

# Encyclopedia of Indian History 13th Century, Vol 2

**Matthew Workman**



**ENCYCLOPEDIA OF  
INDIAN HISTORY  
13TH CENTURY, VOL 2**



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## Chapter 11

# Narasingha Deva I

'Langula' Narasingha Deva I (Odia: ପ୍ରଥମଲୀଙ୍ଗୁଳାନରସିଂହଦେବ) was a powerful monarch and warrior of the Eastern Ganga Dynasty or suryabansha of early medieval Odisha who reigned c.1238–1264. He defeated the Muslim forces of Bengal who constantly threatened the Eastern Ganga dynasty's rule over his kingdom of Kalinga (ancient Odisha) from the times of his father Anangabhimha Deva III. He was the first king from Kalinga and one of the few rulers in India who took the offensive against the Islamic expansion over India by Turko-Afghan invaders. His father had successfully defended his kingdom against the Turko-Afghan rulers of Bengal and crossed into Rarh, Gauda and Varendra in Bengal chasing the invaders on backfoot. He also built the Konark temple to commemorate his victories over the Muslims besides multiple temples as architectural marvels along with the largest fort complex of Eastern India at Raibania in Balasore,. The Kendupatana plates of his grandson Narasingha Deva II mention that Sitadevi, the queen of Narasingha Deva I was the daughter of the Paramara king of Malwa.

## Myths about the name 'Langula'

The term Langula has been confused for many abrupt derivations about the name of Narasingha Deva I as many interpreters have compared the word with the Odia term Languda meaning tail in different ways. Some interpreters without looking at the living era depictions of the king himself



from Konark sun temple, have abruptly narrated that the king was physically disabled which was significantly visible in the form of an extended spinal cord resembling a tail.

However, some other interpreters have described that the king used to wear a very long sword which explained this name of his while others have associated the name with the river Vamsadhara which is also locally known as Languli or Languliya without any prevailing evidence.

One correct interpretation comes from the late medieval period work of Gangavashanucharitam compiled by Vasudeva Somayaji in the eighteenth century of the small principedom of the rulers who were the descendants of the Eastern Gangas in southern Odisha.

In one of the sections of this work, one of the court poets known as Vidyaranava has narrated that there were six kings by the name of Narasingha or Narasimha in the Ganga dynasty lineage before his time out of which the first was the son of Anangabhima Deva III and used to wear a long robe.

When he walked fast due to his aggressive nature, his long robe resembled a tail and hence the king came to be known as Langula Narasimha Deva.

He ruled for 27 years. Besides this accurate historical evidence in sync with the Konark sun temple's multiple stone panel depictions of the king, there is no other existing evidence that support any of the other interpretations about the term 'Langula' as the name of the Narasingha Deva I.

# Literary Glorification by Contemporary Poets

Narasingha Deva I is glorified in multiple phrases and sections of literary works by some of the eminent poets of his time besides being eulogized in the inscriptions of Kendupatna, Asankhali, Kenduli, Sikhaheswara Temple, Panjabi math and Sankarananda Math found in Odisha. Poet Dimdima Jivadeva Acharaya in his work "Bhakti Bhagbata Mahakavyam" has praised him as a renowned warrior who was the only one to have destroyed the invading Delhi Sultanate. Vidyadhara, the court poet of the king himself in his work 'Ekavali' has praised the king's army as a victorious force, the glory of which reached great heights while invoking sorrowfulness in the mind of the Delhi Sultan. Narasingha Deva I is described to have caused apprehension in the ranks of the Turco-Afghan forces of Delhi that would surrender when they saw him appear on the battlefield with his sword. Multiple armies of regional kingdoms (Gauda, Lata, Gurjara, Karnata, Malwa, etc.) are described to have been decisively defeated due to the strength of his army.

## Gajapati title

Narasingha Deva I was the first king of Odisha to use the title of **Gajapati** (*Lord of the elephants*) which would become the imperial title of the ruling monarchs of Trikalinga and its later manifestation as the region of Odradesha. The title was first used in the 1246 CE inscription at Kapilash Temple.

## **Conflicts with Mamluk dynasty of Delhi Sultanate in Bengal**

Narasimha Deva was victorious against the Turko-Afghan rulers of Mamluk dynasty in Bengal that had captured Bihar and Bengal. He not only repulsed their attacks, but pushed them as far back as Padma River in current-day Bangladesh. According to the Sanskrit work of Ekavali of the poet Vidydhara, Narasingha Deva I's military achievements against the Muslim forces are decorated with titles such as "Yavanabani Ballabha" meaning conqueror of Yavana or Muslim kingdom and "Hamira Mada Mardana" meaning vanquisher of the Muslim Amirs of Bengal. After his accession in 1238 A.D., Narasimha I followed the policy of aggressive imperialism. By that time, Tughril Tughan Khan (1233 – 1246 A.D.) had become the governor of Bengal as a vassal of the Delhi Sultanate.

After ascending the throne of Kalinga, Narasingha Deva marched with his grand army, aided by Paramadrideva, who was his Haihaya brother-in-law, towards Bengal in the years 1242 -1243 A.D. The Odishan army overran a number of semi-independent Hindu rajas of the neighbouring Southern regions of today's West Bengal, east of the river Ganges and made a calculated move to northern Rarh, Gauda and Varendra, the subordinate territory of the Delhi Sultanate. At this juncture, Tughril Tughan gave a clarion call to all the Muslims for a jihad (holy war) against the Hindus. Even a Qazi (Muslim holy man) and chronicler by the name Minhaj-us-Siraj accompanied this holy war by the Muslims against the invading Hindus from the Odisha frontier.

It is certainly a fact that Narasingha Deva I had extended his sway up to Rarh by defeating Tughril-Tughan Khan. He intended to extend his sway up to Varendra by repeatedly invading it. By that time, Lakhnauti consisted of two main divisions- Rarh and Varendra, situated on either side of the Ganges. Lakhnor was the headquarters of Turko-Afghan expansionist operations in Bengal, consisting mainly of Rarh and Varendra subdivisions under direct authority of the Delhi Sultanate. Having his sway over Rarh and southern parts of Gauda, Narasingha Deva I, directed his army against Varendra. The Odishan army ransacked the Muslim territory at Bengal and created panic in the minds of the Muslims. Being fearful, Tughril Tughan Khan appealed to Sultan Alauddin Masud Saha of Delhi to come to his rescue; the Sultan sent Quamuruddin Tamur Khan, the governor of Oudh to help Tugha Khan. However, after reaching Bengal, Tamur had a sharp difference of opinion with Tughril Tughan, who was ultimately driven away from Bengal and Tamur Khan continued as its governor till his death in 1246 A.D.

### **First seizure of Lakhnauti and the Battle of Katasin (Contai)**

In the initial phase of the expedition, a siege was laid on the fort of Lakhnauti which was a strategic point of entrance into the territory of the Mameluks Muslims from the west and also a point of communication with other Muslim-dominated kingdoms of North India, especially the Delhi Sultanate. In his work known as *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, chronicler Minhaj-I-Siraj Juzani, who accompanied the Muslim forces, gives live accounts and a vivid picture of the war. By 1244 A.D., Tughril Tughan launched a counterattack on the invading Odishan

army. Gaining some initial success, the Muslim army followed the forces of Narasingha Deva who were on a tactical retreat at this point towards the frontier fort of Katasin (Contai in the Southern part of today's West Bengal) that was surrounded by jungles and thick cane-bushes and provided a strategic defence. The Odia army had dug trenches to force the advancing Muslim cavalry to slow down and halt, and also left some of their elephants unattended along with fodder in open field to lure the advancing enemies and expose them to capture.

After the initial defensive confrontation, the Odia forces followed guerrilla warfare tactics, initially staying hidden from the vision of the approaching Muslim forces. In the middle of the raging battle, a retreating Odia force led Tughral Tughan to believe that the Odia army had left the area and halted the army in ease who in turn settled down for midday meals. A sudden and unprecedented attack was launched by the forces of Narasingha Deva, ensuring a massive slaughter of the enemy forces. According to the Minhaj, a section of the Ganga army charged from the direction of the fort, while a concealed detachment of 200 soldiers, 50 horsemen and 5 elephants pounced on the unsuspecting Bengal Muslim army of Tughan, emerging from the thick cane bushes behind the camp. Several Muslims soldiers were killed in this attack and Tughan himself had a narrow escape with his life and was possibly wounded. The march of Narasingha Deva I's forces over the Muslim army has been described in the Ananta Vasudeva temple inscription. In a dramatic description of these events of slaughtering of a whole Muslim army by the Odia forces, the descendant of Langula Narasingha Deva, Narasingha Deva II in his Sanskrit bronze inscription of Kendupatna, mentioned ;

- "Radha Varendra Yabani Nayanjanaasru,
- Pureya Dur Binibesita Kalima Srihi,
- Tadh Bipralamm Karayadrabhuta Nistaranga,
- Gangapi Nunamamuna Yamunadhunavut"

Which means: The Ganga herself blackened for a great extent by the flood of tears which washed away the collyrium from the eyes of the Yavanis [Muslim women] of Radha and Varendra [west and north Bengal] whose husbands have been killed by Narasimha's army.

### **Second seizure of Lakhnauti**

In 1244 A.D, the victorious Odia forces again seized two provinces of Varendra and Rarh situated side by side on the river Ganga and surrounded the Lakhnauti fort. The Muslim commander of the Lakhnauti fort, Fakr-Ul-Mulk-Karimuddin-Laghri, was killed along with his detachment, who tried to battle with the Odia army in the open field. According to certain records, the two provinces of Bengal were ransacked and plundered by invading forces. Many battle weapons were also seized from the Muslim Bengal Army. The Muslim governor of Awadh and a vassal of the Delhi Sultanate, Qamaruddin Tamur Khan arrived to rescue of Tughan Khan by the orders received from Delhi. Minhaj Juzani notes that on hearing the arrival of this large force from Awadh, the infidels left on the second day, which seems to be incorrect as he himself notes that a quarrel ensued between the two Muslim generals as Qamaruddin was enraged to see the Odia army surrounding the fort of Lakhnauti, which directly contradicts Minhaj's notes, as the Odia forces were still present by the time the Awadh reinforcements had already reached the fort. Further

records on the successive events is missing from *Tabaqat-I-Nisari*. Tughan Khan was discharged from his governorship of Bengal by Qamruddin with the authority of the Delhi Sultanate. Qamruddin Tamur Khan himself assumed the governorship of Bengal after this incident.

### **Battles of Umurdan (1247 to 1256 A.D)**

In 1247 A.D., an able new Muslim military commander, Ikhtiyar-ud-Din Yuzbak, was appointed as the governor of Bengal with the primary task of freeing Bengal from the Odia forces of Langula Narasingha Deva that was commanded by his Haihaya brother-in-law, Paramardi Dev. The secondary task of the new governor was to suppress the rebellious activities of Tughan Khan who was plotting a revolt against the Delhi sultanate. Aided by the Delhi sultanate, the new governor launched a fresh military campaign against the Odia forces on the soil of Bengal. In his *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, Minhaj mentions that the two initial attempts to counter the Odia invasion were successful to an extent but eventually Savantar or Samantaray (commander) of the Odia forces, Paramardi Dev defeated the Muslim army. The Muslim army was again resupplied and reinforced by the Delhi Sultanate on the appeal of Ikhtiyar, who marched further into the Odishan territory and a battle ensued at Mandarana or Umurdan in today's Jahanabad subdivision of Hoogly district. Paramadri Dev resisted but was killed on the battlefield. The Muslims halted their progress into Odisha fearing retaliation by the Odia forces.

