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# A HISTORY OF INDIA

## PART II

### THE MUHAMMADAN PERIOD

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*WITH ILLUSTRATIONS AND MAPS*

LONGMANS, GREEN & CO., LTD.

17 CHITTARANJAN AVENUE, CALCUTTA

NICOL ROAD, BOMBAY

36A MOUNT ROAD, MADRAS, S.C.

LONDON, NEW YORK AND TORONTO

1938

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*First Edition, 1926*  
*New Edition, Revised, 1929*  
*Reprinted, 1931, 1937, 1938*

## PREFATORY NOTE

THIS book forms the second of a series of three books of Indian History which are intended to set out the main narrative in a manner suitable for students reading for the Intermediate Examination. Following the arrangement of Mr. Vincent Smith, we have carried the period down to 1761, when even the semblance of Mughal control over India was at an end. The period is so full of incident that we have been compelled, bearing in mind the type of reader for whom the book is intended, to use a good deal of compression and to limit the number of references. We have dealt at some length with the *Bhakti* movement, that religious revival which produced so many exponents in different parts of India. In our opinion there is a tendency to underestimate the importance of the movement and of its effect upon subsequent history.

LAHORE,  
*January, 1926.*

H. L. O. GARRETT,  
S. R. KOHLI.

The whole part has now been revised and some additional matter added.

*August, 1929.*

H. L. O. GARRETT,  
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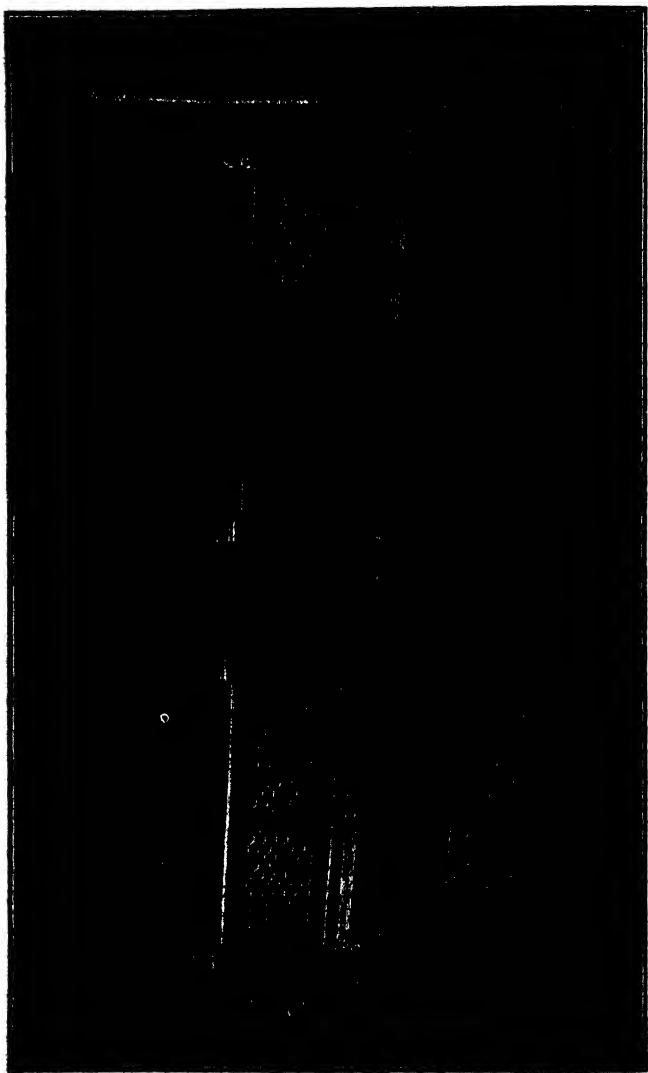
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KUTUB-UD-DIN AIBAK'S TOMB IN LAHORE

# Book I.—THE PERIOD OF INVASIONS 712-1206

## CHAPTER I

### On the Eve of Conquest

#### Rajputs, Arabs, Ghaznavides, 648-1030

Period of Rajput ascendancy—Political divisions of India—Religious and social conditions of the time—Arab conquest of Sindh—Causes of the Arab failure—India and the Turkish slaves—Sabuktigin and Jaipal—Mahmud's invasions.

Harsha may be regarded as the last great Hindu Emperor of Northern India. But unfortunately the dominion he had created did not outlast his reign. After his death in A.D. 648, his Empire steadily went on disintegrating into a number of smaller kingdoms or principalities and then followed a period of nearly two hundred years—a period full of the confusion and disorder which usually follows the collapse of an Empire founded and maintained by the genius of a single ruler. It was during this confusion that the Rajputs issued from their wild country in the west and the south, pushed themselves into the political forefront, swept away the old effete Empire, and replaced it by a large number of smaller kingdoms. For about four centuries, from A.D. 800 to 1206, nearly every kingdom in India was governed by a Rajput family and this period is consequently known in the history of the country as the

**Age of  
Rajput as-  
cendancy.**



period of Rajput ascendancy. An account of the rise and expansion of the Rajput power has already been given in a previous volume of this series.<sup>1</sup> We will,

**Political divisions of India : A.D. 800-1206 Western India.**

therefore, confine ourselves to a bare sketch of the great political divisions which obtained in the country during the age of the Rajputs. Beginning from the West, Gujara- rat and Kathiawar were held by the Salonkis or Chalukyas with their capital at Patna or

Anhilwara.

Rajputana, Sindh and the Panjab were ruled by petty Rajput kings and chiefs—the best known amongst them being the Chauhans with their capital at Ajmer and the Tomaras who occupied the districts of Hissar and Dehli, where their chief Auangpal founded and built a fort (Lalkot).

**Rajputana, Sindh and the Panjab.**

In Central India the most powerful Rajput State was that of Malwa which rose to great renown under its king Bhoja during the last half of the ninth century. The two chief towns of this kingdom of Malwa were Dhar and Ujjain.

**Central India.**

The Northern India group of States comprised among others the two powerful kingdoms of Kanauj and Bundelkhand. Kanauj remained first under the Tomaras and then passed under the Gaharwars. Close to the kingdom of Kanauj was that of Jejakabhukti (Bundelkhand) comprising Mahoba and Kalanjar which was ruled by the Chandel Rajputs. Between the rulers of these neighbouring kingdoms there existed a fierce rivalry for supremacy which, among others, was one of the reasons for no effective resistance

**Northern India.**

<sup>1</sup> *A History of India, Part I: The Pre-Mussalman Period*, by K. V. Rangaswami Aiyangar, M.A.

being offered to the invasion of Mahmud of Ghazni who captured and looted Kanauj in A.D. 1017.

The Himalayan States protected by their mountain barriers formed a political division by themselves comprising the three important States of Kashmir, Nepal and Assam.

**Himalayan States.**

In the east lay the kingdom of Bengal which was split up into two kingdoms, namely, those of Bihar and Bengal. The Bihar kingdom was ruled by the Palas with their capital at Mungir whereas the Bengal portion of its territory was governed by the Sena line of kings.

**Bihar and Bengal.**

The seventh important political division may be said to have comprised the kingdom of Orissa with its capital at Bhuvaneshwar which was founded by Yayati Kesri towards the close of the fifth century. The members of the Kesri or Lion dynasty continued to rule till the eleventh century when they were supplanted by a branch of the Gangavansh or Ganga line of Mysore rulers.

**Kingdom of Orissa.**

West of Orissa and south of the Jejakabhukti (Bundelkhand) kingdom lay the kingdom of Chedi corresponding roughly to modern Berar and the Central Provinces.

**Kingdom of Chedi.**

Two other territorial divisions of the country in this age were the Deccan and Southern India. The Deccan during these centuries was ruled by (i) the later Western Chalukyas with their capital at Kalyan and their dominion extending over the whole of Maharashtra and (ii) the Eastern Chalukyas whose dominions comprised the country lying along the lower courses of the Godavari and Krishna rivers (Telingana). Besides these two branches of the Chalukya House originally founded by Pulakesin II, the contemporary of Harsha (A.D. 610), there were two other houses of the Rajputs

**The Deccan group of kingdoms.**

ruling in the Deccan. These were the Hoysalas with their capital at Dwarasamudra and the Yadavas of Deogiri. Both of these had originally started as feudatories of the Chalukyas. Southern India consisting of a group of three kingdoms of Pandyas, Cheras and Cholas formed a distinct political division.

**Southern  
India  
group.**

Thus there were about eight bigger territorial divisions in the country and each one had more than one independent kingdom included in it. Naturally, therefore, jealousies and feuds existed between royal houses ruling over dominions so closely situated and so ill-defined, which prevented their offering any combined and effective opposition to the Muhammadan invaders.

The absence of a paramount political power in India during the four centuries preceding the Muhammadan invasion also led to the social and religious disintegration of the country. We are told by an Arab traveller of the tenth century that there were as many as 'forty-two religions in India.' The number forty-two perhaps signifies only many. Buddhism had ceased to exist as an organized religion and modern Hinduism was not the same as the old Brahmanism of the Vedic age. In popular forms of faith and worship it diverged widely from the old religion. The old Vedic religion insisted on the worship of Nature's God; modern Hinduism invoked Nature's God in his three-fold power as Creator or Brahma, as Preserver or Vishnu, and as Destroyer or Shiva. Vishnu and Shiva became popular with Hindu worshippers and all over the country large numbers of Shiva and Vaishnava orders were founded. Again in their efforts to reclaim the masses from the Buddhist faith, the Brahman leaders deified their national heroes like Rama and Krishna and raised them to the dignity of Gods and had also given a place to Gautama Buddha

**Religious  
and social  
conditions  
during the  
period.**

himself in their pantheon. The result was that legends and tales of the doings of Krishna and Rama multiplied all over the country and the simple and pious-hearted people of India began to worship them as beneficent personal Gods with all the devotion natural to the Hindus. The followers of various faiths—kings and queens and wealthy trading classes alike—vied with each other in building temples to their favourite deities and the whole country was covered with such temples.

The worship of different deities developed rules and forms of ritual peculiar to each faith. Numerous Puranas were composed by the sects, setting forth the supreme excellence of their Gods and the efficacy of their peculiar rites. As a natural consequence this resulted in frequent sectarian controversies and feuds between the followers of the different forms of worship, so much so that sometimes the followers of one sect would look with delight upon the destruction of the temples of another by the Muhammadan invaders of later centuries.

The forces which brought about this religious disintegration were also responsible for bringing about a total collapse of the old social order. According to the Brahman ideal, society was divided into four main castes, i.e., the Brahmans, the Kshatriyas, the Vaisyas, and the Sudras. Amongst the first three, the Brahmans took precedence and they also claimed to be the custodians of all spiritual knowledge. It was under the guidance of the Brahman alone that one could attain salvation or *Moksh*. Opposed to this was the Buddhist ideal of life which laid stress on the self-efforts of the individual for his or her spiritual salvation, as well as on the equality of man in social life. In their struggle with Buddhism and particularly against the principles of social equality and universal brotherhood of the latter,

**Collapse  
of the  
old social  
order.**

the Brahmans tightened their bonds of caste and defended themselves by the increased rigidity of caste associations. The result was that in place of the four original castes into which Hindu society was divided a large number of new castes sprang up.

The castes, or more correctly the sub-castes, came to be associated with birth, occupation, place of residence and other similar factors. The process of disintegration began, probably, with the Brahman caste. In addition to the Rig Vedi and the Yajur Vedi Brahmans as of old, their sub-castes multiplied and they came to be known by their territorial limits as Kanauji, Gaur, Telugu, and Kokan Brahmans and so on. Similar subdivisions in the Kshatriya and Vaisya castes soon followed. In course of time quite a large number of occupational castes such as the carders, weavers, smiths, fishermen, brewers, cowherds, carpenters, etc., which originally started only as craft-guilds came to be considered as distinct sub-castes in society. The members of an occupational group or caste always looked to the interest of their brotherhood and consequently their social and political vision became very narrow with the lapse of time. Although the revived Hinduism, after a continuous struggle for centuries, did succeed in crushing its rival Buddhism, yet the victory was gained at an enormous cost. The old order—political, religious and social—was destroyed during the struggle and the new one which was substituted in its place was based on weaker foundations. Thus the forces working in different spheres of national life were all working for the separation and disintegration of society. Nor had the new Hinduism yet fully recovered from its prolonged struggle against Buddhism, when in the beginning of the eleventh century the first wave of Islamic invasion swept over the country.

**Formation  
of sub-  
castes  
based on  
occupa-  
tion.**

About the same time that the Rajputs rose to power in India, another greater power was rising in the far west. **Early conquests of Islam.** Muhammad had gathered the hardy warriors of Arabia around him, and united them under the ennobling religion of one God, and before a hundred years had expired after the death of the founder of Islam (A.D. 632) his successors had subdued Egypt, Syria, Northern Africa and part of Spain. The second wave of Arab conquest flowed eastwards and swept before it the old effete civilizations of Persia and the countries around Afghanistan. But here the lofty walls of the Hindukush checked the further progress of the Arab soldiers and saved India for the time being. However, by the close of the first quarter of the eighth century, a magnificent Empire, stretching from the Atlantic to the frontiers of India owned the supremacy of the Khalif of Baghdad.

The religious belief of Muhammad was diffused as widely as the conquests of his votaries had extended. Egypt had surrendered after a short struggle and accepted the religion of its conquerors. So had Syria and Persia. The old Scythian beliefs and institutions in the countries round Balkh and Bokhara were also easily supplanted by Islam and some time after when it made its appearance in Afghanistan and the Kabul Valley, decaying Buddhism also easily gave way and the entire population became converts to the religion of Muhammad.

Having securely established their powers in Persia, the Arabs turned their attention eastwards to India. They had heard a lot about the fabulous wealth of the country from the merchants who sailed from Shiraz and **Invasion and conquest of Sindh, A.D. 712.** Hurmuz and landed on the Indian coast. A good pretext soon offered itself. Some ships conveying

Muhammadan pilgrims from Ceylon with many valuable presents in jewels and pearls from the King of Ceylon to the Khalifa Walid were compelled by adverse winds to go to Debal where these were detained by the pirates infesting that port. Hajaj, the Governor of Basra demanded restitution from Dahir, the Rajput Raja of Sindh, but the latter refused it on the ground that the port was not included in his territory and that he was unable to suppress the pirates. Hajaj then persuaded the Khalifa Walid to declare war against Sindh. The expeditionary force was placed under Muhammad Kasim, who soon took possession of Debal, Haidarabad and Sahwan. A battle was fought at Alor, the capital of Sindh in which Dahir was killed. His brave widow with her bodyguard of Rajputs also perished during a sally against the Muhammadan besiegers of the town. Kasim then advanced to Multan which was weakly defended and the capture of a few other cities completed the conquest of Sindh.

**Failure of  
Arab  
occupa-  
tion of  
Sindh.**

Kasim is said to have been engaged on plans for the invasion of the north-west when orders were received from the Khalif to put him to death. The Arab soldiers remained in Sindh where they married Indian wives and settled down in permanent occupancy. Since the province was unremunerative, the Khalif of Baghdad soon abandoned it in all but name, and subsequently, when his own power declined, even this nominal connection was broken and the local Muslim rulers became independent towards the end of the ninth century. This power, however, was gradually weakened and the Rajputs of the Sumera tribe regained partial possession of Sindh from the Muhammadan invaders who were now confined only to Multan and Mansura in Lower Sindh. After a time, they ceased to control even this restricted area and the Arab invasion soon became little more than a tradition.

The conquest and occupation of Sindh by the Arabs had proved a failure. This was partly due to the inadequate forces sent by the Khalif for so formidable a project as the conquest of India and to the still less adequate reinforcements for the maintenance of that conquest when it was effected. We cannot ignore the fact that the Rajput chiefs, especially on the north and east, had made themselves sufficiently strong to repel the invasion, or at least to check the progress of the Arabs. The renowned Bapa Rawal of Chitor had repulsed them with great loss when the Arabs raided that kingdom. The other reason for the failure of the Arabs was that they had entered the country from the wrong quarter. The province of Sindh is unproductive in itself and is also cut off from the fertile plains of India by an extensive sandy desert which it was not easy for the Arabs to cross. The Arab sailors and merchants, however, penetrated much further than the Muslim armies. They were familiar with all the coast-line down to Ceylon and in many of the sea-ports and inland cities they were held in high repute, being allowed to build their mosques and worship in their own way without molestation by the Hindu chiefs.

From a political point of view, the Arab conquest of Sindh was a comparatively insignificant event in the history of Islam. But the effects of this conquest upon Muslim culture were profound and far-reaching. The Arabs, for the first time, came into direct contact with the Hindus and they found that the latter far excelled them in some of the cultural arts. The skill of the Indian musician, the cunning of the Indian painter and the wisdom of the Indian philosopher inspired, in the mind of the Arab warrior, genuine respect for the Indo-Aryan civilization. Brahman officials were

**Probable causes of failure.**

**The cultural effects of the Arab conquest.**



employed, in large numbers, for various administrative duties and so were the Hindu craftsmen engaged in designing and building cities, palaces and mosques. It was, in fact, in Sindh that the Arabs had their first practical lessons in Indo-Aryan statecraft under the guidance of their Brahman officials. To India, again, the Arabs owe their knowledge of astronomy, medicine and other sciences. But it must be admitted that the Muslims soon gave a new garb to the knowledge they had borrowed from India and developed 'schools of their own which gave a new impetus to scientific research.'

The Arab invasion had come and gone, and the memory of the early Muhammadan invaders gradually dwindled away till the story of their invasion, as remarked before, became little more than a tradition. The various Rajput families continued building up their respective powers and the peace of the country was not disturbed by any foreign aggression for more than a hundred years. It was towards the close of the tenth century, however, that this peace was again broken, when, as a result of the collapse of the Eastern Khilafat, the Turkish body-guard of the Khalif as well as other Turkish adventurers sought to carve out independent principalities for themselves. These invasions came from the north-west corner of India and so completely destroyed her isolation from the rest of Asia that from this time onward for more than seven hundred years, a constant wave of invasions continued to flow into the country till it was finally checked, stemmed and rolled back by the Sikhs of the Panjab at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

This series of invasions may be said to have commenced with the wars of Sabuktigin with Jaipal, the ruler of the Panjab. Sabuktigin was a Turkish slave in the household of Alaptigin, himself originally a Turkish slave

**India and  
the  
Turkish  
slaves.**

**Sabukti-  
gin's wars  
with  
Jaipal.**

who subsequently rose to be the Governor of Khorasan under the Sammani dynasty of Persia in A.D. 960. Alaptigin eventually set up an independent kingdom at Ghazni and died in A.D. 975 bequeathing the succession to Sabuktigin. Not content with the original stronghold of his master, Sabuktigin soon extended his dominions to the east in the Kabul Valley and came into conflict with Jaipal, the ruler of the Panjab.

Jaipal had established his power in the Panjab about the middle of the tenth century and at the time of his conflict with Sabuktigin his kingdom extended from Sirhind to Lamghan and from Kashmir to Multan. The two states were thus so closely situated that a conflict was likely to arise sooner or later. And indeed, they came into conflict when Sabuktigin in A.D. 986 made his first raid into the territory of his Hindu neighbour. The struggle between the two continued for nearly thirty-five years till the Hindu dynasty finally succumbed in A.D. 1021 to the repeated attacks of Mahmud, the son and successor of Sabuktigin.

Jaipal was by no means willing to rest idle under the acts of aggression committed in the western portion of his territory by the ruler of Ghazni. He assembled a large army, and crossing the Indus (A.D. 988) advanced to Lamghan (modern Jallalabad) to retaliate by invading the territory of Sabuktigin. He was, however, defeated and compelled to sign a treaty binding him to pay a large indemnity, and to surrender four forts to the west of the Indus besides about fifty elephants. Jaipal now moved his capital from Ohind to Lahore and feeling himself, perhaps, more secure, refused to fulfil the terms of the treaty. Sabuktigin who could not brook this insult, seized the districts of Lamghan and devastated other possessions of

**Beginning of the struggle.**

**Jaipal crosses the Indus and invades the territory of Sabuktigin.**

Jaipal. After a short interval in or about A.D. 991, Jaipal made a vigorous effort to put an end to the growing Muslim menace by organizing a confederacy of the Hindu kings of Dehli, Ajmer, Kalanjar and Kanauj who gladly enlisted themselves in the national cause. The opposing armies met somewhere in the Kurram Valley, the vast Hindu host was defeated and made to retire, and the country west of the Indus passed under Muhammadan rule. Sabuktigin died in A.D. 997 leaving a large and well-established kingdom for Mahmud.

In A.D. 997 after a short struggle with his brother Ismail, Mahmud succeeded to the throne of his father at Ghazni and assumed the title of Sultan. He was then thirty years old and in the prime of his life. He had also gained much military experience from being his father's constant companion in war.

Mahmud had heard so much of the riches of India that he is said to have made a vow that every year he would undertake a campaign against the infidels of Hindustan. If he did not keep the letter of his vow he fell little short of it. Between the years 1000 and 1026, he made at least seventeen campaigns in India in which he ranged across the plains from the Indus to the Ganges. His first attack was directed against his father's old enemy the Raja Jaipal.

Having settled the affairs of his kingdom, Mahmud turned his attention towards Hindustan and directed his first attack upon Jaipal who had endeavoured to regain Peshawar. In the course of the battle in November 1001, Jaipal and his family were taken prisoners, immense booty passed into the hands of the victor and the captives were set free. But with the courageous despair of his race Jaipal refused to survive his disgrace and cast himself upon a funeral pyre. The struggle was

**Sultan Mahmud's accession to the throne of Ghazni.**

**Renewal of struggle with Jaipal of Lahore.**



continued by Jaipal's son and grandson, namely, Anangpal and Trilochanpal, but their efforts proved unavailing to stem the torrent of Mahmud's invasion into India. By A.D. 1021 Lahore had fallen into the hands of the invader and the Panjab became a Muhammadan province.

**Expeditions against Bhera, Multan, Lahore and Nagarkot, 1004-1010.**

Mahmud's second expedition was directed against the Raja of Bhera on the River Jhelum (1004) and his third was against the Karmathian ruler of Multan (1005) who agreed to pay an annual tribute. The fourth was more important as it was directed against Anangpal of Lahore (1008) who, like his father, had organized a confederacy of Hindu rulers of Northern India and who also met with a similar fate. It is said that on this occasion the Hindus made a common cause and even Hindu females sold their ornaments to furnish resources for the war. The Sultan next proceeded to take the fort of Nagarkot (Kangra), in which, on account of its great strength, had been deposited 'a greater quantity of gold, silver, precious stones and pearls, than was ever collected in the treasury of any prince upon earth'. This vast treasure was carried to Ghazni and Mahmud left his own garrison in the fortress which was recovered by the Hindus after thirty-five years. In the following year 1010, Mahmud directed his armies to the capture of Thaneshwar and on his return marched again to Multan to chastize its refractory governor.

**Conquest of Kanauj, 1017.**

The years A.D. 1012 to 1017 passed without any further invasion of India, but in the latter year, Sultan Mahmud again set out with a large army of 10,000 horse and 20,000 foot, crossed the Indus and rapidly marched on to Kanauj. The greatness and beauty of this ancient Hindu capital, the central city of Northern India, struck the grim invader. 'There are a thousand edifices,' he

wrote, 'as firm as the faith of the faithful, most of them of marble, besides innumerable temples; nor is it likely this city has attained its present condition but at the expense of many millions of *dinars*, nor could such another be constructed under a period of two centuries.' Rajypal, who then ruled Kanauj, was taken unawares and submitted to the conqueror and his city was spared. On his return Mahmud halted at Mathura, pillaged the town, melted the gold and silver images, and carried off an immense booty.

The cowardly submission of Rajypal of Kanauj angered his fellow Rajputs who, under the command of the Chandel kings of Kalanjar, combined against him, slew him, and dispossessed his family of the throne. Mahmud, who regarded the ruler of Kanauj as his vassal, came down to India to punish the Chandel prince. Ganda the Chandel fled and Mahmud was baulked of his prey. Returning home, the Sultan took possession of Lahore, ousted Trilochanpal, the son of Anangpal, and left a Muhammadan Governor in the place. Thus Lahore passed under Muhammadan rule in A.D. 1021.

**Mahmud's  
march on  
Kalanjar  
and his  
final  
capture of  
Lahore,  
1021.**

The twelfth expedition was Mahmud's last and most important. It was directed against the famous shrine of Somnath in Kathiawar. It lay at the furthest extremity of the Kutch Peninsula on the sea-coast and was strongly fortified. There stood one of the most sacred temples of the Hindus, enshrining a far-famed *Lingam*, a conical stone of great size, visited by hundreds of thousands of pilgrims, and served, so it is said, by a thousand Brahmans who guarded its countless treasures of jewels and money. In the beginning of A.D. 1025, Mahmud set out from Ghazni with a large force to plunder the accumulated wealth of ages at

**Expedi-  
tion  
against  
Somnath,  
1025.**

Somnath. Having reached Multan, the Sultan struck across the desert to Ajmer, and thence reached Anhilwara, capital of Gujarat. The Chalukya Raja left his capital, and retired into the mountains and Mahmud pushed on to Somnath. After a fierce fight the Muhammadans captured the fortified town and sacked the temple. The great *Lingam* was cast down and broken into pieces which, it is said, were sent to Ghazni, Mecca and Medina, as witnesses of Mahmud's zeal for the faith. The sandalwood gates of the temple were also carried off to Ghazni and a million pounds worth of gold and jewels found their way into Mahmud's treasury.

The Somnath expedition was the last and most noteworthy achievement of Sultan Mahmud. He died four years afterwards in A.D. 1030.

In India Mahmud's invasions left no permanent result except in the Panjab, since a portion of the latter was annexed to his dominions of Ghazni. Elsewhere the effects of his raids soon wore off and the Rajputs continued masters of Northern India for nearly two centuries.

**Effect of Mahmud's invasions on India.**

## CHAPTER II

### The Conquest

#### Muhammad Ghori, 1175-1206

The kings of Ghor and their struggle with the rulers of Ghazni—Early campaigns of Muhammad Ghori—His wars with Rajputs and fall of Dehli, Ajmer and Kanauj—Conquest of Gujarat, Bihar and Bengal—Revolt of the Panjab and death of Muhammad Ghori—Causes of the Muslim victory.

**Introductory remarks.** Mahmud of Ghazni had no desire to be an Indian monarch, and contented himself with exercising suzerainty over the greater part of the Panjab, including Lahore. The next stage in the conquest of India began in the third quarter of the twelfth century when Muhammad Ghori, who had taken over the Sultanate of Ghazni from his brother at Ghor, advanced through Multan into Sindh and attacked Gujarat in A.D. 1175. The Panjab had already accepted the Muhammadan rule and it was now the turn of the rest of Northern India to feel the hand of the Muslim conquerors from the north-west.

**The Kings of Ghor and their struggle with the Sultans of Ghazni.** Shahab-ud-Din Muhammad Ghori was the first Muslim who laid the foundations of permanent Muhammadan rule in India. Unfortunately we know very little of the early life of this great conqueror, nor do we know much about the history of his family. All that is known of the early history of Ghor is that this principality lay south-east of Herat and in or about A.D. 1043 was made dependent on Ghazni



by Sultan Mahmud, and the chieftains of Ghor became feudatories of the Sultan. But the warlike Ghoris chafed under the rule of the Ghaznavides and when in A.D. 1149, the brutal act of Sultan Bahram gave them a chance to throw off the hated yoke they eagerly availed themselves of the opportunity. Bahram having got hold of the person of Kutb-ud-Din Sur, the reigning prince of Ghor to whom, a few years before he had given his daughter in marriage, put him to death. Kutb's brother Saif-ud-Din immediately took up arms to revenge him and marched on Ghazni in A.D. 1150. Bahram fled to Kirman, leaving the city in possession of Saif-ud-Din. Soon after, having collected an army, Bahram advanced to Ghazni, re-captured the city and put Saif-ud-Din to death with horrible tortures. The third brother Ala-ud-Din, on hearing of the murder, vowed a bitter revenge on Bahram and his people. He marched on Ghazni, defeated Bahram and in a fit of rage gave up the city to indiscriminate pillage and slaughter for seven days. Most of the noble edifices, raised by the Ghaznavide kings, were destroyed and even learned and inoffensive men were put to death in cold blood. Sultan Bahram fled towards India but died on the way of a broken heart in the year A.D. 1152. His son Khusro Shah retired to the Panjab where he ruled as king of Lahore till his death in 1186. But Ghazni was not incorporated in the dominion of Ghor until twelve years later (A.D. 1173) when it was annexed by Ghiyas-ud-Din who had succeeded his cousin Saif-ud-Din as Sultan of Ghor in A.D. 1157. The house of Ghor thus succeeded the house of Mahmud Ghazni in their vast possessions.

Ghiyas-ud-Din made over the kingdom of Ghazni with its dependencies including Kabul to the government of his brother Muhammad who is commonly known as Shahab-ud-Din Ghori.

Feeling secure in his possession of Ghazni, Ghiyas-ud-Din despatched his brother Shahab-ud-Din to India to seize the provinces which belonged to the fallen dynasty of Mahmud and to which the last member of that house had now retired. He accordingly marched down from Ghazni with a strong army and taking a southerly route reached Multan. The city of Multan which was in the possession of the heretical sect of the Karmathians, was compelled to submit in 1175. This successful attack on Multan was followed up by the occupation of the important fort of Uchh at the junction of the rivers of the Panjab with the Indus. Shahab-ud-Din left strong garrisons at these two places and returned to Ghazni. Three years later he again appeared in India and advanced through Multan into Sindh and attacked Gujarat. But Mul Raja of Anhilwara was too strong for the invader, who was beaten back with heavy loss in 1178 and retired to Ghazni.

Next year the Ghori invader again left Ghazni in the hope of better luck and accordingly chose a new route. In A.D. 1180, he appeared before the walls of Peshawar, took possession of the town, and then advanced to Lahore, the capital of Sultan Khusro. The fort was successfully defended, but the Sultan, anxious to purchase peace, gave up his son Malik Khusro as a hostage and got rid of the invader. Four years afterwards Muhammad Ghori invaded the Panjab again, and established some garrisons in the province which Sultan Khusro was unable to expel. Muhammad Ghori being now desirous of getting the Sultan into his power, wrote to him that he had despatched Malik Khusro with overtures of peace. The message was not open to suspicion, and the Sultan, very desirous of meeting the son from whom he had been so long

**Early Indian campaigns of Muhammad Ghori : Multan, Sindh and Gujarat.**

**Defeat of Khusro Malik and capture of Lahore by Ghori Sultan, 1185-6.**

separated, went to meet him, attended only by a small escort. Immediately on receiving intelligence that the Sultan had quitted Lahore, Shahab-ud-Din put himself at the head of a strong body of chosen cavalry, and marching with celerity and secrecy by unfrequented routes suddenly interposed himself between Khusro and his capital; and surrounding his camp by night, made him prisoner. He soon after occupied Lahore (1186) which no longer offered resistance. Khusro and his family were sent to Ghor and confined there in a dungeon of the ancestral Ghori fortress at Ferozkoh. Thus the house of Ghazni ceased to reign, Khusro being the last of the line of Sabuktigin. With the fall of Lahore, the whole of the Panjab passed into the hands of the victor and having already secured Sindh, Muhammad Ghori was in possession of the basin of the Indus and in a position to make further advance into the fertile plains of India where he could prosecute a holy war against the idolatrous and prosperous Hindu.

Shahab-ud-Din had now no Muhammadan rival left.

**Rajput  
kingdoms  
of North-  
ern India.**

All India, that was then Muhammadan, had passed into his hands. The Rajput princes realized the danger that threatened them, but there were, as usual, dissensions among them. At this time, the four greatest kingdoms in Northern India were—Dehli, then held by the Tomara Rajputs; Ajmer, by the Chohans; Kanauj, by the Rathors; and Gujarat, by the Baghelas who had, as stated before, supplanted the Chalukyas; but the Tomara chief dying without male issue, adopted his daughter's son, Prithvi Raj of Ajmer, and united the Tomaras and Chohans under one head.

As Jai Chandra, the Raja of Kanauj, was also a grandson of the Tomara chief by another daughter, he was very much offended at the preference shown to his cousin, and this jealousy gave rise to a deadly feud

between the two Rajput houses of Dehli and Kanauj.

**Prithvi Raj and Jai Chandra's rivalry helps the Ghori Sultan in his designs on India.**

The bitterness, as is so well-known, was increased by the romantic love affair of Prithvi Raj and Sanjogta, the daughter of Jai Chandra, whom the former had carried off at the time of her *swayamvara* (A.D. 1175). Jai Chandra and Prithvi Raj thus became deadly enemies and the former was also accused of intriguing with the common enemy. Whether the accusation against Jai

Chandra of having invited Muhammad Ghori to attack and destroy the rival house of Dehli be correct or not, there is no doubt that the wars and jealousies to which this rivalry of Kanauj and Dehli gave rise contributed greatly to the success of his designs on India.

In 1191, Muhammad Ghori having organized a powerful army advanced into India. The Hindu Rajas, realizing the common danger, formed a great confederacy against the invader, and as many as one hundred or more leading chiefs of Northern India sent their contingents to fight under the command of Prithvi Raj of Dehli. But Jai Chandra and his

**First battle of Tarain and defeat of Muhammad Ghori, 1191.**

associates held aloof. The armies met on

the battlefield of Tarain, near Thanesar, on the sacred ground where the Aryan heroes had fought during the great war of Mahabharata, and where subsequently most of the contests for the possession of India have been decided.<sup>1</sup>

It was the first great clash of Musalman and Rajput. The Musalman cavalry charged the Hindu centre and tried to press their advantage. But the Rajputs followed different tactics on this occasion. They outflanked the

<sup>1</sup> The famous battle-field of Panipat is also situated in the same region about thirty miles farther south.

enemy and closed upon him on both sides while he was busy with his attack on their centre. The result was that both the wings of Muhammad Ghori's army gave way and he himself was surrounded by the Rajputs. In single combat with Prithvi Raj's brother, Muhammad Ghori received such a serious wound from his opponent's lance that he was compelled to withdraw. It is said that he would have fallen from his horse through loss of blood, had not one of his faithful followers leapt up behind him and held him upon the saddle. As a consequence of that accident, Ghori's army was completely routed. The Hindus did not follow up their success and after a pursuit of about forty miles the enemy was allowed to retire to Lahore, where he collected the wreck of his army and returned to Ghor and subsequently to Ghazni.

But Shahab-ud-Din was not the man to be discouraged by one defeat. He had set his heart on the conquest of India and no sooner was he able to recruit a powerful army than he marched out to wipe off the disgrace of the defeat he had suffered. In the year 1192, accordingly, he collected an army of 120,000 Turki and Afghan horsemen and marched suddenly into India by way of Peshawar. The field of battle was the same, but the issue was far different. At the end of a well-fought day the charge of the Sultan's bodyguard of 10,000 mounted archers broke the Rajput ranks. 'Like a great building,' writes Firishta, 'this prodigious (Hindu) army once shaken, tottered to its fall, and was lost in its own ruins.' The power of the Rajputs was hopelessly crushed. Prithvi Raj was captured and put to death. His brother, the Viceroy of Dehli, fell in the battle. The Rajput principalities of Ajmer and Dehli were then occupied by the victors. 'In fact, the second battle of Tarain in 1192,' remarks Vincent Smith, 'may

**Second  
battle of  
Tarain  
and the  
defeat of  
Prithvi  
Raj, 1192.**

be regarded as the decisive contest which ensured the ultimate success of the Muhammadan attack on Hindostan.'

After the victory of Tarain, Ghori returned to Khorasan, leaving his former slave Kutb-ud-Din Aibak, who was now rising into prominence and who afterwards mounted the throne, as his representative in India. Kutb-ud-Din followed up his master's successes with vigour, reduced Dehli which had held out for some time after the battle of Tarain, and in 1193 established the seat of Muhammadan government in the city.

**Kutb-ud-Din Aibak in Dehli.**

Next year, 1194, Shahab-ud-Din returned to India and attacked Kanauj. Jai Chandra soon tasted the bitter fruit of disunion, for his capital, Kanauj, was stormed and the king himself was slain, as he fell back in the direction of Benares. This victory destroyed the second great Rajput house in Northern India, extended the Musalman dominions into Bihar, and opened the way, which was soon followed up, into the rich land of Bengal. An event of great consequence followed these victories. The proud Rajputs who disdained to live under the rule of their conquerors retreated from Kanauj to the sandy deserts of Marwar where they founded small principalities and lived an independent life in their new home which subsequently came to be known after them as Rajputana.

After the fall of Kanauj, Muhammad Ghori returned to Ghazni leaving the conduct of affairs to Kutb-ud-Din whom he now created his viceroy in India. For the time being Kutb-ud-Din was engaged in putting down rebellion in different places, more especially in Ajmer, where some surviving members of the late nobility were dissatisfied with the rule of

**Muhammad Ghori returns to Ghazni leaving Aibak in India.**

the Muslim nominee, the illegitimate son and successor of Prithvi Raj. Having defeated and slain in battle, Hem Raj, the chief of the revolutionary party, Aibak appointed a Muhammadan Governor to protect and control the Raja. Having settled Ajmer, he proceeded to Gujarat and on his way reduced to submission the hill chiefs of Abu. Reaching Anhilwara, Kutb-ud-Din occupied the capital, defeated Bhim Dev (Gujarat) and would probably have annexed his kingdom, but was recalled to Dehli, by orders from Ghazni (1196-97).

In the year 1202, Kutb-ud-Din captured Kalanjar and Kalpi, two important forts in Bundelkhand. The strong fortress of Kalanjar was surrendered by the minister of the Chandel ruler Raja Parmal to Kutb-ud-Din and the town was plundered and its temples, beautiful works of Chandel architecture, were mercilessly destroyed and disfigured or converted into mosques.

**Aibak's conquests of Bundelkhand.**

The people of Bihar and Bengal were no warriors like the Rajputs. From the time of the Emperor Asoka, Bihar, as its name signifies, was the land of *Vihāras* or monasteries where thousands of Buddhist monks resided, who were always engaged in worshipping the relics of Buddha or who passed their time in religious discussions. Such men could not have been expected to offer any considerable resistance to the Musalman conqueror whose logic was far different from theirs. They were seized with terror and submitted, without even a show of struggle, to the invaders.

**Conquest of Bihar —the land of *Vihāras* or Buddhist monasteries.**

There is thus a striking contrast between the conquest of Bihar and Bengal to the east of Allahabad and that of the Rajput princes of Dehli and Kanauj. One of Kutb-ud-Din's captains, Muhammad Bakhtiyar Khilji, overran

the region and effected its subjugation with the utmost ease. Bakhtiyar was more of an adventurer than a regular officer in the employ of the Viceroy of Dehli. He acted quite independently of Kutb-ud-Din, and began to make plundering raids into Bihar where he was gradually joined by other freebooters until he found himself in command of numerous horsemen. One day he moved out with a party of two hundred horsemen and boldly attacked and captured the fort and the next day he was the master of the capital of the province. The city was given to plunder and the monasteries with their 'shaven-headed monks' and their literary treasures believed to be books 'relating to the religion of the idolaters' were all destroyed. Benares and Bihar, the two important seats of Hindu learning, were perhaps the greatest sufferers in this respect. The indiscriminate destruction of the noble monuments of art and literature which was effected during the course of the early Muhammadan invasions is very unfortunate since the rich heritage of civilization is now for ever lost to the country.

Bengal succumbed even more easily than Bihar. Emboldened by his victory over Bihar, Bakhtiyar Khilji one day entered Nudiah, the capital of Bengal, with only eighteen horsemen disguised as horse-dealers. No one stopped him; at last he and his men reached the palace of the Raja and boldly attacked the door-keepers. The raider's audacity succeeded. The old Raja Lakshman Sen was eating his dinner and no sooner heard an outbreak in the courtyard than he slipped away by the back door leaving his palace and treasures in the hands of these adventurers. Meanwhile, Bakhtiyar's main force began to enter the city and took possession of the capital. Henceforth Bihar and Bengal also belonged to the Muhammadans.

**Conquest  
of Bengal  
by Bakhti-  
yar Khilji.**



Muhammad Ghori himself, believing that internal tranquillity had been restored in his new dominions in India, returned to Ghazni leaving the conduct of affairs in the hands of his Viceroy Kutb-ud-Din. The warlike Gakhars of the Panjab, taking advantage of his absence rose in revolt, laid waste nearly the whole of the province, cut off the communications between Peshawar and Multan and even captured Lahore. The Sultan returned from Ghazni and in conjunction with Kutb-ud-Din who had been summoned from Dehli, suppressed the revolt and slew many of the Gakhars. Twenty of them now swore to be revenged. In March, 1206, as the Sultan was on the march towards Ghazni and had encamped on the bank of the River Jhelum near the village of Dhamiak, a body of Gakhars swam across the river during the night, overpowered the sentinels and stabbed the Sultan. His remains were carried to Ghazni and interred there. Muhammad Ghori left no male issue and was succeeded by his nephew Mahmud, son of the late king, Ghiyas-ud-Din.

**Causes of the Muslim victory.**

Thus in a short period of a decade and a half, the whole of the Panjab, Dehli and Ajmer, Kanauj, Bundelkhand, Agra, Bihar and Bengal was overrun and taken possession of by the armies of Muhammad Ghori. The rapidity with which Shahab-ud-Din recovered from the first disastrous defeat at Tarain (1191) and with which he subsequently effected his conquests of the major portion of Northern India is significant and calls for some observations on the conduct and the character of the Hindu and Muslim soldiers and men who were engaged in this struggle. At first sight it seems very strange indeed, that at a time when the whole of India was governed by Hindu princes, a handful of foreign invaders should find it so easy to occupy Dehli and be allowed to

establish the seat of their future government there. But on a closer examination of the political and social circumstances of the country, a student of history is enabled to find an explanation for this otherwise difficult problem. The Muslims had come fresh from Central Asia and had the same advantage as the ancestors of the Hindus enjoyed when they first entered India. They fought as the Aryans of old had fought on horseback but they had also monopolized all the horse-breeding grounds of Western Asia. The horse deteriorates in the plains of India and the Rajputs were cut off from their usual supplies through the Panjab, and compelled to depend upon the rather delusive strength of their elephants which were easily routed by the mobile cavalry of the enemy. The Muslim army had also the advantage of fighting under one undivided command. In the case of the Hindus it was quite different. The Hindu host was comprised of contingents supplied by various princes who cared more for their own safety and disregarded all rules of military discipline. 'The Hindu defenders of their country,' says Vincent Smith, 'although fully equal to their assailants in courage and contempt of death, were distinctly inferior in the art of war, and for that reason lost their independence.' Besides the purely military reasons, there were other causes which contributed to the failure of the Hindus to defend themselves. For centuries the Hindus were cut off from the rest of the world and lived a self-contained life. For three centuries or more after the death of Harsha, India was not visited by any foreign invader and her people were allowed to live a peaceful life. They were consequently deprived of any incentive to develop their military strength or patriotism and at the time of the Muhammadan invasions as we have seen, the country did not rise as one nation to defend itself against its invaders. On the contrary, Jai Chandra watched with unconcern the fate of Prithvi

Raj and the powerful Chandel princes did not move a finger when Muhammad Ghori was molesting their neighbour, the ruler of Kanauj on the other side of the Jumna.

The other great factor responsible for the failure of the Hindus was their unfortunate division into the four castes each of which had its well-defined functions in the body politic. The defence of the country was assigned to the military class alone, which at this time was represented by the Rajputs. This class alone bore the brunt of these invasions and the rest of the population was unconcerned. On no single occasion, during these fifteen years do we notice that the general mass of the people were stirred to defend themselves, and neither directly nor indirectly realized the dangers of an invasion of their country. It may be that the reason for this passive attitude of the people was also the autonomous village government with which the central power seldom or never interfered and that the peaceful peasant would only know of the change of ruler at Delhi when he was called upon to pay his revenues.

#### CHRONOLOGY

##### THE PERIOD OF INVASIONS

712-1206

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| A.D.   |  |
| 712    | ... Arab conquest of Sindh.  |
| 812    | ... Collapse of Arab power in India.                                     |
| 960    | ... Alaptigin, Governor of Khorasan. Jaipal ascends the throne at Ohind. |
| 975    | ... Sabuktigin succeeds Alaptigin at Ghazni.                             |
| 987-88 | ... Sabuktigin defeats Jaipal at Lamghan.                                |
| 991    | ... Battle between Jaipal and Sabuktigin in the valley of Kurram.        |
| 997    | ... Mahmud ascends the throne of Ghazni.                                 |
| 1001   | ... Sultan Mahmud defeated Jaipal.                                       |
| 1008   | ... Defeat of Anangpal of Lahore.  |
| 1009   | ... Mahmud's invasion of Kangra.   |

A.D.

- 1018 ... Attack on Kanauj.
- 1026 ... Sack of Somnath.
- 1030 ... Death of Mahmud.
- 1030-1175 ... The Panjab remains under the successors of Sultan Mahmud.
- 1150 ... Destruction of Ghazni by Ala-ud-Din Hussain.
- 1160 ... Khusro Shah of Ghazni retires to Lahore.
- 1173 ... Ghazni incorporated in the kingdom of Ghor.
- 1178 ... Occupation of Multan by Shahab-ud-Din Ghor.
- 1186 ... Conquest of the Panjab by Ghor.
- 1187 ... Shahab-ud-Din defeated by the Raja of Gujarat.
- 1191 ... Khusro Malik Ghaznavid defeated at Lahore.  
Ghor defeated by Prithvi Raj at Tarain.
- 1192 ... Second battle of Tarain, defeat of the Rajputs.
- 1193-1197 ... Subjugation of Dehli, Benares and Bihar.
- 1200 ... Conquest of Bengal.
- 1206 ... Death of Sultan Shahab-ud-Din.

# Book II.—THE SULTANATE OF DEHLI 1206–1526

## CHAPTER III

### Establishment of Dehli Kingdom

#### The Slave Dynasty, 1206-1290

Kutb-ud-Din Aibak—Shams-ud-Din Iltutmish—Iltutmish establishes his authority over the provincial governors—his wars with the Rajputs—Invasion of Chingiz Khan—Sultana Raziya—Revolt of provincial governors—Nasir-ud-Din Mahmud—Mughal raids—Wars with the Rajputs—Mughal envoy at Dehli—Sultan Balban—His reforms—Rebellion in Bengal—The court of Balban—End of the dynasty—Character of the dynasty and the political results of the Muslim domination.

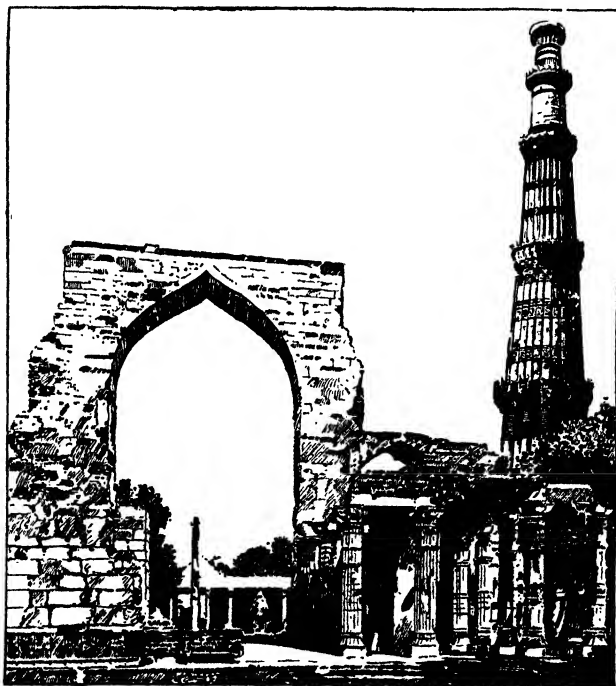
After the death of Muhammad Ghor, India ceased to have any political connection with Ghazni or Ghor. Kutb-ud-Din, who was Ghor's viceroy in Northern India, received from his successor a formal investiture as Sultan and was crowned as the first Muhammadan king at Lahore in July, 1206. Becoming Sultan of Hindostan, this distinguished and fortunate ruler founded what is known as the Slave dynasty.

Kutb-ud-Din was born of obscure parents and was brought to Nishapur in his infancy where he was purchased and kept as a slave by the Qazi or law-officer of the city. The Qazi seems to have been a very indulgent master and struck by the intelligent looks of the boy had him instructed in Persian and Arabic. On the death of his master Kutb-ud-Din was sold to a merchant who presented him to Sultan Shahab-ud-Din, then engaged in one of his western campaigns. He soon acquired his master's favour and was put in command of a body of horse, and, early in his career as a soldier, made his

**Introductory remarks.**

**Kutb-ud-Din, first Muhammadan king of India, (1206—1210); his early life.**

mark for gallantry in one of the border campaigns. Thenceforward the fortunes of Kutb-ud-Din experienced no check, his natural talents had free scope for action, and whether as a soldier, a general or a political administrator he gained equal distinction.



THE KUTB-MINAR AND HINDU RUINED BUILDINGS.

Kutb-ud-Din stood so high in his master's estimation that after the defeat of Prithvi Raj, he was left in charge of all the new conquests and at the time of his enthronement he had served and lived in India for twenty years. He was not therefore new to the situation. In fact, the extension of the conquests in India were due to him. It was he who had extended the Muhammadan power in

**His  
achievements.**

the south and west, reducing Kalanjar, Malwa, and Gujarat while Muhammad Bakhtiyar was making a conquest of Bengal. Kutb-ud-Din died at Lahore in A.D. 1210, from an accident at the game known as *Chaugan* or polo. There can be no question of the ability by which he had raised himself from the condition of a slave to that of a king and Muhammadan historians attest not only to his vigour, but to his social virtues and his profound, generous liberality.

Kutb-ud-Din Aibak is believed to have commenced the series of magnificent Muhammadan buildings in India. He used the materials of Hindu temples to erect a Jama Masjid at his capital of Old Dehli. The lofty minaret, the Kutb-Minar, is said to have been begun by him, but probably it was finished by his successor, Iltutmish, and it takes its name from the famous saint, Khwaja Kutb-ud-Din, whose tomb is close by.

On Aibak's death, his adopted son, Aram proved quite unequal to the task of governing in those troubled times. A deputation of the nobles of the State, therefore, waited upon Shams-ud-Din Iltutmish, the son-in-law of the late king, and besought him to save the kingdom by accepting the throne. He complied with their request, defeated Aram, and was crowned as king at Dehli in January, 1211. Much of Iltutmish's time was spent in successful fighting with his rival slave chieftains, each of whom held a portion of the empire at the time.

Upon the death of Aibak, the empire was divided into four great portions. The Khiljis represented the power of Islam in Bihar and Bengal; the North-Western Panjab was under Yalduz, the ruler of Ghazni, a Turkoman slave, and the valley of the Indus was ruled by another of

**Kutb-ud-Din's buildings.**

**Shams-ud-Din Iltutmish called to the throne, 1211.**

**Divisions of the empire on the death of Aibak.**

these slaves, named Kubacha; while at Dehli a third Iltutmish himself was now proclaimed as king. But his governors were not disposed to obedience; Iltutmish, therefore, had to win back a great part of the territories ruled over by Aibak.

In 1215-16, Iltutmish succeeded in establishing his authority over the Panjab by inflicting a crushing defeat upon Yalduz on the memorable plain of Thanesar, to which place he had advanced with a large army in order to recover the Indian dominions for himself.

**Iltutmish succeeds in establishing his authority over Provincial Governors.**

In 1217, Iltutmish next endeavoured to reduce Nasir-ud-Din Kubacha, who was independent in Sindh, but failed in his purpose after a hard struggle. The Emperor then turned his attention towards Bengal and compelled Bakhtiyar to profess allegiance in 1215. The Khilji chief was dispossessed of nearly half of his dominions (the province of Bihar being conferred on his son by Iltutmish) and was obliged to hold the remaining half under the crown of Dehli.

In 1228 Iltutmish once more turned against Kubacha who was now worn out by his long struggle with the Mughals and the Khawarizim Shah. The Sultan's task was thus rendered comparatively easy and the mighty Governor of Sindh was totally routed in a battle near Bhakhar and was either drowned in attempting to escape from the fort in which he was invested or committed suicide.

Iltutmish was now occupied for upwards of six years in reducing the part of Hindostan which had remained independent. The Rajputs of Malwa struggled hard to preserve their ancient freedom. Iltutmish began by taking Ranthambor which had so long been protected by its mountainous situation. He next took Mandu and then laid siege to the hill fort of Gwalior. The Raja of

**His wars with Rajputs.**



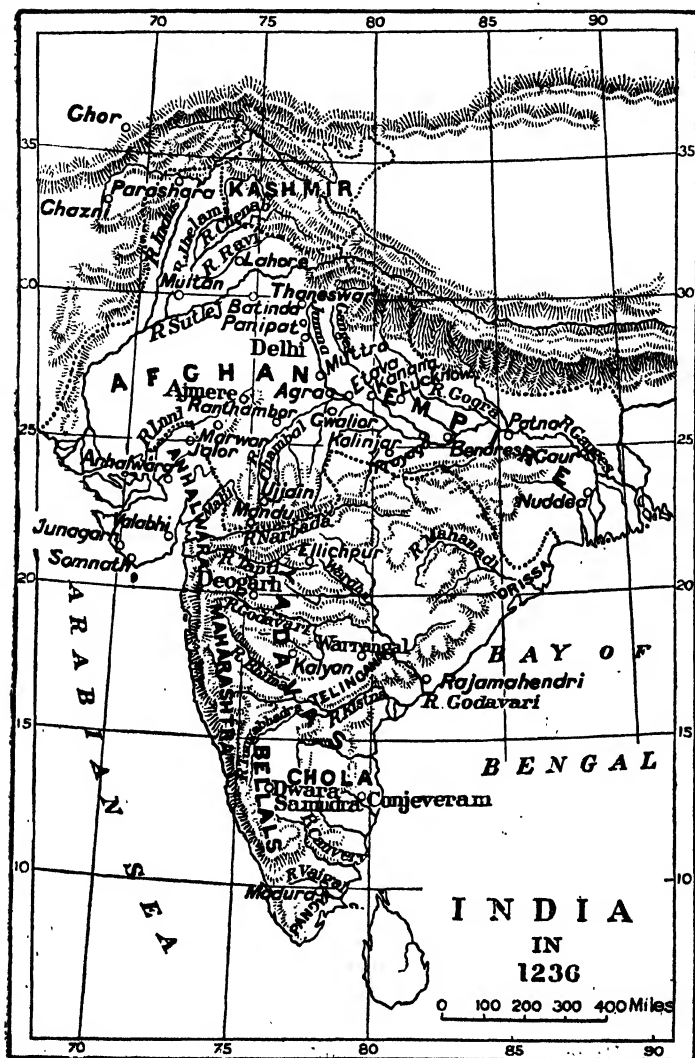
Gwalior held out for a year, and then fled and the fort was taken. Last of all, Iltutmish reduced the ancient capital of Ujjain, and demolished the Hindu temple of Mahakala, which is said to have contained a statue of the celebrated Vikramaditya. We are told by Firishta that the great temple had taken three hundred years to build, that it was surrounded by a wall a hundred cubits high, and that it contained the image of Mahakala in stone and many images of brass. Thus, by the year 1234, was completed the conquest of the rich fertile province of Malwa which carried the southern boundary of the Sultanate to the Narbada. All Hindostan, except perhaps, some isolated portions, now acknowledged the government of Dehli<sup>1</sup> and the dominions of Iltutmish extended from Sindh to Bengal and from the foot of the Himalayas to the river Narbada in the south.

Having reduced several of these Rajput strongholds, Iltutmish returned to Dehli, and died in April, 1235, just as he was about to set out on a journey to Multan. He had reigned twenty-six years with honour, and forms 'another instance of self-elevation by his talents from his originally low condition'.

While Iltutmish was waging a fruitless war with Kubacha, the ruler of Sindh, the Asiatic world across the Indus was overwhelmed by hosts of Tartars. Fortunately, however, India was saved from the terrible visit of their leader Chingiz Khan. These Tartars were nomad tribes who had been wandering in the neighbourhood of the desert of Gobi for many years under the name of Mongols. It was a great migration of races such as had taken place once before in the Fifth Century when the Huns swept over Asia and Europe. They are

**Invasion  
of  
Chingiz  
Khan,  
1221.**

<sup>1</sup> It may be remarked in this connection that the obedience of the different portions was in different degrees and it always varied with the personal equation of the ruler of Dehli.



described as ugly barbarians, with yellow complexions, high cheeks, flat noses, small eyes and large mouths. Their history begins with their chieftain named Tamurchi

who subsequently adopted the style of Chingiz Khan and united these several tribes and assumed the leadership. He was born in 1162, and died in 1227. By sheer force of genius Chingiz Khan had in course of time established his sovereignty over a very large area which was nearly four times as vast as the empire of India. His empire included a large portion of China and all the famous kingdoms of Central Asia, Balkh, Bokhara, Samarkand and Herat. After vanquishing Jalal-ud-Din Mankbarni, the Sultan of Khawarizim or Khiva, Chingiz with his barbaric hordes reached the banks of the Indus but never crossed the river into India, although after his death the Panjab and Sindh were frequently exposed to Mughal raids. Nasir-ud-Din Kubacha's resources were exhausted in his struggle with these Mughal raiders and hence he succumbed to Iltutmish when the latter invaded Sindh for the second time.

Iltutmish was succeeded by his younger son, Rukn-ud-Din, his elder son, Feroz, having predeceased his father. He was a dissolute youth and was removed from the throne after a scandalous reign of a few months. The nobles of the State then offered the throne according to the will of the late king, to his daughter Raziya Begam. Raziya was no ordinary woman. She possessed great vigour and heroism and had received practical training in the art of administration, being more than once appointed by her father as regent at the capital when Iltutmish had to go out on distant expeditions. Firishta writes of her, comparing her with her brothers:—'She had a man's head and heart and was better than twenty such sons.' She had no fault, but that she was a woman.

Sultana Raziya was the only female sovereign who ever sat on the throne of Dehli, and appears to have done her best, in times too stormy for a woman, or for any but the strongest man. She began her administration

**Sultana  
Raziya,  
1236-40.**

with an ability and attention to work which gave promise of success. Assuming male attire, she showed herself to the people on an elephant's back and used to sit in open court every day to transact the affairs of State.

Everything went on smoothly for a time, but the weakness of a woman is watched with jealous eyes. The princess was unmarried and the favour which she showed to her Master of the Horse gave offence to many. Many an intrigue was set on foot against her and several provincial governors began to show signs of rebellion. Early in 1239, the Governor of Lahore raised the standard of revolt but the Sultana promptly marched against him and reduced him to obedience. A second revolt was that of Malik Altunia, Governor of Bhatinda.

She proceeded thither, but was betrayed to the Malik by her own Turki chiefs who made her a prisoner. In her absence, her brother Bahram was raised to the throne of Dehli by the disaffected nobility. But Raziya did not lose heart. She made one more effort to recover her throne and 'a woman's art was of help to her.' Altunia was won over by the imprisoned queen, and married her and with their combined forces they marched towards Dehli. Raziya was however twice defeated in battle and both she and her husband were killed in 1240.

Two more descendants of Iltutmish, a son and a grandson, occupied the throne for a brief period of six years from 1240 to 1246 and then his son, the mild natured Nasir-ud-Din was set up and ruled, though only in name, for twenty years.

During these six years, the Mughals whom Chingiz had left behind made many an inroad into the Panjab and the Gangetic valley. The reigning sovereigns, Muiz-ud-Din Bahram (April 1239-41) and Ala-ud-Din Mas'ud (1241-46)

**Provincial  
Governors  
become  
jealous of  
the Sultana  
and revolt  
against  
her  
authority.**

**Nasir-ud-  
Din  
Mahmud.  
(1246-66.)**

**Mughal  
Raids :  
(1240-46.)**

proved unequal to the task of defending the empire. In 1241-42, Mangu, the grandson of Chingiz Khan and father of the celebrated Kubla Khan, ravaged Western Panjab and advanced as far as Lahore. Another important expedition of the Mughals was into Bengal by way of Tibet and resulted in the sack of Gaur, the capital of the province. By the time of Nasir-ud-Din's accession to the throne, the Mughals had possessed themselves of all the tracts to the west of the Indus. The first duty, in defence of the empire, which the new Emperor was called upon to perform, was to provide against the inroads of these barbarian invaders. Be it said to the credit of his minister Balban that he was equal to the emergency, and he formed the frontier tracts into one strong and fortified province and placed its government under his nephew. The warlike Khokhar tribes of the Panjab who had helped the Mughals and joined with them in their plundering excursions were ruthlessly punished and reduced to order.

The rest of Balban's time was occupied in putting down the rebellions of Hindu princes in Rajputana and the Doab between the Jumna and the Ganges. The Rajputs, taking advantage of the weak successors of Iltutmish, had recovered the whole country south of the Jumna and again embarked upon a struggle for their independence in Malwa. The imperial forces were despatched from Dehli under Balban and succeeded in reducing the Rajputs to submission for the time being. A great battle was fought at Mewat and several of the forts of the Chandel Rajputs in Bundelkhand were also captured. During these expeditions, the loss of human life on both sides, especially of the Hindus, is stated to have been very heavy.

Another event of some note during the reign of Nasir-ud-Din is the entertainment with great honour and splendour at Dehli of a Mughal envoy. Halaku

Khan, the Prince of the Mughals, having taken Baghdad and overthrown the Khilafat, sent an embassy to the court of Dehli, the motive of which was, probably, the death of his brother Mangu and the consequent desire in his mind to retire to his own country and establish his power there.<sup>1</sup>

**Mughal  
envoy at  
Dehli.**

Nasir-ud-Din died in February, 1266. He was a man of piety and studious habits, and became a patron of learning. His ideal of kingship was very high. He regarded himself only as a trustee of State funds and would allow

**Character  
of Sultan  
Nasir-ud-  
Din**

himself no more expense than was absolutely necessary. It is said of this emperor that he used to support himself by making copies of the Koran. Firishita writes of him that he had only one wife, who performed all the duties of a careful and industrious housewife. He refused her even the assistance of a servant, and when one day she complained of having burnt her finger in baking bread, he exhorted her to persevere and God would reward her.

During the twenty years of Nasir-ud-Din's reign, the real power in the State was wielded by his minister Ulagh Khan Balban, who had therefore, no difficulty in ascending the throne on his master's death. Both in the capacity of a minister and of a king, Balban held the reins of administration tightly in his hands for nearly forty years and it may be doubted whether in the whole course of the history of India, there is an instance of more durable prosperity than that which marked the career of this fortunate slave.

**Sultan  
Balban,  
1266-87.**

Early in childhood, Ulagh fell into the hands of slave-dealers who brought him into India where he was purchased by Sultan Iltutmish and enrolled in the corps of the famous 'Forty Turki Slaves'. After the manner of all these

**His gradual  
rise.**

<sup>1</sup> *A Sketch of the History of Hindostan*, by H. G. Keene, 1885, p. 81.

slaves, Ulugh Khan began to mix in political intrigues, and under Sultana Raziya he was promoted to the rank of *Mir-i-Shikar* or Master of the Hunt. He gradually rose higher in the service and obtained in succession the fiefs of Rewari and Hansi. Having now gained both wealth and influence Ulugh Khan was appointed by Nasir-ud-Din as the chief minister of the State. The Emperor was weak and pacific by nature and the astute minister, therefore, used the opportunity to his fullest personal advantage. 'He used,' as Ziya-ud-Din Barani characteristically remarks, 'his master's (Iltutmish's) sons as a show.' This maintenance of a '*roi faineant*' proved useful to Balban since his rival fellow-slaves were thrown into the shade and his own great deeds and services rendered him more and more conspicuous and more able to stand alone when the time came to seize the vacant throne for himself. Balban's life, it may be remarked, affords another instance in the history of those Turki slaves who rose to sovereignty throughout Asia and who for a long time furnished a succession of rulers to India.

