

II. SULTAN MUHAMMAD BIN TUGHLUQ (1324-51)

PERHAPS NO OTHER SULTAN of medieval India has excited so much curiosity about himself and provoked so much criticism of his policies as Muhammad bin Tughluq. His reign of twenty-six years is a fascinating but tragic story of schemes and projects correctly conceived, badly executed and disastrously abandoned. His ingenious mind was as quick in formulating new plans as it was slow in understanding the psychology of the people. He could never establish that rapport and mutual understanding with his subjects, which was so necessary for the successful implementation of his schemes. He doubted the intentions of the people, and the people suspected his motives. A yawning gulf appeared between him and his subjects and it went on widening with the passage of time. Each project left its ominous trail on the other till at last the whole atmosphere became surcharged with bitterness and hostility.

Notwithstanding all this, Muhammad bin Tughluq's reign forms a watershed in the history of the Delhi sultanat because it was under him that it reached its highest watermark; but then a reaction also set in and one rebellion after another sapped the foundations of his power. The Sultan strove ceaselessly throughout his reign to push ahead his concept of the political and administrative unity of India, but when he closed his eyes in death a number of independent kingdoms had raised their heads and the sultanat had retreated to its old frontiers. An inevitable consequence of this tragic denouement of his life was that all sorts of prejudices, consciously or unconsciously, entered in all assessments of his thoughts and projects. He was either painted as an 'ill-starred idealist' or condemned as a blood-thirsty tyrant (*khuni*). Those who found an excuse or an explanation for his failure in his scholarly make-up ignored the fact that, despite all his academic interests, Muhammad bin Tughluq was essentially and basically a soldier and a man of action, who spent more time on the battlefield than even Balban or Alauddin Khalji, and that his policies should, therefore, be judged as such. Here an attempt has been made to examine Muhammad bin Tughluq's thought and behaviour in its historical milieu and in all its lights and shades.

ACCESSION

Since Ghiyasuddin Tughluq had already designated Ulugh Khan as his heir-apparent,¹ his elevation to the throne was smooth and without any opposition. After a state-mourning of forty days for the death of his father, he decided to celebrate his coronation at Delhi. So long he had lived at Tughluqabad, but now he entered the old city and, as a happy and auspicious omen, seated himself on the throne in the Daulat Khana, which had witnessed the coronations of many previous sultans of Delhi.² The city of Delhi was beautifully and lavishly decorated for the festival; cupolas were erected; and richly embroidered and artistically decorated sheets of cloth were hung all along the streets, bazars and lanes of the capital. When the royal procession entered the city, gold and silver coins were scattered right and left and were even thrown on to the balconies and into the laps (*damans*) of the spectators. As the Sultan proceeded to the Daulat Khana through the Badaun Gate, there was a profuse 'rain of gold and silver'. 'All people', writes Barani, 'men and women, young and old, children and grown-ups, free-born and slaves, Muslims and Hindus, shouted praises and blessed Sultan Muhammad and filled their handkerchiefs (*dastarchas*), purses, and pockets with coins of gold and silver. Delhi looked like a garden profusely blooming with white and yellow flowers.'³ Barring Alauddin Khalji, such pedantic display of generosity at the very outset of a reign had not been seen during the time of any other sultan of Delhi.⁴

Both Isami and Barani have used this happy beginning of his reign as a contrast-background to the delineation of the subsequent atmosphere of horror and hatred that prevailed during his regime. Soon after his accession, he adopted the name Muhammad (formerly he was known by his Hindi⁵ name, Jauna) and announced *Abul Mujahid* as his epithet.⁶ According to Isami, he assured the people of his determination

1 The author of *Tarikh-i Ma'sumi* (64) says that his father had conferred upon him the title 'Sultan Muhammad Shah' but this is not confirmed by any early authority.

2 *Firuz Shahi*, 456.

3 *Ibid.*, 457.

4 Though based on hearsay, the following account of Makhduma-i Jahan, mother of the Sultan, as given by Ibn-i Battuta (*Rehla*, Eng. tr., Gaekwad's Oriental Series, 118), gives some idea of the eclat and splendour with which the occasion was celebrated: 'But she has lost her eyesight, which came about in this way. When her son ascended the throne, all the ladies and the daughters of maliks and amirs, dressed in their best clothes, came to pay their respects. She was seated on a gold throne studded with jewels. All of them bowed to her. Then all of a sudden she lost her eyesight.'

5 *Futuh-us Salatin*, Madras edition, 421.

6 *Ibid.*, 421; *Rehla*, 56.

to follow in the footsteps of his deceased father, and declared: 'Every old man in my territory is like a father to me and every young man is like (my brother), Balram Khan, in my affection.'⁷

A well-established tradition of the Delhi sultanat was the appointment of many high officials at the time of the coronation and the conferment of titles and honours on persons chosen to constitute the main core of the governing class of the new regime. Curiously enough, Barani has omitted this list of appointments, but Yahya Sirhindi supplies the necessary details.⁸ According to him the Sultan conferred the following posts and titles at this time:

'Malik Firuz—*naib-i barbek*; Malik Ayaz—*Khawaja-i Jahan*; Malik Qabul—*Malik Kabir*; Malik Sartez—*Imadul Mulk*; Malik Khurram Mubiz—*Zahirul Juyush*; Hamid Kumli—*Raziul Mulk*; Malik Pindar Khalji—*Qadr Khan*, and the *iqta* of Lakhnauti; Malik Husamuddin Abu Raja—*Nizamul Mulk* and the wizarat of Lakhnauti; Malik Izzuddin Yahya Bandat—*A'zamul Mulk* and the *iqta* of Satgaon; Maulana Qawamuddin—*Qutlugh Khan* and the office of *vakildar*; Muhammad, eldest son of Maulana Qawamuddin—*Alp Khan* and the *iqta* of Gujarat; Maulana Kamaluddin, brother of Qawamuddin—*sadr-i jahan*; Maulana Nizamuddin, another brother of Qawamuddin—*Alimul Mulk*; Nizamuddin Kamal Surkh—*Mukhlisul Mulk*; Shihab Sultani—*Tajul Mulk*; Maulana Yusuf—*Dawarul Mulk*; Malik Qiran—*Safdarul Mulk*; Malik Begi—*sardawatdar*; Malik Shihabuddin Abu Raja—*Malikut Tujjar* and the *iqta* of Nausari.'

For a proper assessment of the role of Muhammad bin Tughluq in the history of the Delhi sultanat, it is necessary to construct, with as much accuracy as possible, the chronology of his reign and to analyse his basic political and religious concepts. With the help of one we can follow the *sequence* of events, and with the other the *logic* of these events during the period of his hectic rule.

CHRONOLOGY

Chronology presents a very complicated problem for one trying to analyse the various measures of the Sultan and their reactions in terms of causal connections. Barani was guided by the character and intensity of the impact that the Sultan's various projects had on his own mind rather than their historical sequence.⁹ Ibn-i Battuta is

⁷ *Futuh-us Salatin*, 422.

⁸ *Mubarak Shahi*, 98.

⁹ He frankly admits this, see *Firuz Shahi*, 478.

reliable for incidents that occurred during his stay in India, but is not helpful about events that took place before his arrival. The two versified accounts of Muhammad bin Tughluq—that of Isami and Badr-i Chach—are more helpful in constructing a chronological framework of his reign. The following sequence of events emerges from a study of all the available sources of his reign—political chronicles, poetical works, numismatic and epigraphic evidence, mystic records and accounts of foreign travellers.

According to Barani, Muhammad bin Tughluq ascended the throne at Tughluqabad in A.H. 725/1325.¹⁰ Isami gives A.H. 724/1324¹¹ as the date of his accession and he is supported by evidence available from other sources. (a) Ibn-i Battuta says that Ghiyasuddin Tughluq ruled for four years.¹² It is clear from Khusrau's *Tughluq Nama*¹³ that he had ascended the throne on 2 Sha'ban 720/7 September 1320. This would make A.H. 724/1324 the year of his death, and naturally the year of Muhammad bin Tughluq's accession. (b) A *farman*¹⁴ of Muhammad bin Tughluq granted to the descendants of Shaikh Hamiduddin Sufi Nagauri is dated 14 Zil Hij 724/21 November 1324. (c) It is possible to reconcile the statements of Barani and Isami if we place Muhammad bin Tughluq's accession in Zil Hij 724/November-December 1324 and his coronation forty days later, i.e. in A.H. 725/1325.

One of the earliest events of Muhammad bin Tughluq's reign was the invasion of Tarmashirin Khan. Yahya Sirhindi gives 729/1328 as the date of this invasion.¹⁵ Ferishta,¹⁶ however, says that it took place in 727/1326-27 and his date is supported by circumstantial evidence. Isami refers to the conquest of Kalanaur and Farashur (Peshawar) by the Sultan very soon after his accession.¹⁷ Perhaps the campaign which led to the conquest of Kalanaur and Peshawar was undertaken after this invasion in order to consolidate the position in the frontier areas and to create an effective bulwark against Mongol incursions.

10 *Ibid.*, 456.

11 *Futuh-us Salatin*, 421.

12 *Rehla*, 50.

13 *Tughluq Nama*, 132 *et seq.*

14 See *Saroorus Sadur* (Ms. in Habibganj collection of the Aligarh Muslim University Library). It is a collection of the conversations of Shaikh Hamiduddin Sufi of Nagaur; and since it was compiled during the reign of Muhammad bin Tughluq, it gives very interesting information about the Sultan. The Habibganj Ms. has some other valuable documents, like the *farman* referred to above, appended to it.

15 *Mubarak Shahi*, 101.

16 *Ferishta*, I, 134.

17 *Futuh-us Salatin*, 423-24.

The first rebellion of Muhammad bin Tughluq's reign was organized by his cousin, Bahauddin Gurshasp. According to Isami¹⁸ it took place two years after the Sultan's accession, i.e. in 727/1326-27. A few months after the execution of Gurshasp, the conquest of Kondhana was undertaken.¹⁹ The campaign against Gurshasp took several months, because he held out for two months at Kumta and for one month at Mahendrag. He was arrested when he crossed over to Dwara Samudra. All this must have taken at least five to six months. Isami says that the siege of the Kondhana fort lasted eight months.²⁰ Calculated on this basis, the conquest must have been completed sometime in the middle of 728/1328.

Isami says that the Sultan received the news of the revolt of Bahram Aiba Kishlu Khan when he was resting at Devagiri after his campaign against Kondhana.²¹ It may, therefore, be placed sometime in 728/1327-28. Barani gives no date but considers it the first rebellion of the reign.²²

It appears from Isami's account that the rebellion of Ghiyasuddin Bahadur Shah took place almost simultaneously with the campaign against Bahram Aiba, but the Sultan received the report about its successful suppression when he had completed his operations against Aiba.²³ Thus, it may be presumed that it took place some time late in 728/1328 or early in 729/1328-29. Numismatic evidence supports this inference. The available joint currency of Ghiyasuddin Bahadur and Muhammad bin Tughluq does not go beyond 728/1328.

It appears from Isami that the Sultan issued orders for the exodus to Devagiri after his return to Delhi from Multan²⁴ and prior to the introduction of the token currency.²⁵ Isami's account implies that the token currency was introduced as a measure of punishment for the refractory attitude of the people, who had been sent to Daulatabad.²⁶ Numismatic evidence shows that the token currency was introduced in 730/1329-30.²⁷ The exodus to Devagiri may, therefore, be placed in 729/1328-29.

According to Isami the token currency was withdrawn three years

18 *Ibid.*, 424.

19 *Ibid.*, 432. Ferishta gives 739/1338 which is obviously incorrect.

20 *Futuh-us Salatin*, 432 *et seq.*

21 *Ibid.*, 433.

22 *Firuz Shahi*, 478.

23 *Futuh-us Salatin*, 444-45.

24 *Ibid.*, 445-46.

25 *Ibid.*, 459-60.

26 *Ibid.*, 459-60.