Rarh and Gauda remained occupied by the Odia forces and the northern frontiers of Kalinga ruled by the Eastern Ganga Dynasty, expanded after these expeditions carried out by

Narasingha Deva I while Varendra remained under secluded Mameluk authority. There is no record of any direct Muslim invasion of Odishan territory for at least the next hundred years, due to the aggressive military expeditions in Bengal by Narasingha Deva I.

## **Conflict with Kakatiya ruler**

### **Ganapatideva of Warangal**

The Kakatiya and Odisha conflict was prominent from the times of Narasingha Deva's father Ananga Bhima Deva III. The major territorial disputes were for the areas adjoining the Godavari river. Ananga Bhima Deva III had captured the Vengi territories south of Godavari. Draksharama inscriptions of Kakatiya General Mallala Hemadi Reddy from the year 1237 A.D. show that they were able to claim some territory north of Godavari but were eventually halted, possibly due to the military might of the Ganga forces under the command of Lānguṅā Narasinha Deva. In the Lingaraja temple inscription of Narasingha it is stated that he humbled the Kakatiya king Ganapati, but according to scholar Surya Narayan Das, it was Rudrama, the daughter of Ganapati who was defeated by him while the confusion prevailed for accession to the throne in the Kakatiya kingdom after the death of Ganapati.

#### ***The Lingaraja Temple Sanskrit Inscription of Narasingha Deva I :***

- "Sva-Kara-Karavala-Kampita-Ganapati-Bhu-Senapati
- Gajabaji-Samaja -Rarajaja-Tanujatmaja-Sya



- Marici-Parasara- Acara- Vicara- Caturaviranara-Kesari
- Dharadhi-Pasya-Nyaya-Namra-Paripanthi-Prithlvipati
- Kirita-Kotimani-Ghrni-Sreni-Bhiru-Nita-Pada
- Saro Jasya-Samrajya-Bhiseka- Atrutha-Samvat-Sare"

## **Construction and cultural contributions**

Narasingha Deva I is mentioned as Paramamahesvara, Durga-putra and Purushottamaputra in the Chandrashekhera temple inscription. The titles show that he was a protector and a follower of the Shaiva, Shakti and Jagannath sects during his rule. A sculpture from the Konark sun temple build by him shows bowing before the three lead deities of the sects as per his titles and a priest. The Lingaraj temple inscriptions says that he had constructed a Matha (monastery) called as Sadashiva Matha to give shelter to the fleeing refugees from Radha and Gauda after the incursion by Muslim forces there. According to the Srikurmam temple inscription, he was a sober person without any bad nature and agitation. He possessed valuable articles and was a sincere learner of art, architecture and religion.

He administered the state by the traditions of Marici and Parasara while following the Niti sashtra (book of law). Due to his dedication towards faith and spirituality, he commissioned and completed the building projects for many temples like Konark, Kapilash, Khirachora Gopinatha, Srikurmam, Varaha Lakshmi Narasimha temple at Simhanchalam and Ananta Vasudeva temple which was built by the interest of his

widowed sister, Chandrika. Sanskrit and Odia were both patronized as court languages during his rule and the Sanskrit masterpieces like Ekavali of Vidhyadhara were written during this time. An inscription at Kapilash temple built by him compares him to the Varaha avatar (incarnation) of Vishnu who saved and raised the Vedas and the world from the oceans of uncertainty. He was the first king to use the title of 'Gajapati' or lord of war elephants among the Odishan kings.

### **The Legend of Dharmapada and Twelve Hundred Masons of Konark**

A popular Odia legend exists to this day, regarding the construction of the Konark Sun Temple that was commissioned by Narasingha Deva I. As per the legend, 1200 head Badhei (masons) lead by a leading sculptor named Bishu Maharana, were given the primary task to complete the project within twelve years over twelve acres of land corresponding to the legend of Samba who was cured from leprosy by the boon of Sun god Surya at the same spot after praying for twelve years. Due to delays, the project was not completed by the end of twelfth year as the uppermost portion of Kalasha did not fit in the almost completed structure. Enraged by the delays and doubting the competence of the masons, the king ordered the completion of the task by the next day morning or else all 1200 of them would be beheaded. On the very day a twelve-year-old son, named Dharmapada, had arrived to meet his father Bishu Maharana whom he had not seen since he was born, as Bishu was assigned to the project before that and had never visited his family during the course of the construction. Unable to put the Kalasha on the top of the temple due to the weight of their bodies, the masons feared the worst. The small child somehow

undertook this task and managed to place the Kalasha on the top of the temple hence completing the task. As the orders were very specific for the assigned masons to finish the task, the news of a child completing the task would have still ensured their deaths. Realizing the situation, Dharmapada killed himself by jumping into the adjoining sea. This sacrifice by a twelve-year-old saved his father and all the other masons as Narasingha Deva I, on learning about the consequences of his severe orders, was resentful and spared their lives.

## **Historical impact**

Langula Naraingha Deva rule came at critical juncture for political backlashes in eastern India. He was able to capitalize over the military achievements of his father and became a uniquely aggressive monarch of his era dictating ancient Odisha's military might over eastern India and defending the parts of Central India and the Eastern coast from the invading foreign Turkic forces who had almost subdued all the independent dynastic rulers across India with ease after the fall of Delhi's ruler Prthiviraj Chauhan in the Second Battle of Tarain in 1192 AD. Due to his aggressive military policies and strategic decisions, the Gangas were able to establish a complete independent state with a powerful military presence. Not until the next two and half a centuries would the Muslim forces be successful in threatening the borders of ancient Odisha or greater Kalinga. Due to this extended period of peace, tranquility and presence of military might; religion, trade, literature and art flourished and attained new heights. The tradition of worshipping Jagannath was absorbed by every Odia household.

Numerous magnificent temples were constructed in this era, beginning with the Eastern Gangas, one of the most remarkable initial rulers of which was Langula Narasingha Deva. The Sanskrit poet Vidhyadhara treats him as a great hero in his work Ekavali. Langula is glorified as a devotee of the goddess Shakti by describing him as a devotee of Katyayani. Eastern Ganga copper plate grants treat him as the son of Bhavani. He continued the worship of the holy triad like his father combining the three important deities of Odisha at the time, i.e., Purushottama Jagannahta, Lingaraja Siva and Viraja Durga. Multiple sculptures found in Konark and Jagannath Temple depict the combined worship of all the three sects.

## **Raibania fort**

**Raibania fort** is a group of ancient forts in Baleswar district, Odisha India. This fort complex is considered as the biggest medieval fort of eastern India. It was built during the reign of Eastern Ganga ruler Narasingha Deva I. There are 161 fort goddesses which are as "Durga devata" or "Iṅṅa devata" and Daṅasharu which is an aniconic form of the goddess Jayacaṅṅi. Although three forts were recorded in the Ain-i-Akbari, four forts have been found here: two of the larger ones are closer to the village Raibania, and the other two are closer to the village Phulta (Phulahatta).

According to The Balasore Gazetteer, the forts were devastated after the Kalapahada invaded Utkala. Post-invasion remnants of the forts except Raibania have been utilized for construction by the local Zamindars and villagers of the locality.

## **Location**

The Raibania fort complex is located in Laxmannath, 9 miles (14 km) from Jaleswar and 2 miles (3.2 km) from the river Subarnarekha.

- Hatigarh
- Chudamanipur
- Olmara
- Garhsahi
- Dolgram (Deulgaon) Fort(West Bengal):It is located at Nayagram Block under Jhargram district in West Bengal. Formally known as Deulgaon Fort in Kalinga History. It is famous for Pakshiraj statue, deul pukur, Dolmanch and ancient Jagannath Temple. Dolgram Pakshraj Fort was also a popular regal zone for playing the Pasha Game between Raja Narasingha Deb-iV (King Raibania fort ) and Raja Chandra Ketu (King of Chandrarekha-Dhumsai) on a very Big sized Royal Stone-stage at Dolgram Fort near Behrani Khal. A water emerged temple-pond(Raj-Deul) in middle of Padmapukur is a memorable significance of Maharaja Purusottam Deba at Royal Village Dolgram . Dolgram Balakesher High School is developed on Dolgram Pakshiraj Fort palace. A Pakhiraj (Winged horse-Pegasus )Statue situated near the cultural stage of School with a majestic tradition of culture and architectural innovation. Winged horse is a Rock art by an ancient King Maharaja Purusottam Deba. A Charak Festival was started from golden time of Dolgram which is very famous for Sharp weapon rule

(Taloyar path) in every Chaitra month. Dol utsav also a famous festival of Dolgram region during dol purnima in every year on a stone made Dolmanch. A historical re-search organization named Dolgram Pakshiraj Trust(Nayagram) took initiative for Unhide the ancient history of Deulgaon (Dolgram) Pakshiraj Fort continuously.

## **History**

Narasingha Deva I, king of the Eastern Ganga dynasty of Utkala from 1238 to 1264, built the forts after conquering Humayun Khan to obstruct the entry of the Turks into Odisha.

## **Konark Sun Temple**

**Konark Sun Temple** is a 13th-century CE (year 1250) Sun temple at Konark about 35 kilometres (22 mi) northeast from Puri on the coastline of Odisha, India. The temple is attributed to king Narasimhadeva I of the Eastern Ganga Dynasty about 1250 CE.

Dedicated to the Hindu Sun God Surya, what remains of the temple complex has the appearance of a 100-foot (30 m) high chariot with immense wheels and horses, all carved from stone. Once over 200 feet (61 m) high, much of the temple is now in ruins, in particular the large shikara tower over the sanctuary; at one time this rose much higher than the mandapa that remains. The structures and elements that have survived are famed for their intricate artwork, iconography, and themes, including erotic kama and mithuna scenes. Also called the

*Surya Devalaya*, it is a classic illustration of the Odisha style of Architecture or Kalinga Architecture.

The cause of the destruction of the Konark temple is unclear and still remains a source of controversy. Theories range from natural damage to deliberate destruction of the temple in the course of being sacked several times by Muslim armies between the 15th and 17th centuries. This temple was called the "Black Pagoda" in European sailor accounts as early as 1676 because it looked a great tiered tower which appeared black. Similarly, the Jagannath Temple in Puri was called the "White Pagoda". Both temples served as important landmarks for sailors in the Bay of Bengal. The temple that exists today was partially restored by the conservation efforts of British India-era archaeological teams. Declared a UNESCO world heritage site in 1984, it remains a major pilgrimage site for Hindus, who gather here every year for the Chandrabhaga Mela around the month of February.

Konark Sun Temple is depicted on the reverse side of the Indian currency note of 10 rupees to signify its importance to Indian cultural heritage.