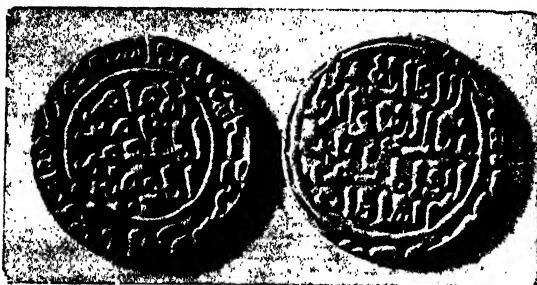
Balban's reign was distinguished by the same qualities that had marked his conduct as a minister and he proved himself a vigorous but severe and merciless ruler. A leading feature of his policy was the defence of the realm against the Mughals. From Dehli to the frontier of the empire, the old fortresses were repaired, new ones were built and all of them were provided with strong and trustworthy garrisons.

Balban had also to establish order within the empire. During the thirty years that had elapsed since the death of Iltutmish, the quarrels of the nobles and the weakness of the various rulers had given plenty of room for abuses and excesses

**Balban's  
Defence  
of the  
Frontier.**

**His other  
reforms.**

and consequent discontent and demoralization among the people. He accordingly set an example himself. He not only himself gave up drinking to which he had been somewhat addicted, but prohibited its sale or manufacture in his dominions while he repressed all public immorality with the utmost strictness and not unfrequently with cruelty. He allowed no joking in his presence and was never seen to laugh. He established rigorous justice and set on foot an army of spies by whose means he obtained 'universal knowledge of events'.



A GOLD COIN OF BALBAN, SULTAN OF DEHLI, STRUCK AT DEHLI  
*From Allen's 'Narrative of Indian History.' By permission.*

Balban reorganized his army and put down, with a ruthless hand, the rebellions of his provincial governors. Tughril Khan, the governor of Bengal and a favourite slave of Balban, had assumed independence and issued coins in his own name. The powerful viceroy twice defeated the imperial armies sent against him and in 1281 the aged monarch himself took the field, and went first to Gaur and then to Sonargaon. The Zamindar of Sonargaon undertook to guard the Megna river and to prevent the escape of Tughril. The insurgent governor fled into the forests but was discovered and slain.

**Suppression of rebellion in Bengal.**



Balban took a terrible revenge on the rebellious city. The long bazaar street was lined with gibbets on which were hung the bodies of Tughril's kinsmen and all who had taken part in the rising, and before leaving Gaur he enforced the moral on his son, Bughra Khan, whom he now placed in charge of the province. 'Didst thou see, Mahmud?' he asked. The surprised prince making no answer, the question was repeated again and yet again. 'Didst thou see my punishments in the streets of Gaur?' he explained. 'If ever you feel inclined to waver in your allegiance remember what you saw here.'<sup>1</sup>

**The  
Mewatee  
rebellion  
and the  
merciless  
execution  
of the  
rebels.**

Balban was stern and pitiless when policy appeared to require such qualities and Mr. Vincent Smith quotes from a Muslim historian, 'the disgusting details of merciless executions ordered by the Sultan in connection with the putting down of the Mewatee rebellion'. Before his accession he had put down the Mewatee brigands who had infested the neighbourhood of Dehli with such severity that the country was quieted for sixty years. They were put to death indiscriminately and the greater part of their country was cleared of forest and cultivated. In January 1260, the army returned from Mewat with their prisoners.

'By royal command many of the rebels were cast under the feet of elephants and the fierce Turks cut the bodies of the Hindus in two. About a hundred met their death at the hands of the flayers, being skinned from head to foot, their skins were all stuffed with straw, and some of them were hung over every gate of the City. The plain of Hauz-Rani and the gates of Dehli remembered no punishment like this, nor had one heard such a tale of horror.'<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *A Sketch of the History of Hindostan*, by H. G. Keene, p. 35.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted by V. Smith, *The Oxford History of India*, p. 228.

During the reigns of Nasir-ud-Din and Balban the court of Dehli became a place of refuge for the Shahs and Sultans of Bokhara and Turkistan and their followers as well as adventurers of all sorts driven from their thrones by the invasion of the Mughals. There were as many as fifteen exiled princes who had taken shelter at the court of Balban and he took a great pride in relieving and supporting them with every mark of hospitality. The fugitives, in their turn, helped to keep the Mughal raiders in check and strengthened the Muslim forces at Dehli in their campaigns against the insurgent Rajput princes. Many eminent literary men, historians, poets and doctors of Islamic Law also came with the fugitive kings and gave a literary distinction to the court of Balban. Chief and most notable among these was the famous Amir Khusro whose verses have become part of the folk-lore of Northern India. Balban is also said to have invited the poet Sa'adi to visit him from Shiraz though the great poet excused himself on the ground of old age.

Ghiyas-ud-Din Balban died in 1286 of shock at the death of his eldest son Prince Muhammad. The prince was slain whilst repelling a Mughal invasion and the aged Sultan (for Balban was now nearly eighty years of age) sank under the blow.

Balban left no worthy heir to succeed him. He knew that his second son Bughra Khan, governor of Bengal, was no fit successor to the throne, and he, therefore, nominated his grandson, Kai Khusro, as his heir. His disposition of the kingdom was not, however, carried out after his death. Kaikobad, another grandson (son of Bughra Khan) a handsome and engaging youth of eighteen, was raised to the throne. There was a touching meeting between the parent and the son.

**The Court  
of Balban.**

**End of the  
Slave  
Dynasty,  
1287-  
1290.**

in the course of which the father gave his son much good advice. But all advice was in vain and Kaikobad proved a worthless and profligate king and was removed after a short reign of three years and with him the dynasty of the slave kings ceased to exist.

From A.D. 1206 to 1290, a period of eighty-four years, ten kings, originally slaves and their descendants, had reigned over India, but the times were so violent and full of war and bloodshed that out of these ten only three died peacefully in their beds. The others were killed. Of these ten, one was a woman Sultan Raziya, Iltutmish's daughter, the most interesting figure in the slave dynasty and of the rest only three are deserving of remembrance, namely, Kutb-ud-Din, Iltutmish and Balban who spread the Muhammadan empire from the Indus to the Brahmaputra. Ever since the establishment of Muslim rule at Dehli (1193-94) there had been constant fighting in Northern India. The Hindu princes did not yield without a hard struggle. By the close of the thirteenth century, the Muhammadan conquerors had acquired a tolerably firm hold over the regions between the foot of the Himalayan and the Vindhya-chal ranges, which included the rich and fertile plains of the Panjab, the Sindh, the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh and Bihar as well as Gwalior and some parts of Rajputana and Central India. Malwa and Gujarat continued to be governed by independent Hindu princes and Bengal or Gaur practically formed an independent kingdom, though at times, the suzerain of Dehli enforced submission and allegiance from his powerful Viceroys of the eastern province.

Another remarkable feature of the early Muhammadan rule in India is that the country in their possession

**Character of the dynasty and the political results of the early Muslim domination.**

presented the look of a vast military camp. The Sultan and his nobles had their armed retainers and standing armies which formed their only source of strength. 'The army,' says the author of *Minhaj-i-Saraj*, 'is the source and means of government.' Naturally, therefore, we cannot expect that such rulers made any serious attempts to solve the problems of civil government or tried to introduce the fine arts on any large scale or to civilize the people.

There is still another event of great consequence which happened during the early Muhammadan invasions of India, namely, the migration of the chief Rajput tribes from their original homes in the Doab, between the Jumna and the Ganges, to the hill country all round the Aravalli hills, which has from that time been known as Rajputana. Being unable to maintain the struggle against the invading Turks and Afghans, the proud warriors retreated to places comparatively more secure, and founded new principalities in which they were able to maintain their independence for a few more centuries.

### SULTANS OF THE SLAVE DYNASTY, A.D. 1206-90

| Serial No. | Name               | Date, A.D. | Remarks   |
|------------|--------------------|------------|---|
| 1          | Kutb-ud-Din Aibak. | 1206-10    | The first Sultan of Dehli. Before his enthronement he was Muhammad Ghori's viceroy of India (1193-1206). 'From a slave to a Sultan' sums up the history of this remarkable man. |
| 2          | Aram Shah ...      | 1210-11    | Son of Aibak. Ruled for twelve months and was then dethroned and subsequently killed.   |

## SULTANS OF THE SLAVE DYNASTY, A.D. 1206-90—(contd.)

| Serial No. | Name             | Date, A.D. | Remarks   |
|------------|------------------|------------|---|
| 3          | Iltutmish ...    | 1211-36    | Slave and son-in-law of No. 1. Full title Shams-ud-Din Iltutmish. Died a natural death. Another instance of self-elevation from a slave to a sovereign.     |
| 4          | Rukn-ud-Din ...  | 1256       | Son of No. 3, was deposed after a reign of about seven months and placed in confinement.  |
| 5          | Raziya Begam ... | 1236-40    | Full title Sultan Raziyyat-ud-Din, daughter of Iltutmish. The only female sovereign who sat on the throne of Dehli, was killed in 1240.                     |
| 6          | Bahram ...       | 1240-41    | Full title Mu'aziz-ud-Din Bahram, son of Iltutmish, seized the throne from his sister Raziya, was deposed and killed.                                       |
| 7          | Ala-ud-Din ...   | 1241-46    | Full title Ala-ud-Din Masa'ud; grandson of Iltutmish (son of No. 4). Deposed, confined and killed.  |
| 8          | Nasir-ud-Din ... | 1246-66    | Full title Nasir-ud-Din Mahmud, son of Iltutmish. Died a natural death.   |
| 9          | Balban ...       | 1266-86    | Full title Ghiyas-ud-Din Balban. Originally one of the forty slaves of Iltutmish, was twenty years Chief Minister. Twenty years king. Died a natural death. |
| 10         | Kaikobad ...     | 1286-90    | Grandson of Balban. Deposed and killed.   |

## CHAPTER IV

### Expansion and Consolidation

#### The Khilji Dynasty, 1290-1320

Election of Jalal-ud-Din as Sultan of Dehli—Execution of Sidi Maula—Invasion of Ujjain and Bhilsa—Expedition of Deogiri—Accession of Ala-ud-Din—Conquest of Gujarat—Mughal raids near Dehli—Fall of Chitor and Ranthambhor—Expedition to the Deccan—Extent of Dehli Empire—Policy of Ala-ud-Din, Kutb-ud-Din and Khusro.

**Jalal-ud-Din-Khilji's assumption of royal power.**

Kaikobad having been killed, the sceptre now passed from the hands of the Turki nobles into the hands of the Afghans known as the Khiljis, who derived their name from Khalj, a village in Afghanistan. Between them and the Turkis there was no love lost. Muhammad Bakhtiyar Khilji had conquered Bihar and Bengal in 1199-1200 and retained possession of these provinces as the representative first of the Ghori Sultan and then of Kutb-ud-Din Aibak. After Bakhtiyar several others of his clan ruled in the kingdom of Gaur in succession. The Khiljis had also held many offices in other parts of the Sultanate of Dehli and thus formed a strong party in the State. Their leader at this time was Feroz Shah, the muster-master (Bakhshi) of the army, whom they now placed on the throne with the title of Sultan Jalal-ud-Din. The new Sultan of their choice was not, however, a success. He was a gentle old man of about seventy and consequently not suited to those rough times. With the inhabitants of Dehli, the election of Jalal-ud-Din was very unpopular and he was regarded as a usurper. As a result he did not venture to reside

in Dehli and was obliged to build himself a palace at Kulghari, a village on the banks of the Jumna outside the city. Not until a year had passed and his virtues had found favour with the people, did he venture within the walls and seat himself upon the throne of the kings of Dehli.

Owing to the leniency of the Sultan, confusion and disorder began to raise their heads throughout the empire. The dacoits and freebooters became more daring. We are told that at one time during his reign about a thousand *thugs* were arrested in Dehli and brought before the Sultan. Instead of punishing them this easy-going monarch ordered the culprits to be banished from the country and sent down the river as a present to Kaikobad, the father of Bughra Khan, who had set himself up as an independent Sultan in Bengal.

The Sultan had also to meet more open hostility. Chajju, nephew of Balban and governor of the important district of Kora, raised the standard of revolt. He was, however, easily defeated while the Sultan even on this occasion showed his characteristic mildness of disposition. He spared the rebels and their lives and property and forgave them freely saying that at his age, when he was preparing for the next world, he was not willing to shed the blood of fellow-Muslims.

There is, however, one instance on record on which the Sultan is said to have lost his temper and to have executed a celebrated faqir Sidi Maula whom he suspected of having plotted against his life. The holy darwish pronounced a curse on the Sultan and his family and in the following year when the Sultan's eldest son died of an epidemic the event was attributed to the execution of Sidi Maula.

**Disorder  
and  
lawless-  
ness in the  
empire**

**Rebellion  
of Malik  
Chajju.**

**Execution  
of Sidi  
Maula.**

The rest of the history of his reign is little more than a story of the early life and exploits of the Sultan's nephew Ala-ud-Din.

The sturdy Rajputs of Malwa still struggled for independence and in the beginning of 1293, Jalal-ud-Din marched into Ujjain and once more reduced them to obedience. Two years after he marched to Mandu and devastated the country, and his nephew Ala-ud-Din, now rising into notice, reduced the Hindus of Bhilsa and plundered the famous Buddhist monasteries of Central India. Jalal-ud-Din was pleased with the success of his nephew, and made him governor of Oudh in addition to Kora.

**War with  
the  
Rajputs of  
Ujjain and  
Bhilsa.**

Encouraged by his success in Central India, Ala-ud-Din cherished the idea of making an expedition southwards into countries as yet unpenetrated by Muhammadans. He had heard, while at Bhilsa, of the riches of Deogiri (Daulatabad) the capital of the Yadav princes.

He accordingly obtained permission from his uncle, and with 8,000 horse set out, in the year 1294, for the Deccan. It was a daring endeavour, and Ala-ud-Din accomplished it with his usual vigour. He marched 700 miles through the wilds and forests of the Vindhya (through Berar and Khandesh) and suddenly appeared before Deogiri in the Maratha country.<sup>1</sup> Ramchandra, the Yadav king of Deogiri, was taken by surprise and was defeated, and his son who came up later with a large army was also defeated after an obstinate battle. Ala-ud-Din raised the siege of the fort on payment of an immense ransom, besides the cession of the tract of country known as

<sup>1</sup> Ala-ud-Din told a very plausible story during his march to Deogiri. He said he was a nephew of the Sultan of Dehli and he had quarrelled with his uncle, and was going to take service under a Raja in Telingana. No one, therefore, stopped him on his way as no one suspected his designs.



Ellichpur. This was the first footing which the Muhammadans obtained south of the Vindhya and, as such, is a notable event in the history of the country. It took place, as already stated, in 1294, just a hundred years after the conquest of Northern India by Muhammad Ghorī. Within these hundred years, almost the whole of Northern India was conquered by the Musalmans while the Deccan and the South looked idly on. Now came the turn of the Deccan and the southern kingdoms who had to fight their battles single-handed.

After his conquest of Ellichpur, Ala-ud-Din, laden with valuable plunder, returned to his government of Kora. The old Sultan, his uncle, felt a great attachment for his nephew and was impatient to see him. The exhibition of regard and affection was not, perhaps, unmixed with the love of lucre since the conquest and plunder of Deogiri was made in the name of the Sultan of Dehli, and he had, therefore, a legitimate claim to a share of the spoils. The Sultan, accordingly, started from Dehli, July 1296, on his way to Kora to meet his nephew. His nobles who had their suspicions, gave him timely warnings of the treasonable intentions of Ala-ud-Din, but the dotting old uncle and father-in-law paid no heed to them and went with only a few followers into a barge on the river. As he disembarked from his vessel, Ala-ud-Din met him with a show of the greatest affection, but while the king was caressing him and leading him back to the barge, two of Ala-ud-Din's guards, at a signal from him, fell upon the old Sultan and murdered him. 'His head was stuck on a spear and carried round the camp. A lavish distribution of gold secured the adhesion of the army to the usurper and Ala-ud-Din became Sultan (July 1296).'<sup>1</sup>

**Murder of  
Jalal-ud-  
Din, 1296.**

**Ala-ud-Din's early difficulties.**

Ala-ud-Din then marched upon Dehli with all the available troops he had at his command. On his way he scattered gold freely out of the vast spoils he had collected from the South and thus secured the loyalty of the Governors of different districts that lay on his route to Dehli. On reaching the capital, however, the usurper was confronted with a difficult situation. The Jalali nobles had not yet forgotten the murder of their chief and secretly plotted to avenge it. Qadar Khan, the son of the late king, had, with the help of his nobles, proclaimed himself king of Dehli with the title of Rukn-ud-Din Ibrahim. The Dowager Queen, Malika Jahan, was also active in the interests of her sons Qadar and Arkali. But Ala-ud-Din knew full well that he could achieve anything if he only unloosened the strings of his long purse. By means of lavish gifts and presents therefore, he gained the good will of the nobles and the people who now deserted the cause of Rukn-ud-Din and flocked to his standard. Thus deserted, the two sons of the late Sultan fell into Ala-ud-Din's hands and their eyes were put out, while the families of the nobles likely to give trouble were destroyed on one pretext or the other. Having thus paralysed all or most of the opposition, Ala-ud-Din mounted the throne of Dehli on October 20, A.D. 1296.

**Ala-ud-Din—the strongest of the early Muhammadan rulers.**

The man who thus waded to the throne in blood, proved to be one of the strongest of the Muhammadan rulers. He greatly increased the extent of the Dehli kingdom and considerably added to its resources. In fact, his long reign of twenty years was a continuous struggle to extend the limits of the Muhammadan empire in India. The chronology of the reign is however uncertain and the exact order and sequence of political events is yet far from settled.

Ala-ud-Din's first efforts were probably directed against Gujarat. The rich province, besides being a land of great fertility, commanded all the sea-borne trade of India with the countries of the West. It included Bharoch, Sopara, Cambay and a good many other ports which from time immemorial had carried on an active maritime trade which provided a source of considerable revenue to the ruler of the province. Muhammadan rulers like Muhammad Ghori and Kutb-ud-Din had partially succeeded in subjugating Gujarat but the Rajputs had recovered their independence. Ala-ud-Din now sent a strong force under Alaf Khan in 1297, and Anhilwara, the old capital was again taken. The Raja Rai Karan fled; his queen Kamla Devi fell into the hands of the Muslims and was sent to Delhi; and Ala-ud-Din himself was captivated by her charms and took her into his harem. The whole of Gujarat was brought under Muhammadan rule and Muhammadan Governors were appointed. It was during this expedition that a raid was made on the rich city of Cambay and Alaf Khan obtained from a merchant there, a slave named Kafur who afterwards became famous.

The Gujarat campaign was no sooner ended, than the king had to encounter a very dangerous invasion of the Mughals. During the last fifty years or more they had made several attempts to wrest India from its Afghan rulers. Ghiyas-ud-Din Balban had made vigorous efforts to check the tide of Mughal invasions, but did not fully succeed in his attempt. They had since invaded India again and again, but had been successfully driven off with heavy losses. In 1298, the Mughals, about 200,000 strong, marched on India under their leader Kutlugh Khan and advanced as far as the Jumna and the city of Delhi was filled with panic-stricken fugitives. A

**Conquest  
of Gujarat,  
1297.**

**Mughal  
raids near  
Delhi.**

council of war was summoned to plan ways and means to cope with the formidable foe. Ala-ud-Din at last marched against the invaders with an army of 300,000 horse and 2,700 elephants commanded by his bravest and most experienced officers, Zaffar Khan and Ulugh Khan. The fight raged furiously and Zaffar Khan delivered a tremendous attack upon the enemy. The Mughals sustained very heavy losses and were pursued for nearly thirty miles. Although Zaffar Khan lost his life in the action, his ruthless destruction of the ranks of the enemy struck terror in the hearts of the Mughals.<sup>1</sup> But these people possessed such wonderful powers of recuperation that in the two following years they repeated their invasions although each time they suffered a crushing defeat. After

**Measures  
for the  
defence  
of the  
frontier.**

repelling the last invasion of the Mughals, Ala-ud-Din adopted defensive measures to strengthen his frontiers in order to create an effective barrier against possible future invasions of these nomadic hordes. He renewed the frontier policy of Balban and ordered all posts, old and new, that lay along the route of the Mughals to be repaired and fortified. The districts of Dipalpur and Samana were entrusted to officers of tried loyalty and a vigilant watch was kept over the route of the invaders. The result was as desired and so long as Ala-ud-Din lived the Mughals did not dare make their appearance in Hindostan.

Freed from the Mughal danger and tempted by the alluring prospects of sovereignty over all Hindostan,

<sup>1</sup> It is said that the Mughals were so frightened that afterwards when their cattle refused to drink water, they used to ask if they had seen Zaffar Khan. This will remind the reader of two other similar instances, namely, of Ahmad Shah Abdali who became a terror to the inhabitants of the Panjab about the middle of the eighteenth century and of the more recent instance Hari Singh Nalwa—the brave Sikh general with whose name the Pathan women still frighten their fretful children.

Ala-ud-Din formed bold plans of conquest and with that end in view reorganized his army and put in order the resources of his kingdom. He launched his first attack on the Hindu chiefs of Rajputana, who a century before were the masters of Northern India, and were yet considered powerful enough to be a source of danger to the establishment of the Muslim power in the country.

In 1299 the forces of the Sultan besieged the famous fortress of Ranthambhor (now in the Jaipur State) but Rana Hamir Deo offered a stout resistance at the head of a strong and well-equipped force. Sharp skirmishes went on for some time when the Sultan was compelled to raise the siege in order to put down the serious rising in Dehli. This was brought about by Haji Maula, former Kotwal of the city, who had by means of a forged royal order secured the city gates and placed upon the throne a descendant of Iltutmish.<sup>1</sup> The rebellion was, however, immediately suppressed and the siege of Ranthambhor was renewed with fresh vigour in the following year and was pushed on for nearly eleven months. The brave Hamir Deo and his family were put to the sword and so were all the Mughals who had helped him in defence of the fort.

The fort of Chitor (now in Udaipur State) was taken in A. D. 1303. As usual, the brave Rajputs made a heroic resistance, but being overpowered by the greater number of the enemy, the fortress fell after a long siege, all the Rajput women perishing on the pyre and all the Rajput warriors falling

**Fall of  
Chitor,  
1303.**

<sup>1</sup> This attempt on the part of Haji Maula to place on the throne a descendant of Iltutmish was independent and had nothing to do with one made, a few months before, by the Sultan's nephew Akat Khan (Rukn Khan) who had attacked his uncle and wounded him and left him for dead on his way to Ranthambhor and himself hastened to Dehli to occupy the throne.

by the sword. The administration of Chitor was entrusted to Prince Khizar Khan and the name was accordingly changed from Chitor to Khizrabad. But Ala-ud-Din was unable to keep the town long and the plan of conquering Rajputana from the Rajputs failed.

In 1306, when the danger from the Mughals had vanished and various conspiracies had been suppressed and when practically the whole of Northern India had come into his hands, Ala-ud-Din's thoughts turned again to the Deccan. He sent a large army under the command of his famous slave Malik Kafur, a renegade Hindu,<sup>1</sup> to gather fresh spoils from the wealthy southern kingdoms.

**Expedition to the South, 1306-11. Capture of Deval Devi; reduction of Dwarsamudra.**

A romantic incident marked the commencement of his operations. Kamla Devi, formerly the queen of Gujarat, was now a wife of Ala-ud-Din; but her daughter Deval Devi, a maiden of surpassing beauty, was still in the South and the prince of Deogiri sought her hand. A detachment of troops under Ulagh Khan was sent to Deogiri to get hold of Deval Devi, but had failed, when a mere accident threw the princess into the hands of Ulagh Khan's followers. Some three hundred of them had gone to see the caves of Ellora when they sighted from a distance a party of Hindu horse and fell upon it in the hope of obtaining some plunder. It proved indeed to be a prize worth having, for it was the escort of the princess Deval Devi who was going on a visit to the cave temples of Ellora. The escort was soon put to flight. Deval Devi was captured and sent to Dehli, where she was given in marriage to Ala-ud-Din's son. The loves of the young prince and princess were celebrated by the court poet in a poem which was much admired.

<sup>1</sup> Malik Kafur was a handsome eunuch, who had won the favour of the Sultan. He was now created Malik Naib and invested with the supreme command of the royal forces.

Ram Deva, the prince of Deogiri, submitted to Malik Kafur who had now proceeded against him since the Raja had ceased to send the stipulated tribute to Delhi. The whole of Maharashtra was subdued and the Muhammadan army captured a large booty. But Kafur proved wise and tactful. He had yet to proceed further south and did not consider it safe to leave behind a powerful foe. He therefore treated Raja Ram Deva very kindly and not only restored his dominions to him but added a small territory in Gujarat to his dominions.

**Ram  
Deva of  
Deogiri  
submits to  
Malik  
Kafur.**

Kafur then crossed the river Godavari and directed his march to the kingdom of Pratab Rudra Deva, Raja of Warrangal. After a long siege the fort of Warrangal was captured and the Raja purchased his safety by offering a heavy sum of money besides consenting to pay tribute annually.

**Capture  
of  
Warran-  
gal by  
Kafur.**

Malik Kafur seems to have been planning a systematic reduction of all the Rajput houses in the South. Having sent to Delhi as a present to the Sultan, a large number of horses and elephants and a great quantity of jewels which were obtained from Warrangal, the Malik himself crossed the river Krishna and turned towards Dwara-samudra, in the Karnatic, of the power and wealth of which he had received information at Deogiri. Dwara-samudra was the capital of the Hoysala or Balol kingdom which, of late, had been consolidated under its capable ruler Ballal III. The Hoysalas and the Yadavas of Deogiri and Warrangal had long been at war with each other and their mutual feuds had disabled both and made room for a third power, namely, that of the Muslims. Vir Ballal was defeated and made prisoner and was ultimately restored to liberty on paying a heavy war indemnity. The entire Hoysala kingdom which comprised

**Reduction  
of Dwara-  
samudra.**

the whole of what is now the Mysore State and a portion of Konkan was overrun, plundered, and to a certain extent subjugated.<sup>1</sup> The power of the Hoysalas declined after this date and the Ballal Rajputs were reduced to the position of local Rajas. Great architectural works, like the famous temple of Halebid commenced in the reign of Vir Ballal, were left unfinished.

The victorious Muslim general emboldened by these successes then penetrated to the extreme southern point of India, namely, Madura, the ancient capital of the Pandyas, and there built a mosque which was still in existence in the sixteenth century when Firishta wrote his history of India.

Thus, by the end of A.D. 1312, Ala-ud-Din had reached the height of his power. The ancient Rajput houses of Malwa, Chitor and Gujarat in the North and the powerful ruling dynasties of the South, namely, the Yadavas, the Hoysalas and the Pandyas were all subdued and made to acknowledge the Sultan of Delhi as their suzerain. These were signal triumphs; but the Hindus in the Deccan and in Rajputana were not prepared to submit so easily to the Muslim yoke. Indeed, within the short space of the three years before Ala-ud-Din's death almost all of them regained their independence. Ram Deva of Deogiri was dead, but his son withheld the tribute and proclaimed his independence. Kafur was sent back to Deccan where he defeated Shukal Deva who was seized and put to death; soon after, however, his brother-in-law, Harpal Deva, summoned the country to arms and expelled the Muhammadan garrisons.

<sup>1</sup> The booty obtained by Malik Kafur was immense. Firishta's estimate of the gold that fell into the hands of the Muslims is 96,000 maunds besides other valuables and live-stock, namely, horses and elephants.



Gujarat next rose in rebellion, and the imperial troops sent there were defeated. The Rajputs of Chitor soon followed the example of Gujarat, 'threw the Muhammadian officers over the walls of the fort' and asserted their independence. 'On receiving these accounts,' says Firishta, 'the king bit his own flesh with fury.' His rage aggravated his illness and he died in January, A.D. 1316.

In the early years of his reign, Ala-ud-Din was troubled by many revolts among his nobles; and he was also exposed to the standing peril of an invasion by the Mughals. Vexed by these revolts and conspiracies, the king called together his councillors and asked them to advise him as to the causes and the cure of the evils that beset the State. He was frankly told that 'not the least of the causes were the king's disregard of the affairs of the State, his devotion to wine, friendship and frequent social intercourse with the nobles of the State and the abundance of wealth which intoxicated men's minds and fostered treason and disaffection. The king thereon applied himself vigorously to official business and passed and enforced a number of highly repressive legislative acts. He gave up the drinking of wine himself and smashed the wine cups of the palace and ordered all the wine in Dehli to be emptied into the streets. And so urgently did the king insist on temperance that he punished drunkards by setting them in pits outside the city walls. By a royal edict it was declared unlawful for the nobles to give parties or to hold meetings in one another's houses.

He next turned his attention to the unequal division of property, which was believed to be one of the causes of sedition. All the gratuities and pensions and jagirs exceeding a certain appointed limit were confiscated to the State; and the *grandees* and other officers were left just enough

**His internal policy.**

**Military and other Reforms.**

for their subsistence. These harsh measures naturally bred discontent and the fear of conspiracy and murder led the Sultan to the establishment of a complete system of espionage. Spies of tried loyalty were taken into the king's confidence and were required to keep him informed of all that transpired in the houses of the *Maliks* and *Amirs*.

The object of Ala-ud-Din in devising these measures to relieve the people of their superfluous wealth was not merely to curb their spirits. He also needed money to fit out and maintain an efficient standing army against the Mughals and to put all the defences on the road to Dehli in thorough order. The lands that had been given away as grants by former rulers, were resumed and incorporated in the imperial domains. The assessment on cultivated fields was raised to an exorbitant proportion of one-half of the produce, whereas previously it had varied from one-sixth to one-third of the gross produce. Several new taxes were levied. A grazing tax was imposed on cattle, and a house tax was also levied, the policy of the State being to extort as much as possible. In order that there might always be an abundance of supplies at cheap rates in the markets of Dehli, the Sultan directed that the dues on crown lands should be paid in kind. Large granaries were erected for the storing of grain, and it became so plentiful that the people did not feel the pinch of high prices even in times of scarcity. Merchants and carriers of grain were registered and compelled to settle in the suburbs of Dehli and any attempt to sell grain at a rate higher than that fixed by government was severely punished. Regulations were also issued to control the prices of such articles as cloth, sugar, ghee, oil, pulses, etc. Even the prices of horses, arms and other equipment for the army were fixed.

The Hindus were treated with special severity. The policy of the State was that the Hindus should not be enabled to ride on horseback, wear fine clothes, carry arms and cultivate luxurious habits. 'No Hindu,' writes Barni, 'could hold up his head, and in their houses no sign of gold or silver . . . or of any superfluity was to be seen. These things which nourish insubordination and rebellion were no longer to be found. . . .'

**Treatment of the Hindus.**

By such measures as these Sultan Ala-ud-Din succeeded in establishing internal order and tranquillity. With all his faults, Ala-ud-Din was a great conqueror<sup>1</sup> and a rigorous ruler, and quiet and security prevailed under his administration. He knew nothing of books nor did he trouble himself about law either sacred or secular. Necessity was the one law he respected.<sup>2</sup> Ala-ud-Din's political theory is clearly set forth in the words which he addressed to Qazi Mughis-ud-Din, with whom he conferred about the legal position of the sovereign power in the State, 'I do not know whether it is lawful or unlawful. Whatever I think to be for the good of the State or suitable for the emergency, that I decree.'

**Estimate of Ala-ud-Din and his theory of kingship.**

Vincent Smith's judgment of Ala-ud-Din's character and policy 'that he was a particularly savage tyrant with very little sense of justice' seems rather severe. It is true, his government represents typical despotism but it would not be fair to ignore his claims as the first Muhammadian king who inaugurated a new imperial policy of bringing the whole country under the sway of Dehli and who attempted to introduce a strong and efficient administration and thus created a great historic precedent which had its

**Ala-ud-Din's character.**

<sup>1</sup> Ala-ud-Din caused himself to be dubbed the 'Second Alexander' in the Khutba or bidding prayer (V. Smith, p. 233).

<sup>2</sup> *Journal of Indian History*, vol. i, part I, p. 148, Allahabad.

conscious or unconscious effect in moulding and shaping the policy of the subsequent rulers of Dehli.

We are informed by Firishta, who is by no means partial to Ala-ud-Din that the increase of wealth among the people in his reign showed itself in public and private buildings throughout the empire. Ala-ud-Din was fond of buildings and is said to have executed many magnificent works. He built a new Dehli called Siri, on the site now marked by the village of Shāhpur. Additions were also made on an extensive scale to the Kutub group of sacred structures.

Though himself unlettered, Ala-ud-Din had acquired the faculty of appreciation of literary merit in others and extended his patronage to the learned and the pious. The famous poet, Amir Khusro, and pious men like Nizam-ud-Din Aulia flourished in his reign and received great attentions from the Sultan.

With the removal of the strong hand of Ala-ud-Din, the disruptive forces began to assert themselves and eventually resulted in a speedy overthrow of the quasi-military administration set up by him. The last fifteen years of the rule of this dynasty are mainly a record of crimes and cruelties. After the King's death Malik Kafur produced a deed, said to have been executed by the king, in which Omar, an infant son of the Sultan, was nominated successor under the regency of Kafur, and the boy was placed on the throne. Two other sons of the late Sultan were imprisoned and blinded, but the third, Mubarik Shah, fortunately escaped the grasp of this tyrant. It is believed that Kafur was also trying to compass the death of his ward when he was himself removed by an assassin. Mubarik Shah then ascended the throne setting aside his younger brother Omar, whom he subsequently caused to be blinded and imprisoned.

**Buildings  
and  
litera-  
ture.**

**Sultan  
Kutb-ud-  
Din  
Mubarik,  
1315-18.**

He also took the beautiful Deval Devi, his brother Khizr Khan's widow, to his own harem.

Mubarik was a youth of seventeen and his first measures were beneficial and just. As many as 17,000 prisoners were released and various restrictions upon trade and agriculture which had been imposed by his father were removed by him. He also showed a good deal of energy in bringing to subjection several refractory chiefs. His officers tightened their hold on Gujarat and he in person led an army into the Deccan against Deogiri, where Raja Harpal Deva had revolted. Harpal Deva failed to offer substantial resistance and was defeated, captured and put to death in A.D. 1318.

On his return to the capital, Mubarik soon gave himself up to licentiousness. He was infatuated with a vile favourite named Hassan, a low-caste Hindu renegade of Gujarat, to whom he gave the name of Khusro Khan. 'During his reign of four years and four months, the Sultan attended to nothing but drinking, listening to music, debauchery and pleasure, scattering gifts and gratifying his lust.' It was a sort of reaction against the late Sultan's reign. A carnival of pleasure and riot succeeded the severe and rigid administration of Ala-ud-Din.

The crimes and follies of Mubarik disgusted the country and he was at last killed in 1319 by his own favourite Malik Khusro, who had recently returned from a successful expedition in the South. Khusro then mounted the throne of Dehli with the title of Nasir-ud-Din and forced the unfortunate Deval Devi to enter his harem; while every one who had a pretension of relationship to the late king was put to death. He had already filled the palace with men of his own caste

**Invasion  
of  
Deogiri.**

**Mubarik  
leads a  
profligate  
life and is  
murdered  
by  
Khusro,  
who  
seizes the  
throne,  
1318.**

and now a donation to the household troops confirmed this usurper for a while upon the throne. But his crimes were too shocking to be borne for long. Ghiyas-ud-Din Tughlak, Governor of the Panjab, in company with other chiefs marched upon the capital, killed Malik Khusro and founded a new dynasty.

## SULTANS OF KHILJI DYNASTY

| Serial No. | Name             | Date, A.D.              | Remarks   |
|------------|------------------|-------------------------|---|
| 1          | Jalal-ud-Din ... | 1290-96                 | Full official title Jalal-ud-Din, Feroz Shah. Murdered by his nephew Ala-ud-Din.  |
| 2          | Ala-ud-Din ...   | 1296-1315               | The first Sultan of Dehli who overran nearly the whole Deccan. Died a natural death.  |
| 3          | Omar ...         | Jan. 1315-<br>Feb. 1315 | Fourth son of Ala-ud-Din. Placed on the throne of Dehli by Malik Kafur. Deposed, blinded and imprisoned by his elder brother Mubarik. |
| 4          | Kutb-ud-Din ...  | 1315-18                 | Full official title Kutb-ud-Din Mubarik. Murdered by his favourite Malik Khusro.  |
| 5          | Khusro Khan ...  | 1318-19                 | Original name Hassan—was a low caste Hindu convert. Created Khusro Khan by Mubarik Khan, killed by Ghiyas-ud-Din Tughlak.             |

## CHAPTER V

### Conquest of the Deccan

#### The Tughlak Dynasty, 1320-1388

Ghiyas-ud-Din Tughlak—Disturbance in Bengal—Muhammad Tughlak—Removal of capital to Daulatabad—Mughal invasions—Subjugation of Deccan—Invasion of Persia and China—Financial experiments—Extent of Dehli Empire—Feroz Shah and his public works—Jizya and conversions—Invasion of Timur—The Sayyads and Lodhis—Battle of Panipat.

After the execution of Malik Khusro, Ghazi Beg Tughlak received the congratulations of the nobles of the city who presented to him the keys of the city and fort of Dehli. We understand from Firishta that Ghazi Beg consented to take up the heavy duties of kingship after great hesitation and reluctance. He was a man of mature age and great experience as well as personal courage. For many years he had acted as Viceroy of Lahore and had charge of that important frontier which had in previous reigns always been exposed to the raids of the Mughals. When elected as king Ghazi Beg assumed the style of Ghiyas-ud-Din Tughlak and founded a new line of rulers known as the Tughlak dynasty. This Ghazi Beg was the son of a Turki slave of Ghiyas-ud-Din Balban by a Hindu mother of a Jat tribe in the Panjab and was accordingly known as Karauna or half-breed. hence also the name of the dynasty *Karauna* or Tughlak dynasty.

Ghiyas-ud-Din proved to be a capable ruler and justified the confidence bestowed on him by his colleagues. Order was soon restored in Northern India and his personal experience of the administration of the Panjab soon

**Ghiyas-  
ud-Din  
Tughlak  
elected  
king by  
the  
courtiers.**

enabled the Sultan to place his western frontier in a state of perfect defence against the Mughal invaders. Revolts in the Deccan and disturbances in Bengal occupied him thereafter until his death in 1325.

After the death of Khusro Khan, the Hindu Rajas of Deogiri and Warrangal had again revolted and the king despatched his eldest son Juna Khan into the Deccan with a large army to restore order. Deogiri was easily made to submit but the Raja of Warrangal offered a stout opposition. The strong walls of the city resisted all efforts of the imperial army and during the siege, a malignant epidemic broke out which decimated the ranks of the Dehli army. The prince was obliged to raise the siege and retire from the Deccan. The retreating Muslim army was pursued by the Hindus with great slaughter and Prince Juna returned to Dehli with only a small remnant of his large force. The first expedition to Warrangal thus ended in failure, but the second was more successful. Within two months of his first disaster, the prince organized a new force and with it proceeded against Warrangal to redeem his honour. He conquered Bidar or Vidarbha, the land rendered famous in ancient history by its association with the poet Bhavbhuti, and then reduced Warrangal. The Rajput Raja and his family were sent to Dehli and Muhammadan officers were appointed to govern the country. The whole of the Telugu country was thus brought under Muhammadan administration and the rule of the Kakti Rajputs in that country was put an end to in A.D. 1323.

Ghiyas-ud-Din himself went to Bengal. This great eastern province had remained unaffected by the revolutions in the centre of the empire and Buehra Khan, the son of Ghiyas-ud-Din Balban had continued to rule the province as virtual king through all these changes at Dehli for more

**Expedition  
against  
Deogiri  
and  
Warrangal.**

**Disturb-  
ance  
in Bengal,  
1324-25.**



than forty years. He was now deposed by his cousin but the timely intervention of the Tughlak Sultan saved the situation. Bughra Khan was confirmed in his government and allowed to assume the ensigns of royalty provided he maintained good relations with Dehli. On his way back, Ghiyas-ud-Din reduced the petty State of Tirhut.

The Sultan returned to Dehli in February, 1325, and his son Juna Khan who was in charge of the capital during the absence of his father, had prepared a wooden pavilion for his reception on the bank of the Jumna. The morning and afternoon were passed in great festivities, races and parades of horses and elephants. At the conclusion of the entertainments, the king took up his station in the new building for afternoon prayers, when as a result of a collision with the passing elephants the timber structure fell on the Sultan and his favourite younger son, Mahmud who had accompanied him. Both father and son were buried beneath the ruins and crushed to death. It was suspected that this was more than an accident.<sup>1</sup>

Juna now became king with the title of Muhammad Tughlak. We are told by contemporary historians,<sup>2</sup> that he was one of the most accomplished men of his age. He was proud of his elegant writing and his letters were models of style and composition. He had studied all the sciences of the period, especially mathematics and medicine and used 'to attend patients himself and note down the progress of their complaints'. He had read logic and Greek philosophy

**Death of Ghiyas-ud-Din, A.D. 1325.**

**Muhammad Tughlak—his character and attainments, 1325-51.**

<sup>1</sup> See also V. Smith, *Oxford History of India*, 1919, p. 236.

<sup>2</sup> Our knowledge of the reign of Muhammad Tughlak is extraordinarily detailed and accurate, because, in addition to the narrative of Zia-ud-Din Barani, we possess the observations of the African traveller, Ibn Batuta, who lived at the court of the Sultan for several years.

and was fond of metaphysical discussions with the learned men in his empire. According to his own notions of godliness he was, perhaps, pious of the pious. He never neglected his religious duties, omitted no prayers and abstained from all vices forbidden in the Koran. But, as Firishta observes, 'with all these qualities he was devoid of the divine quality of mercy, or of consideration for his subjects'. His whole life was spent in pursuing visionary schemes, by means equally irrational and with a total disregard of the sufferings which they occasioned to his subjects.

Since there was some suspicion regarding his conduct towards his father, Muhammad Tughlak had to secure the favour of his army and nobility by lavish largess, scattering without stint the hoarded treasures of the earlier sovereigns and his father. He is reported to have expended 'on one day more than £500,000 sterling'.

Muhammad Tughlak seems to have been fond of the Deccan. As a prince, he had won his spurs in the South. He had reduced Deogiri and the whole of the Telugu country and had appointed Mussalman governors there. The empire was spreading further in this direction and at the time of his accession to the throne it had extended as far south as Kulbarga near the tributary of the Krishna river. But now that he had come into power and was to frame his own policy, he felt, perhaps, the inconvenience of governing the southern provinces effectively from the distant capital at Dehli. He was induced, partly for this reason and partly by the fact of his being annoyed with the people of Dehli<sup>1</sup> to transfer

**Bestowal  
of lavish  
gifts on  
army and  
nobility.**

**Removal  
of capital  
to  
Daulata-  
bad,  
1326-27.**

<sup>1</sup> 'In the year 1326-7, the Sultan having taken offence at the inhabitants of Dehli because they threw into his audience-hall abusive papers criticizing his policy, decided to destroy their city.'  
—V. Smith, p. 289.

his capital to Deogiri, in the Maratha country near Poona and to re-name it Daulatabad, 'the empire-city'. Palaces and mosques were built on an extensive scale in the new capital and the city was fortified 'with three lines of walls and ditches'. A mint was also established there and to commemorate the event, a gold coin was struck at Deogiri in A.H. 727 (A.D. 1326-27). The people of Dehli were ordered to evacuate that city and to proceed to the Deccan, their houses having been purchased from them by the Sultan to enable them to build new houses in Daulatabad with the proceeds. Dehli was literally deserted and turned into a solitude. The story is told by Ibn Batuta that a search having been made in the deserted city, 'the royal slaves found two men in the streets, one paralyzed, and the other blind'. They were brought 'before the Sovereign, who ordered the paralytic to be shot dead and the blind man to be dragged from Dehli to Daulatabad'. It is also reported that the Sultan tried to fill the depopulated city again by a compulsory levy upon other towns but the city being 'so vast and immense' his efforts did not produce satisfactory results.<sup>1</sup>

No sooner was the capital transferred to Daulatabad than several provincial governors in the North ceased to send their regular tribute to the royal treasury, and the governor of Multan taking advantage of his comparative remoteness from the new capital broke into open revolt. The Mughals, who were also always ready for a fray, were tempted, by these disturbances in the north-west, to descend once again on the plains of the Panjab. Early in A.D. 1327 Tarmashirin, the brave leader of the Chaghatai tribe of the Mughals, subdued Multan and the surrounding country and advanced with a considerable

<sup>1</sup> According to Firishta the population of Dehli was removed to Daulatabad for the second time in A.D. 1340.—V. Smith, p. 240.

force to the gates of Dehli having on his way devastated almost the whole of Sirhind. The emperor was compelled to quit his new capital and marched out with a large force to oppose their advance but finding himself unable to do so bought off the invaders by the payment of a vast sum of money, which, as was proved in the sequel, only stimulated the Mughals to renewed invasions. The Sultan was then obliged to remain for three years at Dehli in order to guard against a repetition of the invasion.

The Mughal danger having disappeared for the time being, the Sultan marched back to the Deccan for which he seems to have retained his fondness. For nearly four years he was occupied in subduing the revolts in the Deccan. He also conquered the whole of the Carnatic and for a time established order throughout the empire. It was about the end of this campaign that the two important districts in the north-east, namely, Lucknow and Chittagong, were also conquered and added to the dominions of the Sultan.

Among his other wrong-headed ideas Muhammad Tughlak cherished the ambition of conquering Persia, Nepal and China. A vast army numbering about 370,000 cavalry was assembled to conquer the Persian province of Khorasan, but the pay of the troops falling into arrears, they dispersed, and pillaged the districts they passed through on their way back to their homes.

Another equally wild and disastrous project was the conquest of China by way of the Himalayan passes. Accordingly in A.D. 1337-38 a large force of about 100,000 horse was despatched under Khusro Malik, son of the Sultan's sister, to force their way through Nepal with a view to invading China. The expedition reached the Chinese frontier after incredible toil in the mountains

**Subjugation of Deccan, 1331-35.**

**Attack on Persia and China, 1337-38.**

and when they encountered the Chinese force which was sent to oppose their further progress were heavily defeated. During their retreat nearly the whole of the Sultan's army perished and the 'few who survived to return to Dehli were massacred by their blood-thirsty master'.

Such mad and expensive plans of the Sultan naturally disordered the finances of the State. The treasury had been emptied of the wealth accumulated by Ala-ud-Din and his successors. In order, therefore, to replenish his treasury and to meet the heavy drain upon his finances Muhammad Tughlak made his famous experiment of a token currency. The Sultan, perhaps, argued that if the emperor of China or a Khan of Persia<sup>1</sup> could issue paper money with success he could pass copper as if it were silver in virtue of his royal command. Accordingly he issued orders to that effect and struck vast quantities of copper coins at a high nominal value.<sup>2</sup> These were inscribed with legends denoting their value and were meant to take the place of the supposed gold and silver *tankas*. But their acceptance depended upon the credit of the public treasury and the foreign merchants refused the coins at their imaginary value. If the supply had been restricted, perhaps, things might have gone well, and the copper coins would have circulated at the face value put upon them by the government. But it was impossible in those days to prevent illicit coinage: there was no milling or other device to distinguish the issues of the royal mint from private forgeries. Any skilled engraver could copy the inscriptions and strike copper

<sup>1</sup> Kubla Khan in China and a Mongol Khan of Persia had recently endeavoured to introduce paper money.

<sup>2</sup> This forced currency bears the dates, A.H. 780-782 (A.D. 1329-32).—V. Smith, p. 241.

tokens of the value of *tankas* on his own behalf. The result was natural. Every house became a mint, and the people began to pay their dues to the royal treasury with these and 'with these they purchased horses, arms and fine things of all kinds'. The treasury was filled with these copper coins and the Sultan was obliged to recall the currency and to pay gold and silver for the copper coins brought back into the mint.

These pecuniary difficulties led the Sultan to raise the tax on land and also to levy very heavy duties on the necessaries of life. To add to the misery, as it were, these taxes were collected with such rigour that the people, especially of the Doab between the Ganges and the Jumna who were too poor to pay the taxes, were driven to rebellion, and farmers were compelled to leave their homes and lands and to retire to the jungles to live by plunder. But this only served to incense the Sultan who 'drove them out of the woods in which they had taken refuge, massacred them without mercy, and hung thousands of their heads over the city walls of Dehli'. A failure of the rains completed the mischief which had been wrought by man, and the country round Dehli was converted into a desert. The famine lasted for several years and it is but just to the Sultan to admit that he did his best to mitigate the distress caused by famine and excessive taxation. He abolished (in 1341) all taxes beyond the legal alms and the government tithes and himself sat twice a week to receive the complaints of the oppressed. He distributed the food daily to all the people of Dehli for six months in a time of scarcity and he organized an excellent system of government loans to agriculturists which would have been of great service but for the dishonesty of the overseers.<sup>1</sup>

**Heavy  
taxation  
and  
famine  
result in  
the deso-  
lation of  
the Doab.**

<sup>1</sup> Stanley Lane Poole, *Mediæval India*, p. 133.

But the harm which had been done was beyond repair.

**The Sultan's administrative experiments make him unpopular with his subjects.**

His innovations and costly experiments had harassed and annoyed the people and made the Sultan unpopular. It was little wonder that revolts were frequent. The spirit of discontent was everywhere rife and rebellion was suppressed in one quarter only to break out afresh in another. We hear of the revolts in Multan, in Bengal, in Ma'abar, at Lahore, again in Multan, then at Samana, and at Warrangal and next near Oudh. at Karra and in Bidar, at Deogiri and in Gujarat. Though the Sultan was usually victorious in suppressing these insurrections he could not be everywhere at the same time. Piece by piece the great empire dropped away. Bengal and the Deccan were lost to the empire till the former was recovered by Akbar and the latter was completely subjugated by Aurangzeb towards the close of the seventeenth century.

Muhammad Tughlak was very much dismayed by this general insurrection and thought of invoking the help of the Khalif (Caliph), the head of Islam. Accordingly an embassy was sent to Egypt to obtain the sanction of the Abbasid Khalif of Cairo, to his title as orthodox king of India. The embassy was honoured by the Khalif, who in return despatched one of his representatives to confer the diploma of investiture upon the Sultan of Dehli who now professed himself 'to be merely the vicegerent of the Khalif and removed his own name from the coinage and replaced it by that of the supreme ruler of Islam'.

A contemporary writer, Siraj-ud-Din (quoted by Thomas in his *Chronicles of Pathan Kings*) gives a list of twenty-three provinces subject to the Sultan of Dehli. It was an empire far larger than that under the rule of any of Muhammad Tughlak's Muhammadan predecessors, nor

**Extent of the Empire.**

perhaps, did a king of Dehli hold so wide a dominion again till the time of Aurangzeb. The empire roughly comprised the countries now known as the Panjab, the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, Bihar, Tirhut, Bengal, Sindh, Malwa, Gujarat and a large portion of the Deccan, including part of Mysore and the Coromandel Coast. The degree of subjection of the various provinces varied much, but in a large part of this widely extended dominions, the Sultan's authority was absolute.

It has been remarked above that from A.D. 1340 to 1351, the record of Muhammad Tughlak's reign is a little more than a series of rebellions and insurrections, in the distant provinces. It was in the rainy season of 1347 that the Sultan, after ineffectual efforts to recover the Deccan where he had lost all except Daulatabad, moved into Gujarat to suppress the disorders in that province. Here he spent a little more than two years. Late in 1350 he quitted Gujarat to punish the Sumera Rajputs of the lower Sindh territory who had given refuge to some insurgents, and on his way thither, having reached the Indus, he ate fish to excess. This brought on a violent fever to which he succumbed in March, 1351.

It is not certain whether Muhammad Tughlak left any male offspring, but as soon as the news of his death was received at Dehli, the influential courtiers, 'placed a boy of six years on the throne and he was locally acknowledged as king'. But the army which was camped on the banks of the Indus and which, now assailed by Sindh rebels and Mughal banditti, was left in a perilous plight by the sudden death of the Sultan, had elected Muhammad Tughlak's cousin Feroz Shah as their sovereign. Feroz, though unwilling to accept the responsibility of

**Death of the Sultan, March, 1351.**

**Feroz Shah—his accession to the throne, 1351.**



government in the beginning, was at last prevailed upon to do so; and was 'enthroned in the camp on March 23, 1351'. Order having now been restored by the existence of a leader, the imperial army pursued and defeated the rebels and the new Sultan resumed his progress to Dehli. On his arrival there, the pretensions of the boy who had been set up were withdrawn, and Khwaja Jahan, the aged Governor of Dehli, who was chiefly responsible for putting forward this pretender, was made to surrender and executed on the charge of high treason.

Feroz Tughlak's long reign of thirty-seven years was marked by general peace and prosperity. He is known to posterity not as a great general but as the builder of works of public utility. He waged only two wars of any importance.

**Expedition to Bengal.**  
In 1353-54, he made an attempt to regain authority over Bengal, but the ruler of the province threw himself into his island fortress of Ikdala and the imperial forces were obliged to withdraw owing to heavy rain. On the succession of a new king of Bengal, in 1359, the effort was renewed. After some fighting terms of peace were arranged according to which the independence of the province was recognized on the acceptance of a nominal tribute by the Sultan of Dehli.

**Conquest of Thatta, 1361.**  
In 1361, Feroz Tughlak took up the quarrel with the Sumera Rajputs of Thatta which his predecessor, Muhammad Tughlak, had been unable to settle. A large army comprising about 90,000 cavalry and 500 elephants was ordered to move to the Indus and lay siege to the fortress of the Jam. The result was disastrous. Supplies failed, famine decimated the ranks of the imperial forces, and the Sultan was compelled to retire by way of Gujarat where he lost his way in the marshes of the Rann of Kachh and suffered heavy privations. He swore to be

avenged on the Jam, and as soon as he emerged into Gujarat with the remnant of his army he sent for reinforcements from Dehli, and after refitting his troops, started again for Thatta. His soldiers now seized the standing crops and it was the turn of the Jam to suffer from famine. The Jam held out as long as his stores lasted, but eventually he surrendered and accompanied the Sultan to Dehli where he was permitted to live as a political prisoner. The country of the Sumera Rajputs was not annexed, but a relative of the Jam was allowed to rule at Thatta 'so that the government of Dehli failed to secure any substantial benefit from two costly campaigns and a final nominal success.'

Feroz made no attempt to recover the Deccan and

**Zaffar Khan, Governor of Deccan, is allowed to build his power undisturbed.**

Hasan (Zaffar Khan), the rebellious governor of the province, was allowed to extend his conquests and to consolidate them into a powerful kingdom, known as the Bahmani kingdom.

buildings and works of public utility.

**Feroz Shah's works of public utility.**

As has been remarked above, the long reign of Feroz Tughlak has been rendered memorable by his activity in constructing buildings and works of public utility. The year 1354 witnessed the founding of a new city adjoining Dehli which was named Ferozabad and which included the site of Indraprastha, famous in Hindu legends. To add to the dignity of the new town and to clothe it

with antiquity, the two inscribed columns of Asoka now standing near Dehli were brought there by the order of the Sultan, the one from Topra in the Ambala District, and the other from Meerut. The two other cities founded by the Sultan were the cities of Hissar-Feroza—now known as Hissar—to the north-west of Dehli, and of Jaunpur, north-west of Benares which was named after

his cousin Juna, the late Muhammad Tughlak. Zia-ud-Din Barani, the contemporary historian and friend of the Sultan, gives a long list of the principal works of public utility executed during his reign of thirty-seven years, comprising '50 dams across rivers to promote irrigation, 40 mosques, 30 colleges with mosques attached, 20 palaces, 100 caravan serais, 200 towns, 30 reservoirs or lakes for irrigation, 100 hospitals, 5 mausoleums, 100 public baths, 10 monumental pillars, 10 public wells and 150 bridges; all of which were endowed with lands for their future maintenance'. But the greatest of these public works, perhaps, was the Jumna canal by which water was brought from Karnal to irrigate the arid tract of Hansi and Hissar, on the border of the desert of Bikanir, and which has been utilized by the British Government in the alignment of the western Jumna canal and in a way, still serves its original purpose. The early Muslim kings of India, as a rule, showed no interest in such works of public utility and consequently no works for irrigation had been constructed in upper India before the era of Feroz Tughlak. It is most probable that, having seen the irrigation system of Telingana in active operation, and having understood the immense benefits which resulted from it, the Sultan was induced by his minister Khan Jahan, a renegade Hindu from Telingana, to commence it in the arid districts around the capital. The Sultan was not only a great builder but a great gardener. He is said to have laid out 'twelve hundred gardens near Dehli and many elsewhere, and the produce, among which white and black grapes of seven varieties are mentioned, brought in £8,000 net to the treasury.' Thus the three new sources of revenue, namely, the water dues levied on canal waters, reclaimed lands irrigated by the new canals and the market gardens added nearly 'thirty thousand pounds' to the annual revenue of the State.

The result of all these great undertakings was that agriculture and commerce revived and the country enjoyed prosperity during the greater part of the Sultan's reign. The ryots were relieved of heavy taxation and the State demand from the land revenue having been fixed, there was left little or no scope for the extortions of collectors.<sup>1</sup> The account of the reign given by Barani leaves an impression on the mind of the reader that riches and prosperity abounded in the country and the people especially the peasant and the agricultural classes were very contented and satisfied. 'Their houses', he writes, 'were replete with grain, property, horses and furniture, every one had plenty of gold and silver; no woman was without her ornaments and no house was wanting in excellent beds and couches'.

It was not only that Feroz Tughlak increased irrigation, enlarged markets, checked extortion and reduced taxation, but the entire code of punishment was revised in his reign and many brutal forms of torture were forbidden by this 'just and merciful' Sultan. 'It has been usual in former times', writes the Sultan in his memoirs, 'to spill Muhammadan blood on trivial occasions and for small crimes to mutilate and torture them, by cutting off the hands and feet and noses and ears, by putting out eyes, by pulverising the bones of the living criminal with mallets, by burning the body with fire, by crucifixion, and by nailing the hands and feet, by

**Adminis-  
tration of  
Feroz  
Shah—  
agri-  
cultural  
prosperity.**

**Law and  
justice  
and other  
humanitarian  
measures.  
Abolition  
of torture  
and other  
brutal  
forms of  
punish-  
ment.**

<sup>1</sup> Vexatious taxes of various sorts levied on small traders, shopkeepers, fees charged from flower-sellers, fish-sellers, cotton cleaners, cooks, etc., were all abolished. 'It is better,' says the Sultan in his memoirs, 'to relinquish this portion of the revenue than realize it at the expense of so much distress caused by the discretionary powers vested in the tax-gatherers and officers of authority'.

flaying alive, by the operation of ham-stringing, and by cutting human beings to pieces. God in his infinite goodness, having been pleased to confer on me the power, has also inspired me with the disposition to put an end to these practices.’<sup>1</sup> Among the acts of benevolence undertaken in the reign of Feroz Tughlak must also be mentioned the provision made by him for the training of slaves in various industries and handicrafts. The amount of care bestowed on these unfortunate creatures was bound to produce its good results and we are told by Barani that as many as ‘12,000 slaves became artisans of various kinds’ and useful members of society.

Feroz Shah, it is said, owed much of the peace and prosperity of his reign to his minister—a Hindu convert named Makbul Khan, who was honoured with the title of Khan-i-Jahan. When he died in 1370, his place was taken by his son who assumed the same title of Khan-i-Jahan and conducted the government to the end of the reign. It will be remembered that Ala-ud-Din Khilji had abolished the system of granting jagirs in lieu of cash salaries to his military officers, since that system, as the Sultan believed, tended to foster the spirit of insubordination and rebellion. But Feroz Shah reverted to the old system of granting jagirs and his admirer, the historian Barani, says that no harm came out of this and that ‘not one leaf of dominion was shaken in the palace of sovereignty’. In spite of the assurance given by Barani one is inclined to think that the system of granting military fiefs tended to weaken the power of the central government and to the oppression of the ryots, indeed no sooner was the strong and benevolent hand of Feroz withdrawn than the great fabric of the empire fell to pieces, and the pampered royal army could not make even a show of

**Makbul  
Khan,  
Khan-i-  
Jahan.**

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by J. D. Rees, *Epochs of Indian History, The Muhammadans*, A.D. 1001-1761, p. 79, London, 1894.

resistance to the undisciplined hordes of Timur when he marched unopposed to Dehli in 1398 only ten years after the death of the great Sultan.

Feroz Tughlak was a devout and pious ruler according to the best Muhammadan ideal. He kept the fasts and feasts and public prayers and never did anything without consulting the holy Koran. He was also merciful, benevolent and just, but after perusing his own writings one is inclined to agree with Mr. V. Smith that 'it was not possible for Feroz Shah in his age to rise, as Akbar did, to the conception that the ruler of Hindostan should cherish all his subjects alike, whether Musalman or Hindu, and allow every man absolute freedom not only of conscience, but of public worship'. He imposed Jizya<sup>1</sup> even upon the Brahmans who had hitherto been exempt, and sternly forbade the public worship of idols and the erection of new temples. He induced the Hindus by special indulgences, such as relief from the poll-tax, to come over to Islam. 'I encouraged my infidel subjects', writes the Sultan, 'to embrace the religion of the Prophet and I proclaimed that every one who repeated the creed and became a Musalman should be exempted from the Jizya or poll-tax'.<sup>2</sup> He repressed with equal severity the licentious Hindu Saktas and the Muhammadan heretical sects. He could be fierce when his religious fanaticism was roused. 'I cut off the heads of the elders of this sect (Hindu Saktas) and imprisoned and banished the rest, so that the abominable practices were put an end to.' On another page in this pamphlet, the Sultan records the punishments he inflicted upon the Shias or Rawafiz who dared to preach in public. Several were visited

<sup>1</sup> Jizya was a military tax levied upon non-Muslims in lieu of military service.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted by V. Smith, *Oxford History of India*, p. 250.

with capital punishment and their books were burnt in public.

When due allowance is made for his education and the age in which he lived 'Feroz Shah, whatever may have been his defects and weaknesses deserves much credit for having mitigated in some respects the horrible practices of his predecessors, and for having introduced some tincture of humane feelings into the administration'.

The old age of the Sultan was troubled by the loss of his great *Wazir*, Khan-i-Jahan who died in 1370 and three years later the death of his son Fateh Khan made the aged emperor more miserable. He had now reached his seventy-seventh year and his powers were fast declining. In 1387, the second Khan-i-

Jahan also died as the result of a plot made by Prince Muhammad Khan. Feroz Tughlak was now unable to carry on the administration and therefore abdicated in favour of his son who ascended the throne under the title of Nasir-ud-Din Muhammad. The prince, however, belied the expectations of his father. He was dissolute and given to pleasure and his misgovernment excited a formidable rebellion which was quelled only on the appearance of the old king in person. The Sultan next appointed his grandson to administer his realm and very soon afterwards died in September 1388, 'worn out with weakness' at the age of ninety.

**Estimate  
of Feroz  
Shah.**

**Abdica-  
tion and  
death of  
Feroz  
Shah in  
1388.**

## CHAPTER VI

### Collapse of the Sultanate

#### Tughlaks, Sayyads, Lodhis, 1388-1526

Successors of Feroz Shah—Invasion of Timur—Political condition of Northern India—The Sayyads, Lodhi dynasty—Recovery of Jaunpur and Bihar—Sikandar Lodhi—Ibrahim Lodhi.