27 *JASB*, XVII, 1921, No. 1, 147-52.

after its introduction.²⁸ Numismatic evidence corroborates this. All the available token coins belong to 730/1329-30, 731/1330-31 and 732/1331-32 only.²⁹

Ziyouddin Barani says³⁰ that the Sultan enlisted 370,000 horsemen for the conquest of Khurasan, but they were disbanded after a year because the treasury was unable to pay their salaries any longer. Then 10,000 soldiers were sent to Qarachil. No contemporary or near-contemporary work gives us the exact year in which the army for Khurasan was enlisted. Still it is possible to fix the approximate period. The failure of the monsoon in 1333 left the Sultan no alternative but to seize the grain of the Doab peasants, and when Ibn-i Battuta reached Delhi in March 1334, he found the citizens being given rations for the next six months.³¹ The Sultan left for the South in mid-winter 1334-35, to suppress the rebellion of Ma'abar, and when he returned after two and a half years, the 'bulk'—or 'two-thirds'—of his army had perished in the bubonic plague, while the famine continued. For the next ten years the central authority was paralysed; so neither the Khurasan plan nor the Qarachil campaign can be put after 1333. Now Mir Khurd, who was born about 1310, tells us³² in a passage (quoted later) that the Sultan had begun his propaganda for the Khurasan campaign in the year of the exodus (1329). Next year he issued his token currency. Its success would have given him the silver he needed, but its failure left him no alternative but to redeem his bronze coins and to disband the army. The Khurasan army must have, therefore, been enlisted in 1330-31 and disbanded in the following year. The Sultan's relief measures, foundation of Saragdwari, etc. followed the outbreak of famine. According to Barani the Sultan removed his name from the coins and substituted that of the Khalifa after his return from Saragdwari.³³ The coins without the Sultan's name belong to 741/1340-41.³⁴ According to Ibn-i Battuta the Sultan had stayed at Saragdwari for two and a half years.³⁵ This would mean that he returned from Saragdwari before 741/1340 and that the town of Saragdwari had been founded late in 738/1338 or early in 739/1338.

During the decade beginning in 729/1328 and ending in 739/1338, that is from the exodus to Devagiri to the foundation of the city

28 *Futuh-us Salatin*, 460.

29 *JASB*, XVII, 1921, No. 1, 147-52.

30 *Firuz Shahi*, 477.

31 *Rehla*, 117.

32 *Siyarul Auliya*, 271.

33 *Firuz Shahi*, 492.

34 Thomas, *Chronicles of the Pathan Kings of Delhi*, 259-60.

35 *Rehla*, 87, III.

of Saragdwari, the Sultan had to deal with a number of rebellions, the two most conspicuous being the rebellions of Ma'abar and Bengal, which broke out in 735/1334 and 739/1338 respectively. The independent coins of Jalaluddin Shah of Ma'abar date back to 735/1334,³⁶ and it may be presumed on that account that his rebellion took place about that time. The rebellion of Fakhruddin Shah in Bengal took place sometime in 739/1338. This date can be fixed on the basis of the following calculation. According to Isami this rebellion took place after the return of Muhammad bin Tughluq from Daulatabad.³⁷ Ibn-i Battuta informs us that the Sultan returned from Daulatabad after two and a half years. Since he started for Ma'abar in Jamadi I 735/December 1334-January 1335, his return would be in 737/1336-37. A coin³⁸ of Fakhruddin Shah, which is dated 737/1336-37, supports the above date.

According to Isami, Delhi was repopulated after fourteen years of wilderness.³⁹ This means that the permission to go to Delhi was given to the people in 743/1342, but Barani definitely states that the Sultan, probably on account of the plague, gave a general permission to the people to go to Delhi when he was on his way from Telingana. 'Two or three *carawans*, which had stayed on there, were sent to Delhi; others who were happy in the Maharashtra territory continued to live there with their wives and children', remarks Barani.⁴⁰ It means that during the years 735-737/1335-37 all those emigres of Delhi, who wanted to do so, had returned to the north.

In 741/1340-1, according to Ibn-i Battuta, 'the Sultan ordered the remission of duties in his empire adding that no tax should be realized from the people except the *zakat* (import duties) and *ushr* (land tax).'⁴¹

36 *JRAS*, 1922, 344; 1902, 673.

37 *Futuh-us Salatin*, 471.

38 Thomas, *Chronicles*, 263.

39 *Futuh-us Salatin*, 262.

40 *Firuz Shahi*, 481.

41 *Rehla*, 84. This passage needs elucidation. It does not refer, as is sometimes thought, to the general taxation policy of the Sultan. It deals with *non-shari'at taxes levied on imports* and should be read with the following statement made earlier by Ibn-i Battuta on pages 12-13: 'At the time of our arrival it was the custom at Multan that one-fourth of the commodities brought by the merchants was appropriated by the state and on every horse was levied a tax of seven dinars. Two years after our arrival in India the Sultan remitted these taxes. And he ordered that nothing should be realized from the merchants (*an-nas*) except the *zakat* and *ushr*, when he took the oath of allegiance to Abul Abbas, the Abbasid Caliph.' In this passage Ibn-i Battuta's memory erred in indicating the period as 'two years after his arrival in India' which would mean 735/1335. The date given on page 84 is correct and also corresponds to the latter part of his statement that it was after his oath of allegiance to the Caliph.

Three rebellions broke out when the Sultan was staying at Saragdwari—(i) the rebellion of Ainul Mulk Multani; (ii) the rebellion of Shihabuddin Nusrat Khan; and (iii) the rebellion of Ali Shah Nathu.

The dates of the remaining events of the Sultan's reign are known and will be given as we proceed. But this chronology of the first sixteen years of the reign, though only approximate, will help us in putting events in their chronological and causal sequence. Barani definitely says that he has not followed the time-sequence, and curiously enough, no modern historian has attempted to put the most important events of the reign in their historical order.

THE POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS CONCEPTS AND ATTITUDES OF THE SULTAN

The Sultan's religious and political ideas deserve careful consideration as many of his attitudes were conditioned by them and had a bearing on many of his projects and administrative policies.

1) Muhammad bin Tughluq possessed an unusual originality of mind. He was never satisfied with stereotyped solutions of problems. He hated traditional and conventional approach in all matters. Barani has referred to this quality of the Sultan's mind in different contexts, using different words—*ikhtira'ah*,⁴² when he deals with his political activities, and *tahkimat-i mujaddid*,⁴³ when referring to his quaint attitude in religious and other matters.

2) Politically the keynote of the Sultan's thought was his desire to achieve the political and administrative unity of India. He was anxious to liquidate the barriers—political as well as intellectual—which separated the North from the South. Perhaps no ruler after Asoka had visualized India as a political and administrative unit in the same way as Muhammad bin Tughluq. His Deccan experiment led to the rapid cultural transformation of the South. From Delhi to Daulatabad it was now one world. While his armies were moving from Daulatabad to Multan and from Bengal to Gujarat, mystics, scholars, merchants, poets and administrators annihilated the distance which, for centuries, had narrowed down the vision of the Indian people.

3) When Muhammad bin Tughluq ascended the throne of Delhi, the Central Asian scene was in a state of constant flux. The power of the Il Khans had declined and Timur had not yet been born. There was a vacuum in the political life of Central Asia. Could he fill in

⁴² *Firuz Shahi*, 462-63.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 467, 470.

Also 471 where Barani refers to *ahkamul mujaddida wa awamirul mukhtar'ah* as causes of rebellions.

that vacuum? Muhammad bin Tughluq's restless political spirit asked him that question, and got an answer in the affirmative. He initiated what may very appropriately be called 'an era of higher imperialism', whose spirit one finds articulate in his Khurasan project, apart from his other measures. Barani has very neatly expressed this aspect of the Sultan's thought and ambition in the following words: 'On account of the high ambition, which was ingrained in the peerless personality of Sultan Muhammad, if the whole fourth of the inhabited globe (*rubi maskun*)⁴⁴ was brought under the control of his slaves, and the entire world from east to west, and from north to south, became the tax-payer to his exchequer, and the people of the world became subservient to his orders, and the currency in his name circulated in the whole of the inhabited world (*rubi maskun*); yet if some one said that some land in some island or a piece of territory equal to the size of a room in some country had not been brought under his control, his river-like heart and his world-conquering spirit would not have found peace till that island or that little room-space had been brought under subjection to him. Owing to the high ambitions, exalted aspirations, great love of honour and extraordinary sense of prestige that was rooted in his mind, he desired to stalk in the world like Kaimurs and Faridun, and to behave towards the people like Jamshed and Kaikhusrau. In fact, he would not have been content merely with the status of Alexander (of Macedonia) but tried to attain to the position of Solomon so that ruling both over men and *jins*,⁴⁵ he could combine prophethood (*nubuwat*) with *sultanat*, and counting the king of every country as his slave, issue his commands from his capital both as a prophet and a sultan.'

4) The idea of the political and cultural isolation of India was gall and wormwood to Muhammad bin Tughluq. He believed in close diplomatic, cultural and economic contacts with the outside world. The remission of many taxes on imports in 741/1340-41 may be read in this context. His political vision extended far beyond India and embraced countries up to Egypt on one side and China and Khurasan on the other. In fact, with the rise of Muhammad bin Tughluq to power a new phase began in the history of India's diplomatic relations with the world outside. One hears of embassies pour-

44 Medieval geographers believed the earth to be a globe, but thought that only one-fourth of it—Eurasia and northern Africa—to be inhabited. The sea, they believed, covered the remaining three-fourths of the globe. The inhabited one-fourth (*rubi maskun*) they again divided into seven climes (*haft aqlim*).

45 *Jins* are invisible beings referred to in the Quran. Solomon, son of David, combined the offices of the prophet and the king and both men and *jins* were under his control. In this respect he surpassed all other rulers.

ing in at his court from different parts of Asia. The Iraq embassy sent by Musa; the Chinese embassy sent by Toghan Timur; the Khwarazmian embassy sent by the Princess Turabak, wife of Qutlu Damur, ruler of Khwarazm; the arrival of Amir Saifuddin, son of the chief of the Arabs of Syria—all these show the extent to which foreign governments were anxious to establish relations with him. The Chinese mission consisted of fifteen men with a retinue of one hundred servants. It was headed by Tursi. The emperor of China sent enormous gifts to the Sultan, who reciprocated the gesture by sending a bigger party with larger gifts. Sultan Abu Sa'id Khan of Iran (1316-35) sent Azd bin Yezd as his envoy to the Delhi court.

Muhammad bin Tughluq sent Bighdan, one of his private secretaries, to Sultan Abu Sa'id with one crore *tankas* to be distributed in the sacred towns of Iraq.⁴⁶ These international contacts also brought with them international involvements and tensions; and it is not proper, therefore, to study the developments of Muhammad bin Tughluq's political and religious ideas in isolation. In fact, some of his measures—the Khurasan project, the Qarachil expedition, the token currency and even the execution of certain persons⁴⁷—will remain unintelligible unless considered in the broader framework of developments in the eastern world.

5) The Sultan was a very careful student of religion and philosophy. He had experienced all forms of religious attitudes, including agnosticism and atheism. Ultimately, rationalism became the sheet-anchor of his thoughts, and every religious postulate was subjected by him to deep and searching inquiry. To orthodox theologians, like Ziyauddin Barani, this rationalistic approach was tantamount to a denial of religion. Barani⁴⁸ makes a broad observation to the effect that he had lost implicit faith in 'the revealed word' and the traditions of the Prophet, but later writers say that he had even questioned the *ulama* about their arguments in support of the dogma of the finality of prophethood.⁴⁹ But this does not mean that he had lost faith in Islam. Ibn-i Battuta informs us that he constantly urged people about the performance of obligatory prayers. 'His standing orders', he

46 For details, see Nizami, *Studies in Medieval Indian History and Culture*, Allahabad 1966, 5-6.

47 When the Sultan executed Shaikh Hud, a Suhrawardi saint of Multan, he told him: 'Certainly you intended to flee to the Turks and tell them that you were the son of Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariya and that the Sultan had done such and such a thing to you and to bring them to fight me.' *Rehlu*, 91.

48 *Firuz Shahi*, 465.

49 Shaikh Abdul Haq Muhaddis Dihlavi, *Akhbarul Akhyar*, 129; Muhammad Ghausi Shattari, *Gulzar-i Abrar* (Ms.); Saiyyid Muhammad Husaini, *Jawamaul Kalim*, 175-76.

writes, 'were to the effect that prayers must be recited in congregation and severe punishment was meted out to defaulters.'⁵⁰ The discussions, which caused this misunderstanding among certain orthodox sections, were conducted in an entirely different spirit and with an entirely different objective. Al-Umari writes: 'The *ulama* are present in his *majlis* and have *iftar* with him in the month of Ramadan. The Sadr-i Jahan invites every evening one of those who are present to raise a point for discussion; then all of them discuss the different aspects of the question in the presence of the Sultan, and he, like one of them, discusses with them and refutes them.'⁵¹ It appears that his mornings were also devoted to philosophic discussions. 'I have seen', says Ibn-i Battuta, '...philosophical matters alone being discussed every day after the morning prayers.'⁵² These discussions were not confined to Muslims alone.