## **Location**

- Temple is located in an eponymous village (now NAC Area) about 35 kilometres (22 mi) northeast of Puri and 65 kilometres (40 mi) southeast of Bhubaneswar on the Bay of Bengal coastline in the Indian state of Odisha. The nearest airport is Bhubaneswar airport. Both Puri and Bhubaneswar are major railway hubs connected by Indian Railways'

The Konark Sun Temple was built in 1250 A.D. during the reign of the Eastern Ganga King Narsimhadeva-1 from stone in the form of a giant ornamented chariot dedicated to the Sun god, Surya. In Hindu Vedic iconography Surya is represented as rising in the east and traveling rapidly across the sky in a chariot drawn by seven horses. He is described typically as a resplendent standing person holding a lotus flower in both his hands, riding the chariot marshaled by the charioteer Aruna. The seven horses are named after the seven meters of Sanskrit prosody: Gayatri, Brihati, Ushnih, Jagati, Trishtubha, Anushtubha, and Pankti. Typically seen flanking Surya are two females who represent the dawn goddesses, Usha and Pratyusha. The goddesses are shown to be shooting arrows, a symbol of their initiative in challenging the darkness. The architecture is also symbolic, with the chariot's twelve pairs of wheels corresponding to the 12 months of the Hindu calendar, each month paired into two cycles (Shukla and Krishna).

The Konark temple presents this iconography on a grand scale. It has 24 elaborately carved stone wheels which are nearly 12 feet (3.7 m) in diameter and are pulled by a set of seven horses. When viewed from inland during the dawn and sunrise, the chariot-shaped temple appears to emerge from the depths of the blue sea carrying the sun.

The temple plan includes all the traditional elements of a Hindu temple set on a square plan. According to Kapila Vatsyayan, the ground plan, as well the layout of sculptures and reliefs, follow the square and circle geometry, forms found in Odisha temple design texts such as the *Silpasarini*. This mandala structure informs the plans of other Hindu temples in Odisha and elsewhere.



The main temple at Konark, locally called the *deul*, no longer exists. It was surrounded by subsidiary shrines containing niches depicting Hindu deities, particularly Surya in many of his aspects. The *deul* was built on a high terrace. The temple was originally a complex consisting of the main sanctuary, called the *rekha deul*, or *bada deul* (lit. big sanctum). In front of it was the *bhadra deul* (lit. small sanctum), or *jagamohana* (lit. assembly hall of the people) (called a *mandapa* in other parts of India.). The attached platform was called the *pida deul*, which consisted of a square *mandapa* with a pyramidal roof. All of these structures were square at their core, and each was overlain with the *pancharatha* plan containing a variegated exterior. The central projection, called the *raha*, is more pronounced than the side projections, called *kanika-paga*, a style that aims for an interplay of sunlight and shade and adds to the visual appeal of the structure throughout the day. The design manual for this style is found in the *Silpa Sastra* of ancient Odisha.

Twice as wide as they were high, the walls of the *jagamohana* are 100 feet (30 m) tall. The surviving structure has three tiers of six *pidas* each. These diminish incrementally and repeat the lower patterns. The *pidas* are divided into terraces. On each of these terraces stand statues of musician figures. The main temple and the *jagamohana* porch consist of four main zones: the platform, the wall, the trunk, and the crowning head called a *mastaka*. The first three are square while the *mastaka* is circular. The main temple and the *jagamohana* differed in size, decorative themes, and design. It was the main temple's trunk, called the *gandhi* in medieval Hindu architecture texts, that was ruined long ago. The sanctum of the main temple is now without a roof and most of the original parts.

On the east side of the main temple is the *Nata mandira* (lit. dance temple). It stands on a high, intricately carved platform. The relief on the platform is similar in style to that found on the surviving walls of the temple. According to historical texts, there was an *Aruna stambha* (lit. Aruna's pillar) between the main temple and the *Nata mandira*, but it is no longer there because it was moved to the Jagannatha at Puri sometime during the troubled history of this temple. According to Harle, the texts suggest that originally the complex was enclosed within a wall 865 feet (264 m) by 540 feet (160 m), with gateways on three sides.

The sun temple was made from three types of stone. Chlorite was used for the door lintel and frames as well as some sculptures. Laterite was used for the core of the platform and staircases near the foundation. Khondalite was used for other parts of the temple.

According to Mitra, the Khondalite stone weathers faster over time, and this may have contributed to erosion and accelerated the damage when parts of the temples were destroyed. None of these stones occur naturally nearby, and the architects and artisans must have procured and moved the stones from distant sources, probably using the rivers and water channels near the site. The masons then created ashlar, wherein the stones were polished and finished so as to make joints hardly visible.

The original temple had a main sanctum sanctorum (*vimana*), which is estimated to have been 229 feet (70 m) tall. The main *vimana* fell in 1837. The main *mandapa* audience hall (*jagamohana*), which is about 128 feet (39 m) tall, still stands

and is the principal structure in the surviving ruins. Among the structures that have survived to the current day are the dance hall (*Nata mandira*) and the dining hall (*Bhoga mandapa*).

## **Reliefs and sculpture**

The walls of the temple from the temple's base through the crowning elements are ornamented with reliefs, many finished to jewelry-quality miniature details. The terraces contain stone statues of male and female musicians holding various musical instruments including the vina, mardala, gini. Other major works of art include sculptures of Hindu deities, *apsaras* and images from the daily life and culture of the people (*artha* and *dharma* scenes), various animals, aquatic creatures, birds, legendary creatures, and friezes narrating the Hindu texts. The carvings include purely decorative geometric patterns and plant motifs. Some panels show images from the life of the king such as one showing him receiving counsel from a guru, where the artists symbolically portrayed the king as much smaller than the guru, with the king's sword resting on the ground next to him.

The *upana* (moulding) layer at the bottom of the platform contains friezes of elephants, marching soldiers, musicians, and images depicting the secular life of the people, including hunting scenes, a caravan of domesticated animals, people carrying supplies on their head or with the help of a bullock cart, travelers preparing a meal along the roadside, and festive processions. On other walls are found images depicting the daily life of the elite as well as the common people. For example, girls are shown wringing their wet hair, standing by a

tree, looking from a window, playing with pets, putting on makeup while looking into a mirror, playing musical instruments such as the *vina*, chasing away a monkey who is trying to snatch items, a family taking leave of their elderly grandmother who seems dressed for a pilgrimage, a mother blessing her son, a teacher with students, a yogi during a standing *asana*, a warrior being greeted with a namaste, a mother with her child, an old woman with a walking stick and a bowl in her hands, comical characters, among others.

The Konark temple is also known for its erotic sculptures of *maithunas*. These show couples in various stages of courtship and intimacy, and in some cases coital themes. Notorious in the colonial era for their uninhibited celebration of sexuality, these images are included with other aspects of human life as well as deities that are typically associated with tantra.

This led some to propose that the erotic sculptures are linked to the *vama marga* (left hand tantra) tradition. However, this is not supported by local literary sources, and these images may be the same *kama* and *mithuna* scenes found integrated into the art of many Hindu temples. The erotic sculptures are found on the temple's Shikhara, and these illustrate all the *bandhas* (*mudra* forms) described in the *Kamasutra*.

Other large sculptures were a part of the gateways of the temple complex. These include life-size lions subduing elephants, elephants subduing demons, and horses. A major pillar dedicated to Aruna, called the *Aruna Stambha*, used to stand in front of the eastern stairs of the porch. This, too, was intricately carved with horizontal friezes and motifs. It now stands in front of the Jagannatha temple at Puri.

## Hindu deities

The upper levels and terrace of the Konark Sun temple contain larger and more significant works of art than the lower level. These include images of musicians and mythological narratives as well as sculptures of Hindu deities, including Durga in her Mahishasuramardini aspect killing the shape-shifting buffalo demon (Shaktism), Vishnu in his Jagannatha form (Vaishnavism), and Shiva as a (largely damaged) linga (Shaivism).

Some of the better-preserved friezes and sculptures were removed and relocated to museums in Europe and major cities of India before 1940.

The Hindu deities are also depicted in other parts of the temple. For example, the medallions of the chariot wheels of the Surya temple, as well as the *anuratha* artwork of the *jagamohana*, show Vishnu, Shiva, Gajalakshmi, Parvati, Krishna, Narasimha, and other divinities. Also found on the *jagamohana* are sculptures of Vedic deities such as Indra, Agni, Kubera, Varuna, and Âdityas.

## Style

The temple follows the traditional style of Kalinga architecture. It is oriented towards the east so that the first rays of the sunrise strike the main entrance. The temple, built from Khondalite rocks, was originally constructed at the mouth of the river Chandrabhaga, but the waterline has receded since then. The wheels of the temple are sundials, which can be used to calculate time accurately to a minute.

## Other temples and monuments

The Konark Sun Temple complex has ruins of many subsidiary shrines and monuments around the main temple. Some of these include:

- **Mayadevi Temple** – Located west- been dated to the late 11th century, earlier than the main temple. It consists of a sanctuary, a *mandapa* and, before it, an open platform. It was discovered during excavations carried out between 1900 and 1910. Early theories assumed that it was dedicated to Surya's wife and thus named the Mayadevi Temple. However, later studies suggested that it was also a Surya temple, albeit an older one that was fused into the complex when the monumental temple was built. This temple also has numerous carvings and a square *mandapa* is overlain by a *sapta-ratha*. The sanctum of this Surya temple features a Nataraja. Other deities in the interior include a damaged Surya holding a lotus, along with Agni, Varuna, Vishnu, and Vayu.
- **Vaishnava Temple** – Located southwest of the so-called Mayadevi Temple, it was discovered during excavations in 1956. This discovery was significant because it confirmed that the Konark Sun Temple complex revered all the major Hindu traditions, and was not an exclusive worship place for the *saura* cult as previously believed. This is a small temple with sculptures of Balarama, Varaha, and Vamana-Trivikrama in its sanctum, marking it as a Vaishnavite temple. These images are shown as

wearing *dhoti* and a lot of jewelry. The sanctum's primary idol is missing, as are images from some niches in the temple. The site's significance as a place of Vaishnavism pilgrimage is attested to in Vaishnava texts. For example, Chaitanya, the early 16th-century scholar and founder of Gaudiya Vaishnavism, visited the Konark temple and prayed on its premises.

- **Kitchen** – This monument is found south of the *bhoga mandapa* (feeding hall). It, too, was discovered in excavations in the 1950s. It includes means to bring water, cisterns to store water, drains, a cooking floor, depressions in the floor probably for pounding spices or grains, as well several triple ovens (*chulahs*) for cooking. This structure may have been for festive occasions or a part of a community feeding hall. According to Thomas Donaldson, the kitchen complex may have been added a little later than the original temple.
- **Well 1** – This monument is located north of the kitchen, towards its eastern flank, was probably built to supply water to the community kitchen and *bhoga mandapa*. Near the well are a pillared *mandapa* and five structures, some with semi-circular steps whose role is unclear.
- **Well 2** – This monument and associated structures are in the front of the northern staircase of the main temple, with foot rests, a washing platform, and a wash water drain system. It was probably designed for the use of pilgrims arriving at the temple.