After Feroz Shah's death in 1388 anarchy reigned in Dehli owing to disputes regarding the succession, while the provincial governors divided the Sultanate between themselves. A number of weak princes successively ascended the throne but their short reigns were uneventful and the story of their struggle for 'a dishonoured throne' may be dismissed with a few brief remarks. Feroz Shah's two able sons had died during his lifetime and his grandson Ghiyas-ud-Din proved a very unworthy successor and after a brief reign of five months was deposed and killed on February 18, 1389. He was succeeded by his cousin Abu-Bakr, another grandson of Feroz, who was, in his turn, deposed after eight months by his uncle Muhammad, who now ascended the throne as Nasir-ud-Din Muhammad Tughlak in February 1390. Muhammad, it will be remembered, had fled from Dehli in 1387 when his father Feroz had abdicated but he had since established some sort of authority from Samana to Nagarkot in the Panjab and feeling himself strong enough invaded Dehli and captured the throne of his father. He reigned for nearly four years and all this time he was vexed by a series of rebellions. On his death in 1394, his son Humayun ascended the throne with the proud title of Alexander (Sikandar Shah) but

**Successors  
of Feroz  
Shah,  
1388-1414.**



died after a reign of six weeks and was succeeded by his brother Mahmud who nominally occupied the throne for eighteen years (1394-1412). But the kingdom was already distracted by factions and serious disorders, and a rival court was set up at Ferozabad near the old Dehli by Nusrat Khan, grandson of the late Sultan Feroz Shah. Some nobles remained with Mahmud, others espoused the cause of his cousin Nusrat and a civil war continued at the capital for three years during which period constant bloodshed prevailed.

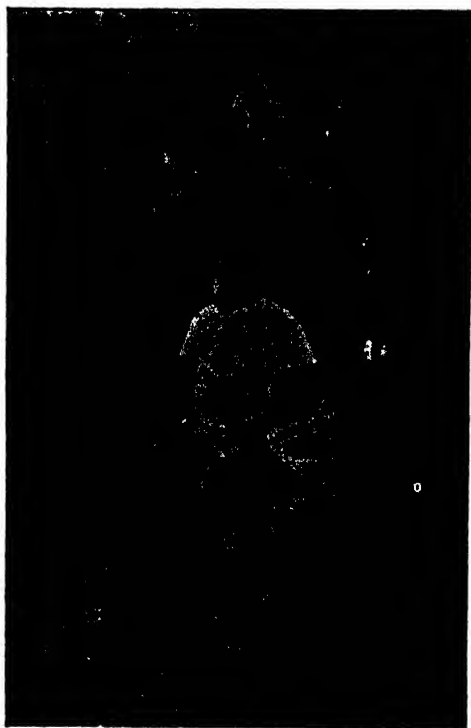
The provincial governors were not slow to take advantage of this distracted state of government at the capital and one by one declared their independence. The *Wazir* of the empire was the first to set up an independent government at Jaunpur, and the rulers of Gujarat, Malwa and Khandesh followed his example. In the Panjab the Gakhars had risen in rebellion and created terror in the whole province.

Such was the chaotic state of the kingdom of Dehli when Timur descended upon it with his ninety-two regiments of a thousand horse each. This great conqueror, who is commonly known as Timur-i-lang, was born in 1336 and had attained the throne of Samarkand in 1369, at the age of thirty-three and then entered on a career of conquest. He soon annexed Khwarizim, subdued Turkestan and overran all Persia and Mesopotamia. He then led his armies to Asia Minor on the west, and also occupied Afghanistan on the east. Thus having established full control over the great Asiatic land route, Amir Timur turned his attention towards India, the fabulous wealth and the distracted state of government of which were sufficient inducement for him to undertake the expedition in person. Previously to this his grandson Pir Muhammad had overrun the countries west of the Indus and

**Dis-  
member-  
ment of  
the  
empire.**

**Invasion  
of Timur,  
1398.**

early in 1398 he turned southwards and attacked Multan, of which he obtained possession after a siege of six months. In September, Timur himself crossed the Indus at Attock with a cavalry force said to number about 92,000, and having easily overpowered Mubarik Khan,



TAMERLANE (TIMUR)

*By kind permission of the Trustees, Victoria Memorial  
Section, Indian Museum "*

the governor of the Panjab, the fierce invader pressed forward and was joined by his grandson on the left bank of the Chenab. The combined troops now advanced upon Dehli by way of Panipat and in December, 1398,

the huge invading host of Turki horsemen lay encamped on the plain of India. But there was no man to oppose them. A week later Timur was before the capital and while he was reconnoitring, the king (Mahmud) and his *Wazir* sallied out of the city with a miserable force of 5,000 horse only to be driven back after a slight skirmish. Then followed the decisive battle. The Indian army mustered about 10,000 horse and 40,000 foot with 125 war elephants and was commanded by Mahmud and his *Wazir*, Ikbāl Khan. The elephants filled Timur's men with fear as they had no previous experience of Indian warfare but the intrepid Mughal took unusual precautions to allay the terrors of his troopers. He surrounded his camp with a ditch and rampart, and prepared iron spikes to cast before the dreaded monsters. The stores, cattle and the women as well as 'the learned men of the army' were stationed at the other end of the camp during the battle and it was on this occasion that a large number of prisoners numbering about 100,000 men were massacred in cold blood as Timur thought that they could not be safely left in the camp. In the battle that ensued, Mahmud was defeated and fled from the capital. Timur entered the city and received the homage of the principal inhabitants, and on Friday he caused himself to be proclaimed emperor of India when public prayers were read in his name. A brawl having arisen between Timur's soldiers and other citizens a general pillage followed and the city was systematically plundered for five days. Timur remained at Dehli only for a fortnight and then set out on his return homewards. Meerut was taken and the garrison put to the sword. He then turned towards Hardwar and 'marching along the foot of the mountains where it was easy to cross the rivers Timur quitted India, as he had come, by way of the Panjab—leaving anarchy, famine and pestilence behind'.

Thenceforward, until the days of the Mughal empire, Dehli never regained her old ascendancy. Nusrat Khan made an attempt to retain the capital, but Iqbal Khan soon expelled him and tried to restore order but his own authority extended only to a few districts outside the city. All the other provinces of the empire were held by the several viceroys as independent kingdoms. Gujarat was held by Muzaffar Khan; Kanauj, Oudh and Jaunpur formed one kingdom under Khwaju Jahan commonly called Shah Shark; the Panjab, comprising Lahore, Dipalpur and Multan was ruled by Timur's deputy Khizr Khan; Samana and Biana were held by Ghali Khan and Shamsh Khan respectively; while Muhammad Khan had set up an independent kingdom at Kalpi and Mohaba.

As already remarked Dehli was held by Iqbal Khan in the name of his fugitive master Mahmud Tughlak who was living at the court of Muzaffar Khan of Gujarat. He returned to Dehli in 1401, but was contented to receive a pension which was allotted to him by the Wazir and set up a separate court at Kanauj. The death of Iqbal Khan in November, 1405, in a battle with Khizr Khan of Multan set him free and enabled him to return to the capital, where he spent in peace the remaining seven years of his life. With Mahmud's death in 1412, the Tughlak dynasty came to an end.

Khizr Khan who had held the Panjab on behalf of Timur now advanced upon Dehli and seized the throne and laid the foundation of a new dynasty known as the Sayyad rulers of Dehli, since the founder claimed descent from the family of the Prophet. Khizr Khan and his three successors continued to rule in Dehli and a few adjoining districts for about forty years but the history of their several reigns is little more than a record of

**Political condition of North-eastern India.**

**The end of the Tughlak dynasty.**

**The Sayyads, 1412-50.**

marchings and counter-marchings in the endeavour to compel the allegiance of rebellious barons and to collect the revenues of the State. How small their territory was will be realized when it is stated that almost yearly campaigns were undertaken to extort the annual tribute from the chief of Rohilkhand, to the north of Dehli, from the ruler of Mewat about a dozen miles to the south of the capital, and from Etawa in the Jumna Doab. Throughout the period we read of frequent rebellions in Sirhind and the Panjab, as well as in the Doab and even the nearer districts of Etawa, Mewat, Gwalior and Rohilkhand gradually broke away from the control of the Sayyads.

It does not seem necessary to follow the events of the Sayyad period in detail as there are but few incidents of mark during their tenure of power. The last of the line named Ala-ud-Din was allowed to retire to Budaon where he lived in peace for many years.

When Ala-ud-Din abdicated in 1450, and had retired to

**Bahlol  
founds the  
Lodhi  
dynasty  
and con-  
solidates  
his power,  
1450-  
1526.**

Budaon, Bahlol Lodhi, the Governor of the Panjab, was invited to carry on the government of the capital. This Bahlol Khan was descended from a rich family of the Lodhi Afghan merchants who traded between Kabul and India; some of whom, as was common at the period, entered the service of the sovereigns of India. The uncle of Bahlol had fought under the banner of Khizr Khan in 1405, and had slain the Wazir Ikbal Khan in single combat and was for that service rewarded with the governorship of Sirhind to which Bahlol Khan succeeded as independent ruler on the death of his patron and relative. Now as the opportunity was offered, Bahlol seized the throne of Dehli and laid the foundations of a new dynasty known as the Lodhi, from the Afghan clan to which Bahlol belonged. He was a man of some ability and

prowess in war and during the thirty-eight years of his rule he did much to restore the vanished power of Dehli.

Having reduced the minor principalities round Dehli, Bahlol Khan engaged in a war with the king of Jaunpur. This province having thrown off its allegiance to the emperor of Dehli during the anarchy following on Timur's invasion had been consolidated into a powerful monarchy by the successors of Khwaja Jahan, and its ruler Hussain Shah now offered a stubborn and protracted resistance to Bahlol. But that able soldier at last succeeded in defeating the Sharki rulers of Jaunpur after a long struggle lasting nearly a quarter of a century and in recovering the kingdom for the emperor at Dehli in 1478. He appointed his own son Barbak Shah as viceroy of the newly annexed province.

Bahlol Lodhi reigned till 1488, when he died of a disease from which he had long suffered. It is said that he intended to divide his dominions between his five sons, but on the advice of his nobles, he dropped the idea and on his death they chose Nizam Khan as his father's successor. He assumed the royal style of Sultan Sikandar Ghazi.

Sikander was not less vigorous and ambitious than his father and he continued the policy of recovering the lost possessions of Dehli and brought back Gwalior and Bidar to their allegiance to the emperor. Another important political event of the reign was the expulsion of his brother Barbak Shah from Jaunpur. Barbak who was appointed governor of Jaunpur by his father refused to acknowledge the election of Sikandar to the throne and took up arms to assert his own right. He was, however, defeated and afterwards pardoned, but his bad government of the province was taken as an excuse for his removal from office and for a more definite annexation of that kingdom.

**Recovery  
of Jaunpur  
and Bihar,  
1478.**

**Sikandar  
Lodhi,  
1488-1517.**

Although the king undertook many minor campaigns and was, for the most part of his reign, busy in reducing to submission the various refractory chiefs, yet he enjoyed long intervals of peace during which he employed his great talents and learning in improving the civil administration of his dominions. He made considerable improvements in public roads and communications as well as in the organization of police and horseposts. The literary accomplishments of the Sultan were considerable for the age. He was a poet and also took a special interest in 'medical lore'. His reign was remarkable for the prevalence of exceptionally low prices for both food and other things, 'so that small means enabled their possessors to live comfortably'.

Sikandar Lodhi is described by Muhammadan authors as a devout Muslim who strictly followed Koranic law and practice. But he had very little tolerance for his Hindu subjects and on a trifling pretext destroyed some of their temples. The famous shrine of Mathura was converted into a mosque for Muslim use.<sup>1</sup>

Sikandar died in 1517 and his eldest son Ibrahim ascended the throne without opposition, but it was not long before his brother Jalal Khan, then governor of Kalpi, captured Jaunpur and declared himself king. The rebellion was suppressed; Jalal fled but was pursued and soon arrested and eventually put to death.

Ibrahim did not inherit the virtues of his father and his haughty and insolent conduct gave great offence to his proud nobles and the discontent ultimately resulted in outbreaks and rebellions throughout the empire. The provinces which were annexed by Bahlol and Sikandar and were only loosely attached to the empire revolted

**His  
character  
and civil  
govern-  
ment.**

**Ibrahim  
Lodhi,  
1517-  
1526**

<sup>1</sup> V. Smith, *Oxford History of India*, p. 254.

and once more broke away from the control of the Sultan. Bahadur Khan, Lohani of Bihar, declared his independence and the governor of Jaunpur followed suit. Daulat Khan Lodhi, governor of the Panjab, also revolted, but instead of proclaiming his independence invited Babur, the ruler of Kabul, to come and assert his right to the throne of Delhi in virtue of the conquests of his ancestor Timur. Babur was only looking out for an opportunity and on the invitation of Daulat Khan marched on Delhi in 1526 and defeated Ibrahim at the battle of Panipat.

EMPERORS OF DELHI  
1320-1526

| Serial No. | Name                      | Date, A D      | Remarks   |
|------------|---------------------------|----------------|---|
| 1          | Ghiyas-ud-Din Tughlak     | 1321-25        | Original name Ghazi Malik, full official title Ghiyas-ud-Din Tughlak Shah. Elected Sultan by the courtiers of Delhi. Killed by the fall of a pavilion.  |
| 2          | Muhammad bin Tughlak.     | 1325-51        | Son of No. 1. Full name Muhammad Adil bin Tughlak, also styled Fakhr-ud-Din Juna and Ulugh Khan. Suspected by some as the murderer of his father. Shifted his capital from Delhi to Daulatabad. Introduced forced brass and copper currency. Sent expeditions to Persia and China and indulged in other mad schemes. Natural death. |
| 3          | Feroz Shah ...            | 1351-88        | Cousin of No. 2. Feroz is chiefly remembered for his works of public utility. Died a natural death.   |
| 4          | Ghiyas-ud-Din Tughlak II. | 1388-89        | Grandson of No. 3. Killed by his brothers and cousins, February 1389.   |
| 5          | Abu Bakr ...              | Feb -Nov. 1339 | Cousin of No. 4. Deposed by his uncle.  |



## EMPERORS OF DEHLI—(continued)

| Serial No. | Name                           | Date, A.D. | Remarks   |
|------------|--------------------------------|------------|---|
| 6          | Nasir-ud-Din Muhammad Tughlak. | 1390-94    | Son of No. 3. Died a natural death.   |
| 7          | Humayun Tughlak.               | 1394       | Son of No. 6. Died after a short reign of forty-five days.  |
| 8          | Mahmud Tughlak.                | 1394-1412  | Son of No. 6. There were serious disturbances at Dehli—rival competitor being Nusrat Khan—after Timur's invasion, 1398. Mahmud fled to Gujarat. But the real power was wielded by the minister Ikbal Khan. Returned to Dehli, 1401.<br>Nos. 9 to 13 are the Sayyad rulers of Dehli. |
| 9          | Sayyad Khizr Khan.             | 1414-21    | V. Smith following Mr. E. Thomas considers that the Sayyad rulers never assumed the royal style, or struck coin in their names.   |
| 10         | Sayyad Mubarik.                | 1421-35    |   |
| 11         | Sayyad Muhammad.               | 1435-44    |   |
| 12         | Sayyad Ala-ud-Din.             | 1444-50    | He abdicated in favour of Bahlol Lodhi. Died in 1478.   |
| 13         | Bahlol Khan.                   | 1450-89    | Full official designation Sultan Bahlol Lodhi, founder of the Lodhi dynasty.  |
| 14         | Sikandar Lodhi.                | 1489-1517  | Son of No. 13. Original name Nizam Khan. Assumed the royal style of Sultan Sikandar Ghazi—was a religious enthusiast.   |
| 15         | Ibrahim Lodhi.                 | 1517-26    | Son of No. 14. Last of the dynasty—killed in the battle of Panipat.   |

## CHRONOLOGY

THE SULTANATE OF DEHLI. 1206-1526

1206

... Kutb-ud-Din Aibak.

Becomes King of India and founds the Slave Dynasty.

- 1210 ... Aram Shah ascends the throne of Dehli.
- 1211 ... Iltutmish succeeds Aram at Dehli.
- 1221-22 ... Mughal Invasions.
- 1227 ... Death of Chingiz Khan.
- 1234 ... Iltutmish subdues most of Northern India.
- 1236-40 ... Sultana Raziya.
- 1240 ... The Mughals again invade the Panjab.
- 1266-86 ... Ghiyas-ud-Din Balban.
- 1282 ... Balban recovers Bengal from the rebels.
- 1290 ... End of the Slave dynasty. Jalal-ud-Din founds  
Khilji dynasty.
- 1294 ... Ala-ud-Din invades the Deccan and annexes  
Ellichpur.
- 1296 ... Ala-ud-Din murders his uncle and ascends the throne.
- 1297 ... Conquest of Gujarat.
- 1296-98 ... Mughal invasions of Dehli.
- 1302-11 ... Malik Kafur overruns Southern India, sacking  
Dwarasamudra, Kanchi and Madura.
- 1303 ... First sack of Chitor.
- 1318-20 ... Execution of Harpal Dev Yadev. Khusro Khan  
usurps the throne.
- 1321 ... Ghiyas-ud-Din founds Tughlak dynasty of Dehli.  
Capture of Warrangal.
- 1325 ... Muhammad Tughlak succeeds his father.
- 1326-27 ... Evacuation of Dehli and transfer of capital to  
Daulatabad.
- 1336-38 ... Expedition against China.
- 1347 ... Deccan independent under Zaffar Khan Bahmani.
- 1351 ... Death of Muhammad Tughlak and accession of  
Feroz Tughlak.
- 1351-88 ... Feroz Tughlak. Break up of the Sultanate.
- 1390-94 ... Muhammad Shah reigns.
- 1394 ... Mahmud Shah reigns.
- 1398 ... Invasion of Timur.
- 1399-1414 ... Anarchy at Dehli.
- 1414-50 ... The Sayyad rulers of Dehli.
- 1450 ... Accession of Sultan Bahlol Lodhi.
- 1476 ... Recovery of Jaunpur.
- 1489-1517 ... Sultan Sikandar Lodhi.
- 1517-26 ... Ibrahim Lodhi, battle of Panipat.

# Book III.—INDIA IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

1398–1526

## CHAPTER VII

### Northern India

#### Provincial Dynasties, 1398-1526

Expansion of Muhammadan power—Political divisions of the country—History of Northern kingdoms, Sindh, Multan, Jaunpur, Bengal, Malwa, Gujarat, Khandesh, etc.

The battle of Panipat in A.D. 1526 marks the close of the mediæval age and ushers in a new era in India. The first Muhammadan empire which was founded at Dehli in the year 1206 by Kutb-ud-Din Aibak was now finally extinguished, after a long and chequered career of three hundred years, by Babur who founded, on its ruins, the second Muhammadan empire known to history as the Empire of the Mughals. The year 1526 may therefore be taken as a convenient opportunity for noticing briefly the growth of various forces—political, social, religious and economic—which obtained in the country during the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth century.

A detailed story of the political conquest of the country has already been described in the foregoing chapters, but it will not be out of place to summarize here what has been said before. We have seen how the defeat of Prithvi Raj, in 1192, at the battle-field of Tarain paved the way for further conquest of India by Shahab-ud-Din Ghori and his lieutenants. This process of conquest once begun, did not stop till the whole country

**Introductory.**

**Expansion of Muhammadan power.**



was made to acknowledge the sway of the Dehli Sultanate. Kutb-ud-Din, Iltutmish and Balban of the Slave dynasty spread the Muhammadan empire from the Indus to the Brahmaputra during the thirteenth century.

Next in order come the Khiljis and the Tughlak Sultans of Dehli whose armies carried the banner of Islam far and wide during the first fifty years of the fourteenth century. Ala-ud-Din Khilji extended the limits of the empire to the Deccan; and Muhammad Tughlak carried it still further south. He conquered Warrangal and destroyed the last great Rajput house in Southern India in 1323. In the second half of the fourteenth century, the house of Dehli declines in power. One by one the outlying provinces become rebellious and eventually as the central authority grows weak, the provincial governors throw off the imperial yoke and set up their independent kingdoms. But it is necessary to remember, as the late Sir R. C. Dutt observes, that this decline of the Dehli monarchy did not affect the ascendancy of the Muhammadan power. On the contrary these provincial governors succeeded in forming independent Muhammadan kingdoms in distant provinces, and the rise of these independent kingdoms meant the further consolidation of the Muhammadan power in India.

A glance at the political map of India in the year 1450 will show a large number of these petty realms in the country. Beginning from the west we have the kingdom of Sindh; north of it that of Multan; next, the Panjab, nominally a province of Dehli, but in practice quite independent of the emperor. Then comes Dehli itself with a few districts in its immediate neighbourhood which constitute the actual empire of Dehli. To the east and south and running alongside of Dehli lies the kingdom of Jaunpur while further eastward still is the kingdom of Bengal.

**Political divisions of India.**

This forms what may be called the northern group of Muhammadan States. The second or the southern group comprises the kingdom of Gujarat, Malwa and the principality of Khandesh. South of Khandesh in the Deccan is the great Bahmani kingdom ruled by its Muhammadan dynasty called the Bahmani dynasty. Thus it will appear from the description given above that Muhammadan power had spread over almost the fairest portions of India. There were, however, still some independent zones in which the Hindus retained their independence. In the north there was the Himalayan zone comprising the kingdoms of Kashmir,<sup>1</sup> Nepal, Bhutan and Assam, which, protected by their natural position, continued to be the seats of Hindu kings. Wedged in between the northern and southern band of Muhammadan States lies what may be called the central zone of Hindu States, running from Rajputana in the west, through Gondwana to Orissa in the east. This part of the country was saved from the sweeping conquests of the Sultans, partly by the valour of its people and partly by its thick and dense forests which the invading armies of the north found it extremely difficult to penetrate. Lastly Southern India remained virtually independent under Hindu chiefs and kings owing to its remoteness from Dehli and even from the Deccan. It was here that a great Hindu kingdom was founded at Vijayanagar about the year 1340, which not only retained its independence for more than two centuries but prevented the expansion of Muhammadan power further south. From an outline of political divisions given above it will appear that there are two great groups of Muhammadan powers, and each group is 'menaced on the south by a formidable Hindu polity'.

<sup>1</sup> Kashmir was, however, practically conquered by Muhammadans about A.D. 1340 where a free lance named Shah Amir had founded a dynasty of rulers.

It is this distribution of political forces in the middle of the fifteenth century that contributed a good deal to the making of the India of the sixteenth and subsequent centuries. We propose, therefore, to trace in outline the history of these States which furnished the material with which the Mughals constructed that political edifice which endured for nearly two hundred years.

The province of Sindh has, throughout its history, exercised but little influence upon the politics of Hindostan. The first occupation of the Muslims failed and somewhere about the middle of the eighth century, the Sumera Rajputs regained the province and maintained their independence for about five hundred years. About the year 1210, Nasir-ud-Din Kubacha—a Turki slave of Muhammad Ghorī and his representative in the Panjab—subdued the Sumeras and declared himself king of Sindh. On his death, in A.D. 1225, another local Rajput dynasty known as the Jams of Samana established their independence and continued to rule till the close of the fourteenth century. During this time a few attempts were made by the Sultans of Delhi to invade Sindh, but these did not prove very successful. The Jam family, it is said, embraced the Muhammadan faith about A.D. 1380 though for what reason, or under what circumstances it is not mentioned.<sup>1</sup> The Jams, now Muhammadan by faith, ruled the kingdom until 1520, when it was conquered by Shah Beg Arghun of Kandahar, who being harassed by Babur had established himself as an independent king at Multan.

Multan, like Sindh, fell very early into the hands of the Muhammadan conquerors of India. Muhammad Kasim gained possession of the city in A.D. 712. The Karmathians (A.D. 970-1206) then

<sup>1</sup> Meadows Taylor, *A Student's Manual of the History of India*, p. 157, reprint 1915.

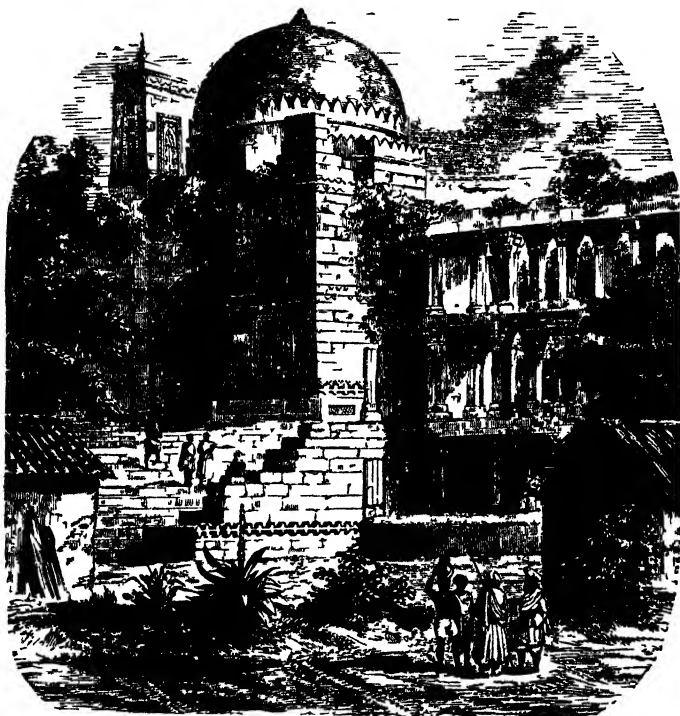
seized Multan towards the end of the tenth century and continued to rule the province until they were finally overthrown by Muhammad Ghori. The latter in the course of his expeditions passed several times through Multan and on one occasion is recorded to have 'delivered that place from the hands of the Karmathians.' The history of the province from the period of its annexation by the Muhammadans up to the year 1443, is extremely obscure. It was in this year, however, that tired of anarchy the people of Multan selected a ruler 'one Sheikh Yusaf, a man of learning, wisdom and high character' of the tribe of Kuresh, and 'the public prayers were read, and money coined in his name.' The prince fully repaid their confidence by re-organizing the government and gaining the esteem and friendship of the surrounding Zamindars. Sheikh Yusaf had hardly been two years on the throne when, in 1445, Rai Sehra, father-in-law of the Sheikh, seized Multan, drove out his son-in-law and assumed the title of Kutb-ud-Din Langah. Kutb-ud-Din reigned in peace, till his death in 1469. His successors then occupied the throne for nearly fifty years. In 1524, Multan was attacked by Shah Hussain Beg Arghun and the city and the fortress were made to surrender after a prolonged resistance of several weeks.

Jaunpur next demands a word. This kingdom roughly coincided with what is now called Oudh.

**Jaunpur.** Jaunpur, the town of Juna, as we have noted already, was founded by Feroz Shah Tughlak, and was so named after his cousin and predecessor Juna, better known as Muhammad Tughlak. This new Muhammadan city was planted, as may be seen in the map, in the very midst of the most orthodox Hindu part of Northern India, and in course of time grew into the capital of the Muhammadan kingdom of the Sharki Maliks. The founder of this dynasty was the eunuch Khwaja Jahan



who was appointed in 1394, by Sultan Mahmud Tughlak, as governor of the eastern provinces with the title of Malik-us-Shark. During the confusion that ensued after the invasion of Timur, in 1398, Khwaja Jahan's adopted son Malik Karanfal seized the opportunity and set himself up as an independent king of Jaunpur with



VIEW OF GATEWAY OF JAMA MASJID, JAUNPUR  
 From Ferguson's *'History of Indian and Eastern  
 Architecture.'* John Murray.

the style of Mubarik Shah Sharki. His short reign of three years ended with his death in 1400. His younger brother Ibrahim Shah then succeeded to the throne. He reigned for about forty years from 1400 to 1440 and was the most capable monarch of the Sharki dynasty.

Ibrahim considerably extended his borders by bringing under his sway the adjacent territories of Kanauj, Oudh and Bihar. His long and prosperous reign of forty years is also distinguished by the erection of some of the finest specimens of Muslim architecture, such as the Atala Mosque, with which he adorned his capital Jaunpur.

Ibrahim was a zealous Muslim and an enlightened patron of art and learning and is credited with the opening of several Muhammadan schools and colleges in his kingdom. After him the dynasty rapidly declined as his successor Mahmud Shah yielded to the temptation to take part in the struggle which then centred round the decayed power of Dehli. This legacy he bequeathed even to his successors after his death, in 1457, and the result of the struggle was that when Bhalol Khan Lodhi mounted the throne of Dehli, he defeated Hussain Shah the last of the Sharki kings, in three successive actions near Kanauj in 1476 and deprived him of all his possessions. He was allowed to dwell for some years at the capital (Jaunpur) and then fled to Bihar and his kingdom was annexed to Dehli.

The emperors of Dehli had never had, for any length of time, an effective control over Bengal.

**Bengal.** The distance from the capital and, perhaps, the difficulties of the journey prevented the sovereigns of Dehli from reaching the province and subduing a refractory governor. The province of Bengal, therefore, was mostly in a state of semi-independence from a comparatively early date. Its geographical position in the extreme east, far removed from the scene of the political activities at the capital of the empire contributed to a considerable degree in allowing the province to develop a sort of self-sufficiency and go on its own way, apparently 'disregarding and disregarded by all other kingdoms except for certain wars on its frontiers.' Bengal had no good court historian. Very little is,

therefore, recorded of the annals of the numerous rulers who governed the province for a period of three hundred and fifty years before its conquest and annexation by Akbar, in 1576.

Within its own borders, however, Bengal was often divided against itself. It had two distinct principalities (an eastern and a western) with their capitals respectively at Sonargaon and Satgaon. About 1339, the governor of Eastern Bengal assumed independence; and a year later, the governor of Western Bengal followed his example. Both these principalities were united in 1352, under the rule of Ilyas Khwaja Shamsuddin and the capital was fixed at Panduah which was a couple of years after transferred to Gaur. Feroz Shah Tughlak, during his campaign of 1353-54 recognized the independence of Ilyas. The dynasty of Ilyas, known by its popular name as the dynasty of Purbiyas or Bhangeras continued to reign till the close of the fourteenth century, when after a short period of anarchy, the throne came into the possession of a Hindu Raja named Kans. But the family of Kans did not retain power for long. There were many revolutions and counter-revolutions, and changes of dynasty, till the government of the country became more stable under its Sayyad rulers. This dynasty was founded in 1493 by Allauddin Hussain Shah, a Sayyad of Arab descent who had held the office of Wazir under the tyrant Abyssinian adventurer Muzaffar Shah. Hussain on ascending the throne immediately dismissed the rebellious Abyssinian levies and reigned in peace, prosperity and great splendour till 1519, when he died and was succeeded by his son Nusrat Shah. Both Nusrat and his father Hussain Shah seem to have been rulers of great ability and political foresight. They had built up political connections with their neighbouring States and Hussain Shah concluded a treaty of friendship even with the distant ruler of Dehli. Both father and son were

great patrons of art and learning and did a great deal for the development of Bengali literature. We learn from Dinesh Chandra Sen's book on Bengali literature that Nusrat Shah ordered a Bengali version of the *Mahabharat* and the *Bhagavat* to be made. To Hussain Shah is attributed the origin of a cult called Satya Pir intended to unite Hindus and Musalmans in divine worship. His name is still familiar in Bengal.

The province of Gujarat enjoys exceptional natural advantages. Besides the fertility of its soil and a favourable climate, it possesses a long sea-board with many ports, including Diu, Bharoch, Cambay, Daman and Chaul. This brought it into relations with Persia, Egypt and Arabia. Naturally therefore, a country so rich in trade, commerce and manufacture has attracted the attention of all invaders who have effected the conquest of Northern India. Its peculiar geographical position beyond the great desert and the hills connecting the Vindhya with the Aravali range made it inaccessible to the invaders from the north and helped the Hindu rulers of the province to preserve their independence, for a long time. It was not till 1298, almost a century after the Muhammadans had established their power at Dehli that an officer of Ala-ud-Din Khilji annexed it to the empire and Gujarat became a Muslim province. From that date Muhammadan governors continued to be appointed from Dehli till a century later Zaffar Khan formally withdrew his allegiance in A.D. 1401 and placed his son Tatar Khan on the throne, as Sultan of Gujarat. This boy, however, died soon after and Zaffar retained in his own hands the reins of administration. Zaffar Khan or Muzaffar Shah I, for such was the title he assumed, died in 1411, and was succeeded by his grandson Ahmad Shah who reigned for nearly thirty years and may be regarded as the real founder of the kingdom of Gujarat. For the first few

years of his reign, Ahmad Shah was busy in reducing to submission, the Hindu rulers of Kathiawar. Their important fortresses of Junagarh (Girnar) and Nagore were conquered in 1414 and a couple of years after, the whole peninsula of Surashtra (Kathiawar) was annexed to the rising kingdom of Gujarat. He had hardly time to reorganize his army and to consolidate his possessions when he was called upon to defend his territory from the attacks of his Muhammadan neighbours, the Sultans of Malwa and Khandesh. He was successful against both and not only repulsed their joint attack in 1419, but pursued Sultan Hushang of Malwa to his capital of Mandu. Ahmad Shah is also remembered as the builder of a beautiful new city which he named after himself as Ahmadabad and which to this day continues to be the capital of Gujarat.

The next important king of the dynasty founded by Zaffar Khan was Sultan Mahmud Birgarha, a grandson of Ahmad Shah who reigned for fifty-two years from 1459 to 1511. Mahmud was a brave and warlike king and displayed considerable talent in civil government during his long and prosperous reign; and though like Akbar, he was only fourteen years of age at the period of his accession, he gave like him evidence of unusual energy by dispensing with a protector and himself suppressing a revolt of his nobles and like Akbar also he early won the respect of his people.

The Rajputs of Girnar had again declared their independence and Mahmud was now called upon to oppose a formidable Rajput confederacy. He won brilliant success at Girnar and Champanir both of which were now permanently annexed to Gujarat. Mahmud's fame reached even beyond India and Shah Ismail of Persia is said to have sent an embassy to his capital at Ahmadabad. His aid was also sought in 1508, by the

**Sultan  
Mahmud  
Birgarha  
— King of  
Gujarat,  
1459-  
1511.**

Sultan of Egypt for an attack on the Portuguese, whom the Muhammadans were anxious to expel from the Indian Seas. Mahmud died in 1511 in his seventieth year and his reign is still remembered in Gujarat as a golden age.

Mahmud was succeeded by his eldest son Muzaffar who ascended the throne under the title of **Muzaffar Shah of Gujarat.** Muzaffar Shah II. He was unfortunately involved in a disastrous war with Rana Sangram Singh (Rana Sanga) of Mewar who had expelled the reigning Sultan of Malwa and taken possession of his capital Mandu. The war with this powerful head of the Rajput confederacy caused a heavy strain on Muzaffar's military and financial resources and his own illness prevented him from making any impression on his Hindu adversaries. He died in February, 1526—the year in which Babur invaded India.

There was no tract of India, except Rajputana, where the illustrious Hindu chiefs, proud of their **Malwa.** ancient lineage, offered a stouter resistance to the Muhammadans than the rulers of Malwa; and the annals of the early emperors of Dehli are full of accounts of campaigns in this province, waged with varying fortune till in 1310 the province was brought more or less into subjection by an officer of Ala-ud-Din Khilji, and the old Hindu dynasty disappeared after a hard and almost perpetual struggle of nearly one hundred years.

In 1387, Sultan Feroz Tughlak granted the fief of Malwa to Dilawar Khan Ghori, a descendant of Shahb-ud-Din, who with other provincial governors of Dehli threw off his allegiance to the emperor, and became independent during the unsettled period that followed the invasion of Timur, in 1398. Quickly consolidating his position, Dilawar Khan declared himself king in 1401, assumed the ensigns of royalty and had coins struck in his name. He also shifted his capital from Ujjain, the seat of ancient Hindu kings, to the strongly

fortified and newly built city of Mandu. He was not, however, destined to enjoy his new rank for long, as he died suddenly in A.D. 1405. He was succeeded by his son Alph Khan who ascended the throne under the title of Sultan Hushang Ghori. Hushang was early involved in war, as already mentioned, with the neighbouring



TOWER OF VICTORY,  
CHITOR

*From Hamlin's  
'Architecture.'*

*By permission*

Muhammadian kingdom of Gujarat, and was once even driven out of his capital by Sultan Muzaffar Shah of Gujarat. He died in 1432, but his son and successor Muhammad Ghori proved weak and dissolute, and was soon deposed and probably poisoned at the instigation of his minister who seized the throne and became king with the title of Sultan Mahmud Khilji in 1436. The situation of Malwa, hedged in by warring States, Dehli and Jaunpur on the north, Gujarat on the west and the powerful Rajput confederacy on the north-west, involved the new State in frequent wars with one or other of its neighbours. For the first few years of his rule Mahmud Khilji succeeded in holding his own against the kings of Gujarat and Jaunpur and Rajputana; but towards the end of his reign, the Rajput confederacy proved irresistible. In 1440, he suffered a heavy defeat at the hands of Rana Kumbha, whose success is

recorded in one of the inscriptions found within the

lofty tower of victory still standing at Chitor.<sup>1</sup> Mahmud Khilji died in 1469 after a reign of thirty-three years, and was succeeded by his son Sultan Mahmud II. He also reigned for a period of the same duration as his father but was not half so able and strong. Defeated in a battle by Rana Sanga, he allowed his kingdom to be completely dominated by Rajputs, chief amongst whom was Medni Rao, Raja of Chanderi who acted as chief minister to the Sultan. This state of affairs continued, until the invasion of Babur involving the defeat of the Rajputs and the death of Medni Rao relieved Malwa of this Hindu king-maker.

South of Malwa, lay the small and comparatively insignificant kingdom of Khandesh which **Khandesh.** became independent under its governor Malik Raja Farrukhi. An interesting story of the Malik Raja's rapid rise to favour is related by Muhammadan historians. It is said that King Feroz Tughlak was once separated many miles from his attendants during a hunting expedition and happened to meet Malik Raja, who was, like the king, fond of hunting and a great sportsman. The Malik invited him to share the meal, which he was preparing consisting of delicious game. Feroz was so pleased with him that he invited him to court and appointed him commander of 2,000 horse and subsequently nominated him to the government of Khandesh in 1370, and also honoured him with the surname of Farrukhi or the *fortunate*. Having taken possession of his province, Malik Raja speedily reduced some of the Hindu chiefs about him, and caused himself to be feared and respected. Following the example of his neighbours, Dilawar Khan of Malwa and Muzaffar

<sup>1</sup> The victory of the Rajputs does not seem to have been very decisive, since Sultan Mahmud is also reported to have built a remarkable tower at Mandu in commemoration of this battle claiming victory for himself.



Shah of Gujarat, Malik Raja also declared his independence and with a view to strengthening his political connections married the daughter of the ruler of Malwa. He ruled his small realm wisely and well for about thirty years until his death in 1399. He was succeeded by his eldest son Malik Nasir who reigned for nearly forty years. Nasir extended his dominions in the north-east by the capture of the fort of Asirgarh, having treacherously taken possession of the person of Raja Asa Ahir. He was tempted to interfere in the politics of the Bahmani kingdom but he fared so badly in his wars with these rulers of the south, that after a severe defeat, he died of vexation in September, 1437. The next notable monarch of the Farrukhi dynasty was Adil Khan who enjoyed a long prosperous reign of forty-six years, from 1457 to 1503. Except for a short war with Gujarat, Adil Khan's reign was a period of unbroken peace, during which, trade and the manufacture of gold and silver cloth flourished under State patronage. Like that of Malwa and Gujarat, the soil of Khandesh is extremely fertile and under the benevolent rule of these Farrukhi kings, large areas of cotton were grown and the manufacture of fine muslins became one of the staple industries of the province. After Adil Khan's death in 1503, the dynasty of Malik Raja declined and in 1511, Sultan Mahmud Birgarha of Gujarat placed on the throne one of his own relations and collateral of Adil Khan. The subsequent history of the State is of very little interest and will be noticed hereafter.

As already remarked in these pages, wedged in between the Northern and Southern group of **Orissa.** Muhammadan States was a long belt of Hindu kingdoms beginning from Rajputana in the west and running along Gondwāna to Orissa in the east. Orissa did not play a very important part in the politics of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. A few isolated

attempts were made during this period to subdue the Hindu rulers of the province but all proved abortive. In 1457, Hussain Shah, ruler of Jaunpur, invaded the province at the head of a large army numbering about 30,000 horse and 100,000 foot, but considering a permanent occupation of the country as impracticable, returned after obtaining a large booty. The Bahmani kings also made a few attempts and, in 1477, Muhammad II deprived the Raja of Orissa of a few important possessions like Rajamandri, Kandapali and Kandavid and also levied tribute from the Raja, but it is doubtful whether he ever completely possessed the country.

It has been mentioned in a previous chapter that the Rajput families not being able to stand the **Rajputana.** onset of the Turks and the Afghans, had left their original homes in the Doab between the Jumna and the Ganges and had founded new kingdoms, about the close of the thirteenth century, in the hilly country all round the Aravali hills. Here they were able to maintain their independence for a few more centuries. Amongst those who played an important part in the political history of the country were the Guhila princes of Mewar. The famous rock fortress of Chitor was the seat of their power, and it had become the object of a passionate national devotion. The most famous amongst the early rulers of Chitor was Rana Kumbha to whose successful struggle against Gujarat and Malwa we have already alluded in connection with the history of these kingdoms. The next important member of this dynasty was the famous Rana Sangram Singh (Rana Sanga). He was at the head of the Rajput confederacy when Babur invaded India in 1526 and we, therefore, propose to narrate his career in its proper place.

## CHAPTER VIII

### Southern India

#### Bahmani Kingdom, 1347-1518

A comparison of the Bahmani and Vijayanagar kingdoms—Founding of the kingdom—Account of individual rulers—Execution of Khwaja Gawan—Review of the character of the Bahmani dynasty—Administration—Architecture—Progress of education.

We now come to the Deccan where the sovereignty of the country was divided between the Muhammadan rulers of the Bahmani Kingdom and the Hindu kings of Vijayanagar. Both these kingdoms were founded about the middle of the fourteenth century and it is also a strange coincidence that the decline of the first ruling houses, both at Kulbarga and Vijayanagar founded respectively by Zaffar Hasan Bahmani (1347) and Harihar and Bukka (1340), also set in about the same time, namely in the closing decade of the fifteenth century. The provincial governors of the Bahmani kingdom taking advantage of the rottenness of the Sultanate asserted their independence and one after another set up petty independent kingdoms. Similarly the first dynasty of Vijayanagar came to a sudden close about the year 1486 when Narsinga Saluva, the powerful governor of Chandragiri, was obliged to depose the nominal reigning sovereign owing to palace intrigues and internal

**Bahmani  
and the  
Vijaya-  
nagar  
Kingdoms  
—a compa-  
rison.**

dissensions and take the cares of government on his own shoulders. But it must be remembered that in both cases, the domination of political forces in their respective territorial limits outlived the first dynasties of rulers. The decline of the house of Hasan Bahmani did not affect the ascendancy of Muhammadan power in the south. On the contrary it meant the further consolidation of the Muhammadan power in as much as the Sultanates of Berar, Ahmadnagar, Bijapur and Golkonda and Bidar which were formed out of the ruins of the Bahmani kingdom, effectively combined together and pooled their resources to continue the old contest with the rival Hindu empire of Vijayanagar which was now recovering its strength, first under Narsinga Saluva (1486-92) and then again under its able ruler Krishna Raya (1509-29). The other characteristic feature of these rival kingdoms of the south is the perpetual contest between them from the date of their foundation to the period of final extinction of one of the rivals, namely, Vijayanagar in 1565, in the decisive battle of Talikota. During the first hundred years of their history this struggle was almost ceaseless and the Muslim and the Hindu empires were on the whole equally matched. From the middle of the fifteenth century, both the parties suffering from exhaustion, occasionally found it convenient to forget their enmity and to enter into temporary alliances. In the end, the Muslims who were more vigorous, better organized and more persevering than the Hindus, won the long contest. The chief interest of the story of these two empires of the Deccan does not lie only in their long contest for political supremacy. Trade, industries and commerce flourished in the south during these two hundred years and the country witnessed the execution of quite a large number of architectural works and other specimens of fine art both in the dominions of the Bahmani kings, and at Vijayanagar. We

propose, therefore, to give, in this and the following chapter, a brief outline of the story of the rise and fall of the Bahmani and the Vijayanagar empires.

Like all the Muhammadan kingdoms of the fifteenth century, the Bahmani kingdom found its origin in a successful revolt from Dehli; but its history commences at an earlier date. The provincial governors of the south, unable to bear the caprices and cruelties of Muhammad Tughlak, became insubordinate and a number of rebellions broke out in the Deccan towards the close of his reign. In order, therefore, to put down these revolts, a court favourite named Zaffar Khan, surnamed Bahmani,<sup>1</sup> was despatched from Dehli as governor of the Deccan in or about the year 1342. Such frontier commands, with freedom for exertion, were acceptable posts for the talented and adventurous spirits of the time; and having taken possession of his province Zaffar Khan immediately proceeded to consolidate his own resources with a view to make himself independent of Dehli. In five years' time Zaffar felt his position strong enough to declare himself king and, in August 1347, adopted the title of Ala-ud-Din Hasan Bahmani and laid the foundation of a dynasty of rulers which endured for nearly two hundred years. Until his death in 1358, Ala-ud-Din Hasan was busy in extending his dominion which now comprised a large part of the Deccan stretching from Berar on the north to the river Krishna on the south, and from the ocean on the west to Indore on the east. The capital of the kingdom was at Kulbarga.

<sup>1</sup> The old explanation about the origin of Hasan's surname of Bahmani that he had adopted it in gratitude to his previous master Gangu Brahman who had prophesied his greatness, has now been found to be false. It is surmised that his surname of Bahman was adopted by Hasan as he claimed his descent from an early Persian king so called. See also V. Smith, *Oxford History of India*, p. 275.

Ala-ud-Din's son succeeded him, in 1358, under the title of Muhammad Shah and spent most of his time in fighting with his powerful Hindu neighbours of the kingdom of Telingana and Vijayanagar. From the account of the details of battles it appears that the parties fought with a vengeance. A very large number of human lives were lost and horrid cruelties were committed on both sides, till the parties realized their folly, stayed their butchery and patched up peace for a little while. Muhammad Shah died after a short but strenuous rule of fifteen years in 1373, leaving a compact and flourishing kingdom, a full treasury, and an immense property in jewels and elephants, with a well-appointed army, to his son Mujahid Shah, who succeeded him. Mujahid in his turn quarrelled with the rulers of Vijayanagar and invaded and besieged the Hindu capital, but was made to retire after very heavy loss in officers and men who were made captives and detained at Vijayanagar. On his return to his kingdom, the Shah was assassinated in 1377 at the instigation of his uncle Daud who seized the throne. But Daud was not destined to enjoy his ill-gotten power. He had hardly been on the throne for two months when he was murdered while saying his prayer by a slave—a devoted attendant of Mujahid Shah.

Daud's brother Muhammad Shah then ascended the vacant throne and enjoyed a peaceful and comparatively long reign of about twenty years. Muhammad Shah was of a peaceful and virtuous disposition, and during his reign both foreign wars and domestic insurrections were unknown. He died in April, 1397, to the great grief of his subjects and on the day following the eminent minister Saif-ud-Din who had so faithfully served the five Bahmani kings, also died at the extraordinary age of 107 years. The year 1397 witnessed

**Muham-  
mad Shah,  
Mujahid,  
and Daud,  
1358-78.**

**Muham-  
mad II,  
Ghiyas-ud-  
Din, and  
Feroz-  
shah,  
1378-1422.**

two more kings on the throne of Kulbarga, namely, Ghiyas-ud-Din and Shams-ud-Din both of whom were, however, deposed in turn. Feroz Shah then ascended the throne in the month of November and restored peace and quiet in the capital. Having firmly established his power Feroz renewed the wars with Vijayanagar and Telingana and seems to have achieved some success in these operations. At last, peace was concluded between Vijayanagar and the Bahmani kingdom, the Hindu Raja having consented to marry his daughter to Feroz Shah and to give away Bunkapur and the western districts of his empire as part of the dowry. The war was renewed in 1419-20 when Feroz endeavoured to possess himself of the fort of Pangal but this time the Muhammadan forces were worsted in battle and Feroz retired greatly humiliated. His health and intellect were giving way and he died in 1422, a broken old man.<sup>1</sup> His death was, probably, precipitated by his intemperate living and strenuous exertions. He kept an enormous number of women in his harem and boasted that it contained a representative of every nation on earth, including Europeans and that he could speak to each lady in her own tongue. Feroz was also fond of buildings, and constructed a fortified palace at Ferozabad on the Bhima and is also said to have adorned Kulbarga with many noble edifices. It appears that a brisk trade was kept up at this time, between India and the West, as we learn from the historians of Feroz Shah that almost every year his ships sailed from Goa and Debal to Arabia and brought back for the king, the choicest productions of Europe. He is considered as the most notable among the Bahmani kings and is often compared with Akbar for his

<sup>1</sup> V. Smith, *Oxford History of India*, p. 277, states that Feroz was murdered by his brother Ahmad who ascended the throne after him in 1422. But we have no convincing proof for such an assertion.

tolerance in matters of religion. He used to enjoy the reading of the Old and New Testament and, like Akbar, he also married Hindu ladies.

Feroz Shah was succeeded by his brother Ahmad Shah who also assumed the title of *wali* or saint.

**Ahmad  
Shah,  
1422-35.**

The most important political event of his reign is his war with the rulers of Warrangal which had commenced in the last reign and was continued by Ahmad. The kingdom of Warrangal or Telingana, supported by the Raja of Orissa, was a standing menace to the Muslim power both in the north and in the south. Although politically of little importance, the Hindu kingdom of Orissa acted as a barrier, more or less effective, to the southerly expansion of Muslim power in Bengal whereas the Hindu rulers of Telingana checked the Bahmani kings from extending their dominions in the east towards the sea. Muhammad was now determined to destroy Warrangal. He attacked the city, captured its prince, put him to death and annexed his kingdom.

Ahmad Shah changed his capital from Kulbarga to

**Transfer  
of Capital  
from  
Ku'barga  
to Bidar.**

Bidar, the reason assigned for this change being the healthier climate of the new city. He died in 1435, and was succeeded by his eldest son Ala-ud-Din (1435-57). The new Sultan renewed the war with Vijayanagar, but internal troubles prevented his prolonging the struggle and a peace was made with the enemy though not without some advantage to the Sultan.<sup>1</sup> These troubles distracted the civil government of the country to a considerable degree and were due to a long-standing

<sup>1</sup> It is stated by Firishta that the Hindu rulers of Vijayanagar employed during this war Muhammadan mercenary soldiers and that Deva Raya II was so indulgent to the religious feelings of his Muslim soldiers that he erected, for their use, a mosque at his capital.



rivalry which had been considerably augmented during this reign between the foreign troops and the Deccanese Muhammadan soldiers of the Sultan. These Deccanese consisted of the natives of the south who allied themselves with the Abyssinian settlers and were mostly Sunnis, and the others who had come from the north (Turks, Persians and Mughals) and were usually Shias were regarded by the former as 'foreigners'.

Ala-ud-Din was followed by his eldest son Humayun (1457-61) who is 'remembered by the epithet of *Zalim* or the tyrant'. He was a terror to all classes of men and it is stated that 'the nobles and generals when they went to salute the Sultan used to bid farewell to their wives and children and make their will'. In 1461, when he died, his subjects gave thanksgiving to God, since in His mercy He had delivered them of this tyrant.

The next important ruler of this dynasty was Muhammad Shah III who reigned from 1463 to 1482 and, during his period of rule, considerably retrieved the falling fortune of the Bahmani dynasty with the assistance of his capable minister Khwaja Gawan. The Hindu chiefs of Warrangal had again gathered strength, and had not only recovered their independence but had advanced in 1461 to within ten miles of the capital Bidar, during the reign of the minor Nizam Shah. The Rajas of Vijayanagar also had seized some portion of the Bahmani dominions during the reign of the last king. These were now recovered by Khwaja Gawan who also reduced the strong fortress of Belgaon and recaptured Goa. But the most remarkable military achievement of Muhammad Shah was his successful raid on the Hindu temple of Kanchi or Conjeeveram which city, perhaps, had never before been visited by any Muhammadan invader. It is

**Humayun,  
1457-61.**

**Muham-  
mad Shah  
III,  
1463-82.**

said that the walls and roof of the temple were covered with gold plates and ornamented with precious stones. The Sultan possessed himself of an immense amount of jewels and gold on the capture of the temple.

No account of the reign of Muhammad Shah, however brief, would be complete without a reference to the unjust and unmerited execution of his highly talented old minister Khwaja Gawan. Besides his military achievements, Khwaja Gawan displayed considerable ability in the reforms he carried out in the civil government in the country. These reforms embraced a wide field, covering almost every department of the State—finance, justice, army, public education and the assessment of the land revenue. By sheer force of ability Gawan had steadily risen to the post of chief minister and was in the almost exclusive confidence of the Sultan. This naturally excited the jealousy of the Deccani nobles—since Gawan was a Persian and belonged to the party known as the ‘foreigners’. A conspiracy was formed against him and a treasonable letter falsely attributed to the minister was placed before the king. ‘The besotted Sultan,’ says Vincent Smith, ‘without taking the slightest trouble to ascertain the facts, ordered the instant execution of his aged and faithful servant.’ This lamentable event occurred on April 5, 1481, in the seventy-eighth year of Gawan’s age; and ‘with him,’ remarks Meadows Taylor, ‘departed all the cohesion and the power of the great Bahmani kingdom.’ Muhammad Shah himself did not long survive this unjust murder of his minister as he died of fever brought on by his habit of excessive drinking, in March, 1482. He was, practically, the last of the Bahmani rulers, who retained any real power in his hands, for his son and successor Mahmud, a boy of twelve years of age at the time of his accession, grew up a ‘worthless

**Execution  
of Khwaja  
Gawan,  
1481.**

debauchee'. The provincial governors, one after another, declared their independence and set up their kingdoms at Golkonda, Bijapur, Berar and Ahmadnagar and the old Sultanate itself was reduced to a small kingdom subsequently known as the Barid Shahi of Bidar. This completes the narrative of the political history of the Bahmani kingdom and an account of the new Sultanates of the south will be given in a later chapter.

Meadows Taylor,<sup>1</sup> at the end of his political narrative of the Bahmani kingdom gives a review of the character of the dynasty and sums up the results of the Muslim rule in the Deccan during 170 years between 1347-1518. Mr. Vincent Smith does not entirely agree with him. He rather accuses Taylor of having judged the Sultans with 'excessive partiality.'<sup>2</sup> But one is constrained to remark that Smith's own estimate of the character of the Bahmani rulers is far too severe. With very few honourable exceptions all the Sultans that occupied the throne are considered by Mr. Smith as 'bloodthirsty fanatics' and 'drunken debauchees'. 'Little is recorded about any member of the family', he observes, 'which is calculated to justify a favourable opinion' of his character'. But this does not seem to be the whole truth. Although the record of their early wars against the Hindus of Vijayanagar is a 'mass of sickening horrors', yet one finds that the Sultans were not very inconsiderate to their own Hindu subjects and when we consider the age in which they flourished, it appears that they governed with moderation. We do not expect them in the fifteenth century to be able to rise to the conception that the ruler of the kingdom should treat all his subjects alike, whether Musalman or Hindu, and

**A résumé  
of the  
Bahmani  
dynasty.**

<sup>1</sup> *Manual of the History of India*, pp. 183-86.

<sup>2</sup> *Oxford History of India*, p. 284.

afford every man equal facilities in the different departments of life.

We have had occasion to refer in these pages to the names of two very eminent ministers, Saif-  
**Adminis-** ud-Din and Mahmud Gawan, who so ably  
**tration.** served the Bahmani Sultans at different periods in their history. Gawan's name is associated with a number of reforms which he had carried out in almost every department of civil government. The department of land revenue is said to have been re-organized by Gawan and he is said to have substituted cash payment in place of payment in kind of the share due to the State from the land produce. 'Up to the regency of Mahmud Gawan,' observes Meadows Taylor, 'the revenue had been probably raised in kind, on a proportion of the crops, but his system evolved a commutation for money payment upon the value of the land, much on the principle of that afterwards perfected by the Emperor Akbar, and the great Ahmadnagar minister, Malik Amber.' The Sultans did also much to encourage cultivation; and following the example of the Hindu rulers, carried out irrigation works on a large scale especially in the Telugu country. We learn from a Russian merchant of the name of Athanasius Nikitin who travelled in the Bahmani dominions for a number of years between 1440-74 that the country was well cultivated and there were villages at every *kos*, the roads were well guarded, and travelling secure.

The new capital Bidar is described as a noble city as was the old capital at Kulbarga. The royal palaces were stately and spacious buildings containing lofty halls and apartments furnished with windows and arches of beautiful design and execution. Meadows Taylor speaks very highly of the design and grandeur of the fortresses built by the Bahmani kings and characterizes them as  
**Buildings**  
**and**  
**Architec-**  
**ture.**

their 'greatest and most indestructible monuments' which perhaps 'far exceed any of the same period in Europe.' The two that are specially mentioned by him as choice specimens of mountain fortresses are those of Gawilgarh and Narnalla, both in Berar.

Although we do not hear of any very celebrated literary production of the period, yet it appears that in respect of education, the Bahmani kings were liberal for their time. Provision was made in almost every large village for the education of children, while a small mosque was built and well endowed as a part of the existing village system. The *Mullah* acted both as school master and priest. In big cities provision was made for higher teaching in Persian and Arabic and these colleges were also richly endowed. The college of Mahmud Gawan, in the city of Bidar, was, perhaps, the greatest of its kind. It was a spacious two-storeyed building which provided accommodation for a large number of residential students.

Before the establishment of the Bahmani kingdom, there was, probably, no Muhammadan population in the south. The origin of that section of inhabitants as noted by Meadows Taylor<sup>1</sup> is mainly a consequence of the Bahmani rule, under which large numbers of Persian, Turk, Arab, and Mughal soldiers and officials settled in the country and inter-married with the native women or took them forcibly as slaves and concubines. It is not improbable, as pointed out by Mr. Smith, that many Hindu families also were forcibly converted, and the continuance of Muslim dynasties in large areas for centuries has kept or even increased the proportion of the Musalman minority.

**Progress  
of educa-  
tion and  
learning.**

**The Muham-  
madan  
population  
of Deccan.**

<sup>1</sup> *A Manual of Indian History*, p. 185.

## SULTANS OF THE BAHMANI DYNASTY, 1347-1518

| Serial No. | Name                      | Date, A.D. | Remarks   |
|------------|---------------------------|------------|---|
| 1          | Ala-ud-din<br>Hasan Shah. | 1347-58    | Original name Hasan, commonly known as Hasan Gangu Bahmani. Started career as governor of Deccan in 1343. Died a natural death.                                   |
| 2          | Muhammad I.               | 1358-73    | Son of No. 1, almost constantly engaged in war with Hindu kings of Vijayanagar. Died rather early owing to intemperate living.                                    |
| 3          | Mujahud Shah              | 1373-77    | Son of No. 2. Lived an intemperate life. Murdered by his cousin Daud.   |
| 4          | Daud Shah ...<br>- - - -  | 1377-78    | Grandson of No. 1. Reigned for only forty days. Was assassinated by a slave—a partisan of No. 3.  |
| 5          | Muhammad II.              | 1378-97    | Brother of No. 4. A reign of comparative peace. Died a natural death.   |
| 6          | Ghiyas-ud-Din.            | 1397       | A boy of seventeen at the time of his accession to the throne. Son of No. 5. Blinded and deposed by his brother Shams-ud-Din. Reigned for about thirty-five days. |
| 7          | Shams-ud-Din.             | 1397       | Brother of No. 6. Reigned for about five months. Blinded and deposed.   |
| 8          | Feroz Shah ...            | 1397-1422  | Grandson of No. 1. Possessed an immense harem. Died a natural death.  |

## SULTANS OF THE BAHMANI DYNASTY, 1347-1518—(contd.)

| Serial No. | Name               | Date, A.D. | Remarks   |
|------------|--------------------|------------|---|
| 9          | Ahmad Shah...      | 1422-35    | Brother of No. 8. Capital of the Empire was changed from Kulbarga to Bidar. Died a natural death. |
| 10         | Ala-ud-Din II      | 1435-57    | Son of No. 9. Died a natural death.   |
| 11         | Humayun. ...       | 1457-61    | Son of No. 10. Renewed war with Vijayanagar. Probably assassinated.                               |
| 12         | Nizam Shah ...     | 1461-63    | Son of No. 11, minor. Died a natural death.   |
| 13         | Muhammad Shah III. | 1463-82    | Brother of No. 12. Died of intemperance.  |
| 14         | Mahmud Shah.       | 1482-1518  | Son of No. 13. Dismemberment of the empire. Died a natural death. The dynasty ceased with him.    |

## CHAPTER IX

### Southern India—(*continued*).

#### Vijayanagar Empire, 1336-1565

Introductory—Traditional date of origin—Account of the Rayas—Battle of Talikota—Dissolution of the empire and later history—Note on Vijayanagar—Its administration, art, architecture, etc.

To the south of the Muslim Bahmani empire lay the great Hindu empire of Vijayanagar which not only checked its southerly expansion, but created 'a solid wall of opposition' and defended the integrity of Hindu India in the south for a long period of about two hundred and fifty years. Mr. Sewell, the great historian of Vijayanagar, is of opinion that the establishment of this kingdom was a measure of self-defence on the part of the Hindus of the south to preserve their independence against the ever advancing tide of Muslim invasions. We have already said that the way to the south was opened up by Ala-ud-Din Khilji in 1293, when he penetrated beyond the Vindhya range, conquered and captured Deogiri. A few years after, Khilji's celebrated general, Malik Kafur, with an immense force swept into the Deccan and reduced Warrangal in 1309, and in the following year advanced even as far south as Dwarasamudra. In 1318, Sultan Kutb-ud-Din Mubarik of Delhi marched to Deogiri and 'barbarously flayed alive' the Hindu Raja Harpal Deo. As it has already been related in a

**Introductory.**



previous chapter, things became worse for the Deccan with the accession of Muhammad Tughlak, in the year 1325. This monarch was determined to make the Deccan an integral part of his vast dominions and accordingly changed his capital from Delhi to Deogiri which he renamed as 'Daulatabad'. 'Everything, therefore,' observes Mr. Sewell, 'seemed to be leading up to one inevitable end—the ruin and the devastation of the Hindu province, the annihilation of their old royal houses, the destruction of their religion, their temples, their cities. In order therefore to save all that they held most dear, the Hindus of the south combined and gathered in haste to the new standard of Vijayanagar which alone seemed to offer some hope of protection.'

The origin of this great Hindu empire is very obscure.

The traditional account, however, attributes it to the efforts of the indefatigable brothers Harihara I and Bukka. Harihara and his four brothers were, very probably, the feudatories of the Kanarese dynasty<sup>1</sup> whose capital Dwarasamudra was sacked in 1327 by Muhammad Tughlak. Harihara, it is said, had the foresight and wisdom to cross over to the other side of the deep and rapidly flowing river Tungbhadra and build a new city in a comparatively safe place among the rocks on its southern bank, in or about the year 1336. The building of it took about eight years. In the following ten years these chiefs were so firmly established in their situation that they could claim control over 'the whole country between the eastern and the western oceans'. Harihara I and

<sup>1</sup> According to another account the brothers were fugitives from the Telugu kingdom of Warrangal which was destroyed by Muhammad Tughlak in 1323. To the more curious reader, we will recommend the pages of Mr. Sewell's admirable work, *A Forgotten Empire*.