Non-Muslim scholars also participated in the discussions at his court. Both Isami and Ibn-i Battuta say that he used to have private discussions with the *jogis*.⁵³ Recent discovery of Jain records has shown that he had close contact with Jain scholars.⁵⁴ Once Jinaprabha Suri conversed with him till midnight.⁵⁵ The Sultan gave him one thousand cows, besides a large number of other gifts. Jain scholars like Raja Sekhara and Jinaprabha Suri enjoyed his patronage. It is, however, surprising that he remained absolutely uninfluenced by the Jain ideal of *ahimsa*.

6) While extremely punctilious in the performance of prayers and other religious rites enjoined by Islam, the Sultan was, at the same time, equally tolerant of other creeds and could participate in their religious ceremonies and festivals. He is perhaps the first sultan of Delhi about whose participation in the Hindu festival of Holi there is clear contemporary evidence.⁵⁶ Innumerable *jogis* roamed about in his territory with their Muslim followers, and he never objected to it. A very large number of heterodox religious groups and individuals, to whom reference is made by Firuz Shah in his *Futuhāt*, could only have flourished in the atmosphere of intellectual freedom created by Muhammad bin Tughluq. He is reported to have visited the Satrunjaya temples at Palatina and the idol-houses of Girnar. In the Satrun-

⁵⁰ *Rehla*, 83.

⁵¹ *Masalikul Absar*, Eng. tr. Otto Spies, 38.

⁵² *Rehla*, 266.

⁵³ *Futuh-us Salatin*, 515; *Rehla*, 199.

⁵⁴ For detailed reference see Kalipada Mitra's article 'Historical References in Jain Poems', in the *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, Hyderabad Session, 1941, 295-302.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 299.

⁵⁶ *Futuh-us Salatin*, 515.

jaya temples he performed some acts of devotion appropriate to a leader of the Jain *sangha*. He is also reported to have issued a *farman* under royal seal for the construction of a new *basati upasraya* (rest house for monks).⁵⁷ The Batihagarh⁵⁸ inscription announces the construction of a *gow math* (cow-temple) under the orders of the Sultan. This religious cosmopolitanism of the Sultan provided a pretext for men like Isami to bring charges of heresy and innovation against him.

7) The Mongol destruction of Muslim lands in the thirteenth and the fourteenth centuries had evoked two diametrically opposed reactions in Muslim minds.

(a) The mystics, with a nonchalant attitude towards political power, had organized the mystic *silsilahs* and initiated a brisk movement for resuscitating Muslim society through the moral and spiritual regeneration of the people.

(b) A fundamentalist section led by Imam Ibn-i Taimiya (1263-1328) adopted an entirely different attitude. It condemned the mystic approach as one of pacificism, inertia and submission to an unfavourable situation, and advocated a movement for the revitalization of Muslim society by bringing together its various constituents—peoples, rulers, mystics, *ulama*, etc.—and the revival of political power. According to Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Ibn-i Taimiya occupies a unique place in the history of Islam on account of the fact that, after the Mongol cataclysm, it was he who indicated the lines on which political power could be regained and Muslim society resuscitated. It appears that Muhammad bin Tughluq was attracted towards some aspects of the thought of Ibn-i Taimiya. His criticism of the mystic attitude of isolation from the state and of some customs and practices of the mystics is in line with the attitude of the great Syrian scholar. Ibn-i Battuta informs us that one of the disciples of Ibn-i Taimiya, Maulana Abdul Aziz Ardbili, had visited the court of Muhammad bin Tughluq and the Sultan was so deeply impressed by him that he had kissed his feet in the *darbar*.⁵⁹

His attitude, which developed under these influences, found expression in his declaration that 'religion and state are twins'⁶⁰—a remark intended primarily against the mystics who had developed a tradition of isolation from the state under the excuse that the state

⁵⁷ *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress, 1941, 296.*

⁵⁸ See, Hira Lal, *Descriptive Lists of Inscriptions in Central Provinces and Berar, Nagpur, 1916, 50.*

⁵⁹ *Rehla, 70.*

⁶⁰ *Siyarul Auliya, 196.* Barani puts the same idea differently when he says that he wanted to combine prophethood with kingship (*badshahi ra ba paygham-bari jama'i kunad*), *Firuz Shahi, 459.*

did not represent religion. In a coin issued by him as early as 727/1326-27 he calls himself *Muhi-i Sunnan-i Khatim un Nabi'in*⁶¹ (Revi-ver of the Traditions of the Last of the Prophets).

It would, however, be incorrect to think that he completely subscribed to the thought of Ibn-i Taimiya or identified himself with it. He seems to have asked Shaikh Sharafuddin Yahya Maneri to write a book on mysticism specifically for him.⁶² He was himself the disciple⁶³ of Shaikh Alauddin, a grandson of Shaikh Fariduddin Ganj-i Shakar. Shaikh Alauddin was known for his aversion towards worldly power and materialistic pursuits. Obviously, the Sultan and his *pir* (religious guide) stood on antipodes, but the mere fact that he turned to him for spiritual solace shows that he had, in spite of all that he did against the mystics, a deep and genuine respect for the mystics and their piety. He is even reported to have kissed the feet of Shaikh Ruknuddin Multani,⁶⁴ and accepted his intercession for forgiving the people of Multan after crushing the rebellion of Bahram Aiba Kishlu Khan.⁶⁵ Muhammad bin Tughluq was the first sultan of Delhi to visit the grave of Shaikh Mu'inuddin Chishti at Ajmer,⁶⁶ and the grave of Salar Mas'ud Ghazi at Bahraich. He distributed enormous gifts to the guardians of the mausoleum of Salar Mas'ud.⁶⁷ Besides, he constructed mausoleums over the graves of Miran Mulhim at Badaun, Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya at Delhi, Shaikh Ruknuddin Abul Fath at Multan, Shaikh Alauddin at Ajudhan,⁶⁸ and many other contemporary and earlier saints.

Taking all aspects of the Sultan's thought and behaviour into consideration, it may be stated that he was not against *mysticism* as such, but did not approve of the mystic attitude of isolation from the state and wanted the *sufis* to make their talent available to the state in its various plans and projects. He was anxious to absorb as many

61 Thomas, *Chronicles of the Pathan Kings of Delhi*, 211. The assumption of this title by the Sultan assumes added significance when it is recalled that at one time he had exercised his mind over the arguments one could advance in support of the Muslim doctrine about the finality of the Prophet. Unfortunately, the *ulama* did not attempt to satisfy the curiosity of his mind by cogent reasoning; they challenged his motives and condemned him. See *Gulzar-i Abrar* (Ms.).

62 *Maktubat* (Ms.).

63 *Siyarul Auliya*, 196; *Rehla*, 20 (but Ibn-i Battuta's memory errs when he gives his name as Fariduddin). The Sultan's attachment with the mystic house of Ajudhan is mentioned in *Sirat-i Firuz Shahi* (f. 10) also. For Shaikh Alauddin's piety and popularity, see Barani, *Firuz Shahi*, 347.

64 *Futuh-us Salatin*, 439.

65 *Ibid.*, 443; *Firuz Shahi*, 479.

66 *Futuh-us Salatin*, 466.

67 Barani, *Firuz Shahi*, 491.

68 Nizami, *Salatin-i Delhi kay Mazhabi Rujhanat*, 375-76.

mystic families in his administration as possible, and if his policy, according to which he gave his sisters and daughters⁶⁹ in marriage to religious families, had succeeded, a new and very incongruous element would have appeared in the governing class.

8) The Sultan believed in offices being open to talent. He dispensed with whatever considerations of birth had persisted in the administration and appointed low-born persons to the highest offices in the administration. Barani, in whom hatred for persons he considered to be low-born amounted to an incurable disease, writes: 'The Sultan talked as if he hated low-born people more than he hated idols. Nevertheless, I have seen him promoting Najba, the low-born son of a musician, to such an extent that he rose higher in status than many maliks, for Gujarat, Multan and Badaun were put in his charge. Similarly, he raised Aziz *Khummar* (the vintner), and his brother, Firuz *Hajjam* (the barber), Manka *Tabbakh* (the cook), Mas'ud *Khummar* (the vintner), Laddha *Baghban* (the gardener) and many other jems of low-birth (*jawahir-i latrah*) to a high status and gave them offices and territories. He gave Shaikh Babu, the son of a Nayak weaver, a position near to himself and elevated the rank and position of such a low-born man among mankind. He assigned the ministry of revenue (*diwan-i wizarat*) to Pera *Mali* (the gardener), the lowest of the low-born and mean-born men of Hind and Sind, and placed him over the heads of maliks, amirs, *walis* and governors (*maqtas*). He assigned to Kishen (Krishna) Bazrañ Indri, who was the meanest of the mean-born, the territory of Awadh. To Muqbil, the slave of Ahmad Ayaz, who in appearance and character was a shame for all slaves, he gave the governorship (*wizarat*) of Gujarat, which had been a post for great khans and wazirs. It was strange how he gave high offices and governments of extensive territories and great provinces to men of low and mean birth."⁷⁰

The professions indicated in the above surnames are the ancestral professions of the officers mentioned; the officers themselves, it has to be assumed, were highly educated and efficient men. The matter is clarified by Barani himself when in his *Fatawa-i Jahandari* (Advice XI) he advocates that 'low-born people are not to be taught reading and writing, for plenty of disorders arise owing to the skill of the low-born in knowledge. The disorders into which the affairs of the state are thrown are due to the acts and words of the low-born, who have become skilled. For, on account of their skill, they become

⁶⁹ The Sultan gave one of his daughters in marriage to a grandson of Shaikh Hamiduddin Sufi of Nagaur (*Saroorus Sadur*, Ms.), and another daughter to Maulana Yusuf (*Mubarak Shahi*, 98).

⁷⁰ *Firuz Shahi*, 505.

governors (*wali*), revenue-collectors (*amils*), auditors (*mutasarrif*), officers (*farman-deh*) and rulers (*farman-rawa*).⁷¹ This policy of the Sultan was bound to cut across the interests of certain families, which had looked upon all offices as their sole monopoly.

9) The Sultan believed that only by giving a broad base to his administration could he consolidate the foundations of his power. A government to be stable should be conterminous with its subjects—if all sections of the Muslims had to be taken into the administration, it was equally necessary to admit Hindus to the highest offices of the government. With some such notion he appointed Hindus to some of the highest offices, as will be pointed out as we proceed.⁷² Besides, he patronized Hindu scholars and poets. According to Shihabuddin al-Umari there were one thousand poets of Arabic, Persian and Hindi at his court.⁷³

It is with reference to these basic concepts of the Sultan that some of the prejudices and antipathies of the historians of the period, as well as some of the important sections of medieval society, can be explained and analysed. Our chief authority for Muhammad bin Tughluq, Ziyauddin Barani, who was a reactionary in politics and a traditionalist in religious matters, could hardly appreciate the objectives of a ruler, who belonged to an entirely different category, being a progressive in religion and an innovator in politics. It is only in the interplay and interaction of these trends of Muhammad bin Tughluq's thought that an assessment of his policies can be attempted.

INVASION OF TARMASHIRIN

Isami gives a graphic account of the invasion of Alauddin Tarmashirin Khan but it is disfigured by poetic exaggerations and his personal vendetta against Muhammad bin Tughluq. One day, he says, a messenger came rushing from Multan and reported that a Mongol storm had burst in Sind and was spreading thick and fast. The Sultan started making immediate preparations to repulse the attack and summoned contingents from different parts of the empire. From Siri to the hills of Jud (Salt Range) the entire area looked like a military camp. The army had not yet come into motion when reports began to pour in saying that the Mongols had reached Meerut and were plundering the area. The Sultan despatched Yusuf Bughra to Meerut with ten thousand mounted soldiers and instructed him to make a surprise attack on the enemy; and if the enemy advanced further, he

⁷¹ Professor M. Habib and Mrs. Afsar Salim Khan: *Political Theory of the Delhi Sultanat*, 49.

