elder sons, Khan-i-Khanan and Arkali Khan, were granted the red *Chatra*, *Durbash* standard and drums.¹¹³ Granting of *Khilats* to the nobles on various occasions was a usual feature. Ala-ud-din also continued this tradition when he granted a red *Chatra* to Khizra Khan after the victory of Chittor which was named Khizrabad.¹¹⁴ Among the nobility the honour of holding red *Chatra* and *Durbash* was granted only to Malik Naib when he started for an expedition to Deogir in 1308-9.¹¹⁵ Ram Deo, the Raja of Deogir submitted and when he was brought to Delhi, the Sultan treated him kindly conferring on him the title of Rai Rayan and also bestowed a *Chatra*.¹¹⁶ Sultan Qutb-ud-din Mubarak Khalji also conferred *Chatra* to Khusrau Khan when he sent him to the Deccan campaign.¹¹⁷

(iii) *The Tughluqs*: Princes of the royal blood continued to hold *Chatra*, *Durbash*, standard and drum etc. as usual. Ulugh Khan who later on became Sultan Muhammad was granted *Chatra* before starting for the expedition to Arangal¹¹⁸ and was also declared heir-apparent by Sultan Ghiyas-ud-din Tughluq. When the latter defeated Sultan Nasir-ud-din of Lakhnauti, he granted him *Chatra*, *Durbash* etc. to honour him in return for his submission.¹¹⁹ His son, Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq

by Iltutmish to Malik Nasir-ud-din Aitumur Bahai in recognition of his victories over the Hindus of Ajmer (*Ibid.*, p. 236).

¹¹¹ FS, pp. 156-9.

¹¹² TF, p. 92.

¹¹³ MF, pp. 23-4.

¹¹⁴ *Dewal Rani Khizra Khan*, pp. 64-5. Barani says that Ala-ud-din granted the *Chatra* to Khizra Khan during the last years of his reign and also allowed him to hold separate *darbar* (TF, p. 367).

¹¹⁵ TF, pp. 326-7.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 326.

¹¹⁷ *Tughluqnama*, p. 17; TF, p. 390.

¹¹⁸ TF, pp. 428-46.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 451.

granted five *Chatra* to Bahadur Shah Boora on whom he conferred Sonargaon.¹²⁰ By this time, the system of granting these insignia had been well established and there were set rules for holding them. While *Chatra* and *Durbash* could only be granted by the Sultan at his will, the number of grant of standards depended on the rank held by the nobles. Thus, a *Khan* could carry nine standards, while the *amirs* carried three. Similarly, the number of horses which a *Khan* could keep for his personal use was ten. The *amirs* kept two horses.¹²¹ The position did not appear to have changed during Firuz Shah Tughluq.

V. Dismissal and Other Disciplinary Proceedings

(i) *The Ilbaris*: As with other matters of service conditions of the nobility, the nature of punishments meted out to the nobles for dereliction of duty, disloyalty, rebellion, high treason etc., depended solely on the Sultan's discretion.¹²² During the reign of Iltutmish, Malik Ala-ud-din Jani, the *muqti* of Lakhnauti was dismissed for fomenting rebellion against the Sultan.¹²³

No list of offences punishable under the law then prevailing is available but in addition to the above may be added the

¹²⁰ FS, pp. 421-2. This is perhaps the first example of more than one Tabar Khan was granted many *chatras* (Aff: *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, p. 391). *Chatra* being conferred on a noble. During the reign of Firuz Tughluq, Usually the Sultan alone could use more than one *Chatra* for *Masalik-ul-Absar* says that Sultan Muhammad carried several *Chatras* with him while on expeditions (*Masalik-ul-Absar*, p. 35).

¹²¹ *Masalik-ul-Absar*, p. 36.

¹²² It is difficult to form an exact idea from the chronicles about the nature of crimes punishable under the law but from Barani's *Fatawa-i Jahandari* it is clear that the following political offences were cognizable: (1) High Treason (2) Disloyalty and Dereliction of duty 3 Open Rebellion (4) Disregard for the King's commands (5) Bribery (6) Embezzlement and other offences connected with the treasury and (7) punishments for conduct against the *Shara* (*Fatawa-i-Jahandari*, pp. 55-63).

¹²³ TN, p. 239. Although Malik Ala-ud-din Jani was a very high noble of Iltutmish, Minhaj does not make a separate notice of him in the account of Shamsi Maliks probably because he met his downfall during the reign of Iltutmish. The first major appointment held by him was the Governorship of Bihar which was granted to him in A.D. 1225. When Iltutmish conquered Lakhnauti from Sultan Husam-ud-din Iwaz Khalji he conferred that vast kingdom on Malik Jani in A.D. 1229-30. He soon after rebelled and was, therefore, dismissed (TN, pp. 163-80).

defiance of royal orders and coming to and leaving the court without permission of the sovereign.¹²⁴ Warning was considered an adequate punishment in case of misconduct of nobles of high rank. Malik Qutlugh Khan who was the step-father of Sultan Nasir-ud-din was warned for misconduct during his governorship of Avadh.¹²⁵ Another case of warning was that of Malik-Izz-din Tughril Tughan Khan, the *Sar Davatdar* of Iltutmish, for losing the jewelled pen case of the Sultan which he used to keep in his custody.¹²⁶ Another cognizable offence was failure to deposit the revenue in the royal treasury which was generally punishable by confinement in jail till the money was deposited into the royal treasury.¹²⁷ Balban was very ferocious in meting out punishment to his nobles on the slightest pretext. Thus, failure of the expedition against Tughril of Bengal was the cause of the execution of Malik Amin Khan Mu-i-Daraz, the *muqti* of Avadh.¹²⁸ Besides this, the cases of Malik Baqbaq, the *muqti* of Budaun and Malik Haibat Khan, the *muqti* of Avadh, who were given condign punishment for doing injustice to their subordinates is well-known. The *Barid* of Budaun, who failed to report the high-handedness of Malik Baqbaq, was also put to death.¹²⁹

(ii) *The Khaljis*: In awarding punishments to his nobles, Sultan Jalal-ud-din made a clear departure from the precedents created by his predecessors. He was a kind and human person who would not like to hurt even an ant. Decoits and thieves were let off by him with only a warning for better conduct in future.¹³⁰ For this lenient policy he was frequently criticized by the nobles whenever they assembled in convivial parties, and although these proceedings were reported to the Sultan, he never took serious notice of them.¹³¹ The extraordinarily cordial treatment given to Malik Chhajju and his associates need not be repeated here. In connection with the conspiracy of Sidi

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 255.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 306.

¹²⁶ *TN*, p. 242.

¹²⁷ *TF*, p. 304.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 84.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 40-1.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 188-9.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 190-3.

Maula, Barani clearly points out that coercion as a method for obtaining confession was unknown in the days of Sultan Jalal-ud-din.¹³²

In Ala-ud-din's code of laws, kindness and consideration were unknown words. He not only awarded condign punishment to the nobles who rebelled against him, but introduced new methods of torture and punishment, the mere mention of which makes one shudder.¹³³ Barani, an eye-witness, clearly says that, previous to the reign of Ala-ud-din, women and children of the rebels or state prisoners were not put to death but since his reign it became an established practice.¹³⁴ Qutb-ud-din Mubarak Shah was equally ferocious in meting out punishment to his nobles.¹³⁵

Dismissal as a measure of punishment was not unknown in the reign of Ala-ud-din but it seems to have been confined to very high officials who could not be put to death. Although the charges on which the dismissal of Malik Hamid-ud-din and his brother Malik Izz-ud-din, both of whom were the sons of Malik Ala Dabir and held charge of two important diwans are not known,¹³⁶ yet it confirms the proposition that capital punishment was only awarded in cases of high treason and rebellion.

Coming to the court without the sovereign's permission continued to be a recognized offence during the reign of the Khaljis and nobody, not even the crown prince was immune from punishment for such a crime. Khizr Khan, whom Ala-ud-din ordered to be arrested and imprisoned in the Gwalior fort, was charged of this offence.¹³⁷

(iii) *The Tughluqs*: There is little to be said about the short reign of Sultan Ghiyas-ud-din Tughluq in this connec-

¹³² *Ibid.*, p. 211. It is, however, very strange that the Sultan should have proposed the fire ordeal for Sidi Maula and his accomplices to prove the truth of their loyalty to the Sultan. The *Ulema* gave the *Fatawa* against this fantastic proposal of the Sultan and, therefore, it was dropped. Kotwal Biranjtan and Hatiya Paik were punished severely. Many others involved in the conspiracy were transferred to different places.

¹³³ *TF*, pp. 253, 282, 336.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 253.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 393, 396.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 337.