Bukka whose names are prominently mentioned amongst the earliest rulers of Vijayanagar perhaps never assumed royal rank. Harihara died in 1343, and after his death the work of consolidation was carried on by his younger brother Bukka. Most of Bukka's life was spent in waging war against his three contemporary rulers of the Bahmani kingdom, namely Zaffar Khan (Ala-ud-Din I), Muhammad Shah and Mujahid. The bone of contention was the Raichur Doab—a triangle of fertile country lying between the rivers Krishna and Tungbhadra. It contains the fortresses of Mudkal and Raichur, which witnessed many a hard-fought combat beneath their walls. But it is unnecessary to repeat the events of the war which have been adverted to in our account of the Bahmani kings. There is no doubt, however, that the extent of the new kingdom of Vijayanagar, and also its wealth, increased considerably during the time of Bukka (1343-76) and that under his successors it became a solid compact empire.

Bukka was succeeded by his son Harihara II, who as we learn from Mr. Sewell, gave himself **Harihara II.** 'an imperial title under the style of Maha-rajadhiraj' and was the first really independent sovereign of Vijayanagar. He ruled from 1379 to 1404 and was a contemporary of the quiet and unassuming Bahmani king, Muhammad II (1378-98). Harihara II had, therefore, not much anxiety from this quarter since the policy of the Bahmani rulers or more exactly of their minister Saif-ud-Din, who practically controlled the State affairs—was that of peace with his neighbours. Freed from this danger from the north, Harihara II turned his attention to the south where he found a vast field for his ambition. Slowly and gradually he extended his dominion in this direction till it embraced the whole of Mysore, Dharwar, Conjeevaram, Chingleput and Trichinopoly.

Towards the close of his reign, however, Harihara II was called upon again to defend his dominions against the expanding ambition of the Bahmani Sultan Feroz Shah who had ascended the throne of Kulbarga in 1397. The hereditary enmity was re-opened and Harihara and his two successors, Bukka II (1404-06) and Deva Raya (1406-12) were engaged in constant fighting against Feroz who took the field against the Hindus almost every year. The next sovereign of this line of any importance was Deva Raya II who reigned for twenty-seven years from 1421 to 1448. He was a contemporary of the Bahmani Sultans Ahmad Shah (1422-35) and Ala-ud-Din (1435-57), against both of whom he was engaged in constant fighting. The Hindus suffered very heavily during these campaigns and Vijayanagar was made to pay tribute to the Bahmani rulers. We are fortunate in possessing the account of the reign of Deva Raya II and a description of the city of Vijayanagar from the pen of two capable foreign travellers namely Nicolo Conti, an Italian and Abdur Razzak, an Arabian ambassador both of whom visited the country during his reign.

The period of forty years following the death of Deva Raya is a very obscure period in the political history of Vijayanagar. It was full of confusion and as Vincent Smith observes 'the Kings were of little personal merit, palace intrigues were rife and the government was feeble.' It was the right moment therefore, one might say, for its hereditary enemies to the north to swallow up Vijayanagar. But fortunately for the Hindus, Kulbarga itself was in too troubled a condition to venture on further military adventures. Humayun, 'the cruel', had made himself obnoxious to his subjects who felt great relief at his

**Bukka II  
and Deva  
Raya—  
War with  
the Bah-  
mani  
rulers.**

**The  
Bahmani  
rulers  
unable to  
take ad-  
vantage of  
the weak-  
ness of  
the Rayas.**

death in 1461. The Bahmani forces were also otherwise engaged in attempting to reduce the country of the Telugus where they had met with no considerable success. In 1461-63, two kings in succession had ascended the throne in their minority and there were, in consequence, internal disputes and civil wars at Kulbarga. Muhammad Shah (1463-82) made some efforts to improve the situation but the trouble, it seems, had gone too far to permit of any real cure and it ended only with the extinction of the Bahmani monarchy and the establishment of five rival Muhammadan kingdoms in the place of one.

To resume our narrative of the Vijayanagar kingdom.

**Narsinga Saluva founds the second dynasty of Vijayanagar rulers —1486?**

The story of these forty years, as already remarked, is very obscure and when the curtain rises again in 1486, we see a new dynasty in power at Vijayanagar. It was founded by Narsinga Saluva, a powerful feudatory of the Raya and ruler of Chandragiri, who deposed the last imbecile representative of the line of Harihara and Bukka and himself ascended the throne. He was succeeded by his son about 1492, who was deposed and killed by his general, Narasa Nayaka in 1505.

The greatest monarch of the second or as is often asserted of the third dynasty, was Krishna Raya (1509-29). The time had now come for Vijayanagar to recoup itself for the many losses it had suffered. Krishna Raya's greatest achievement was the recovery from his Muhammadan neighbours, of the much disputed fortresses of Raichur and Mudkal. These were won in a bloody battle fought on May 19, 1520, between Krishna Raya and Adil Shah of Bijapur who now took the leading position on the Muslim side, the last Bahmani rulers themselves being pushed into the background and

restricted to a small principality close to Bidar, their capital.

**Krishna  
Raya, and  
the Portu-  
guese.** Krishna Deva Raya is said to have held sway over all Southern India and several quasi-independent chiefs were his vassals. He had also cordial relations with the Portuguese governors, Almeida, and Albuquerque, and to the latter he sent a message of congratulation on his capture of Goa, in 1510, from Adil Shah of Bijapur. Krishna Raya took into his service a Portuguese engineer of the name of Joao de la Ponte with whose help the construction of extensive irrigation works in his empire was carried out.

The Portuguese speak highly of Krishna Raya, and Domingos Paes especially gives a long and detailed account of the Raya in which he speaks of him as 'a great ruler and a man of much justice.'

**Achyuta  
Raya,  
1529-42.** Krishna Raya died in 1529 and was succeeded by his brother Achyuta Raya who is spoken of as 'a craven' by Mr. Sewell. He soon lost (1531) the frontier fortresses of Mudkal and Raichur which his brother had recovered, after a hard fight, from the ruler of Bijapur. The intrigues of his ministers had weakened the government; so much so that Adil Shah of Bijapur was emboldened to deliver an attack on the capital of Vijayanagar, and retired only on receiving a heavy payment by way of tribute. Achyuta died in 1542 after a reign of twelve years but during this short and weak rule the forces of disintegration made their appearance and the Hindu empire began to fall to pieces. When Sadasiva succeeded his uncle in 1542, the power seems to have passed wholly into the hands of the minister Rama Raya and his brothers, Tirumala and Venkatadri. Quarrels among the Musalman States induced Rama Raya to interfere in their affairs and profit by them. In 1548, he joined Ahmadnagar and Golkonda in making a combined attack

on Bijapur. Fifteen years later he combined with Bijapur against Ahmadnagar and took the chief part in devastating the territory of Nizam Shah. 'The infidels of Vijayanagar,' writes Firishta 'who for many years had been wishing for such an event, left no cruelty unpractised. They insulted the honour of the Musalman women, destroyed the mosques, and did not even respect the sacred Koran.' These outrages perpetrated by the Hindu troops caused so much alarm and resentment amongst the Musalmans that a movement was immediately set on foot for dropping their private quarrels and combining against the 'arrogant infidels.'

The movement matured in course of time and the combination of the four Sultanates—Bijapur, Golkonda, Ahmadnagar and Bidar, was effected under the leadership of the ruler of Bijapur. Early in January, 1565, the confederate armies had assembled at Talikota, a small town in the territory of Bijapur to the north of the River Krishna. The Muhammadan army crossed the river to give battle to the vast Hindu host which had assembled in a plain several miles to the south of that river.<sup>1</sup> It was a memorable battle—to decide, as each party knew, the final supremacy of Hindu or Muslim in Southern India—and was well contested on both sides. Rama Raya had assembled all the available forces of his dominions and although Firishta seems to exaggerate the numbers of Hindu troops, it is probable that the army was one of the largest which ever took the field in India. The number of the Muslim troops was far below that of the Hindus. At the first onset of the Hindu cavalry, the Muhammadan wings were thrown into confusion but Hussain

<sup>1</sup> The battle was not actually fought on the plains of Talikota, but, as indicated above, at a distance of about thirty miles from that village on the other side of the river Krishna.

**Battle of Talikota and destruction of Vijayanagar, 1565.**

Nizam Shah who commanded the artillery park in the centre soon saved the situation. The guns were loaded with copper coins and opened so destructive a fire that many hundreds of Hindus were soon stretched dead before them. This caused a general panic in the Hindu army and Kishour Khan, a clever and plucky Bijapuri general, taking advantage of the confusion, fell on the flank of the retiring column and completed the rout. Rama Raya was captured and beheaded by the order of Hussain Nizam Shah. It is estimated that the Hindus lost about 100,000 in killed and wounded and the remainder melted away in panic. The city of Vijayanagar was literally deserted. In the words of Mr. Sewell, 'it was not a defeat merely, it was a cataclysm. All hope was gone.' The victorious Muslim army halted for rest and refreshment on the field of battle for two days and on the third day they reached the capital and for full five months they plundered, and burnt and destroyed. 'With fire and sword,' writes the historian of Vijayanagar, 'with crowbars and axes, they carried on day after day their work of destruction. Never perhaps in the history of the world has such havoc been wrought, and wrought so suddenly, on so splendid a city, teeming with a wealthy and industrious population in the full plenitude of prosperity one day, and on the next seized, pillaged and reduced to ruins, amid scenes of savage massacre and horrors begging description.'<sup>1</sup>

After the decisive battle of Talikota, the Hindu empire of Vijayanagar came to an end after a long and glorious career of two hundred and twenty-five years. The territories of the empire were variously disposed of on its dissolution. The Sultans of Bijapur and Golkonda annexed the districts on their southern

**Dissolution of the empire and its later history.**

<sup>1</sup> Sewell's *A Forgotten Empire*, pp. 206-8. Reprinted, 1924.

borders. The Hindu viceroys of Vijayanagar at Tanjore, Vellore and elsewhere in the south, taking advantage of the misfortune that befell the empire, also set up independent kingdoms. It is superfluous for the purpose of this short book, to follow the later history of its kings. Suffice it to say that of the three brothers who held the sole power at Vijayanagar before the battle, Tirumala alone survived and with his nominal master Sadasiva fled south to take refuge at Penugonda. After some time this ambitious minister retired to Chandragiri, put the puppet king out of the way and began to rule in his own name. This occurred in or about the year 1570. The most notable king of this new dynasty founded by Tirumala was his son Venkata I who came to the throne about 1585. He is chiefly remembered as a patron of the Vaishnava reformers and is also said to have liberally patronized the Telugu poets. His successors, however, were soon reduced to the position of mere local Rajas. It was from one of these Rajas of Chandragiri that the English received the grant of Madras in 1639.

#### NOTE ON VIJAYANAGAR

It will not be without interest to give, at the close of its historical narrative, some account of the great city of Vijayanagar, the life of the people and the mode of governance of the Hindu emperors of the south. The information on these points is abundant since we possess long and detailed accounts from the pen of several celebrated travellers who visited Vijayanagar from time to time during the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Among others, the most well-known who have left a contemporary account of Vijayanagar may be mentioned the names of the Italian Nicolo Conti (1420-21),

**Introductory remarks.**



Abdur Razzak of Herat (1443-44), the celebrated Portuguese Domingos Paes (1522) and Fernas Nuniz (1535-37). All these accounts attest to the very large size of the city, the splendour of its buildings, the busy life at the capital, the wealth of its bazaars and the volume of trade carried on in its markets.

Nicolo Conti was very much impressed by the size of the city and the strength of its fortifications and estimated the circumference of the city of Vijayanagar to be sixty miles. So also was Abdur Razzak who visited the city twenty-four years after Nicolo, in 1443.

**Description of the city of Vijayanagar.**

‘The city of Bidjanagar,’ he observes, ‘is such that the pupil of the eye has never seen a place like it, and the ear of intelligence has never been informed that there existed anything equal to it in the world. It is built in such a manner that seven citadels and the same number of walls enclose each other. Around the first citadel are stones of the height of a man, one half of each is sunk in the ground, while the other half rises above it. These are fixed one beside the other in such a manner that no horse or foot soldier could easily approach the citadel.

‘The space which separates the first fortress from the second, and up to the third fortress, is filled with cultivated fields and with houses and gardens. In the space from the third to the seventh one meets a numberless crowd of people, many shops and a bazaar. By the King’s palace are four bazaars, placed opposite each other. On the north is the portico of the palace of the *Rai*. Above each bazaar is a lofty arcade with a magnificent gallery, but the audience-hall of the King’s palace is elevated above all the rest. The bazaars are extremely long and broad.’

‘Roses are sold everywhere. These people could not live without roses, and they look upon them as quite as necessary as food. . . . Each class of men belonging

to each profession has shops contiguous, the one to the other; the jewellers sell publicly in the bazaars pearls, rubies, emeralds and diamonds. In this agreeable locality, as well as in the King's palace, one sees numerous running streams and canals formed of chiselled stone, polished and smooth. . . . Behind the King's palace are the house and hall allotted to the Danaik. To the left of the said palace is the Mint. This empire contains so great a population that it would be impossible to give an idea of it without entering into extensive details. In the King's palace are several cells, like basins, filled with bullion forming one mass. All the inhabitants of the country, whether high or low, even down to the artificers of the bazaar, wear jewels and gilt ornaments in their ears and around their necks, arms, wrists and fingers.'<sup>1</sup>

Like the two travellers quoted above, Paes was also struck with the size and magnificence of the city. He considers Vijayanagar as 'the best provided city in the world, where the number of houses exceed 100,000' and the number of inhabitants is beyond computation. The city had a very busy life. 'The streets and markets,' observes this Portuguese writer, 'are full of laden oxen without count, so that you come upon so many of them that you have to wait for them to pass or else have to go by another way.'

The system of Government that prevailed in the kingdom of Vijayanagar was of the usual type. The provinces or districts<sup>2</sup> into which the empire was divided were placed, each under a principal officer who held his appointment on the terms very much similar to those that

**System of Government.**

<sup>1</sup> Sewell's *A Forgotten Empire*, pp. 90-92.

<sup>2</sup> The number of such districts has been roughly estimated at about two hundred. V. Smith, *Oxford History of India*, 1919, p. 811.

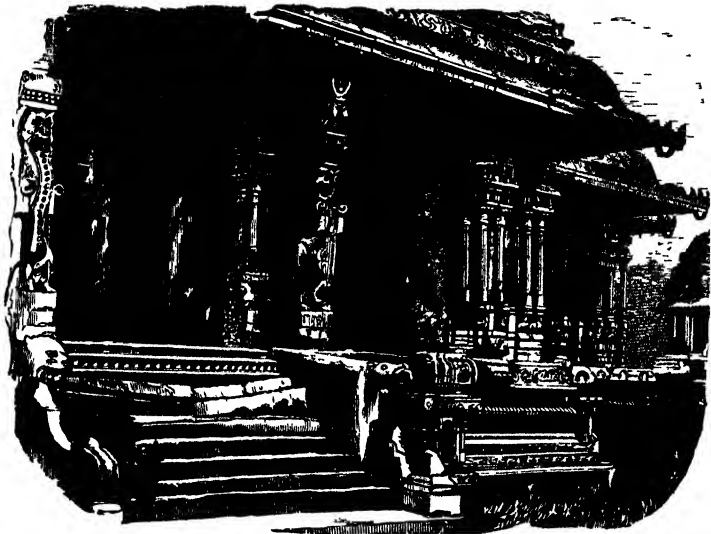
governed the appointment of a Mughal *mansabdar* in later years. These districts were assigned to them and they ruled them virtually as sovereigns while in return they were bound to furnish a certain amount of revenue and a fixed contingent of troops to the State. Although the Raya maintained a large force attached to his person, yet the armies of the empire consisted chiefly of the local troops furnished by these feudatories.

There was no regular chain of courts of justice such as we are familiar with to-day. The time-honoured institution of the village *panchayat* was maintained to act as a local tribunal, and in the big towns, the local governor combined in himself the functions of a collector of revenues, a magistrate and judge. Judged from the modern standpoint, the code of punishment for criminal offences that obtained in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, under the rulers of Vijayanagar, seems to have been very severe. The punishment of amputating a limb for the crime of ordinary theft appears to have persisted in India since the fourth century B.C. or even from an earlier date. Murder, treason and other heinous offences were punishable with death, but the mode of execution in some cases was barbarous and cruel. Those who became traitors to the King were 'sentenced to be impaled alive on a wooden stake thrust through the body.'

Nuniz also mentions in his narrative that the custom of duelling prevailed and was frequently resorted to by the parties in these southern States. This is also corroborated by Firishta but unlike the European chronicler, he denounces it 'as an abominable habit, unknown in any other civilized country of the world.'

The chief source of income of the State in India, from times immemorial has been the land. The Hindu rulers of Vijayanagar, we are given to understand, effected some improvements in the methods of assessment

of land revenue. The old practice of receiving from the ryots in kind the share of the State, was given up and in its stead was fixed a cash demand calculated on the basis of current bazaar prices of grains. Vincent Smith, on the authority of Wilks, who wrote his account at the beginning of the nineteenth century, gives the rate of 'grain' as  $33\frac{2}{3}$  seers for the rupee. This cash assessment when worked out came to be one-sixth of the gross produce which agreed with the traditional Hindu rate of assessment as sanctioned by Manu and other writers.



PORCH OF A TEMPLE AT VIJAYANAGAR

*From Ferguson's 'History of Indian and Eastern Architecture.' John Murray.*

The Rayas of Vijayanagar extended their liberal patronage to both Sanskrit and Telugu literature. The two celebrated Brahman scholars Madhava and Sayana served as ministers respectively to Bukka I and Harihara II. They set themselves the task of preserving for

**Literature  
and art  
under the  
Rayas.**

posterity, the sacred literature which formed the basis of Vedic religion. Madhava Acharya made a compendium of Sanskrit philosophy, the *Sarvadarsana-samgraha* while his equally learned brother Sayana Acharya wrote his commentaries on the text of the *Rig Veda Samhita*, the *Aitareya Brahmana* and *Aranyaka*. Narsinga Saluva the founder of the second dynasty (1486-92) was the patron of Telugu poets and the celebrated Krishna Raya of the third dynasty was himself a poet and author. The famous Telugu poet Alasani Peddana was the Court poet of Krishna Raya. With their liberal support and the patronage of the later Rayas a great revival of the Vaishnava religion was accomplished.

Foreign travellers like Paes, Razzak and Nicolo are full of admiration for the beauty and grandeur of the capital of the Rayas and to this a reference has already been made in these pages. It would be superfluous to give in this short book, a detailed description of a large number of works of art and architecture executed in the reign of successive rulers of Vijayanagar. Suffice it to say that these Rayas were great builders who spent money most liberally on constructing works of public utility such as large tanks, reservoirs, lakes and other works of irrigation and water supply, as well as on building 'gorgeous palaces and temples decorated with all the resources of art, both sculpture and painting.'

## Southern India

**THE RAYAS OF THE VIJAYANAGAR EMPIRE, 1386-1585**  
*Note.*—The dates given below are only approximately correct.

| Serial No. | Name                                       | Date             | Remarks  | Contemporary Bahmani kings  |
|------------|--|------------------|--|---|
| 1          | Harihara and his brothers.                 | A.D.<br>1336     | Date of foundation of Vijayanagar. Died a natural death.   |   |
| 2          | Bukka I                                    | ...<br>1343-79   | Brother of No. 1. Expansion of Vijayanagar. Continuous struggle between Vijayanagar and Bahmani kings. | (i) Ala-ud-Din I } 1347<br>(ii) Muhammad I } to<br>(iii) Mujahid } 1378.<br>(iv) Daud }     |
| 3          | Harihara II                                | ...<br>1379-1404 | Son of No. 2. Harihara II had a comparatively quiet reign. Died a natural death.                       | (i) Muhammad II } 1378<br>(ii) Ghiyas-ud-Din } to<br>(iii) Shams-ud-Din } 1397.             |
| 4          | Bukka II                                   | ...<br>1404-6    | Son of No. 3. His succession was probably disputed by his brother.                                     |   |
| 5          | Deva Raya I                                | ...<br>1406-19   | Constant fighting with Sultan Feroz to whom the Raya was constrained to give his daughter in marriage. | Feroz 1397-1422.  |
| 6          | Vira Vijaya                                | ...<br>1419-21   | Nothing is known about him.  |   |
| 7          | Deva Raya II                               | ...<br>1422-48   | Also known as Immadi or Pratapa. War renewed with Bahmani Sultan Ahmad.                                | Ahmad 1422-35.  |
| 8-10       | Mallikarjuna, Virupaksha, Prabhudeva Raya. | 1448-86          | This period marks the decay of the empire and the close of the first dynasty.                          | (i) Ala-ud-Din II } 1435<br>(ii) Humayun } to<br>(iii) Nizam } 1482.<br>(iv) Muhammad III } |

THE RAYAS OF THE VIJAYANAGAR EMPIRE, 1336-1585 (continued)  
*Note.*—The dates given below are only approximately correct.

| Serial No. | Name                | Date             | Remarks  | Contemporary Bahmani kings                               |
|------------|---------------------|------------------|--|--|
| 11         | Narsinga Saluva ... | A. D.<br>1486-92 | Originally the governor of a province. He set aside the last ruler of the Bukka house and seized the throne. | M a h m u d 1482-1518<br>Decline of the Bahmani kingdom. |
| 12         | Immadi Narsinga.    | 1492-1505        | Son of No. 11. Killed by his general No. 13.   | Yusaf founded the kingdom of Bijapur, 1490               |
| 13         | Narasa Nayka ...    | 1505-6           | Founder of the third dynasty of Vijayanagar.   |  |
| 14         | Vir Narsinga ...    | 1506-9           | Nothing very important is recorded in this reign.  |  |
| 15         | Krishna Deva Raya   | 1509-29          | The glory of Vijayanagar revived. Won the victory of Rarchur.  |  |
| 16         | Achyuta Raya .      | 1529-42          | Brother of No. 15  |  |
| 17         | Sadasiva ...        | 1542-70          | Brother of No. 15. Decay of the empire. Battle of Talikota, 1565   |  |
| 18         | Thrumala ...        | 1570-73          | Founder of the fourth dynasty. Brother of famous minister, Ram Raja of No. 17.                               |  |
| 19         | Ranga ...           | 1573-85          | Son of No. 18. Practical end of dynasty. His successors were reduced to the position of local chiefs.        |  |

## CHAPTER X

### Condition of the People under the Rule of the Sultans

Nature of Sultan's government—Spread of Islam—Contact of Hinduism and Islam—Forces working for a reconciliation of Hinduism and Islam—Religious revival and religious reformers—Development of Hindi and Urdu literature—Evolution of Urdu—Art and architecture.

**Introductory remarks.** In the three previous chapters of this book we have given the outline of the independent kingdoms that were set up in Northern and Southern India during the decay of the Dehli Sultanate. We propose to devote this chapter to a brief review of the general condition of the people during the three hundred years of the rule of these Sultans. There is no doubt that an historian is very much handicapped in his task owing to the paucity of material; since the aim of the contemporary Muhammadan writers was more directed to the record of wars, and of political events and intrigues, than of the transactions of peaceful years; but notwithstanding this, there are occasional and pleasant glimpses of quiet times. One meets many such in the records left by foreign travellers, like Ibn Batuta, Nicolo Conti and Abdur Razzak.

**Nature of Sultan's government.** The form of government was autocratic; the emperor's will was absolute. He was looked upon as the fountain-head of all authority in the State. In theory, no doubt, the emperor was required to be guided in his deliberations, by the Ulemas or the Muslim doctors of divinity but there was no means of enforcing the decisions of these theologians on an unwilling emperor. A strong autocrat,



like Ala-ud-Din, for instance, would never allow legal scruples to hamper his will. There was no fixed law to govern the succession to the throne. Ordinarily, the claims of the eldest son of the late king were recognized, but there was nothing either by way of tradition or convention to prevent a junior member of the family from trying his luck if he was strong and resourceful. Not infrequently the succession was effected by means of an irregular election conducted by the chief officers of the State and the person chosen to be the king was not necessarily a direct descendant of the late king.

As we have remarked before, the character of the administration of the Sultans was essentially military. There was no civil organization worth the name. We do not hear of any large administrative units such as the *Subahs* or governorships of Akbar's times nor do we come across any reference to a well-organized system of assessment of land or that of the collection of revenues which we find elaborately treated in the *Ain* of Abul Fazl. On the other hand, the methods of administration of these early kings were rather rude and oppressive. The whole empire was parcelled out into a large number of military Jagirs, each of which was placed under a feudal baron bearing the title of Malik or Amir. These Maliks or governors wielded extensive powers within their jurisdiction. Besides, they had large standing armies of their own. It is obvious therefore that such a system of government was, by its nature, suicidal to the integrity of the empire. An ambitious and powerful governor, with all the material and military resources of the province at his command would often look upon the throne of Dehli as the ultimate goal of his ambition. And indeed, during the three hundred years of the life of the empire, the dynastic changes at Dehli, were frequently the result of such an unbridled ambition.

## Condition of the People under the Sultans 139

Jalal-ud-Din Khilji, Ghazi Khan Tughlak, and Bahlol Khan Lodhi—all of whom founded new dynasties—had been provincial governors before their accession to the throne of Dehli.

There is, however, one redeeming feature of the rule of these Sultans and that is they did not disturb the ancient local institutions of the people. The village with its autonomous government remained untouched. The officers of the State did not interfere in the normal course of the life of the people nor was it affected, in any way, by the revolutions and civil wars at Dehli. The village republics were left independent in the management of their own affairs, they regulated the distribution of lands, settled local disputes, collected taxes and transmitted them to government treasury.

It is but natural that the permanent establishment of their political power in the country should have contributed a good deal to the spread of the religious faith of the Muhammadans. The number of the followers of Islam multiplied rapidly during the first three hundred years of their rule. It is not correct to say that the conquerors made any wholesale conversions at the point of the sword. There are instances, where an individual, a governor of the province or even an emperor himself, was excessively partial to his Muhammadan subjects and forbade the Hindu population to carry on their religious duties in public. One thing, indeed, that was regularly enforced against the non-Muslims and had a sort of official sanction behind it was the exaction of the *Jizya* from them.<sup>1</sup> The Hindu population was offered the choice of conversion or the payment of the poll-tax and it can be readily understood that forced by economic

<sup>1</sup> The *Jizya* as remarked elsewhere in these pages was a military tax which was levied upon the *Zimmis* in lieu of military service.

**The  
spread of  
Islam**

pressure quite a large number of the Hindus from amongst the poorer classes<sup>1</sup> preferred to embrace Islam and be exempted from the payment of the *Jizya*.

But there were other important factors than this buying of conversions which equally operated in increasing the number of Muslims in the country. These were the immigration or the fresh recruitment from beyond the north-western frontier and the comparative fertility of the Muslims who, as it is believed, multiply more rapidly than Hindus. All these causes combined to explain the large proportion of Musalmans in the population of those parts of India which came under the direct rule of the Dehli Sultanate. Outside its limits, in such provinces as, for example, Rajputana, Bundelkhand and Mysore, where the old Hindu ruling houses continued to exist in full or semi-independence, the religious and social state of the people remained practically the same as before the Muhammadian conquest.

Unlike their foreign predecessors, the Indo-Bactrians, the Sakas, the Huns and others, the Muhammadans were not absorbed into its fold by the elastic and ever-expanding Hinduism. The reason obviously was that a Muhammadian had a more definite and intelligible religion. He believed with all his heart in the infallibility of the Koran and had an unshakable faith in his Prophet and in the oneness of God. As such he, perhaps, considered his religion in no way inferior to that of the Brahmans who, at that time, worshipped many gods with their idols and ceremonies. The early invaders like the Sakas and the Huns had no such definite religion which

**Contact of Hinduism and Islam.**

<sup>1</sup> When this choice was offered by Sultan Feroz Shah Tughlak, he writes in his memoirs, 'great numbers of Hindus presented, and were admitted to the honour of Islam. Thus they came forward day by day from every quarter, and, adopting the faith, were exempted from the *Jizya*, and were favoured with presents and honours.'

could protect them against the more definite religion of the Hindus and consequently when they settled in the country and married Hindu women they were rapidly absorbed into the Hindu caste system.

The two religious systems thus maintained their individuality, but since the adherents of the two faiths lived as neighbours and came into close contact with each other some sort of change was bound to come over both. Besides this mere contact and occasional exchange of ideas between the votaries of two faiths there were also other influences at work which brought about some sort of reconciliation between Islam and Hinduism. The influence of Hindu women in Musalman harems must be counted as one of the chief. 'The traditional devotion and the tenderness of Indian motherhood,' observes Mr. Havell, 'helped greatly to soften the ferocity of the Turki and Mughal nomad.' ✓The Hindu converts who were forced for economic reasons to adopt Islam formed a distinct class by themselves. They had, perhaps, never understood the real meanings of the *gayatri* or the Sanskrit formula of the daily prayers of the Hindus, nor after their conversion to Islam did they care to grasp the significance of the *Kalima* or the creed of the Muslim faith. They now resorted to a mosque as often or as occasionally as they before used to go to a Hindu temple to satisfy their spiritual cravings; and in place of a Brahman minister they now invited a member of the Muslim faith to conduct their religious ceremonies.<sup>1</sup> ✓

There was no real change of hearts. Their conversion was a mere substitution of one lifeless link for another

<sup>1</sup> In certain cases the Brahman minister was also present with the Muslim Mullah and even now in certain Muhammadan families, the fees on such ceremonious occasions are divided between the ministers of the two faiths.

in the chain of their religious ideals. These nominally converted Hindus, in fact, retained most of their old habits and social connections and thus exercised a silent influence in bringing about some understanding between their old and new professions of Faith. Frequent revolutions, civil wars and foreign invasions were other important factors which contributed, in a degree, to the same end. It must be remembered that, during their invasions, the Turkish or the Mughal soldiers by no means always spared the life and property of their co-religionists and the sufferings which fell equally upon all members of society whether Hindus or Muslims, stirred deeply the religious feelings of the people. 'Men and women of all castes,' observes Mr. Havell, 'who had suffered as much as human nature could endure felt drawn together in a common bond of sympathy.' These, amongst others, were the chief social, moral and political forces working silently but steadily during this period for a '*modus vivendi*, if not for complete reconciliation between Islam and Hinduism.' On the propaganda side of the question, the influence of the Muslim Sufi, however, cannot be ignored. He derided the ritualistic side of his religion and his teachings—that salvation was a concern for all, and that before God's throne there was no difference between the high-born and the low, between a Muslim and a Hindu—had a closer kinship with the Hindu revivalists of the age than with the 'stiff-necked mullah' of the Sultan's Court.

We have had occasion to remark, in these pages, that Hinduism during its prolonged struggle with Buddhism had received such accretions that it could never subsequently shake off. It had adopted the doctrine of incarnation and had become idolatrous. The old Vedic belief in the oneness of God gave place, in the popular

**Religious  
revival—  
Bhakti  
cult.**

mind, to the faith in the plurality of Gods. It had lost its spiritual character and was reduced to a mere mass of superstitions and unmeaning ceremonials. It was in this condition of spiritual stagnation that Hinduism came in contact with Islam, in the eleventh century. The impact of Islam certainly stirred it from its deep slumber and a period of Hindu revival began which had a far-reaching effect on Hindu thought. A new school of spiritual thought sprang up and in the course of a few centuries it swept all over the country. This school is known by the name of Bhakti school and the creed of the school was the creed of *bhakti* or devotion or attachment to God. As we shall presently see, the teachers of the Bhakti cult seem to have had been strongly impressed with the monotheistic faith of Islam. *Ram* and *Rahim*, *Kuran* and *Puran*, *Veda* and *Kiteb*,<sup>1</sup> very often go together in the devotional songs and moral maxims uttered by these teachers and reveal how Hinduism and Islam reacted one upon the other during the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. This teaching is the most distinct mark of the doctrines of Ramananda, of Kabir, of Dadu, of Randas, Surdas, Nanak and Chaitanya, who flourished in different parts of Northern, Eastern and Western India.

The earliest teacher whose doctrine was the basis of such schools was Ramanuja who lived in the twelfth century and preached the unity of God under the name of Vishnu in Southern India. He proclaimed that the love of God was the only way to salvation. It is said that the ruler of the Chola kingdom was a follower of Shiva and Ramanuja had therefore to leave his kingdom for Mysore where he received converts from all classes of the people. Before he died Ramanuja had succeeded in

**Ramanuja  
and Rama-  
nanda.**

<sup>1</sup> *Kiteb* or *Kitab* stands for the Book, the Koran or the Bible.

establishing about 700 Vaishnava monasteries. The next famous Vaishnavite teacher about whom we have some information was the great Ramananda—fifth in the apostolic succession from Ramanuja. He flourished in the fourteenth century and did a good deal of itinerant preaching but eventually settled in Benares. He preached in Northern India, the same ennobling doctrine and faith which his worthy teacher Ramanuja had done in the South but he broke away entirely from the caste rules hitherto imposed by Brahman schools. He admitted into his order people of all castes and is said to have had twelve *chelas* or chief disciples who included a Brahman, a Rajput, a barber, a chamar (*currier*) and a Muhammadan weaver, namely Kabir. He preached and wrote in Hindi, the language of the people of Northern India. Ramananda died about 1411, and had, probably, lived through all the stormy period of the Tughlak Sultans.

Perhaps the most famous disciple of Ramananda was

**Kabir.** Kabir, a Muhammadan weaver by caste. For most of his time he preached in Bihar and Bengal. Like his master, Kabir also preached in the vernacular but he went further than his master in his denunciation of idolatry and of the Brahman rites and ceremonies. Kabir laid great emphasis on the equality of man and declared that before God's high throne all were equal, high-born and low-born, Muslims and Brahmans. He conceived the lofty ideal of effecting a reconciliation between Islam and Hinduism. 'The city of the Hindu God,' he said, 'is in the east (Benares), and the city of the Musalman God is in the west (Mecca), but search your hearts, and there you will find the God both of Hindus and Muhammadans.' 'If the creator dwells in tabernacles, whose dwelling is the universe?' His followers are known as the Kabirpanthis and are still numerous in Central India, Gujarat, and the Deccan.

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We have had occasion to remark in connection with the history of Bengal that the two local rulers **Chaitanya.** Hussain Shah and his son Nusrat Shah had by their liberal policy, created in that province an atmosphere of religious toleration towards the close of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth century. It was in this atmosphere that Chaitanya Swami was born in Nudiah (Nuddea) in A.D. 1486 and preached in Bengal and Orissa the religion of one God under the name of Vishnu. He, too, preached that salvation was a concern for all and invited Muhammadans to join his sect. Like his predecessors Chaitanya also laid stress upon perfect devotion to God as the only way to salvation.

The *bhakti* movement was not confined to any one quarter of India but it spread, like a great **Nanak.**<sup>1</sup> ocean wave, to the three corners of this triangular peninsula. Almost contemporaneous with the great reformer of Bengal, Guru Nanak was born in 1469, at Talwandi in the Panjab. He preached the same monotheism and conceived the same great idea of bringing about a compromise between Islam and Hinduism by uniting the followers of the two faiths in the worship of one God.

Later than Nanak and Chaitanya, Dadu was born in **Dadu.** Ahmadabad (Gujarat) in 1544. Like Kabir and others, Dadu raised his strong voice against idol worship and the popular practice of worshipping at the shrines of the departed saints. Dadu was a great poet and like the preceding teachers of the *bhakti* cult composed his verses in the vernacular of the country where he lived. He has left a quantity of sacred poetry which is held in great veneration throughout Western India even to-day. Amongst

<sup>1</sup> A fuller account of Nanak's life and teachings will be found in a later chapter in connection with the history of the Sikhs.



Dadu's chief disciples may be mentioned the names of Garib Das and Madho Das who spread their master's creed in Ajinere and other big cities of Rajputana.

This same influence was at work, perhaps with greater effect on the popular mind in Maharashtra, where preachers, both Brahmans and non-Brahmans, were calling on people to identify *Ram* with *Rahim* and ensure their freedom from the bonds of formal ritualism and caste distinctions and unite in the common love of man and faith in one God. Amongst the earliest teachers of the *bhakti* cult in Maharashtra should be mentioned the name of Swami Namdeva who flourished in the fifteenth century. During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, this work was carried on by Shridhar, Tukka Ram, Ram Das and others, a detailed account of whose life and teachings will be given in a later chapter in connection with the rise of the Maratha power.

Among other effects of the collapse of Hindu political power must be noticed the intellectual stagnation which characterized Brahmanism after the beginning of the twelfth century. The royal patronage having been stopped, scientific research came to a standstill. 'Brahman astronoumers, mathematicians, chemists and other investigators,' remarks Mr. Havell, 'stopped at the results already reached.' But in Southern India things were different. There the Sanskrit learning was not neglected as it was in the north. It had rather received a fresh impetus from the presence of the learned scholars of the north who had fled to the Deccan during the course of Muhammadian invasions of Northern India. In the extreme south, in the Hindu kingdom of Vijayanagar, beyond the depressing influences of the Muhammadian empire, Hinduism still showed some signs of vigorous life; and a very advanced school of Sanskrit learning

**Namdev,  
Tukka  
Ram and  
Ram Das.**

**Hindu  
philosophy—  
Madhava  
and  
Sayana-  
charya.**

was founded by the famous brothers Madhava and Sayana who composed the great commentaries of the Vedas and other ancient works which are still considered authoritative all over India. To Southern India also belongs the credit of producing the first modern reformer in Ramanuja who lived there in the twelfth century, and from whom were spiritually descended Ramananda in the fourteenth, and Vidyapati and Chaitanya in the fifteenth centuries—the great apostles of Vaishnavism about whom we have already spoken at some length.

The leaders of the *bhakti* movement made valuable contributions to the vernacular literature and their works were widely studied by their followers. Before their time, great literary works were composed in Sanskrit but these teachers, as stated before, taught and wrote in Hindi. They composed their devotional songs and moral maxims in the spoken language of the people and when these were reduced to writing, the body of the vernacular literature of the country received a considerable accession. Even in this direction it was Southern India that took the lead. The great Jain and Buddhist writers in the eleventh and twelfth centuries produced a mass of beautiful literature in the Tamil language and the *Chintamani*, a romantic epic of 15,000 lines, may be mentioned as a fair specimen of this class of compositions. About the beginning of the twelfth century when Buddhism was supplanted by the worship of Shiva and Vishnu, the *Ramayana* was translated into Tamil and a great many hymns were also composed in the honour of Shiva and Vishnu.

In Maharashtra also a body of vernacular literature was developed during the period, and the earliest Maratha poets who wrote in the spoken Maratha tongue date from the thirteenth century, and their compositions are mostly of a religious character.

Nor was Northern India slow to follow the lead of the Deccan and Southern India. The culture of the Hindi language followed close upon the culture of the Tamil.

**Hindi.** The poet Chand Baudai of the court of Prithvi Raj, made a beginning in this direction. His great epic *Prithvi Raj Raso* is, so far as present researches go, admittedly the most ancient work of Hindi literature. *Gita Govinda* of Jayadeva, probably, written in the twelfth century A.D. is another excellent specimen of lyrical poetry. In subsequent centuries, as said before, the religious movement led by Ramananda and Kabir led to the composition of a vast mass of sacred Hindi literature, while Rajputana was rich in heroic ballads and poetry connected with the deeds of Rajput chiefs.

Like Maharashtra, in Bihar and Bengal it is the religious songs that mark the beginning of the growth of vernacular literature. Vidyapati, who lived at the court of Shiva Singh of Tirhut, and the well-known Brahman poet Chandi Das of Bengal composed in the fourteenth century those touching songs about Krishna and his spouse Radha which mark the commencement of vernacular literature in Bengal. More serious compositions followed, when Krittivasa (born 1346) translated the *Ramayana* into Bengali, and a Bengali version of the great Mahabharat was also prepared by the order of Nusrat Shah (1518-32).

It cannot be said with any amount of certainty when the rise of the Urdu language took place. **Evolution of Urdu.** But it seems very probable, as has been suggested by various writers on the subject that this mixed language was originally formed as a convenient compromise between the language of the rulers and the ruled. It was then, as its name signifies,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Urdu is derived from the Turki word *Urdu*, 'camp', the original form of the English word 'horde'.

at first a camp jargon formed by a mixture of Persian, Arabic and Turki with Hindi, the local vernacular of Delhi. Gradually, however, through the writings of the court poets and historians it developed a literary form. Quite a large number of Hindi words occur in the writings of Amir Khusru who died in 1325 and Mauk Muhamunad of Jais who flourished in the time of Humayun and even wrote in Hindi.

Many of the Muhammadan rulers of this period were great patrons of art and learning. The Muhammadan writers developed a special taste for history and almost every great reign had its own historian. Among the more prominent of early Muhammadan writers on India may be mentioned Alberuni, the astronomer and mathematician, Amir Khusru, the poet, Ibn Batuta, the traveller, and Firishta, the historian.

If Islam in earlier centuries of its rule did not make any considerable original contributions to Indian philosophy or psychological study, it at least provided great opportunities to the Indian builders and craftsmen to show their skill and develop it further by providing them with 'new problems of construction and design.' The architectural works of the period accordingly show a fine blend of the Saracenic and Hindu style. Some of the most beautiful architectural monuments of India were erected during the period. About the year 1235, the famous Kutb Minar near Delhi was built by Iltutmish<sup>1</sup> in memory of the Musalman saint Kutb-ud-Din. Muhammad Tughlak did not find much leisure to attend to the work of building but his successor Feroz Shah was a magnificent builder who spent vast sums of money on the construction of towns, palaces, mosques, tanks and gardens. Besides

**Buildings  
and archi-  
tecture.**

<sup>1</sup> There is a great difference of opinion among historians as to whether the building of the *minar* was commenced in the reign of Aibak or Iltutmish.

the Sultans of Dehli the rulers of provinces also contributed a good deal in this direction. The Sharki kings of Jaunpur are famous for their architectural works executed by them and the beautiful Atala Mosque in the city of Jaunpur may be mentioned as a fair specimen of the architectural monuments of their reign. Mandu the ancient capital of Malwa, has some beautiful ruins of the fifteenth century, of which the style is similar to that of the period in Dehli. Ahmadabad, the capital of Gujarat, has a beautiful Jama Masjid built by the founder of the city, Ahmad Shah, about 1424.

#### CHRONOLOGY

##### BREAK-UP OF THE SUITANATE, 1398-1526

##### *Northern India*

- |           |     |   |
|-----------|-----|---|
| 1310      | ... | Approximate date of independence of Bengal under Fakhr-ud-Din.                |
| 1398      | ... | Timur invades India.  |
| 1399      | ... | Jaunpur becomes independent under the Sharki dynasty.                         |
| 1400-1    | ... | Independence of Malwa under Sultan Shahab-ud-Din.                             |
| 1400      | ... | Independence of Gujarat under Nasir-ud-Din Muhammad.                          |
| 1411      | ... | Sultan Ahmad Shah ascends the throne of Gujarat.                              |
| 1431      | ... | Approximate date of the foundation of Ahmadabad.                              |
| 1432      | ... | Sultan Mahmud Ghori ascends the throne of Malwa.                              |
| 1435      | ... | King of Malwa takes Kalpi and besieges Dehli.                                 |
| 1436      | ... | Mahmud usurps the throne of Mandu (Malwa) and founds Khilji dynasty of Malwa. |
| 1438-39   | ... | Rana Kumbha ascends the throne of Chitor.                                     |
| 1440      | ... | Rana Kumbha defeats the ruler of Malwa.                                       |
| 1452      | ... | Sharki ruler of Jaunpur lays siege to Dehli.                                  |
| 1459-1511 | ... | Sultan Mahmud Birgarha of Gujarat.  |
| 1469      | ... | Birth of Guru Nanak.  |
| 1477      | ... | Jaunpur annexed by Bahlol Lodhi, emperor of Dehli.                            |
| 1486      | ... | Approximate date of birth of Chaitanya.                                       |
| 1493-1518 | ... | Hussain Shah of Bengal.   |
| 1498      | ... | Vasco da Gama lands at Calicut.   |

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- 1507 ... Ruler of Gujarat in alliance with the Egyptians defeats the Portuguese at Chaul.  
1509 ... Almeida defeats Egyptians and the Gujarati forces at Diu.  
1510 ... Occupation of Goa by Portuguese.  
1510-27 ... Rana Sanga reigns at Chitor.  
1512-23 ... Portuguese factory established at Diu.  
1521 ... Babur overruns the Panjab.  
1526 ... Battle of Panipat. Babur founds Mughal dynasty.  
1541 ... Approximate date of birth of Dadu.

### *Southern India*

- 1336-37 ... Traditional date of founding of Vijayanagar Kingdom.  
1310-87 ... Madhava and Sayana, Vedic scholars flourish.  
1347 ... Deccan becomes independent under Zaffar Khan Bahmani.

*Note.*—A chronological table showing the contemporary kings of the two important southern kingdoms—namely, the Bahmani and the Vijayanagar—has already been given on page 135.

- 1410-11 ... Ramananda, the great Vaishnava reformer.  
1422 ... Kingdom of Warrangal extinguished.  
1481 ... Execution of Mahmud Gawan Bahmani Wazir.  
1490-1512 ... Break-up of the Bahmani Sultanate and the rise of the kingdoms of the Deccan.  
1520 ... Battle of Raichur, Vijayanagar kingdom at its zenith.

# Book IV.—THE MUGHAL EMPIRE 1526-1707

## CHAPTER XI

### The Beginnings of the Mughal Empire

#### Babur, Humayun and Sher Shah

1526-56

The sixteenth century and the beginning of new forces—Babur, his early career—Empire in India—War with the Rajputs—Conquest of Bihar and Jaunpur—Babur's *Memoirs*—Accession of Humayun and his early difficulties—His first administration—Struggle with Sher Shah—Humayun's flight from India—Sher Shah's early career—Sher Shah as emperor of India—Administrative reforms of Sher Shah—Restoration of Humayun.

The advent of the sixteenth century marks the beginning of the three new forces in the country which changed the course of her future history. As we shall presently see, these forces also played a considerable part in moulding the national life of the people of the country. In fact, they laid the foundations of modern India. The first of these forces was the religious revival of which we have spoken, at some length, in the previous chapter. The second, in chronological order, was the discovery in 1498 of the sea route to India and the advent of the European nations in this country. The third was the beginning of the Mughal rule at Dehli which commenced with the victory of Babur over Ibrahim Lodhi in 1526. To a student of political history it is the third that strikes as the most important and of absorbing interest since the remaining two are relegated to a secondary position at least for the time being. Babur laid the foundation of the Mughal empire which was subsequently enlarged and consolidated by his grandson Akbar. Akbar not

**The  
sixteenth  
century  
and the  
beginning  
of new  
forces.**

only enlarged the boundaries of his dominions, but built up an administrative and fiscal system which gave a definite form and cohesion to the Mughal sovereignty. The empire after his death maintained its full glory for about a century after which it began to show some signs of decline. But as we study them a little more minutely the remaining two movements are not less significant than they appear at first sight. Though neither of these attracted much notice at the time, they heralded the birth of three mighty powers, namely the Marathas, the Sikhs and the English, which were brought into collision first with the Mughal power and then with each other till at last the more organized foreign power prevailed in the struggle and displaced the disorganized Indian powers from their respective positions. The Sikhs and the Marathas were the outcome of those religious movements which were quietly making their way into the humble ranks of society when Babur was busy in scoring victories over the emperor of Delhi and was occupied in suppressing the troublesome nobility of the late ruler of India. The movements gradually gained strength in the course of two centuries and as the result of changed political circumstances they also underwent a transformation. About the middle of the seventeenth century these religio-political forces made themselves felt both in the Panjab and in Maharashtra though not yet so keenly or acutely in the former province. The eighteenth century witnessed the establishment of the Maratha empire and the beginnings of the political sovereignty of the Sikhs in the Panjab which was subsequently developed by Ranjit Singh. It was mainly with these two political powers that the British had to fight out their struggle for sovereignty in India after they had defeated their European rival France, both in this country and in other parts of the world.



The interest of the story of Indian history from the sixteenth century onwards will, therefore, appear to lie in the study of the development of these forces which made a small beginning at the opening of the century and in a way inaugurated the modern age in the history of the country. Speaking of the fifteenth century in India, Professor Rushbrook Williams observes that 'beneath all the apparent chaos, the elements from which, in the future, modern political society will be constructed, are slowly taking shape, until the moment comes when they rise into view, dominant and incontrovertible.'

Babur's connection with India began only in the last twelve years of his life. His early life was spent far away from India, in the country beyond the Oxus where the descendants of Timur struggled for the remaining fragments of the vast empire which had broken up as soon as that grim conqueror had died. In our sketch of his life in these pages we propose to give only an outline of his early career which may be read at some length in the interesting and detailed memoirs left by Babur himself. His life may be roughly divided into three periods, each of which is marked by a distinct progress in his career as a king.

**Babur,  
(1483-  
1530)—  
Introductory**

Zahir-ud-Din Muhammad, surnamed Babur, was born in February, 1483. He was fifth in descent from Timur, and on his mother's side was connected with Chingiz Khan, the Mongol.<sup>1</sup> Thus he united in his person the blood of the two greatest conquerors of Central Asia and it is no

**Period of  
struggle,  
1494-  
1503.**

<sup>1</sup> If we determine Babur's nationality from his father's side, he was a Tartar, and not a Mughal and it may seem strange that the dynasty he founded should have been known as the Mughal dynasty. The reason seems to be that the Indians used to call all Northern Musalmans, excepting the Afghans, the Mughals—hence the name Mughal dynasty.

## The Beginnings of the Mughal Empire 155

wonder that he played the role of one of the greatest conquerors of the sixteenth century.

Timur had created an extensive empire in Central Asia with its capital at Samarkand. After Timur's death the empire had been shorn of its outlying provinces, but a



considerable kingdom still remained in the possession of his successors. Babur's grandfather Abu Said Mirza had held that kingdom entire but it was parcelled out among Abu's numerous sons. Babur's father, Sheikh Umar Mirza, got the province of Farghana, east of Samarkand. Babur himself came to his kingdom of Farghana while he was yet a boy of twelve years of age.

His uncles and cousins were all hostile to him and one of them Ahmad Mirza of Samarkand attacked him in 1494, almost immediately on Babur's accession to the throne of Farghana. Fortunately for the young Sultan, Ahmad Mirza's attack failed and he himself died a year after. It was now Babur's turn to avenge the insult and taking advantage of the confusion that followed his uncle's death, he seized the throne of Samarkand in November, 1497 and ascended the throne of his great ancestor Timur at the age of fifteen. At Samarkand, Babur fell ill and his ambitious minister gave out that he was dead and set up on the throne, Jahangir, Babur's younger brother. As soon as he recovered, Babur marched post-haste from Samarkand to recover Farghana, but as luck would have it he lost both—for Samarkand was occupied in his absence by his cousin Ali, and at Andiyana, the capital of Farghana, Jahangir was securely established. This happened in February, 1498 and Babur was now 'no king.' His only possession was Khojeud, a small town between the two principalities of Farghana and Samarkand. For one year and four months he lived a wanderer's life till he recaptured Andiyana in June, 1499. Early the following year Babur also reconquered Samarkand but the Uzbegs would not let him rest and he was forced to evacuate it a second time, in 1501. Farghana was also lost the same year. All his prospects being thus extinguished, Babur left his native land and set out to try his fortune beyond the range of the Hindukush Mountains, in 1502.

Babur toiled over the Hindukush range and while on his way to Kabul, heard the news of the distressed state of affairs at the capital of his uncle's kingdom. Ulugh Beg, his uncle, had died in 1501, and his young son Abdur Razzak had been deposed by a usurper Mukim Beg who seized the throne of Kabul. Anarchy and confusion

**Kingdom  
of Kabul,  
1504-26.**

reigned supreme everywhere in the dominions of Kabul and a strong party in the country was in favour of restoring the throne to a prince of the royal blood. Babur on receiving this intelligence cleverly manipulated the whole thing and on his arrival near Kabul, the army began to desert the usurper and went over to Babur who occupied the city early in 1504. He was now king of Kabul where he reigned for nearly twenty-two years before his conquests of India and the sovereignty of which was enjoyed by his descendants till the end of the seventeenth century. Babur also conquered Kandahar and Herat and organized his new kingdom but he had not altogether given up his idea of the conquest of Samarkand. Accordingly in 1513, when the opportunity was offered by the death of his old enemy Shaibani, Babur made an alliance with the Shah of Persia, took Bokhara and obtained possession of Samarkand. But he was never destined to be long successful there, and before the end of twelve months he was again driven out of the city.

It was after his last failure at Samarkand that Babur turned his serious attention to India. 'From the time I conquered the land of Kabul till now,' wrote Babur, in 1526, 'I had always been bent on subduing Hindostan. Sometime, however, from the misconduct of my Amirs, sometime from the opposition of my brothers, etc., I was prevented. At length these obstacles were removed and I gathered an army (1519) and marched on to Bijour and Swat and thence I advanced to Bhera on the west of the Jhelum River.'

These were preliminary attempts which Babur made in 1519. He came as far as the Chenab river in that year. The people on the frontier could make no stand against Babur's new weapons, i.e., the matchlock and artillery, and conditions in India proper were also becoming more favourable every day. Sikandar Lodhi,

**Empire  
in India,  
1526-30.**

**Condi-  
tions  
favouring  
Babur's  
designs  
on India.**

a capable soldier and administrator, had died in 1517, and his stupid and inexperienced son Ibrahim had ascended the throne of Dehli. A large number of Muhammadan States independent of Dehli had been established in Bengal, Jaunpur, Malwa and Gujarat. The treatment of the Sultan had estranged a number of his own kith and kin. Daulat Khan Lodhi, governor of the Punjab and Alam Khan, uncle of Ibrahim invited Babur, and Rana Sangram Singh, the chief of the Rajput confederacy, had also made him overtures.

No more propitious moment could be desired. India was distracted. Babur was strong and well-prepared and at his side was also a member of the royal house to sanction his plans and invite adhesion.

**Babur's  
advance  
on India.**

Babur was soon on the march and following his previous route reached Lahore. On his arrival he found that Daulat Khan had been driven out of the capital by an Afghan chief who now opposed Babur. Babur was, however, determined to try his chance. He easily overpowered the new governor, took Lahore, and leaving Alam Khan of Dipalpur as governor, returned to Kabul to obtain reinforcements. This happened in 1524.

Babur's nominee was not allowed to tarry long. Daulat Khan soon drove him out and he fled to Kabul. Babur now returned fully prepared, attacked Daulat Khan and advanced to Dehli *via* Sirhind. The Sultan Ibrahim

**Battle of  
Panipat,  
1526.**

came out of Dehli to give the invader battle. The two armies met on the historic plain of Panipat. Babur protected his army which was much inferior in numbers (12,000 men) against any assault of the enemy by surrounding it with wagons linked together with a hedge and ditch. He had one decided advantage over the Indian troops in that he possessed a good park of

## The Beginnings of the Mughal Empire 159

artillery which had, by this time, begun to be the decisive weapon both on land and sea. The Indian army though it far outnumbered (100,000 men) that of the invader could not withstand the fire of Babur's gunners; their ranks were broken up and the Sultan himself fell in the fight. Babur entered Dehli and Agra and was hailed as 'Emperor of India' by the people of the Imperial cities.

Babur was now king of Dehli, but not yet king of Hindostan, and much less of India. The Lodhi dynasty was indeed dethroned, but there were a number of Afghan chiefs who considered their claims superior to Babur's. Nor was this the only opposition with which Babur had to contend. His own men began to desert him since they longed for the cool air of Kabul. But Babur was a man of determination and resolve. He assembled his officers and told them he was determined to stay in India and that all who chose to return were at liberty to do so. His bold address had its desired effect, and with very few exceptions the army consented to remain under his flag.

Babur chose to make Dehli his capital and reduced Kabul to the position of a province. But he was not yet secure in his new situation. There were still formidable foes to overcome. The Rajputs were fired with the ambition of establishing Hindu rule in Dehli after the Afghan power had been overthrown. Their leader was Rana Sangram Singh, commonly called Sanga, the head of the Mewar or Chitor State. The Rana was, indeed, worthy of his honoured position. He had already been the hero of a hundred fights, and has been rightly described as 'the fragment of a warrior,' lacking an eye and an arm and a leg and counting eighty wounds from lance or sword in his body.

**Babur's  
early diffi-  
culties.**

**His wars  
with Rana  
Sanga.**

He is said to have commanded an enormous host of retainers: one hundred and twenty chieftains of rank, with 80,000 horse and 500 war elephants, followed him to the field. And it was he who had now gathered all his chivalry to meet the Mughal conqueror and to make a bid against him for the throne of Dehli.

In 1527, Sanga advanced with a large army to Biana.

**Battle of  
Khanwa.  
March,  
1527.**

Babur also advanced with his army to Fatehpur Sikri, about twenty miles from Agra. Babur's advanced guard was beaten back by the Hindus, and for a time Babur was very much disheartened. But he soon mustered courage, broke his cups, foreswore wine, and repented of his sins. He also roused the dejected spirit of his soldiers by means of a stirring address and taking advantage of the fresh courage he had inspired, he left his entrenchments and advanced boldly to meet the enemy. A heavy artillery discharge was opened and Babur's guns hurled destruction on all sides. Then, says Firishhta, Babur himself 'charged like a lion, rushing from his lair,' and after an obstinate conflict compelled the Rajputs to give way. Rana Sanga escaped with difficulty from the field but the gallant Rana would not go back to his kingdom after the defeat. He is believed to have survived for two years after this when it is suspected that he was poisoned or killed by some of his own people.

The Rajput opposition was crippled though not yet crushed. The remnants were now gathered together and the lead was taken by the brave Medni Rao of Chanderi. But Babur soon crossed the Jumna and took the fort by storm and put the whole garrison to the sword. This completed their overthrow and left Babur free to devote his attention to his other opponents, namely, the Afghans.

**Storming  
of the  
fortress  
of Medni  
Rao of  
Chanderi.**

## The Beginnings of the Mughal Empire 161

Although the Afghans were defeated at Dehli they were still strong in Bihar and farther east and Babur would know no rest until their power was crushed. Accordingly he advanced in that direction and succeeded in inflicting a severe defeat upon their chief leaders on the banks of the Ghagra near the junction of that river with the Ganges above Patna. As in the previous engagements at Panipat and Khanwa (near Sikri) Babur's artillery rendered him valuable service in his action against the Afghans.

**Conquest of Bihar and Jaunpur, 1529.**

Within a couple of years Babur had struck two decisive blows, which shattered the power of the two greatest forces in India. At Panipat the Muhammadan Afghans went down; Khanwa had crushed the confederacy of the bravest Hindus. Babur was thus left master of Kabul, the Panjab, Agra, Oudh and Bihar, as well as part of Rajputana and Gwalior. He had, however, no time to organize his new conquests as he died on December 26, 1530, nearly a year after his last campaign against the Afghans. His body was conveyed from Agra to Kabul where he was buried in accordance with his commands in a favourite garden, by the side of a rivulet flowing close to the city. This garden, like the one around the tomb of his great-grandson Jahangir at Lahore, is a favourite holiday resort of the citizens of Kabul even to this day.

Mr. Lane-Poole admirably sums up Babur's career in his *Medieval India*. He says, 'Babur's permanent place in history rests upon his Indian conquests, which opened the way for an imperial line; but his place in biography and literature is determined rather by his daring adventures and persevering efforts in his earlier days and by the delightful

**Babur's character and his 'Memoirs'.**



*Memoirs*<sup>1</sup> in which he related them. Soldier of fortune as he was, Babur was not the less a man of fine literary taste and fastidious critical perception. In Persian, the language of culture, the Latin of Central Asia, as it is of India, he was an accomplished poet, and in his native Turki he was master of a pure and unaffected style alike in prose and verse.'

On the death of Babur, his large empire was divided into two. Humayun, his eldest son, succeeded in Northern India, and Humayun's younger brother Kamran retained Kabul, Kandahar and the Panjab. To the younger boys Hindal and Askari, Humayun allotted the government of Sambhal and Mewat respectively.

Babur, as we have seen, had not time to consolidate his new dominions. What he had achieved in India in the short space of four years was only the partial submission of the Afghans and the Rajputs and the reduction of their territory which extended over the Panjab, part of Rajputana and the modern United Provinces of Agra and Oudh. His untimely death in 1530, less than five years after he had been proclaimed emperor at Delhi, had therefore left his successor with a very precarious foothold in India and this division of the empire further weakened his position. The separation of Kamran's dominions cut off Humayun from the Mughal base in the north-west and deprived him of the resources in men and money which Afghanistan and the Panjab could supply. On the east he was threatened by the Afghan chief Sher Khan who had

<sup>1</sup> The *Memoirs* referred to, having been originally written in Turki, were transcribed by his son Humayun with his own hand, and were translated into Persian by the Khan-i-Khanan under the direction of Akbar. They were rendered in English in 1826 by Leyden and Erskine and a revised version was published by Mrs. Beveridge. A new annotated edition has been brought out by the Oxford University Press.

settled in Bihar, and on the south was his powerful enemy Bahadur Shah of Gujarat, both of whom were aiming at the overlordship of Hindostan, 'using the relatives of the late Lodhi Sultan of Dehli as stalking-horses.'

Humayun had thus to meet this difficult situation single-handed. He was not lacking in ability or experience although he was only twenty-three when his father died. Humayun certainly did not possess the characteristic sagacity, energy and promptitude of his versatile father. First he marched to Bihar and easily disposed of the Lodhi pretender, Mahmud, in a decisive battle near Lucknow in 1531. He did not follow up his success by crushing the routed Afghans, rather he abandoned the siege of Chunar and accepted the nominal submission of Sher Khan and retired to Agra. He then left the most clever, unscrupulous and ambitious man in the whole Afghan party free to mature his plans and strengthen his powers during the emperor's absence.

It was the fear of Bahadur Shah of Gujarat that induced this fatal retreat. Bahadur Shah had not only given shelter to the pretender Alaud-Din Lodhi, but had equipped him with men and money and despatched him against Dehli under the protection of his son Tatar Khan. They were, however, defeated by Humayun in a general action at Biana in which Tatar Khan was slain. Humayun now marched on Gujarat to punish Bahadur Shah. The two Muslim armies lay facing each other till famine wasted the ranks of Gujarat and the Sultan fled secretly. He was hunted from place to place by Humayun, and with difficulty eluded his pursuer until he found refuge at last with the Portuguese at Diu (1536). Believing his occupation of Gujarat to be

**Humayun's Campaigns in the east against the Lodhi rebels.**

**War with Bahadur Shah of Gujarat.**

secure, Humayun left the province in charge of his brother Askari and himself marched post-haste to Bihar where Sher Khan had again rebelled, and on this occasion in a most formidable manner.

Sher Khan had considerably enlarged his territories and strengthened his army during the emperor's absence of six years in the east, and was at this moment engaged in Bengal. Humayun foolishly allowed him to complete his conquest of Gaur, while he himself spent six months over the siege of Chunar. From Gaur, Sher Khan marched on to the famous fort of Rohtas whither he had also removed his treasure, artillery and family, leaving in the meanwhile his son Jalal Khan with a small force to hold against the emperor the pass of Chikragully which leads from Bihar into Bengal at the foot of the Rajmahal Hills. As soon as they were safely lodged in Rohtas, Jalal Khan also joined his father and the imperial army was allowed to debouch into the plains of Bengal. Humayun then took possession of Gaur without opposition. But here the imperial troops were compelled to halt during the monsoon and when the dry season enabled him to advance, he found that his communications were cut off. Sher Khan, a master of strategy, had led Humayun into Bengal only to seize the approaches and sever his communications. The emperor was in an extremely critical situation. He began to retreat and marched back along the bank of the Ganges. Sher Khan, on the other hand, with a picked force made a secret march by night, and near Chausa, attacked Humayun's army in the rear (June 1539). The imperial army suffered a heavy loss, about 8,000 of them having been drowned in the Ganges during their flight. It is said that the emperor himself was saved by a water carrier, who carried him to the opposite shore on an inflated skin. Humayun then retreated to Agra and

**Huma-  
yun's  
wars with  
Sher  
Khan.**

succeeded in raising another army, which encountered Sher Khan near Kanauj in May, 1540. He was again defeated and fled back to Dehli and from there to Lahore in the hope of getting some help from Kamran. But Kamran it seems was also afraid of Sher Khan and he ceded the Panjab to him and retired to Kabul.