⁷² *Firuz Shahi*, 501.

⁷³ *Masalikul Absar*, Eng. tr., 32.

was to attack it from the rear while the Sultan attacked it from the front. When the actual combat began, the Indian soldiers were struck with giddiness on account of the terrible roar made by the Mongol bugles. Despite this serious affliction, however, the forces of Delhi achieved a victory over Tarmashirin and repulsed his attack.⁷⁴ This was the first and the last foreign invasion that Muhammad bin Tughluq had to face during his reign. Unlike Balban and Alauddin Khalji, he had to deal with no recurring Mongol problem. His energies were consumed in dealing with internal rebellions.

Yahya Sirhindi says that the Sultan went in pursuit of Tarmashirin up to Kalanaur and garrisoned that frontier post and placed it under Malik Mujiruddin Abu Raja.⁷⁵

Ibn-i Battuta gives a detailed account⁷⁶ of Tarmashirin, which is entirely different from all Indian accounts, and the only way to reconcile it with the accounts of Isami, Yahya Sirhindi and other Indian chroniclers is to assume that the second Tarmashirin was a pretender.

Ibn-i Battuta says that while coming to India he had stayed at Bukhara for two months as a guest of Tarmashirin. At that time Tarmashirin was at the height of his power; he ruled over an extensive dominion and large armies were at his beck and call. Two years after his arrival in India, Ibn-i Battuta came to know that as a punishment for violating the *yasas* of Chengiz, people swore allegiance to a cousin of Tarmashirin, Bazan Aghul, and deposed him. Tarmashirin came to India and started living in Sind without disclosing his identity. Imadul Mulk Sartez, the governor of Multan, succeeded in discovering him and reported the matter to the Sultan. The Sultan's physician, who had formerly served Tarmashirin, was sent to confirm his identity. He recognized him by the scar of an abscess which he had treated. Ahmad Ayaz and Qutluq Khan warned the Sultan of the political dangers involved in the presence of such a dignitary in the country. Muhammad bin Tughluq was also alarmed. He summoned the pretender to his court and when he arrived, the Sultan angrily addressed him: 'O son of a prostitute! How could you lie and say that you are Tarmashirin, whereas Tarmashirin has been killed and here is with us the guardian of his grave.'⁷⁷ According to Central Asian historians, Tarmashirin tried to fly to Ghazni but was captured and sent to Bazan, who put him to death in 1332. Muhammad bin Tughluq must have been informed of the correct facts. The

⁷⁴ *Futuh-us Salatin*, 462-65.

⁷⁵ *Mubarak Shahi*, 101.

⁷⁶ *Rehla*, 254-56.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 258.

words attributed to him by Ibn-i Battuta clearly show that the Sultan knew that he was dealing with a Mongol pretender, who found it profitable to hint that he was Tarmashirin Khan. The pretender was expelled from India.

CONQUEST OF KALANAUR AND FARASHUR
(PESHAWAR)

Soon after his accession,⁷⁸ Muhammad bin Tughluq led a campaign to Kalanaur and Peshawar. In all probability it was undertaken after the invasion of Tarmashirin. He paid his soldiers one year's salary in advance and ordered them to equip themselves with all necessary weapons, horses, etc. He then marched towards Lahore and reached there after two months. He stayed at Lahore but ordered the army to continue its march to Peshawar. His aim was to garrison the frontier region against the Mongols, who were entrenched all along the area and used to plunder Indian territory. 'In that year', remarks Isami, 'contrary to what had happened in earlier years, Indian soldiers pillaged Mongol territory.'⁷⁹ Kalanaur and Peshawar were conquered and the *Khutba* was read in the name of the Sultan. Since no cereals were available there, and the soldiers had to live on the animals they hunted, they soon got disgusted with the place. The army rejoined Muhammad bin Tughluq at Lahore. For two or three months the Sultan stayed at Lahore and set the affairs of the frontier region in order and brought to book many recalcitrant elements. He then returned to Delhi. According to Isami, for two years he was extremely kind and affectionate towards the people but later on his attitude began to change.⁸⁰

REBELLION OF BAHAUDDIN GURSHASP

Yahya Sirhindi says that it was the first rebellion during the reign of Muhammad bin Tughluq.⁸¹

Gurshasp was a cousin of the Sultan.⁸² According to Ibn-i Battuta he refused to swear allegiance to Muhammad bin Tughluq after the death of Ghiyasuddin,⁸³ but Isami says that Muhammad bin Tughluq had conferred on him the title of Gurshasp and sent him to Sagar,

⁷⁸ Isami definitely says '*dar aghaz-i mulk*', *Futuh-us Salatin*, 423.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 423.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 424.

⁸¹ *Tarikh-i Mubarak Shahi*, 99.

⁸² Ibn-i Battuta says that he was the son of Ghiyasuddin Tughluq's sister (*Rehla*, 95); Ferishta mentions him as the son of Muhammad bin Tughluq's uncle (I, 135). Ibn-i Battuta is, no doubt, correct.

⁸³ *Rehla*, 95.

where he attained to great fame.⁸⁴ He rebelled when he realized that a change had taken place in the character and temperament of the Sultan.⁸⁵ Barani, perhaps owing to his failing memory, says nothing of this rebellion.

Khwaja-i Jahan Ahmad Ayaz was directed to proceed against Gurshasp from Gujarat and take with him senior maliks, like Qawamuddin, Qutbul Mulk, Tatar Ashraful Mulk and others.⁸⁶ 'The Sultan sent against him', Ibn-i Battuta states, 'troops which contained great amirs like Malik Mujir (Mujiruddin Abu Raja); and the wazir, Khwaja-i Jahan, was the commander-in-chief.'⁸⁷

When Gurshasp heard about the approach of the imperial army, he immediately crossed the Godavari and moved westwards from Devagiri. Here the encounter took place. Gurshasp attacked the centre led by Ahmad Ayaz and crippled it, but before he could take advantage of this, one of his comrades, Khizr Bahram, deserted him and joined the troops of Abu Raja. This desertion proved disastrous and turned Gurshasp's initial victory into a defeat. He, however, saved himself and his family by crossing the river and flying to Sagar, from where he left with his family to seek refuge with the Rai of Kampila. The Rai, brave and chivalrous as he was, readily agreed to give him asylum. 'You have done well', he told Gurshasp, 'in coming to me and I am prepared to lay down my own life to save yours. So long as a single artery functions in my body, I won't allow any one to touch you.'⁸⁸ These were brave words, sincerely uttered and scrupulously carried out.

Hotly pursuing Gurshasp, the forces of Delhi reached Kampila. Muhammad bin Tughluq himself marched to Daulatabad and sent reinforcement to Kumta (the fortress of Kummata). Gurshasp and the Rai of Kampila came out twice to give battle, but eventually decided to shut themselves up in the fortress. For about two months the fighting went on, but then the position of the garrison became untenable, and the royal army succeeded in forcing its way into the fortress. Gurshasp and his host, the Rai of Kampila, then left for Husdarg (Anegundi). The forces of Delhi pursued them and besieged that fortress also. For about a month they bravely defended themselves, but ultimately the royal army made a violent attack and captured the fortress.

The accounts of Ibn-i Battuta and Isami vary in certain details at

84 *Futuh-us Salatin*, 424. See also Ferishta, I, 135.

85 *Futuh-us Salatin*, 424.

86 *Ibid.*, 425-26.

87 *Rehla*, 95.

88 *Futuh-us Salatin*, 427-28.

this point, but there is no real contradiction in their statements and taken together they complete the picture. According to Ibn-i Battuta, the Rai told Gurshasp: 'You see how things have developed. In these circumstances I have resolved to perish with my family and followers. You had better go to such and such a ruler and stay with him. He will defend you.' The Rai sent some one with Gurshasp to conduct him to the territory of the other Rai.⁸⁹ According to Isami, Gurshasp had kept four horses in readiness for his escape. He seated his family on them and very skilfully came out of the fortress and killed everybody who chased him.⁹⁰

The Rai of Kampila, on his part, was determined to fight to the finish. He performed the rite of *jauhar*—burnt all his property, wives and daughters,⁹¹ and then fought the last and the most desperate battle with the royal forces and died fighting on the battle-field. When Ahmad Ayaz occupied Anegundi, he directed one of its leading inhabitants to identify the persons who had been killed and whose bodies lay on the battle-field. When the man looked at a 'head dotted like a flower with shafts', he shrieked as if in deep agony. 'This is the head of our Rai', he told the anxious inquirers. Ahmad Ayaz ordered the head be placed in a tray of gold and the skin to be severed from the body and filled with straw.⁹² Eleven sons of the fallen Rai were captured and taken to the Sultan, who treated them exceedingly well 'in consideration of their good descent and the noble conduct of their father'. All of them embraced Islam. Ibn-i Battuta met three of them, Nasr, Bakhtiyar and Abu Muslim, and developed a friendship with Abu Muslim, who was known as *muhrdar*, because it was his duty to seal the water which the Sultan used to drink.⁹³ That Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq selected him for such a delicate and responsible duty shows the high appreciation he had for the fallen Rai's steadfastness, chivalry and loyalty to a guest.

Gurshasp was not destined to succeed. Ibn-i Battuta does not mention the name of the Rai with whom he sought shelter after the fall of Anegundi, but informs us that the Rai told him that he could not repeat the mistake of the Rai of Kampila and made him over to the imperial army.⁹⁴ Isami says that the Rai was Ballala⁹⁵ (i.e. Vira Ballala III, also called Bilal Deva, the Hoysala Rai of Dwara Samudra).

⁸⁹ *Rehla*, 97.

⁹⁰ *Futuh-us Salatin*, 429.

⁹¹ *Rehla*, 97.

⁹² *Futuh-us Salatin*, 430.

⁹³ *Rehla*, 96.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 96.

⁹⁵ *Futuh-us Salatin*, 431.

Gurshasp was put in heavy chains and sent to the Sultan, who ordered that he be flayed alive and his skin be stuffed with chaff and straw and paraded throughout the country.⁹⁶ According to Ibn-i Battuta, 'The sultan ordered him to be taken to his female relations, who abused him and spat on his face; and then he had him flayed alive. A part of his flesh was cooked with rice and sent to his wife and children; the rest, put together in a tray, was placed before a female elephant, who refused to eat it.'⁹⁷ Ibn-i Battuta further says that when the stuffed skin reached Sind, its governor, Bahram Aiba Kishlu Khan, ordered it to be buried⁹⁸ and this was disapproved by the Sultan.

This inhuman treatment of Gurshasp's dead body created horror and hatred against the Sultan in the public mind. What the Sultan wanted to act as a deterrent to future rebellions in fact provided an incentive for them. Kishlu's rebellion is perfectly understandable in this context.

The only silver lining to the cloud in the operation against Gurshasp is the spirit of religious tolerance and broad-mindedness displayed by the Sultan's officers. During this time some soldiers damaged the *Siva-linga* and the temple of Madhukeshwar at Kalyan.⁹⁹ Thakkura Mala, a trustee of the temple, waited upon Ahmad Ayaz and requested him to reinstate the idol. Ahmad Ayaz issued an order, saying: 'Since worship in the temple is the religious duty of the petitioners, they should follow it.' The Kalyan inscription brings to light the Sultan's policy of religious freedom¹⁰⁰ to his non-Muslim subjects.

CONQUEST OF KONDHANA

Kondhana or Singarh stood in the vicinity of Devagiri and was held by Nag Nayak. Muhammad bin Tughluq marched against the fortress from Devagiri. The Rana stood the siege for eight months but could not hold out further and submitted. The Sultan appreciated his surrender and honoured the Rana by bestowing a *qaba* and a *kulah*¹⁰¹ on him.

96 *Rehla*, 96; *Futuh-us Salatin*, 431.

97 *Rehla*, 96.

98 Ibn-i Battuta says that the skin of Bahadur Bura was also paraded with it, but this cannot be correct because the rebellion of Bura took place after the rebellion of Kishlu Khan.

99 In the Bidar district of Mysore.

100 *Epi. Ind.*, Vol. XXXII, Part IV, October 1957, 165 *et seq.*

101 *Futuh-us Salatin*, 423-33.