A collection of fallen sculptures can be viewed at the *Konark Archaeological Museum*, which is maintained by the Archaeological Survey of India. The fallen upper portion of the temple is believed to have been studded with many inscriptions.

## **History**

### **Ancient texts**

The oldest surviving Vedic hymns, such as hymn 1.115 of the Rigveda, mention *Surya* with particular reverence for the "rising sun" and its symbolism as dispeller of darkness, one who empowers knowledge, the good, and all life. However, the usage is context specific.

In some hymns, the word *Surya* simply means sun as an inanimate object, a stone, or a gem in the sky (Rigvedic hymns 5.47, 6.51 and 7.63) while in others it refers to a personified deity. In the layers of Vedic texts, *Surya* is one of the several trinities along with *Agni* and either *Vayu* or *Indra*, which are presented as an equivalent icon and aspect of the Hindu metaphysical concept called the *Brahman*.

In the *Brahmanas* layer of Vedic literature, *Surya* appears with *Agni* (fire god) in the same hymns. *Surya* is revered for the day, and *Agni* for its role during the night. According to *Kapila Vatsyayan*, the concept of a *Surya*–*Agni* relationship evolves, and in later literature *Surya* is described as *Agni* representing the first principle and the seed of the universe. It is in the *Brahmanas* layer of the Vedas, and the *Upanishads* that *Surya* is explicitly linked to the power of sight, and to visual



perception and knowledge. He is then internalized and said to be the eye, as ancient Hindu sages suggested abandonment of external rituals to gods in favor of internal reflection and meditation of the gods within, in one's journey to realize the Atman (soul, self) within, in texts such as the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, Chandogya Upanishad, Kaushitaki Upanishad, and others.

The Mahabharata epic opens its chapter on Surya by reverentially calling him the "eye of the universe, soul of all existence, origin of all life, goal of the Samkhyas and Yogis, and symbolism for freedom and spiritual emancipation". In the Mahabharata, Karna is the son of Surya and an unmarried princess named Kunti. The epic describes Kunti's difficult life as an unmarried mother, then her abandonment of Karna, followed by her lifelong grief. Baby Karna is found and then adopted, and grows up to become one of the central characters in the great battle of Kurukshetra where he fights his half-brothers.

### **Konark in texts**

Konark, also referred to in Indian texts by the name *Kainapara*, was a significant trading port by the early centuries of the common era. The current Konark temple dates to the 13th century, though evidence suggests that a sun temple was built in the Konark area by at least the 9th century. Several Puranas mention Surya worship centers in Mundira, which may have been the earlier name for Konark, Kalapriya (Mathura), and Multan (now in Pakistan). The Chinese Buddhist pilgrim and traveler Hiuen-tsang (also referred to as Xuanzang) mentions a port city in Odisha named

*Charitra*. He describes the city as prosperous, with five convents and "storeyed towers that are very high and carved with saintly figures exquisitely done". Since he visited India in the 7th century, he could not have been referring to the 13th-century temple, but his description suggests either Konark or another Odisha port city already featuring towering structures with sculptures.

According to the Madala Panji, there was at one time another temple in the region built by Pundara Kesari. He may have been Puranjaya, the 7th-century ruler of the Somavasmi Dynasty.

## **Construction**

The current temple is attributed to Narasimhadeva I of the Eastern Ganga Dynasty, r. 1238–1264 CE-. It is one of the few Hindu temples whose planning and construction records written in Sanskrit in the Odiya script have been preserved in the form of palm leaf manuscripts that were discovered in a village in the 1960s and subsequently translated. The temple was sponsored by the king, and its construction was overseen by Siva Samantaraya Mahapatra. It was built near an old Surya temple. The sculpture in the older temple's sanctum was re-consecrated and incorporated into the newer larger temple. This chronology of temple site's evolution is supported by many copper plate inscriptions of the era in which the Konark temple is referred to as the "great cottage".

According to James Harle, the temple as built in the 13th century consisted of two main structures, the dance *mandapa* and the great temple (*deul*). The smaller *mandapa* is

the structure that survives; the great *deul* collapsed sometime in the late 16th century or after. According to Harle, the original temple "must originally have stood to a height of some 225 feet (69 m)", but only parts of its walls and decorative mouldings remain.

### **Damage and ruins**

The temple was in ruins before its restoration. Speculation continues as to the cause of the destruction of the temple. Early theories stated that the temple was never completed and collapsed during construction. This is contradicted by textual evidence and evidence from inscriptions. The Kenduli copper plate inscription of 1384 CE from the reign of Narasimha IV seems to indicate that the temple was not only completed but an active site of worship. Another inscription states that various deities in the temple were consecrated, also suggesting that construction of the temple had been completed. A non-Hindu textual source, the Akbar-era text *Ain-i-Akbari* by Abul Fazl dated to the 16th century, mentions the Konark temple, describing it as a prosperous site with a temple that made visitors "astonished at its sight", with no mention of ruins. 200 years later, during the reign of the Marathas in Odisha in the 18th century, a Maratha holy man found the temple abandoned and covered in overgrowth. The Marathas relocated the temple's Aruna stambha (pillar with Aruna the charioteer seated atop it) to the Lion's Gate entrance of the Jagannath Temple in Puri.

Texts from the 19th century do mention ruins, which means the temple was damaged either intentionally or through natural causes sometime between 1556 and 1800 CE. The

intentional-damage theory is supported by Mughal era records that mention the Muslim invader Kalapahad attacking and destroying Jagannath Puri and the Konark temple. Other texts state that the temple was sacked several times by Muslim armies between the 15th and 17th centuries. Islamic texts describing the raids of Kalapahar mention his army's first attempt to destroy the temple in 1565, but they failed. They inflicted only minor damage and carried away the copper *kalasa*.

The Hindu text *Madala Panji* and regional tradition state that Kalapahad attacked again and damaged the temple in 1568. After the Sun Temple ceased to attract faithful, Konark became deserted, left to disappear in dense forests for years.

The natural-damage theory is supported by the nearness of the temple to the shore and the monsoons in the region that would tend to cause damage. According to NCERT's history text book, the shikhara of the temple reached as high as 70m, which proved heavy for the site and it fell in the nineteenth century. However, the existence of nearby stone temples in the Odisha region that were built earlier and have stood without damage casts doubt to this theory. According to P. Parya, the number of rings of moss and lichen growth found on the stone ruins suggests the damage occurred sometime around the 1570s, but this approach does not indicate why or by whom.

According to Thomas Donaldson, evidence suggests that the damage and the temple's ruined condition can be dated to between the late 16th century and the early 17th century from the records of various surveys and repairs found in early 17th-century texts. These also record that the temple remained a

site of worship in the early 17th century. These records do not state whether the ruins were being used by devotees to gather and worship, or part of the damaged temple was still in use for some other purpose.

### **Aruna Stambha**

In the last quarter of the 18th century, the **Aruna stambha** (*Aruna pillar*) was removed from the entrance of Konark temple and placed at the *Singha-dwara* (Lion's Gate) of the Jagannath temple in Puri by a Maratha *Brahmachari* named Goswain (or Goswami).

The pillar, made of monolithic chlorite, is 33 feet 8 inches (10.26 m) tall and is dedicated to Aruna, the charioteer of the Sun god.

### **Preservation efforts**

In 1803 the East India Marine Board requested the Governor General of Bengal that conservation efforts be undertaken. However, the only conservation measure put in place at the time was to prohibit further removal of stones from the site. Lacking structural support, the last part of the main tower still standing, a small broken curved section, collapsed in 1848.

The then-Raja of Khurda, who had jurisdiction over this region in the early 19th century, removed some stones and sculptures to use in a temple he was building in Puri. A few gateways and some sculptures were destroyed in the process. In 1838 the Asiatic Society of Bengal requested that conservation efforts be undertaken, but the requests were denied, and only measures to prevent vandalism were put in place.

In 1859 the Asiatic Society of Bengal proposed, and in 1867 attempted to relocate an architrave of the Konark temple depicting the *navagraha* to the Indian Museum in Calcutta. This attempt was abandoned as funds had run out. In 1894 thirteen sculptures were moved to the Indian Museum. Local Hindu population objected to further damage and removal of temple ruins. The government issued orders to respect the local sentiments. In 1903, when a major excavation was attempted nearby, the then-Lieutenant governor of Bengal, J. A. Bourdillon, ordered the temple to be sealed and filled with sand to prevent the collapse of the *Jagamohana*. The Mukhasala and Nata Mandir were repaired by 1905. In 1906 casuarina and punnang trees were planted facing the sea to provide a buffer against sand-laden winds. In 1909 the Mayadevi temple was discovered while removing sand and debris. The temple was granted World Heritage Site status by the UNESCO in 1984.

## **Reception**

The Konark Sun Temple has been rated as one of the greatest architectural marvels of the Indian subcontinent. According to Coomaraswamy, the Konark Sun Temple marks the high point of the Odisha style of Nagara architecture.

The Nobel Laureate Tagore wrote, Here the language of stone surpasses the language of human.

- —*Rabindranath Tagore*

The colonial-era reception of the temple ranged from praise to derision. Andrew Sterling, the early colonial-era administrator

and Commissioner of Cuttack questioned the skill of the 13th-century architects, but also wrote that the temple had "an air of elegance, combined with massiveness in the whole structure, which entitles it to no small share of admiration", adding that the sculpture had "a degree of taste, propriety, and freedom which would stand a comparison with some of our best specimens of Gothic architectural ornament". The Victorian mindset saw pornography in the artwork of Konark and wondered why there was no "shame and guilt in this pleasure in filth", while Alan Watts stated that there was no comprehensible reason to separate spirituality from love, sex, and religious arts. According to Ernest Binfield Havell, the Konark temple is "one of the grandest examples of Indian sculpture extant", adding that they express "as much fire and passion as the greatest European art" such as that found in Venice.

## **Cultural significance**

Religion is frequently at the centre of the Odia (previously Orissan) cultural expression, and Konark occupies an important space in it as part of The Golden Triangle (Jagannath Temple, Puri, and the Lingaraja Temple of Bhubaneswar completing it) which represents the pinnacle of Odia (previously Orissan) masonry and temple architecture.

## **Literature**

Numerous poems, stories, and novels have been written about Konark, most of which explore or expand or reinterpret the tragedies inherent in the legends and stories around the

temple. Most recently, Mohanjit's book of poems, *Kone Da Suraj*, which revolves around Konark, won the Kendra Sahitya Akademi Award (one of the top awards for literature in India) for Punjabi language.