¹³⁷ *FS*, pp. 338-41; *TM*, pp. 80-1.

tion, except that as a major digression from the strict and cruel precedents established by the Khaljis in meting out punishment to their nobles, he showed a marked leniency and relaxation and, barring open rebellion, he seldom punished his nobles for mistake or misconduct.¹³⁸

He totally stopped the practice of executing nobles of the older regime as a warning to others.¹³⁹

It is difficult to form a clear conception about the ideas of punishment adopted by his son and successor Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq for there is so much of contradictory evidence relating to his reign that generalizations are not easily possible. Even in the chronicles, he is termed both as 'Adil' and 'Qatil' according as the view held by individual historians. Barani, Ibn-i-Battutah, and Isami all testify that he shed blood indiscriminately and that many innocent men died because of his cruelty and blood-thirstiness. Nevertheless, the lenient view taken by him about the revolt of Ain-ul-mulk Multani, *muqti* of Avadh and Amir Ghadda, otherwise known as Amir Saif-uddin, is illustrative of his sense of moderation and justice.

For the dispensation of justice, the Sultan had established a separate department of justice and he himself used to appear during its proceedings. He was also much concerned about the provisions of the *Shara* relating to capital punishment and Barani records an interesting conversation which he had with the Sultan. He says that he informed the Sultan that, according to the *Tarikh-i-Kisrawi*, kings could award capital punishment for seven offences out of which three had been sanctioned by the *Shara* and the remaining four were precedents established by ancient kings. But the Sultan replied that the rules established by ancient kings were old and obsolete and had no bearing on the conditions prevailing in his times. He, therefore, continued to punish the people according to his own standards of justice.¹⁴⁰

Besides capital punishment awarded for fomenting rebellion or associating with rebellious nobles,¹⁴¹ minor and exemplary

¹³⁸ *TF*, pp. 431-3.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 426.

¹⁴⁰ Barani: *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, pp. 509-11.

¹⁴¹ Instances of these punishments are numerous and the history of Muhammad bin Tughluq is replete with capital punishment awarded to

punishments were also awarded to nobles for mis-conduct. The Sultan punished his own brother-in-law (sister's husband), Malik Saif-ul-mulk, for seeking forced entry into the royal palace by ordering him to be imprisoned and thereafter transporting him out of the country.¹⁴² A similar treatment was meted out to another brother-in-law, Malik Mughis bin Malik-ul-mulk.¹⁴³ Another named Amir Bakht, whose title was Sharaf-ul-mulk, was punished with reduction in his pay from 40,000 to 1,000 *tankahs* for some misconduct. He was also ill-treated but afterwards forgiven by the Sultan.¹⁴⁴

Punishments were also awarded for unauthorized absence from the court. According to the established rules, no one could be absent from the court for more than three days without permission. In case of illness and long excursion, the *Amirs* were required to offer presents to the Sultan when they came to the court after such absence.¹⁴⁵

No noble, however high, was immune from punishment, and Isami informs us that, sometime after his accession, the Sultan dismissed the *Wazir*, Ahmad Ayaz, and sent him to Gujarat, but he seems to have been recalled and restored to his previous honours and rank as he continued as *Wazir* till the death of the Sultan.¹⁴⁶

Bribery was also considered a serious offence although it was rampant despite Sultan's drastic punishments. Khudawandzada Ghiyas-ud-din who demanded bribery from Ibn-i-Battutah for issuing the necessary order for payment of 55,000 *tankahs* sanctioned by the Sultan, was arrested and put in prison till an enquiry was made into the whole affair.¹⁴⁷

Sultan Firuz could not have continued for a day on his throne had he not adopted a peaceful and mild policy in awarding punishments. Not only did he relax the rules and precedents established by Sultan Muhammad but he changed them altogether. In fact, his theory of punishment, which was both ex-

his nobles (see Ibn-i-Battutah: *Travels*, pp. 209-316, 322-3, 328-9, 353-4, 357-8).

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 280-2.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 358-61.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 358-61.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 220.

¹⁴⁶ *Isami*, pp. 421-2.

¹⁴⁷ *Travels*, pp. 412-4.

emplary and reformatory was a direct contradiction of the one followed by Sultan Muhammad Tughluq. In his opinion, forgiveness and greatness went together and he seldom awarded capital punishment to his nobles. He had accordingly ordered it to be inscribed at a prominent place in the royal palace at Firuzabad that the former Sultans acted on the maxim: "If thou desireth to make thy empire stable, then let not thy sword rest." Below this maxim he caused to be engraved the following motto of his administration:

Remember how the compassionate mother
Bore unimaginable trouble for her son.¹⁴⁹

It must be said to the great credit of Sultan Firuz Tughluq that throughout his long reign there was peace and prosperity around. He totally abolished the practice of torturing the *iqtadars* for irregular or non-payment of revenue in the treasury.¹⁴⁹ The Sultan dismissed Kajar Shah, the Superintendent of the royal mint for allowing coins containing lesser contents of gold to circulate in the market.¹⁵⁰ Again, he dismissed Malik Ain-ul-mulk Multani, the *Mushrif-i-Mamalik* for constantly quarrelling and disobeying the orders of the *Wazir*, Khan-i-Jahan Maqbul.¹⁵¹ A similar punishment was awarded to Malik Shams-ud-din Abu Rija, the *naib* of Gujarat when he spoiled the administration of that territory by his autocratic rule.¹⁵² His successor, Nizam-ul-mulk, the *naib* of Gujarat who had failed to arrange supplies of commissariat and foodstuffs to the Sultan during his expedition to Thatta, was dismissed for this act of gross negligence.¹⁵³

¹⁴⁸ Afif, p. 21.

¹⁴⁹ Barani: *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, pp. 574-5. Afif says that once Malik Naib Barbak ordered that the turban of an *iqtadar* be put off for non-payment of revenue. This was the highest punishment for this offence (Afif: *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, p. 432).

¹⁵⁰ Afif: *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, p. 349.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 406-18.

¹⁵² Afif: *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, p. 454. Later on when Malik Shams-ud-din Abu Rija became the *Mustaufi-i-Mamalik* and took bribe indiscriminately, he was transported and imprisoned for life by Firuz Shah Tughluq (Afif: *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, pp. 482-92).

¹⁵³ Afif, pp. 219-20.

Transfer as a mode of punishment was also prevalent but concrete illustrations are lacking for the reign of Firuz Tughluq, the only one being those of Khan-i-Jahan Ahmad Ayaz who was dismissed from *Wazarat* and transferred to Samana, and of Malik Ain-ul-mulk Multani who, after his dismissal from the post of *Mustaufi-i-Mamalik*, was posted to the *iqta* of Multan.¹⁵⁴

VI. Administrative Training

It is obvious that the highly centralized administration with its distant ramifications situated in the provinces of a vast empire required not only an efficient system at the centre and the provinces but also the services of men of great administrative experience, and initiative. That the system was always manned by able administrators is testified to by the efficient manner in which the government was carried out in times of peace and war. It is, therefore, necessary to find out whether the Sultans evolved any system of training the higher order of nobility in order to prepare them for the great responsibilities of administration. That such a training was mainly an individual enterprise leaves no doubt that the major part of it was acquired by the new aspirants through seeking practical experience from those already in the administration. It also proves that the training was individual in character and no general training was imparted to the aspirants with a view to preparing them for particular jobs.

It was perhaps on this account that the rulers from time to time and also on the occasion of first appointment to a territory used to issue instructions to new incumbents regarding the manner in which the administration was to be carried on. Some of the earliest examples of such directives are given by Hasan Nizami. He informs us that, when the country of Kol (Aligarh) was conquered in the year A.D. 1193, Qutb-ud-din Aibak appointed Malik-ul-Umara Husam-ud-din Aghulbak to that country and issued the following instructions for the guidance of the Malik:

As regards the duties of this functionary in exercising his authority, he was to act with discretion and sound judgement as the deputy of the king; he had to preserve and protect the laws, rules and usages; he had to act according to the will of

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 219-20.

God; he had to show honour and respect to religious divines and accomplished scholars, the people of the pen, give them proper place suited to their position, offer them reward and gradation of rank, but hinder them from practicing oppression; he had to win offended and affected hearts of the domestics and the attendants, soldiery and tenantry by making good promises, holding enquiries, and making things easy and convenient for them so that they might become friends and well-wishers; in governing he had to be careful and cautious; just and fair towards men of action and fighting hands; in a general situation, he had to practice economy and cultivate moderation and exercise discrimination between specious and real virtues; in administering justice, he should treat the nobles and plebeans on an equal footing and regard attentively the prayers of the oppressed ones; in the matter of public punishment he should abstain from precipitancy and over-hastiness, arbitrariness, anger, prejudice and passion, and without a clear evidence and a convincing argument he should not award the sentence of punishment; in executing the duty of *Jihad* he should act according to the Quranic text that it should be religious warfare commanded by God and fought in His service; he should guard himself against any agreement with, or approval of, the views of selfish interests and slandering calumnious people, and men of sin and inequity; vice and immorality must be repressed and suppressed; he should realise that the administration of the realm called for regulation and guarding of highways, paths, and roads, bridges and places of observation, and it was his obligatory duty to favour and encourage the traders who serve as couriers of the world and as instruments spreading the laudable and generous actions of honourable men; he should not leave any worthy and deserving person neglected and always pay attention and regards towards the needs of guests and wayfarers and the affairs of all, high and low; he should strive his utmost to store up money for giving loans and charities and deem good deeds and benevolence as a provision for him in the other world.¹⁵⁵