REBELLION OF BAHRAM AIBA

Isami says that the Sultan was resting in Devagiri¹⁰² after his successful Kondhana campaign when he was informed about the insurrection of Bahram Aiba Kishlu Khan in Multan. He immediately set off for Delhi and by forced marches reached there within a short time. He did not march to Multan immediately but relaxed for about a month in Delhi and made the necessary preparations. Here he gave orders for the construction of a huge tent (*bargah*). A pulpit was placed in it for him and a feast was arranged to which all sorts of people were invited. The Sultan first asked Jalal Husam to deliver a speech and then himself ascended the pulpit and addressed the audience. Later some musicians entertained the people. The Sultan also distributed trays full of gold to the invitees. Isami gives all these details but says nothing about the main theme of the Sultan's exhortations. He makes a cryptic and evasive remark with reference to his speech and says that the Sultan did hypocritical talking to his people. Perhaps it was on this occasion that the Sultan began to think in terms of a second administrative centre in the South. Thus alone he could meet effectively the situations arising in the far-flung parts of the empire.

Aiba's rebellion was, in fact, the first serious protest against the policy of draconian punishments initiated so early in his reign by Muhammad bin Tughluq. Ibn-i Battuta says that the Sultan was displeased with him because he had ordered the burial of the corpse of Bahauddin Gurshasp, which was being paraded throughout the empire. The Sultan summoned Kishlu Khan, but he declined to come and rose in rebellion.¹⁰³ Yahya Sirhindi says that Ali Khattati was sent by the Sultan to bring Aiba's family to Devagiri. Ali Khattati was harsh and uncouth in his dealings with Bahram Aiba, a veteran noble and military leader of great reputation and standing and a close friend of Tughluq Shah. He made Aiba sit in his court and reproached him in strong words. He even rebuked Laula, a son-in-law of Bahram, in these words: 'Why do you not despatch your dependants? You desire that they should not go. You are acting villainously.' Laula's patience was exhausted. He pulled Ali Khattati down (from his horse) and killed him. Matters now took a serious turn and Bahram had no alternative but to rebel.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 433.

Isami is supported by Barani, who says that the Sultan rushed from Devagiri to quell the rebellion of Bahram. (*Ftruz Shahi*, 479.)

¹⁰³ *Rehla*, 97.

¹⁰⁴ *Mubarak Shahi*, 100.

The Sultan marched from Delhi against Bahram Aiba. The battle was fought near Abuhar. The Sultan placed Shaikh Imaduddin, brother of Shaikh Ruknuddin Multani, under the royal canopy in order to deceive the enemy. The trick worked. Bahram mistook Imaduddin for the emperor, and having killed him, dispersed and relaxed. Thereupon the Sultan, who was hiding in an ambush, came out and completely crushed the army of Bahram. Bahram was decapitated and his head was brought before the Sultan. The Sultan then thought of punishing the people of Multan by ordering a mass-massacre. When Shaikh Ruknuddin came to know of the Sultan's intention, he went to him with bare head and bare feet¹⁰⁵ and sought his forgiveness. The Sultan's wrath cooled down and he granted mercy to the people.

KAMALPUR INSURRECTION

According to Ibn-i Battuta the other insurrection that broke out at this time was of the inhabitants of Kamalpur in Sind. The Sultan sent Khwaja-i Jahan to crush the rebellion. 'I was informed by a jurist', writes Ibn-i Battuta, 'that the *qazi* and the *khatib* of Kamalpur were brought before the wazir and the latter ordered them to be flayed alive. "Kill us", they said, "in any other fashion". "Why" the wazir inquired, "are you to be killed at all?" "On account of our disobedience", they replied, "to the Sultan's order." "How, then," the wazir remarked, "can I myself act contrary to his orders? Verily, he has ordered me to kill you in this very fashion."' ¹⁰⁶

REBELLION OF GHIYASUDDIN BAHADUR

Almost simultaneously with the campaign against Bahram Aiba Kishlu Khan the rebellion of Ghiyasuddin Bahadur, known as Bura, took place.¹⁰⁷ According to Ibn-i Battuta, Bura had been detained in Delhi as a prisoner by Ghiyasuddin Tughluq. Muhammad bin Tughluq set him free after his accession, and conferred upon him and his own step-brother, Bahram Khan, the governments of Lakhnauti and Sonargaon respectively. The *Khutba* at Lakhnauti was to be read and the coins were to be struck in the names of both Bura and the Sultan. It was also decided that Bura would send his son, Muhammad, known as Barbat, as a hostage to Delhi. Bura carried out all the instructions of Delhi but politely declined to send his son, under the pretext that his son was not prepared to obey his orders. The Sultan

105 *Futuh-us Salatin*, 427.

106 *Rehla*, 97.

107 *Futuh-us Salatin*, 444.

sent an army under Duljiut Tatarī and instructed his brother, Bahram Khan, also to deal with Bura.¹⁰⁸

According to Isami, the Sultan was on his way back from Multan and had reached Dipalpur when a courier came from his brother, Bahram, governor of Sonargaon, and informed him that Bura had revolted at Lakhnauti and caused much bloodshed and confusion. He was challenged and defeated. He fled towards a river but his horse got stuck in the mud. He was captured and flayed alive. His stuffed skin was sent with the *fath nama* (message of victory). The Sultan ordered celebrations of this victory for forty days in Dipalpur, and the skins of Bura and Aiba Kishlu Khan 'were displayed from a height like two kernels in one shell'.¹⁰⁹ This rebellion took place in 730/1330-1.

EXODUS TO DEVAGIRI

One of the most grossly misunderstood measures of the Sultan was his attempt at creating an effective administrative centre in the Deccan. The nature of the experiment, the extent of the exodus it necessitated and its reactions and after-effects—all these topics deserve unbiased appraisal, since much of the misunderstanding has been due to the subjective statements made by contemporary chroniclers.

I. *Motives:*

Different motives have been ascribed by various historians to Muhammad bin Tughluq for his Deccan experiment.

(a) Barani says that the Sultan made Devagiri his *darul mulk* (or capital) because he thought that it was more centrally situated and was equidistant from Delhi, Gujarat, Lakhnauti, Satgaon, Sonargaon, Tilang, Ma'abar, Dwara Samudra and Kampila.¹¹⁰ Apart from the geographical inaccuracy of this statement, the point cannot be ignored that if Devagiri could not be controlled from Delhi, neither could Delhi be controlled from Devagiri. Nevertheless, Barani's observation, as usual, is helpful in understanding the basic motive of the Sultan—*effective administrative control of the South*.

(b) Ibn-i Battuta, who came to India nearly five years after the Deccan experiment of the Sultan, writes: 'One of the most serious reprehensions against the Sultan is that he forced the inhabitants of Delhi into exile. The cause of it was this. They used to write letters

¹⁰⁸ *Rehla*, 95.

¹⁰⁹ For numismatic evidence, see Lane Poole, *The Coins of the Muhammadan States of India in British Museum*, 11.

¹¹⁰ *Firuz Shaht*, 473-74.

containing abuses and scandals, and they would seal the letters, writing on the cover—"By the head of His Majesty none except His Majesty should read this letter." These letters they used to throw into the council-hall in the course of the night. When he tore them open, the Sultan found abuses and scandals in the contents. So he resolved to lay Delhi waste.¹¹¹ But the very next sentence that the African traveller writes after this contradicts him: 'He (the Sultan) bought the houses and dwellings from all the inhabitants of Delhi and paid the price for them.'¹¹² A punitive action could not possibly be accompanied by such fair bargaining. The incident of throwing letters, if at all true, must have been the *effect and not the cause* of the exodus of the people to Devagiri.

(c) Isami says that since the Sultan was suspicious (*badguman*) of the people (*khalq*) of Delhi, he thought of driving them out in the direction of Maharashtra in order to break their power.¹¹³ Isami's narrative leaves the impression that he is often at pains to prove and develop his theory that a deep animosity existed between the Sultan and the people, and that the Sultan was guided by his animus against the people in all his projects. Such an approach can only blur a correct historical perspective.

(d) It was in all probability during, or immediately after, his campaign against Bahauddin Gurshasp in the Deccan that Muhammad bin Tughluq realized the urgent need* of having a strong administrative centre in the South to cope effectively and instantaneously with all situations that arose in that region. His councillors suggested Ujjain¹¹⁴ for that purpose but his decision went in favour of Devagiri. To the beauties of Devagiri and its claim to a pride of place in the cities of the world, the attention of Muhammad bin Tughluq had already been drawn by the poet, Amir Khusrau, in his *masnavi*, *Sahifatul Ausaf*,¹¹⁵ when the poet came with him in 721/1321.

When the Sultan embarked upon his Deccan project, he had already given considerable thought and attention to all aspects of the problem. It was neither a haphazard plunge in administrative experimentation nor an eccentric craze for novelty, but a well-thought-out

111 *Rehla*, 94.

112 *Ibid.*, 94.

113 *Futuh-us Salatin*, 446.

114 *Ferishta*, I, 136.

115 This short *masnavi* supplies 'background atmosphere' to the decision of the Sultan to make Devagiri 'the second administrative city of the empire'. This *masnavi* is included in the poet's *Diwan*, the *Nihatul Kamal*, and has been separately edited by the writer of these lines.

solution of a problem by one who, of all the sultans of Delhi, had the most intimate experience of the difficulties in the administrative control and the military operations in the South. Among modern historians two very significant explanations for this measure of the Sultan have been given by Professor Muhammad Habib and Gardner Brown.

Professor Habib says: 'Muhammad bin Tughluq knew the Deccan better than any of his contemporaries. Malik Kafur, in the course of four successful campaigns, had plundered the richest temples of the South and compelled most of the rais to accept the overlordship of Delhi; but Alauddin, acting on the sane and sensible advice of Alaul Mulk, the fat and wise kotwal of Delhi, had refused to annex even a bigha of land. The southern rais were deprived of all the jewels they had collected 'star by star' from the time of Vikramaditya, but their territories were returned to them with the diplomatic suggestion that they were welcome to make up for their loss by plundering their neighbours. It was not the habit of the Khalji autocrat to undertake more than he could very safely perform.

'Mubarak Shah after his accession entirely changed the Deccan policy. He not only overthrew the Yadavas of Devagiri but established his administration over their territory, which was distributed among a large number of petty officers, known as the *sadah* amirs (*amiran-i sadah*) or commanders of one hundred, who were expected to collect the revenue and keep the population quiet. It was a brittle and rickety administration. There was only a thin sprinkling of Muslim populations in Gujarat, Rajputana and Malwa. In Devagiri there was no Muslim population whatsoever, except the officers and their men. To the south, east and west of Devagiri there were powerful Hindu chiefs, who had lost their prestige but not their power; a union of their forces could have any day driven the weak forces of the empire pell-mell beyond the Vindhya, and the hold of Delhi over Gujarat and Malwa, conquered so lately by Sultan Alauddin, would have also been endangered. But the fateful dice had been cast.

'Muhammad bin Tughluq was driven to the conclusion that the position of Devagiri would never be secure so long as the kingdom of Warangal was allowed to exist. He led an expedition against Warangal during his father's reign and tasted the bitterness of failure. His second attempt, however, was successful and Warangal, like Devagiri, was entrusted to the *sadah* amirs. Still the situation was anything but satisfactory. Foreign government—a government of the South by the North—was as intolerable to the *sadah* amirs of the empire as to the Hindu population whom they were expected to control. Every one saw that it could not last beyond a decade; the

forces of opposition were too strong. The success of Islam in India, moreover, depended on its becoming thoroughly indigenous.

'Mu'izzuddin and the early Turkish sultans had succeeded in Hindustan owing to two great movements: The Mongol invasions of Central Asia and Persia had driven a large number of refugees to India, who had settled in the country for good. At the same time the Chishti and Suhrawardi mystic orders (*silsilahs*) with their super-military discipline had carried on an extensive religious propaganda in every village and town of Hindustan, and their efforts had brought a considerable minority of pure Indians within the fold of Islam. This minority of gardeners, cooks, barbers, and other "gems of worthlessness", which Barani detested, naturally stood for that social democracy which is the finest contribution of Islam to India, and gave to the empire of Delhi the strength it needed. Unless something like this happened in the Deccan also—unless by deportation or conversion an indigenous Muslim population was created there—the breeze of the first Hindu reaction would sweep everything aside.