The empire of India was lost and Humayun now wandered through the deserts towards Sindh seeking asylum with the Rajputs and the Muhammadan governors of that region. Sometimes hospitality was given grudgingly and sometimes it was denied. After suffering many privations the fugitive emperor at last reached Amarkot in the utmost distress. It was at Amarkot, amidst all the troubles of this disastrous flight, that Humayun's son Akbar was born on October 14 1542.<sup>1</sup> From Amarkot, with the assistance of its Raja, Humayun made another unsuccessful attempt to obtain a footing in Sindh and then retired to Kandahar. Here he did not meet with a favourable reception on the part of his brother Kamran and therefore he went to Persia to seek shelter with Shah Tahmasp. Humayun thus disappeared from Indian politics for about fifteen years and the Sultanate of Dehli, together with Bihar and Bengal passed into the hands of the Afghan tribe of Sur. The most distinguished representative of this line was Sher Khan, commonly known as Sher Shah Suri.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Vincent Smith does not accept this date. According to his computation it is November 23, 1542.

<sup>2</sup> Of late years, Sher Shah has attracted a good deal of attention among scholars and an extensive literature concerning his military and administrative achievements has appeared. We have made use of the recent publication 'Sher Shah' by Kalikaranjan Qanungo, Calcutta, 1921.

**Humayun's departure from India, 1540; and birth of Akbar.**

Farid—for that was Sber Khan's original name—was born in the year 1486 in Hissar Feroza (near Delhi) where his grandfather Ibrahim with his family had gone in search of employment. Ibrahim's family finally settled at Narnol where he received a jagir to maintain forty-six horsemen. His son Hasan also obtained employment in the army and by his merit and ability steadily rose in power and was placed at the head of 500 troops which brought large additional jagirs to the family. Hasan had married four wives and had a large family. Farid and his mother were not very well treated and being displeased with his father's unkindness the boy Farid left his home and went away to live with his father's benefactor Jamal Khan, at Jaunpur. Here Farid applied himself assiduously to the study of Arabic and Persian, and soon developed into a promising youth. After some time Farid was reconciled to his father who appointed him as the governor of his *jagirs* in the parganas of Sasram and Khawaspur near Bihar on its southern side. Farid was now twenty-five years of age, full of energy and vigour and is said to have managed the estate admirably. He introduced the principle of direct settlement with the cultivators which removed the exacting and oppressive middlemen and brought the chief in direct touch with his tenants. After placing the revenue administration of the pargana on a satisfactory basis, the young Farid turned his attention to reducing the refractory zamindars to obedience. During the eight years (1511-18) that he held the charge of these districts, Farid gained considerable experience or to put it in the words of his biographer 'he was unconsciously serving his period of apprenticeship for administering the empire of Hindostan.'<sup>1</sup>

**Sher  
Shah's  
parentage  
and early  
life.**

<sup>1</sup> *Sher Shah* by Qanungo, p. 27.

Farid again quarrelled with his father and was compelled to quit his home a second time in 1519. He now took up service with Bahar Khan, the governor of Bihar, who had revolted against the Lodhi emperor. It was in the service of Bahar Khan that Farid gained the title of Sher Khan for having slain a tiger when out hunting. He served the ruler of Bihar in the civil and revenue departments for about four years, 1522-26. In the year 1528 when Babur marched to reduce South Bihar, Sher Khan rendered him valuable service and was rewarded by the grant of several parganas including Sasram and Khawaspur, his father's old jagir.<sup>1</sup>

**Sher Khan employed in the service of the governor of Bihar.**

Jalal Khan, son of Bahar Khan Lohani of Bihar, being a minor, Sher Khan was appointed by Jalal's mother to manage the affairs of his estate. He had already served under the father of Jalal Khan and naturally therefore acquired considerable influence and power. He was virtually the master of a vast tract of country from Chunar to Bihar, and as chance would have it the complications in the kingdom of Bengal now further favoured the designs of Sher Khan.

**Sher Khan as deputy governor of Bihar, 1529-33.**

Nusrat Shah of Bengal died in 1532<sup>2</sup> and was succeeded by his son Feroz Shah. Feroz was soon deposed and killed by his uncle Mahmud Shah and the kingdom of Bengal was threatened with a civil war by the partisans of the late ruler. Sher Khan was involved in that war and the boy king Jalal, who felt the control of his masterful guardian unbearable for him, made his submission to Mahmud Shah, left his own kingdom and repaired to Bengal. Sher Khan was now master of the situation and when after a year, in 1534, Mahmud Shah

<sup>1</sup> Sher Khan's father had died in 1520.

<sup>2</sup> For the previous history of Bengal, see Chapter VII.

in company with Julal Khan made an effort to reduce Bihar, he was defeated by Sher Khan at Surajgarh and made to retire to his own province of Bengal.

The victory at Surajgarh raised high hopes in the mind of Sher Khan and if he desired to further his fortunes this was perhaps the right moment. The Emperor Humayun was busy with his war with Bahadur Shah of Gujarat. He had therefore little fear from that quarter. Accordingly he set out on his expedition to Bengal about the middle of 1535, and conquered a large tract of country as far as Manghair and early next year appeared before the very walls of Gaur, the capital of Mahmud Shah's kingdom. Mahmud bought off the Afghan invader and Sher Khan after accepting a large indemnity returned to Bihar. The invasion of Bengal considerably raised the prestige of Sher Khan in the eyes of the Afghan nobility especially when even Bahadur Shah of Gujarat with whom they had so long thrown in their lot had been defeated by Humayun.

Next year Sher Khan again marched on Gaur and captured the town on April 6, 1538 after a protracted siege. He then advanced on the stronghold of Rohtas and also captured it. This practically ended the independence of Bengal under Mahmud Shah. Sher Khan's growing power caused some uneasiness to Humayun who being now free from the conquest of Gujarat turned his attention to Bihar. As already stated, the Emperor set out for Chunar, the stronghold of Sher Shah and took possession of the place early in 1538. But Humayun was no match for Sher Khan's strategy and cunning. When Humayun took Chunar after a prolonged siege, Sher Khan retreated to Bengal; and when Humayun went to Bengal and took Gaur, Sher Khan came back

**Conquest  
of North-  
east Bihar  
and  
Bengal,  
1535.**

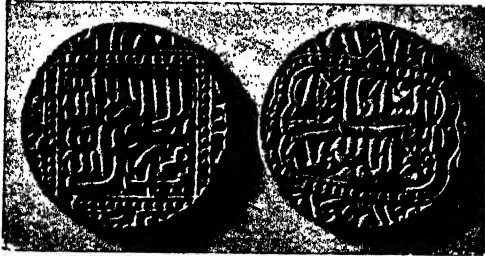
**War  
with the  
Emperor  
Humayun.**

## The Beginnings of the Mughal Empire 169

to Bihar, recovered Chunar and ultimately inflicted a crushing defeat upon the emperor at Chausa near Buxar in 1539.

**Sher  
Shah is  
crowned  
as King,  
December,  
1539.**

After his victory at Chausa, Sher Shah's horizon of ambition became immensely widened. He was now the *de facto* ruler of Bengal, Bihar, Jaumpur, and after the flight of Humayun became also the virtual possessor of Dehli and Agra. But in order to give validity or legality to his authority he must be a crowned king. Accordingly the ceremony of coronation



GOLD COIN OF SHER SHAH, SURI, 1540-45

was performed and Sher Khan ascended the throne of Bengal, at Gaur, with the title of Sher Shah. Coins were struck and the Khutba was read in his name.<sup>1</sup>

It was during his pursuit of Humayun that Sher Shah effected a partial conquest of the Panjab, especially of the fighting clans of Gakhars. In the modern district of Jhelum he built a fort and named it after the fort of Rohtas in Bengal. Leaving his deputies in the Panjab, Sher Shah himself retired to Gaur in order to reorganize the administration of the province.

**Conquest  
of the  
Panjab.**

<sup>1</sup> *Sher Shah* by Qanungo, p. 205.



During the reign of Mahmud II, the kingdom of Malwa declined in power.<sup>1</sup> One of its provincial governors Mallu Khan, took possession of Mandu, Ujjain, Sarangpur and a few other districts and set up an independent kingdom. Besides Mallu Khan there were two other chiefs, Purna Mal and Munir Khan who ruled large tracts of country in virtual independence. Malwa and Dehli being so closely situated, Sher Shah's fears were only natural and he, therefore, set out to subjugate that kingdom lest some more powerful neighbour should take advantage of the disorganized state of things there and become master of it. Gwalior and Sarangpur were soon taken and Ujjain was also reduced by Sher Shah about the middle of 1542.

The following year Sher Shah proceeded against the Rajput State of Marwar. The strong fortress of Raisin was besieged about the beginning of April and it capitulated after a prolonged siege of four months in July, 1543. The terms of capitulation offered by Sher Shah and accepted by the Rajputs included among others a guarantee of safe conduct for the garrison beyond the frontiers of Malwa, but he was prevailed upon by his troops to break his faith with the Rajputs.<sup>2</sup> The latter driven to despair defended themselves with valour and perished to a man. The fort of Jodhpur, the capital of Marwar, was next besieged early in 1544 but Sher Shah's attempt to reduce that State was not attended with any considerable success. A body of Rajput horse attacked his camp with such impetuosity that the emperor narrowly escaped with his life, and alluding to the poor produce of the country of Marwar he declared that 'for a handful of *bajra* he had almost lost the empire of Hindostan.'

<sup>1</sup> For the previous history of Malwa, see Chapter VII.

<sup>2</sup> *Sher Shah* by Qanungo, pp. 295-6.

## The Beginnings of the Mughal Empire 171

In June 1544, Sher Shah proceeded against Chitor which he easily acquired and then marched upon Kalanjar. The Bundela chief offered a stout resistance, and Sher Shah while superintending the batteries was fatally injured by the explosion of a magazine and was carried dreadfully burnt to his tent where he expired on May 22, 1545.

**Invasion of Chitor and Kalanjar and death of Sher Shah, May, 1545.**

Although in several other respects, as we have said before, Sher Shah had anticipated Akbar yet in his policy towards the Rajputs, the Afghan emperor lacked that breadth of vision which characterized the policy of his Mughal successor. Sher Shah's attacks on these small forts and States were, as remarked by an historian, 'acts of doubtful wisdom' and it was reserved for the more sagacious Akbar to conciliate the Rajputs and make them strong supporters of the throne of Dehli. In other respects, however, Sher Shah's rule was wise, vigorous and successful. His experience as manager of his father's jagirs had taught him that the traditional methods of the hereditary revenue officials deprived the State treasury of a large amount of its dues. He therefore regulated the assessment of his land revenue by an exact system of land measurement, and protected, as far as possible, the industrious ryots from unauthorized demands and other illegal exactions. This system, as we know, was subsequently developed by Akbar's famous revenue minister Raja Todar Mall and introduced throughout his empire. In other departments of civil administration also Sher Shah introduced many improvements. Law and order were maintained with great vigour and severity and it is said that in the courts of law all were considered equal and no man could expect favour by reason of his rank or position. An efficient police force was maintained throughout the

**Administrative Reforms of Sher Shah.**

empire to keep the general peace. Sher Shah also encouraged trade by improving the coinage and keeping the highways in good order. He is credited with the construction of useful public works and the memory of this great builder of roads is perpetuated by the Grand Trunk Road from Bengal to the north-west which was subsequently improved or rebuilt by Lord Dalhousie. It is said that caravanserais, with attendants of different castes, were also provided on the roadside both for Muhammadans and for Hindus. Although Sher Shah did not, like Shivaji, Haidar Ali and Ranjit Singh, start his career as a soldier, yet he has displayed no want of genius even in this direction. 'As a general,' remarks Meadows Taylor, 'Sher Khan takes a very high rank among Indian commanders. His military operations against the Emperor Humayun, on both occasions of the invasion of Bengal, were directed with great skill and strategy; and the combination of his comparatively weak forces against the flower of the Mughal army, hitherto unchecked, and the personal bravery by which they were directed, met with deserved success.' Sher Shah also introduced several reforms into the army with a view to checking the prevalent evil of fraudulent musters practised by Jagirdars. He revived Ala-ud-Din Khilji's practice of drawing up descriptive rolls of the troopers and branding their horses. That was one method of checking the evil of false musters since the marks on the body of a man and his horse were compared with those given in his descriptive roll.

Sher Shah, like Babur, enjoyed a brief reign of five years, but what he accomplished during this short period certainly entitles him to rank with the greatest sovereigns of India. The secret of his success lay in his character. He was gifted with great foresight and was a very observant student of human nature. He knew when to strike and where to

**Estimate  
of Sher  
Shah.**

strike and he made the best use of Humayun's weakness and of his difficulties. Again, in organizing his government Sher Shah displayed great administrative ability. Indeed, he anticipated Akbar in this respect. Almost all the financial and administrative reforms which have been attributed to Akbar by his court historian Abul Fazl were instituted by Sher Shah but as his career was suddenly cut short by death he found no time to develop them. Had he been spared, as Mr. Smith observes, 'he would have established his dynasty, and the great Mughals would not have appeared on the stage of history.'

Sher Shah left two sons, Adil Khan and Jalal Khan and the choice of the Afghan nobles fell on Jalal Khan, the younger of the two brothers. He ascended the throne under the style of Islam Shah and reigned for nearly eight years until 1553. The only noteworthy event of his reign was a socialist religious movement started in the Panjab by Shaikh Alai. He preached from district to district and by his eloquence roused the religious zeal of the masses and serious disturbances occurred in the province. The Shaikh grew so bold that he even defied the authority of the Sultan who was eventually compelled to order his execution. Islam Shah was succeeded by his son but he was soon deposed by Mubariz Khan who ascended the throne with the title of Adil Shah, nicknamed Adali, 'the foolish.' He was inefficient and profligate and allowed the administration of his kingdom to be controlled by a clever Hindu officer named Hemu. There were two other claimants to the throne, namely Ibrahim and Sikandar Sur who fought a battle for the throne of Dehli. There were thus three Afghan princes ruling at one time—Adil Shah in Bengal, Sikandar at Dehli and Ibrahim in the Sambhal District.

Such was the situation in India, when Humayun, who was now securely established in Kabul, the possession of

**Successors of Sher Shah, 1545-55.**

which he had gained in 1545-6 from his brother Kamran, thought of striking another blow for his lost throne. From Sindh Humayun had proceeded to Persia where he was hospitably received by Shah Tahmasp and aided by him with about 14,000 horse to recover Kabul and Kandahar from his brother Kamran. It was agreed upon by Humayun that in return for his aid he would make over to the Shah the province of Kandahar if recovered. In 1545-46 Kandahar and Kabul were both conquered by Humayun and after some time he also succeeded in getting hold of the person of his brother Kamran. He then put out his eyes and persuaded him to retire to Mecca to prevent further treachery on his part. By the year 1554, Humayun was the undisputed ruler of all the Mughal territory in Afghanistan and was free to commence his operations against India. As remarked above, the time was singularly propitious as the three Afghan factions were engaged in a murderous struggle for supremacy and the people were weary of disorder. A message from his friends in India also urged Humayun to seize the opportunity. His staunch friend and general Bairam Khan now joined him with a select body of veterans from Ghazni. Humayun occupied Lahore without opposition and then advanced to Dehli. On the morning of June 18, 1555, the forces of Sikandar Sur were defeated at Sirhind and a few days afterwards Humayun re-entered Dehli after an absence of fifteen years full of many vicissitudes of fortune. Some revolts of a minor character were summarily repressed, and the emperor was engaged in the general pacification of the country when he met his death in January, 1556, by an accidental fall from the stairs of his library while listening to the call of the muezzin to the evening prayer.

**Restoration of Humayun and his second administration 1555-56.**

## CHAPTER XII

### The Making of the Mughal Empire

**Akbar, 1556-1605**

Introductory remarks—Accession and position of Akbar (1556)—Career of Hemu—Battle of Panipat—Dismissal of Bairam Khan—Early conquests of Akbar—Akbar's early troubles—Akbar and the Rajputs—Rana Pratap's resistance—Later conquests of Akbar.

The history of Akbar (1556-1605) is practically the history of the whole of Northern India during the second half of the sixteenth century, and the Emperor himself is the outstanding figure upon which the eye of the historian is constantly riveted throughout the period.

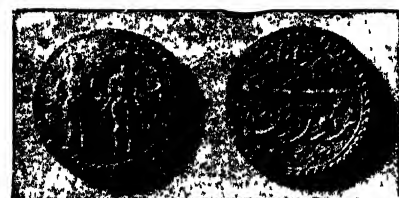
**Introductory.** Although Akbar was only a boy of fourteen when he ascended the throne yet he lived to be the greatest Muslim Emperor that ever ruled in India. He has become one of the chief heroes of our history wherein he is immortalized as a great king whose memory is vividly maintained in the hearts of the people of the country, even after the lapse of more than three hundred



AKBAR

years. 'He possessed,' remarks an historian, 'that broad-minded sympathy, that capacity to trust and to evoke trust, that generous confidence in a loyal people, which enabled him to weld together a great and durable empire out of the poor fragments of military conquests left to him by his father.'

When Akbar received the news of the sudden death of his father, he was engaged in an expedition in the Panjab against Sikandar Khan Suri. The mournful news reached him at Kalanour, in the Gurdaspur District and caused no small anxiety to his tutor and guardian Bairam Khan who immediately proceeded to make arrangements for the enthronement of his young ward. An ordinary brick platform was prepared near the camp



GOLD COIN OF AKBAR,  
DATED FROM THE FIRST  
YEAR OF HIS REIGN

*From Allen's 'Narrative of Indian History.' By permission.*

and the ceremony of coronation of this great future sovereign of India was performed on February 14, 1556.<sup>1</sup> But the enthronement, by no means, made Akbar's position more secure. 'It merely registered,' as Mr. Smith truly observes, 'the claim

of Humayun's son to succeed to the throne of Hindostan.' Humayun, as we know, during the few months after his restoration to the throne of Dehli in June, 1555, had hardly any time to recover his old possession or even to consolidate what little he had actually recovered. The political situation in Northern and Eastern India was

<sup>1</sup> The platform and seat used in the ceremony still exist and are reverently preserved.

still unsettled. Sikandar Khan Suri, though defeated, was still in the field and retained his pretensions to be king of Dehli and the Panjab. In the eastern provinces, the Afghans held royal power; and Muhammad Shah Adali with his clansmen was a formidable antagonist. There was still a third, and perhaps a more powerful and resourceful claimant, than the two mentioned above. This was a Hindu named Hemu, a minister and general of king Adali who had already made a name for himself. Besides these three claimants who were actually contesting the crown with Akbar there were a number of Rajput and other Hindu princes who had as yet made no declaration either of adherence to the old Muhammadan party, or the recognition of the new. These were some of the very profoundly disturbing forces in the country which the boy Akbar was called upon to face at the time of the death of his father, and to add to his embarrassment, the Mughal force in the country was also singularly small.

As soon as the news of the death of Humayun reached Bengal, Hemu started thence to make one more effort to save his master's empire. He quelled the rebellion in Bengal and immediately advanced to Agra and seized the city and the fort. He then repaired to Dehli, defeated Tardi Beg, Humayun's governor of the place, possessed himself of the ancient capital and entered it as king, under the title of Vikramajit (Vikramaditya). Hemu appears to have been a man of extraordinary character. Muhammadan historians have represented him in an unfavourable light and since he could not boast of royal blood in his veins, he is uniformly dubbed by them as a 'low-born Hindu.' Unfortunately, there has not yet appeared in print any more sufficient material than a few casual and contemptuous remarks in Muhammadan histories, from which a student might be able to write a

**Hemu captures Dehli and proclaims himself king.**



short biography of this extraordinary man. Hemu is said to have been a baniya by birth who started his career as a petty shop-keeper. By virtue of his character and talent Hemu first made his name and acquired the position of a Chaudhari in his own little circle of tradesmen. This first step of advance in life brought him into contact with the government officials who, discovering his business talents introduced him into the Court of the Sultan. His adroit and ingratiating manner soon won for him not only the favour but also the confidence of his Afghan master, who employed him in different capacities, at one time to command his armies and at another to administer a district. Hemu acquitted himself so well both in military affairs and in politics that in spite of differences in birth and creed, he became Adali Shah's right-hand man and trusted confidant. For him, Hemu won battles, conquered provinces and provided the necessary men and money for every new undertaking.

Having failed to hold Dehli against Hemu, Tardi Beg retired to the camp of Akbar where Bairam

**Battle of  
Panipat,  
November,  
1556.**

Khan annoyed with his cowardly conduct ordered his immediate execution. Preparations were then made to recover Dehli from

Hemu and an advanced detachment was sent under Ali Kuli Khan. Bairam Khan and Akbar having made necessary arrangements for keeping Sikandar Suri shut up in the north-eastern Panjab, themselves followed Ali Kuli and reached the plain of Panipat by way of Thanesar. Hemu, on his side, had not been negligent; when he heard that preparations were being made for his expulsion, he hastily collected whatever troops Afghan or Hindu, he could lay hands on, and proceeded to meet the Mughals. The battle-field was again the historic plain of Panipat where more than once the fate of India has been decided. In a previous engagement with

Ali Kuli, Hemu had lost a considerable portion of his artillery but he was still possessed of a powerful host of 1,500 war elephants on which he relied and was in command of troops far superior in numbers to those of his adversary. In the action which ensued, the imperialists were overwhelmed by a tremendous charge of elephants; their two wings were driven back, and their centre only kept its position with difficulty. Probably Hemu would have been the victor but for the unfortunate accident that he was struck in the eye by an arrow and rendered unconscious. The tide of victory turned. His army now deprived of its leader fled, and 1,500 elephants with an enormous booty fell into the victor's hands. The dying Hemu was taken prisoner and brought into the royal camp where he was despatched in Bairam's and Akbar's presence.<sup>1</sup> The victors pressed the pursuit of the broken foe and promptly occupied both Agra and Delhi.

As already stated, Bairam Khan, before he left for Panipat, had despatched a force against Sikandar Khan who had retired to the Siwalik Hills and shut himself up in the strong hill fortress of Mankot. The Mughal army besieged the fort for about six months when Sikandar was constrained to sue for peace and agreed to give up the fort if he and his son were honourably provided for. He was given a *jagir* in the eastern provinces and allowed to proceed there unmolested. This happened early in 1557. About the same time king Adali of Bihar, the second Afghan rival of Akbar, also died as a result of a conflict

**Submission of Sikandar Sur and the end of the Sur dynasty.**

<sup>1</sup> Whether Akbar, at Bairam's bidding, joined in the outrage, or chivalrously refused, is a detail upon which the evidence is conflicting. Mr. Smith writes that Akbar 'smote the prisoner on the neck' and adds further that Hemu's head was sent to Kabul and his trunk was gibbeted on one of the gates of Delhi. *Oxford History of India*, p. 344.

with the king of Bengal. The three acknowledged antagonists of Akbar, namely Hemu, Sikandar and Adali, were thus removed from his way before the end of 1557.

Bairam's loyalty and military skill had saved Akbar's life and throne in a situation of great difficulty and danger. When the news of the capture of Dehli by Hemu reached Akbar at Kalanaur and a large majority of his nobles had recommended a rapid retreat through the Panjab to the further side of the Indus, it was Bairam Khan alone who advised him to make preparations for a fight with Hemu. By virtue of his wisdom, age and experience Bairam acquired considerable influence over the young emperor and became virtually the ruler of the empire for two or three years. But the Khan-i-Khanan's haughty demeanour and the exercise of authority without regard to the feelings of others had made him many enemies. A certain party including such high personages as the mother of the emperor, his foster-mother Maham Ansa, and her son Adham Khan were now ranged against Bairam. Akbar himself was fast approaching manhood and began to feel impatient of the control of his masterful guardian. The breach between the latter and his growing ward was evidently widening and the palace ladies lost no opportunity in encouraging these feelings. Accordingly, early in 1560, Akbar, then twenty years of age, dismissed the Protector from office and announced his intention of taking the reins of government into his own hands. The Khan, who resented the insolence of Akbar's envoy, rebelled. He was defeated in the Panjab and taken prisoner, graciously pardoned by his sovereign and allowed to proceed to Mecca, on a pilgrimage. But he was not destined to reach his goal and on his way to the coast near Patan was waylaid and killed by a private enemy in January, 1561. His little

**Dismissal  
of Bairam  
Khan,  
1560.**

son Abdur Rahim was saved and lived to rise to the highest rank in Akbar's service and married a daughter of Prince Daniyal.

Mr. Elphinstone well observes 'of all the dynasties that had yet ruled in India, that of Tamerlane was the weakest and most insecure in its foundations.'

Although Akbar, very early in his reign, was able to remove some of his principal adversaries, yet he cannot be said to have obtained any real hold over the country and the enemies

of his house were neither weak nor few in number. His own armies were less powerful than those of his adversaries; his chances of obtaining aid from Kabul were fewer, while the Indian soldiery was yet untried, and from their attachment to former dynasties, as yet impossible to be trusted. Yet the acquisition, at least, of the leading fortresses was an essential preliminary for securing the firm grasp of the imperial government on Upper India. For three and a half years more, after the battle of Panipat, Akbar and Bairam continued the conflict with the Sur dynasty and conquered and occupied during the course of this period, the forts of Gwalior and Ajmere and the province of Jaunpur. In 1561-62, Malwa was conquered. A year later an attempt was made to subdue Khandesh and other wilder parts of Central India. Gondwana was reduced but not without a stubborn resistance on the part of the gallant Durgavati,<sup>1</sup> the queen of the State who, following the practice of her noble ancestors, stabbed herself to death to escape falling into the hands of the enemy.

<sup>1</sup> She was a very spirited lady and we learn from Abul Fazl that she ruled her country with wisdom and ability, fought her enemies with success and delighted in hunting and bringing down wild animals with her own gun. The spot where Durgavati made her last defence against Akbar's forces is still pointed out near Jabbalpur.

Akbar, as we have stated above, had several enemies amongst the Afghans but it may be said with equal truth that he had not very many friends or well-wishers in the Mughal camp itself. A few whom he had trusted in the beginning proved to be as troublesome, if not more so, than his open enemies. To establish his authority over his own chiefs became therefore a problem for the young emperor at the very beginning of his career as a sovereign. One of his most trusted generals Khan Zaman was despatched to Bengal against Sher Shah II, the successor of Adali Shah, in 1560. The Afghans were overthrown but Khan Zaman and his brother, despising the youth and feeble resources of their master withheld the spoils of conquest and behaved in the manner of rebels. The emperor was obliged to proceed against them in person to bring them to obedience.

The second instance was that of Adham Khan, an equally trusted officer, who, in 1561, was employed to subdue Baz Bahadur, an Afghan, who had taken possession of the kingdom of Malwa. Adham Khan assisted by Pir Muhammad Shirwani, obtained a brilliant success over the enemy near Sarangpur but following the example of Khan Zaman he was tempted to retain the spoils of conquest.<sup>1</sup> Here again Akbar displayed that decision and promptitude of action which alone prevented a rebellion. Leaving Agra on April 27, 1561, he reached Malwa by

<sup>1</sup> Amongst the spoils that fell into the hands of Adham Khan was Baz Bahadur's Hindu mistress, the beautiful Rupmati. Adham Khan having sought to gain possession of her, she escaped further dishonour by taking poison. The loves of Baz Bahadur and Rupmati form a favourite subject for the skill of Indian poets and artists. V. Smith, *Akbar, the Great Moghal*, p. 50.

forced marches and taking Adham Khan by surprise, seized the spoils and removed Adham from his government. Pir Muhammad was appointed in his place as governor but the choice was equally unfortunate. He was more a man of letters than of war and Baz Bahadur, taking advantage of the weak government of the Pir, reconquered Malwa. Akbar, however, redeemed his loss and Baz Bahadur after making a few fruitless efforts was persuaded to accept service under Akbar. The government of the province was made over to Abdulla Khan Uzbek, who had recovered it from Baz Bahadur.

Adham Khan's fate was very different. He counted probably too much upon the influence of his mother Maham Anga whom the young emperor respected as his foster-mother. Smarting under the loss of his government of Malwa and feeling that the power was slipping from the grasp of his mother and himself, Adham Khan one day stabbed the emperor's minister Shams-ud-Din in the royal palace. The tumult awoke Akbar who rushed out and dealt him a blow with his fist which knocked the traitor senseless to the ground. He was then seized and thrown headlong from the terrace of the palace where the murder had been done. This event happened on May 16, 1562.

Another instance of such headstrong men, who took the law into their hands hoping to escape punishment for their offences owing to relationship or influence with the emperor, was that of Khwaja Muazzam, a half-brother of Akbar's mother. In March, 1564, this 'half-insane monster' took his wife to his country-seat and stabbed her to death. At the request of the girl's mother the emperor repaired to the scene of action, seized the murderer and his attendants and consigned him to the state-prison in Gwalior where 'he died insane'.

In July 1564, another unruly governor displayed a spirit of insubordination and this is, perhaps, the most important of all acts of this nature which have been recorded. Indeed, at one time, the rebellion of Abdulla Khan assumed formidable dimensions and threatened the very existence of the empire of Akbar. Abdulla Khan Uzbeg, revolted in the province of Malwa, and Akbar, early in July, marched against him and forced him to retire to Gujarat. He ultimately made his way to Jaunpur where he joined and made common cause with another disaffected Uzbeg chief named Khan Zaman. It appears very likely, as suggested by Mr. Smith, that at this time 'Akbar was considered to favour the Persian officers between whom and the Uzbeg chiefs intense jealousy existed.' The Uzbegs, therefore, suspected that the young monarch was actuated in his dealings with Abdulla Khan by a dislike of their race and that they were, as a class, about to be reduced to a subordinate position. Several of them joined this movement which, as already remarked, assumed threatening dimensions. Khan Zaman or Ali Kuli Khan who had rendered valuable service to Akbar at the battle of Panipat, joined his Uzbeg brethren and rebelled in his government of Jaunpur early in 1565. Asaf Khan, another nobleman of the same clan, who had recently distinguished himself in the Bundelkhand and Gondwana campaigns also threw in his lot with the rebels. The war occupied Akbar for nearly two years and was not always attended with success. The imperial forces sent against Khan Zaman of Jaunpur, were defeated in April, 1565, whereupon in the following month Akbar took the field in person. The rebel chiefs made a show of submission but the rebellion was by no means at an end, as the disaffected Afghans and other Muhammadans of the eastern provinces also joined the ranks of the rebellious

**Uzbeg  
rebellion,  
1564-67.**

Uzbegs. Akbar, however, had to leave things here as they were, in order to check a more formidable combination in favour of his half-brother Hakim Mirza, who, expelled from Kabul, sought to establish himself in the Panjab and was encouraged by several of the local commanders. But Akbar's energy averted serious consequences. He immediately repaired to the Panjab and succeeded in dispersing the allies of his brother who himself fled to Kabul. Akbar with his characteristic skill and resource restored tranquillity in the province and turned his attention once more to the rebellious Uzbegs. Early in May, 1567, Akbar is said to have crossed the swollen Ganges on his elephant at night and to have attacked the insurgents on the morning of the following day. In the battle that followed, Khan Zaman was killed and his brother Bahadur Khan was taken prisoner and executed. The rebellion was thus concluded by an act of courage and promptitude very characteristic of the conqueror.

We have had occasion to remark before that of all the dynasties that had yet ruled in India that of Timur was the most insecure in its foundations. They had no base upon which to draw, as had the kings of Ghor and Ghazni, and the recent expulsion of his father Humayun made Akbar careful to establish his empire upon the will of the people of India, and to the realization of that ideal he steadily devoted himself through a long and glorious reign. He admitted Hindus to every degree of power and Musalmans of every party to the highest station in the service, according to their rank and merit, until his dominions were filled with a loyal and united people. The Rajputs formed the vanguard of the Hindu community and their fine military qualities were not unknown to the Muhammadan rulers of the country whom they had opposed in their efforts to establish their power during

**Akbar and  
the Raj-  
puts.**



the last three hundred years or more. The first employment of his own means of conquest was little calculated to inspire Akbar with confidence in his project for the subjection of the whole of India to his rule. It became difficult for him to establish his authority over his own chiefs who, as we have seen, despising the youth and feeble resources of their master, tried to assert their independence in the provinces they were sent to govern. His sagacious mind, therefore, suggested to Akbar, early in his reign, that a policy of conciliation and close alliance with the Rajputs would serve him a double purpose. The opposition of the fighting section of the Hindus which formed the great bulk of the population of India would be disarmed. Moreover if tactfully handled this fine fighting material could be organized and employed as a counterpoise against the disruptive forces of the Uzbeks and the Afghans.

In January, 1562, Akbar married the eldest daughter of Raja Bihar Mall, the chief of Jaipur, and Man Singh and Raja Bhagwan Singh of Bihar Mall's family were taken into the imperial service and ultimately rose to high office. He continued his policy of making Hindu alliances, and in 1570 he married princesses from Bikanir and Jaisalmir, the two leading principalities of Rajputana.

**Emperor's marriage with the daughter of Raja Bihar Mall.**

As if he desired to bequeath his own policy of Hindu alliances to his children, Akbar selected the daughter of Raja Bhagwan Das as the first consort of his son, Prince Salim. The wedding was celebrated in February, 1584, with great magnificence in the beautiful city of Jaipur. The Rajput families were thus gradually won over by this diplomatic monarch and remained the strongest supporters of the throne of Dehli for about a century till the impolitic actions of

**Marriage of Prince Salim with the daughter of Raja Bhagwan Das.**

Aurangzeb forced them to withdraw their allegiance from the descendants of the great Akbar.

But the State of Mewar, the premier State of Rajasthan, whose chiefs were proud of their long and noble ancestry<sup>1</sup> rejected all alliances and defied the power of Akbar. An attack upon Chitor was accordingly planned and the emperor marched in person against the famous hill fortress of the Rajputs, early in October, 1567. Unfortunately for Chitor, the head of the Mewar State at this time was Rana Uda Singh, the posthumous child of Rana Sanga who was saved from destruction in his infancy by the fidelity of a nurse who sacrificed her own child in his stead. Uda Singh proved to be an unworthy scion of the house of Bapa Rawal and as Colonel Tod justly observes 'he had not one quality of a sovereign and wanting martial virtue, the common heritage of his race, he was destitute of all.' He further adds that 'well had it been for Mewar had the poniard fulfilled its intention; and had the annals never recorded the name of Uda Singh in the catalogue of her princes.'

On the approach of the imperial troops, Uda Singh, in order to save his own person, retired into the mountains leaving the defence of his capital to the gallant Jai Mall.

The siege was long and arduous and the brave garrison put up a heroic defence, repulsing the numerous direct assaults of the Mughal army. Akbar therefore decided to proceed by a regular sap and mine process. Two

<sup>1</sup> This line of Guhala Rajputs was founded by Bapa Rawal in or about A.D. 780. This dynasty is the most ancient royal house of importance in India and has ruled Mewar with merely temporary interruptions, for a period of twelve hundred years. They still retain the possession of Mewar and the fortress of Chitor, although the capital is not now Chitor. For their detailed early history see pp. 70-90, *Medieval India*, vol. ii, by C. V. Vaidya (1924), Poona.

*Sabāts* or covered approaches to the walls were built and it was proposed to blow up a part of the fort by means of gunpowder. It so happened, however, that a mine in one of the two *Sabāts* exploded too soon and wrought terrible havoc in the investing army. A new work was commenced under the joint supervision of Raja Todar Mall and Kasim Khan, and in a short time, was carried up to the ramparts in which a large breach had been made by the besieger's batteries. One night, February 23, 1568, when Jai Mall was directing the repair of one of these breaches, Akbar chanced to see him and seizing a matchlock from an attendant shot him through the head. Jai Mall was dead and 'as usual in India, the fall of the commander decided the fate of the garrison.' The Rajputs became desperate, they performed the ceremony of *Jauhar*, put their women and children to death, burned them with their leader's body and themselves awaited the Muhammadan's approach. During the course of the following morning, when Akbar made his entry, eight thousand Rajput warriors rejecting his offers of quarter, perished to a man, killing about the same number of the enemy. Thus fell Chitor for the third and the last time in February, 1568, for it has never again been the seat of the sovereignty of the Guhala princes. The fortresses of Ranthambhor and Kalanjar in quick succession shared the fate of Chitor.

Udai Singh died in 1572, five years after the fall of Chitor, in his new capital at Udaipur. He was succeeded by his son, the gallant Pratap, who vowed to recover Chitor and vindicate the honour of his house. Compared with the resources of Akbar's empire, the resources of Pratap or his poverty-stricken State of Mewar were nothing and to a cool and calculating mind the Rana's chances of success were, perhaps, not one in a hundred. But the Rana was fighting for his

**The  
heroic  
resistance  
of Rana  
Pratap,  
1572-97.**

principles and those who fight for a principle do not stop to measure the chances of success or failure, so 'this bravest of the brave Rajputs' carried on an unequal struggle for a quarter of a century till he recovered much of Mewar. The heroic story of Rana Pratap is best told in the glowing language of Colonel Tod and is well worth reading in all its fascinating details. A bare outline of the struggle is all that can be given here. Akbar needed no excuse for an attack on the Rana. It was enough that Pratap did not make his submission to the imperial throne and chose to remain outside the empire. His patriotism was his offence. The noble tradition of his family that 'the son of Bupa Rawal should bow the head to no mortal man' was maintained, and Pratap spurned every overture which had submission for its basis.

The first battle between the Rana and the imperialist army was fought near the pass of Haldighat in 1576 in which Pratap suffered a defeat. The imperial troops commanded by Raja Man Singh of Amber assisted by Asaf Khan II marched on the fortress of Gogunda in the Aravalli Hills, but the Rana with his three thousand horsemen guarded the pass of Haldighat on the way to Gogunda. The battle was a ferocious hand to hand struggle which raged from early morning to midday and the daring Rana himself was present all the time in the hottest part of the action. Towards the close of the battle Pratap received a serious wound and retired into the hills, mounted on his beloved steed Chaitak, but the 'victors were too exhausted to pursue him.' The Rana was obliged to live in the remote hills and fortresses for some time and suffer his strong places to fall one by one into the hands of the enemy. Later he was able to recover all Mewar, excepting Chitor, Ajmer and Mandalgarh. At last the whole country was filled with the fame of the heroic Pratap, and

**Battle of  
Haldighat,  
1576.**

Akbar himself is reported to have expressed a genuine respect for his gallant enemy who struggled for the independence of his own land. In 1597, Rana Pratap died, worn out in body and mind.

A more profitable undertaking was the conquest of Gujarat. This province, it will be remembered, was temporarily occupied by Humayun in 1536, and Akbar, therefore, with some show of reason could reclaim it as a lost province of his empire. But as Mr. V. Smith points out, the wealth and the maritime commerce of Gujarat were quite sufficient attractions to tempt Akbar to annex the province even if no other reason for the invasion existed. The nominal king, Muzaffar Shah III, exercised little authority over his powerful vassals and one of them Iltimad Khan also invited Akbar to put an end to this anarchical state of affairs in Gujarat. The emperor accordingly marched out of Fatehpur Sikri on July 4, 1572, and by leisureed marches, arrived near Ahmadabad early in November. Muzaffar Shah made no opposition and formally ceded his crown to Akbar. The emperor was now near the sea which he had never seen before. He, therefore, made an excursion to Cambay and enjoyed a short sail on the ocean and also made the acquaintance of the Portuguese who came to pay their respects.

After making necessary administrative arrangements the emperor himself retired to Fatehpur, but he had hardly reached his destination when the misdeeds of the Mirzas whom he had left in charge of the province compelled him to march back to restore his authority. Immediate arrangements were made for return to Gujarat and rushing through Rajputana mounted on swift-footed dromedaries with a few attendants, the emperor completed a journey of 600 miles in nine days—'a marvellous feat of endurance.' On reaching Ahmadabad, Akbar defeated,

**Later conquests of Akbar, 1572-95. Gujarat, 1572.**

with his tiny force of 3,000 horsemen, the enemy troops numbering about twenty thousand men and gained a decisive victory on September 3, 1573. A few more expeditions were subsequently made before the country was finally subdued in 1584.

The conquest of Gujarat extended the bounds of Akbar's empire in the west right up to the sea and it seemed only natural that the ambitious monarch would also desire to secure a similar natural frontier in the east. The excuse for the attack was given by Daud Khan, the Afghau King of Bengal. Daud was the son of Sulaiman who founded a new but short-lived dynasty in Bengal in 1564. He was shrewd enough to recognize the formal suzerainty of Akbar and lived on terms of peace with the imperial officers stationed in Rohtas. But Daud, who succeeded his father in 1572, was a rash and headstrong youth who had too great a confidence in the military resources of Bengal. He provoked Akbar by the seizure of the fort of Zamania and the emperor who was in Gujarat at the time sent orders to Munim Khan, his governor of Jaunpur to chastise the aggressor. Munim Khan was unable to make much impression on Daud and the emperor accordingly deputed Raja Todar Mall, his best general, to take command in Bihar and it was chiefly through the exertions and military ability of this Hindu general that Bengal was added to the empire of Dehli between 1576 and 1580. When the Afghans again rose in rebellion against Akbar in favour of his brother Hakim Mirza, another Rajput Hindu general, the great Man Singh, reconquered the country in 1592.

In 1579-80 Akbar's brother Hakim Mirza made an attempt to seize the Panjab and succeeded in defeating a division of the imperial army. Akbar at once hurried from Bengal to meet in person this graver danger threatened from Kabul.

**Kabul,  
1585.**

He marched from his capital with an overwhelming force, but the Mirza fled back to Kabul on the approach of the imperial troops. He was pursued by Prince Murad but the emperor permitted his brother to retain Kabul as long as he lived. However, on his death in 1585, the province became a part of the Indian Empire and Raja Man Singh was sent there as governor. But the Afghans were as unruly as ever and even this greatest of the great Mughals was unable to hold them in proper check. In 1586, Raja Birbal, one of Akbar's dearest and most intimate friends, was drawn into an ambushade in the hills of Swat and slain; and the imperial troops were routed and retreated with considerable loss to Attock.

Kashmir was a more easy conquest. The degenerate rulers of Kashmir committed great cruelties on their Hindu subjects and Akbar found an excuse for intervention. In 1586 the emperor despatched a large force under his cousin Mirza Shah Rukh and his Hindu general Bhagwan Das to conquer the State from its Muhammadan ruler Yusuf Shah. They entered into a sort of convention with Yusuf Shah, but Akbar refused to ratify the convention and sent a fresh force in the following year. After a desultory warfare the local rulers made their submission, Kashmir was annexed and both Yusuf and his son received *Jagirs* and were enrolled among the Mughal nobility.

The last conquests which completed the mighty fabric of Akbar's Northern Indian empire were Sindh, Kandahar and Orissa. Multan and the strong island fortress of Bhakhar had already been in the possession of the emperor since 1574. The campaign for the conquest and annexation of Sindh was entrusted to one of Akbar's best officers, Abdur Rahim, the son of his late guardian Bairam Khan. Mirza Jainsi, the ruler of Thatta, attempted to defend his country but was compelled to

**Sindh,  
Kandahar  
and Orissa,  
1592-95.**

surrender (1592) before the emperor's superior military force. A little after the news of the victory of Khan-i-Khanan Abdur Rahim in Sindh was announced, the emperor also received intelligence from the east that Raja Man Singh had defeated the rebellious Afghan chiefs in Orissa and annexed the country, which was amalgamated to the *Subah* of Bengal.

The conquests of Sindh and Balochistan, as Mr. Smith suggests, were a necessary prelude to the long-meditated recovery of Kandahar, but it so happened that no attack was needed and Kandahar fell into Akbar's possession without bloodshed. Muzaffar Hus-sain Mirza, who was involved in quarrels with the Uzbegs, invited Akbar to take charge of the province which he gladly did in May, 1595.



## CHAPTER XIII

### The Consolidation of the Empire

#### Akbar—(continued) 1596-1605

Akbar's Deccan campaign—Siege of Asirgarh—Extent of Akbar's empire—Akbar's internal policy—Development of Akbar's religious views and Din-i-Ilahi—Administrative and military reforms—Celebrated men of Akbar's Court—Progress of art and literature—Last days of Akbar—Note on the discovery of sea-route to India and the Jesuit missions at the Court of Akbar.

Having built up his empire in Northern India, Akbar next turned his attention to the Deccan. The Bahmani kingdom of the Deccan, as has already been related in a previous chapter, was split up into five separate Muhammadan kingdoms, namely Berar (1490), Ahmadnagar (1490), Bidar,<sup>1</sup> Golkonda (1512) and Bijapur (1490). Burhanpur, the capital of Khandesh, had been taken as early as 1562 and this province may be regarded as the threshold of the Deccan. Akbar first tried diplomatic methods and sent political missions to induce the rulers of the south to recognize his suzerainty. Since these missions did not obtain any substantial success the ambitious monarch determined on war, and the kingdom of Ahmadnagar, owing to its geographical position, was the first to be assailed. Prince Murad and Abdur Rahim, Khan-i-Khanan, were sent in charge of the expedition and the operations began in 1595. Chand Sultana, who acted as regent on behalf of her nephew, gallantly defended the city of Ahmadnagar, appearing herself on the ramparts of the city in full armour and with drawn

<sup>1</sup> Bidar represented the residue of the Bahmani kingdom.

sword to encourage her troops. Nor did the two officers of the Mughal troops co-operate with each other in perfect harmony. The imperial army therefore failed to make any impression on Ahmadnagar and were glad to make peace on condition that Berar alone should be ceded to the empire. Thus ended the first campaign against Ahmadnagar, early in 1596. But war soon broke out again. The internal dissensions in Ahmadnagar resulted in the deposition and murder of the brave Chand Sultana and the intriguers violated the treaty with the Mughals and sought to recover Berar. An engagement was fought early in February, 1597, at Ashti near Supa on the Godavari where each party claimed the victory. Desultory warfare continued for sometime and Akbar was contemplating a change of commanders when in May, 1599, Prince Murad died of 'his excesses at a town in the Deccan, and so ceased to trouble anybody.' The emperor now marched in person to the Deccan and early in 1600 occupied Burhanpur and despatched Prince Daniyal with Khan-i-Khanan to reduce Ahmadnagar. The gallant Chand Bibi was no longer alive to save the city and Akbar's troops stormed the fortress without much difficulty and 'above fifteen hundred of the garrison were put to the sword.' Ahmadnagar was annexed to the empire though a fairly large portion of its territories continued to be governed by a chief named Murtaza.

While Prince Daniyal was sent to reduce Ahmadnagar, Akbar with a large army proceeded to invest the strong fortress of Asirgarh. Raja Ali Khan, the ruler of Khandesh, had fallen in the battle of Ashti, fighting on the side of the imperialists. His successor Bahadur, who was unwilling to bear the imperial yoke, retired to the strongly fortified fortress of Asirgarh not very far from his capital of Burhanpur which was now in the possession

**Siege of  
Asirgarh,  
1600-01.**

of Akbar. Asirgarh was stocked with ample provisions to stand a siege for a year or so and was also considered 'one of the strongest fortresses in the world at that date.' The siege had gone on for about six months and Akbar's artillery failed to breach the walls or make any impression on the brave garrison. But Akbar was hard pressed for time, his son Prince Salim had broken into rebellion and his presence in the capital was urgently needed. He was therefore driven to have recourse to treachery. Bahadur was inveigled into Akbar's camp for the purpose of negotiations where he was detained by the orders of the emperor and the siege pushed on with greater vigour than before. The Portuguese officer amongst the garrison held out and the siege dragged on till January, 1601, 'when the gates were opened by golden keys,' or in other words, Akbar corrupted the Khandesh officers by heavy payments. Thus fell the impregnable fortress of Asirgarh<sup>1</sup> and with it the entire kingdom of Khandesh. The Deccan conquests were then organized into three provinces or *subahs*, namely Ahmadnagar, Berar and Khandesh.

A glance at the map will show that in 1605, Akbar was the undisputed master of the whole of Northern India and that his sway also extended over a part of the Deccan up to the Godavari River. In the north the Himalayan range with the exception of the Hindu State of Nepal, formed its boundary. Within these limits the empire stretched from sea to sea. Akbar's dominions were divided into the following eighteen *subahs*:—(1) Kabul, (2) Lahore, (3) Multan, (4) Dehli, (5) Agra, (6) Oudh, (7) Allahabad, (8) Ajmer, (9) Gujarat, (10) Malwa,

**Extent of  
Akbar's  
empire,  
1605.**

<sup>1</sup> For a detailed study of episodes connected with the siege of Asirgarh, see pp. 275-85, *Akbar, the Great Moghal*, by V. Smith, Oxford, 1919.

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(11) Bihar, (12) Bengal, (13) Khandesh (14) Berar, (15)



Ahmadnagar, (16) Orissa, (17) Kashmir and (18) Sindh  
 Mr. Smith observes that 'at a very early stage in his

career he realized thoroughly that it was no longer possible for the *Padshah* of Hindostan to be the king of the Muslim minority only. His throne, if it were to be firmly established, must rest on the broad foundation of general loyalty, accorded willingly by Hindus and Musalmans alike.' This attitude of mind, as Mr. Smith thinks, might have been the result of political necessity, but it is equally difficult to ignore the fact that his own religious beliefs and his own spirit of tolerance also affected Akbar's State policy to a large extent. It was in January, 1562, that he married his first Hindu wife and within a couple of years of this marriage, Akbar abolished the *Jiziya* (1563-64). His next act was to discontinue the tax upon Hindu pilgrims, on the ground that however superstitious the rite of pilgrimage might be, it was wrong to place any obstacle in the way of a man's service to God. Although this involved a considerable sacrifice of State revenues, he was well repaid for this financial sacrifice by the willing and loyal service of his Rajput adherents who in their zeal and loyalty for the emperor did not hesitate to fight even against their own race in the hills of Rajasthan. Rajput princes were employed as generals and civil administrators and the great finance minister, Raja Todar Mall, brought by his measures of reform, thousands of Hindus into the imperial service where they shared with the Muhammadans, the details of all ordinary administrative business. 'Much of the improvement in administration,' remarks Mr. Lane-Poole, 'was due to Akbar's employment of Hindus who at that time were better men of business than the uneducated and mercenary adventurers who formed the large proportion of the Muhammadan invaders.' Nearly half of his soldiers and several of his best generals, e.g., Bhagwan Das, Man Singh, Todar Mall and Birbal were Hindus, and this assimilation of the Hindu chiefs,

**Akbar's  
internal  
policy.**

it may be said was the most conspicuous feature of Akbar's reign.

This new policy in relation to his Hindu subjects, as remarked above, was partly dictated by political necessity and was partly the result of Akbar's personal fancies and beliefs in matters of religion. Although he remained illiterate all his life, we learn from Abul Fazl that the *Padshah* loved to have books read to him and learnt much Sufi poetry by heart, thereby developing a bent of mind which influenced his ideas of religion and statecraft. Early in his reign he initiated the practice of marrying Hindu wives and accepted his Hindu male connections as members of the royal family. These must have had their share in moulding Akbar's religious views. But there were also other influences at work besides those of his Hindu wives and friends. In 1567, the well-known Sufi scholar Shaikh Mubarak presented his son Faizi at the Court and seven years later (1574) he also introduced his younger son, the famous Abul Fazl, to the emperor at Fatehpur Sikri. With the help of these scholars the *Padshah* collected a great library of books on history, philosophy, religion and science which were read and explained to him by the librarian Abul Fazl. As the result of these studies and his close association with the two brilliant brothers, Akbar's mind was unsettled in religion. He was essentially eclectic, and saw good in almost every form of worship. To satisfy his spiritual curiosity he inaugurated formal discussions on religion and theology, at first open to his Muslim courtiers only, but later on to Brahmans, Jains, Zoroastrians, Jews, Christians and others, who were in the Mughal service or were invited to the Court. In January, 1575, a building known as *Ibadat-Khana* or House of Worship was specially designed for purposes of such discussions where the selected persons of

**Develop-  
ment of  
Akbar's  
religious  
views.**

different religions used to meet and discuss with freedom 'the most abstruse problems under the presidency of the sovereign.' He listened to them with great care and these discourses on philosophy, as he himself is reported to have said, had a great charm for him. The emperor was, in fact, passing through a stage of earnest doubt, and the violent wrangling of the Muslim doctors of divinity only served to estrange him from the Islamic faith. In 1579, he accordingly issued what Mr. Smith calls 'The Infallibility Decree'<sup>1</sup> by virtue of which the Padshah's ruling in religious questions was to be regarded as final provided that it was supported by a verse from the Koran and was of benefit to the nation. Akbar thus became, or more correctly wanted to become, both the spiritual and temporal head of the nation. It is not unlikely that in issuing this decree Akbar may also have been persuaded by political motives, as he believed and with some reason, that the decline of the authority of the *Ulemas* or heads of divinity would indirectly result in the tightening of his political hold on his Muslim subjects.

The last stage in the development of Akbar's religious views was reached in 1582, when he made a formal proclamation of a new faith under the name of Din-i-Ilahi or *Tauhid* Ilahi or the Divine Faith.

**Proclama-  
tion of  
Din-i-  
Ilahi.**

A general council was summoned for this purpose to which all masters of learning and the military commanders of the cities round about the capital were invited and salient points of the new faith were read aloud. The monotheistic principles of Islam were recognized but the ritual was eclectic, adapted partly from the Brahman and partly from Zoroastrian worship. The ceremony of

<sup>1</sup> The draft of the decree was prepared by Shaikh Mubarak, the father of Abul Fazl and Faizi.

initiation was usually performed on a Sunday when a novice desiring to join the new order was brought before the emperor and with his turban in his hands put his head on the feet of the emperor who then raised up the suppliant and replaced the turban on his head. His Majesty, Abul Fazl informs us, would then communicate to the novice 'the great name' and the symbolical motto 'Allahu-Akbar.' There were four grades of this new order and the members were pledged to acknowledge the Padshah as their spiritual leader and to devote to the service of the State their property, lives, honour and religion. From time to time disciplinary regulations for the members of the order were issued by the emperor. The members were expected to abstain from meat and out of regard for the religious susceptibilities of his Hindu subjects Akbar also forbade the slaughter of cows and perhaps made it a capital offence. The ceremony of *Sijlah* or prostration which according to Islam is considered lawful only in divine worship was declared by Akbar to be the due of the emperor. This and many other similar regulations corroborate the contemporary view of the Jesuit fathers that the emperor, if he had not totally rejected Islam, had become very indifferent to the creed of the Prophet.

The Divine Faith very probably ceased to exist with the death of Akbar. The number of its adherents even in the life-time of the emperor was never considerable, and although Abul Fazl would have us believe that the new Faith counted thousands of followers, one is inclined to agree with Mr. Smith that

**Adherents  
of the  
Faith and  
its fate  
after the  
death of  
Akbar.**

the 'votaries of Akbar's religion probably never numbered many thousands.' Amongst the most prominent Hindu members of the order was Raja Birbal, Rajas Bhagwan Das and Man Singh having refused to join.



It is not possible to review in a small book Akbar's various reforms of the land revenue system, of the army, of justice, of police, and of general State Policy—which are contained in Abul Fazl's *Ain-i-Akbari*. Although all these reforms were important and progressive and bear the stamp of originality, yet Akbar's system of the assessment of the land revenue of his kingdom was, perhaps, the most perfect and the most elaborate of them all. The system endured throughout the period of Mughal rule and still forms the basis of land settlement in India.

As remarked elsewhere in this book, the model for Akbar's institutions was supplied by Sher Shah Suri and it was now improved upon by Akbar and his ministers. Reform in the finance and land revenue departments were carried out by Raja Todar Mall and Muzaffar Khan Turbati. The first or tentative settlement was made in Gujarat in 1573-75, by Todar Mall and this served as a model for the rest of the empire in subsequent years. A standard land-measure or *jarib* was established and upon the basis of this uniform measure, a cadastral survey was commenced in 1574, and in accordance with the latter the method of culture determined the rate of taxation. Four classes of cultivation were distinguished (1) *P'olaj*, land continuously cultivated; (2) *Paranti*, that which lay fallow for a short period in order to renew its productive power; (3) *Chachar*, land that has lain fallow for three years or four years; and (4) *Banjar*, land which has been out of cultivation for five years or more. Each of the first three classes was sub-divided into three grades, and the average produce of the class was calculated from the mean of the three grades in it. The Government share was fixed at one-third of this average produce. The tax-payer was given the option of payment in money or kind although cash payments were

**Akbar's  
adminis-  
trative  
Reforms.**

**The land  
revenue  
system.**

preferred. In case of certain crops which were liable to destruction, only cash rates were levied. Such articles included vegetables and fruits like radishes, water melons, etc., and other produce such as indigo, hemp and sugar-cane. The revenue was collected directly from the cultivator and in modern terminology may be described as the Ryotwari System. The total revenue derived from land, or probably from all sources included, amounted to Rs. 17,45,00,000 or £17,500,000 sterling in 1605.<sup>1</sup>

For purposes of administration the empire was divided, as has already been stated, into fifteen *subahs*,<sup>2</sup> each *subah* was further sub-divided into *sarkars*; and *sarkars* were further split into *parganas* also called *mahals*. The government of a *subah* or province was vested in a viceroy styled variously as Nawab Nazim, Subedar and Sipah Sālār. He was assisted by a Diwan or Finance minister and a *Foujdar* or the head of the local militia. *Kazis* and *Kotwals* were appointed to administer justice and keep order in towns, but in villages the people lived under their own institutions, namely the village community system.<sup>3</sup> The Nazim had complete civil and military control over the province and 'maintained a court modelled on that of his sovereign.'

In 1573-75, about the same time as the carrying out of a land survey in Gujarat was commenced, the emperor also took in hand the task of introducing certain improvements in his army. The practice of branding the horses and preparing a descriptive roll of each trooper in government service was introduced as a precaution

**Administrative divisions, 'Subahs and Sarkars'.**

**Reforms in the army—the 'Man-sabdars'.**

<sup>1</sup> Vide V. Smith, *Akbar, the Great Moghal*, p. 379.

<sup>2</sup> The three *subahs* in the Deccan were added subsequent to this arrangement.

<sup>3</sup> For a detailed study of the duties of these functionaries, see p. 380 onwards in V. Smith's *Akbar, the Great Moghal*. - A reference to this has already been made in connection with Sher Shah Suri.

against false musters. The grading of *mansabdars* was also made more systematic. The rules connected with the grading, etc., of these military officials are too complicated to be related here and to the more curious reader we would recommend the discussion on this subject in the pages of Irvine's *Army of the Indian Moghals* and V. Smith's *Akbar, the Great Moghal*. The mansabdars were divided into thirty-three classes, each member of each class being supposed to furnish a certain number of troopers to the imperial army. The three highest grades 7,000 to 10,000 were reserved for the members of the royal family although in later years exceptions were made to this rule and Raja Todar Mall was promoted to the rank of 7,000. The other commands ranged from 10 to 5,000. A mansabdar was paid a very liberal salary, usually in cash, but not infrequently by the assignment of land revenue, though Akbar, so far as possible, tried to discourage the practice of granting military fiefs. The mansabdar was required to pay the cost of his quota of horses and elephants and also to provide his own transport. The imperial army was made up mostly of these contingents and the permanent regular army of the emperor himself was very small. Such troops as were raised by the emperor and not paid directly by the State were known as *Dakhli* or supplementary, since they were tacked on to the contingent of some individual mansabdar. There was still a third class of troopers who were recruited by the State but were not distributed among the mansabdar's contingents and were placed under the separate command of a noble. These were known as *Ahadis*. The pay and social status of an *Ahadi* was very much superior to that of a trooper of a mansabdar's contingent.

Akbar attempted reforms also in social matters. Most important among his social regulations were **Social reforms.** the prevention of forcible *Sati* and the prohibition of the circumcision of children before the age of

twelve. So far as the State was concerned widow marriage amongst the Hindus was made lawful. The slaughter of oxen, buffaloes, horses and camels was also forbidden by the order of the emperor. Akbar is also said to have discouraged child marriage.

Akbar, who always rewarded merit, made little or no distinction of creed in selecting his officers.

**Some celebrated men of Akbar's Court.** He chose his friends and great officers from among both Hindus and Muhammadans, and as Mr. Vincent Smith remarks 'with a leaning in favour of the former.' Most prominent among the Hindu officers and friends of Akbar were Rajas Bhagwan Das, Man Singh, Todar Mall and Birbal, to all of whom he gave high commands in his army and influential places at his court. Todar Mall's name is intimately associated with the land revenue reforms of Akbar and he was a great intellectual asset to the Emperor's Darbar. With the possible exception of Abul Fazl and his brother Faizi, Todar Mall was the ablest man in the imperial service wielding both his pen and his sword with equal skill. He was of comparatively humble birth and 'made his way to the top of the service by sheer merit and ability.' Birbal's name is familiar to almost every Indian boy as a past-master of witty sayings. It was owing to this uncommon intellectual gift that he won the favour of the emperor and became 'a member of Akbar's innermost circle of friends.' Birbal's original name was Mahesh Das, and he was in the service of Raju Bhagwan Das whom he used to amuse with his music and story-telling and it was by Bhagwan Das that he was first introduced to the Court of Akbar. Birbal was amongst the very few Hindus who subscribed to the *Din-i-Ilahi*.

The most prominent amongst the intellectual luminaries of Akbar's Court was his friend and confidential adviser Abul Fazl. He has been compared by Vincent

Smith, to his contemporary Francis Bacon for combining in his person 'the parts of scholar, author, courtier, and man of affairs.' Abul Fazl is celebrated as the author of the *Ain-i-Akbari* and *Akbar Namah*. Abul Fazl's elder brother Faizi was in temperament different from him. He was entirely devoted to literary pursuits and unlike his brother cared very little for wealth or worldly honours. He was in charge of the imperial library and applied himself to the work of translating into Persian some of the important Sanskrit works on mathematics.

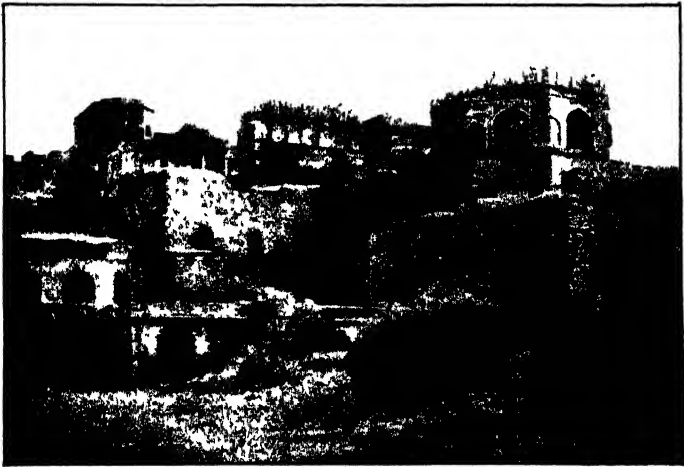
Art and literature made considerable progress during the long and prosperous reign of Akbar. Books on various subjects written by ancient authors treating of history, philosophy, religion and science were collected and placed in the imperial library. Poets and literary men flocked to the Court and received liberal donations from the emperor who gave them every possible encouragement. Among the Persian poets, Faizi was probably considered the best. Historians like Abul Fazl and Badaoni were considered among the prominent literary gems of Akbar's Court and with their help and under their supervision some of the standard Sanskrit works were translated into Persian. Amongst these may be mentioned *Atharva Veda*, the great epics *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* and the *Lilavati*, a celebrated treatise on Arithmetic.