Another set of similar instructions were issued to Malik Bahadur-din Tughril when he was appointed to the newly conquered

¹⁵⁵ Hasan, Nizami: *Taj-ul-Maasir*, IOMs. pp. 137a-141b; translated into

fort of Thanagarh in A.D. 1196.¹⁵⁶ But the most informative piece of advice is contained in the instructions which Sultan Iltutmish issued for the guidance of his son prince Nasir-ud-din Mahmud (the elder) when he was conferred upon him the *iqta* of Lahore in A.D. 1217. It runs as follows:

That after carrying out the command of the Creator and following the laws based on the sayings of the Prophet, he should consider it as a rule and basis of the Islamic faith to honour and revere the descendants of the Prophet; he should show special considerations towards and nourish the saints and the scholars who had passed the stage of learning and attainment and reached that of teaching and instructions, had acquired knowledge of the intricate problems and of things, lawful and unlawful, and had kept the path of the canon law free from the impurities of heresy and errors in religion; he should consider it necessary to bestow his munificence and liberality on all the domestics and civil officials, irrespective of differences in position and status, conciliate the hearts of all alike, high and low, do his utmost to promote the happiness and prosperity, affluence and enjoyment of life of all friends and helpers of the country and the state; he should provide for the interests of the ryots and the dependent people and give them support against accidents and calamities; he should realise that the standard of the faith cannot be unfurled and success and victory cannot be achieved without the use of sword, spears and daggers, and that peace and security and the defence of the country cannot be attained without the help of the cavalry and infantry; he should ensure the joy and happiness of the officials and men who are

English by Hasan Askari, *Patna University Journal* (Arts), Vol. 18, No. 3, 1963, pp. 79-79.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 83. He says: "The province of Thanagarh was entrusted to Sepahsalar Baha-ud-din Tughril. He had given sufficient proof of his wisdom in matters of administration and bravery and in arranging troops in battle array. He was instructed to strive his utmost for proclaiming the law of *Shariat*, to convert the houses of duties into mosques and charitable institutions, to honour learned divines, and act according to the teachings and the *Fatwas*, and to be always fair and impartial in administering justice. He had to behave himself in such a way as to leave his good name behind himself."

well acquainted with all the affairs of the country, iniquitous and secretive according to the place of nearness, occupied by each; he should cultivate gravity and firmness and when occasions demand it, he should act swiftly, and when caution and circumspection are needed, he should show constancy and firmness; he should direct his attention and desire towards the renewal of the institutions of charity and the usages and acts of devotion, and wherever there is the unruliness and need of liberation in India, the places of idol-worship and temples should be denuded of idols and images; he should, in his regime, act justly and impartially and avenge wrongs and oppressions, for the props of sovereignty and basis of monarchy can be maintained and made stable only by constancy and affirmation of the traditions of fair play and rectitude and the continuance of the affairs of justice and equity; in all situations he should follow the laudable virtues shown and straight path pursued by kings both in regard towards and deeds which he might have witnessed and experienced.¹⁵⁷

It will be noticed that these general instructions lay down the theocratic nature of the administration and also emphasize laws of natural justice and practical statemanship in running the government.

Apart from these general instructions and the practical training which was imparted to new entrants emphasis was laid on theoretical side of the aspect also. In the contemporary chronicles, a number of books are referred to which contained advices on statecraft and also the duties of various offices with practical hints as to how particular situations arising out of such duties might be dealt with. Barani informs us that when the two sons of Sultan Balban, viz. prince Muhammad (also known as the

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 107-09. Such advices and instructions were also given by Sultan Balban to his two sons when they were appointed to the *iqtas* of Multan, Samana and Lakhnauti (Barani: *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, pp. 69-80, 80-1, 95-106). That such a practice was not obsolete in the reign of Firuz Shah Tughluq is testified by the *Insha-i-Mahru* which contains three letters addressed to Prince Fateh Khan, and Malik Ain-ul-mulk Multani on their first appointment to the *iqtas* of Sindh and Multan respectively containing instructions as to how the administration was to be carried on (*Insha-i-Mahru*, letter Nos. 1 & 3).

Khan-i-Shaheed) and prince Bughra Khan, had been taught the alphabets and handwriting, their teacher brought them before the Sultan and requested that the two princes be placed under scholars well-versed in *Sarf* and *Nahv*. The Sultan ordered that the princes should be placed under the training of able historians who should also teach them the advices contained in *Adab-us-Salatin* and *Maasir-us-Salatin* which Sultan Iltutmish had also ordered to be taught to his sons. Prince Muhammad and Bughra Khan were taught these books by Khwaja Taj-ud-din. After the princes finished their studies under him, Balban granted two villages and a lakh of *jitals* in *inam* to Khwaja Taj-ud-din.¹⁵⁸

This valuable piece of information gives us an idea of the preliminary training of the higher classes of the nobility. But this appears to have been the case only with the higher orders of the nobility. The bulk, in the early days of Turkish rule in India, began their careers in the royal household as *Chashnigir*, *Sar-jandar*, *Amir-i-Majlis*, *Saqi-i-Khas*, *Sar-Abdar Tasht-dar*, *Jam-dar*, *Naib Chashnigir*, *Khasah-dar Saqi*, *Naib Sar-Jandar*, *Yuzban* and *Sar dawat-dar* etc, and gradually rose to the post of governorship or *Wazarat* in the empire.

Besides the *Adab-us-Salatin* and the *Maasir-us-Salatin* theoretical curriculum also included the famous treatise on diplomacy, *Kalila wa Dimna*¹⁵⁹ a translation of the Sanskrit work *Panch-tantra* of Vishnu Sharma. The *Siyasatnama* of Nizam-ul-mulk Tusi occupied an important place in the curriculum. Other important works were the *Adab-ul-mulk wa Kifayat-ul-mulk*¹⁶⁰ the *Kitab-ul-Maghzi* and the *Siyar-un-nabi wa Asar-i-Sahaba*.¹⁶¹

By the time of the Khaljis and Tughluqs, the system had

¹⁵⁸ TF, pp. 144-5.

¹⁵⁹ *Nuh Sipahr*, pp. 166-7.

¹⁶⁰ This is the same as *Adab-ul-Harb Wash-Shajjat*. Besides giving valuable advices on the organization of the armed forces and the modes of fighting and principles of military strategy, the book deals with the theories of taxation, the criterion for the appointment to government posts and the duties of the *Wazir* and the *Ariz-i-Mamalik*.

¹⁶¹ Barani says that in his days *Kitab-ul-Maghazi* of Maghzi Waqdi and the *Siyar-ul-nabi wa Asar-i-Sahaba* of Imam Muhammad Ishaq both of whom were renowned historians of Arabia and Persia respectively formed part of the curriculum (Barani: *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, p. 13).

much improved on account of the expansion of the empire as also due to the migration of a large number of educated people from Persia and Turkistan who settled in Delhi. The facilities for general education, provided by the state and rich nobles in the *madrasas*, were manned by very able scholars well-versed in the art of education. Barani has given a long list of scholars of the reign of Balban and Ala-ud-din Khalji.¹⁶² Barani himself wrote his *Fatawa-i-Jahandari* containing valuable advices on administration and politics and mentions a number of books which were very famous in his days. It is needless to say that all these important books were made use of by the educated section of the nobility.

Besides standard works on statecraft and diplomacy, *Kabus-nama* of Kaikaus bin Iskandar bin Kabus written in the year A.D. 1082-83 was considered a work of great importance and was frequently referred to by the elite because it contained rules of conduct and etiquette for the kings and nobles.¹⁶³ Another work referred to by Afif is the *Dastur-ul-Wuzra* which was also considered a valuable treatise on administration.¹⁶⁴

Works on practical letter-writing also formed part of the curriculum throughout the Sultanate period because they provided a model for writing official letters. Barani says that Malik Qiwam-ul-mulk Ala Dabir, who wrote many *Fathnamas* in the reign of Balban and specially that of Lakhnauti, was unbeaten in the art of letter-writing.¹⁶⁵ But the most famous treatise was the *Ijaz-i-Khusrawi* of Amir Khusrau. Contemporary literature hardly makes any mention of this famous work but it provides ample proof that the art was being perfected from time to time and in Amir Khusrau's days as many as six different forms of letter-writing were in vogue. Next in fame but perhaps more practical and important was the *Tarassul-i-Ain-ul-mulki* of Malik Ain-ul-mulk Multani, the *Mastaufi-i-mamalik* of Sultan Firuz Shah Tughluq.¹⁶⁶

By far the most important work written in the reign of Sultan Firuz Shah Tughluq was the *Dastur-ul-Albab fi Ilm-il-Hisab*

¹⁶² TF, pp. 353-5.

¹⁶³ Afif, p. 283.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 283.

¹⁶⁵ TF, p. 169.