The following is a list of notable Odia literary works based on or inspired by Konark:

- Sachidananda Routray was the second Odia to win the Jnanpith Award, considered the highest literary award in India. His most famous work is the long poem *Baji Rout*, which narrates the story of courage and sacrifice by a child, similar to the tale of Dharmapada and his sacrifice for the masons who built Konark. He has written many poems based on the legends of Konarka:
  - *Bhanga Mandira*
  - *Konarka*
- Gopabandhu Das was a notable social activist and writer in pre-independence India, who was instrumental in the formation of the state of Odisha. His epic poem *Dharmapada* is one of the landmarks in Odia literature.
- Mayadhar Mansingh is a noted Odia poet and writer, who was popularly known for the romantic and erotic metaphors in his work, earning him the nickname of Prēmika kabi (Lover poet). His poems on Konark include:
  - *Konarka*
  - *Konarkara Lashya Lila*
  - *Mumurshu Konarka*



- Manoj Das is a celebrated Odia writer, with a Kendra Sahitya Akademi Award to his name, among many other recognitions and awards. His second book of poems, *Kabita Utkala* (published in 2003), has four poems on Konark
- Dharmapada: Nirbhul Thikana
- Bruntahina Phulara Sthapati: Sibei Santara
- Konark Sandhane
- Kalapahadara Trushna: Ramachandi
- Pratibha Ray is a modern Odia novelist and short story writer who has found both critical and commercial success. Her book *Shilapadma* (published in 1983) won the Odisha Sahitya Academy Award and has been translated to six other languages.

Additionally, the Sun Temple is the setting of *Interpreter of Maladies*, a short story in Jhumpa Lahiri's Pulitzer Prize winning collection of the same name.

### **In heraldry**

The Warrior and Horse statue found in the temple grounds forms the basis of the state emblem of Odisha.

## Chapter 12

# Rule of Razia Sultan

**Sultan Raziyyat-Ud-Dunya Wa Ud-Din** (r. 1236–1240), popularly known as **Razia Sultana**, was a ruler of the Delhi Sultanate in the northern part of the Indian subcontinent. She was the first female Muslim ruler of the subcontinent, and the first female Muslim ruler of Delhi.

A daughter of Mamluk Sultan Shamsuddin Iltutmish, Razia administered Delhi during 1231–1232 when her father was busy in the Gwalior campaign. According to a possibly apocryphal legend, impressed by her performance during this period, Iltutmish nominated Razia as his heir apparent after returning to Delhi. Iltutmish was succeeded by Razia's half-brother Ruknuddin Firuz, whose mother Shah Turkan planned to execute her. During a rebellion against Ruknuddin, Razia instigated the general public against Shah Turkan, and ascended the throne after Ruknuddin was deposed in 1236.

Razia's ascension was challenged by a section of nobles, some of whom ultimately joined her, while the others were defeated. The Turkic nobles who supported her expected her to be a figurehead, but she increasingly asserted her power. This, combined with her appointments of non-Turkic officers to important posts, led to their resentment against her. She was deposed by a group of nobles in April 1240, after having ruled for less than four years. She married one of the rebels – Ikhtiyaruddin Altunia – and attempted to regain the throne, but was defeated by her half-brother and successor Muizuddin Bahram in October that year, and was killed shortly after.

## Names and titles

Razia's name is also transliterated as Raḡiyya or Raziyya. The term "Sultana", used by some modern writers, is a misnomer as it means "the king's wife" rather than "female ruler". Razia's own coins call her *Sultan Jalalat al-Duniya wal-Din* or as *al-Sultan al-Muazzam Raziyat al-Din bint al-Sultan*. The Sanskrit-language inscriptions of the Sultanate call her *Jallaladina*, while near-contemporary historian Minhaj calls her *Razia*.

## Early life

Razia was born to the Delhi Sultan Shamsuddin Iltutmish, a Turkic slave (*mamluk*) of his predecessor Qutb al-Din Aibak. Razia's mother – Turkan Khatun was a daughter of Qutb al-Din Aibak, and the chief wife of Iltutmish. Razia was the eldest daughter of Iltutmish, and probably his first-born child.

## Decree naming Razia as the heir apparent

Iltutmish had groomed his eldest son Nasiruddin Mahmud to be his successor, but this son died unexpectedly in 1229. According to historian Minhaj-i-Siraj, Iltutmish believed that his other sons were absorbed in pleasurable activities, and would be incapable of managing the state affairs after his death. While leaving for his Gwalior campaign in 1231, Iltutmish left his daughter Razia as in-charge of Delhi's administration. Razia performed her duties so well that after

returning to Delhi, Iltutmish decided to name her as his successor. Iltutmish ordered his officer *mushrif-i mamlakat* Tajul Mulk Mahmud Dabir to prepare a decree naming Razia as the heir apparent. When his nobles questioned this decision on the basis that he had surviving sons, Iltutmish replied that Razia was more capable than his sons.

## **After Iltutmish's death**

However, after Iltutmish's death, the nobles unanimously appointed his son Ruknuddin Firuz as the new king. It appears that during his last years, Iltutmish had agreed to appoint a son as his successor. This is suggested by the fact that after becoming seriously ill, he had recalled Ruknuddin from Lahore to Delhi. Another possibility is that the legend of Iltutmish nominating Razia as his successor is a false story circulated by Razia's supporters after her ascension. Minhaj is the only near-contemporary source that narrates this legend, and he did not witness the events or the alleged decree himself: he was in Gwalior at the time, and did not return to Delhi until 1238.

## **Taking over the throne**

Ruknuddin was not an able ruler, and left the control of administration to his mother Shah Turkan. The duo's blinding and execution of Iltutmish's popular son Qutubuddin, combined with Shah Turkan's high-handedness, led to rebellions by several nobles, and even the *wazir* (prime minister) *Nizamul Mulk* Junaidi joined the rebels. This situation became worse, when the Turkic-origin slave officers

close to Ruknuddin planned killings of the Sultante's *Tazik* (non-Turkic) officers. This led to the murders of several important *Tazik* officers, including Junaidi's son Ziyaul mulk and Tajul Mulk Mahmud, who had drawn up the decree declaring Razia as the heir apparent. While Ruknuddin marched towards Kuhram to fight the rebels, Shah Turkan planned to execute Razia in Delhi. At a congregational prayer, Razia instigated the general public against Shah Turkan. A mob then attacked the royal palace and detained Shah Turkan. Several nobles and the army pledged allegiance to Razia, and placed her on the throne, making her the first female Muslim ruler in South Asia. Ruknuddin marched back to Delhi, but Razia sent a force to arrest him: he was imprisoned and probably executed on 19 November 1236, having ruled for less than 7 months.

Razia's ascension to the throne of Delhi was unique not only because she was a woman, but also because the support from the general public was the driving force behind her appointment. According to the 14th century text *Futuh-us-Salatin*, she had asked the people to depose her if she failed to meet their expectations.

## **Opposition to ascension**

From the very beginning of her reign, Razia faced stiff opposition from nobles of Turkic origin. She had ascended the throne with support of the general public of Delhi rather than that of the powerful Turkic-origin provincial governors. Razia attempted to offset the power of the Turkic nobility by creating a class of non-Turkic nobles, which led to further opposition from the Turkic nobles.

*Nizamul Mulk* Muhammad Junaidi, a 'Tazik' (non-Turkic) officer who had held the post of the *wazir* (prime minister) since Iltutmish's time, refused to accept her ascension. He was joined by four Turkic nobles, who had also rebelled against Razia's predecessor Ruknuddin. These nobles included *Malik Izzuddin Muhammad Salari* of Badaun, *Malik Izzuddin Kabir Khan Ayaz* of Multan, *Malik Saifuddin Kuchi* of Hansi, and *Malik Alauddin Jani* of Lahore. When these nobles marched against Razia from different directions, she sought help from *Malik Nusratuddin Taisi*, whom she had appointed as the governor of Awadh. However, shortly after crossing the Ganges on his way to Delhi, Taisi was captured by Kuchi's forces, and died in captivity.

Razia then led an army out of the fortified city of Delhi to fight the rebels, and set up a camp on the banks of the Yamuna River. After some indecisive skirmishes, the rebel leaders Muhammad Salari and Izzuddin Kabir Khan Ayaz decided to join Razia. They secretly met with Razia, and the group planned to arrest other rebel leaders, including Junaidi. However, Junaidi and other rebel leaders came to know about the plan, and escaped, pursued by Razia's forces. Saifuddin Kuchi and his brother Fakhruddin were captured, imprisoned, and later executed. Junaidi fled to the Sirmaur hills, and died there. Alauddin Jani was killed at the Nakawan village, and his head was later brought to Delhi.

## **Reign**

Immediately after ascending the throne, Razia made several important appointments. She appointed Khwaja Muhazzabuddin as her new *wazir* (prime minister), and

conferred the title *Nizamul Mulk* upon him. Muhazzabuddin had earlier served as deputy to the previous *wazir* Junaidi. Razia appointed *Malik Saifuddin Aibek Bahtu* as the in-charge of her army, and conferred the title *Qutlugh Khan* upon him. However, Saifuddin died soon after, and Razia appointed *Malik Qutubuddin Hasan Ghuri* to the newly created office of *naib-i lashkar* (in-charge of the army). Razia assigned the iqta' of Lahore, formerly held by the slain rebel *Alauddin Jani*, to *Malik Izzuddin Kabir Khan Ayaz*, the rebel who had joined her. Razia appointed her loyalists to imperial household positions, including *Malik-i Kabir Ikhtiyaruddin Aitigin* as *Amir-i Hajib* and *Malik Jamaluddin Yaqut* as *Amir-i Akhur*.

Minhaj mentions that soon, all the nobles from Lakhnauti in the east to Debal in the west acknowledged her authority. Razia's first military campaign directed at non-rebels was an invasion of Ranthambore, whose Chahamanas ruler had asserted his sovereignty after Iltutmish's death. Razia directed *Malik Qutubuddin Hasan Ghuri* to march to Ranthambore: he was able to evacuate the Turkic nobles and officers from the fort, but was unable to subjugate the Chahamanas. The Chahamanas, in alliance with the Mewatis, captured a large part of present-day north-eastern Rajasthan, and carried out guerilla war around Delhi. Razia also sent a force to re-assert Delhi's control over Gwalior, but this campaign had to be aborted.

During Razia's reign, the Shias revolted against the Sultanate, but the rebellion was suppressed. In a major incident, the Shia Qarmatians carried out an attack on the Jama masjid in Delhi. The Qarmatian leader *Nuruddin Turk* had earlier condemned the Sunni Shafi'i and Hanafi doctrines, and had gathered

nearly 1,000 supporters from Delhi, Gujarat, Sindh, and the Doab. On 5 March 1237, he and his supporters entered the mosque, and started killing the Sunnis assembled there for the Friday prayers, before being attacked by the citizens.

In 1238, Malik Hasan Qarlugh, the former Khwarazmian governor of Ghazni, faced a Mongol threat, and sent his son to Delhi, probably to seek a military alliance against the Mongols. Razia received the prince courteously, assigned him the revenues of Baran for his expenses, but refused to form an alliance against the Mongols.

## **Overthrow**

The nobles who supported Razia intended her to be a figurehead, but she increasingly asserted herself. For example, her initial coins were issued with her father's name, but by 1237–1238, she had started issuing coins solely in her own name. Isami mentions that initially, she observed *purdah*: a screen separated her throne from the courtiers and the general public, and she was surrounded by female guards. However, later, she started appearing in public dressed in traditional male attire, wearing a cloak (*qaba*) and a hat (*kulah*). She rode on elephants through the streets of Delhi, making public appearances like the earlier Sultans.