'Muhammad bin Tughluq, who combined the bull-dog tenacity of Mu'izzuddin Ghuri with the far-sighted tolerance of Shaikh Fariduddin, to whose school he belonged, grimly made up his mind to accomplish the task. The population of Delhi was there, living comfortably beneath his nose; *it was a fine social and economic unit for a southern capital and he would take it there.* But, this was not enough. Unless an extensive propaganda was undertaken and centres of Muslim social and religious culture were established in the Deccan, his scheme would fail. So the mystics also had to be transported for the purpose of preaching and propaganda.'¹¹⁶

According to Gardner Brown, with the accession of Muhammad bin Tughluq the centre of gravity of the empire had shifted from the North to the South. The Punjab had lost its importance on account of the Mongol devastations to which it was subjected for about a hundred years.¹¹⁷ Thus, to put it differently, when Muhammad bin Tughluq embarked upon his Deccan experiment, he simply acted as an agent of certain economic forces, which were actively operating in the life of the country and demanded the transfer of the capital to a region economically more prosperous to sustain the structure of an all-India government. When all contemporary and modern interpretations are taken into consideration, it appears that the Deccan experiment was basically dictated by political exigencies. In an empire in which simultaneous insurrections were appearing in areas so far off

¹¹⁶ *Aligarh Magazine*, July 1930, 1-11. The *Siyarul Auliyah* refers to a lot of mystics, who were compelled to leave for the Deccan.

¹¹⁷ *Journal of UP Historical Society*, Vol. I, pt. ii, 13.

as Ma'abar and Bengal, there was no other alternative to deal with the situation except what the Sultan attempted.

II. *Implementation* :

The Deccan scheme was implemented in stages and with due consideration for the convenience of the people. (a) It appears that the idea was conceived at least two years before it was actually executed. Yahya Sirhindi records in the developments of 727/1326-27 : 'At a distance of every two miles (*karohs*) along the road from Delhi to Daulatabad, the Sultan constructed halting stations and transformed the whole uninhabited area into a habitation. To the people in these regions he gave lands to dwell in, and the income of these lands was to be accounted for in their salaries. He also planted trees on both sides of the road.'¹¹⁸ (b) First of all the Sultan's mother, Makhduma-i Jahan, and the entire royal household, with amirs, maliks, slaves, horses, elephants and treasures, shifted to Devagiri. Afterwards, the Sultan summoned all the *Saiyyids*, shaikhs (mystics), *ulama* and grandees of Delhi.¹¹⁹ (c) According to Isami, six *carawans* were formed of the people who were forced to migrate to Daulatabad.¹²⁰ According to Yahya Sirhindi the order for the exodus was issued in 729/1328-29.¹²¹ (d) The Sultan, as already stated, purchased the houses and dwellings of the people of Delhi and paid the price for them.¹²² (e) Facilities of travel and conveyance were provided for the migrants. (f) In Daulatabad itself, free board and lodging were provided for new arrivals. 'The Sultan', writes Barani, 'made liberal gifts to the people both at the time of their departure for, and on their arrival at, Daulatabad.'¹²³ (g) The Sultan had bestowed considerable thought and attention to the planning of Daulatabad. The following account of the city given to Shihabuddin al-Umari by Shaikh Mubarak deserves to be quoted in this context :

'And the city of Delhi is the capital of the country. Then *after it* (comes) Qubbatul Islam and this is the city of Devagiri, which this Sultan built anew and named Qubbatul Islam. . . When I left it six years ago it was not yet completed. And I do not think it is yet complete on account of the vast extent of the area of the city and hugeness of its buildings. The Sultan had divided it in such

¹¹⁸ *Tarikh-i Mubarak Shahi*, 98.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 98.

¹²⁰ *Futuh-us Salatin*, 449.

¹²¹ *Mubarak Shahi*, 102.

¹²² *Rehla*, 94; *Tarikh-i Mubarak Shahi*, 102. Isami says that the emperor had announced that he who obeyed the royal order would receive much gold.

¹²³ *Firuz Shahi*, 474.

a way that separate quarters were built for every class of people; a quarter for the troops, a quarter for the wazirs, a quarter for the secretaries, a quarter for the judges and the learned men, a quarter for the shaikhs and faqirs, and a quarter for merchants and handicraftsmen. In every quarter there were found, according to the needs of every class, mosques, minarets, bazars, public baths, ovens for (baking) flour; so that the people of that quarter did not depend upon the other quarters for selling and buying and exchanging things, and each quarter was in the position of a separate self-contained city, not dependent on others for anything.¹²⁴

III. *Not a Mass Exodus:*

The impression of a mass exodus given by contemporary historians is not correct. In fact only the upper classes, consisting of nobles, *ulama*, shaikhs and the elite of the city, were shifted to Daulatabad.¹²⁵ The general Hindu public also was not affected by this project. Two Sanskrit inscriptions¹²⁶—dated 1327 and 1328—show that the Hindus of Delhi lived in peace all this time. Barani's narrative makes it abundantly clear that the measure had proved a calamity for the upper classes. Both Barani and Isami magnified this limited exodus of the elite of the city into a wholesale transportation to Daulatabad. The elite of Delhi constituted a fine social and economic unit for a southern capital, and the Sultan forced it alone to change its habitat and settle in a new region and amidst new surroundings.

IV. *Reactions of the People:*

An exodus under duress is bound to provoke strong reactions. So did the Deccan project of the Sultan. During the preceding one hundred and sixty years or so Delhi had been the capital of the sultanat, and it had developed its urban and cultural life in its own distinctive manner. Its bazars, *khanqahs*, madrasas, tanks, orchards, minars, buildings, mausoleums had their own fascination for the people who had been brought up among them. Even as early as the days of Kaiqubad—when hardly a century had passed since the foundation of 'Hazrat-i Delhi'—a poet like Amir Khusrau felt home-sick in Awadh and longed to be back in India's cultural centre.¹²⁷ To be weaned away completely from Delhi could be nothing short of torture for the people affected. Apart from this, during the last century and a half Delhi had become a strong centre for the mystics. There

124 *Masalikul Absar*, Eng. tr. by Otto Spies, 18-19.

125 For a detailed discussion, see Mahdi Husain, *Tughluq Dynasty*, 145 *et seq.*

126 *Catalogue of the Delhi Museum of Archaeology*, 29; *Tughluq Dynasty*, 146-47.

127 See Amir Khusrau's versified letter, written from Awadh to his friend, Tajuddin Zahid, quoted in *Ghurratul Kamal*.

were thousands of *khanqahs*, hospices and *zawiyahs* (religious houses)¹²⁸ in Delhi, and huge crowds of people used to gather there.¹²⁹ Muhammad bin Tughluq's project hit hard at the *khanqah*-life of Delhi. Saiyyid Muhammad Gisu Daraz is reported to have remarked that with the exception of the mausoleums of Shaikh Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki, Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya and a few others, no other mausoleum of Delhi had even a candle-stick left on account of the destruction wrought by Muhammad bin Tughluq.¹³⁰ This general eclipse of the cultural centres of Delhi is responsible for the extremely exaggerated accounts of the destruction of Delhi that one finds in the pages of *Tarikh-i Firuz Shahi* and *Futuh-us Salatin*. For Barani Delhi was nothing but the dwellings of its aristocracy and the hospices of its saints. When these disappeared, the whole Delhi seemed depopulated to him. Isami's very aged grandfather had died at Tilpat while on his way to Daulatabad, and his bitterness against the Sultan and his project is understandable. Ibn-i Battuta talks of the depopulation of Delhi on the basis of rumours, but when he actually describes Delhi on his arrival in 734, barely four or five years after the exodus, he talks of its splendour, prosperity and population as if no disaster had overtaken it.

The mystic reaction to the demand of Muhammad bin Tughluq had some ideological complications also. The mystics believed in the concept of *walayat*¹³¹, (spiritual dominion over a territory) being the linch-pin of their organization. Their areas of work were determined by their spiritual masters, who assigned 'spiritual territories' to them to carry on their work of moral and spiritual education of the people and face the blows and buffets of fortune. When the Sultan sought to move them from one place to another, they interpreted it as a serious interference in their *khanqah*-life. They hesitated in obeying the Sultan's orders; the Sultan interpreted this hesitation as rebellion, and armed by a counter-ideology of the 'state and religion as twins', forced them to migrate to the distant South. It was difficult for many to defy a sultan like Muhammad bin Tughluq, but Shaikh Nasiruddin Chiragh held fast to the traditions of his *silsilah* and patiently bore all the tortures and punishments inflicted on him by the Sultan.¹³²

128 The author of *Subhul Asha* refers to two thousand *ribats* (inns) and *khanqahs*. *An Arab Account of India in the 14th century*, 29.

129 See Barani's account of Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya's *khanqah* at Ghiyaspur, *Firuz Shahi*, 341-44.

130 *Jawamaul Kalim*, 143.

131 For a detailed discussion of the concept, see Nizami, *Religion and Politics in India during the Thirteenth Century*, 175-76.

132 For details, see *Khairul Majalis*, Introduction, 49-58.

It was easy for the Sultan to use all the terrible powers of a medieval monarchical government to drive the mystics from Delhi to Daulatabad, but it was not easy to escape the consequences in terms of loss of public popularity. Perhaps no other measure brought so much unpopularity to the Sultan as the forced migration of the mystics to Daulatabad.

Muhammad bin Tughluq was an autocrat to his finger-tips. He was never prepared to tolerate disobedience to his orders. He simply became mad when he found anybody disobeying him. Ibn-i Battuta says that one night the Sultan went up to the roof of his palace and looked around. When neither a lamp nor even smoke or light came within his sight, he remarked: 'Now my heart is pleased and my soul is at rest'¹³³—as if he was a Nero playing on the fiddle while Rome was burning.

The accounts of his punishments of all people who disobeyed his orders, as given by Barani, Ibn-i Battuta and Isami, may be highly exaggerated, but it will be improper to dismiss them as baseless. They represent the general disgust against the Sultan and are in line with the general policy of the Sultan himself. Isami says that the mystics and all other persons, who did not start for Daulatabad at the Sultan's order, were dragged out of their houses. The police pulled them by their hair and inflicted draconian punishments upon them.¹³⁴ Isami gives an idea of the atmosphere in which the *caravans* marched towards Daulatabad when he says: 'They walked with loud lamentations, like persons who were going to be buried alive.'¹³⁵

It appears from Isami that the exodus took place during the hot summer months and this considerably aggravated the miseries of the people. 'The people had to tread', writes Isami, 'over the soil which the burning sun had made hot like iron.'¹³⁶ Making due allowance for Isami's poetic exaggerations, it can hardly be denied that the journey from Delhi to Daulatabad was bound to be a prolonged torture, despite all the facilities provided by the state. This was inevitable in view of the medieval limitations concerning transport and conveyance. The inclemencies of the season, nostalgic memories of the past, presence of women, children and old persons in the *caravans*, uncertainties of life in the South, and a dread of the Sultan's unpredictable temper—all these combined to make the journey an extremely tormenting experience. Still Isami, a bitter critic of Sultan Muhammad and the exodus, writing in the reign of the first Bahmani king

133 *Rehla*, 94.

134 *Futuh-us Salatin*, 447.

135 *Ibid.*, 447.

136 *Ibid.*, 449.

sums up the situation in two lines: 'A tenth of the population of the people of Delhi that succeeded in reaching (their destination) brought glory to this region; groups that had been distressed in Delhi were well-provided in this land.'¹³⁷

V. Capital or Second Administrative City:

The general impression about the Deccan experiment of the Sultan that he transferred the capital to Daulatabad is not correct. In fact, he made Daulatabad the second administrative city of the empire. This is borne out by Al-Qalqashandi who says that the empire of Delhi had two capitals: Delhi and Devagiri or Qubbatul Islam.¹³⁸ It may be noted that in a coin minted in A.H. 730, Delhi is indicated as *Takhtgah-i Delhi*¹³⁹ and another coin of A.H. 731 refers to Daulatabad as *Takhtgah-i Daulatabad*.¹⁴⁰

A word has to be added here about the historic past of Devagiri (Deogir), 'the hill of the gods'. It was the capital of the Yadavas. Sultan Qutbuddin Mubarak Khalji gave it the name Qutbabad¹⁴¹ and established a mint there.¹⁴² The words, *Qubbatul Islam*,¹⁴³ appear on the coins as early as 727/1326-27 but no significance need be attached to this fact. It was in 728/1327-28 that the place was named Daulatabad.¹⁴⁴ Thus, it was not Devagiri that was renamed Daulatabad; it was Qutbabad which received a new title.