¹⁶⁶ Afif, p. 408.

by Haji Abdul Hamid Muharrir Ghaznavi, an employee at the court of the Sultan. Besides detailed instructions on the various branches of administration and particularly the revenue, the book contains an account of the duties of the principal officers of the Government which were filled by high-ranking nobles viz. the *Wazir*, the *Mushrif*, the *Mustaufi*, the *Nazir*, the *Barid*, etc.¹⁶⁷ It also contains the various modes of taxation and how account was maintained in the revenue department of the income and expenditure of the empire. Caution must, however, be taken in separating theory from practice while studying the real structure of the administration as contained in the book.

¹⁶⁷ *Dastur-ul-Albab-fi ilm-il-Hisab*, pp. 79-93.

Conclusions

In bringing to a close this study, it is necessary to make a general survey of our findings in the previous chapters to see if any generalizations can be drawn out of the integrated study of the institution of the nobility spread over a period of two centuries (A.D. 1206-1398).

It has been noticed that the nobility which played a very vital part in carving out the Delhi Sultanate began its career as a small racial group of Ilbari Turks but within half a century of Turkish rule, indigenous elements began to dilute its racial contents making it more and more heterogeneous. During the reign of the Ilbaris, the nobility could not tolerate the supremacy of Hindu converts but hardly a century had passed when they tolerated a Hindu convert as *Wazir*. Both during the reign of the Ilbaris and the Khaljis, racialism played a vital part in the political life of the Delhi Sultanate. The position, however, considerably changed during the reign of the Tughluqs.

This heterogeneous character of the nobility had both its advantages and disadvantages. It provided those necessary checks and balances which were helpful in keeping the nobility under the control of the sovereigns. It was on this account that the nobles, though hard pressed by the severity of Muhammad Tughluq, could not make a concerted attempt to oust him from the throne. Under the Ilbaris, it was not only a possibility but a reality as the racial compactness of the Ilbari nobility enabled it to cow down successfully the successors of Iltutmish. Their power was perhaps both a menace to the stability of the nascent Turkish state over and above being a threat to the ruling monarch and Balban did well to annihilate that class. In clearing the way for his sons, however, Balban did not practise moderation but swept away nearly all the nobles whom he suspected irrespective of the fact whether they were

loyal or disloyal.

The defects of the heterogeneous character of the nobility far outweighed the advantages. First of all, in times of necessity it failed to provide leadership to save the Turkish state. It was sheer good luck and chance that after the death of Sultan Qutb-ud-din Mubarak Shah Khalji, the nobles of Ala-ud-din Khalji united to oust Khusrau Khan but after the death of Firuz Tughluq, the liquidation of the Turkish state was solely due to the fact that the nobility failed to rise to the occasion on account of petty rivalries and jealousies and eroded each other's strength by mutual conflict. The interests of the state were thrown into the background in furtherance of their own selfish ends.

Secondly, the system failed also to create a stable order of the elite based upon hereditary possession of land as the Whig or Tory nobility of England. Hence the country had never a dependable leadership in the country which had a vested interest in the stability and prosperity of the land and the people.

And finally, the Turkish nobility because of its heterogeneous character also failed to develop a sense of patriotism that could make the state stable. Its record stands in clear contrast to that of the British nobility of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries who fought with the king but kept the country united in severe crisis.

It must, however, be noted that, during the entire period of our study, the nobility played a vital part in the political life of the Delhi Sultanate because the monarchs themselves were nobles. It is obvious that the main conflict between the nobility and the crown should revolve around the principal question of relationship between the two rival powers. Islamic theory of the state gives a semi-divine status to an elected *Amir-ul-mominin* but in the absence of a workable democratic machinery for such an election, the sword was the only arbiter to decide the political fate of Muslim communities everywhere. And once anyone who had proved his superiority of arms over his rival, tried to create a halo of sanctity around his personality which had the sanction of the Holy Scriptures. But this status was seldom recognized by the nobility in India because in reality the king was only one of them. They were, therefore, loath to give him, except under duress, a higher status than that of

primus inter pares. The monarchs on the other hand tried to assert the right given to them by religion by virtue of recognition by the Khalifas. This naturally led to incessant conflict between the crown and the nobility. A powerful monarch succeeded in controlling his nobles with a strong hand but the succession of a weak monarch meant the beginning of anarchy.

The ideal system under the circumstances was to realize that if the Islamic state was to exist in India and exist peacefully, it must recognize the status of the nobility as co-sharers of the political power with the sovereign. In other words, some sort of constitutional monarchy was called for which would recognize the right of the nobles as well as provide leadership to maintain its cohesion which was so necessary for the stability and the continuation of the Islamic state in India. The conflict between the nobility and the crown was resolved to a great extent during the reign of Sultan Firuz Tughluq who allowed a free play to the abilities of his nobles. The result was a peaceful reign spread over forty years. But it must not be forgotten that to run such a system required not only a moderate ruler but a team of devoted advisers whose loyalty was beyond question. In the conflict between *Khan-i-Jahan* Maqbool and Malik Ain-ul-mulk Multani, though both were at daggers drawn with each other, neither of them took any step detrimental to the interests of the state. It may also be said to the great credit of the Sultan that he tried to reconcile and resolve such conflicts with exceptional ability. After his death, or more correctly in the last years of his life, the absence of able advisers created such rents and holes in the body politic that peace and tranquility became unknown for the next half a century. The conflict between *Khan-i-Jahan* bin *Khan-i-Jahan* and Malik Shams-ud-din Abu Riza proved deadly to the interests of the Turkish state. In fact, the entire history of the nobility since the inception of the Turkish state to its downfall in 1398 may be summed up in these words: *They united to destroy their enemies and disunited to destroy themselves.*

Another feature which has confronted us throughout our study is the real character of the Turkish nobility. It is difficult to call it either bureaucratic or feudal. In the beginning it had all the features of a tribal elite which refused to share political power with anyone outside their ranks. As time passed, many

other groups emerged that differed entirely in character from the bulk of the order. Thus, during the reigns of the Ilbaris, one can correctly designate the Ilbari nobility as a racial group; but, during the reign of the Khaljis and the Tughluqs, it would be meaningless to speak of a Khalji nobility or Tughluq nobility because it was not constituted of a particular racial group but of a number of groups deriving their power from the position they held and not from the particular ethnic group to which they belonged. Yet, occasionally these groups fought each other for power at the court. Khurasani and Hindustani politics made themselves felt during the reign of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq as we have already noticed earlier in connection with the revolt of Malik Ain-ul-mulk Multani. A similar instance is provided by the rise of Barwars under the Khaljis. But the supremacy of one racial group or the other based on royal patronage soon dwindled away into insignificance as soon as that patronage was removed and the particular racial group instantly found itself open to rapid dissolution or quick liquidation. This was the fate of the Barwars after the downfall of the Khaljis, and that of the Khorasanis after the death of Sultan Muhammad Tughluq. The racial character of the Turkish nobility is, therefore, for most of the time, only a myth and not a reality.

Eminent scholars, both Indian and foreign, have led themselves into the belief that the Turkish nobility was feudal in character. The territorial assignments made to the members of the nobility by the Sultans of Delhi have been called as fiefs, and an attempt has been made to prove that the Turkish nobility was marked by many of those attributes which were the principal features of the European feudal order. But this view has long since been challenged. As early as 1927, Moreland pointed out in a brilliant article already cited, that it was a folly to draw any analogy between the two systems because whatever outward semblance there might be in the two systems, disappears the moment it is closely examined. Recently, in a paper read before the twenty-fourth session of the Indian History Congress, Professor Abdur Rashid argued convincingly that it is difficult to trace elements of feudalism in the Delhi Sultanate during the thirteenth century. And, we may add that what is true about the thirteenth century is also true about the four-

teenth because the system hardly changed or was replaced by an alternative institution.

The main reasons why we cannot attribute a feudal character to the Turkish nobility are two. Firstly, the circumstances creating the two systems were different. In Europe, the feudal order arose because of the *weakness* of the monarchs; that is to say, by the force of circumstances, the monarchs in Europe were obliged to share their power with the nobility, but in India, the Turkish nobility was a creation of the monarchs themselves. The Sultans created it in order to uphold it as pillars of the empire. Moreover, in their attempt to graft the system of government of the Middle East on administrative practices in India, they had perhaps no alternative on account of perpetual internal and external threat. But, after having created it, they jealously guarded their own rights and thwarted all attempts of the nobility to share sovereignty. Frequent threats, from the western border helped the despotic rule of the Sultans to maintain its strength by concentrating all powers in their own hands. Had the Turkish state founded by Iltutmish been granted a longer life than was destined by fate, the minor powers granted to the nobility might have been converted into established rights but frequent changes of dynasties discouraged it. It would, therefore, seem that no stable nobility could establish itself in the Sultanate on account of the frequent dynastic changes and the predilection of each dynasty to ennoble its own kinsmen or adherents.