Razia's increasing assertiveness and her appointment of non-Turkic people to important posts created resentment among the Turkic nobles. The post of *Amir-i Akhur* had previously been held by officers of Turkic origin, and Yaqut was of Abyssinian origin: therefore, Razia's Turkic officers resented this appointment. Chroniclers such as Isami, Sirhindi,



Badauni, Firishta, and Nizamuddin Ahmad attribute Razia's intimacy with Yaqut as a major cause of her downfall.

In 1238–1239, *Malik Izzuddin Kabir Khan Ayaz* – the governor of Lahore – rebelled against Razia, and she marched against him, forcing him to flee to Sodhra. Because the area beyond Sodhra was controlled by the Mongols, and because Razia continued to pursue him, Izzuddin was forced to surrender and accept Razia's authority once again. Razia treated him leniently: she took away the iqta of Lahore from him, but assigned him the iqta of Multan, which Iltutmish had assigned to Ikhtiyaruddin Qaraqash Khan Aitigin.

Razia had recalled Ikhtiyaruddin Aitigin, a Turkic slave purchased by Iltutmish, to her court in Delhi, and made him *Amir-i Hajib*. She had also bestowed favours upon another slave of Iltutmish – Ikhtiyaruddin Altunia, assigning him first the iqta of Baran, and then, the iqta of Tabarhinda. However, these two officers conspired with other Turkic officers to overthrow her, while she was away on the Lahore campaign. Razia arrived in Delhi on 3 April 1240, and came to know that Altunia had rebelled against her in Tabarhinda. Unaware that other nobles in Delhi had joined Altunia in conspiring against her, Razia marched towards Tabarhinda ten days later. At Tabarhinda, the rebel forces killed her loyalist Yaqut, and imprisoned her. According to Minhaj, Razia ruled for 3 years, 6 months, and 6 days.

## **Alliance with Altunia and death**

When the news of Razia's arrest reached Delhi, the rebel nobles there appointed Muizuddin Bahram – a son of Iltutmish

– on the throne. He formally ascended the throne on 21 April 1240, and the nobles pledged allegiance to him on 5 May 1240. The nobles expected the new king to be a figurehead, and intended to control the affairs of the state through the newly created office of *naib-i mamlakat* (equivalent to regent), which was assigned to Ikhtiyaruddin Aitigin. However, the new king had Ikhtiyaruddin Aitigin assassinated within 1–2 months.

After deposing Razia, the nobles at Delhi had distributed important offices and iqtas among themselves, ignoring claims of Ikhtiyaruddin Altunia, who had arrested Razia at Tabarhinda. After Aitigin's death, Altunia lost all hope of realizing any benefits from Razia's overthrow, and decided to ally with her. Razia also saw this as an opportunity to win back the throne, and married Altunia in September 1240. The two were supported by some other disgruntled Turkic nobles, including *Malik Qaraqash* and *Malik Salari*.

Altunia assembled an army, which according to Isami, included Khokhars, Jats, and Rajputs. In September–October 1240, Sultan Muizuddin Bahram led an army against the forces of Altunia and Razia, and defeated them on 14 October 1240. Altunia and Razia were forced to retreat to Kaithal, where they were deserted by their soldiers, and were killed by a group of Robbers. Razia was killed on 15 October 1240. She remains the only Muslim woman to have sat upon the throne of Delhi.

## **Tomb**

The grave of Razia is located at Mohalla Bulbuli Khana near Turkman Gate in Old Delhi. The 14th century traveler Ibn Batuta mentions that Razia's tomb had become a pilgrimage

centre: a dome had been built over it, and people sought blessings from it. Razia's grave is said to have been built by her successor and half-brother Bahram. Another grave, said to be of her sister Shazia, is located beside her grave. Razia was a devotee of the Sufi saint Shah Turkman Bayabani, and the place where she is buried is said to be his hospice (khanqah).

Today, the site is largely neglected: the Archaeological Survey of India performs annual maintenance to it, but has been unable to beautify it further because it is surrounded by illegal construction, and is approachable only through a narrow, congested lane. In the late 20th century, the local residents constructed a mosque near it. A ruined building in Kaithal is purported to be the site of Razia's original grave.

## **Coins**

Coins of Razia are found in Silver and Billon, One Gold coin of Bengal style is also known. Silver Tankas were issued from both Bengal (Lakhnauti) and Delhi. Initially she issued coins from Delhi in the name of her father Iltumish citing the title *Nasrat* i.e female title of *Nasir*.

## **Portrayals**

Several Indian films have portrayed the empress. *Razia Begum* (1924) was an Indian silent film by Nanubhai B. Desai and Bhagwati Prasad Mishra. Devendra Goel directed *Razia Sultana*, a 1961 Indian Hindi-language film which starred

Nirupa Roy in the titular role. A notable portrayal was by Hema Malini in the 1983 biopic *Razia Sultan* by Kamal Amrohi.

In 2015, And TV started airing *Razia Sultan*, a TV series on the life of Razia, starring Pankhuri Awasthy as Razia and Rohit Purohit as Altunia.

## Chapter 13

# Sri Madhwacharya Born in Pajaka

**Madhvacharya** (CE 1238–1317), sometimes anglicised as **Madhva Acharya**, and also known as **Pūrna Prajña** and **Ānanda Tīrtha**, was an Indian philosopher, theologian and the chief proponent of the *Dvaita* (dualism) school of Vedanta. Madhva called his philosophy *Tattvavāda* meaning "arguments from a realist viewpoint".

Madhvacharya was born on the west coast of Karnataka state in 13th-century India. As a teenager, he became a Sanyasi (monk) joining Brahma-sampradaya guru Achyutapreksha, of the Ekadandi order. Madhva studied the classics of Hindu philosophy, particularly the Principal Upanishads, the *Bhagavad Gita* and the Brahma Sutras (*Prasthanatrayi*). He commented on these, and is credited with thirty seven works in Sanskrit. His writing style was of extreme brevity and condensed expression. His greatest work is considered to be the *Anuvyakhyana*, a philosophical supplement to his bhasya on the Brahma Sutras composed with a poetic structure. In some of his works, he proclaimed himself to be an avatar of Vayu, the son of god Vishnu.

He was a critic of Adi Shankara's Advaita Vedanta and Ramanuja's Vishishtadvaita Vedanta teachings. He toured India several times, visiting places such as Bengal, Varanasi, Dwaraka, Goa and Kanyakumari, engaging in philosophical debates and visiting Hindu centres of learning. Madhva established the Krishna Mutt at Udupi with a murti secured from Dwarka Gujarat in CE 1285.

Madhvācārya's teachings are built on the premise that there is a fundamental difference between Atman (individual soul, self) and the Brahman (ultimate reality, God Vishnu); these are two different unchanging realities, with individual soul dependent on Brahman, never identical. His school's theistic dualism teachings disagreed with the monist teachings of the other two most influential schools of Vedānta based on Advaita's nondualism and Vishishtadvaita's qualified nondualism. Liberation, asserted Madhva, is achievable only through the grace of God. The Dvaita school founded by Madhva influenced Vaishnavism, the Bhakti movement in medieval India, and has been one of the three influential Vedānta philosophies, along with Advaita Vedānta and Vishishtadvaita Vedānta. Madhva's historical influence in Hinduism, states Kulandran and Kraemer: "has been salutary, but not extensive."

## Biography

Madhvācārya was born in Pajaka near Udupi, a coastal district in the present day Indian state of Karnataka. Traditionally it is believed that Naddantillaya (Sanskrit: Madhyageha, Madhyamandira) was the name of his father and Vedavati was Madhwachārya's mother. Born in a Tulu-speaking Brahmin household, he was named Vāsudeva. Later he became famous by the names Purnaprajna, Anandatirtha and Madhvacarya (or just Madhva). Pūrṇaprajña was the name given to him at the time of his initiation into *sannyasa* (renunciation), as a teenager. The name conferred on him when he became the head of his monastery was "Ānanda Tīrtha". All three of his later names are found in his works. Madhvācārya or Madhva are names most commonly found in modern literature on him, or

Dvaita Vedanta related literature. Madhva began his school after his Upanayana at age seven, and became a monk or *Sannyasi* in his teenage, although his father was initially opposed to this. He joined an Advaita Vedanta monastery in Udupi (Karnataka), accepted his guru to be Achyutrapreksha, who is also referred to as Achyutraprajna in some sources. Madhva studied the Upanishads and the Advaita literature, but was unconvinced by its nondualism philosophy of oneness of human soul and god, had frequent disagreements with his guru, left the monastery, and began his own Dvaita movement based on dualism premises of *Dvi* – asserting that human soul and god (as Vishnu) are two different things. Madhva never acknowledged Achyutrapreksha as his guru or his monastic lineage in his writings. Madhva is said to have been clever in philosophy, and also to have been tall and strongly built.

Madhvacharya established a *matha* (monastery) dedicated to Dvaita philosophy, and this became the sanctuary for a series of Dvaita scholars such as Jayatirtha, Vyasatirtha, Vadiraja Tirtha, Raghuttama Tirtha, Raghavendra Tirtha and Satyanatha Tirtha who followed on the footsteps of Madhva.

A number of hagiographies have been written by Madhva's disciples and followers. Of these, the most referred to is the sixteen cantos Sanskrit biography *Madhvavijaya* by Narayana Panditacharya – son of Trivikrama Pandita, who himself was a disciple of Madhva.

- Self-proclamation as being avatar of Wind god

In several of his texts, state Sarma and other scholars: "Madhvacharya proclaims himself to be the third avatar or incarnation of Vayu, wind god, the son of Vishnu". He, thus,

asserted himself to be like Hanuman – the first avatar of Vayu, and Bhima – a Pandava in the Mahabharata and the second avatar of Vayu. In one of his bhasya on the Brahma Sutras, he asserts that the authority of the text is from his personal encounter with Vishnu. According to Sarma, Madhva believed himself to be an intermediary between Vishnu and Dvaita devotees, guiding the latter in their journey towards Vishnu.

Madhva is said to have performed several miracles during his lifetime, including transforming Tamarind grains into coins, fighting and winning against robbers and wild animals, crossing the Ganges without getting his clothes wet, and giving light to his students through the nails of his big toes after the lamp went out while they were interpreting a text at night.

## **Works of Madhvacharya**

Thirty seven Dvaita texts are attributed to Madhvacharya. Of these, thirteen are bhasya (review and commentary) on earliest Principal Upanishads, a *Madhva-bhasya* on the foundational text of Vedanta school of Hinduism – Brahma Sutras, another *Gita-bhasya* on Bhagavad Gita, a commentary on forty hymns of the Rigveda, a review of the Mahabharata in poetic style, a commentary called *Bhagavata-tatparya-nirnaya* on Bhagavata Purana. Apart from these, Madhva is also attributed for authoring many stotras, poems and texts on bhakti of Vishnu and his avatars. The *Anu-Vyakhyana*, a supplement to Madhvacharya's commentary on Brahma Sutras, is his masterpiece, states Sharma.

While being a profusely productive writer, Madhvacharya restricted the access and distribution of his works to outsiders



who were not part of Dvaita school, according to Sarma. However, Bartley disagrees and states that this is inconsistent with the known history of extensive medieval Vedantic debates on religious ideas in India which included Dvaita school's ideas.