'But the greatest author of the time,' observes Mr. Vincent Smith, 'Tulsi Das, the Hindi poet, does not seem to have been known to Akbar personally.' His noble work *Ramacharitamans* or Hindi *Ramayana*, adapted from the Sanskrit epic, is read by rich and poor, high and low, all over Northern India, and may be called the great national work of the Hindi-speaking population of India.

**Progress  
of litera-  
ture and  
art.**

**Tulsi Das  
and  
Sur Das.**

The other celebrated literary production in Hindi was the *Sur Sagar* of Sur Das, 'the blind bard of Agra.' Amongst the musicians of the age, first place may be given to Tansen. He was considered by Abul Fuzl as 'the best singer, the like of whom has not been seen in India for the last thousand years.' After living at the Court of Akbar for some time Tansen turned Muhammadan and was given the title of Mirza. He died in 1589 and was buried in Gwalior.



THE OLD FORT, FATEHPUR SIKRI

*From Allen's 'Narrative of Indian History.' By permission.*

Akbar loved building and like a cultured prince he possessed an excellent taste in art. As many as seventeen first rate artists, both Hindus and Muhammadans, were in constant attendance at the Court and their works received universal admiration.

Of the buildings of Akbar only a few survive to-day. Many of those built within the precincts of the Agra fort were subsequently pulled down by the order of his

grandson Shah Jahan whose canons of taste differed from those of Akbar. The best amongst the architectural works of the reign that have survived are the buildings at Fatehpur Sikri and the tomb of Humayun, near Dehli. The building of Fatehpur was begun in 1569 and finished about seven years later. It grew out of Akbar's desire to build a mosque for the use of the Saint Shaikh Salim Chishti who prophesied three sons to the emperor all of whom should survive. The first of these, who was also named Salim after the saint, was born in August, 1569 and the work of building the mosque and palaces was soon after taken in hand. It was occupied as the capital for nearly fifteen years after which it was deserted in favour of Agra in 1585. The 'Buland Darwaza' or the Lofly Portal of the mosque at Fatehpur is considered an admirable specimen of the architecture of the period.

Akbar was not fortunate in respect of his sons; and his greatest failure was, perhaps, in their upbringing. Of his three sons Prince Salim alone survived his father. The two younger Princes, Murad (born 1570) and Daniyal (born 1572) led very intemperate lives and died comparatively young in 1599 and 1604 respectively. The third Prince Salim, no less immoderate in the use of liquor, was saved from meeting the same fate, perhaps, owing to his stronger constitution. But apart from this he was a source of great annoyance to the old emperor in the later years of his reign. Early in 1600 when the emperor was far away in the Deccan busily engaged in reducing the fort of Asirgarh, Prince Salim who was then thirty-one years of age and was, probably, 'weary of waiting for the long-deferred and ardently-desired succession, broke into open rebellion, assumed the royal style and set up as an independent king in Allahabad. Akbar made all possible haste to return to his capital and sent threats

**Last days  
of Akbar.**

and remonstrances to his son but the prince was obdurate. In 1602 he gave further cause for grief to his father when he caused the murder of Akbar's most beloved friend and adviser Abul Fazl. Undoubtedly Akbar's end was hastened by these bitter experiences of his later years. On his death-bed in 1605 a formal reconciliation with his only surviving son took place and when the emperor passed away, Salim's popularity with the army secured him the succession to the throne of his father.

### NOTE ON THE DISCOVERY OF SEA-ROUTE TO INDIA AND THE JESUIT MISSIONS AT THE COURT OF AKBAR

We have had occasion to remark, in these pages, that the efforts of the Western European powers to re-open by way of the sea the ancient connection with India and of the Mughals to possess themselves of India began almost simultaneously. Now that we have made some advance in the narrative of the history of the Mughal conquest of India it is a convenient opportunity to give an outline of the progress made by the European powers in establishing trade relations in the country.

Commercial intercourse between India and Europe is, perhaps, as old as civilization. From the dim ages of the Assyrian and Egyptian monarchies it had continued to the Grecian, and Alexander's invasion gave it an enormous impetus. The channels of trade were many. Through Afghanistan and Central Asia, merchandise from Northern India went first to Kabul or Kandahar, and thence, by Balkh, Samarkand, Astrakhan and the Caspian, reached the Black Sea. A more southern line was through Persia to Damascus, or Alexandria; and in a greater or less degree, the whole of the coast of Asia Minor and Syria served as an *entrepôt* for the Indo-European trade. This was known as the great Asiatic land-route almost the whole of which was once controlled

**Old trade routes between East and West.**



by the Persian monarchs From Central and Southern India as well as from its eastern portion the sea was the only means of communication and was largely used by the Indians to carry on their trade with Ceylon, Africa and Egypt, at the proper season The Indian vessels used to leave the harbours of Cochin Calicut Goa and Gujarat during the north east monsoons and made rapid



VASCO DA GAMA

voyages to the Persian Gulf or to Aden, and also to the coasts of Egypt They discharged their cargoes at Cossien, Mocha or Jedo, in the Red Sea or at Bushair or Bussra, in the Persian Gulf. The emporia for the southern trade were Alexandria, Smyrna and other ports in the Mediterranean, and from these the Venetians and

the Genoese had almost a monopoly of the carrying trade to Europe. When Constantinople was taken by the Turks, in 1453, the special protection and privileges which the Genoese had received from the Greek emperors ceased and the European nations were obliged to discover a direct sea-route to India.

A direct sea-route to India was, about this time, considered practicable. The Portuguese sea-captains, in their pursuit of the 'hated Moors,' had already explored a part of the western coast of Africa as well as a portion of the interior of the country or the home of the Moors. A free use of scientific nautical instruments like the compass had removed a good deal of the terror of the ocean from the minds of the explorers

**Discovery of sea-route to India, 1498.**

who now began to venture further afield. Prince Henry of Portugal (1394-1460) started a regular school for the scientific training of seamen who would carry on the work of exploration. The result of these activities was that nearly the whole of the African coast became known to the Portuguese. By 1471 the Equator was crossed, and the Congo was reached in 1484; in 1486-87 Bartholomeo Diaz doubled the Cape of Good Hope; and ten years later Vasco da Gama, rounding the Cape of Good Hope sailed up the east coast of Africa and reached Mozambique. Ships from India were lying in the harbour of Melinda and he there obtained the services of an Indian pilot. He sailed for India on April 22, 1498 and after a month's voyage da Gama cast anchor near the beautiful city of Calicut.

The ruler of the place, called the Zamorin, did not prove hostile, but the Portuguese met with great opposition from the Muhammadan and Arab traders who had the monopoly of trade in these waters. Expedition after expedition was sent from Portugal till the claim of the Christian

**Progress of the Portuguese.**

nation to trade in the East was recognized and the Portuguese secured a foothold on the Indian coast. After Vasco da Gama, Albuquerque was sent in command of a naval squadron. He built a fort at Cochin by permission of the Zamorin; took Goa from the Bijapur Sultan (1510),<sup>1</sup> Diu from the ruler of Gujarat, and established fortified factories at Colombo and Malacca. The better seamaanship and artillery of the



ALBUQUERQUE

Portuguese soon drove out the Egyptian and the Gujarati fleet from the sea and before Albuquerque died in 1518, the current of maritime trade between East and West had been diverted from its ancient channels leading to the Mediterranean, to the Cape route leading to the Atlantic seaboard. The economic revolution which this involved opened a new book of fate for India and for Europe,

which will form a fit subject for the third volume of the present series.

As has been mentioned before, Akbar had started regular religious discussions in 1575 in which the representatives of various creeds used to take part. In 1579, the Christian missionaries were also invited to the Court and the emperor sent a formal letter of invitation to the authorities at Goa. The invitation was eagerly accepted and the missionaries selected for the purpose were Father Ridolfo Aquaviva, Father Antonio Monserate and Francesco Enriquez, a convert from Islam, who

<sup>1</sup> By this time the Bahmani kingdom had declined and the Governor of Bijapur had set up as an independent Sultan.

**Jesuit  
Missions  
at the  
Court of  
Akbar.**

had to act as interpreter. The mission left Goa by sea in November, 1579 and arrived at the Court at Fatehpur Sikri in February, 1580 where they were welcomed by the emperor and treated with great respect. The Jesuit fathers stayed at the Court for about three years after which Father Aquaviva was recalled. A second mission was sent in 1590 and still a third in 1595 which was received by the emperor at Lahore where the Court then resided. Although the Jesuits failed to win Akbar as a convert to Christianity as they had hoped to do in the beginning, yet the third mission attained a partial success inasmuch as they obtained permission to build chapels in Lahore and Agra, and preach their religion and to make converts if they could. The mission thus inaugurated became a more or less permanent institution in the capital cities of the Mughal dominions.

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## CHAPTER XIV

### Jahangir

#### A Mixture of Opposites, 1605-27

Accession of Jahangir—Rebellion of Prince Khusro—Nur Jahan—War with Ahmadnagar—Submission of Mewar—Affairs in the Panjab—Execution of Guru Arjun and the history of the Sikhs—Jahangir and the Jesuits—Captain Hawkins and Sir Thomas Roe—Loss of Kandahar—Mahabat Khan—Character of Jahangir.

**Accession  
of Jahangir,  
1605.**



JAHANGIR

Jahangir also secured the goodwill of the orthodox

As mentioned before, Akbar on his death-bed was partially reconciled to Prince Salim. The latter now ascended the throne at Agra, on October 24, 1605, a week after his father's death, and assumed the proud title of Jahangir or 'World-Grasper.' His habitual excess in drinking and his sullen temper afforded little prospect of a happy reign; nevertheless, his first acts gave promise of amendment. He confirmed most of his father's old officers in their appointment and thus allayed the fears and suspicions of men like Raja Man Singh and others who had supported the claims of Prince Khusro.

Muslim nobility by declaring that he would protect the Muhammadan religion. For the benefit of his subjects in general, he issued several edicts and salutary regulations, some of which exceeded even the reforms of his father in practical utility. Several customs and transit duties of a vexatious nature which had survived Akbar's reforms were now abolished and so was also the punishment of cutting off the ears and noses of criminals.

Akbar, when he was annoyed with Prince Salim for having gone into open revolt had held out a threat to him that he would pass over his claims to the succession in favour of Salim's son Prince Khusro. There were also strong partisans at Court, including Khusro's maternal uncle Raja Man Singh, to support the pretensions of the young Prince. Accordingly, shortly after his father Salim had been crowned as emperor, Prince Khusro either owing to fear of ill-treatment from his father or actuated by ambition or by both, quietly left Agra and advanced on Lahore with whatever troops he could collect on the way. Jahangir immediately followed him. The governor of Lahore refused to open the gates of the city to the Prince, who after some fighting turned north-westward in the hope of reaching Kabul. As ill luck would have it, the ferry-boat in which he was crossing the river Chenab ran on a sand-bank and the Prince was captured and brought before his father on April 27, 1606, heavily loaded with chains. The rebellion was suppressed in less than three weeks and Jahangir now determined to teach a thorough lesson to the Prince and his followers. About three hundred of these were arrested and impaled in a line outside the gate of Lahore and we learn from his *Memoirs* that while most were still living and writhing and shrieking in agony, the Emperor directed his son,

**Rebellion  
of Prince  
Khusro  
and his  
subse-  
quent  
history.**

placed on an elephant to be carried down the line. The other details given in the *Memoirs* regarding the treatment of some of the individuals are too revolting to be quoted. Prince Khusro was kept in the capital as a prisoner for some time, until in 1616, for reasons not known to us, he was made over to Asaf Khan's custody.



NUR MAHAL BEGUM

From Allen's 'Narrative of  
Indian History.'  
By permission.

Later, in 1620, the unfortunate prisoner was passed on to the custody of his brother, Prince Khurram who, as the emperor knew, was not well-disposed towards his brother. The inevitable result followed and one day early in March 1622, the news of the death of the Prince was made known to the people and the emperor. It is suspected that he was strangled by the order of his brother Khurram.<sup>1</sup> Since there was not much love lost between the father and son, Jahangir, in his

*Memoirs*, 'records his son's death without comment or expression of regret.' Khusro, as we learn from contemporary accounts given by Terry, Mundy and de Laet, was an amiable gentleman of charming manners and very popular with the people and the nobility. Long after his death his last resting place in Allahabad was visited by the people in a spirit of veneration and he was regarded as a 'martyred saint.'

<sup>1</sup> Long afterwards Aurangzeb is also said to have accused his father Shah Jahan of the murder of both his brothers Khusro and Parvez. Vide J. N. Sarkar, *History of Aurangzeb*, vol. iii, p. 175.

**Nur Jahan  
or the  
Light of  
the World.**

The celebrated Nur Jahan was born of Persian parents who emigrated from Persia to India under circumstances of great poverty. Her father Mirza Ghiyas succeeded in securing employment under Akbar, and his wife and young daughter Mihr-ur-Nisa were allowed access to the imperial harem. It was here that Jahangir had first seen the beautiful Mihr-ur-Nisa and became enamoured of her. When she came of age, she was, however, married to Ali Kuli Khan, surnamed Sher Afghan, upon whom the emperor settled a Jagir in Bengal (Burdwan). In 1607, Sher Afghan fell under the suspicion of the emperor Jahangir who sent Kutb-ud-Din Koka to remove him from his government of Burdwan. Sher Afghan refused to obey the imperial orders and in the affray that ensued both Kutb-ud-Din and Sher Afghan were killed. Sher Afghan's widow was brought to Court and for fully four years she 'resisted the ardent importunities of her imperial lover.' At last in 1611, she was persuaded to yield and consented to enter the royal harem as the chief queen of Jahangir. She was a beautiful and accomplished lady and even at the age of forty-four when she



GOLD COIN OF JAHANGIR  
(HOLDING UP A CUP OF WINE).

*From Allen's 'Narrative of Indian History.' By permission.*

was re-married to Jahangir her personal charms were so great that she soon acquired unbounded influence over her husband, or in other words 'conquered this world



conqueror (Jahangir).’ Her name was joined to that of the emperor on the coinage, a conjunction as Mr. Stanley Lane-Poole points out ‘unparalleled in the history of Muhammadan money.’ By degrees she became, in all but name, the undisputed sovereign of the empire, as the emperor left the conduct of State affairs entirely in the hands of his talented wife and was quite satisfied as long as he had ‘a bottle of wine and a piece of meat to keep him merry.’ Be it said to her credit that she administered the realm well and won golden opinions from all the people. Nur Jahan’s influence on her husband was also salutary to some extent inasmuch as he was persuaded by her to reduce his drinking to a more moderate amount.

It is only natural to expect that she made use of her power to advance the interests of her family. Her father Itmad-ud-Daulah, and her brother Asaf Khan, rose to high rank and with her help succeeded in creating a strong party of their own at the Court. Her daughter by Sher Afghan was given in marriage to Jahangir’s youngest son Shahryar, and this last connection as we shall subsequently see landed both herself and the emperor in trouble.

Towards the close of his reign, Akbar had succeeded in imposing his authority over Ahmadnagar; but an Abyssinian officer of the State, named Malik Ambar, restored the fallen dynasty of the Nizam Shahis. Malik Ambar was an industrious and talented minister of Ahmadnagar and is as famous for his revenue reforms in the history of the Deccan as is Raja Todar Mal in the history of Northern India. Taking advantage of the rebellion of Prince Khusro, Malik Ambar attacked the imperial forces in the Deccan, and with the help of his Maratha troops defeated the commander Khan-i-Khanan (Abdur Rahman), and re-captured Ahmadnagar in 1610. Khan-i-Khanan was recalled and in his place Khan Jahan was despatched to the Deccan. But as the attention of the emperor was too

**War with  
Ahmad-  
nagar,  
1610-  
1620.**

much engrossed in his marriage affairs with Nur Jahan, no new operations against Malik Ambar were undertaken at the time. In 1612, however, an army was directed to proceed to Khan Jahan's help from Gujarat, but this too failed to achieve any success against Malik Ambar. The Maratha cavalry of Ahmadnagar harassed the retreating imperial troops, and Prince Parvez and Khan Jahan Lodhi did not venture to attack Malik Ambar again. It may be mentioned here that among Ambar's Maratha allies was Shahji, the father of the famous Shivaji.

Affairs in the Deccan, however, continued to be a subject of vexation to the emperor. In the year 1616, he therefore sent another force commanded by Prince Khurram, who had recently received the title of 'Shah Jahan' for his victory over the Rana of Mewar. With short intervals of peace, war continued with Ahmadnagar until 1620 when Malik Ambar suffered a heavy defeat. Ahmadnagar was taken by the Mughals in the following year and the conflict was finally brought to a close by the death of Malik Ambar in 1629.

The brave Rana Pratap who had so long maintained the struggle for independence against Akbar died in 1597. His son Amar Singh succeeded him on the *gaddi* at Udaipur and was allowed to live unmolesated by Akbar for the rest of his reign, but Jahangir re-opened the war with the Rana and despatched a force under Mahabat Khan. The Rajputs bravely defended their country and the imperial troops retired without being able to accomplish anything decisive. The same fortune attended Abdullah Khan, who was sent the following year in command of the Mughal troops. In 1614, however, a more determined effort was made by Prince Khurram and he pressed the Rajputs so vigorously that they were reduced to extremes. The Rana, too, had become weary of a conflict

**Death of Malik Ambar and the close of the struggle.**

**Submission of Mewar, 1614.**

in which victories were almost as costly as defeats and he, accordingly, made his submission to the Mughal prince and consented to acknowledge the emperor as his overlord. Jahangir on this occasion did not forget the policy of his father and it is to his credit that he treated his gallant adversary generously and did what he could to soften the humiliation of defeat. All the country conquered from him since the invasion of Akbar was restored to the Rana and he was also given an assurance that he would not be compelled to attend court in person. The Rana's son Karan Singh was raised to the dignity of a 'commander of 5,000.'<sup>1</sup>

Jahangir was naturally delighted by this success over the Rana of Mewar which Akbar had failed to achieve. Another notable victory which attended Jahangir's arms in a direction in which his father had failed, was the reduction of the strong fortress of Kangra (1620) which had held out successfully at an earlier date against the armies of Akbar.

In June, 1606, there occurred an incident in the city of Lahore which had no small share in moulding the subsequent history of the Panjab. This was the execution of the Sikh Guru Arjun who had refused to pay the unjust and heavy fine (Rs. 2,00,000) imposed upon him by the emperor for having given his blessings and possibly a little monetary help to the rebel prince Khusro when he was in the Panjab. It will be a convenient opportunity here, to summarize briefly the history of the Sikhs who played an important part in the political history of

**Affairs in the Panjab : Conquest of Kangra.**

**Execution of the Sikh Guru Arjun.**

<sup>1</sup> After some time Jahangir is said to have done special honour to the Rana and his son by directing the artists at Ajmer to fashion their full-sized statues in marble. They were then removed to Agra and erected in the garden of the palace below the audience-window—a proceeding probably suggested by the action of Akbar who had done a similar thing in the case of Jai Mal and Fatah, the gallant defenders of Chitor. See also V. Smith, *Oxford History of India*, pp. 351 and 381.

the province during the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth century. The founder of the Sikh religion was Guru Nanak (1469-1538) and the movement was a part of that general religious revival which characterizes the history of India in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and which has been described at some length in a previous chapter.

Nanak was born at Talwandi (Nankana Sahib) in 1469.

**The found-  
ing and  
develop-  
ment of  
the Sikh  
Church:  
Guru  
Nanak.**

From his very childhood he was of a contemplative turn of mind and as he grew in years his love for spiritual enquiry increased and he eventually left his home and started itinerant preaching. Nanak travelled through the whole length and breadth of India and is also believed to have visited some places outside the country, such as Mecca, Medina and Persia. He ultimately settled at Kartarpur where he built a *dharmshala* (Sikh chapel) and continued to preach to the end of his life.

Nanak's mission in life was the purification of the Hindu religion and the reformation of society. He asserted most emphatically that the Brahmans and the *Mullahs* who followed religion as a profession were not the true guides to truth, that they were like blind men leading the blind, and that salvation lay only in devoting one's self to the service of God.

**Nanak's  
succes-  
sors and  
their con-  
tribution  
to the  
building  
up of the  
Sikh  
Church.**

Fortunately for the mission of Nanak, his successors were all very intelligent men and possessed great organizing ability, energy and devotion. Seventy years after his death, we find that, under the careful guidance of these successors, the movement had assumed a definite shape; and that his little following had grown into a power and a strong factor in society. Gurus Angad (1538-52), Amar Das (1552-74), Ram Das (1574-81), and Arjun Dev (1581-1606) succeeded Nanak during these seventy years and each

of them contributed his share towards strengthening the foundations of the religion.

Angad invented the Gurumukhi characters in which all the sacred and secular literature of the Sikhs is now written. Amar Das instituted the system of the diocesan *gaddis* throughout the country and in each diocese he appointed one influential and pious Sikh to act as the Vicegerent of the Guru and carry on the pastoral work in his diocese. Ram Das founded Amritsar—which eventually grew to be the central place of pilgrimage of the Sikhs. Arjun Dev further strengthened the foundations of the religion by organizing its finances and compiling the *Granth Sahib* which in the estimation of the Sikhs at once assumed a position equal to that of the Bible, the Kuran and the Vedas.'

The elements necessary for a theocratic State were now almost complete. The Sikhs had their religious code in the *Granth*, their holy city in Amritsar, and a chief in the person of their Guru. The finances of the community had also become regularized and systematic. The power and prestige of the Guru had increased and he was now becoming an important factor in the political life of the province. His alliance was sought by the Diwan, or Finance Minister, of Lahore who desired to give his daughter to the son of the Guru. But as the Guru, for some reason, did not accept the offer, the minister Chandu Shah became his enemy and brought about his execution when the Guru was arraigned for treason and fined by the order of Jahangir.

Jahangir's religious position, it seems, varied according to circumstances. To secure his succession to the throne, as has been remarked before, he professed himself an orthodox Muslim and broke off all intercourse with the Jesuit missionaries. A year afterwards they were again

**The Sikh Church becomes a theocratic State.**

**Jahangir and the Jesuits.**

in high favour at Court. They were allowed to retain their churches at Lahore and Agra and in the latter city, the missionaries also succeeded in converting about twenty men in the beginning of the year 1607. In Lahore, we are told, that 'church processions with full Catholic ceremonials were allowed to parade the streets and cash allowances were paid from the treasury for church expenses and the support of the converts.' Jahangir had taken a fancy to pictures of religious subjects from the Old and New Testaments and the lives of the Christian saints and ordered his palace walls to be decorated with such pictures. But a little later, in 1613, the Portuguese by their rash acts incurred the displeasure of the emperor who, in retaliation for their plundering the cargoes of imperial ships, ordered all Christian churches to be closed and imprisoned Father Jerome Xavier.

The Portuguese monopoly of the Indian commerce brought them large profits. Other European powers were naturally tempted to share that trade and the political decline of Portugal, perhaps, also favoured their designs. In 1580, Portugal ceased to exist as an independent power since Philip of Spain conquered the country and annexed it to his own dominions. Eight years later (1588) Spain also suffered a heavy loss both in power and prestige by the destruction of the *Armada*, after which bolder attacks were made on the Portuguese and Spanish monopoly by the English and the Dutch. In 1600, the English East India Company was also formed for the same purpose. Between 1600 and 1608, the East India Company sent as many as three expeditions to India, but they were attended only with partial success owing to the opposition of the Portuguese. Captain Hawkins, an adventurous English seaman, who commanded the ship *Hector*

**Captain  
Haw-  
kins at  
the Court  
of Jahan-  
gir,  
1608-11.**

arrived in 1608 having in his possession, a letter from King James I to the Emperor of India, 'The Great Mughal'. After much opposition he managed to proceed to Agra to deliver the letter in person. He was received honourably by the Emperor and as we learn from his own account<sup>1</sup> he soon became a favourite with and a boon companion of Jahangir. Hawkins lived at the Court for about three years and enjoyed the hospitality of the emperor but so far as the object of his mission



COURT OF THE GREAT MUGHAL, SHOWING THRONE,  
PROCESSION LEADING UP TO IT, AND ELEPHANT FIGHT  
*From Allen's 'Narrative of Indian History' By permission*

went, he was unsuccessful owing to the intrigues of the Portuguese Jesuit missionaries who were at this time in high favour. Hawkins is also said to have married an Armenian Christian lady at the bidding of the emperor.

<sup>1</sup> See *Purchas Pilgrimes*, edited by Maclehoze, 1905.

The informal mission of Hawkins was followed up by the embassy of Sir Thomas Roe, sent by James I, in 1615. Sir Thomas was a man of much higher standing than Hawkins. He had already gained some experience of oriental courts by his residence at Constantinople and was thus well qualified for the task assigned to him. He arrived at Surat in September 1615 and proceeded to the Court of Jahangir, then at Ajmer. Like Hawkins, Roe also remained at Court for about three years (1615-18), but he had one advantage which Hawkins had not. The Portuguese Jesuits had recently lost the favour of the emperor. Sir Thomas accordingly succeeded in obtaining a *firman* from the emperor permitting the English to trade at Surat. Sir Thomas Roe's Journal as well as that of his attendant clergyman Edward Terry form a very valuable contemporary source for Jahangir's reign, and the proceedings of the Mughal Court. Terry's account contains in addition a description of the country and its government. Some observations on the subject will be made at the proper place, but it may be mentioned here that these narratives show that bribery was rife among the officials and that travelling was not very safe between the coast and the capital.

We read in Jahangir's *Memoirs* that the bubonic plague broke out in the Panjab in the tenth year of his accession (1616). The disease attacked first the rats and mice as it does even to-day and then the infection spread rapidly among the people of the province.

Shah Abbas, the King of Persia, had long had his eye on the province of Kandahar and when he saw that Jahangir could not be persuaded to relinquish his claim over this frontier province of his empire, the Shah took it by force without much trouble. Jahangir ordered his son Prince

**Sir  
Thomas  
Roe.**

**Bubonic  
plague,  
1616.**

**Loss of  
Kandahar,  
1622.**



Shah Jahan to take command of the expeditionary force that was to be sent for the recovery of the town. But Shah Jahan, whether rightly or wrongly, interpreted the order in a different light. He conceived that service in the frontier campaign was only a pretext for removing him from India and since he did not want to imperil his succession to the throne by his absence he declined to accept the command. Prince Shahryar was then nominated in his place but before the expeditionary force left the capital the news of Shah Jahan's revolt reached the emperor and the intended campaign was postponed.

Shah Jahan with his troops marched upon Agra in January 1623. The emperor who had been at Lahore, set out to oppose him and the armies met at Balochpur, to the south of Dehli, where partial engagements took place and Shah Jahan's army suffered some loss. The Prince retired to the Deccan through Malwa but failing to secure any help from the governor of Gujarat he proceeded to Burhanpur and then passing through Telingana entered Bengal by the coast route early in 1624. Here his cause was warmly espoused by the local authorities and he easily obtained possession of Bengal and Berar. But the prince Parvez and Mahabat Khan who commanded the pursuing army marched from Burhanpur direct upon Allahabad and in an action which ensued, completely defeated Shah Jahan and obliged him to retrace his steps into the Deccan. Here he tried to make friends with his old enemy Malik Ambar and the other rulers of the south. In 1625 a sort of peace was patched up between the prince and his father and Shah Jahan agreed to surrender Rohtas and Asirgarh and sent his two sons Aurangzeb and Dara Shikoh, to court as hostages.

**Rebellion  
of Shah  
Jahan,  
1623-25.**

Nur Jahan had become jealous of the growing power and influence of the general Mahabat Khan, the more so as he was favourably disposed towards Shah Jahan. He was accordingly summoned to Court early in 1626, but as he suspected some treachery Mahabat came suitably escorted by his 5,000 loyal Rajput attendants. The emperor with his consort Nur Jahan was encamped on the Jhelum on his way to Kabul, and was about to cross the river with his body-guard—the main army having already gone over to the other side of the river—when Mahabat Khan's horsemen surrounded the imperial tents and captured the person of the emperor. The empress quietly stole to the other side of the river, joined the imperial army and made an unsuccessful attempt to rescue her husband. She was allowed to accompany her royal consort as a captive to Kabul. But where force failed woman's wiles succeeded. Mahabat Khan was thrown off his guard and Jahangir was enabled to escape to his army and to regain his freedom and authority. Mahabat Khan was obliged to fly and join Shah Jahan in the Deccan.

Jahangir, owing to ill-health, was unable to punish the insolence of the turbulent Mahabat Khan. From Kabul he proceeded to Kashmir, but as he found the climate of the valley too severe he returned to Lahore and died on the way near Bhimbar on October 28, 1627. The dead body of the emperor was brought to Lahore and interred in the mausoleum he had prepared for himself outside the city.

Our sources of information regarding the period of Jahangir's rule are many and valuable. The emperor's own memoirs cover a period of nineteen years of his reign and present a true pen-picture of himself. Besides that we possess

**Mahabat Khan seizes the person of the emperor.**

**Death of Jahangir, October, 1627.**

**Jahangir's character.**

the accounts of several Englishmen who visited the Court of the emperor and enjoyed many opportunities of observing closely the state of affairs at that Court. Most prominent amongst these were Captain Hawkins, Sir Thomas Roe, and the two clergymen, Terry and Ovington. Almost all these accounts including the *Memoirs* indicate that Jahangir was possessed of considerable natural abilities but unfortunately these abilities were marred by habitual and excessive drinking. 'By day he was the picture of temperance, at night he became exceedingly glorious in the company of his nobles.' He knew how to maintain discipline. What was done in the evening was entirely ignored in the morning, and any noble who ventured to approach the daily levee with the least odour of wine upon him was destined to certain punishment. Although several incidents mentioned in his *Memoirs* leave an impression on the mind of the reader that Jahangir possessed a violent temper and was capable of the most fiendish cruelty, yet on a second thought one is inclined to believe that it was not entirely so. He was not cruel by nature. It was rather the result of excessive intemperance which brought about these fits of violent temper, for when he was sober he was magnanimous and forgiving. He used to lavish gifts on all who were needy and resorted to his presence for help. He was anxious to see that his poorer subjects were not molested by the powerful members of the nobility. To redress the wrongs of the people Jahangir had a chain and bell attached to his room at the palace so that all who would appeal to him could attract his attention directly without having to approach him through an official. Jahangir's reputation for justice still endures in the country.

His personal accomplishments were not few. He was widely read and could write sufficiently well in the Persian language. He also extended a liberal patronage

to authors and *Farhang-i-Jahangiri*, a valuable Persian dictionary is an enduring monument of that patronage. Jahangir seems to have been interested in Nature study and his *Memoirs* contain frequent references to the peculiar *fauna* and *flora* of the valley of Kashmir. A reference has already been made to the emperor's love of art and we discover from his *Memoirs* the names of two very eminent painters of the reign, i.e., Abdul Hasan and Ustad Mansur, both of whom were liberally patronized by the emperor.

**Jahangir's  
personal  
attain-  
ments and  
his love of  
art and  
literature.**

## CHAPTER XV

### 'The Builder of the Taj'

**Shah Jahan, 1628-1656**

Disputed succession—Rebellion of Khan Jahan Lodhi, etc.—  
Capture of Hugh—Ambitious Mughal policy in the Deccan—  
Deccan affairs—Operations against Kandahar—War of succession  
—Aurangzeb's treatment of his brothers—Death of Shah Jahan—  
Art and architecture of Shah Jahan's reign.

Prince Khusro and Prince Parvez had predeceased their father Jahangir, and the two surviving princes Khurram and Shahryar now disputed the succession to the throne on the death of their father. Each of these had his own partisans at Court. Prince Shahryar was married to the daughter of Nur Jahan by her former husband Sher Afghan and Prince Khurram had married Mumtaz Mahal, daughter of Nur Jahan's brother Asaf Khan. Shah Jahan was still in disgrace in the Deccan when his father died in October, 1627, and Shahryar was at Agra from whence he at once hurried off to Lahore to join Nur Jahan. In the meantime Asaf Khan busied himself in the interest of his son-in-law and placed on the throne Dawar Bakhsh, son of late prince Khusro, as a stop-gap emperor till the arrival of Shah Jahan from the south. Shahryar was no match for Asaf Khan's strategy and cunning. He was soon defeated and imprisoned by the latter and the dowager empress Nur Jahan also, seeing that her cause was lost, retired into a privacy, from which she never emerged. When Shah Jahan arrived at Agra early in February, 1628, Dawar Bakhsh was quietly removed from the throne and allowed to retire to Persia where he spent the rest of his life living on

the charity of the Shah. He was fortunate, however, to have escaped with his life, since the rest of his



SHAH JAHAN

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Indian Museum*

collaterals were all secretly put to death by the order of Shah Jahan. 'Kingship knows no kinship' and this inhuman act was faithfully copied by his son, as we shall see later on.

In the first year of Shah Jahan's reign, the turbulent Bundela Rajputs, taking advantage of the difficult nature of their country, Bundelkhand, revolted under the leadership of their valiant Raja Jhujhar Singh. The rebellion was soon suppressed but the Raja eluded the grasp of the imperial forces and continued to give

**Rebellion  
of the  
Bundela  
Rajputs.**

them trouble from his mountainous retreat till he was killed in a chance skirmish with the Gonds who occupied these wild regions.

The rebellion of Khan Jahan Lodhi, the commander-in-chief and viceroy of the Deccan, was of more moment, and became ultimately the foundation of a greater interference in, and control over Deccan affairs, than had ever yet been exercised. Khan Jahan was originally an Afghan adventurer and had risen by his personal valour and skill to the highest rank. He now allied himself with the Sultan of Ahmadnagar and went into rebellion. Shah Jahan understood the seriousness of the situation. If Khan Jahan should succeed in making a confederacy of the southern powers and himself take the lead of their combined troops, the emperor knew very well that it would be difficult to retain the southern provinces of the empire. He therefore proceeded to the Deccan, in person, in 1629, to conduct the campaign. As was anticipated by the emperor, his general Azim Khan proved more than a match for Khan Jahan whom he drove from place to place forcing him ultimately to retreat to the south to seek shelter with the Sultan of Bijapur. Lodhi's Maratha allies like Shahji and his cousin Kaluji Bhonsla made voluntary submission to the emperor and were confirmed in their *jagirs* as the emperor's feudal retainers. Khan Jahan having tried his luck at Bijapur and failed, proceeded to Bundelkhand in the hope of inciting its lawless chiefs to rebellion. Here again he was disappointed and the local chiefs, so far from assisting him, opposed his further march, and he was slain fighting them near the fort of Kalanjar, in 1630.

Another event of some note in the early years of Shah Jahan's reign was the destruction of the Portuguese settlement at Hugli, in 1632. The town of

**Rebellion  
of Khan  
Jahan  
Lodhi.**

Hugli,<sup>1</sup> situated on the bank of the river had of late risen to importance owing to the Portuguese factories there. The Portuguese settlers, besides their usual vocation of commerce, also indulged in slave trade and very frequently used to seize the orphan children of Hindus and Muhammadans and forcibly convert them to Christianity. By such proceedings they gave offence to the local authorities and early in the year 1632 some of their men incurred the displeasure of the empress by seizing two slave girls who were claimed by Mumtaz Mahal. The emperor issued an order for a wholesale destruction of their settlements in Bengal and the governor Kasim Khan accordingly captured the town and razed the Portuguese fort and factories to the ground. It must be mentioned, however, in this connection, that a handful of the Portuguese garrison (1,000 men) in the town made such a heroic resistance against the huge army of Kasim Khan, which is said to have numbered about 15,000 men, that it took him fully three months to reduce this weak settlement at Hugli.

It will be remembered that during the last five years of his reign (1600-5) Akbar was almost constantly engaged in campaigns against the Nizam Shahi State of Ahmadnagar. Although he did not meet with such complete success in the south as he had in the north, yet he was able to annex to his vast dominion the whole of the kingdom of Khaudesh and a smaller portion of Ahmadnagar. The ambitious policy of extending to the south the dominions of the empire of Delhi, which was initiated by Akbar and which his sudden death

**Ambitious  
Mughal  
Policy in  
the  
Deccan.**

<sup>1</sup> It has been suggested that the name of the town which is variously spelt in old records as *ogolim* owes its origin to the Portuguese. It is probably a corruption of *ogolim* meaning in the Portuguese language ‘the godown or store-house.’ V. Smith, *Oxford History of India*.



prevented him from carrying out in its entirety, was transmitted as a sort of family legacy to his successors. Jahangir, Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb had not much to do in the way of conquest in the north, as the whole of Northern India had already been consolidated into one united kingdom by Akbar. Every one of them could, therefore, conveniently spare time, money and military resources to be employed freely in executing their family policy of reducing the southern States to submission and as we shall presently see every one of Akbar's successors contributed his share towards that end till Aurangzeb pushed the policy to its logical conclusion and obliterated the two surviving Sultanates of Golkonda and Bijapur from the political map of India. It was in pursuance of this policy that Jahangir was involved in a war with Malik Ambar, the able Abyssinian minister of Ahmadnagar, of which mention has already been made, and it was in this war that Shah Jahan as a prince had won his spurs. Now that he had come to the throne and had a little leisure, he resumed his design of the conquest of the south.

If an excuse were needed Ahmadnagar's help to the rebellious Khan Jahan Lodhi was a sufficient pretext for Shah Jahan to march to the south. Khan Jahan Lodhi had escaped from the south and was subsequently killed in Bundelkhand, but war with Ahmadnagar did not cease with his death. Internal dissensions in the State further favoured the emperor's designs. The Sultan Murtaza Nizam had fallen out with his minister Fateh Khan, son of Malik Ambar, and had thrown him into prison but having experienced nothing but failure in his struggle with the Mughal generals he soon released the minister and restored him to power. The Abyssinian, more mindful of his former injuries than recent favours, applied his

**War with Ahmadnagar and the extinction of the Nizam Shahi Dynasty.**

newly gained liberty to the destruction of the king. He accordingly put himself in communication with Shah Jahan, and on receiving instructions from the latter, seized the person of the Sultan, put him into confinement and quietly got him murdered. A minor member of the royal family named Hussain Shah was placed on the throne and Fateh Khan became the chief man in the state. But he proved as faithless to Shah Jahan as he had been to his sovereign. The fort of Daulatabad had been fortified by his father Malik Ambar and was now in the possession of Fateh Khan. Fateh Khan's recent conduct against Sultan Murtaza had very much incensed Shahji Bhonsla—a powerful Maratha noble of Ahmadnagar who persuaded the Sultan of Bijapur to attack Daulatabad and punish the usurper Fateh Khan, and Bhonsla himself joined the Bijapur army. On behalf of the emperor, Mahabat Khan, who had been left as viceroy of the Deccan, proceeded to the relief of the fortress. Fateh Khan at once changed sides, and refused to give up the fortress. Mahabat Khan now invested it but the garrison stoutly held out till at the end of two months, the Khan-i-Khanan (Mahabat Khan) despairing of any success bought off Fateh Khan and the garrison. The fort was surrendered and the young Sultan Hussain Shah was captured and sent as a state prisoner to Gwalior and the kingdom of the Nizam Shahis was ended (A.D. 1632). Fateh Khan was rewarded for this treacherous conduct by Shah Jahan and was taken into the imperial service and granted a liberal salary.

Of the five kingdoms into which the Bahmani empire of the Deccan had broken up towards the close of the fifteenth century two were thus gone and absorbed into the Mughal dominion, namely, the Imad Shahi of Berar and Nizam Shahi of Ahmadnagar. The Barid Shahi of Bidar which represented the residue of the original Bahmani

**Fate of  
the  
Deccan  
Kingdoms.**

kingdom was automatically reduced to a local chieftainship and ceased to exist as an independent kingdom of any note. The remaining two, viz., the Adil Shahi of Bijapur and the Kutb Shahi of Golkonda were still powerful and Shah Jahan next turned his attention towards these.

In 1631, when the imperial troops advanced against Ahmadnagar, Muhamad Adil Shah of Bijapur, fearing a similar fate for his own kingdom, had made common cause with Murtaza Nizam. But Murtaza, as has been related, was murdered by his minister Fateh Khan who had for the time being acknowledged the sovereignty of the emperor of Dehli. Muhammad Adil's open defiance of the Mughals now drew upon him the whole brunt of their power; and he was besieged in his capital by Asaf Khan (1631). But the Bijapuris bravely defended their city. The Maratha light cavalry in the service of the State cut off all supplies of grain and forage from the Mughal army, which was eventually obliged to abandon the siege and Bijapur was saved. There was thus a respite<sup>1</sup> for some time till in 1635 Shah Jahan resumed his operations against the kingdoms of the south. This was necessitated by the proceedings of the Maratha chieftain Shahji Bhonsla who played an important part in the military and diplomatic history of southern States during these years. Shahji taking advantage of the absence of Mahabat Khan from the Deccan, set up another prince of the Ahmadnagar house, and in his name re-occupied the whole of the western portion of the old dominions, as far as the sea.

<sup>1</sup> The emperor had gone back to Agra (1631). A famine had occurred in Northern India and the emperor had also lost his beloved wife Mumtaz Mahal in June, 1631. He was now occupied in the planning and building of the Taj in memory of Mumtaz.

The emperor now sent written commands to the Sultans of both Golkonda and Bijapur requiring them to recognize his suzerainty and to abstain from the support of Shahji Bhonsla and his allies of Ahmadnagar. In case of refusal they were threatened with an invasion of their kingdoms. The ruler of Golkonda complied with all the demands of the emperor, consented to pay a regular annual tribute, to read the *Khutba* and to strike coins in the name of Shah Jahan.

**Imperial commands issued to the rulers of Bijapur and Golkonda.**

The Sultan of Bijapur, however, felt strong enough to resist the imperial aggression. Shah Jahan accordingly divided his army into two portions; one was to act against Shahji Bhonsla, the other, under the command of Khan Dowran was directed against Bijapur. The capital was again besieged, and the mode of defence which had been successful before was again resorted to, but unfortunately, it was not attended with the same amount of success. The districts around the capital were deserted, wells of water were poisoned and the lands immediately surrounding the city were flooded with water and the besieging army was very much harassed. The capital city was thus saved but the rest of the country was ruthlessly plundered by incensed imperial troops. A great havoc was caused in the country of the 'hapless Sultan' and he was constrained to sue for terms of peace. A treaty was drawn up and the Sultan agreed to pay a 'peace offering' of twenty lakhs of rupees; and respect the integrity of Golkonda which Shah Jahan now claimed as a tributary State. Shahji Bhonsla also saw the futility of resistance and submitted to the emperor; Ahmadnagar was thus definitely blotted out of existence and its territories were divided between the Sultan of Bijapur and Shah Jahan. This happened in 1636.

**The Sultan of Bijapur is made to acknowledge the suzerainty of Shah Jahan.**

The Deccan was thus pacified and the settlement so effected lasted for about twenty years. The emperor retired to Agra and the charge of the Deccan was placed under the young prince Aurangzeb. His charge comprised Khandesh, Berar, Telingana and Daulatabad—a fairly extensive portion containing about sixty-four strong forts and estimated to yield an annual income of about five crores of rupees. Aurangzeb, during the period of his viceroyalty of eight years (1636-44) also made a valuable addition by annexing a strip of territory in the hills near Nasik. In 1644, however, when he had gone to Agra to see his sister Princess Jahanara, who was seriously ill, he resigned his appointment and retired into private life for a while.<sup>1</sup>

**Pacifica-  
tion of the  
Deccan  
and the  
appoint-  
ment of  
Prince  
Aurang-  
zeb as the  
viceroy of  
the South.**

**Opera-  
tions  
against  
Kandahar—  
its strate-  
gical im-  
portance.**

Shah Jahan's armies, as we have seen, could ravage the Deccan ruthlessly and force the Sultans of Golkonda and Bijapur to pay tribute. With a huge army (150,000 men) his generals could capture the Portuguese Settlement at Hugli defended by a garrison of barely a thousand. But when the Great Mughal vain-gloriously embarked on a campaign to recover the Central Asian territories of his ancestor Timur—Kandahar, Balkh and Badakhshan, the weakness of his army showed itself. As many as three campaigns were undertaken for the recovery of Kandahar between 1648 and 1653 and Shah Jahan tried his sons Princes Aurangzeb and Dara Shikoh together with his best military officers, but failed to achieve a permanent success. Situated as it is on one

<sup>1</sup> Whether it was under compulsion or otherwise that Aurangzeb was made to resign his appointment is not definite. Dara Shikoh certainly had his hand in it. In fact, it was as a protest against his brother's jealous interference with his work and Shah Jahan's partiality to his eldest son that Aurangzeb gave up his appointment and took to a life of retirement for the time being. See also *Aurangzeb*, vol. i, by J. N. Sarkar.

of the principal roads leading from Central Asia to India the possession of Kandahar was of immense value to the emperor of India both by virtue of its strategical position and as the principal commercial station on the trade route between India and Persia. It had, therefore, been the subject of contention between the Shahs of Persia and the Mughal emperors of India for a very long time. The family connection of the Mughals with Kandahar begins as early as 1522, if not earlier. It was in that year that Babur wrested the town from the rule of Herat. In 1545, Humayun captured the fort of Kandahar from his brother Askari—it then remained attached to Dehli for some time, but during the troubled days of that prince it became a province of Persia. Akbar, however, again recovered it in 1594 when after thirty years’ possession it was again lost to the emperor of Dehli in 1623 during the reign of Jahangir.

No serious effort was made between the years 1623 and 1638 for the recovery of Kandahar but now that the transactions in the Deccan were concluded Shah Jahan turned his attention to this important frontier post. The Persian governor of the town, Ali Mardan Khan, was not satisfied with the treatment of his sovereign and with a little pressure combined with the temptation of gold from Shah Jahan, he betrayed the fort into the hands of the Mughal officers and himself took refuge at Dehli. He was received, as may well be supposed, with great honour at the Mughal Court and was afterwards at different times made governor of Kashmir and Kabul and employed on various military and other duties. The fame of this engineer-general has been perpetuated in India by the great public works which were executed under his guidance such as the great canal near Dehli and the Shalimar gardens at Lahore.

**Ali Mardan Khan makes over the fortress to the Mughals.**

Shah Jahan was actuated with the desire of conquering Balkh and Badakhshan because, as stated by his historian Abdul Hamid Lahori, they were the heritage of Babur and also lay on the way to Samarkand, the capital of the empire of Timur. In 1645, taking advantage of the confusion in the State of Balkh, Shah Jahan despatched a force under Ali Mardan Khan and Prince Murad Baksh, but the Uzbeks proved too strong for the Indian armies. Prince Aurangzeb and Said Ullah Khan next tried with a contingent of Rajput horse but all attempts to reduce and retain Balkh and Badakhshan (1645-47) proved abortive.

**Opera-  
tions  
against  
Balkh and  
Badakh-  
shan.**

After his failure at Balkh, Prince Aurangzeb was sent to the government of Multan but was soon recalled to take charge of the expeditionary force to be sent to Kandahar, since the Shah of Persia was making preparations to recover the fort. Aurangzeb arrived a little too late. The fort had surrendered, the garrison capitulating on February 11, 1649. The combined troops of Aurangzeb and Said Ullah attacked the city of Kandahar but without effect. In September the siege was raised and Aurangzeb returned.

**The  
Mughals  
fail to  
recover  
Kandahar.**

Two more attempts were made to recover the important town in 1652-53 and both the princes Aurangzeb and Dara were tried, but against the superior skill and strategy of the Persians their efforts proved unavailing and the emperor was obliged to give up all hopes of the recovery of his ancestral possession.

A sudden illness of Shah Jahan early in 1657 led to a scramble for the throne among his four sons. A disputed succession had become a tradition in the Mughal family. Humayun, Akbar, Jahangir and Shah Jahan had all found themselves compelled to combat the rivalry of their near relatives. Even the fact that the sons of Shah Jahan were born of the same

**Disputed  
succe-  
sion—  
a tradition  
in the  
Mughal  
family.**

mother did not dispose any one of the brothers to waive his traditional right to fight for the throne. Each of them as we know was of a mature age, and in 1657 Dara Shikoh was aged forty-three, Shujah forty-one, Aurangzeb thirty-nine, and Murad Bakhsh about thirty-three years. All four had gained considerable experience in military and civil affairs and each of them at the time of the struggle was a provincial viceroy, and had a standing army under his orders. Dara Shikoh was the governor of the Panjab but he used to live at the Court near his father. Shujah held charge of Bengal, Murad of Gujarat and Aurangzeb of the Deccan.

Each of the four princes possessed marked traits of conduct and character which had no small share in deciding the issue of the struggle in his favour or against him. The eldest Dara possessed considerable natural abilities but owing to his violent temper and proud and haughty manner he had made several enemies at the Court. His eclectic spirit in religion also went against his political interests as orthodox Muslims like

**Conduct  
and  
character  
of the  
sons of  
Shah  
Jahan.**



COIN OF SHUJAH, A.H. 1068 = A.D. 1657

*From Allen's 'Narrative of Indian History.' By permission.*

Aurangzeb and others of his way of thinking regarded Dara Shikoh as a heretic who deserved no sympathies from his co-religionists. Shujah was so much addicted to pleasure and luxury that his intellect and mental faculties were impaired and he could not take instant



action at the decisive moment. Shujah had also another disadvantage. He subscribed to the Shia faith and had thus incurred the displeasure of the orthodox Sunni section of the court nobility. Murad was a brave and plucky soldier but was otherwise foolish, pleasure-loving and unbusiness-like. He was also simple-minded and easily deceived. Aurangzeb not wanting in daring and pluck as a soldier, was also deep in counsel, crafty in action and cold and calculating by nature. He was also known as highly religious holding the orthodox Sunni views and had, therefore, on his side the sympathies of the Muhammadian courtiers.

As soon as the news of the dangerous illness of Shah Jahan reached the provinces, the brothers occupied themselves in making necessary preparations for the impending struggle. Shujah was the first to break out. Early in September, 1657, he assumed the imperial title, enthroned himself at Rajmahal, the capital of his province of Bengal and struck coins in his own name. The next to assume the offensive was Murad who proclaimed

**Shujah and Murad assume Imperial titles in their respective Viceroyalties.**



COIN OF MURAD BAKHSI, STRUCK AT SURAT, A.H. 1068=A.D. 1657  
From Allen's 'Narrative of Indian History.' By permission.

himself emperor at Ahmadabad, the capital of Gujarat. Aurangzeb himself refrained from taking any hasty action but otherwise took every precaution to conceal his

movements. In October he posted strong and confidential guards at all the ferries over the Narbada and put himself in communication with his sister Roshanara to keep him informed about all that was going on in the capital at Agra.<sup>1</sup> Thus from his post in the Deccan, with one eye on Mir Jumla’s European artillery and the other on Dara Shikoh (through his sister Roshanara), Aurangzeb began to cajole the simple-minded Murad into an agreement for dividing the empire. The agreement between the brothers was solemnly recorded in writing and was to the effect that Murad should receive the Panjab, Kabul, Kashmir and Sindh, while Aurangzeb should take the rest. The two now moved out to march upon Agra and effected a junction outside Dipalpur in Malwa.

Shah Jahan’s health was now partly restored and he sought to secure the succession of his eldest son Dara Shikoh. A force was accordingly despatched under the command of Dara’s son Sulaiman Shikoh and Mirza Raja Jai Singh to oppose the advance of Shujah who had marched out from Bengal on his own behalf and had come as far as Benares. A battle was fought at Bahadurgarh in February, 1658, in which Shujah was defeated. Another force commanded by Maharaja Jaswant Singh and Kasim Khan was sent from Agra to fight the combined troops of Murad and Aurangzeb. The hostile armies met at Dharmat near Ujjain on April 15, 1658. The divided command of Maharaja Jaswant Singh and his Muslim colleague bore an evil result. The imperialists were

**Struggle for the throne—battles of Bahadurgarh, Dharmat and Samugarh.**

<sup>1</sup> Roshanara and Jahanara were the two daughters of Shah Jahan. Both these sisters, it may be noted, had played quite an active part in the war of succession. Jahanara was devoted to the cause of her brother Dara and the two together had considerable influence over their father during the last days of his rule. Roshanara, the younger of the sisters, took the side of Aurangzeb and, during the early stages of the struggle, kept that prince informed of the movements at Court.

utterly defeated and the victorious princes pressed on, and were able to secure the passage of the Chambal. Dara was not, however, indifferent to the progress of events. He immediately collected a large force and marched out to meet the advancing army of his brothers. Rash and headstrong as he was he would neither listen to the advice of his father nor would he await the arrival of a second army previously sent under his son against Shujah. As to the army he now had with him, its sympathies were, probably, more with Aurangzeb than with himself. The armies met at Samugarh on May 29. The Rajputs fought most desperately and 'did honour to their race.' The princes Murad and Aurangzeb who had all at stake themselves fought in the forefront and risked their lives without hesitation. Unluckily Dara's elephant was badly wounded by an arrow and when he mounted a horse in its stead his troops missed his presence and there was a general panic among them. 'That action,' as says Mr. Smith, 'settled the fate of the battle.' The ranks of the imperialists were broken, and Dara fled from the field leaving his camp and guns to be captured by the victors. Aurangzeb now marched upon Agra and compelled his old father to surrender the fort by stopping the supply of drinking water from the Jumna (8th June).

The action at Samugarh really decided the war of succession. Shah Jahan was taken prisoner and all the treasures in the fort were now in the possession of Aurangzeb and Murad.

Aurangzeb had now to deal with his brother Murad who was no match for the former in craft and cunning. The two started in pursuit of Dara, who had fled towards Dehli. At Mathura, Aurangzeb saw his opportunity. He invited Murad to dinner in his camp and, after making him drunk, loaded him with heavy chains

**Aurangzeb's treatment of his brothers—execution of Murad.**

and sent him as prisoner to Dehli. From Dehli Murad was sent to Gwalior where he was executed (1661) on a charge of murder raked up against him at the instigation of Aurangzeb.

Murad being disposed of, Aurangzeb now turned more serious attention towards Shujah and Dara.

**Pursuit of Shujah and Dara.**

After his flight from the battlefield Dara proceeded to Dehli and from there he went to Lahore and subsequently to Multan, being all the time pursued by Aurangzeb. In September, however, Aurangzeb was obliged to leave the task of pursuit in the hands of his trusted officers and himself to turn back from Multan to meet the danger from Bengal where Shujah who had recovered from his defeat (Bahadurgarh, February, 1658), was making another bid for the throne. Aurangzeb advanced in person against him and on January 5, 1659, utterly routed Shujah's army at Khajwah. Mir Jumla pursued the prince with a large army and ultimately drove him across Bengal to Dacca and thence over the Arakan frontier in May, 1660. Nothing more was heard of Shujah and it is suspected that the prince and his family were murdered by the Arakanese.

When Aurangzeb himself was busy in crushing the opposition of Shujah in the eastern provinces his men were hunting the unfortunate Dara from place to place. From Multan he fled down the course of the Indus and with great difficulty made his way to Thatta (Tatta). Not being hospitably received here, Dara was compelled to cross the Indus delta and entered Kathchh (Cutch). But his followers were fast deserting him and he was now left with a very much diminished force. On that account he did not feel his position secure even in Cutch and therefore proceeded to Kathiawar. The governor of the province Shah Nawaz Khan was favourably inclined to

**Execution of Dara Shikoh.**

the prince, opened the city gates and then assisted him to occupy Surat. Here Dara was able to raise a large army and if he had been wise enough to listen to the counsel of his friends he could very easily have escaped to the Deccan where he would have become a dangerous rival to his brother. But he was constitutionally indisposed to listen to the advice of others and took rather the rash step of giving battle to the pursuing army, when he was again defeated near Ajmer. He now fled back into Sindh and sought shelter with a faithless Afghan chief named Jiwan Khan of Dadar, near the Bolan Pass. This treacherous host betrayed him to his pursuers on June 9, 1659. The unfortunate Dara was now brought to Dehli and paraded through the streets of the city, clad in rags and seated upon a mean and filthy elephant. This spectacle in which the traitor Jiwan Khan appeared riding on a horse alongside of Dara, excited a popular resentment which after a few days broke out into a riot directed against Jiwan Khan. Aurangzeb who was already thinking of putting an end to the life of his brother now gave the order for his execution.<sup>1</sup> 'On the night of that day (August 30),' writes Mr. Smith, 'brutal murderers tore away Sipihr Shikoh from his father's embrace, and, after a violent struggle beheaded Dara Shikoh.'

The fate of Dara's elder son was not less enviable.

**The fate  
of Sulaiman  
Shikoh.**

It will be remembered that he was sent in command of an army by his father against Shujah whom he had defeated in February, 1658, at Bahadurgarh near Benares. But it seems he was slow in his movements as he was not

<sup>1</sup> Aurangzeb seems to have preferred to kill his victims with all the forms of law if possible. Dara was put on his trial as an apostate from Islam and the theologians gave a verdict of death against him. Similar legal proceedings were observed in case of Murad and a death sentence was obtained against him from the Doctors of Muhammadan law in December, 1661.

able to return and join his father when the battle of Samugarh was fought in May, between Dara Shikoh and Aurangzeb. The result was that Sulaiman Shikoh had to flee for his life to Garhwal where he sought shelter with a local chief. In December, 1660, owing to the pressure applied by Aurangzeb the unfortunate prince was handed over to his uncle and sent as a prisoner to the fort of Gwalior where he was put to death ‘by the slow poison of *posta* or infusion of opium—poppy heads.’

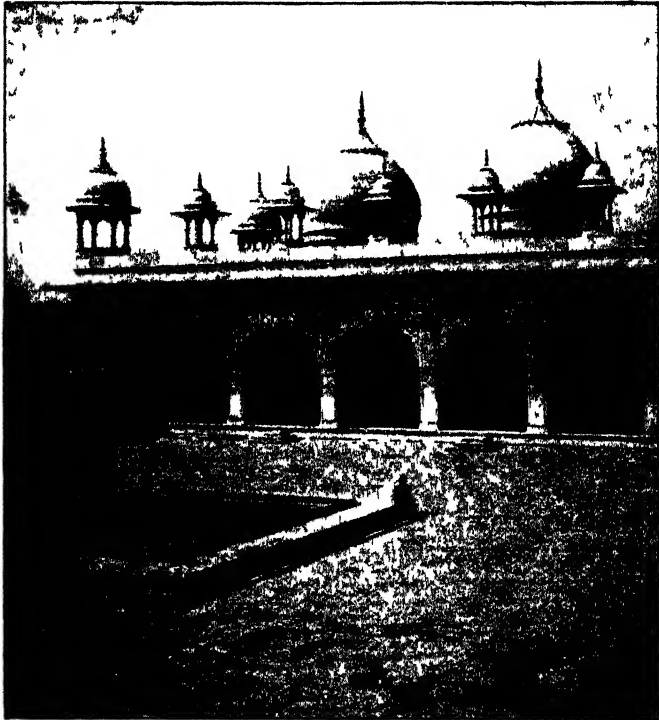
His younger brother, Sipihir Shikoh, was spared, and when he grew up Aurangzeb married him to his third daughter. The same treatment was accorded by Aurangzeb to his second nephew the son of Murad Bakhsh, who was married to the emperor’s fifth daughter. It appears, as Mr. Vincent Smith observes, that Aurangzeb, while not shrinking from any severity deemed necessary to secure his throne, had no taste for indiscriminate and needless bloodshed; and, when he felt his power established beyond danger of dispute by the sons of his brothers, was willing to allow the youths to live.

As already mentioned it was on June 8, 1658, that the fort of Agra was surrendered to Aurangzeb who took possession of its treasures and made his father a prisoner for life. From that day Shah Jahan may be said to have ceased to rule, although the new emperor, Aurangzeb did not go through an informal ceremony of enthronement till the third week of July. Thus closed the reign of Shah Jahan which had begun with a deep crime. The emperor, however, had partly redeemed his reputation by introducing certain wise measures in his administration. It is said that the Mughal empire reached the height of its glory during the reign of Shah Jahan

**Dara’s  
younger  
son Sipihir  
Shikoh  
spared  
and  
married to  
Aurang-  
zeb’s  
daughter.**

**Review of  
Shah  
Jahan’s  
reign.**

and, the Muhammadan historian Khafi Khan while comparing him with his grandfather remarks that 'Akbar was pre-eminent as conqueror and law-giver, Shah Jahan was pre-eminent as an administrator.' Tavernier, the French jeweller who visited India in the



A CORNER OF THE PEARL MOSQUE, AGRA

*From Allen's 'Narrative of Indian History' By permission.*

seventeenth century, also bears testimony to the vigorous administration of Shah Jahan and of the security enjoyed by the people during his reign. But one feels constrained to remark that the liberal and

catholic spirit which had helped Akbar to win the sympathy of the people and to build the empire died out when the empire appeared to be safe and strong; and ‘Shah Jahan signalized his reign by those unwise acts of intolerance which were copied by his son, and which eventually led to the ruin of the empire.’ We learn from Abdul Hamid, the author of *Badshah Nama*, that in 1632, the emperor gave orders for the destruction of all Hindu temples which had been begun in his reign. The order was carried out, and especially at Benares, the centre of Brahman orthodoxy, where as many as ‘seventy-six temples had been destroyed.’

Shah Jahan remained in confinement for eight years (1658-66) and during all his time he was faithfully served by his loving daughter Jahanara. It is believed that towards the close of his life, Shah Jahan became extremely devout, detaching himself from worldly affairs and occupying his time with religious exercises.’

Shah Jahan deserves most to be remembered for the glorious architecture of his reign. It is not possible to give in this small book, a description of the many noble edifices which were erected at Dehli, Agra and other places during his reign of thirty years. Among others those that are very well known are the Jama Masjid of Dehli, perhaps, the greatest mosque in India, the exquisite Pearl mosque (Moti Masjid) within the fort of Agra, the Lal Qila or the residential palace at Dehli with its beautiful and spacious halls of public and private audience, and above all the Taj of Agra which is considered as one of the ‘seven wonders’ of the world. To the world, at large, Shah Jahan is known as the builder of the Taj and the Peacock Throne. He spent lavishly on these

**His captivity and death.**

**Art and architecture of Shah Jahan's reign.**



buildings,<sup>1</sup> as he had a noble revenue and had also inherited a vast treasure from his father and grandfather. We know that owing to a strong government in Persia, during these years, a large and profitable caravan trade was kept up between India and western Asia; there was also a flourishing export trade to Europe by sea, mostly paid for in gold and silver bullion, for India was industrially self-supporting except, perhaps, for a few novelties which appealed to the taste of the ruling classes only. Both Jahangir and Shah Jahan, therefore, found plenty of money to spend on these costly edifices which have greatly assisted in perpetuating the memory of the Mughal emperors in the country.

The architecture and style of Shah Jahan's buildings are very different from those which were erected by Akbar and Jahangir. The mausoleum of Humayun, the buildings at Fatehpur Sikri, the tomb of Akbar at Sikandra and that of Itinad-ud-Daula at Agra and several other buildings, form a group by themselves and are built in what is known as the Indo-Persian style of architecture. The peculiar features that mark these buildings and distinguish them from those of Shah Jahan are their massiveness and strength, whereas the Taj, the Moti Masjid and the Diwan-i-khas at Dehli have something of romantic glitter and effeminate beauty about them. They are characterized by 'elegance rather than by strength, and by the lavish use of extraordinarily costly decoration.' Shah Jahan preferred marble to

<sup>1</sup> It is estimated by Abdul Hamid Lahori that Shah Jahan's buildings absorbed more than three million sterling (£3,065,625). For details see *Studies in Mughal India* by J. N. Sarkar, 1919, Calcutta, page 16. Of these buildings the Taj and the palaces at Dehli cost 50 lakhs each. The Peacock Throne is estimated to have cost at least one crore of rupees equivalent then to a million and a quarter pounds sterling.

the red sandstone which was favoured by Akbar and Jahangir. Another remarkable feature, namely, a mixture of Hindu-Muslim style, which is so prominent in the buildings of Akbar and Jahangir, is much less evident in the architectural works of Shah Jahan. Even the building of purely Hindu temples was prohibited by the order of the emperor in 1632.