In another vital respect too, the Turkish system was poles asunder from its European counterpart. The privileges enjoyed by the European feudatories were totally absent in the Turkish system. Privileges or *Maratib*, as they are called, enjoyed by the Turkish nobility—such as the keeping of *Chatra*, *Durbash*, standard and drum—were not privileges strictly speaking because they hardly yielded an economic benefit to its owner. Moreover, these honours were conferred in recognition of actual services. They were special privileges granted by the state, whereas in Europe feudal privileges were rights acquired against the state. Another significant difference was that, whereas the privileges enjoyed by the European feudal lords depended on the possession of land and were, therefore, local, those granted to the Turkish nobility depended on the posses-

sion of an office and did not change on account of transfers or promotion. Finally the privileges of the Turkish nobility had nothing to do with the actual *iqtas* or assignments granted to them for their benefit.

The only resemblance perhaps was that of military assistance to the king in times of need as *Quid pro Quo* of the territorial assignments or ranks granted by the crown, but here too, there were remarkable distinctions. Firstly, in Europe, the feudal order was generally hereditary whereas in India it was not. Again, the forces maintained by the *iqtadar* were servants of the crown, directly paid out of the revenue of the *iqtas*, and the *muqtis* were, so to speak, only managers of the king's affair in his territory as is denoted by the term *naib* i.e. deputy. It is, therefore, a gross mistake to draw any analogy between the Turkish *iqta* system and the European feudal order.

Religion no doubt played an important part in the history of the nobility since exclusively the *Ulema* held posts in the judiciary as a matter of their birthright and they sided with the crown or the nobility at different times according to the respective strength of the two and thus gained or lost according to the right or wrong group they had supported. Nevertheless, the *Ulema* played an important part in shaping the policy of the Sultans by impressing upon them that they were defenders of the faith. One supreme duty assigned to them by the scriptures was to urge constant war (*jihad*) against the infidels. Time and again, they urged the Sultans to offer to the Hindus the choice of 'death or Islam'.

In one respect, however, this study has to be considered as not deep and thorough enough. The service conditions of the nobles could not be correctly assessed for want of paucity of material as has already been pointed out in the relevant chapter. Perhaps, the discovery of some fresh valuable material might enable a later scholar to delineate in greater detail and exactness this important aspect of their life in future. However, some few generalizations might be helpful to understand the general conditions of service. Broadly speaking, the Turks established so far as the central structure of the government was concerned, the same administrative system in India as prevalent in Persia and Egypt. In the provinces, too, the same system was adopted in broad details, but, so far as the local administration in

the interior was concerned, the old indigenous system continued throughout the period of this study.

In matters of pay and emoluments, the general practice seems to have been to make yearly payments to the nobles according to their ranks. At the top of the selected nobles were the *Khans* who were the highest-paid officers. The number of these *Khans* though small had no relation to the extent of the power and influence they wielded at the court, for next to the Sultan they were the foremost in power and prestige in the realm. Below them were the *Maliks* and then the *Amirs* and *Sipahsalar*s. Under all the three dynasties their pay differed from dynasty to dynasty and monarch to monarch. Besides the annual pay paid to them, the Sultans also distributed rich gifts among them on auspicious occasions and sometimes before starting for a fresh military campaign to ensure their loyalty.

Of the pay and emoluments of the members of the judiciary, there is no record in the chronicles or other contemporary literature. Ibn-i-Battutah, who could have been helpful in this respect, is totally silent though he mentions his own pay which cannot be taken as a general standard but it can be taken as a maximum since Ibn-i-Battutah was a favoured foreigner. He leaves an impression that the members of his class received a fixed pay. In any case, the Qazis were paid far less pay than the nobles holding the ranks of *Khan*, *Malik*, *Amir* or *Sipahsalar*.

A

A Note on Chihalgani Slaves of Iltutmish

Ziya-ud-din Barani, the author of the *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi* has set many scholars in speculation about the true meaning of Chihalgani, the collective name given by him to the nobles of Sultan Iltutmish. The difficulty of ascertaining the true character of this group of nobles has been increased all the more by the complete absence of any mention of such a designation by Minhaj-i-Siraj, the author of the *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, who was a contemporary of Sultan Shams-ud-din Iltutmish and of all his sons who succeeded him. It, however, appears that during his days the group had either not emerged as a powerful element to be reckoned with, or its composition was vague enough to form a collective entity. In any case, the name suggests that the group probably consisted of forty members, drawn out mainly from the slaves of Iltutmish. This number is not doubtful; for, Barani and Firishta have mentioned it expressly in their chronicles.¹ It must, however, be mentioned that, apart from the *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri* and other contemporary works, Firishta also drew his information relating to the slaves from the *Mulhiqat-i-Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, of Shaikh Ain-ud-din Bijapuri which is not extant now. It expressly mentions Malik Ikhtiyar-ud-din Altuniya, the *muqti* of Tabarhinda and the husband of Sultan Raziya, as a Chihalgani slave though nothing is on record either in the chronicle of Barani and other late writers to show that Malik Ikhtiyar-ud-din Altuniya was a Chihalgani.²

The truth, however, is that in the minds of later historians there were serious misgivings about this group and in the *Makhzan-i-Afghani*, Sultan Qutb-ud-din Aibak is mentioned as

¹ Barani: *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, p. 28; Firishta: *Gulshan-i-Ibrahimi*, pp. 179-80.

² Firishta: *Gulshan-i-Ibrahimi*, p. 164.

one of the Chihalganis. The text says: "When Sultan Shahab-ud-din died, Sultan Qutb, who was one of the forty slaves, ascended the throne of Delhi."³ This means that the Chihalganis had been organized under Sultan Muizz-ud-din Muhammad bin Sam which fact, if true, would also make Sultan Iltutmish as one of the Chihalganis. Minhaj-i-Siraj who gave separate accounts of both Qutb-ud-din and Iltutmish could not ignore this vital fact which is a clear proof that the author of the *Makhzan-i-Afghani* was not well-informed when he made the above statement.

Since Barani is our first authority to mention the Chihalganis as a group, let us first examine his statement about it to find out its exact nature or composition. He says: "After the death of Sultan Shams-ud-din, his Chihalgani slaves became all powerful. The sons of Sultan Shams-ud-din lacked princely habits and talents. . . . As a result of the predominance of Shamsi Turkish slaves, all those grandees and their descendants whose ancestors were *Maliks*, or sons of *Maliks*, or *Wazir* or sons of *Wazirs*, were destroyed on various pretexts during the reign of those sons of Sultan Shams-ud-din who knew nothing about the world around them or the requirements of kingship."⁴ This is enough proof of the fact that the Chihalganis as a political group emerged only after the death of Iltutmish and they ousted all those foreigners who had taken shelter in the court of Iltutmish and held very high appointments. But among themselves too there was no unity or corporate life as each wanted to assert his own influence and could not tolerate any of his colleagues gaining the upper hand in the realm.⁵

It will be noted that the membership of this group was confined only to the slaves of Iltutmish. Turning to the account of the reign of that monarch as given by Minhaj-i-Siraj, we find that he lists as many as thirty nobles⁶ of Iltutmish and the biographies of only twenty-five of his nobles find place in his narrative.⁷ Thus, it cannot be said definitely whether the slave

³ Niamat Ullah: *Makhzan-i-Afghani*, translated into English by Nirodbhusan Roy (Santiniketan, 1958), p. 13.

⁴ Barani: *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, p. 27.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

⁶ *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, pp. 177-8.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 231-324.

nobles of Sultan Shams-ud-din consisted of forty nobles. Barani says that each of the Chihalgani nobles assumed the title of Khan.⁸ If this be taken as the criteria, the number dwindles still more comprising fifteen members only. From Barani's account the famous among the *Chihalgani* nobles can be traced out which are listed below:

1. Ulugh Khan Balban
2. Ala-ud-din Kishli Khan, the *Amir-i-Hajib* of Balban
3. Sher Khan Sunqar, the *muqti* of Multan
4. Malik Timur Khan, the *muqti* of Avadh
5. Malik Muhammad Arsalan Khan, the *muqti* of Lakhnauti
6. Malik Imad-ul-mulk Rawat-i-Arz
7. Malik Amir Ali Sarjandar Hatim Khan

Firishta adds one more as already pointed out viz. Malik Ikhtiyar-ud-din Altuniya, the *muqti* of Tabarhinda and the husband of Sultan Raziya.

Muhammad Bihamad Khan, the author of *Tarikh-i-Muhammadi* also mentions one Malik Asad-ud-din, a noble of Firuz Shah holding the surname of Chihalgani which only suggests that the holder was descended from one of the *Chihalgani* slaves of Iltutmish.⁹

It appears that Barani coined a rhetorical term and sought to indicate that a number of nobles exercised immense power and controlled the affairs of the government. Chihalgani does not mean that they numbered forty or there existed any organized group pitted against the successors of Sultan Shams-ud-din Iltutmish.

⁸ Barani: *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, p. 65.

⁹ Muhammad Bihamad Khan: *Tarikh-i-Muhammadi*, BMM, p. 416a.