VI. Aftermath:

The after-effects of this Deccan experiment may be assessed from two angles—immediate and remote. Its immediate effect was widespread resentment against the Sultan, who forfeited once and for all the confidence of his people, and the bitterness against him due to their sufferings continued to rankle in their hearts for decades. In its remote consequences the Deccan experiment of Muhammad bin Tughluq was a remarkable success. The barriers which had separated

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 458.

¹³⁸ *An Arab Account of India in the 14th century*, 30. See also *Masalikul Absar* (Eng. tr.), 18.

¹³⁹ *Indian Museum Catalogue* II, 59. *Takhtgah* means Capital.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 60, Coin no. 385.

¹⁴¹ *Masnavi Sahifatul Ausaf (Ms)*; also Nelson Wright, *The Coinage and Metrology of the Sultans of Delhi*, 109.

¹⁴² Three gold coins minted there in A.H. 718, 719 and 720 have come to light. *Chronicles of the Pathan Kings of Delhi*, 179-80. Edward Thomas's view that these coins belong to Delhi has been refuted by H. R. Nevill (JASB, NS, 35 art. 219) and Nelson Wright (*The Coinage*, 109).

¹⁴³ Nelson Wright, 119, Specimen No. 484.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 157.

the North from the South broke down, and though the extension of the administrative power of the Delhi sultanat into the Deccan did not prove successful, the extension of its cultural institutions did in fact succeed. 'On all the four sides of Daulatabad there appeared graveyards of Musalmans',¹⁴⁵ Barani remarks, referring to the impact of the exodus forced by the Sultan. But these 'graveyards' connected the hearts of the people of the North with the soil of the South. The rise of the Bahmani kingdom was only made possible by this influx of population.

Isami tells us that when the people of Delhi left for Daulatabad, the Sultan brought 'peasants' (*rustai*)¹⁴⁶ from the countryside and settled them in Delhi. But this is obviously a poetic way of saying that all those who filled the vacuum created by the transportation of its original inhabitants were like uncouth countrymen compared to them. Barani clearly says that the elite of other parts of the country was invited to Delhi and settled there.¹⁴⁷ It is a significant fact that when Ibn-i Battuta reached Delhi in 1334, he found it full of scholars, literati and mystics and no after-effects of the exodus were visible to him. This fact becomes even more significant when it is remembered that the Sultan permitted the people to return to Delhi in 1335-37.¹⁴⁸

THE TOKEN CURRENCY

Next to the Deccan experiment comes the token currency of the Sultan. Briefly put the measure was as follows. A silver coin, in those days, was known as a *tanka*; a copper coin was known as a *jital*. The Sultan issued a bronze coin, in place of the silver coin, and demanded its acceptance as a token coin equivalent to the silver *tanka*.¹⁴⁹ To put it in a different way—here was a *jital* calling itself a *tanka*.

The token coin was distinguished from the ordinary currency in the following respects: (a) The metal used for the token coins was copper (*mis*) according to Barani, but Ferishta says it was brass or bronze (*biranj*) and he is supported by numismatic

145 *Firuz Shahi*, 343.

146 *Futuh-us Salatin*, 450.

147 *Firuz Shahi*, 474.

148 *Ibid.*, 481. Moreland, however, puts a wrong interpretation on the words of Barani when he regards this permission as 'the restoration of Delhi as the capital'. (*Agrarian System*, 49.)

149 'In no instance', remarks Edward Thomas, 'were these representations of real money issued to pass for the more valuable current gold pieces; the highest coin he desired credit for in virtue of the regal stamp was a *tanka* of 140 grains of silver and the minor subdivisions were elaborately provided for in detail.' *Chronicles of the Pathan Kings of Delhi*, 245.

evidence.¹⁵⁰ (b) While other coins had only Arabic superinscriptions, the token coin had its legends in Persian also. (c) While most medieval coins of the baser metals are difficult to decipher, special care was taken to make the legend on the token coins clear and legible. (d) The inscription in Persian ran: *Muhr shud tanka, ra'ij dar ruzgar-i banda-i ummidwar Muhammad Tughluq* (Minted tanka, current during the days of Muhammad (bin) Tughluq, who hopes for Divine favour). The word 'current' in this inscription makes it clear that the coin owed its value to the credit of the Sultan and not to its metallic value. (e) The token coins contained the following Arabic inscriptions also: 'He who obeys the Sultan, obeys God'; 'Obey God, obey the Prophet and those in authority amongst you.' This was an appeal to the religious sentiments of the people to honour the token currency.

The principles of a token currency, whether of paper or base metal, are too well-known to the modern world to need a detailed discussion, and some of them must have been foreseen by Muhammad bin Tughluq. The basic condition of success is that the token currency must be accepted by the government in taxes and other payments by the people; unless this is done, the token currency will have no value whatsoever. Secondly, the token currency has to be manufactured by some process the secret of which is known to the government alone. Thirdly, very harsh punishments have to be meted out to unauthorized persons, who manufacture or 'utter' the token currency and an extensive police organization is needed for the purpose. *If these necessary measures are taken, the success of the token currency will mean that a very large part of the silver in circulation as coin comes into the hands of the state as an interest-free loan for an indefinite period.* But since the token currency has no value in foreign countries, a certain amount of silver currency is needed by merchants, who bring foreign merchandise into the country. If the state can give a guarantee that a silver coin will be given *on demand* in return for a token coin, the permanent value of the token coin is assured. Conversely, if the state and the forger — or both — keep on manufacturing the token coin beyond a particular limit, its value will fall in proportion to the increase in its quantity.

This experiment in token currency was not new in Asia. Under Qublai Khan (1260-94) of China and Kaikhatu Khan of Iran (1293) attempts at introducing a token currency had been made. The Iranian experiment had failed; the Chinese venture had succeeded. The *chao* (paper currency of Qublai Khan) had succeeded because (a) the Khan had made due allowance for the people, if they desired to use

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 244, 249.

gold and silver, and (b) the manufacture of the paper and inks of the state could not be forged.

Why did the Sultan at all think of introducing a token currency? Barani says that the Sultan's projects to conquer foreign lands and his boundless generosity and munificence had depleted the treasury;¹⁵¹ and it was a device to face the crisis of bankruptcy. This is only partially true. It cannot be disputed that the experiment was connected with the economic strain put on his resources by the contemplated Khurasan expedition and the subsequent Qarachil disaster, but he was not bankrupt even at this time, for we know that when the experiment failed, he promptly redeemed in silver and gold the token base metal coins his own mint had manufactured. Was it then a fad for novelty which prompted him to introduce it? It must be remembered that Sultan Muhammad was never satisfied with temporary solutions of basic problems. Whenever any difficulty or problem came to his knowledge, he attempted some basic and fundamental solution. Perhaps the experiment was dictated by the phenomenon of the shortage of silver not only in India but all the world over. The relative value of silver and gold during this period is given as follows by three authorities:

Edward Thomas	8:1
Col. Yule	7:1
Nelson Wright and Nevill	10:1

This is why we find a gradual decrease in the weight of the silver *tanka* and a corresponding increase in the weight of the gold coin during this period. Regarding the scarcity of silver, Nelson Wright remarks: 'But apart from Bengal the sources of silver supply in India were scanty. The riches of Southern India were exhausted or at any rate closed to the Delhi sultans. The extension therefore of the use of billon, which Muhammad was the first to introduce for the higher-value coins, in a more and more debased form became almost inevitable'.¹⁵² The problem of the shortage of silver was aggravated during the time of Muhammad bin Tughluq on account of the establishment of new mints in the extensive empire and the enormous expenditure incurred on military expeditions and the Deccan experiment.

The effect of the token currency was felt in different spheres and in different ways.

(a) People began to mint the token coins and (in the words of Ziyauddin Barani) the house of every 'Hindu'¹⁵³ became a mint. Why

¹⁵¹ *Firuz Shahi*, 475.

¹⁵² Nelson Wright, *The Coinage and Metrology of the Sultans of Delhi*, 160.

¹⁵³ It may be pointed out that by the word 'Hindu' in this context Barani obviously means the goldsmiths. Since the goldsmiths were mostly Hindus, he uses the

did it happen? Edward Thomas finds the following reasons for this: 'His Majesty's officers of the mint worked with precisely the same tools as the ordinary workman, and operated upon a metal, so to say, universally available. There was no special machinery to mark the difference of the fabric of the royal mint and the handiwork of the moderately-skilled artisan. Unlike the precautions taken to prevent the imitation of the Chinese paper notes, there was positively no check upon the authenticity of the copper token, and no limit on the power of production by the masses at large.'¹⁵⁴

But Professor Mohd. Habib gives a different and more plausible explanation when he says: 'The mint had a special type of bronze alloy for the coins, which could be easily distinguished on the touchstone; but the secret of the proportion of the metals in the bronze coins could not be discovered by the goldsmiths. When people took gold and silver coins in those days, they had the coins weighed (to make allowance for clipping) and also tested on the touchstone for purity of metal. The Sultan expected the public to follow the same practice in regard to his token coins. But in this matter the public failed him. Consequently, many forged coins got mixed with the treasury coins; and as the forged coins became current and the government was unable to prevent this, more and more coins were forged. A bronze coin would be at least worth its weight in bronze—i.e. about 50 bronze coins would be normally equal to one silver *tanka*. But forging the bronze coins was an offence. So a forged bronze coin may meet any fate, for a new element—fear of punishment—also entered into the determination of its value. In the distant provinces it circulated at one-half of its official value in terms of the silver *tanka*; in the capital people would be afraid of being found in possession of forged bronze coins; they would throw them away or keep them in order to melt them into bronze vessels later on. The whole operation got beyond the control of the government. Too many forged coins got into circulation and the failure of the experiment caused a havoc in the market. It was not possible to punish those in actual possession of the forged bronze coins, because they were innocent. In fact, strange to say, nobody was punished. . . It was understood from the very beginning that the treasury would redeem every bronze coin it had issued. The Sultan now ordered this to be

term *Hindu* for them—a favourite practice with Barani to use a 'generic' term where a 'specific' term is required. His use of the word 'Turk' for Ilbarites in the context of the rise of the Khaljis, and his use of the word 'Hindu' here and in connection with the regulations of Alauddin Khalji concerning *khuts*, *muqaddams* and *chaudharis* are examples of this presentation, which has caused considerable confusion.

¹⁵⁴ *Chronicles*, 246.

done. People brought to the treasury the bronze coins they had. *The treasury redeemed the bronze coins it had issued as a matter of treasury-conscience; it rejected the false coins but did not punish their owners because they were "bonafide" possessors.* Heaps of these rejected bronze coins, which were probably melted later on, could be seen at Tughlaqabad. But forged bronze coins not brought to the treasury continued to circulate at their metallic value, specially in the provinces, and have survived to our days.¹⁵⁵

(b) People started hoarding silver and made all purchases in the token currency. Thus considerable silver was kept out of circulation.

(c) Payment of land revenue came to be made in the spurious token currency. The *khuts*, *muqaddams* and *chaudharis* became powerful and defiant.

(d) Contumacious elements purchased weapons and war-material with the spurious token currency.¹⁵⁶

(e) Foreign merchants stopped bringing their wares to India, and imports received a serious setback. When the Sultan realized that his token currency had created a chaos, he withdrew it and offered to exchange all copper coins *by genuine gold and silver coins.*¹⁵⁷ Though the Sultan had vindicated the pledge that was implicit in the token currency, he was deeply annoyed at the failure of his project.

THE KHURASAN EXPEDITION

Barani informs us that Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq had raised an army of 370,000 soldiers for the conquest of Khurasan and Iraq. This project he counts among the Sultan's misdeeds and remarks that, deceived by the people of other lands, he lavishly squandered his resources. He could not conquer those lands while he weakened his control over his own territory.¹⁵⁸ The following features of the recruitment of this army are evident from Barani's narrative: (a) The total number of recruits reported by the *diwan-i arz* was 370,000 mounted soldiers. (b) The salaries were paid both in cash and in the form of *iqtas*. (c) An enormous amount was given for the careless purchase of equipment — arrows, horses, etc. (d) This army was paid

¹⁵⁵ *The Political Theory of the Delhi Sultanat*, 129.