## CHAPTER XVI

### Mughals and Marathas

#### Aurangzeb, 1658-1707

Enthronement of Aurangzeb—Wars on the eastern frontier—Aurangzeb's illness and his visit to Kashmir—Rise of the Marathas—Parentage and early life of Shivaji—Influence of environments on Shivaji—Shivaji commences his public career—Shivaji and Afzal Khan—Aurangzeb and Shivaji—Shayista Khan—Prince Muazzam and Raja Jai Singh—Shivaji at Agra—Prince Muazzam and Jaswant Singh—Coronation of Shivaji—Shivaji's death—Military and civil administration of Shivaji—Shivaji's character—His religious policy and his place in history.

Having gained possession of the palace and treasures at Agra and imprisoned his father (June 8) and his brother Murad Bakhsh (June 25)<sup>1</sup> Aurangzeb went through an informal ceremony of enthronement on July 21, 1658, but postponed to another occasion the adopting of the more regular signs of royalty, namely the inscribing of his name on the coinage and inserting it in the *Khutba* or 'bidding prayer.' This was done in June, 1659, when he was enthroned for the second time, with complete ceremonials, at Dehli. He now assumed the title of Alamgir. A couple of years after (1661) he received grand embassies from Persia and Bokhara, sent to congratulate him on his accession and the envoys, we understand, 'were treated to a sight of the lavish splendour of the Mughal Court.' All rivals to the throne having been removed, the new monarch now enjoyed a long period of comparative peace.

<sup>1</sup> A more detailed account of Aurangzeb's struggle for the throne and the fate of his father and brothers and other relations has been given in the preceding chapter.

As has been pointed out more than once in these pages, after the conquest and consolidation of the whole of Northern India into one compact kingdom by Akbar, there was very little to disturb the peace of Hindostan and his successors Jahangir and Shah Jahan were mostly occupied, so far as their military careers go, either in fighting against the Shah of Persia for the retention of Kandahar or in reducing to submission the Shia-Muslim kingdoms of the south. Aurangzeb's officers too, not having much to do within the limits of Northern India, found some scope for their energies on the eastern frontier of the empire.

Daud Khan, the governor of Bihar, conquered Palamau in December, 1661, and Mir Jumla was engaged in a war with the Assamese. Mir Jumla, it will be remembered, had been sent in pursuit of Shujah and had chased that prince from Bengal to Dacca and thence to the Arakan frontier. Aurangzeb who very probably wanted to keep such a powerful and ambitious general at a distance from the capital appointed him governor of Bengal, and did not disapprove of his activities on that frontier. He overran Kuch Bihar and Assam and penetrated further into this difficult country, possibly with the object of invading Chinese territory, but was driven back by floods and heavy rains and the lack of proper means of transport.

Mir Jumla returned greatly mortified, and worn out by the effects of climate and privation. He died before reaching Dacca on March 31, 1663.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mir Jumla had risen to this eminent position from a comparatively very humble station in life. He first came to India in connection with his business and then entered the service of the king of Golconda as a diamond merchant. Owing to his wealth and position at the court he became a great power in the State. In March, 1656, when he fell out with his master he accepted the

**Wars on  
the  
eastern  
frontier  
1661-66.**

**Mir Jumla  
overruns  
Assam,  
Arakan,  
etc.**

The new governor of Bengal, Shayista Khan (1664)<sup>1</sup> who had been recently recalled from the Deccan, also found something to occupy him on this frontier. Owing to the disorganized state of the Mughal flotilla, the Portuguese and the Burmese pirates were growing very bold and extended their ravages to the Dacca sub-division. He therefore added to the strength of the Bengal fleet by building a large number of new ships and attacked and compelled the king of Arakan to cede Chitagaon (Chittagong), the stronghold of these pirates, in January, 1666. The island of Sondip, in the Bay of Bengal, was also captured and piracy was put down.

In the summer of 1664<sup>2</sup> Aurangzeb had a serious attack of illness and was confined to his bed for more than a month. When he had recovered in the beginning of July and had gained sufficient strength to undertake a long journey, the emperor, on the advice of his physicians, proceeded to Kashmir to restore his health and spent a part of the cold weather in the valley. Doctor Bernier also accompanied the emperor on the march and, in a series of letters written to M. de Marveilles, the French physician gives an interesting account of the journey.

**Capture of Chittagong.**

**Aurangzeb's illness and his visit to Kashmir, 1665.**

overtures of Aurangzeb and joined him. In July of the same year Shah Jahan's prime minister, Saidullah Khan, died and Mir Jumla became the prime minister at Dehli. During the war of succession Mir Jumla was the right-hand man of Aurangzeb.

<sup>1</sup> Shayista Khan was Aurangzeb's maternal uncle. Owing to his failure against Shivaji (1660-63) he was recalled from the Deccan and sent back to Bengal. He was governor of Bengal for nearly thirty years. He died in 1694, at an advanced age of over ninety years.

<sup>2</sup> Professor Sarkar gives May to June, 1662, as the period of Aurangzeb's illness (*History of Aurangzeb*, vol. iii, p. 12). See also V. Smith, *Oxford History of India*, p. 425.

It was time that Aurangzeb turned his arms southwards, since a great power had arisen there and his governors and generals were not having a quiet time in the Deccan. This power was the Maratha power and Shivaji, the implacable leader of the Marathas, had gradually built up his strength and had become a very important factor in the politics of the south. We must, however, first go back some years and give some account of the Maratha people before we take up the story of the rise of Shivaji.

**Rise of the Marathas.**

**The physical features of the country and their influence on the history of the Maratha people.**

Owing to the peculiar nature of their country and its climate, the Marathas have developed certain physical features as well as moral qualities which mark them off from the rest of the population of India. The characteristic features of the Maharashtra country are the great mountain ranges which enclose it on two sides—the Sahyadri range running from north to south, and the Satpura and the Vindhya ranges running from east to west. The hill forts on the top of these ranges protect the naturally defensible position of the country and they have played an important part in its political history. The people of Maharashtra also enjoy a good and bracing climate. Owing to the uncertain rainfall and the rocky nature of the country, the soil is poor and 'yields to much labour a bare measure of subsistence.' Hence the country is sparsely inhabited. But such a country and climate have their compensating advantages, too. They develop certain moral virtues such as self-reliance, courage, perseverance and a stern simplicity which are not always the heritage of a people living in rich and fertile plains. The Marathas have developed these

qualities and 'they are all active, laborious, hardy and persevering.'<sup>1</sup>

To these qualities of character was added the sense of equality fostered by the popular religion of Maharashtra. We have had occasion to speak in a previous chapter, of the strong religious movements that arose and swept through the entire length and breadth of India in the fifteenth century and of which the Deccan had also its share. The main teachings of these leaders of thought were *bhakti* or devotion to God, and equality or oneness of all true believers before God without any distinction of class or birth. The *bhakti* movement quietly made its way into the humble ranks of society and united the people of Maharashtra in a common love of man and faith in one God. Their literature and language afforded another bond of union for the Maratha people. The religious reformers composed their devotional songs in the Marathi dialect and a large quantity of Marathi literature was produced during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The themes of the literature were taken from the ancient scriptures and epics which are the heritage of all the Hindus.

Thus a remarkable community of language, creed and life was attained in Maharashtra in the seventeenth century, even before political unity was conferred by Shivaji.<sup>2</sup> But even in political training the people of this country were not lacking. They had acquired the necessary training both in military and civil administration under the Muhammadan rulers of the southern

<sup>1</sup> Elphinstone, in his *History of India*, gives a vivid description of the country of the Marathas and the character of its people. The author also makes a few observations regarding a comparative estimate of the racial character of the two leading peoples of India, namely, the Rajputs and the Marathas.

<sup>2</sup> *Shivaji* by J. N. Sarkar, p. 15.

**Religion and literature—a great unifying force in Maharashtra.**

**Early civil and military training of the Marathas.**

kingdoms. Not only were the Marathas and Deccani Brahmans largely employed in the revenue department of these States, but some of them were appointed to the highest ministerial offices under their Muhammadan rulers. Murar Rao, Madan Pandit and several distinguished members of the Raj Rai family had, from time to time, filled the posts of ministers and *Diwans* in the Golkonda State. Narso Kale and Yesu Pandit are other prominent names among those who served with distinction under the Adil Shahi rulers of Bijapur. Brahman ambassadors were employed on diplomatic duties by the rulers of Ahmadnagar. The Maratha *Siledars* and *Barqis* also freely enrolled themselves in the military departments, first of the Bahmani kingdom and afterwards of the five States into which it was split up towards the end of the fifteenth century. This training in arms and in civil employment brought education, power and wealth with it, and in the sixteenth century we meet with the names of several powerful families who enjoyed military fiefs under the Musalman rulers. Even in these pages we have had occasion to refer to the prominent part played in the politics of Ahmadnagar and Bijapur respectively by the Maratha Jagirdars, Shahji Bhonsla and Murar Rao Jogdev during the Mughal invasions under Jahangir and Shah Jahan.

Thus slowly and steadily had the Marathas gained influence and power in the politics of the south about the commencement of the seventeenth century, so much so that the nominal Muhammadan rulers of Golkonda, Bijapur, Bidar, etc., were virtually controlled both in the civil and military departments by Maratha statesmen and Maratha warriors, and the hill-forts near the *ghats* and the country thereabout were in the hands of Maratha

**The Marathas gain considerable power and influence in the politics of the south.**



jagirdars, who were only nominally dependent upon these Muhammadian sovereigns'. At the beginning of



MAHARAJA SHIVAJI

*From Manucci's 'Storia do Mogor', with the kind permission of the publishers Messrs. John Murray and of the Record Department of the Government of India Office.*

the seventeenth century when the house of Ahmadnagar was destroyed and those of Golkonda and Bijapur were threatened with a similar fate by the Mughal emperors of Dehli, the bold and sturdy race of the Marathas found a fresh opportunity to advance their national interests. And it happened that almost exactly at this time *Chhatrapati* Shivaji, who possessed all the necessary qualities of a born leader of men, was born in the year 1627. Before he died in 1680, at the age of fifty-three, he had succeeded in creating a national Maratha State, which in course of time dominated the political destinies of the whole of India till it was dislodged from that position by a better organized foreign power in the first quarter of the nineteenth century.

Shivaji was the son of a Maratha Jagirdar named Shahji Bhonsla and his wife Jijabai. Jijabai was the daughter of Jadhav Rao, the greatest Maratha jagirdar of his time and a descendant of the Yadav rulers of Deogiri. Shahji Bhonsla traced his lineage back to the Rajputs of Udaipur. Both his parents being so highly connected, Shivaji might justly be proud of his noble ancestry.

Shivaji's mother Jijabai has been described by all writers on Maratha history as a very pious and devout Hindu lady, and since Shivaji lived with her and was brought up under her care, Jijabai had a large share in moulding the character of her promising young son. We are told that she literally fed him on the old Puranic and Epic legends of bravery and war and by 'her example and teaching did much to stimulate the zeal of her famous son in defence of Brahmans, cows, and caste, the three principal objects of Hindu veneration.' Shivaji also fully realized the influence of his mother on himself and as long as she lived, he consulted her in all the great crises of his career, and became a devoted worshipper of her guardian goddess, Bhavani. 'If ever

**Parentage  
and early  
life of  
Shivaji.**

great men owed their greatness to the inspiration of their mothers,' says Mr. Justice Ranade, 'the influence of Jijabai was a factor of prime importance in the making of Shivaji's career, and the chief source of his strength.'<sup>1</sup>

Next only to Jijabai's influence over young Shivaji, was the part played by his guardian Dadoji Kandadev who was the administrator of Shahji's estates in Poona and loved the child as dearly as if he were his own son. Dadoji gave him the necessary training in fighting, riding and other accomplishments. He also taught him what was more valuable still, the way to organize and control undisciplined forces. The training in the art of civil administration was also not neglected and Shivaji soon acquired the art of civil government, under the care of Dadoji.<sup>2</sup>

The influence of the Maratha poets and saints on the mind of the young Shivaji was no less responsible for fostering his devotion to the cause of Hinduism. Of these saints, Ram Das was one, and Tukaram was another, with both of whom Shivaji lived on terms of close communion. Ram Das gradually acquired considerable influence over Shivaji and was looked upon by him as his *Guru* or spiritual guide and philosopher. The *guru mantra* or the secret formula which Ram Das whispered into the ears of his royal disciple was the love of his country and nation. 'Mother and motherland are dearer than heaven itself. Gods and cows, Brahmans and the Faith, these are to be protected: therefore God has raised you up: when Faith is dead, death is better

<sup>1</sup> *Rise of the Marhatta Power*, by M. G. Ranade, p. 63.

<sup>2</sup> Shivaji never acquired any knowledge of a language or anything in the way of book-learning. The weight of evidence is in favour of the view that Shivaji was unlettered, like three other heroes of mediæval India.—Akbar, Haidar Ali and Ranjit Singh. *Shivaji*, by J. N. Sarkar, p. 26.

than life; why live when Religion has perished? Gather ye, therefore, the Marathas together make the *dharma* live again; for otherwise our forefathers will laugh at us from heaven!'

Such then was the training which Shivaji had received and such was the influence of environments working on his mind when he set himself the seemingly hopeless task of overthrowing the Muslim yoke in the Deccan.

During his younger days Shivaji made himself thoroughly familiar with the hilly country round about Poona and mixed freely with the Mawali chieftains of his own age. Their friendship proved of immense value to Shivaji in his subsequent years, for it was from these people that he drew his best soldiers. The Mawalis were a hardy and brave people and knew every path and rock of their native wilds. This was specially useful to them in their wars with the regular and better trained troops of the Sultans and the Mughals, who were accustomed to fight in open plains.

Like Ranjit Singh of the Panjab, Shivaji commenced his public career at the early age of nineteen. Taking advantage of the weakness and the confusion which the recent invasions of the Mughals had caused in the State of Bijapur,

Shivaji began to lay his hands upon the distant and weakly garrisoned hill forts of the Sultan. In 1646 he seized the fortress of Torna about twenty miles south-west of Poona. Raigarh, five miles east of Torna, on the crest of the same spur of hills, was next captured and almost wholly re-built. Shivaji then wrested Supa from his uncle Shambuji<sup>1</sup> who was left by Shahji as his agent or manager of the jagir in the Supa sub-division. In a couple of years the young chief succeeded in

**Shivaji  
commen-  
ces his  
public  
career  
1646.**

**Shivaji  
captures  
Torna.**

<sup>1</sup> Shambuji Mohite was the brother of Shahji's second wife.

establishing his own authority most systematically in his father's jagir in Poona now that Dadoji, his old guardian and the manager of his father's estates, was dead. The forts of Baramati and Indrapura, in the south-eastern corner of Poona, also in his father's jagir, were brought under more direct control. And now the occupation of Purandhar and Kondana together with Torna and Raigarh secured his estates, by a strong chain of hill-forts on the south, against any attack from Bijapur.

These aggressive proceedings of Shivaji were reported to the Sultan of Bijapur, but the friendly intervention of the ministers saved the situation. The Darbar was persuaded to believe that these forts were seized in the general interest, by way of protection to the family jagir.

Shivaji next turned his attention to the Konkan, the rich strip of broken ground between the crest of the mountains and the sea. A body of Maratha horsemen under Abaji Sonder gained possession of the important town of Kalyan in that region. He then marched southwards in the Kolaba District and gained the sympathy and support of the local chiefs in the common cause of throwing off the Muslim yoke.

Shivaji's seizure of Kalyan and his activities in the Konkan roused the authorities at Bijapur against him. His father Shahji had also been recently degraded, imprisoned and his jagirs confiscated by the Bijapur authorities owing, very probably, to his insubordination to the Bijapur commander Nawab Mustafa Khan during the siege of Jinji by the Bijapuri troops.<sup>1</sup> This danger to his father's life compelled Shivaji to abstain from further aggressions. At the same time

**Shivaji's activities in the Konkan.**

**Arrest of Shahji and his subsequent release.**

<sup>1</sup> For further details, see *Shivaji*, by J. N. Sarkar, pp. 37-39. The other view is that Shahji was imprisoned on account of his supposed connivance at the acts of aggression of his son.

Shivaji could not brook submission to Bijapur and sacrifice all his gains and further hopes of greatness. He therefore cleverly resorted to diplomacy, approached Prince Murad Bakhsh, the Mughal viceroy in the Deccan and offered his services to the Emperor of Dehli and requested him to intercede for the release of his father. The leading nobles of the Bijapur Court were also moved on behalf of Shahji and the good offices of his friends and benefactors Sharza Khan and Randaula Khan (Bijapur) were employed in securing the release of the Maratha Sardar.<sup>1</sup>

Shahji was released after the fall of Jinji (December, 1649), but as his release had been conditional, Shivaji kept quiet during the years 1649 to 1655, so far as Bijapur was concerned. He utilized this time in consolidating his conquests and organizing their administration.

When Shivaji had consolidated his power, the second stage in his career commenced with his struggle against Bijapur. It lasted from 1657 to 1662; and its best known incident is the defeat and murder of Afzal Khan.

In November, 1656, Muhammad Adil Shah of Bijapur died. The succession of his only son, a youth of eighteen years of age, naturally resulted in internal disturbances, which also offered an opportunity for the gratification of the ambition of the Mughal dynasty.

Aurangzeb who was then the viceroy of the Deccan invaded the kingdom and with the help of Mir Jumla reduced Bidar, Kalyani, and Parinda by the end of March, 1657. The Dowager queen, however, soon made peace with the Mughals and agreed to surrender these districts besides paying a large indemnity. The

<sup>1</sup> Professor Sarkar, *Shivaji*, p. 41, attributes Shahji's release almost entirely to the exertions of these two Muhammadan nobles of Bijapur.

dangerous illness of Shah Jahan in September, 1657 and the subsequent war of succession which took place among his four sons, put a stop to all thoughts of further conquests in the Deccan. The Deccan kingdoms thus obtained a respite and their rulers were therefore in a better position to attend to other pressing business nearer home.

The Bijapur authorities accordingly made up their mind to check the growing power of Shivaji and with that purpose sent a force numbering about ten thousand cavalry with an artillery park consisting of mountain guns under a veteran officer named Afzal Khan 'to bring back the rebel (Shivaji) dead or alive.' The Khan knew the difficulty of his task. The country commanded by Shivaji's mountain strongholds was very difficult to reduce. He therefore sent his land steward Krishnaji Bhaskar as an envoy to Shivaji inviting the latter to a conference. Shivaji treated this Brahman envoy with great respect, and at night met him in secrecy and solemnly appealed to him as a Hindu and a priest to tell him of the Khan's real intentions. Krishnaji yielded so far as to hint that the Khan intended mischief. Shivaji was therefore on the alert and having made his military preparations went to the meeting place with concealed weapons, prepared to meet craft by craft if occasion so demanded. Afzal Khan, a man of prodigious size and strength, embraced the short slim Maratha and then suddenly tightened his clasp and held Shivaji's neck in his left arm with an iron grip, while with his right hand he tried to run him through with his sword. The hidden armour of Shivaji rendered the blow harmless and the agile Maratha chief, with the help of the 'tiger claws' fastened to his left hand, forced the Khan to relax his grip and stabbed him with his dagger. The attendants of the two leaders then exchanged blows. The encounter ended with the death of Afzal Khan and the

complete rout of his army by the Maratha troops who lay in ambush.<sup>1</sup>

The fall of Afzal Khan led to the conquest of the countries southward to Panhala and along the banks of the Krishna. A second army sent by the Bijapur Government was defeated, and Shivaji followed up the rout by pushing his army to the very gates of Bijapur, while his generals captured Rajapur and Dabhol. A third and still a fourth army was sent in 1661-62, the last expedition being led by the Bijapur Sultan in person, but no important advantage was gained, and the war dragged on for a year or more. After these repeated disasters, the Bijapur Government were constrained to send Shahji to negotiate peace on the basis of acknowledging Shivaji as ruler of the territories he had won during the last few years.

Having thus gained power and prestige and above all formal recognition as a ruler by the Muhammadan rulers of the south, Shivaji began to raid the adjoining Mughal provinces. This brought him into conflict with the Mughals, and marks what one might call the beginning of the third stage in Shivaji's career. In 1660, Aurangzeb had sent one of his relations, the veteran general Shayista Khan, as governor of the Deccan, with instructions to suppress the activities of Shivaji. He scored a few victories over the Marathas and also succeeded in capturing a few of Shivaji's forts but the defeated Marathas as a rule fell upon the Mughal baggage and carried off whatever they could. Shayista Khan was in difficulties and did not know how to deal

**Aurangzeb  
and Shivaji  
—Shayista  
Khan,  
1663.**

<sup>1</sup> For the details in the text, we have followed Sarkar, *Shivaji and His Times*, pp. 66-73, and Kincaid and Parasnis, *History of the Mahratta People*, pp. 157-64. Both these accounts are based on the latest researches and appear more convincing than the old account given by Grant Duff.



with his wily foe. At last he retired to Poona to spend the rainy season there, intending to renew his campaign after the cessation of the rains. The Mughal general had, unfortunately for him, taken up his residence in the very house in which Shivaji was born and had passed his boyhood. The latter knew the ins and outs of the city and every nook and corner of the house and utilizing this knowledge to the full, he entered the city one night with a picked band of 400 men and delivered a night attack upon Shayista Khan. Shayista Khan was thankful to get off with the loss of his son and three fingers, April 5, 1663.<sup>1</sup> The humiliated Mughal governor then retired to Aurangabad for greater safety but was immediately (May, 1663) recalled by the emperor who ascribed his defeat to his negligence and incapacity.

Maharaja Jaswant Singh who had been sent as second in command to Shayista Khan was allowed to stay on till March, 1664. It was believed at the time that the night attack was made with the connivance of Jaswant Singh. Next morning when the Raja came to condole with the Khan he received the significant rebuke from him, 'When the enemy fell upon me I imagined that you had already died fighting against them.'

In January 1664, Shivaji performed an exploit not less daring, but certainly more profitable than the Poona escapade. He swooped down on Surat and carried off a rich booty from the town though the Dutch and the English succeeded in holding off the Murathas from their factories.

**Suspicion  
on  
Jaswant  
Singh.**

**Raid on  
Surat.**

<sup>1</sup> Professor Sarkar gives fuller details of this incident, which reveal no less agility and cunning than bravery and dash on the part of Shivaji, pp. 93-96.

The failure of Shayista Khan and the sack of Surat roused the indignation of Aurangzeb and he decided to send his best and most trusted officers to the Deccan. Mirza Raja Jai Singh, assisted by Dilir Khan and a few other carefully selected lieutenants, was appointed to put down Shivaji, Prince Muazzam having already been appointed to succeed Shayista Khan as the viceroy of the Deccan. Jai Singh relieved Jaswant Singh at Poona early in March, 1665, and forthwith busied himself in making the necessary preparations for an attack on Shivaji's territories. Purandhar was closely invested and even Raigarh—the seat of Shivaji's government—was seriously threatened. The flying columns of Mughal light cavalry ravaged the Maratha villages. Shivaji at last saw the wisdom of making peace with the imperialists and personally paid a visit to Raja Jai Singh in his tent pitched at the foot of Purandhar. The Maratha chief consented to surrender twenty of his forts and to take service against the Sultan of Bijapur, asking in return for a recognition of his right to *chauth* in some districts in the Bijapur kingdom. This is known as the treaty of Purandhar, June, 1665.

The remaining six months of the year were utilized by Jai Singh in invading the territories of Adil Shah and in this expedition Shivaji rendered valuable help to the imperialists. In the following year Shivaji was persuaded to go to the Court at Agra, being assured by Raja Jai Singh that high honours were awaiting him there, but he was received coldly at the public Darbar and not treated with the amount of respect that he expected. He very much resented being asked to take his place among the third grade mansabdars of 5,000, and in a fit of anger lost his temper and is said to have addressed bold words of reproach to the emperor. Aurangzeb said nothing, but

**Prince  
Muazzam  
and  
Raja Jai  
Singh.**

**Shivaji at  
Agra.  
1666.**

took action. Next day Shivaji found himself a prisoner in his house. He moved every official to persuade the emperor to allow him to return home but all in vain. He then had recourse to his own cunning which, perhaps, never failed him. He feigned illness and began to send out of his house every evening baskets full of sweetmeats and fruits for Brahmans and other mendicants. After a few days when the guards over the house slackened their vigilance and allowed these huge baskets to pass unsearched Shivaji and his son one evening escaped in one of them. Both father and son then disguised themselves as Hindu ascetics and hastened towards Mathura. Leaving his son Shambuji under the care of a Deccani Brahman at Mathura, Shivaji made his way back to his country through Eastern Bengal, Orissa and Gondwana with a view to avoiding the vigilance of the imperial police who were guarding the usual road to the Deccan through Berar and Khandesh.

Mirza Raja Jai Singh was recalled in May, 1667 and

**Prince  
Muzzam  
and  
Jaswant  
Singh.**

Raja Jaswant Singh was sent a second time against Shivaji. Worn out by age and disappointed at his sudden recall Mirza Raja died on the way home at Burhanpur in July 1667. With weak and indolent Muazzam as viceroy, and the friendly Jaswant in power in the Deccan, Shivaji had now not much to fear from the Mughal side. Aurangzeb was also too much occupied to be able to spare time and energies for the crushing of Shivaji. A large army had to be sent to the Panjab early in September, 1666, to meet a threatened invasion of the Persians and again in March of the following years, the Yusafzai rising in Peshawar taxed the resources of the empire for more than a year.

Shivaji, therefore, spent his time (1668-69) in organizing his internal administration. At the request of the Maratha chief, Raja Jaswant Singh and Prince Muazzam

persuaded the emperor to grant Shivaji the title of Raja and raise his son Shambuji to the rank of a *mansabdar* of 5,000. Shivaji was also given a jagir in Berar in settlement of his claim to *chauth* in the Ahmadnagar territories.

In 1670, hostilities were again renewed between the Mughals and Shivaji. Owing to financial stringency Aurangzeb had already disbanded a portion of his troops in the Deccan and the men discharged had taken service under Shivaji. He was now able to capture many more forts and to extend his territories. In December, 1670, Shivaji's officers exacted from the local authorities of certain districts in Khandesh written promises to pay Shivaji or his deputies one-fourth of the yearly revenue due to Government. This may be said to be the first imposition of Maratha *chauth* on districts immediately subject to the Mughal. In 1670, Shivaji looted Surat a second time.

Continued success and prosperity everywhere persuaded Shivaji to assume formally the title of king and ascend the throne. The coronation ceremony took place in June, 1674, at Raigarh with full Vedic rites and Shivaji was henceforth regarded as sovereign ruler of Maharashtra. As usual with the Hindu kings of old, Shivaji established a new era dating from his enthronement.

He reigned for six years after his formal coronation and taking advantage of Aurangzeb's entanglement in hostilities with the Afghan tribes on the north-western frontier, he extended his conquests in the south. In 1676, Shivaji planned and began to execute operations in the south and before his death in 1680, he brought a series of brilliant campaigns to a successful conclusion, capturing Jinji, Vellore, and many other important fortresses. This expedition to Jinji has been

**Corona-  
tion of  
Shivaji,  
1674.**

**Shivaji's  
southern  
campaign  
and his  
death.**

described as 'the most important expedition of Shivaji's life.'

During this campaign Shivaji added to his kingdom a considerable part of the old Vijayanagar empire, with a view to consolidating his strength for the final struggle with Aurangzeb, but as fate would have it, he was snatched away by death at the early age of fifty-three.

At the time of his death Shivaji's 'own kingdom' or *Swaraj* consisted of a long narrow strip comprising chiefly the Western Ghats and the Konkan between Kalyan and Goa, with some districts to the east of the mountains.

The extreme breadth of this kingdom from east to west is estimated at about one hundred miles. The provinces in the south which were acquired during the last years of Shivaji's life comprised the Western Karnatak extending from Belgaum to the bank of the Tungabhadra, opposite to the Bellary district of the Madras Presidency. The latest conquests which were not settled at his death comprised Vellore, Jinji and few other districts.

The total annual revenue from this kingdom may be estimated at its highest at nine *crores* of rupees, although the sum actually realized was probably considerably less than this paper-estimate. Sometimes it fell even lower than one crore.<sup>1</sup>

The government of the kingdom was conducted on the old Hindu principles as laid down in the codes of Kautilya and Sukracharya. Shivaji revived the ancient Hindu Council of State as recommended by these writers on Indian Polity. It consisted of eight Ministers (*Peshwa*, or *Mukhya Pradhan*), Commander-in-Chief (*Sar-i-naubat* or *Senapati*), ministers for Finance

**Extent of Shivaji's kingdom.**

**Organization of civil government.**

<sup>1</sup> Sarkar, *Shivaji*, p. 248.



(*Majmuadar* or *Amatya*), War (*Dabir* or *Sumant*), Home and Foreign affairs (*Shuru-navis* or *Sachiv*), Religion (*Danadhyakhsha*) and Justice (*Nyayalhis*). As many as eighteen different departments of the public service were established and the ministers held departmental charges. This was the government at the centre and the provincial governments were also based more or less on a similar model. The consolidated portion of the kingdom was divided into three provinces each placed under a viceroy. The immemorial Hindu institution of the *Panchayat* was kept intact and almost all civil disputes were decided by that body.

The land in every province was measured and an estimate was made of the expected produce of each *bigha*, three parts of which were left to the peasant and two parts taken by the State. The State also encouraged cultivation by making advances from the State treasury for the purchase of seeds and cattle to the new ryots who came to settle on uncultivated lands. These were recovered in easy annual instalments. The existing practice of farming out land revenue to hereditary landlords (*miasdars*) was stopped by Shivaji and the State dues were collected by government revenue officials. Jagirs and fiefs of all kinds were discouraged: all officials military and civil were paid regular salaries from the State treasury. Whenever a State official was not paid in cash from the Treasury he received an assignment of revenue on a certain district but otherwise he had no political power over the inhabitants of the district or his tenants. These rules of civil government, it may be remarked, were applied only to the territories under the direct rule of Shivaji and known as *Swaraj*. But there were also other districts collectively known as *Muglai* territory under the government of other powers over which the Marathas claimed suzerainty and from which they exacted the yearly payment of *chauth*

and *sardeshmukhi*. We have seen how as early as 1670, a portion of Khandesh although imperial territory, was compelled to submit to the payment of *chauth*. *Sardeshmukhi* was an extra-tenth which was extorted over and above the *chauth* or the one-fourth of the authorized land revenue assessment of a district.

Shivaji had some of the genius of a military organizer as well as that of a statesman. The Maratha army originally consisted mostly of infantry and it had been the practice with Maratha yeomen to work for half the year upon their fields, and to spend the dry season in the saddle on active service much like the militia of King Alfred of England. Shivaji attempted to improve the system and to check some of its abuses. He introduced the practice of keeping a regular standing army and during the rainy season he provided quarters for his troopers and their horses and also gave them regular pay for all these months.

The army of Shivaji was organized in a regular manner with a due gradation of officers.<sup>1</sup> In the cavalry, the unit was formed by twenty-five troopers; over twenty-five men was placed one *havaladar*, over five *havaldars*, one *jumladar*, and over ten *jumladars* or 1,250 men one *hazari*. Still higher ranks were the *5-hazaris* and the supreme commander or *sar-i-naubat* of cavalry. For every twenty-five troopers there were a water-carrier and a farrier.

In the infantry, whether fort garrisons or Mavli militia men, there was one corporal (*nayak*) to every nine privates; over five *nayaks* one *havaladar*, over two (or three) *havaldars* one *jumladar*, and over ten *jumladars* one *hazari*. The *sar-i-naubat* of infantry was a different person from the officer of the same rank in

<sup>1</sup> This account is taken from Professor Sarkar's *Shivaji and His Times*, pp. 415-16.



the cavalry. The troopers comprised *bargirs*, mounted by the State, and *Silahdars* who provided their own horses.

Since the forts played a very important part in the Maratha kingdom, the garrisons of the forts were carefully constituted and every possible precaution was taken against the commandants being corrupted. Every fort was placed under three officers of equal status, viz., the *havaldar*, the *sabnis* and the *sar-i-naubat*, who were to act jointly and thus serve as a check upon one another.

Shivaji also built a considerable fleet which was stationed at Kolaba, to check the power of the Abyssinian pirates of Janjira and to plunder the rich Mughal ships.

As we have said before, Shivaji was brought up under the direct supervision of his mother Jijabai who was herself intensely religious. He therefore acquired from his very boyhood a love for associating with holy men and was scrupulously careful to lead a simple and highly moral private life. The Muhammadan chroniclers themselves bear witness to the personal virtues of Shivaji. He respected the holy places of all creeds and made endowments for Hindu temples and Muslim saints' tombs, and mosques alike. Even Khafi Khan, who otherwise, as a rule, uses for Shivaji such abusive epithets as 'a father of fraud', 'a sharp son of the devil', etc., is compelled to admit this special virtue of toleration which the Maratha chief practised throughout his career. He says . . . 'But he (Shivaji) made it a rule that whatever his followers went plundering, they should do no harm to the mosques, the Book of God, or the women of any one. Whenever a copy of the sacred Koran came into his hands, he treated it with respect, and gave it to some of his Musalman followers.'

**Shivaji's  
character :  
his reli-  
gious  
policy.**

Shivaji is, without doubt, a great historical figure of the seventeenth century, and his greatness lies in his character, practical ability and his achievements. Professor Sarkar gives the following estimate of the achievements and life-work of Shivaji: 'Before his rise, the Maratha race was scattered like atoms through many Deccani kingdoms. He welded them into a mighty nation. And he achieved this in the teeth of the opposition of four mighty powers like the Mughal empire, Bijapur, Portuguese India, and the Abyssinians of Janjira. No other Hindu has shown such capacity in modern times. The materialistic Maratha authors of the *bhakhars* have given us a list of Shivaji's legacies—so many elephants, horses, soldiers, slaves, jewels, gold and silver and even spices and raisins! But they have not mentioned Shivaji's greatest gift to posterity, viz., the new life of the Maratha race.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Shivaji and His Times*, p. 441.

## CHAPTER XVII

### The Beginning of the End

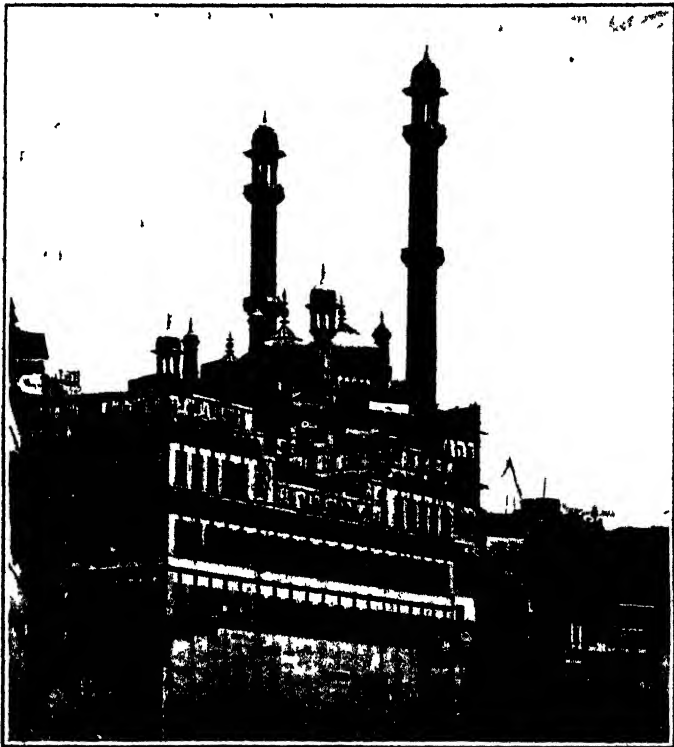
#### **Aurangzeb** (*continued*), 1681-1707

Aurangzeb's religious zeal—Rajput war and other outbreaks of discontent—Deccan campaign—Height of Mughal power—War with the Marathas—Death of Aurangzeb—His character and policy—Aurangzeb—His sons and his death-bed letters—Administration—Transactions with the English.

While the war of Maratha liberation was being waged in the Deccan, Aurangzeb was occupied with his religious propaganda in the north. In April, 1669, on receiving a report that in the provinces of Thatta, Multan and Benares the Brahmins were in the habit of delivering public sermons, the emperor gave immediate orders to his provincial governors 'to destroy the temples and schools of the Brahmans . . . and to put down utterly the teachings and religious practices of the infidels.' The Muslim governors executed the order with a willing hand. In August, the great Vishvanath temple at Benares was pulled down, and in the January of the next year (1670) Aurangzeb had the satisfaction of learning that the grandest shrine of Mathura, Kesav Rai's temple, built at a cost of thirty-three lakhs of rupees by Raja Bir Singh Bundela was razed to the ground and that a mosque was built on its site. By the order of the emperor 'the idols taken from the temples were transferred to Agra, and there buried under the steps of Jahanara's mosque that they might be constantly trodden on' by the Muslims going in to pray. About the same time the temple of Somnath in Kathiawar was also destroyed. During and after the Rajput war

**Aurang-  
zeb's reli-  
gious  
zeal.**

(1679-80) we are told that as many as 240 temples big and small were demolished in Mewar alone.



*Photo Johnston & Hoffmann.*

BIKANER, SHOWING AURANGZEB'S MOSQUE, BUILT SO AS TO  
DOMINATE THE HINDU TEMPLES

In 1679, when Aurangzeb had been firmly seated on the throne for about twenty years, and his biggest Rajput officers like Raja Jai Singh and Jaswant Singh were dead he began to give free play to his religious bigotry. The Brahman seminaries had been forcibly closed and some very important temples of the Hindus demolished during the

**Revival of  
the  
'Jiziya'.**

preceding decade (1669-78) and now in April, 1679, the emperor revived the *jiziya* or poll-tax on non-Muslims, which Akbar had wisely abolished early in his reign. By another ordinance, March, 1695, 'all Hindus except Rajputs were forbidden to carry arms or ride elephants, *pālkis*, or Arab or Persian horses.'

It was natural that this conduct of the emperor should provoke discontent and rebellion amongst the vast bulk of his Hindu subjects. But it is also difficult to believe that Aurangzeb who was otherwise so intelligent was incapable of thinking of the ultimate consequences of his policy.<sup>1</sup> The explanation seems to be that although he was not blind to the political results of his actions yet as an orthodox, sincere Muslim emperor, he believed that his spiritual gains would outweigh the material loss which he or his empire suffered by alienating his Hindu subjects. The Jats of the Mathura District, infuriated by the destruction of the splendid temple of Kesav Rai, rose in revolt and gave the imperial forces much trouble for years afterwards. In March, 1672, the Satnamis revolted near Narnol, and it taxed the imperial power seriously to exterminate these 5,000 stubborn peasants fighting for faith and home.<sup>2</sup>

In 1679, the Rajputs broke out into open rebellion. Maharaja Jaswant Singh of Jodhpur died at Peshawar

<sup>1</sup> Aurangzeb was born in October, 1618. In 1669 when he initiated his anti-Hindu policy he was upwards of fifty years of age.

<sup>2</sup> The Satnamis were a sect of religious devotees whose stronghold at the time was Narnol. It was given out that the arrows of the Satnamis possessed magical power and the imperialists were therefore afraid of fighting in the front rank. Aurangzeb, when he heard of this, resorted to a clever stratagem. With a view to dispel the fear from the minds of his men, the Emperor wrote out charms with his own hand and attached them to the imperial standards, telling his men that these would counteract the magic of the infidels.

(December, 1678) when he was still in the service of the emperor as commandant of the difficult frontier post of Jamrud. Aurangzeb immediately sent his officers to take possession of his kingdom and subsequently set up on the throne a worthless relative of Jaswant Singh who offered to pay a *nazrana* of about thirty-five lakhs of rupees.

**Outbreak  
of war  
with the  
Rajputs.**

In February, 1679, the two widows of the late Maharaja Jaswant Singh arrived at Lahore from Peshawar and were delivered of two sons. The emperor ordered the ladies and the new born babes to be seized and detained at his Court till the latter should come of age. But the brave and devoted Rathor guard of Jaswant Singh would not submit to these indignities. They perished to a man like heroes in their effort to escape with their wards and thanks to the sagacity and loyalty of their captain Durga Das the widows and the surviving infant Ajit Singh were safely conveyed to Jodhpur (July, 1679). The widows of the Maharaja now claimed the protection of Udaipur, the premier State of Rajasthan which was readily granted by the reigning Rana, Raj Singh. War then began between the imperialists and the Rajputs who were already incensed by the series of provocative edicts against Hinduism, but the 'ever-loyal' Jaipur held aloof and continued to support the imperial cause. The war lasted from 1679 to 1681. The emperor directed the movements of his armies from Ajmer, and three of his sons, Muazzam, Azam and Akbar were in command of separate divisions. The Rajputs fought with their usual valour in defence of their country and although Jodhpur was formally annexed to the empire towards the end of 1679, the conquest was far from complete. The State of Mewar was devastated and the Rana took refuge in his mountain fastnesses. Prince Akbar then rebelled against his father (January, 1681) joined the Rajputs, and

assumed the royal title. The emperor was very much disturbed for the time being but his cunning saved him. By means of a letter which he contrived should fall into the hands of the Rajputs, he conveyed to them the suspicion that Akbar was playing them false.<sup>1</sup>

Aurangzeb's trick proved successful and Akbar's Rajput adherents gradually deserted him. A few days after however when the truth became known Durga Das returned to the prince and safely escorted him to the Deccan in May, 1681, where he lived for upwards of a year at the Court of Shivaji's son Shambuji. The prince then repaired to Bombay and thence took ship for Persia at the end of January, 1683.

The active operations in Rajputana were brought to a close with the flight of Prince Akbar to the Deccan. A peace was patched up with Rana Raj Singh of Udaipur, early in June, 1681, both sides making concessions. The Rana ceded certain territory in lieu of the payment of *jiziya*, and the emperor did not press his demand for that 'odious impost.' War in Marwar, however, continued as Aurangzeb would not formally acknowledge the rights of Jaswant Singh's minor son, Ajit Singh, to rule over the State of Jodhpur. It was in 1709, that peace was restored in Marwar when Bahadur Shah, the son and successor of Aurangzeb, was forced to acknowledge Ajit Singh as Raja and ruler of Marwar. The result of this unwise conduct of the emperor was that the Rajputs, who had been since the days of Akbar, the hereditary supporters of the Mughal house were henceforth permanently alienated from the throne of Dehli. Although we learn from the Muhammadan

**Rajputs  
alienated  
from the  
throne of  
Dehli.**

<sup>1</sup> Professor Sarkar has reproduced a number of letters that subsequently passed between Aurangzeb and his son Prince Akbar in his *Studies of Mughal India*, pp. 96-110.

historians that even after this war Aurangzeb was able to command the services of some of the Rajput clans yet we no longer read of large Rajput contingents fighting under the imperial banner and the principal States like those of Mewar and Marwar altogether withdrew their support from the house of Akbar.

With the close of the Rajput war in 1681, there comes to an end what may be called the first and stable half of Aurangzeb's reign which he spent in Northern India, as the remaining period of about quarter of a century (1682-1707) of his long reign of fifty years was spent in unceasing wars against the Marathas and the kingdoms of the Deccan. The political situation in the south was in no way improved. It had rather become worse. Although Shivaji was dead, his son Shambuji was no less daring a raider than his father. He had, moreover, the rebel prince Akbar living at his Court as a Maratha pensioner. Could he not be used by this 'wily foe' against imperial interests in the Deccan? Against the Shia rulers<sup>1</sup> of Bijapur also Aurangzeb had, from time to time, sent his best officers but they had all failed. Further, they were also suspected of corruption. Aurangzeb, therefore, believed and perhaps with some reason that the only course left open to him was to conduct the Deccan campaign in person. With this object in view, the emperor made a move from Ajmer early in September, 1681, with a large army composed of men of all the northern nations of the empire, a magnificent train of artillery, and the most gorgeous camp-equipage that had ever been seen in the Deccan before. By slow marches the emperor reached

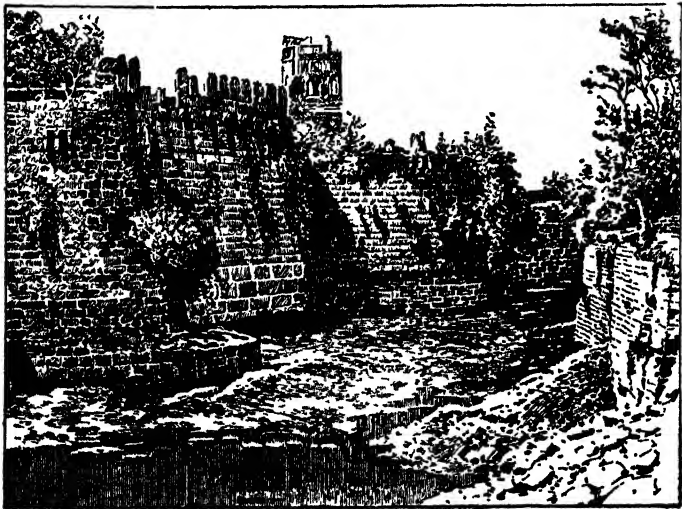
<sup>1</sup> Aurangzeb disliked the Shias as much, perhaps, as he disliked the Hindus. In his private correspondence he never mentions the Shias without an abusive epithet. Sarkar, *Studies in Mughal India*, p. 48.



Aurangabad in the third week of March, 1682, and in November next year he pitched his camp at Ahmadnagar.

Preliminary operations were now taken in hand. Two big divisions of the army commanded by Princes Muazzam and Azam were despatched against the Marathas and the Bijapuris. Prince Akbar had already escaped to Persia and the imperialists succeeded only in capturing a few forts of the Marathas. The division of the army under Prince Muazzam which had penetrated into the Konkan suffered heavy loss both in men and

**Preliminary operations in the Deccan.**



FORT WALLS, BIJAPUR

animals owing to sickness and privation and returned unsuccessful after a campaign of ten months (September, 1683—May, 1684). The Prince Azam was equally unsuccessful. He had captured Sholapur, but when he advanced upon Bijapur he was opposed by a superior force and was obliged to retreat.

In the meantime the emperor had advanced southwards from Ahmadnagar, and having formed a junction with his son Azam, proceeded in person to invest Bijapur. The siege was begun early in April, 1685, and a practicable breach was soon effected in the outer fortifications of the city. The garrison fought bravely and the relieving armies of Bijapur and the Marathas, though beaten back by the imperialists, served to prolong the siege. Aurangzeb himself arrived in the environs of the city to superintend the siege operations. At last falling short of provisions, the city capitulated on September 12, 1686. Sikandar Adil Shah, the last of the Adil Shahi kings, surrendered and was taken to the Mughal camp as a prisoner and his kingdom was annexed. Thus closed the illustrious dynasty of the Adil Shahi kings, which had reigned, for the most part in great splendour and prosperity, for nearly two hundred years.

**Siege of  
Bijapur.**



COIN OF AURANGZEB

Meantime another force had been sent under Prince Muazzam, in June, 1685, against Golkonda to prevent aid coming from that quarter to Bijapur. Besides being Shia in faith the king Abul Hasan, it seems, had also for other reasons incurred the displeasure of Aurangzeb. Amongst the charges made against the king in a formal declaration of war were prominently mentioned, accusations of perpetual profligacy, the employment of Brahman

**Conquest  
of  
Golkonda.**

ministers, and alliance with an 'infidel'—Shambuji. The war dragged on for some time. At last Aurangzeb arrived himself before Golkonda (January, 1687) and pressed on the siege. But the fortress was so well provided with food and munitions that it was prepared to hold out indefinitely. Mining and assaults failed as they had failed in the case of the siege of Asirgarh by



AURANGZEB BEFORE THE WALLS OF GOLKONDA

*By kind permission of the Trustees, Victoria Memorial Section, Indian Museum.*

Akbar nearly a century before. 'The emperor, therefore, following the precedent of his ancestor,' remarks Mr. Vincent Smith, 'had recourse to bribery, and gained

admittance through the treachery of one of the officers of the garrison, who opened a gate.' Abul Hasan was captured and made prisoner and his kingdom shared the fate of Bijapur (September, 1687). The dreary story of this siege is relieved by one example of valour and fidelity. Abdur Razzak, one of Abul Hasan's ablest officers, stood firm and faithful to his master to the last. He spurned Aurangzeb's most tempting offers of money and fought bravely in a hand to hand fight at the gateway till he fell covered with 'seventy wounds.' Aurangzeb admiring his courage and fidelity, placed him under the care of his own skilled surgeons, who succeeded in effecting his cure.

We have stated before that the first campaigns against the Marathas in 1682 and 1683 under Prince Muazzam had ended in total failure. The troops sent to the Konkan were wasted by fever in the malarious jungles, or inveigled and cut to pieces by watchful and mobile enemies upon the hill-sides or in the defiles. Now that Bijapur and Golkonda had fallen, the Emperor was free to give his whole attention to the Marathas. Shambuji though brave was dissolute. If, during this period, he had exerted himself he might have saved Bijapur or Golkonda or both. But he was entirely inactive, and had given himself up to pleasure and perpetual debauchery in company of a favourite friend named Kalusha. While in this condition and residing at Sangameshvara he was surprised by an energetic Deccani officer named Mubarraq Khan, and taken direct to the emperor, then at Tolarpur, near Bijapur. Shambuji and his friends are said to have used abusive language to the Emperor and his officers; whereupon they were 'ignominiously paraded through the imperial camp like wild beasts and executed with prolonged and inhuman tortures.' This event occurred on March 11,

**The  
campaign  
against  
the  
Marathas  
renewed.**

1689. Seven months after the execution of Shambuji, the imperial forces succeeded in capturing Raigarh—the capital of Shivaji's kingdom. Raja Ram, the brother of the late Maharaja Shivaji, escaped, but the rest of the family, Shambu's mother, wives and his little son of six years named Shivaji (Sahu) were made prisoners. Aurangzeb further pushed his conquests southwards and for the time being was able to levy tribute even on Tanjore and Trichinopoly in the far south.

The year 1690-91 may be taken therefore as marking the most distant advance of the Mughal power. Aurangzeb was now the Lord Paramount of the whole of the Indian Peninsula—from Kabul to Chittagong and from Kashmir to Cape Comorin. He had attained what he considered to be the main purpose of his Deccan campaign. The Shia Sultanates of Bijapur and Golkonda were wiped out and their territories annexed to the Empire of Dehli. Shivaji was dead, his son and successor Shambuji executed by the order of the emperor, several important Maratha forts were captured including their capital Raigarh, and the present incumbent of the Maratha throne Sahu was a prisoner in the imperial camp. All seemed to have been gained by Aurangzeb now, but, as Professor Sarkar rightly observes, 'In reality all was lost. It was the beginning of the end.' The continued absence of the emperor from the north resulted in the administration in that part of the empire growing slack and corrupt. Indiscipline reigned supreme at Agra and Dehli; and the chiefs and zamindars of the northern provinces defied the authority of the provincial viceroys. The Jats and the Sikhs were in open rebellion. The expensive and wasteful wars in the Deccan exhausted the imperial treasury whereas there was no adequate financial return

**Height of  
Mughal  
power—  
The  
beginning  
of the  
end.**



- |             |     |
|-------------|-----|
| Possessions |     |
| English     | E.  |
| French      | F.  |
| Portuguese  | P.  |
| Dutch       | D.  |
| Danish      | Da. |

**INDIA**  
IN  
1700

0 100 200 300 400 miles

from the newly conquered provinces since these were not yet regularly settled. In extent also the empire had grown too big to be ruled by one man or from one centre.

The impolicy of destroying the Sultanates had no inconsiderable share in bringing about the ultimate disastrous results of Aurangzeb's Deccan campaign. In the first place the Shia subjects of Bijapur and Golkonda had been attached to their respective dynasties, and were not disposed to welcome the foreign conquerors from the north. The disbanded officers and troops of these States joined the Marathas and swelled the ranks of the enemy. In the second place it meant the annihilation of the only two bulwarks of Muhammadian government in the south and the leaving of the field clear for the Marathas.

If Aurangzeb had believed that he could break the back of the Maratha resistance by the capture of their king he was sadly mistaken. They had learnt their lesson too well. The discipline and enthusiasm which Shivaji had infused into the Maratha ranks held good, even long after his death. After the execution of Shambuji and the arrest of his son Sahu, the Maratha government was carried on by his brother Raja Ram. He had retired to Jinji behind the southern line of forts, and with a friendly power at his back kept the Mughals at bay. The individual Maratha leaders like Santaji Ghorpare and Dhannaji Jadav with their plundering hosts, ravaged the country, cutting off Mughal convoys and spreading terror and confusion everywhere. Zulfikar Khan, one of the best of the imperial generals, who was sent to besiege Jinji in 1691 fared no better than several other divisions of the army which were detailed for the capture of other Maratha forts. The fortress of Jinji was one of the strongest forts in Southern India and its Maratha garrison under Raja Ram defied every effort of

**War with  
the  
Marathas  
continued,  
1691-  
1707.**

Zulfikar Khan to take it. He applied for reinforcements, but the Emperor was in no condition to send them; his large army was split up into small portions and despatched to different localities to take over the forts and provinces of the newly annexed kingdoms from their local officers, many of whom had set up for themselves. The siege was unusually prolonged and Prince Kam Bakhsh who was suspected of traitorous correspondence with the enemy was recalled. Zulfikar Khan was also recalled in 1694 as he was unable to reduce the fort. Other generals were then tried between 1694-97 but they too failed. Zulfikar was sent again and the fort was taken by escalade in January, 1698, but Raja Ram was allowed to escape to Satara.

At Satara, Raja Ram assembled a considerable army and resumed the struggle in the northern Deccan where the emperor had now concentrated his forces. In the year 1699, Aurangzeb who had established a cantonment at Barhampur on the Bhima river, a very central position, made his disposals for a new campaign. Since the mutual jealousies of his generals had spoiled affairs, Aurangzeb, now aged eighty-one years, proposed to lead a part of the army in person against the fortified strongholds of the Marathas, while the other under Zulfikar



AURANGZEB

Khan should act in the open country against Raja Ram,



Dhannaji, and other leaders. For fully seven years the aged emperor was engaged in an unceasing but fruitless struggle against the Marathas and at the end of this period he had the mortification of learning that he could neither defeat nor crush them. Though Raja Ram had died in the beginning of the campaign (1700) his widow Tara Bai took the lead and carried on the struggle. The imperialists succeeded in capturing about half a dozen forts<sup>1</sup> of the outer line of the Maratha defences, but behind them lay many others equally strong and more inaccessible. The war dragged on for years. Famine, pestilence and flood fought on the Maratha side. 'The soldiers and camp-followers,' says Professor Sarkar, 'suffered unspeakable hardships in marching over flooded rivers and rain-soaked roads, porters disappeared, transport beasts died of hunger and overwork, scarcity of grain was chronic in the camp.' The Mughal army had, in fact, lost its *morale* and over and above this the Marathas gave them no peace. They began to recapture the forts they had lost. The campaign proved an utter failure. Meanwhile in the north, the Jats of Bharatpur and the Sikhs of the Panjab armed and organized themselves against the provincial viceroys. An account of their proceedings will be given in a later chapter.

Amidst discouragements such as these, Aurangzeb was nearing his end. At last in October, 1705, when he had retired to his camp for the rainy season after the capture of the fort of Wakinkhera, nature gave him unmistakable warnings of what was to come. He was attacked by a severe illness and at last yielding to the importunities of his ministers gave the order to retreat

<sup>1</sup> The most important among these forts were Satara taken in (December, 1699), Panhala (May, 1701), Kondane (April, 1701), Rajgarh (February, 1704), and Torna (March, 1704).

to Ahmadnagar. Pursued by skirmishing bodies of exultant Marathas 'slowly and with difficulty,' the emperor reached Ahmadnagar on January 20, 1706, where 'he had encamped twenty-four years earlier filled with hopes of conquest and glory.' A man of iron will, Aurangzeb, when he grew a little better gallantly fought against his disorder and forced himself to transact the business of the State, but on the morning of Friday, February 20, 1707, the 'Puritan Emperor' at last succumbed and his 'weary spirit was released.' His remains were carried to Rauza near Daulatabad and interred in the precincts of the tomb of the celebrated saint, Burhan-ud-Din. He desired in his will that his funeral expenses should be defrayed from the proceeds of caps he had quilted and sold, and this amount did not exceed five rupees, while the proceeds of the sale of his copies of the Koran, about three hundred rupees, were distributed to the poor in obedience to the emperor's instructions. He had also left instructions that his coffin was to be covered with a piece of white canvas only and that no canopy was to be raised over him.

**Aurangzeb's character and policy reviewed.** Thus Aurangzeb died as he had lived—simple, pious and austere. His ideal of personal and private life was, indeed, very high. He abstained scrupulously from the slightest indulgence in any prohibited food or drink, or dress; and although well-skilled in the theory of music, refused to enjoy the pleasures of that art from an early date in his reign.<sup>1</sup> He strove to live up to the ideal of a strict orthodox Muslim, and this was,

<sup>1</sup> Aurangzeb had stopped the allowance of the royal musicians and dismissed them from his Court. These men one day got up a funeral procession and passed by the window of the palace carrying a bier. On being asked whom they were bearing to the grave, they replied, 'We are burying Music.' 'Then bury it so deep,' said the emperor with his grim humour 'that it will never come out.'

perhaps, one of the chief reasons why he failed to prove a successful sovereign. The country over which he was called upon to rule was, unfortunately, not a purely Muhammadan country. On the other hand the bulk of its population was made up of the Hindus whom the emperor disliked for religious reasons and whom he turned into bitter enemies by his policy and conduct dictated chiefly by his zeal for Islam as interpreted by himself and his Sunni Ulemas. He destroyed, what the Hindus cherished most, their temples and idols, forcibly closed their seminaries and re-imposed upon them the *Jiziya* or the poll-tax. In fact, he reversed the wise and conciliatory policy of Akbar and therefore failed as a sovereign.<sup>1</sup> The strength of Akbar's government lay in his policy of uniting various hostile elements into a peaceful organism. Aurangzeb began the disintegration of the Mughal dynasty by resolving that organism once more into its antagonistic constituents.

With all these shortcomings of Aurangzeb's political policy it is impossible not to admire the ability, the patience, the courage and energy with which, to the very last, he conducted the affairs of his government in person. No detail however insignificant in all his widely extended dominions ever escaped him, and all the great measures of his reign were exclusively his own. Of diplomacy he was a past master, and could not be beaten in any kind of intrigue or secret manipulation. He was as much a 'master of the pen' as a 'master of the sword.' Although himself fond of literary pursuits Aurangzeb did very little for literature and art. Rather he discouraged both and contributed a good deal to narrow the mental activities of Mughal India. He

<sup>1</sup> Aurangzeb himself was conscious of the fact that his long reign of half a century had been a colossal failure. 'After me will come the deluge!' The morose forebodings of Louis XV was repeated by Aurangzeb almost word for word (*Az ma-si-hamah fasad-i-baqi*). Sarkar, *Studies in Mughal India*, pp. 55-56.

forbade not only the teaching of the Vedas by Brahmans but the writing of political history, the most solid intellectual recreation of his Muslim courtiers.

Aurangzeb was of intensely suspicious temperament. He believed that a king should be jealous of his own shadow. This oversuspicious nature rendered him incapable of indulging in love for man or woman and few indeed were the persons including his own sons, who loved him. Almost all his sons had to undergo some sort of punishment at one time or another during his long reign owing to the suspicious nature of their father. Prince Sultan, the eldest son of Aurangzeb, was kept in prison for nearly eighteen years because he had shown sympathy for Shujah (1658) and had also married his daughter. His second son Muazzam who subsequently succeeded his father as Bahadur Shah I, displeased him because of his sympathy for the fallen kings of Bijapur and Golkonda. He was placed in confinement in 1687, and released in May, 1695, but not before, when his spirit had been 'thoroughly tamed.' The fourth prince, Akbar, as mentioned before, rebelled against his father in 1681 and eventually fled to Persia where he died an exile in 1704. The youngest, Kam Bakhsh, incurred the displeasure of his father for his misconduct during the siege of Jinji and was put under restraint.

Even when convinced that his end was near, Aurangzeb's invincible suspicions still mastered his natural affections. He kept all his sons away, lest they should do even as he had done to his father. This fear of Nemesis, perhaps, always haunted his mind, and Aurangzeb had no peace while his sons were with him. Prince Muazzam was sent to Agra as governor, Kam Bakhsh was appointed to administer the newly conquered territories of Bijapur, and the third prince Azam was made

**Aurang-  
zeb's  
treatment  
of his  
sons.**

**Aurang-  
zeb's  
death-bed  
letters.**

governor of Malwa. The letters which the emperor wrote to his sons on his death-bed are preserved and a perusal of these shows how the dying old man, feeling probably remorse for certain acts of his during a long reign of fifty years—poured out his troubled heart to his sons in a most pathetic language. To Prince Azam he wrote:—‘I am grown very old and weak. Many were around me, when I was born, but now I am going alone. I know not who I am or why I came into the world. I bewail the moments which I have spent forgetful of God’s worship. I have not done well for the country or its people. My years have gone by profitless. God has been in my heart; yet my darkened eyes have not recognized His light. Life is transient, and the lost moment never comes back. There is no hope for me in the future. The fever is gone, but nothing is left of me save skin and dried flesh. . . . The army is confounded and without heart or help, even as I am, apart from God, with no rest for the heart. They know not whether they have a king or not. Nothing brought I into this world, but I carry with me the burden of my sins. I know not what punishment be in store for me to suffer. Though my trust is in the mercy and goodness of God, I deplore my sins. When I have lost hope in myself, how can I hope in others? Come what will, I have launched my bark upon the waters. . . . Farewell! Farewell! Farewell!’

To his youngest and favourite son Kam Bakhsh he wrote:—‘Soul of my soul. . . . Now I am going alone. I grieve for your helplessness. But what is the use? Every torment I have inflicted, every sin I have committed, every wrong I have done, I carry the consequence with me. Strange that I came with nothing into the world, and now go away with this stupendous caravan of sin! Wherever I look I see only God. . . . You should accept my last will. It should not happen that Mussulmans

be killed and the reproach should fall upon the head of this useless creature. I commit you and your sons to the care of God and bid you farewell. I am sorely troubled. Your sick mother, Udaipuri, would fain die with me. . . . May the peace of God be upon you!

By reading these letters one is inclined to agree with Mr. Smith's remarks that 'the sternest critic of the character and deeds of Aurangzeb can hardly refuse to recognize the pathos of those lamentations or to feel some sympathy for the old man on his lonely death-bed.'

The system of administration introduced by Akbar was maintained with all its essential details during the rule of his powerful successors. It only began to crumble away when a succession of weak rulers after Aurangzeb failed to keep a firm hand over their subordinates and were unable to keep their prestige or make their authority respected.

With the increase in the extent of the empire under Aurangzeb, however, the number of *subahs* was raised from three to six in the Deccan and from fifteen to eighteen in the north as the result of the re-arrangement of the territorial limits of the old provinces. It was felt that the *subahs* of Multan, Kabul and Bengal were too big and that each of these involved too heavy a charge upon their governors who could not efficiently administer such large areas. Each was therefore split up into two. The whole of Southern Sindh was detached from Multan and formed into a separate province of Thatta (Tatta). So were Kashmir and part of Hazara taken from the jurisdiction of the governor of Kabul and placed under a viceroy. Orissa and part of Gondwana were detached from Bengal and formed into a new province of Orissa.