## Madhva's philosophy

The premises and foundations of Dvaita Vedanta, also known as *Dvaitavada* and *Tattvavada*, are credited to Madhvacharya. His philosophy championed unqualified dualism. Madhva's work is classically placed in contrast with monist ideas of Shankara's Advaita Vedanta and Ramanuja's Vishishtadvaita Vedanta.

### Epistemology

Madhva calls epistemology as *Anu pramana*. It accepts three *pramānas*, that is three facts or three correct means of knowledge, in contrast to one of Charvaka and six of Advaita schools of Hindu philosophies:

- *Pratyaksha* (प्रत्यक्ष) means perception. It is of two types in Dvaita and other Hindu schools: external and internal. External perception is described as that arising from the interaction of five senses and worldly objects, while internal perception is described as that of inner sense, the mind.
- *Anumāna* (अनुमान) means inference. It is described as reaching a new conclusion and truth from one or more observations and previous truths by applying

reason. Observing smoke and inferring fire is an example of *Anumana*. This method of inference consists of three parts: *pratijna* (hypothesis), *hetu* (a reason), and *drshtanta* (examples).

- *Śabda* (शब्द) means relying on word, testimony of past or present reliable experts. It is also known as Agama in Madhva's Dvaita tradition, and incorporates all the Vedas. Hiriyanna explains *Sabda-pramana* as a concept which means reliable expert testimony. The schools of Hinduism which consider it epistemically valid suggest that a human being needs to know numerous facts, and with the limited time and energy available, he can learn only a fraction of those facts and truths directly.

Madhva and his followers introduced *kevala-pramana* as the "knowledge of an object as it is", separate from *anu-pramana* described above.

Madhva's Dvaita school holds that Vishnu as a God, who is also Hari, Krishna, Vasudeva and Narayana, can only be known through the proper *samanvaya* (connection) and *pramana* of the Vedic scriptural teachings. Vishnu, according to Madhvacharya, is not the creator of the Vedas, but the teacher of the Vedas. Madhva's school of thought assert, knowledge is intrinsically valid, and the knower and the known are independently real. Both the ritual part (*karma-kanda*, Mimamsa) and the knowledge part (*jnana-kanda*, Upanishadic Vedanta) in the Vedas, asserted Madhvacharya, are equally valid and interconnected whole. As asserted by the Mimamsa school of Hindu philosophy, Madhvacharya held that the Vedas

are author-less, and that their truth is in all of its parts (i.e. the *saṁhitas*, *brāhmaṇas*, *āraṇyakās* and *upaniṣads*)...

## **Metaphysics**

The metaphysical reality is plural, stated Madhvacharya. There are primarily two *tattvas* or categories of reality — *svatantra tattva* (independent reality) and *asvatantra tattva* (dependent reality). Ishvara (as God Vishnu or Krishna) is the cause of the universe and the only independent reality, in Madhvacharya's view. The created universe is the dependent reality, consisting of *Jīva* (individual souls) and *Jada* (matter, material things). Individual souls are plural, different and distinct realities. *Jīvas* are sentient and matter is non-sentient, according to Madhvacharya.

Madhva further enumerates the difference between dependent and independent reality as a fivefold division (*pancha-bheda*) between God, souls and material things.

These differences are: (1) Between material things; (2) Between material thing and soul; (3) Between material thing and God; (4) Between souls; and (5) Between soul and God.

This difference is neither temporary nor merely practical; it is an invariable and natural property of everything. Madhva calls it *Taratamya* (gradation in pluralism). There is no object like another, according to Madhvacharya and there is no soul like another. All souls are unique, reflected in individual personalities. The sea is full; the tank is full; a pot is full; everything is full, yet each fullness is different, asserted Madhvacharya.

According to Madhvacharya, even in liberation (moksha), the bliss is different for each person based on each's degree of knowledge and spiritual perfection. This liberation according to him, is only achievable with grace of God Vishnu.

### **Nature of the Brahman**

Madhva conceptualised Brahman as a being who enjoys His own bliss, while the entire universe evolves through a nebulous chaos. He manifests, every now and then, to help the evolution process.

The four primary manifestation of Him as the Brahman are, according to Madhva, Vasudeva, Pradyumna, Aniruddha and Sankarasana, which are respectively responsible for the redemptive, creative, sustaining and destructive aspects in the universe. His secondary manifestations are many, and all manifestations are at par with each other, it is the same infinite no matter how He manifests. Brahman is the creator of the universe, perfect in knowledge, perfect in knowing, perfect in its power, and distinct from souls, distinct from matter. For liberation, mere intellectual conceptualization of Brahman as creator is not enough, the individual soul must feel attraction, love, attachment and devotional surrender to Him, and only His grace leads to redemption and liberation, according to Madhva.

The Vishnu as Brahman concept of Madhvacharya is a concept similar to God in major world religions. His writings led some early colonial-era Indologists such as George Abraham Grierson to suggest the 13th-century Madhva was influenced by Christianity, but later scholarship has rejected this theory.

## **Atat tvam asi**

One of the Mahavakyas (great sayings) in Hinduism is *Tat tvam asi*, or "Thou art That", found in verse 6.8.7 of the ~700 BCE text Chandogya Upanishad. This section of Chandogya Upanishad is credited to sage Uddalaka and the text considered central in Vedanta and the Brahma Sutras, interpreted to mean that there is no difference between the soul within (Thou) and the Brahman (That).

The Dvaita school led by Madhva reinterpreted this section, by parsing the Sanskrit text as *Atat tvam asi* or "Thou are not That", asserting that there is no Sanskrit rule which does not allow such parsing. He accepted that the tradition and prior scholars had all interpreted the text to be "Tat tvam asi", but then asserted that there is no metaphysical or logical requirement that he should too.

## **Soteriology**

Madhvacharya considered Jnana Yoga and Karma Yoga to be insufficient to the path of liberation without Bhakti. Krishna was the supreme God to Madhva, who can only be reached through Vayu – the son of God; he further states, faith leads to the grace of God, and grace leads to the liberation of soul.

The knowledge of God, for Madhvacharya, is not a matter of intellectual acceptance of the concept, but an attraction, affection, constant attachment, loving devotion and complete surrender to the grace of God. He rejects monist theories believing that knowledge liberates, asserting instead that it is Divine grace through Bhakti that liberates. To Madhva, God

obscures reality by creating Maya and Prakriti, which causes bondage and suffering; and only God can be the source of soul's release. Liberation occurs when, with the grace of God, one knows the true nature of self and the true nature of God.

## **Ethics**

Evil and suffering in the world, according to Madhvacharya, originates in man, and not God. Every *Jiva* (individual soul) is the agent of actions, not *Jada* (matter), and not *Ishvara* (God). While Madhva asserts each individual self is the *Kartritva* (real agency), the self is not an absolutely independent agent to him. This is because, states Madhva, the soul is influenced by sensory organs, one's physical body and such material things which he calls as gifts of God. Man has free will, but is influenced by his innate nature, inclinations and past karma.

Madhvacharya asserts, *Yathecchasi tatha kuru*, which Sharma translates and explains as "one has the right to choose between right and wrong, a choice each individual makes out of his own responsibility and his own risk". Madhva does not address the problem of evil, that is: how can evil exist with that of a God who is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnibenevolent.

According to Sharma, "Madhva's tripartite classification of souls makes it unnecessary to answer the problem of evil". According to David Buchta, this does not address the problem of evil, because the omnipotent God "could change the system, but chooses not to" and thus sustains the evil in the world. This view of self's agency of Madhvacharya was, states David Buchta, an outlier in Vedanta school and Indian philosophies

in general. Moral laws and ethics exist, according to Madhva, and are necessary for the grace of God and for liberation.

## **Views on other schools**

Madhvacharya was a fierce critic of competing Vedanta schools, and other schools of Indian philosophies such as Buddhism and Jainism. He wrote up arguments against twenty one ancient and medieval era Indian scholars to help establish the foundations of his own school of thought.

Madhvacharya was fiercest critic of Advaita Vedanta, accusing Shankara and Advaitins for example, as "deceitful demons" teaching Buddhism under the cover of Vedanta. Advaita's nondualism asserts that Atman (soul) and Brahman are blissful and identical, unchanging transcendent Reality, there is interconnected oneness of all souls and Brahman, and there are no pluralities. Madhva in contrast asserts that Atman (soul) and Brahman are different, only Vishnu is the Lord (Brahman), individual souls are also different and depend on Vishnu, and there are pluralities. Madhva criticized Advaita as being a version of Mahayana Buddhism, which he regarded as nihilistic. Of all schools, Madhva focussed his criticism on Advaita most, and he wrote four major texts, including *Upadhikhandana* and *Tattvadyota*, primarily dedicated to criticizing Advaita.

Madhvacharya disagreed with aspects of Ramanuja's Vishishtadvaita. Vishishtadvaita school, a realist system of thought like Madhvacharya's Dvaita school, also asserts that Jiva (human souls) and Brahman (as Vishnu) are different, a difference that is never transcended. God Vishnu alone is

independent, all other gods and beings are dependent on Him, according to both Madhvacharya and Ramanuja. However, in contrast to Madhvacharya's views, Vishishtadvaita school asserts "qualified non-dualism", that souls share the same essential nature of Brahman, and that there is a universal sameness in the quality and degree of bliss possible for human souls, and every soul can reach the bliss state of God Himself. While the older school of Vishishtadvaita asserted "qualitative monism and quantitative pluralism of souls", states Sharma, Madhvacharya asserted both "qualitative and quantitative pluralism of souls".

Shankara's Advaita school and Ramanuja's Vishishtadvaita school are premised on the assumption that all souls can hope for and achieve the state of blissful liberation; in contrast, Madhvacharya posited that some souls enjoy spreading chaos and irreligion, and even enjoy being eternally doomed and damned as such.

Madhvacharya's style of criticism of other schools of Indian philosophy was part of the ancient and medieval Indian tradition. He was part of the Vedanta school, which emerged in post-Vedic period as the most influential of the six schools of Hindu philosophy, and his targeting of Advaita tradition, states Bryant, reflects it being the most influential of Vedanta schools.

## **Influence**

Madhvacharya views represent a subschool of Vaishnavism, just like Ramanuja's. Both championed Vishnu, often in the *saguna* form of Vishnu's avatar Krishna. However, 11th-



century Ramanuja's ideas have been most influential in Vaishnavism. Both Madhvacharya's and Ramanujacharya's vaishnavism have their reach in respective regions of India. To say one is more influential than other is not factual.

Madhvacharya's ideas led to the founding of Haridasa sect of Vaishnavism in Karnataka, also referred to as *Vyasakuta*, *Dasakuta* or *Dasa Dasapantha*, known for their devotional songs and music during the Bhakti movement.

Other influential subschools of Vaishnavism competed with the ideas of Madhvacharya, such as the Chaitanya subschool, whose Jiva Gosvami asserts only Krishna is "Svayam Bhagavan" (original form of God), in contrast to Madhva who asserts that all Vishnu avatars are equal and identical, with both sharing the belief that emotional devotion to God is the means to spiritual liberation. According to Sharma, the influence of Madhva's Dvaita ideas have been most prominent on the Chaitanya school of Bengal Vaishnavism, and in Assam.