¹⁵⁶ *Firuz Shahi*, 475.

¹⁵⁷ Barani says that in exchange of that *muh*r (token coin), the Sultan gave gold and silver *tankas* and *sashganis* and *duganis* (*Firuz Shahi*, 476). This shows that the Sultan was, in fact, short of silver; otherwise he would not have given gold in exchange.

¹⁵⁸ *Firuz Shahi*, 476. Barani had no clear idea of the relative position of various Islamic countries. This is proved by the surprising errors he makes in Advice XVI of his *Fatawa-i Jahandari* (*Political Theory of the Delhi Sultanat*, 75-81.)

for one year, and it was thought that the 'booty' obtained would meet its expenditure in the following years; but the campaign could not be undertaken and there were no resources for maintaining it for the second year. And what was more, this army could not be kept busy in any military operation.

Barani does not mention the motives of the Sultan in planning this military venture, but it is difficult to believe that, despite his close contact with the Sultan, he was unaware of the circumstances in which the military preparations were undertaken. The following account of Amir Khurd gives a good idea of the way in which the Sultan tried to mobilize public opinion in favour of his project and also throws light on the mystic reactions to his plans:

'In those days when Sultan Muhammad (bin) Tughluq sent the people to Devagiri and was (also) anxious to conquer Turkistan and Khurasan and to overthrow the descendants of Chengiz Khan, he summoned all the elite and grandees of Delhi and the neighbourhood. A big tent (*bargah*) was pitched and a pulpit placed on which the Sultan was to sit in order to exhort the people to undertake a *jihad* against the *kuffar* (Mongols). So on that day he summoned Maulana Fakhruddin (Zarradi), Maulana Shamsuddin Yahya and Shaikh Nasiruddin Mahmud. Shaikh Qutbuddin Dabir, who was one of the sincere and devoted disciples of the Sultanul Mashaikh (Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya) and was a pupil of Maulana Fakhruddin Zarradi, wanted to conduct him (to the presence of the Sultan) before the others entered. But the Maulana, who was reluctant in meeting the Sultan, said several times: "I see my head rolling (in dust) before the palace (*serai*) of this fellow (the Sultan). I will not treat him gently and he will not spare my life."

However, when the Maulana approached the Sultan, Shaikh Qutbuddin Dabir carried his shoes behind him and, keeping them in his armpit, stood there (in the court) like a servant. The Sultan saw all this but did not say anything at the time. He began talking with Maulana Fakhruddin and said, "I want to overthrow the descendants of Chengiz Khan. You should cooperate with me in this work." The Maulana replied: "*Insha Allah* (God willing)!" The Sultan said: "This term indicates indecision." "This term is used for work to be done in future", replied the Maulana. The Sultan writhed in fury on hearing this reply of the Maulana and said: "Give me some advice so that I may act upon it." The Maulana replied: "Get rid of this anger." "Which anger?" asked the Sultan, "The anger of the beasts", the Maulana replied. The Sultan got infuriated at this reply and signs of resentment and anger became visible on his face. But he said nothing and ordered the midday meal to be served. The Maulana and

the Sultan began to partake of the food from the same dish. Maulana Fakhruddin Zarradi was so deeply annoyed at this that the Sultan also realized that he did not like taking food with him; and in order to add to his feelings of resentment, the Sultan kept on severing the meat from the bones and passing it on to the Maulana who (on his part) ate very little and very reluctantly. The meal being over, Maulana Shamsuddin Yahya and Shaikh Nasiruddin Mahmud were brought before the Sultan.¹⁵⁹

While the methods adopted by Muhammad bin Tughluq for the realization of his various projects were often offensive and hasty, their *raison d'etre* was invariably sound. A few facts may, however, be noted in this connection. The word 'Khurasan' is often very loosely used and it is very difficult, therefore, to determine exactly the geographical area which Muhammad bin Tughluq had in mind.¹⁶⁰ Barani, however, tags the word Iraq also to Khurasan.¹⁶¹ Ferishta says that large number of princes and maliks, who had arrived in his court from Iraq and Khurasan, convinced him that the conquest of Iran and Turan would be an easy walk-over.¹⁶² There was a political vacuum in Central Asia and Persia in the period between the vanishing of the power of the Il Khans and the establishment of Timur's authority. Muhammad bin Tughluq wanted to take advantage of this situation in order to extend the area of his influence. His unbounded generosity to foreigners and his gifts to people resident in foreign lands were all intended to create a favourable climate for the execution of his plans. He entered into some alliances also for this purpose. A serious break in these alliances, however, made him change his mind. A large army such as he had recruited could not but raise the expectations of the people. The abandonment of the project and the consequent disbandment of the army created frustration, unemployment and disgust.

REBELLION OF SEHWAN

Since on his arrival at Sehwan in 734/1333, Ibn-i Battuta saw the bodies of the rebels nailed to the ramparts of the city, this rebellion must have taken place sometime during that year. Ratan, the Hindu governor of Sehwan, was put to death by Wunar and Qaisar-i Rumi, and all government property amounting to twelve lakhs was seized by them. Wunar became known as Malik Firuz and a large army was recruited by him, but he did not consider himself safe and fled

159 *Siyarul Auliya*, 271-73.

160 Ibn-i Battuta says: 'All foreigners in India are called Khurasanis.' *Rehla*, 60-61.

161 *Firuz Shahi*, 476.

162 *Ferishta*, I, 134.

away. The army then raised Qaisar-i Rumi as its leader. Imadul Mulk Sartez, the governor of Multan, crushed the rebellion and gibbeted the rebels.

THE QARACHIL EXPEDITION

The Qarachil region may safely be identified with the mid-Himalyan tract of Kulu in the Kangra district in the Kumaon-Garhwal area. Ibn-i Battuta says that the region was at a distance of 'ten days' journey from Delhi'.¹⁶³ Securing this region was part of a broader policy of the Sultan 'to complete the chain of fortifications in the North'. It appears from Ibn-i Battuta that Chinese encroachments on the independent Rajput kingdoms in the Himalayas had caused some concern to Muhammad bin Tughluq. 'They had built an idol temple at a strategic place and were planning extension of their authority in that area.

Barani's statement that the expedition was connected with the conquest of Khurasan cannot be accepted. 'The Sultan', he writes, 'thought that as the preliminaries to the conquest of Khurasan and Trans-Oxiana had been undertaken, and as the Qarachil mountain intervened and obstructed the shorter route from the countries of Hind and Sind, it should be brought under the control of the banner of Islam.'¹⁶⁴ Since the Himalayas did not obstruct the way to Khurasan, the statement is obviously meaningless. Ferishta, in his attempt to rectify Barani's error, made China the ultimate objective of Muhammad bin Tughluq's Qarachil expedition, but no earlier authority supports Ferishta's view.¹⁶⁵ Hajiud Dabir's suggestion that the Sultan wanted the Qarachil women for his *haram* is contradicted by all estimates of the Sultan's character. In fact, the motive of the Sultan was simply to secure frontier areas and to consolidate his position in a region of strategic importance by compelling the chiefs of the hilly area to recognize his overlordship. For this purpose he sent an army comprising of 10,000¹⁶⁶ soldiers under the command of his nephew (sister's son), Khusrau Malik.¹⁶⁷ He gave elaborate instructions as to how far the operations were to be extended and where the army had to stop. According to his instructions, military posts had to be established all along the route to ensure regular supply of provisions and to serve as places of refuge in case of retreat or mishap.

¹⁶³ *Rehla*, 98.

¹⁶⁴ *Firuz Shahi*, 477.

¹⁶⁵ *Ferishta*, I, 135.

¹⁶⁶ *Futuh-us Salatin*, 467; *Rehla*, 98.

¹⁶⁷ *Futuh-us Salatin*, 467.

Ibn-i Battuta gives the name of the commander as Malik Nukbia, *Rehla*, 98.

The army succeeded in occupying Jidya, and the Sultan sent a qazi and *khatib* as symbols of his decision to integrate the area with his territory. The Sultan warned the commander not to proceed beyond Jidya; but elated with his success, Khusrau Malik ignored the Sultan's instructions and marched ahead towards Tibet, unconsciously repeating the mistake committed earlier in the thirteenth century by Muhammad bin Bakhtiyar Khalji. Soon afterwards the rains set in and the army was overtaken by disease and panic. The hill people hurled huge blocks of stones and completely routed the forces of Delhi. According to Barani only ten persons survived;¹⁶⁸ according to Ibn-i Battuta only three soldiers¹⁶⁹ returned to tell the tale of their misfortune.

Though the Sultan cannot be blamed for the catastrophe that came in the wake of Khusrau Malik's misguided enthusiasm, he had to face the consequences. It led to tremendous waste of resources and to immeasurable discontent among the people. It would, however, be unfair to Muhammad bin Tughluq to think that the Qarachil expedition did not yield any positive political results. Ibn-i Battuta remarks: 'After this, the Sultan made peace with the inhabitants of the hills on condition that they should pay him a certain amount; since these people held possession of the territory lying at the foot of the hills, they were unable to use it without his permission.'¹⁷⁰ This is an aspect which has been ignored by both Bajani and Isami. Ibn-i Battuta is corroborated by the author of *Masalikul Absar* who received the following information in Damascus: 'The people of the country of Qarachil are subject to this Sultan. They have from him protection and security on account of taxes, which are brought to him from them and are a source of wealth.'¹⁷¹

FAMINE, PLAGUE AND THE SUCCESSFUL REBELLION OF MA'ABAR

The first decade of Sultan Muhammad's reign was pre-eminently successful; his direct administration extended over an area more extensive than that of Alauddin Khalji and he succeeded in crushing all rebellions.

But then he had to face two forces quite beyond his power—famine and the bubonic plague.

¹⁶⁸ *Firuz Shahi*, 478.

¹⁶⁹ *Rehla*, 98. Ibn-i Battuta gives the names of two survivors—Nukbia and Badruddin Malik Daulat Shah. He had forgotten the name of the third person.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 98-99.

¹⁷¹ *Masalikul Absar*, Eng. tr., 13.

In examining Barani's account of the matter, we have to remember that though his *Tarikh-i Firuz Shahi* is 'a remarkable feat of memory', the author had no books or records within his reach and, as Professor Habib has pointed out, 'he had nothing but his memory and his pen, ink and paper'.¹⁷² Also we have Barani's frank confession that he is not describing the events of Sultan Muhammad's reign in their historical sequence.¹⁷³

Barani's first paragraph on the famine is very incorrect and unfortunate. He writes: 'The first design that led to the destruction of the territory and the overthrow of the *ra'iiyyat* was this. It came to the Sultan's mind that the land tax of the Doab peasantry should be raised from one to ten and from one to twenty.¹⁷⁴ He made stern regulations for enforcing this measure; the money realized broke the backs of the *ra'iiyyat*; the demands were so severe that weak and helpless peasants were completely crushed, while the richer *ra'iiyyat*, who had money and goods, became rebellious. The territory was ruined and cultivation was given up completely. Further, the *ra'iiyyat* of distant territories, fearing that they would be treated in the same way as the Doab peasantry, began to disobey and hid themselves in the forests. And on account of the dearth of cultivation in the Doab and the ruin of the Doab peasantry, the decline of *carawans* and the non-arrival of grain, there was a fatal famine in Delhi and its suburbs and the whole of the Doab. The price of grain rose. *The monsoon also failed.* There was total famine, which remained for some years. Many thousands and thousands of men died. Society was distressed. Most people lost all they had. *The country as well as the government of Sultan Muhammad became insipid and without glory from that time.*'¹⁷⁵

Our historian's memory is obviously deceiving him. In order to bring a charge against his deceased patron, he tries to confuse the effect with the cause. The increase in the land tax of the Doab could not have led to failure of monsoon for several years; on the other hand, it is very likely that the famine left the Sultan no alternative but to demand that the peasant pay the state-share in grain or (in the alternative) its money equivalent in cash according to the market price of grain.

¹⁷² Professor Habib, *Political Theory of the Delhi Sultanat*, 120.

¹⁷³ *Firuz Shahi*, 476.

¹⁷⁴ Since we are dealing with famine prices, it is useless discussing whether Barani's figures should be taken literally; even taken literally they are correct. *But the point is that the enhanced taxation was not the cause of famine, but its consequence.*

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 472-78.