B

Explanatory Note on the statement

It is clear from the statement that the slaves who entered the service of Iltutmish generally started their career in some post connected with the personal service of the Sultan and made gradual progress till they held independent charge of big *iqtas* in the realm. For promotion to *muqtiship*, however, the period of apprenticeship in various capacities ranged from 10 to 30 years depending upon the ability of the incumbent as also the services rendered by him to the Sultan and not on the number of appointments. In some cases the incumbents were given smaller *iqtas* apparently in order to enable them gather some administrative experience before they were assigned bigger *iqtas*. But there were a few exceptions too as is indicated by the cases of Malik Kabir Khan-i-Ayaz Al-Muizzi Hazarmarda (No. 2) and Malik Nusrat-ud-din Taisi Muizzi (No. 6). But in fact these are not exceptions because both these nobles entered the service under Sultan Muizz-ud-din Muhammad bin Sam as is indicated by the title 'Muizzi' added to their name. They were already very senior nobles, almost his equals, when Iltutmish ascended the throne and it was in the fitness of things that in recognition of their loyalty to the new Sultan they were honoured with higher appointments and, therefore, do not form an exception to the general rule that important *iqtas* were assigned to the nobles of considerable experience and confidence.

Another notable feature is that out of the 25 nobles only five (Nos. 20, 21, 22, 23, and 25) were alive in 1259-60. Of these two (Nos. 23 & 25) were Ilbaris, another two (Nos. 20 & 22) belonged to the Qipchaq tribe and the fifth (No. 21) was a Rumi. But by the reign of Balban, the Qipchaq and Rumi members of the old Shamsi nobility totally disappear as they are not mentioned in the list of Balban's nobles.

Appendix B

Statement showing promotions made during the reign of Ilbari Sultans ()

S.N. (1)	NAME OF THE INCUMBENT (2)	TRIBE OR FAMILY (3)	I APPOINTMENT (4)	
1.	Taj-ud-din Sanjar Kazlak Khan	—	Chanshnigir	228)
2.	Kabir Khan-i-Ayaz Al-Muizzi Hazarmardah	Rumi	Muqti of Multan (1227)	
3.	Nasir-ud-din Aitimur Bahai	—	Sarjandar (After 1217)	
4.	Saif-ud-din Aibak	—	Sarjandar	
5.	Malik Saif-ud-din Aibak	Khitai	Amir-i-Majlis	
6.	Nusrat-ud-din Taisi Muizzi	—	Muqti of Hansi (1227)	
7.	Izz-ud-din Tughril Tughan Khan	Qaran Khita	Saqi-i-Khas	
8.	Qamar-ud-din Qiran Taimur Khan	Qipchaq	Not known	(1227)
9.	Hindu Khan Mubarak Alkhazin-us-sultani	Mahir	Yuzban	123
10.	Ikhtiyar-ud-din Qaraqash Khan Aitigin	Qara Khita	Safi	123
11.	Ikhtiyar-ud-din Altuniya Tabarhinda	—	Sharabdar	
12.	Ikhtiyar-ud-din Aitigin	Qara Khita	Sarjandar	(1227)
13.	Badr-ud-din Sunqar Rumi	Rumi	Teshtdar	(1227)
14.	Taj-ud-din Sanjar Qutlugh	Qipchaq	Jamadar	
15.	Taj-ud-din Sanjar Kuret Khan	Qipchaq	Shalma	
16.	Saif-ud-din Batkhan Aibak Khitai	Khitai	Sarjandar in the reign	
17.	Taj-ud-din Sanjar Tabar Khan	Garzi	Not known	
18.	Ikhtiyar-ud-din Yuzbak Tughril Khan	Qipchaq	Not known	
19.	Taj-ud-din Irsalan Khan Sanyar Khwarazmi	Khwarazmi	Khasadar in the reign	la
20.	Izz-ud-din Balban-i-Kishlu Khan	Qipchaq	Saqi (1227)	-ud-
21.	Nusrat Khan Badr-ud-din Sunqar Sufi Rumi	Rumi	—	124
22.	Arqali Dadbak Sait-ud-din Shamsi Ajmi	Qipchaq	Not known	
23.	Nusrat-ud-din Sher Khan Sunqar	Ilbari	Not known	125
24.	Kishli Kham Saif-ud-din Aibak Assultani Malik-ud-Hujjab	Ilbari	Not known	51-
25.	Ulugh Khan-i-Balban Assultani	Ilbari	A responsible job u Iltutmish (1232-33)	

IV APPOINTMENT	V APPOINTMENT	VI APPOINTMENT
(7)	(8)	(9)
Muqti of Kuhram	Muqti of Tabsihinda	Muqti of Uchcha (1
Muqti of Lahore (1237)	Muqti of Multan (1238-3)	—
—	—	—
Muqti of Sunam	Muqti of Uchcha (1229-30)	—
—	—	—
—	—	—
Amir-i-Akhur	Muqti of Badayun (1232-33)	Muqti of Bihar
Muqti of Kannauj (1237)	Muqti of Kara	Muqti of Avadh
Khanzinedar (1210)	Muqti (1237)	Muqti of Jalandhar
Muqti of Multan (1235-36)	Muqti of Lahore (1237)	Muqti of Bayana
Muqti of Baran (1237)	Muqti of Tabarhinda	—
Muqti of Badaun (1237)	Amir-i-Hajib	Naib of the Realm
Naib Amir-i-Hajib	Naib Amir-i-Akhur	Muqti of Badayun
Muqti of Sarsuti (1238)	Muqti of Badayun (1241)	—
Muqti of Baran	Muqti of Avadh	—
Muqti of Baran	Vakil-i-Dar (1246)	—
Muqti of Kasmanda	Muqti of Baran	Vakil-i-Dar (1256)
Shahna-i-Pil	Muqti of Tabarhinda (1241)	Muqti of Kannauj
Muqti of Bayana (1246)	Vakil-i-Dar	Muqti of Tabarhin
Muqti of Baran	Honoured by Raziya (1239)	Honoured by Muizz
—	Muqti of Kol (1242)	Muqti of Bayana
Amir-i-Dad (1242-43)	Muqti of Palwal (1246)	Muqti of Baran
—	Muqti of Lahore (1241-42)	Muqti of Bayana
Amir-i-Akhur (1241)	Amir-i-Hajib (1249)	Muqti of Kara (1
—	—	—
Amir-i-Akhur (1239)	Iqta of Rewari	Iqta of Hansi

Explanatory Note on the statement

One of the advantages of the information provided by the lists of nobles given by Minhaj-i-Siraj and Ziya-ud-din Barani, which otherwise are unimportant is the identification of the nobles which frequently are mentioned in the general narrative that follows the lists. Sometimes nobles who do not at all find a place in the political history are introduced to us through these lists alone. An instance will suffice to prove the extraordinary usefulness of these lists. Kamal Mahiyar is mentioned by Barani in the *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi* in connection with his appointment to the post of *Khvajaship* of Amroha. Balban severely reprimanded the high nobles who had recommended his case since he was an outcaste in the eyes of Balban who put undue emphasis on the ancestry and race of the incumbents. The appointment was not made during the reign of Balban as this is the only conclusion we can draw from the relevant context in Barani's *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*. But one Malik Kamal-ud-din Mahiyar is mentioned in the list of nobles of Sultan Muizz-ud-din Kaiqubad. This Kamal-ud-din Mahiyar is definitely the noble who was despised by Balban or rather by Barani. It, however, proves that in spite of the contempt with which the Hindu converts to Islam were held in those days, Kamal Mahiyar managed to rise higher and higher till he attained the rank of Malik, a much coveted appointment at the court next only to that of the Khan. Numerous examples may be quoted to prove that the lists, far from being an unconnected or disjointed part of the general history to which they are appended, are complementary and supplementary pieces of information invaluable for the study of the institution of nobility.

The present analysis, however, is confined to a comparative study of the nobles under the last of the Ilbari Turks and the

founders of the Khalji dynasty. It will be noticed that out of 35 nobles of Balban listed in column 1 of the statement, fourteen (serials 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 16, 33, 34, 35, 38 and 39) can be clearly identified in the list of Sultan Muizz-ud-din Kaiqubad. Of the remaining, many cannot be identified because of two reasons. Firstly, the change of titles following the accession of Muizz-ud-din Kaiqubad and secondly, the rise of junior nobles to places of importance. These junior nobles undoubtedly held some or the other post, however insignificant, under Balban, but their rise to places of power and prestige after the death of Balban became necessary firstly, in order to fill up the vacancies caused by wholesale massacre of neo-Muslim nobles who were trapped into the ghastly-tragedy by the machinations of Malik Nizam-ud-din and secondly, by removal of influential Turkish nobles of Balban who upheld the cause of Prince Kai Khusrau. Thus, though a large number of nobles remain unidentified yet it is an indisputable fact that there was no drastic change in the organization of the nobility under Muizz-ud-din Kaiqubad. In any case no new classes were added to the already existing sections of the Turkish nobility.