As said before, Aurangzeb held all the strings of administration in his own hands and used to dictate himself even the minutest details to his governors and

**Admini-  
stration.**

**Readjust-  
ment of  
provinces.**

generals. The result was that they were not given occasion to develop any initiative or self-reliance and when Aurangzeb died the administrative machinery which had endured for more than one century suddenly collapsed. In fact, corruption and slackness had already set in during the lifetime of Aurangzeb owing to his long and continuous absence from Northern India.

Another noticeable feature in the Mughal administration of the reign of Aurangzeb is the absence of Hindu officials both in the highest and lower ranks of government service. 'With one stroke of his pen,' writes Professor Sarkar, 'the emperor dismissed all the Hindu clerks from office.' He further adds that custom duties were abolished on the Muslims and doubled on the Hindu.

Before we close our account of the reign of Aurangzeb let us pass in brief review the progress made by the English in India and their relations with the government of the country.<sup>1</sup> Ever since the visit of Sir Thomas Roe to the Emperor Jahangir, the English had pursued their original policy of friendly intercourse with the Mughal and other Indian princes. About 1616, they negotiated the building of a factory at Masulipatam. Owing to troubles with the Dutch, the English Agent, Francis Day, applied and obtained from the local ruler of Chandragiri (a descendant of the Rayas of Vijayanagar) in 1639, the lease of a strip of land and proceeded to build a factory and a fort which was afterwards named Fort St. George. Shah Jahan although he had captured Hugli and driven out the Portuguese was well disposed towards the English. He

**Centrali-  
zation in  
the hands  
of the  
emperor.**

**Transac-  
tions with  
the  
English.**

<sup>1</sup> A detailed account of the progress of English and other European powers in India will be given in the third volume of this series which is entirely devoted to the British period of Indian History.

allowed them to build factories at Hugli and Kasim Bazar in 1650-51 and also gave them other trade concessions. On the west coast Charles II had received the islands of Bombay and Salsette as part of the dowry of his bride, Catherine of Braganza. In 1668 Charles made over his property, as a thing of little worth, to the Company for an annual quit rent of £10. This immensely strengthened the position of the English on the west coast since they had a harbour of their own where neither the Marathas nor the Dutch could molest them.

The general insecurity on the western coast caused by the depredations of the Marathas persuaded the English factors to fortify their possessions. In 1684, the Directors approved of the policy of their factors in India and wrote back to say 'though our business is only trade and security, we dare not trade boldly, nor leave great stocks . . . where we have not the security of a fort.' Soon after the action of the governor of Bengal brought about a crisis. In 1685, Shayista Khan, contrary to the imperial *farmans* granted to the Company by Shah Jahan, imposed local dues upon their traffic. The Company thereupon openly defied the Great Mughal and resisted by force the demands of the viceroy of Bengal. A sort of 'semi-official war between England and the Mughal Empire' was declared.

James II, King of England, was persuaded to send out ten or twelve warships with a few companies of infantry in order to seize Chittagong. The expedition, as can be well imagined, proved an utter failure and only ended in bringing Aurangzeb's wrath upon all the English merchants. Their factories at Surat, Masulipatam and on the Hugli were seized and the English factors were forced to abandon these places in 1686,

**Strained relations between the English factories and the Mughal governor of Bengal.**

**English factories seized by the order of the emperor.**



but since Aurangzeb was not very anxious to prolong the struggle, terms were ultimately arranged and Ibrahim Khan, the successor of Shayista Khan, invited Job Charnock, the chief of the English factory at Hugli to return to his settlement, early in October, 1690. Charnock received the royal *farman* and was allowed to plant, a few miles below the Hugli, a small station which took its name from an adjoining village, Kalikatta (Calcutta), and which afterwards developed into the capital of British India.

From this date onwards the English East India Company returned to their old methods of peaceful trade, till the activities of the French in India and the political chaos which followed the decline of the Mughal empire eventually forced a new policy upon them.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### Later Mughals

#### The Collapse of the Empire, 1707-1761

War of succession—Release of Sahu—Peace with Rajputs—Progress of the Sikhs—Later Mughals—Progress of the Marathas—Maratha and Sikh confederacies compared—Invasions of Nadir Shah and Ahmad Shah—Causes of decline of the Mughal empire.

Aurangzeb is said to have left written instructions just before his death for a peaceful partition of the empire among his three sons. According to the plan of the emperor, Muazzam was to succeed him as Padshah in the northern and eastern provinces; Azam was to have all that lay to the south and south-west of Agra, except Golkonda and Bijapur which were to fall to Kam Bakhsh. But in the Mughal dynasty it had become a tradition that the sword rather than any such will or law of primogeniture should decide the succession to the throne on the death of an emperor. The three brothers accordingly went to war, each asserting his claim to the undisputed sovereignty of all India. Prince Muazzam moved from Kabul with all speed to take possession of Agra and met the army of his brother Azam, who had advanced from Malwa with the same object at Jajau. A battle took place on June 10, 1707, in which Muazzam was victorious and Azam was mortally wounded. Muazzam, then sixty-four years of age, ascended the throne with the title of Bahadur Shah. The new emperor soon marched south to meet Kam Bakhsh who had occupied Bijapur and Golkonda and had proclaimed his independence in the south. Kam Bakhsh advanced to meet his brother but was defeated in an action near Hyderabad and died of his wounds early in 1708.

**War of  
succes-  
sion.**

The Marathas had immediately taken advantage of the withdrawal of the greater part of the Mughal army from the Deccan, and had already re-taken several forts and were plundering the Mughal districts. Zulfikar Khan who was thoroughly acquainted with the state of parties among them advised the emperor Bahadur Shah to release Sahu, the son of Shambuji, who had been a prisoner in the imperial camp ever since his capture by Aurangzeb in 1690. It was a very clever move indeed. Tara Bai, the widow of Raja Ram, held sway over the Maratha territories and would brook no rival. She naturally opposed Sahu who now marched on Satara and was joined by several Maratha chiefs like Dhannaji Jadav and others who considered Sahu's claim as superior to that of Tara Bai. A dispute about the succession having thus been created in their own camp the Marathas were prevented from further aggressions on the Mughal districts.

Freed from his apprehensions in regard to the Deccan, the emperor proceeded towards Rajputana, in order to adjust existing differences with the several States. He withdrew the *Jiziya*, acknowledged the independence of the two premier States of Mewar and Marwar and thus secured peace in that part of the kingdom. It is possible that the emperor would not have granted these terms so readily to the Rajputs had not the Sikhs risen in the Panjab, captured the whole of Sirhind, and caused a great deal of havoc under their leader Banda Bahadur. The emperor therefore considered it very necessary to repair to the Panjab in person to suppress the Sikhs.

In a previous chapter (XIV) of this book we brought the narrative of the Sikh movement down to the execution of Guru Arjan—the fifth in the pontifical succession to Guru Nanak, the founder of the religion.

**Release of Sahu and the dissensions in the Maratha camp.**

**Peace with the Rajputs.**

It was pointed out in connection with the life of Guru Arjan that the Sikhs, before his death, in 1607, had established a sort of theocratic State and had become accustomed to a form of self-government within the empire. They looked upon their *Guru* as the *Sachha Padsha*, or 'the True King.' Guru Arjan, it may be mentioned, had induced many of his followers to deal in horses, a lucrative trade and one calculated to encourage the spirit of adventure and develop a taste for riding so that the Sikhs subsequently became the finest horsemen in Northern India. A fairly secular turn had been given to the ambition of the Sikhs by their fifth Guru but it was the persecution of their Muhammadan rulers that actually drove them to take up arms in self-defence.

After the execution of his father Arjan Dev, Hargobind ascended the *gaddi* and forthwith proceeded to make certain significant innovations in the character of the Guruship. Fond of riding, tent-pegging and hunting, he introduced and encouraged the use of flesh in the diet of his followers. He also made it obligatory that their presents to the Guru should consist of horses, arms, and other warlike equipment. He further threw up a mud fort in Amritsar. With Hargobind the mode of living of the Guru also underwent a change. To the symbols of asceticism he added the paraphernalia of royalty, i.e., the sword, the umbrella and the crest. To complete this transformation, Hargobind introduced a regular political terminology. He was addressed as *Sachha Padsha* (the True King), his assembly came to be termed as *darbar*, and the temple (or its precincts where those assemblies were held) was called the *Darbar sahib* or the audience hall. The *chabutra* or terrace from which the Guru used to dispense justice and which was specially built for the purpose (since he had forbidden

**The progress of the Sikhs, 1607-1708.**

**Changes introduced by Guru Hargobind.**

his followers to carry their civil or criminal suits to the Mughal Courts) was known as *Akal Takht* or the imperishable throne. Besides these changes, Hargobind also addressed himself to the task of raising a little army of his own as a measure of self-defence. He exhorted his followers to bear arms and be always prepared to fight enemies of their religion. He also took into his service several adventurers and dare-devils, both Hindus and Pathans.<sup>1</sup>

Although Hargobind had ascended the *gaddi* as a sworn enemy of the Muslim government, the persecutors of his father, we find that for some time he was not only unmolested but was a favourite friend and follower of Jahangir. The emperor granted him an allowance of Rs. 500 per diem for the maintenance of a feudal army comprising 7 guns, 500 cavalry and 1,000 infantry, with powers to act as Supervisor-General over the Panjab affairs.<sup>2</sup> Subsequently, however, Hargobind fell into disfavour with the emperor and was shut up for about twelve years with other political prisoners in the fort of Gwalior. He was eventually released by Jahangir and, after the death of that emperor, was constantly engaged in war against the officers of Shah Jahan. He fought three important actions and in all of these three he came out victorious. After retiring from the field, Hargobind not thinking it safe to live any longer in the plains took shelter in the hills and passed his remaining days in perfect peace till he died in 1644.

Hargobind was the first Guru who entered upon a military career. 'After his time,' says Cunningham, 'the

<sup>1</sup> The author of *Dabistan-i-mazahib*, a friend and contemporary of Hargobind, estimates the strength of the force in the Guru's service at 300 horsemen and 60 artillerymen together with a stable of 300 horses.

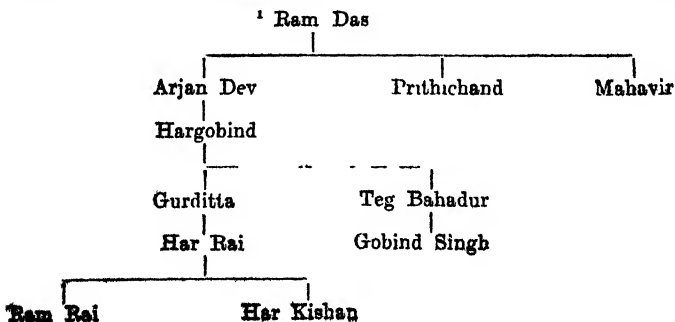
<sup>2</sup> *Transformation of Sikhism* by G. C. Narang.

Sikhs were in little danger of relapsing into the limited merit or utility of monks and mendicants.'

Hargobind was succeeded by his grandson Har Rai, his eldest son Gurditta having predeceased his father. Har Rai was of a gentle and peaceful disposition and remained for the most part of his pontificate at Kiratpur. He did not meddle with politics until he was induced in 1658, to give his blessings and some help to his friend Dara Shikoh when he was flying to the Panjab pursued by the armies of Aurangzeb during the war of succession. Aurangzeb was not the man to forget this affront coming from an unknown quarter and in 1660 when he was securely settled on the throne he summoned the Guru to Dehli. The Guru sent his son Ram Rai who by his conduct at the Court incurred the displeasure of his father and thus lost his chance to the succession. His younger brother Har Kishan—a boy of six years of age—therefore succeeded his father in 1661. But the 'infant apostle' was soon attacked by small-pox and died in 1664.

As Har Kishan died very young, the succession reverted to the junior branch of Hargobind's family.<sup>1</sup> His second son Teg Bahadur was then acknowledged as their Guru by the Sikhs but Ram Rai who still resided at Dehli continued to misrepresent him to the emperor. Teg

**Execution of Guru Teg Bahadur.**



Bahadur was summoned to Dehli but escaped punishment at the intercession of Mirza Raja Jai Singh or his son Ram Singh<sup>1</sup> with whom the Guru then proceeded to Bengal. On the 'return of the expedition from Assam, the Guru chose to stop at Patna for some time and it was here that his famous son Gobind Singh was born. After a time, however, he returned to the Panjab and settled at Makhawal on the banks of the Sutlej, close to Kiratpur, the chosen residence of his father. The hostility of Ram Rai, however, still pursued him and very probably his own conduct<sup>2</sup> also gave the emperor an occasion once more to summon Teg Bahadur to Dehli. This time, however, no escape was possible. Aurangzeb had already set in motion his anti-Hindu policy. 'Half-insultingly, half-credulously,' remarks Cunningham, 'the Sikh Guru was told to exhibit miracles in proof of the alleged divinity of his mission.' But the Guru chose to give his head and not his secret (*Sir dia, Sarr na dia*), and like his grandfather Arjan Dev, Teg Bahadur also fell a victim to the imperial wrath (1675).

It is said that when Teg Bahadur was on his way to Dehli, he sent for his youthful son (Gobind Singh), and girding upon him the sword of Hargobind, hailed him as the Guru of the Sikhs. He is also said to have enjoined upon him the necessity and the merit of revenge. Like his grandfather Hargobind, Guru Gobind Singh thus ascended the *gaddi* as a sworn enemy of the Muslim government. He was resolved to avenge the wrongs done to his father and his nation.

**Guru  
Gobind  
Singh—a  
sworn  
enemy of  
the  
Muslim  
govern-  
ment.**

<sup>1</sup> Authorities differ as to the name of the Rajput prince who pleaded on behalf of the Guru. Mirza Raja died in June, 1667.

<sup>2</sup> The author of *Sair-ul-Mutakharin* and a few other Persian histories represent the Guru as subsisting on plunder.

He consequently addressed himself to preparing his men for the mighty task, and we find that under this inspired leader Sikhism assumes quite a new aspect. The tradition which Guru Gobind had inherited was in no way a mean or discouraging asset in the glorious career upon which he was about to enter.

His great grandfather Arjan Dev had made the Sikh sect into a theocratic community by giving it a code, a capital, a treasury and a chief in the person of the Guru. His grandfather Hargobind had added armed resistance to the theocratic organization and had also won continuous victories over the provincial armies of Shah Jahan. His father, too, suffered the execution of a martyr for his faith. Such then were the noble traditions of his family which young Gobind had inherited at the time of his accession in 1675. He was hardly fifteen years old at that time. To think of active resistance to the mighty power of the Great Mughal was out of the question. Gobind therefore quietly retired to the hills to gather strength and wait until the time was ripe to strike a blow for freedom.

In the meanwhile Aurangzeb had rendered himself odious in the eyes of his Hindu subjects by following the policy of religious intolerance. He had pulled down their temples and destroyed their idols. He had reimposed the *Jiziya* on his non-Muslim subjects. He had estranged the Rajputs and converted them from friends to foes. Lastly he had himself moved down to the Deccan with the pick of his army (1681) leaving the administration of Northern India entirely into the hands of the provincial governors. If Guru Gobind desired to strike a blow this was the right moment. And he seized that moment. In 1695 Gobind laid the foundations of the *Khalsa* and by

**He considers it politic to retire to the hills for the time being.**

**Guru Gobind seizes the right moment to strike the blow in 1695.**



organizing his military resources declared open defiance to the authority of the Great Mughal.

It may be mentioned here that Gobind had utilized the period of twenty years (1675-95) in preparing himself and his followers for his mighty task. By introducing several religious and social reforms, as well as by the adoption of distinctive symbols and devices, he awakened in his followers a new sense of definite purpose and destiny in the life of the nation. He enjoined upon them the worship of Shakti or the goddess of force, and made it obligatory upon all Sikhs to wear steel upon their person in one shape or another. He diverted their attention from the plough to the sword. As said above, he gave to the community the general name of *Khalsa*, i.e., the chosen or *elect* of God and impressed upon their mind the idea that they were born to conquer.<sup>1</sup> In a word, the result of Gobind Singh's teachings was that the spirit of devotion and sacrifice became deeper and the votaries of the faith now fought with the spirit of crusaders against their opponents.

Hargobind had fought three battles against the armies of Shah Jahan, whereas Gobind Singh's military career extended over nearly thirteen years. During that time he constantly employed his men in war, first against the hill chiefs, and then against the troops of the imperial viceroys. The Sikhs, accordingly, were now better acquainted with the art of war and also became more expert in the use of arms. They are said to have even used guns during the siege of Chamkaur and to have

**Guru Gobind Singh changes the spirit and character of Sikhism.**

**Gobind Singh's military career.**

<sup>1</sup> The mode of salutation of the Sikhs, introduced by Gobind Singh was to be and still is *wah guru ji ka khalsa, wah Guru ji ki jateh*. (The Lord's is the Khalsa, the Lord's be the victory).

Guru Gobind also instituted a new ceremony of initiation into the brotherhood (*Khalsa*) which was known as *Pahul* and consisted of drinking consecrated water stirred by a *kirpan* or dagger.

successfully returned the enemy's fire from the walls of the fortress where they had mounted their own guns. The siege continued till the provisions of the Sikhs were exhausted and Guru Gobind was forced to seek shelter in flight under cover of a dark night. He then retired to a place subsequently known as *Damdama* or a breathing place, half way between Hansi and Ferozepur. This happened in 1702.

The Guru had now lost all his children—two being killed during the siege and two captured and buried alive by the order of the governor of Sirhind. His followers had also deserted him in large numbers and he was consequently in a state of great dejection. He was then invited by Aurangzeb and, as stated by the Muhammadan historians, proceeded to the Deccan to meet the emperor but before he arrived, the aged monarch had died. The Guru passed the rest of his life in peace in the Deccan until he was stabbed by two Pathan proteges whose father had been killed by him. This happened in 1708, at Naderah, a town on the Godavari, now called Abchalnagar.

Gobind Singh was the tenth and the last of the Sikh Gurus. But before he died he had chosen one Banda Bairagi to carry on his work as temporal leader of the Sikhs and sent him on to the Panjab giving him necessary instructions together with a sword and five arrows from his own quiver as his credentials. Banda was originally a Rajput of the Dogra tribe. He was born in 1670, at the village of Rajowri (Punch State) and his original name was Lachman Dev. While quite a youth, Lachman Dev had renounced the world and became a *Sadhu* or ascetic:<sup>1</sup> he left the Panjab and settled at the

<sup>1</sup> It is stated by his biographers that Banda, when young, was very fond of hunting and one day when he killed a doe and cut her open, two little fawns came out alive and breathed their last

**Gobind  
Singh  
retires to  
the Deccan.**

**Banda  
Bahadur,  
1708-16.**

banks of the Godavari. The Guru, while travelling in the Deccan, met him there and appealed to him by his Rajput descent to carry on the work of national liberation, and appointed him as his successor.

Having accepted his commission from Gobind Singh,

**Banda captures Sirhind and perpetrates horrible cruelties on the Muhammadan population of the town.**

Banda Bahadur reached the Panjab and collected thousands of Sikhs from all parts of the province to fight under his banner. The Emperor Bahadur Shah at first was busy in the south, settling affairs with the Marathas and with his own brother Kam Bakhsh, and then in restoring peace in Rajputana. Banda, taking advantage of these circumstances directed his first attack on the town of Sirhind. Wazir Khan, the governor, came

out with all his available troops to oppose the invader and a very hotly contested action was fought in May, 1710, in which the Sikhs fought with the spirit of crusaders and Banda himself, like a true Rajput, fought in the forefront of his army. Wazir Khan was killed, the city given over to plunder, and the infuriated<sup>1</sup> Sikhs ruthlessly massacred the Muhammadan population without any distinction of sex or age. With the fall of the town the whole of the province of Sirhind from the Sutlej to the Jumna passed into the hands of the Sikhs. Banda next moved towards Saharanpur and took possession of the town and its environs. He then took Karnal and reduced the whole country up to Panipat. The Sikhs were thus in the neighbourhood of Dehli and reports of their ravages were daily pouring in from all sides. The emperor, as stated before, therefore made up his differences with the Rajputs and hastened to the

before his very eyes. Lachman Dev was so touched with the sight that he not only gave up hunting but also renounced the world. G. C. Narang, *Transformation of Sikhism*, p. 102.

<sup>1</sup> It was in the town of Sirhind and by the order of the governor that the two young sons of Gobind Singh were buried alive.

Panjab. The fort of Lohgarh was besieged by the imperial army but Banda escaped by a narrow path from the back of the fortress and retired to the hills of Nahan Sirmur (November, 1710). From these hills the Sikhs maintained a sort of predatory warfare for some time till the emperor was obliged to retire to Lahore owing to illness and died early in February, 1712.

The death of the emperor was, as usual, attended with a struggle for the throne amongst the various claimants and it was not until the beginning of the next year that Farrukh Siyar was able to secure his succession. The Sikhs naturally took advantage of the political situation and began again their ravages under the intrepid Banda. But now that peace was restored in the empire and a strong governor in the person of Abdul Samad was sent to Lahore (1714) the suppression of the Sikhs was taken in hand. Some of the more orthodox Sikhs who disliked certain innovations made by Banda in their religious practices withdrew from his camp in a body and even assisted the imperial army in hunting him down. After severe fighting Banda and about a thousand of his followers were taken prisoners and put to death with savage tortures (1716).

The result of twenty years' constant fighting (1696-1716) under Gobind Singh and Banda now stood the Sikhs in good stead when the execution of the latter left them without a common recognized leader. The simple, untrained peasant of Guru Hargobind had now become a regular, well-equipped soldier of the Khalsa, adept in the use of arms and trained in the methods of guerilla warfare.

Although after the execution of Banda the Sikhs were mercilessly persecuted by the Government, the rising spirit of the Khalsa was not totally crushed. The

**Execution  
of Banda  
Bahadur.**

**Progress  
of the  
Sikhs  
under  
Gobind  
Singh and  
Banda.**

more honest from amongst their ranks fled to the jungles, hills and deserts of Rajputana and Bikanir, where they nursed their grief and lay in waiting for a favourable opportunity. This opportunity offered itself when the invasion of Nadir Shah (1739) threw the Panjab into confusion. Taking full advantage of the anarchical state of the province, the Sikhs swooped down from their hill-recesses and began to plunder the towns and cities. Such a state of things is always tempting to the bold and the courageous, and the ranks of the Khalsa began to swell. The repeated invasions of Ahmad Shah Abdali (1748-61) made the political condition of the province even worse, and the Sikhs were not slow to turn this confusion to their best advantage. They now formed themselves into bands of tens and twenties under the leadership of more daring chiefs and began to harass the authorities.

The authority of the emperor of Dehli had ceased to exist, nor was the province of the Panjab effectively managed by its new rulers of Kabul.<sup>1</sup> This neglect or inability of the authorities enabled the Sikh bands or associations to prosper, and the most successful leaders purchased horses with the proceeds of their spoils and mounted and armed their followers. They gradually settled in the plains near Amritsar and also managed to throw up a couple of fortresses in the neighbourhood. Since all these leaders owned a fervent allegiance to the Khalsa, each felt a general readiness to assist in his neighbour's scheme of conquest, prompted partly by a desire for the good of the Khalsa and partly by a desire for a legitimate share in the spoils.

**Temporary suppression and re-assertion of the Khalsa, 1716-64.**

**The Sikhs take advantage of the political situation of the Panjab.**

<sup>1</sup> The Panjab was ceded to Ahmad Shah Abdali in 1766-67.

In 1758, a large number of Sikhs assembled under Jassa Singh Kalal and succeeded in capturing Lahore. The old Mughal mint was used for striking coins bearing the inscription 'coined by the grace of the Khalsa, in the country of Ahmad conquered by Jassa, the Kalal.' On the approach of Abdali in the following year the Sikhs had to vacate Lahore but their individual leaders were still in possession of large districts in the province. The empire was in the last throes of dissolution and the spirit of the Khalsa was ever on the rise. By their conduct and history during the preceding thirty years they had shown that they were destined to be the future rulers of the Panjab.<sup>1</sup> Six years after their first capture of Lahore (1758) the Sikhs again besieged the city and compelled Kabuli Mall, the governor of Ahmad Shah, to make over to them the town and the fortress. The Khalsa now became the dominant power in the Panjab. Their subsequent history cannot be appropriately told here. Suffice it to say that between 1764 and 1799 about a dozen of their most important leaders divided the central Panjab amongst themselves till one by one, all of them were reduced to submission by Ranjit Singh before the close of the first quarter of the nineteenth century and the theocratic confederacy of the Sikhs was transformed into the compact and united kingdom of the Khalsa.

We have noticed at some length, the rise and progress of the Sikhs bringing the narrative of their history down to the final occupation of the Panjab by them. We therefore now resume the thread of our story of the Mughal kings. As said before, Bahadur Shah died in 1712. The succession to the throne was, as usual, contested by his

**Farrukh  
Siyar,  
1713-29.**

<sup>1</sup> Ahmad Shah Abdali himself is reported to have said to one of his officers Nur-ud-Din Sanchi, 'This (the Sikh) nation smacks of royalty' (*assie qaum-bu-i-badehahi me asid*).

four sons. Three of them including Azim-us-Shan, the best of them, were killed in the struggle and the fourth Jahandar Shah ascended the throne. But he was not destined to enjoy it long. Azim-us-Shan's son, Farrukh Siyar, marched from Bengal and had no difficulty in routing the large, but disaffected imperial army. Jahandar and his minister Zulfikar Khan were put to death and Farrukh Siyar was proclaimed emperor. During the reign of Farrukh Siyar who was himself weak and good-for-nothing, the power of the government was mostly in the hands of two brothers, Abdullah and Hussain Ali, commonly known as the Sayyad brothers. As soon as the emperor showed signs of resisting their authority, these brothers procured his murder in 1719.

Two more puppet kings filled the throne for a few months each. Muhammad Shah, a grandson of Bahadur Shah, was set up on the throne by the Sayyad brothers in November, 1719. Muhammad Shah was as anxious to get rid of the Sayyads as his predecessor had been. After a while Hussain Ali proceeded to the south to recover the Deccan from a Turki General named Kilich Khan, more popularly known as Asaf Jah or Nizam-ul-Mulk. On the march he was assassinated with the connivance of the emperor who now seized the opportunity and put the other brother Abdullah into prison where he died after a short time. Nizam-ul-Mulk then became the wazir of the empire. But things had become so disorganized at the capital that soon after, in 1723, Nizam-ul-Mulk returned in disgust to his territories in the Deccan. There he became independent and founded the existing dynasty of the Nizam (1723-24).

In the same year (1723) Sa'adat Khan received his appointment as governor of Oudh and retired from the court to his province. From that date onwards, though

**Muham-  
mad  
Shah—the  
disinte-  
gration of  
the  
empire,  
1719-48.  
Nizam-ul-  
Mulk  
retires to  
the Deccan.**

he continued to render military service when it suited his own purposes, he ceased to pay tribute to Dehli and governed the province in practical independence. Bengal soon followed the example of the Deccan and Oudh. Shujah-ud-Din having died in 1739, a local Turki official named Ali Vardi Khan, taking advantage of the confusion caused by the invasion of Nadir Shah and of the helplessness of the Court of Dehli, fought his way to the governorship of the province. He ruled Bengal in practical independence from 1740 to 1756 when he was succeeded by his grandson Siraj-ud-Daula.

**Sa'adat Khan and Ali Vardi Khan become governors in Oudh and Bengal.**

**The Rohillas in the Doab and the Sikhs in the Panjab assert their power:**

About this time the Rohillas, an Afghan clan, took possession of the districts to the north of the Ganges which subsequently came to be known after them, as Rohilkhand. Between 1739 and 1748 as stated before, the Sikhs, after a temporary suppression began to re-assert their power and forming themselves into small groups or *misl*s ravaged the Northern Panjab. In 1720, the Marathas, as will be presently related, obtained from the Emperor Bahadur Shah, an official recognition of *swaraj* or the entire sovereignty of the Marathas over their own country, as well as the right of *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi*. The year 1723 or to put it more broadly the close of the first quarter of the eighteenth century may be taken as marking the beginning of the disintegration which continued in subsequent years till the empire had entirely broken up.

Muhammad Shah reigned in name for thirty years.

**The story of the later Mughals.**

His successors Ahmad Shah, Alamgir II, and Shah Alam also reigned only in name and occupied the throne of Dehli for about a period of half a century. Their story may be told in a very few words, for it contains little of political



interest or value. In the midst of the treacherous plots and sordid intrigues of the nobles at Court the power of the emperor wasted away to a shadow, while the external foes, who encroached upon his provinces and snatched them away, one by one, from his feeble grasp, were the Sikhs and the Marathas. The main interest, therefore, of the story of Indian history during the first half of the eighteenth century, lies in the expanding power of the Marathas and of the Sikhs, and the invasions of Nadir Shah and of Ahmad Shah Abdali each of which contributed its share in bringing about the decline and the collapse of the Mughal empire. The history of the Sikhs has already been told briefly. We now propose to narrate, in brief, the story of the rise of the Maratha power.

We have already stated that Zulfikar Khan, Bahadur Shah's Viceroy in the Deccan, held off the Marathas by an adroit move. In 1708, he had restored Sahu to freedom and had sent him off to claim the government of his country from Tara Bai, the widow of Raja Ram, who then exercised the power in the name of her infant son, Shivaji II. The Marathas were thus, for the time being, involved in their own quarrels and prevented from molesting the Mughal territories in the south, but they soon settled their disputes and were again ready to take the field.<sup>1</sup>

Sahu had none of the qualities of his grandfather. He had been for seventeen long years a prisoner with the Mughals and was consequently unsuited to be a great

<sup>1</sup> Tara Bai was worsted in the struggle and retired to Kohlapur with her son Shivaji II, where she was allowed to exercise her power unmolested. In 1712, when Shivaji died, his step-brother Shambuji was set up on the *gaddi of Kohlapur*. Sahu was, however, recognized as the principal ruler of the Marathas on the *gaddi of Satara*.

leader of the Marathas. Content with the mere honours of kingship and the pleasure of the palace, Sahu left the affairs of the State in the hands of his Peshwa or the chief minister. The first of the line of Peshwas was Balaji Visvanath—a man exceedingly clever, wise, and versed in state-craft—who made his own power supreme in the State and also made the office hereditary in his family. The result was what may be expected. The successors of Shivaji rapidly declined in power, and in course of time, dropped out of sight so completely that the story of the rise of the Maratha power in the eighteenth century has practically become the story of the line of Brahman ministers known as the Peshwas.

**The origin of the office of the Peshwa.**

**Balaji Visvanath—1714-20.**

This new system of government, however, did not prove less useful to the advancement of the Maratha national interests. The Peshwa exercised his sovereign power with the consent of the council of State (*Asht Pradhan*), and had thus the benefit of the advice of his colleagues. Taking full advantage of the dissensions and intrigues at the Court of Dehli, the Maratha government steadily gained in power and influence. In 1719, Balaji Visvanath was called to Dehli to support the Sayyad brothers against a rival court faction. Farrukh Siyar was assassinated in that year and Balaji succeeded in obtaining from his successor Muhammad Shah, the three grants which may be considered the foundation-stone of the great fabric of the Maratha power in India. The first of these conceded to the Marathas the right of *chauth* or a fourth share of the revenues of the Deccan and Southern India including Hyderabad, the Karnatic and Mysore. This legal claim sowed the seeds of future contention between the Marathas and Nizam-ul-Mulk of Deccan. The second grant conceded the right of

*sardeshmukhi*, or a ten per cent share over and above the fourth share mentioned above. The third grant was still more important, and recognized the right of *swaraj*, or the entire sovereignty of the Marathas over their country.

The Marathas thus made a considerable advance under the rule of their first Peshwa and had also the satisfaction of seeing that though Aurangzeb had tried to crush their power and had wasted as many as twenty precious years of his reign in the attempt, they had succeeded in compelling his successors in the short space of eleven years after his death, to recognize their sovereign right in their own country, as well as the right to levy contributions from all other States to the south of the Narbada River.

**The progress of the Marathas under Balaji Visvanath.**

Balaji Visvanath died shortly after his return from Dehli in 1720, and was succeeded in the office by his son Baji Rao. Baji Rao was brought up in the school of politics of his father and was not less ambitious. The Marathas made great strides during his term of office (1720-40). He is consequently considered as the ablest of the Peshwas, and certainly he was the best soldier of them all. His father Visvanath, as we have seen, had established the power and prestige of the Marathas in the Deccan and Southern India. Baji Rao, therefore, turned his attention towards the north. His political policy is summed up in a pithy sentence which is attributed to him and which he is reported to have uttered in reference to the declining power of the Mughal emperor at Dehli. 'Let us strike the withered trunk, and the branches will fall off themselves.'

**Baji Rao, 1720-40**

Baji Rao re-organized the armies of the State and opened up his campaigns against the northern territories of Hindostan early in 1781. The Maratha claims to the

*chauth* and *sardeshmukhi* in Gujarat were established in that year and in the following year the Peshwa's armies poured into Malwa and overran the province. Bundelkhand was then conquered and in 1737 Baji Rao with a large army appeared before the very walls of the capital of the empire (Dehli). Nizam-ul-Mulk advanced from the Deccan to the aid of the emperor but was worsted in an action against the Marathas near Bhopal, and compelled to sign the convention of Sironj, in which he made a formal cession of Malwa and Gujarat and promised to pay an indemnity of fifty lakhs to Baji Rao. Baji Rao also took the island of Bassein from the Portuguese in 1739. He died in 1740 after placing the power of the Marathas on a firm and secure basis.

**Progress under Baji Rao.**

Balaji Baji Rao succeeded his father in the office of the Peshwa, without much opposition on the part of his brothers. Not being a man of very great stamina himself, Balaji had the wisdom of benefiting by the superior talents of his cousin Sadasiva Bhao. He consulted him in almost every important State affair and would not take any action unless he had sought his cousin's advice. Under the able guidance of Sadasiva, the Maratha power during Balaji's regime rose to its zenith.

**Balaji Baji Rao, 1740-61.**

Malwa, Gujarat and Bundelkhand, as stated before, were conquered between the years 1731-37. Raghoji Bhonsla now overran Central India, and repeatedly invaded Bengal compelling the old Nawab Ali Vardi Khan to cede Orissa to the Marathas in 1751, and to make a formal grant of the *chauth* of the provinces of Bengal and Bihar. Between the years 1752 and 1756 the Peshwa also succeeded in obtaining a promise of the *chauth* of the imperial revenues of Northern India. In 1758 again, the Maratha armies occupied the Panjab

**The Maraths power at its height, 1760.**

and the Maratha flag now waved on the fort of Attock. 'Their frontier,' as Elphinstone observes, 'extended on the north to the Indus and Himalayas, and on the south nearly to the extremity of the peninsula; all the territory within those limits that was not their own paid tribute.'

But the conquest and occupation of the Panjab had fatal consequences. This province was claimed by Ahmad Shah Abdali who now marched down from Afghanistan to recover it from the Marathas. The Marathas flushed with their previous successes were determined to try an issue with the Afghan general. The contending armies met on the historic plain of Panipat where more than once the fate of India had been decided, but as Mr. Smith observes, the conflict between the Marathas and Abdali was 'far more determined and sanguinary than either of the battles fought on the same ground in the sixteenth century.'

The forces engaged were large on both sides. Shah Abdali had under his command about 40,000 cavalry and 35,000 infantry. The Maratha confederacy under Sadasiva Bhao mustered 55,000 cavalry, besides 15,000 Pindaris and 15,000 infantry. Both sides had large parks of artillery and innumerable hosts of auxiliaries. Sadasiva Bhao was a leader of little military experience. He was proud of his guns and therefore contrary to the advice of old Maratha soldiers who pressed for adopting their well-tried and customary mode of guerilla warfare, he decided on the fatal plan of entrenching himself before the Afghans. The Maratha lines of communication having been cut by Ahmad Shah early in November their vast hordes began to feel the pressure of hunger. They were therefore constrained to take the offensive early in January, 1761. At the first onset their numerical superiority in cavalry and artillery gave the Marathas

**Battle of  
Panipat,  
1761.**

the advantage. But a great rally of the Afghans, when their right and centre were broken, won for them an overwhelming victory. The Maratha commander Sadasiva Bhaos was slain and so was also Visvas Rao—the Peshwa's son. Malhar Rao Holkar escaped by flight and Mahadaji Sindhia also managed to save himself though he was lamed for life. Several other Maratha leaders also fell in the action while the number of rank and file killed in the battle was without count. The losses were reported to the Peshwa in enigmatic language. 'Two pearls have been dissolved, twenty-seven gold mohars have been lost, and of the silver and copper the total cannot be reckoned.' This letter was delivered to Balaji when he was coming up with reinforcements, but it was now too late. The day was lost. Broken-hearted he retired to Poona, where he died a few months later.

The results of the battle were most disastrous to the national cause of the Marathas. 'They lost almost all their acquisitions in Northern India. Dissensions soon broke out after the death of Balaji, and the government of the Peshwa never recovered its vigour. Most of the Maratha conquests were recovered at a subsequent period, but it was by independent chiefs, with the aid of European officers and disciplined sepoy. The confederacy of the Maratha princes dissolved on the cessation of their common danger.'

Before we close our account of the Maratha history, it seems necessary to say a few words about the Maratha confederacy. It was during the wars waged by their second Peshwa, Baji Rao (1720-40), and in the subsequent period of anarchy and confusion resulting from the invasions of Nadir Shah and Ahmad Shah Abdali (1740-61) that some of the Maratha leaders rose to importance and eventually established the Maratha princely houses.

**Maratha  
confederacy.**

These were Pilaji Gaikwar, Ranoji Sindhia and Malhar Rao Holkar, the ancestors of the present ruling houses of Baroda, Gwalior and Indore. All were originally captains of Maratha troops and served and fought under the orders of the Peshwa. Gradually, however, as the strength of their respective commands was increased and they were given a freer hand in the conquest of the Moghul territories, these leaders solved the problem of maintaining their armies by settling down as territorial lords in the provinces they had won though they continued to serve as members of the Maratha confederacy. The fourth and equally important member of the confederacy was Raghoji Bhonsla who had settled in Central India and subsequently founded the house of Nagpur. It is necessary to bear in mind the history of these separate Maratha States which in course of time became virtually independent of the Peshwa. The power of the Peshwa is now extinct, but the descendants of Gaikwar, Sindhia and Holkar are still ruling powers in India.

It is a strange coincidence that about the same time, i.e., in the third quarter of the eighteenth century, as some of the Maratha leaders were settling down as territorial lords in the Deccan and Central India and were laying the foundations of the future Maratha confederacy, the Sikhs in the Panjab were also forming a theocratic confederacy of their own. Their principal leaders had formed each his own association technically called a *misl* and they all owed a fervent allegiance to the Khalsa. Each helped the other in his schemes of conquest and in spreading the Sikh dominions over the greater part of the country. By these means, as we have stated before, the whole of the Central Panjab became subject to the Khalsa domination, and before the century closed, twelve of the most important leaders had established themselves as masters of important

**The  
Maratha  
and the  
Sikh con-  
federacies  
compared.**

principalities. As the confederacy of the Maratha princes practically dissolved on the cessation of their common danger so the various Sikh chiefs who were now established in their respective territories soon became engaged in mutual jealousy and strife when they had no common enemy to fight. The democratic Khalsa of Guru Gobind Singh had already become changed into a community of feudal chiefs and the change was now silently paving the way for the monarchy which the great Ranjit Singh set up at the beginning of the nineteenth century. It is not unlikely that if the Maratha principalities had been allowed the time, they too, like the Sikh *mists*, would have been welded into one united kingdom by some one from amongst themselves and like the Sikhs also they would have applied the united strength of the Maratha nation in their subsequent struggle with the English. But as it was, before this could be done they were involved in a life and death struggle with the English who were undoubtedly stronger, more resourceful and better organized than the Marathas.

From what has been stated above it will be clear that within a short space of seventeen years after the death of Aurangzeb, the empire if it had not actually broken up, at least showed unmistakable signs of disintegration. Asaf Jah had retired from Dehli to his province of the Deccan, Saadat Khan had set up an independent rule in his *Subadari* of Oudh and Ali Vardj Khan had become the ruler of Bengal. The Marathas had secured legal recognition for their sovereignty in Maharashtra and obtained formal permission to levy *Chauth* and *Sardeshmukhi* in the six provinces of Southern India. We must remember that it was the feebleness of the government and the state of decay to which the empire was reduced which had invited the invasions of Timur in 1398 and of Babur in

**Political situation in the country invites the invasions of Nadir and Ahmad Shah.**



1526. History repeats itself. Once again the country was reduced to a condition in which every *Omrah* and officer was only anxious to secure power for himself—a state of things which invited an invasion from Persia in 1739.

It lies beyond the scope of the present work to give in detail the origin or progress of Nadir Shah, 'the most remarkable man and the greatest warrior Persia has ever produced.' Suffice it to say that he rose from a humble station in life to exercise rule over all Persia and Afghanistan. In 1736, he drove from the Persian throne the Safavi dynasty of Afghan origin and revived a national dynasty in his own person. After he had been firmly established on his throne for two years, Nadir Shah was tempted to invade the weak and tottering

**Invasion  
of Nadir  
Shah,  
1737-39.**

empire of the Mughals. Marching through Ghazni and Kabul, the invader reached Lahore in March, 1739, and after a very short stay in the Panjab resumed his march on Dehli. At Karnal, within a hundred miles of Dehli, the Persian invader, however, met with a check for the first time, but Saadat Khan who had advanced with the imperial army against the Persians could not make



NADIR SHAH

a stand for more than two hours. His army was routed and he himself was captured and brought before Nadir as a prisoner. The weak and imbecile Muhammad Shah made no attempt at further resistance but attended

Nadir Shah in his camp and submitted to the victor's mercy. Both kings then proceeded to Dehli where Nadir stayed for nearly two months and after collecting enormous booty, including Shah Jahan's Peacock Throne, he returned home towards the end of May. He also obtained a cession of territories west of the Indus by virtue of a treaty concluded on May 26, 1739.

Nadir Shah's memory is associated with the sickening tale of the general slaughter which he once ordered during his stay in Dehli. It so happened that a false report got abroad that Nadir Shah was dead whereupon the citizens of Dehli fell upon some of Nadir's soldiers and slew them. The troops stood to their arms all night, and next morning the ruthless king unsheathed his sword as the signal for a general massacre, and sat, it is said, for nine hours in the Great Mosque until, at Muhammad Shah's intercession, the horrible carnage was stopped.

**The horrible carnage in Dehli.**

On the death of Nadir Shah his kingdom had been divided. Ahmad Shah Abdali, an Afghan of Herat, had secured the Afghan portion and set up as an independent king. In 1748, following the example of his predecessor he advanced on the Panjab but was repulsed by the ability of Mir Muin-ud-Din, the eldest son of the wazir and governor of Lahore. Abdali was not, however, to be discouraged by one defeat. Next year he again descended on the plains of the Panjab and succeeded in exacting tribute from the governor of the province. He then advanced on Dehli and obtained the cession of the province of the Panjab. In 1756, this indefatigable invader again marched on Dehli, captured the city and inflicted untold miseries on its inhabitants. In the summer of 1757, he returned to his own country but periodically paid subsequent visits to India and each time that he came, his 'hungry hordes of Afghans' levied

**Invasions of Ahmad Shah Abdali, 1748-64.**

blackmail on the Panjab and Dehli and left them more desolate than before. His last and most important invasion was that of the year 1760-61 when he defeated the Marathas on the plain of Panipat. After this great victory the empire of Hindostan was within his grasp but the Afghan king was unable to profit by it. His army mutinied and demanded a return to Afghanistan. The Shah was forced to yield. Although he returned later to punish the Sikhs his health was failing and he died in 1764 leaving the Sikhs to capture Lahore and the major portion of the Panjab.

If we take our stand in the middle of the second quarter of the eighteenth century and study the map of India, we observe that the political forces which eventually engulfed the Mughal Empire and helped in making the India of the nineteenth century had begun to shape themselves even at that early period.

In the north-west corner of the empire, we have the province of the Panjab, where the political system seems to be almost wholly in the melting pot. The implacable followers of Guru Gobind had formed themselves into small armed bands under the leadership of a more daring chief of their own community and had begun their predatory career. They did not spare even a grim invader like Nadir Shah and fell upon his rear when he was returning home in 1739 laden with the spoils of Dehli. In 1748-49, this province altogether slipped from the imperial grasp when Ahmad Shah of Dehli was constrained to make a formal cession of it to his Durrani namesake, the ruler of Kabul, but the troubles of the emperor, as we have seen before, did not end with that. The rising power of the Khalsa had made the province a danger-spot in the empire, since it invited repeated attacks from the Durrani king who now claimed it as his own and each time that Ahmad Shah descended upon

**Causes of decline of the Mughal Empire.**

the plains of the Panjab, he paid a flying visit to Dehli and left it weaker and more desolate.

In the eastern provinces, Saadat Khan in Oudh and Ali Vardi Khan in Bihar and Bengal had set up practical independence. The Rohillas were forming themselves into a self-governing community and had taken possession of the territory in the neighbourhood of Dehli, north of the Ganges.

Asaf Jah who retired in disgust from the Court had become almost independent in the Deccan. The Marathas, too, were making great strides. They had conquered Malwa, Gujarat, and even marched upon Dehli in 1739. Nearer home, at Dehli, the court intrigues and wars of succession resulted in the delegation of sovereign authority from the emperor to his ministers who were all powerful at the time and were mainly responsible for securing the throne to the emperor. This sense of dependence upon the instruments of his power naturally reduced the emperor to a mere figure-head and there was nothing to prevent his ministers from using that power for their own selfish ends.

With the weakening of the executive authority at the centre, the governors of various provinces such as Oudh, Bengal and Deccan were concerned more in strengthening their individual power, than in the common weal of the empire. They did respond to the call of the emperor but only when it suited their purpose, otherwise the political interests of their own kingdoms which they were now building up within the empire absorbed all their attention. The Maratha capital having become the fulcrum of Deccan politics, Nizam-ul-Mulk was concerned more with his own kingdom in the south than with the political changes or revolutions at the capital of the empire. Similarly Saadat Khan was more anxious to keep in check the neighbouring principality of Rohilkhand than to reform the Court at Dehli. Ali Vardi

Khan, for similar reasons, cared more to maintain good relations with the ruler of Oudh than to interest himself in the intrigues of the Dehli Court.

Such then were the forces of disintegration working within the empire when Ahmad Shah Abdali opened his series of invasions in 1748 and further bled the already 'bleeding and prostrate' empire of the Mughals. Its ruin was now complete.

To sum up, therefore, the selfish and unpatriotic conduct of the Muhammadan nobility on the one hand, and the movement of Hindu political revival (the Sikhs and the Marathas) on the other, were mostly responsible for the internal disintegration of the empire. To complete this process of decay, a number of foreign invasions occurred between the years 1739 and 1761<sup>1</sup> which gave the empire a series of fatal shocks and brought down the top-heavy structure with a sudden crash. The empire had, perhaps, never taken deep roots in the soil of India. 'Its existence,' as Mr. Smith truly observes, 'depended mainly on the personal character of the reigning autocrat and on the degree of his military power.' Akbar, Jahangir, Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb were all men of exceptional ability and strong and vigorous rulers. This system which Akbar had built up during his reign was therefore maintained in more or less working order throughout a period of over one hundred years. But Aurangzeb, the last of the Great Mughals, ruled for an unusually long period of fifty years and 'attained an age far beyond the limit of efficiency.' His highly centralized policy and his over-suspicious nature had already robbed his officers and even his sons of all self-reliance and initiative so that at his death—after a long reign of fifty years—they were no

<sup>1</sup> Ahmad Shah Abdali came as many as ten times in fourteen years.

better than children though turned sixty years of age. Bahadur Shah when he ascended the throne in 1707 was sixty-four years of age but 'benumbed by the crushing weight of parental control', he had lost all capacity for government. His successors were men having neither ability nor character whom excessive luxury had further rendered incapable of any vigorous action.

The Mughal military machine had also begun to show signs of decay even as early as the reign of Shah Jahan. His armies, though they could ravage the Deccan, failed to recover Kandahar from the Persians and made a very poor show before Balkh and Badakshan. Shah Jahan was more interested in his gaudy jewel, the Peacock Throne, than in his cavalry or ordnance factories. The heavy strain put on the imperial troops during the long and protracted campaign of twenty-five years waged by Aurangzeb in the south further undermined the military strength of the empire, and when Nadir and Ahmad Shah invaded the country with their undisciplined hordes, the demoralized Mughal army could not even make a show of resistance. Further, the powerful moral and military support of the Hindus so cleverly secured for his throne by Akbar, was lost by the erroneous policy of his successors.

Amongst other causes of decay may be mentioned the unwieldy size of the empire, which it became physically impossible for one man to govern from one centre in the seventeenth century, when the means of communication were not so well developed as they are to-day. The neglect of sea-power was another factor which contributed to the ruin of the empire, but we agree with Mr. Smith that it is easy to expand such observations and to indicate other causes of decline and that it is needless to work out the theme in further detail. It is better therefore to leave an intelligent reader of the 'story to fill in this outline in his own fashion.'

THE MUGHAL EMPERORS, 1526-1718.<sup>1</sup>

| Serial No. | Name           | Date                            | Remarks  |
|------------|----------------|---------------------------------|--|
| 1          | Babur ...      | 1526-30                         | Proper name Zahir-ud-Din Muhammad. Founder of the Mughal dynasty. Has left interesting memoirs. Died December 26, 1530.  |
| 2          | Humayun ...    | 1530-40<br>1555-56 <sup>2</sup> | Son of No. 1. His first administration lasted for ten years until in May, 1540, he was defeated by Sher Shah Suri and compelled to leave India. Regained his throne in June, 1555, and died as the result of an accident in January, 1556. |
| 3          | Akbar          | 1556-1605                       | Son of No. 2. Real founder of the Mughal Empire. Conquered the whole of Northern India and also initiated the 'Forward Policy' of the conquest of the Deccan. Died a natural death. October, 1605.   |
| 4          | Jahangir       | 1605-27                         | Son of No. 3. Was born of a Hindu mother. Assumed the style of Nur-ud-Din Muhammad Jahangir, Padshah Ghazi. Was given to the habit of excessive drinking. Has left interesting memoirs. Died a natural death. October, 1627.               |
| 5          | Shah Jahan ... | 1627-58                         | Son of No. 4. Was born of a Hindu mother. Waded his way to the throne through blood. Was guilty of the murder of almost all his male collaterals. Was deposed and imprisoned by his son, June, 1658. Died in captivity, January, 1666.     |

<sup>1</sup> We have included the names in the above list only up to Muhammad Shah who may be considered the last emperor worth the name. The actual break-up of the empire had begun in his reign.

<sup>2</sup> During the interval of fifteen years the throne was occupied by Sher Shah and his descendants.

THE MUGHAL EMPERORS, 1526-1718—(continued).

| Serial No. | Name           | Date      | Remarks  |
|------------|----------------|-----------|--|
| 6          | Aurangzeb ...  | 1658-1707 | Son of No. 5. Assumed the style of Alangir. Like his father ascended the throne by causing the death of his brothers. Died a natural death, February, 1707, at the advanced age of ninety. |
| 7          | Bahadur Shah I | 1707-12   | Son of No 6. Assumed the style of Shah Alam. Died a natural death, 1712.   |
| 8          | Jahandar Shah  | 1712-13   | Son of No 7. Was murdered in 1713, after a few months of accession.  |
| 9          | Farrukh Sivar  | 1713-19   | Grandson of No 8. Murdered in 1719.  |
| 10         | Muhammad Shah  | 1719 48   | Grandson of No. 7. Died a natural death.   |



## CHRONOLOGY, 1526-1764.

### *Mughal Emperors.*

- 1526 ... April. Battle of Panipat, Babur proclaimed Padshah of Hindustan.
- 1527 ... Battle of Khanua, defeat of Rana Sanga.
- 1528 .. Battle of the Ganges, Babur defeats Afghans.
- 1529 ... Battle of Ghagra, conquest of Bengal.
- 1530 ... December. Death of Babur, accession of Humayun.
- 1535-36 ... Humayun conquers and loses Malwa and Gujarat.
- 1539 ... Defeat of Humayun at Chausa.
- 1540 ... May. Final defeat and flight of Humayun.
- 1542 ... Birth of Akbar at Amarkot.
- 1541-42 ... Accession of Sher Shah. Formal enthronement in January, 1542.
- 1545 ... May. Death of Sher Shah and accession of his son Salim Shah.
- 1545-53 ... Salim Shah or Islam Shah.
- 1553-54 ... Muhammad Adil Shah succeeds Islam Shah.
- 1555 ... Battle of Sirhind, Humayun recovers Delhi (June, 1556).
- 1556 ... January. Death of Humayun. February. Enthronement of Akbar at Gurdaspur. November. Battle of Panipat, defeat of Hemu.
- 1560 ... Dismissal of Bairam Khan.
- 1560-62 ... Conquest of Malwa, Jaunpur and Khandesh. Execution of Adham Khan. Marriage of Akbar with the daughter of Raja Bihar Mall, January, 1562.
- 1564 ... Abolition of *Jiziya*.
- 1565-67 ... Uzbek rebellions.
- 1568 ... Akbar storms Chitor.
- 1569-76 ... Building of Fatehpur Sikri.
- 1572-73 ... Conquest of Gujarat.
- 1576 ... Subjugation of Bengal, battle of Haldighat.
- 1579 ... Akbar's Infallibility decree.
- 1580 ... Revolts in Bengal. First Jesuit mission at the Court of Akbar.
- 1581 ... Expedition to Kabul.
- 1582 ... The *Din-i-Ilahi* proclaimed.
- 1585 ... Annexation of Kabul on the death of Hakim Mirza.

- 1586 ... Conquest and annexation of Kashmir.
- 1590-91 ... Second Jesuit mission at the Court of Akbar; conquest of Sindh.
- 1592-95 ... Annexation of Orissa and Balochistan, and Kandahar. Third Jesuit mission.
- 1595 ... Defence of Ahmadnagar by Chand Bibi.
- 1596 ... Subjugation of Berar.
- 1600 ... Fall of Ahmadnagar.
- 1601 ... Capture of Asirgarh. Rebellion of Prince Salim (1601-4).
- 1605 ... October. Death of Akbar, accession of Jahangir.
- 1606 ... April. Rebellion of Khusro.
- 1608 ... Arrival of Hawkins at Surat.
- 1608-11 ... Hawkins at Court. Jahangir's marriage with Nur Jahan. May, 1611.
- 1612 ... Suppression of Usman's revolt in Bengal.
- 1614 ... Submission of Rana of Udaipur.
- 1615-18 ... Sir Thomas Roe's embassy at the Court of Jahangir.
- 1616 ... Shah Jahan takes command against Malik Ambar.
- 1616-24 ... Plague in parts of Northern India.
- 1622 ... Kandahar taken by Persians. Rebellion of Prince Khurram.
- 1624-25 ... Submission of Prince Khurram (Shah Jahan).
- 1626 ... Revolt of Mahabat Khan, death of Prince Parvez.
- 1627 ... October. Death of Jahangir, accession of Shah Jahan. Formal enthronement, February, 1628.
- 1631 ... Rebellion of Khan Jahan Lodhi in the Deccan. Death of Muntaz Mahal (June 17).
- 1632 ... Hugli taken from the Portuguese. Destruction of new Hindu temples. End of Ahmadnagar Kingdom.
- 1636-37 ... Treaties with Golkonda and Bijapur. Aurangzeb sent as viceroy of Deccan.
- 1638 ... Recovery of Kandahar.
- 1643 ... Completion of the Taj, commenced in 1632.
- 1644 ... Aurangzeb resigns his appointment as governor of Deccan.
- 1645-46 ... Campaign in Balkh and Badakshan.
- 1648 ... Kandahar re-taken by the Persians.
- 1649-53 ... Unsuccessful campaign for the recovery of Kandahar.
- 1653-57 ... Aurangzeb's second viceroyalty of Deccan, his intrigues with Mir Jumla.
- 1657 ... Illness of Shah Jahan and beginning of the war of succession.

- 1658 ... February. Defeat of Shujah at Bahadurgarh; April, battle of Dharmat, defeat of the imperialists under Jaswant Singh. May, defeat of Dara at Samugarh.
- 1659 ... Shujah defeated by Mir Junla and his flight to Arakan (January); Dara pursued and captured and executed (August).
- 1659-66 ... Bernier in India.
- 1660 ... Death of Sulaman Shikoh (December).
- 1661-63 ... Mir Junla's expedition to Assam. Aurangzeb's illness and visit to Kashmir.
- 1663 ... Jaswant Singh and Shayista Khan sent against Shivaji.
- 1665 ... Surrender of Shivaji to Jai Singh and Dilar Khan. Tavernier in India.
- 1666 ... Annexation of Chittagong by Shayista Khan; death of Shah Jahan in captivity at Agra; Shivaji escapes from Agra.
- 1667 ... Death of Mirza Raja Jai Singh.
- 1669 ... Demolition of Hindu temples. Jat rebellion near Mathura.
- 1672 ... Satnami revolt.
- 1674 ... Coronation of Shivaji.
- 1676 ... Death of Raja Jaswant Singh.
- 1679 ... Jiziya re-imposed by Aurangzeb.
- 1680 ... Beginning of Rajput war.
- 1681 ... Prince Akbar joins the Rajputs. Aurangzeb goes to the Deccan.
- 1685-87 ... East India Company at war with Aurangzeb.
- 1686 ... Conquest and annexation of Bijapur.
- 1687 ... Annexation of Golkonda.
- 1689 ... Fall of Poona and execution of Shambuji.
- 1692-1705 ... Aurangzeb's indecisive campaign against the Marathas.
- 1706 ... Aurangzeb retires to Deccan.
- 1707 ... Death of Aurangzeb (February 21).
- 1707 ... Defeat of Azamat Jajau, accession of Bahadur Shah (June).
- 1709 ... Defeat and death of Kam Bakhsh.
- 1709-12 ... Sikh rebellion in the Panjab, Banda Bahadur succeeds Gobind Singh as temporal leader of the Sikhs.
- 1712 ... Death of Bahadur Shah.
- 1713 ... Accession of Farrukh Siyar.

- 1713-16 ... Sikh rebellion and execution of Banda Bahadur.  
 1719 ... Murder of Farrukh Siyar and accession of Muhammad Shah.  
 1723-24 ... Deccan and Oudh become independent under Asaf Jah and Saadat Khan respectively.  
 1739 ... Invasion of Nadir Shah.  
 1740 ... Ah Vardi Khan also becomes independent in Bihar, Bengal and Orissa.  
 1748-61 ... Death of Muhammad Shah, accession of Ahmad Shah. Repeated invasions of Ahmad Shah Abdali. Panjab ceded to the Kingdom of Kabul.  
 1754-59 ... Ahmad Shah deposed, accession of Alamgir II (1754).  
 1756 ... Ahmad Shah Abdali sacks Delhi.  
 1761 ... Third battle of Panipat.

*Other leading dates in Indian History.*

- 1538 ... Death of Guru Nanak.  
 1538-52 ... Guru Angad invents Gurmukhi script and compiles first memoirs of Nanak in that script.  
 1545-46 ... Humayun captures Kabul and Kandahar.  
 1553-55 ... Humayun master of Afghanistan.  
 1552-74 ... Guru Amar Das institutes the system of *manjas* or *diocesan gaddis*.  
 1560 ... Inquisition established at Goa by the Portuguese.  
 1565 ... Battle of Talikot, fall of Vijayanagar and consequent decline of Portuguese trade at Goa.  
 1574-81 ... Guru Ram Das enjoys the patronage of Akbar and founds Amritsar, the future capital of Sikh theocracy.  
 1580 ... Union of Spain and Portugal. Decline of Portuguese power in India begins.  
 1581-1606 ... Guru Arjan Dev, compilation of the *Adi Granth*. Removal of Guru's seat to Amritsar. Execution of Guru Arjan Dev.  
 1588 ... Defeat of Spanish Armada and collapse of Portuguese political and commercial supremacy in the East.  
 1600 ... Charter of the East India Company of London (December 31, 1600).  
 1602 ... Dutch East India Company formed.  
 1606-28 ... Accession of Guru Har Gobind, his imprisonment and subsequent release.  
 1612 ... English factory at Surat.  
 1622 ... Ormuz taken from the Portuguese.  
 1623 ... Massacre of Amboyna.

- 1625 ... Beginning of English factories on eastern coast.
- 1627 ... Birth of Shivaji.
- 1628-45 ... Beginning of armed resistance of the Sikhs. Har Gobind's wars with provincial armies of Shah Jahan, his subsequent retirement and death.
- 1639-40 ... Mr. Day receives grant of site of Madras.
- 1645-46 ... Shivaji captures Torna, Raigarh, Supa, etc.
- 1645-61 ... Guru Har Rai renders assistance to Dara Shikoh, 1659.
- 1648-49 ... Shivaji raids Konkan.
- 1649-50 ... Imprisonment and subsequent release of Shahji, father of Shivaji, by the Sultan of Bijapur.
- 1659 ... Murder of Afzal Khan by Shivaji.
- 1661 ... Bombay ceded by Portuguese to English.
- 1661-64 ... Guru Har Kishan. Summoned to Dehli by Aurangzeb where he died of small-pox.
- 1664 .. Formation of French company by Colbert.
- 1664 ... Shivaji plunders Surat.
- 1664-75 ... Guru Teg Bahadur summoned to Dehli, proceeds to Bengal, resummoned by the emperor on his return from Bengal (Assam) and executed at Dehli.
- 1668-69 ... East India Company occupies Bombay.
- 1670 ... Shivaji loots Surat again.
- 1674 ... Founding of Pondicherry.
- 1675-76 ... Guru Gobind Singh ascends the *gaddi*, but lives in retirement till 1695.
- 1680 ... Death of Shivaji. Shambuji succeeds his father.
- 1690 ... Calcutta founded.
- 1695-1706 ... Guru Gobind Singh founds the Khalsa and begins his wars with the Rajas of Kangra and the Mughal viceroys. In 1705 he successfully escapes from Chamkaur.
- 1701 ... Death of Raja Ram. Tarabai becomes Regent.
- 1707-8 ... Guru Gobind Singh goes to the Deccan and is stabbed to death by his Pathan servants.
- 1708 ... Shah released from Mughal captivity, becomes Raja of Satara.
- 1714-20 ... Balaji Visvanath Rao becomes Peshwa, marches to Dehli and gets the grant of *Chauth*, *Sardeshmukhi*, and *Swaraj*.
- 1716-19 ... Persecution of the Sikhs.
- 1720-40 ... Baji Rao I. Peshwa's office becomes hereditary. The Marathas conquer Gujarat and Malwa.
- 1735 ... Dumas, Governor of Pondicherry.

- 1737 ... Marathas appear before Dehli. Convention of Sironj.
- 1739-48 ... Sikhs take advantage of the confusion caused by the invasion of Nadir and form their associations or *misl*s and a national army known as *Dal Khalsa*.
- 1740 ... Marathas invade Karnatic.
- 1742 ... Duplex, Governor of Pondicherry.
- 1740-61 ... Balaji Baji Rao, Peshwa. The founding of Maratha princely houses. Holkar, Sindhua Gaikwar, and Bhonsla.
- 1748 ... Death of Nizam-ul-Mulk.
- 1748-61 ... The rise of the Sikh *misl*s, capture of Lahore by the Sikhs, 1757-58. Jassa Singh coins money in his own name.
- 1748 ... Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle.
- 1751 ... Orissa ceded to the Marathas by Ali Vardi Khan. Clive seizes Arcot, recall of Duplex.
- 1756-60 ... Clive in Bengal. Battle of Plassey. Recapture of Calcutta.
- 1758 ... Marathas occupy the Panjab.
- 1761 ... Death of Balaji Rao. English take Pondicherry.
- 1764 ... The Sikhs occupy Lahore and become masters of the Panjab.



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