With the accession of Jalal-ud-din Khalji, a change is witnessed in the organization of the nobility though not very revolutionary in nature. Out of the thirty-six nobles of Jalal-ud-din, nine (Nos. 2, 4, 6, 9, 11, 21, 23, 24, and 28) are taken from the nobles of Muizz-ud-din. To these nine, if we add Malik Chhajju Kishli Khan, Amir Ali Sarjandar Hatim Khan and Malik Fakhr-ud-din Kotwal who for some years remained in the service of Jalal-ud-din Khalji, the total number comes to twelve i.e. exactly one-third of the nobles of Muizz-ud-din. Provision must also be made for at least six more nobles who cannot be identified with the nobles of Muizz-ud-din. Thus we come to the conclusion that at least 50 per cent of the nobles of Muizz-ud-din find place in the list of Jalal-ud-din's nobles.

Turning to the list of Ala-ud-din's nobles, we find that a revolutionary change has taken place in the structure of the nobility. Not a single noble can be identified with any person included in Jalal-ud-din's list, confirming Barani's statement that Ala-ud-din annihilated his uncle's supporters root and branch. However, it may be noticed that quite a few persons are taken into favour from amongst the nobles of Balban. In the list of Ala-ud-

Ala-ud-din's nobles, Khwaja Umdat-ul-mulk Ala Dabir (Serial 9) is identified with the same noble of Balban's list (Serial 18). Besides, his two sons viz. Kamal-ud-din *Dabir* and Malik Hamid-ud-din *Naib Vakil-i-Dar* of Ala-ud-din (serials 16 and 17), are taken into favour, perhaps on account of the influence of their father. Another important feature of Ala-ud-din Khalji's reign as depicted by the list of his nobles is that the list contains more nobles than any of the three preceding sultans which was definitely due on account of the expansion of the Turkish empire.

D

The Life & Career of Qutlugh Khan

Perhaps in the vast panorama of the political history of the early Turks, no personality attracts so much attention as that of Malik Qutlugh Khan, the step-father of Sultan Nasir-ud-din Mahmud (1246-1266). Yet the great tragedy about this noble has been that he has received scant attention from the contemporary and later historians thus leaving the actual role played by him in obscurity. With the little information we can glean from the chronicle of Minhaj-i-Siraj, it is difficult to form an exact idea of the power and influence wielded by him. In fact the paucity of information about his early life and his relations with other nobles leaves his career a mystery beyond apprehension and now there is the remotest possibility of solving the riddle created by Minhaj about him unless some contemporary accounts are discovered throwing full light on this important personality. It is really regrettable that Minhaj-i-Siraj, who gives separate accounts of nearly all the prominent nobles of the court, should have singularly ignored him though his close relationship with the house of Iltutmish definitely renders him fit for special attention.

He was the son of Malik Ala-ul-din Jani,¹ the prince of Turkistan, who is mentioned in the list of nobles of Sultan Shams-ud-din Iltutmish.² The early career of Malik Ala-ud-din Jani is enshrouded in mystery, but he was probably one of those princes who had taken shelter in the court of Iltutmish after being expelled by the Mongol invasions led by Changez Khan. In any case, he must have held a place of high honour at the court because he was a great confidant of Iltutmish and in 622 A.H.,

¹ *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, p. 177.

² *Ibid.*, p. 267.

(A.D. 1225) the Sultan appointed Malik Ala-ud-din Jani to the province of Bihar after his successful expedition to Lakhnauti, to punish Sultan Ghiyas-ud-din Khalji.³ Malik Ala-ud-din Jani could not enjoy his new assignment for long as the territory was again recovered by Sultan Ghiyas-ud-din Khalji. Accordingly, another expedition was sent to Lakhnauti in 624 A.H. (A.D. 1226-27) under the leadership of the then crown-prince, Malik Nasir-ud-din Mahmud (the elder), in which Malik Ala-ud-din Jani also led an important wing.⁴ Ghiyas-ud-din Khalji was defeated and put to death and the *iqta* of Lakhnauti was conferred upon Prince Nasir-ud-din Mahmud.⁵ He, however, soon died unexpectedly in March 1229. The Khaljis of Lakhnauti, led by Balka Malik Husam-ud-din Iwaz Khalji, siezed the province and declared independence.⁶ Sultan Iltutmish again led an expedition in A.D. 1229-30 to Lakhnauti and after defeating the Khaljis, conferred it upon Malik Ala-ud-din Jani and left for Delhi.⁷ He was, however, soon dismissed from his assignment and the *iqta* was conferred on Malik Saif-ud-din Aibak.⁸ Although nothing is known about Malik Ala-ud-din Jani during the rest of the reign of Iltutmish, he appears to have been pardoned and again taken into favour for he is mentioned among the nobles of the court who rebelled against Sultan Rukn-ud-din Firuz Shah. Along with Malik Kuchi, he invaded the capital to seize the Sultan.⁹ In the reign of Raziya he joined hands with her opponents at the end of 1236.¹⁰ He was soon captured at Payal (34 miles north-west of Patiala) and put to death. His severed head was sent to the court.¹¹

His son, Malik Qutlugh Khan, who must have entered the court in the days of Iltutmish's successors, is mentioned for the

³ *Ibid.*, p. 163.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 168 and 180 Minhaj gives his title as Izz-ul-mulk (*Ibid.*, p. 163) which clearly suggests that he was a Tazik. His downfall along with other Tazik nobles on Rukh-ud-din's court further confirms this presumption.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 180.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 174.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 174.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 239.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 295.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 186.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 187.

first time in the events of the reign of Sultan Nasir-ud-din Mahmud for the year 650 A.H. (1252-53) as the *muqti* of Bayana. In that year, the Mongols led an expedition into India and the Sultan, in order to repel the attack, left Delhi on 26th December 1252 with a large army.¹² When the royal camp reached near the river Bias, Qutlugh Khan, and Malik Izz ud-din Kishlu Khan, the *muqti* of Badaun joined the royal standards.¹³ It was at this occasion that Imad-ud-din Raihan succeeded in turning the Sultan against Balban who was transferred to the *iqta* of Hansi.¹⁴ The previous career of Imad-ud-din Raihan and Qutlugh Khan, their mutual relations and their relationship with the harem of the Sultan, are not known but that they were working together for the downfall of Balban is clearly proved by the favours granted to them by the Sultan after the downfall of Balban. Minhaj-i-Siraj says that Imad-ud-din Raihan was appointed *Vakil-i-Dar*; Malik Ain-ul-mulk Muhammad Nizam Junaidi received the office of *Wazir*; Qazi Shams-ud-din of Bahraich was appointed to the Chief Qaziship of the realm in place of Qazi Minhaj-i-Siraj.¹⁵ Malik Izz-ud-din Balban, the son-in-law of Qutlugh Khan, was appointed to the post of *Naib Amir-i-Hajib*. All the associates and confidants of Balban were transferred to different *iqtas*.¹⁶

The supremacy of Qutlugh Khan's clique did not last long as is well-known. The recall of Balban to the court in December 1254 and his reconciliation with the Sultan led to the downfall of Qutlugh Khan's party. Izz-ud-din Balban left towards the *iqta* of Qutlugh Khan and Imad-ud-din Raihan was deprived of the post of *Vakil-i-Dar* and transferred to Budaun.¹⁷ But early in January-February 1255, the marriage of Qutlugh Khan was solemnized with Shah Turkan, the mother of the Sultan, which deeply estranged the Sultan against his mother and her new husband. The Sultan transferred Qutlugh Khan to Avadh in order to save his face from their irksome presence. Simultane-

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 216. In the account of Ulugh Khan Balban the date of departure of the army is given December 16. 1252 (*Ibid.*, p. 297).

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 216.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 217.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 217.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 299.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 302.

ously, Imad-ud-din Raihan, who was a close associate of Qutlugh Khan, was transferred to Bahraich.¹⁸

Qutlugh Khan tried to create trouble in Avadh for a number of times and was warned by the court for his misconduct. Imad-ud-din Raihan, the *muqti* of Bahraich, also created trouble in that territory since both of them were close associates. Malik Taj-ud-din Sanjar Mah Peshani was assigned the *iqta* of Bahraich and sent to suppress the rebellion of Imad-ud-din Raihan and Qutlugh Khan. He was, however, captured and imprisoned by the latter but effected his release by a clever strategem and proceeded to Bahraich where he defeated and killed Imad-ud-din Raihan.¹⁹

The death of Raihan rendered Qutlugh Khan very weak and his downfall became imminent. In 1256, Ulugh Khan led an expedition to Avadh to bring Qutlugh Khan to submission but the latter could not be captured. Qutlugh Khan now fled with his associates towards the Siwalik hills. Ulugh Khan was commanded to pursue him but he could not succeed.²⁰ Qutlugh Khan now took shelter in the Santur hills where he soon attracted a large following on account of his power and influence with the help of Rana Ranpal Hindi, the ruler of that territory. When the news of Qutlugh Khan's actions were known at the court a large army was sent against him under Ulugh Khan Balban in April 1257 towards the hills of Santur.²¹ A number of hotly contested battles took place between the two forces but without a decisive victory to either. Ulugh Khan now pressed towards the fort of Sirmur which was Qutlugh Khan's headquarter and laid a siege to that strong fort. Rana Ranpal could not face the royal army and fled. The fort of Sirmur was captured.²² Qutlugh Khan now escaped towards Punjab to join Malik Izz-ud-din Balban Kishli Khan. Their combined forces now proceeded towards Kuhram and Samana and occupied those territories. Ulugh Khan and Kishli Khan now proceeded along with other nobles of the court to arrest their depredations. When the two

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 303; *Muntakhab-ut-tawarikh*, p. 92.

¹⁹ *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, p. 304; *Tarikh-i-Mubarakshahi*, p. 37. He says that in Avadh Qutlugh Khan was joined by Izz-ud-din and with the help of Hindu Rajas raised the standard of revolt.

²⁰ *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, pp. 305-06.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 306-07.

²² *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, p. 307.

armies came face to face near Kaithal, Ulugh Khan succeeded in surrounding the rebels on all sides. Finding an open engagement futile, Qutlugh Khan and Izz-ud-din Balban Kishli Khan left the field and made a direct approach to the capital with a view to capture it and the king. Some of the *Ulema* at the court invited them to come with promises to deliver the city. This treachery, however, leaked out and some of the confidants of Ulugh Khan who were posted in the capital reported it to him. Ulugh Khan immediately wrote back to the Sultan to remove the *Ulema* involved from the capital by ordering them to go to their own *iqtas*.²³ Thus when the combined forces of Qutlugh Khan and Izz-ud-din Balban-i-Kishli Khan reached the capital, a gallant opposition was offered by the loyal nobles of the court and they could not effect an entry into the capital. Ulugh Khan also came to Delhi with swift marches foiling the attempt of Qutlugh Khan to seize the capital.²⁴ Qutlugh Khan and his associates now sought shelter with the Mongols.²⁵ After an interval of seven months, i.e. in December 1257, he along with the Mongol forces entered Sindh and besieged the fort of Multan causing great damage. The royal forces too came out of Delhi on January 9, 1258 and encamped outside the capital with a formidable force to face the Mongols who, learning of the enormous arrangements for the defence of the capital, decided to

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 308. In the account of Malik Izz-ud-din Balban Kishli Khan, Minhaj gives more details of the event. From his account it appears that Qutlugh Khan and Malik-i-Jahan had arrived with their forces near the garden of Jud outside Delhi and waited the arrival of Malik Izz-ud-din Balban Kishli Khan but failing to capture the capital he left for Uchha and from there went to the court of Halaku Mongol, the ruler of Turkistan and returned with a Mongol army. (*Ibid.*, pp. 272-3; *Tarikh-i-Mubarakshahi*, pp. 37-8).

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 310.

²⁵ Of Qutlugh Khan's doings in the Mongol court, Minhaj is totally silent but further details are given by *Tarikh-i-Binagiti*: "Malik Jalal-ud-din fled from Hind, and in 655H presented himself in the Urdu of Mangu Khan along with Qutlugh Khan and Sunqar (Sher Khan Sunqar). Mangu Khan commanded that a befitting grant should be assigned to the latter, and a Yarligh was issued to the Nuyun Sali then in those parts (in the tract on the Indus, and as far as east Biah) to aid him with his troops. Malik Jalal-ud-din returned therefore and he was permitted to take possession of the district of Luhawur".—*Tarikh-i-Binagiti* as quoted by Revery in the translation of the *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, pp. 1224-5.

retire without provoking a contest. Meanwhile, Qutlugh Khan succeeded in forming an alliance with Malik Taj-ud-din Irsalan Khan, the *muqti* of Kara and Avadh. The local Hindu rajas of Avadh and Kara Manikpur also joined their standards. This sorely alarmed the court and Ulugh Khan immediately left for Kara Manikpur to arrest the further progress of Qutlugh Khan and Irsalan Khan both of whom now fled for their life along with their family and baggage. Finding their cause thus totally lost, they sued for pardon through the intercession of Ulugh Khan, which was granted. Both of them presented themselves at the court on October 7, 1258. They were received with courtesy by Ulugh Khan who conferred many favours on them with the result that they became once again loyal servants of the crown. Two months after Lakhnauti was granted to Qutlugh Khan and Irsalan Khan was posted to Kara Manikpur.²⁶ Nothing further is known about Qutlugh Khan who appears to have died there soon after because in May 1259, his son-in-law Malik Izz-ud-din Balban Yuzubaki, is mentioned the *muqti* of Lakhnauti who sent immense riches, valuable presents and two elephants to the court. In return for this gesture of loyalty, the *iqta* of Lakhnauti was permanently conferred upon him.²⁷ But he could scarcely enjoy the fruits of his possession because Malik Irsalan Khan attacked Lakhnauti during his absence. A battle took place between the two in which Izz-ud-din was defeated and died soon after in captivity.²⁸

²⁶ *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, p. 312.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 313.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 267-8.

E

Letter

of Maulana Rashid-ud-din

Letter of Maulana Rashid-ud-din to Maulana Qutb-ud-din Masood Sheerazi* from Multan, informing him of his journey to India as well as the details of his stay there etc.¹

After customary Salam (Salutation in verse) the writer says:

My sincere friend and dear acquaintance, paying my due respects to you, I pray to God, with great humility and submission for your long life and prosperity. Almighty God very well knows my grief of long separation from you and eager desire to see you again. I cannot express my distress, due to a long separation, by my pen.

After all it may be known to you that while I was feeling miserable it so happened that it occurred to our King Arghoon Khan to send me, a true friend of you, on any embassy to the lands of India, so that I may communicate the details of the prestige and dignity of the Ilkhanis to the Kings and rulers in those lands and induce them to be united and obedient to our monarch. Another object of my mission was to obtain beneficial herbs and drugs, which are not found in Iran. In the course of my journey I had to face many dangers and perils, but it was all in compliance with royal order. However, I reached the towns of Kaij and Makran, which are on the shores of Omman. I found that the rulers of that land were all firm and true, and there was not the least tinge of falsehood and evil intent in their speech or actions. They all received me enthusiastically and similarly a large crowd of people came to see me off when I boarded the ship on way to Delhi. In spite of my separation from sincere friends,

¹ I am indebted to Sri Abrar Husain of Gopamanu for the English translation of this letter.

which was painful to me I was consoling myself by reciting this verse:

Disease after disease but no curer, and sickness after sickness, but no medicine.

But on reaching Indian soil, I devotedly thanked God. For a shortwhile I stayed in Dhar (Malwa) when Sultan Ala-ud-din (Khilji) (God may bestow eternity to his country and authority) heard that I had arrived there. He then sent some of his nobles to Dhar to escort me, with all honour and due respect, to his Court. When, by the grace of God, I reached his court and got the honour of kissing the Royal threshold, he showed on me so much kindnesses and greatest honours that I cannot possibly describe them. During my long stay in Delhi, the king one day held a special Durbar with so much pomp and show that the paradise may envy it. In that very Durbar I found that the monarch spends a good deal of his time in merry-making, drinking wine and musical entertainment. I felt it my duty, as a sincere friend, according to commandment of God ('He advises you, perhaps you abide by them.'), to call his attention to the fact that the wealth of youth spent on wine-cups would not hold out to meet the important affairs of the time, nor would be able to render or to pay what is due to his servants and subjects, and thus he cannot perform his regal duties. (The writer here illustrates his advice with a narrative of evil consequences of wine habit).

When the monarch listened to my exhortation he did realize that my aim was for his own good name in this world and incalculable rewards for him in the next.

His faith in me and for my friendship increased, and he very kindly assigned to me four villages, the area of each of which was greater than the holy city of Yezd. This assignment was made to me in perpetuity as a fief to be retained by my successors decade after decade. The trust deed was drawn according to the rules of *Shariat*, endorsed by the signatures of Qazis and of other authorities concerned and administrators of the place. To his revenue officers he issued orders that the annual revenue of these lands should be regularly remitted to me through trustworthy merchants, who

would hand them over to my representatives or agents in the city of Basra, and obtaining a detailed receipt from them to submit it to the monarch. This process would continue with respect to my successors also. Over and above this he ordered that 5000 (Five Thousand) *Misqal* of Royal (Alai) gold should also be sent annually as a stipend for me to my representative in Basra and obtain a receipt also.

About the time of my return journey he also gave me silver, gold, musk, ambergris as well as garments and victuals, the details of which, it is impossible to give. At the time of actually bidding adieu and taking leave for my departure, I presented myself before the King and kissed his feet, he then asked me to send one of my sons to him and said: "I want that you send one of your sons, who may be famous in bravery, courage and ingenuity, so that I may also give him the control of the affairs of my country just as land of Iran is under your control."

He assured me that he will look after my son and train him in such a way that the whole world would envy him and in this way the affectionate and cordial relations between us shall be maintained for ever.

Now that by the grace of God, after succeeding in my mission in the interest of Ilkhani kingdom, I am determined to leave Multan very soon for Kabul *en route* to Khurasan and therefrom to the Capital Tebrez, where I hope to meet you, with the help of God. *Salam*.

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