A subsect of Gaudiya Vaishnavas from Orissa and West Bengal claim to be followers of Madhvacharya. Madhva established in Udupi Krishna Matha attached to a god Krishna temple. Gaudiya Vaishnavas also worship Krishna, who is in the mode of Vrindavana.

### **Hindu-Christian-Muslim controversies**

Madhvacharya was misperceived and misrepresented by both Christian missionaries and Hindu writers during the colonial era scholarship. The similarities in the primacy of one God, dualism and distinction between man and God, devotion to God, the son of God as the intermediary, predestination, the

role of grace in salvation, as well as the similarities in the legends of miracles in Christianity and Madhvacharya's Dvaita tradition fed these stories. Among Christian writers, GA Grierson creatively asserted that Madhva's ideas evidently were "borrowed from Christianity, quite possibly promulgated as a rival to the central doctrine of that faith".

Among Hindu writers, according to Sarma, SC Vasu creatively translated Madhvacharya's works to identify Madhvacharya with Christ, rather than compare their ideas.

Modern scholarship rules out the influence of Christianity on Madhvacharya, as there is no evidence that there ever was a Christian settlement where Madhvacharya grew up and lived, or that there was a sharing or discussion of ideas between someone with knowledge of the Bible and Christian legends, and him.

There are also assumptions Madhva was influenced by Islam. The *Madhvavijaya* tells about Madhva meeting the Sultan of Delhi and saying to him in fluent Persian that both worship the same one God of the universe, and that he spreads the faith in God.

The sultan is said to have been so impressed by this that he wanted give half of the empire to Madhva, which he refused. However, the indologist and religious scholar Helmuth von Glasenapp assumes that monotheism can also be derived from the Indian intellectual world, and that there is no reason supporting the theory that Madhva's views on afterlife were influenced by Muslim or Christian impulses.

## Monasteries

Madhvacharya established eight *mathas* (monasteries) in Udupi. These are referred to as *Madhva mathas*, or *Udupi ashta matha*, and include Palimaru matha, Adamaru matha, Krishnapura matha, Puttige matha, Shirur matha, Sodhe matha, Kaniyooru matha and Pejavara matha. These eight surround the *Anantheswara* Krishna Hindu temple. The matha are laid out in a rectangle, the temples on a square grid pattern. The monks in the matha are sannyasis, and the tradition of their studies and succession (Paryaya system) were established by Madhvacharya.

There are Madhva mathas set up all over India. Including those in Udupi, there are twenty four Madhva mathas in India. The main center of Madhva's tradition is in Karnataka. The monastery has a pontiff system, that rotates after a fixed period of time. The pontiff is called *Swamiji*, and he leads daily Krishna prayers according to Madhva tradition, as well as annual festivals. The process and Vedic mantra rituals for Krishna worship in Dvaita monasteries follow the procedure written by Madhvacharya in *Tantrasara*. The Krishna worship neither involves *bali* (sacrifice) nor any fire rituals.

The succession ceremony in Dvaita school involves the outgoing Swamiji welcoming the incoming one, then walking together to the icon of Madhvacharya at the entrance of Krishna temple in Udupi, offering water to him, expressing reverence then handing over the same vessel with water that Madhvacharya used when he handed over the leadership of the monastery he founded.

The monastery include kitchens, *bhojan-shala*, run by monks and volunteers. These serve food daily to nearly 15,000 to 20,000 monks, students and visiting pilgrims without social discrimination. During succession ceremonies, over 80,000 people are served a vegetarian meal by Udupi *bhojan-shalas*.

## **Pajaka**

**Pajaka** is a village in Udupi Taluk and district of Karnataka state in India. Pajaka is the place where Dvaita philosopher Sri Madhvacharya was born. The place is near Kunjarugiri Durga temple.

The importance of Pajaka kshetra is also narrated in a small biographical poem called "Sampradaya Paddhati", whose author is Sri Madhvacharya's direct disciple Sri Hrushiksha, the mula yati of Sri Palimaru Mata.

Sri Vadiraja swamy of the Sode Mata in his "Tirtha prabandha" explains Pajaka Kshetra as a very holy place, because it was here Sri Mukyaprana was born as Sri Madhvacharya and hence it has to be visited all wise men. There is an impression of Sri Madhvacharya's feet near his house. Sri Vadiraja swamy later installed an idol of Sri Madhvacharya there, which is now a temple and where he is worshipped by devotees till date.

## **Places to see**

There are many interesting places to see at Pajaka. Perhaps the most important of all is the ancestral home and birthplace of Sri Madhva. There are many archaeological evidences of the

life and times of Sri Madhva at this place. This includes the spot where his Aksharabhyasa (Initiation Ceremony) was performed, a banyan tree supposed to have been planted by him, the place where Sri Madhva (by virtue of being an avatar of Vayu) lifted two huge stones and placed them on pots, and a pond where Sri Madhva is supposed to have brought the water from 4 nearby ponds (Dhanus Theertha, Gada Theertha, Bana Theertha and Parashu Theertha).

There is also a Madhva Mandira very close to the house. Lot of religious activities happen here and it is also a Vidyapeeta where students learn Vedas and Sanskrit. The entire complex is managed by Sri Kaniyooru Matha, one of the eight mathas Sri Madhva established.

The Kunjaragiri Durga temple is also a fascinating place to visit. The temple is located on top of a hill and the hill offers some breathtaking sceneries of Udupi. There is also a Parashurama temple nearby.

## Chapter 14

# Tughral Tughan Khan

- **Tughral Tughan Khan** later known as **Mughith ad-Din Tughral** was an officer of the Mamluk Sultanate of Delhi. He governed Bengal during 1236-1246 CE and again during 1272-1281 CE.

## Biography

He was a Turkic of Khitan origin and was a slave-officer bought by Sultan Iltutmish. He was given the iqta' of Badayun before being appointed the Governor of Bihar by the Sultan in 1232 as Saifuddin Aibak had been transferred to Lakhnauti.

Following the death of Iltutmish, assassination of Saifuddin Aibak and the subsequent ascension of the rebel usurper Awar Khan Aibak, Tughan invaded Bengal and successfully defeated Awar Khan in 1236. Immediately after assuming power, Tughan Khan led a number of expeditions. He established his dominance throughout Bengal, Bihar and Oudh while staying loyal to the Delhi Sultanate. He conquered Tirhut in September 1242. He advanced westwards towards Kara, where he got news of the ascension of Sultan Ala ud din Masud.

In 1242, he ordered his treasurer Mubarak Khan al-Khazan to construct a building in southern Bihar. Tughral is referred to as "Majlis Ali, the great Khan, the exalted Khaqan, honour of the Truth and the Religion, helper of princes and sultans, patriarch of victory, Tughral the Sultani". The inscription stating this is preserved in Bihar Museum.

During the reign of Tughan Khan, the Hindu king of Orissa, Narasimhadeva I, invaded southern Bengal. Tughan Khan repulsed the Oriya army and captured the Katasin fort of Orissa. But when the Muslim army was celebrating its victory, the Oriya soldiers attacked and defeated them. The Oriya army pursued the Muslims all the way to Lakhnauti, the capital of Bengal, and besieged the city. All the Muslims of Lakhnauti were slain.

Tughan Khan sought assistance from the Delhi sultan, Alauddin Masud Shah, who sent Malik Karakash Khan of Kara and Malik Tughlaq Tamar Khan of Oudh to help Tughan Khan. Hearing the approach of the Delhi army, the Oriya army retreated to Orissa. But Tughlaq Tamar Khan himself assumes the power of Bengal which forced Tughan Khan to flee to Delhi. Thus Tughan Khan's ten year ruling of Bengal ended in 1246 CE.

Tughan Khan was later appointed as the governor of Oudh by Sultan Alauddin Masud Shah.

## **Second term (1272-1281)**

In 1272 Sultan Ghiyasuddin Balban appointed Amin Khan as the governor and Tughan Khan as the sub-governor of Bengal with the duty to reconquer and pacify the Province, most of which had been under the control of the Eastern Ganga dynasty since the death of Malik Ikhtiyaruddin Iuzbak in 1257 CE. However Tughan Khan deposed Amin Khan with the help of his old loyalists and declared himself Sultan of Bengal. He took the name *Mughisuddin Tughral*.

In 1279, Tughan Khan defeated the Sena king Vishwarup Sen of eastern Bengal (present-day Assam) and established an Islamic feifdom in that region for the first time in history. He res-established the Bengali Navy, destroyed in 1243 by Narasimhadeva I at the Fort Narikella at Sonargaon. In 1280, Tughan Khan took advantage of a drought to invade South Bengal and then, Jajnapar (present-day Orissa).

Taking advantage of Tughan Khan's absence, Sultan Ghiyasuddin Balban sent a huge army led by Malik Turmati the ruler of Oudh against Tughan. But the Delhi army was thoroughly defeated by Tughan's army. Balban sent another army against Tughan. But this time once again Balban's army was defeated by Tughan's army.

Infuriated by repeated defeats Balban himself invaded Bengal in 1281. His son, Nasiruddin Bughra Khan, assisted him in this mission. There were about three hundred thousand soldiers in Balban's army. This massive army was accompanied with a huge navy. Tughan fled to Jajnapar by river. Balban split his army into smaller groups. One such small group led by Malik Sher Andaz attacked Tughan's army and Tughan was defeated and killed in the battle.

After Tughan's death, Balban put his son in charge of Bengal. Thus the separatist Mameluk ruling of Bengal ended in 1281.

## **Battle of Katasin**

The **Battle of Katasin** was a battle fought in 1243 CE between Narasingha Deva I of the Eastern Ganga dynasty and Tughral Tughan Khan, the Bengal governor of the Mamluk dynasty of



Delhi, at Katasin (present day Contai, in West Bengal, India). Narasingha Deva I delivered a crushing defeat to the Mamluk forces and subsequently went on to capture additional territory.

## **Background**

Narasingha Deva I's predecessor Anangabhim Deva III had already taken steps to protect the Ganga Empire by defeating the invasion attempts of Ghiyasuddin Iwaj Shah, the ruler of Bengal.

However, the Muslim rulers of the Mamluk dynasty and their vassal and governor of Bengal Tughral Tughan Khan continued to pose a major threat to the Ganga Empire and in order to counter the threat, Narasingha Deva I undertook an aggressive policy and invaded Bengal.

## **Aftermath**

The victory at Katasin was followed up by Narasingha Deva I with a further offensive to capture Lukhnor and Lakhnauti. The battle was a blow to Muslim power in the area and put a check on their aggressive and expansionist designs on the Ganga Empire.

Tughan Khan fled in fear and appealed to the emperor in Delhi for help, but was again badly defeated. Several districts of Bengal were annexed and added to Narasingha Deva I's empire.

The military successes of Narasingha Deva I in the Battle of Katasin and subsequent victories raised his prestige among contemporary Hindu rulers and augmented his resources, thus enabling him to undertake the building of iconic structures like the Sun Temple of Konark

## Chapter 15

# The Mahanubhava Philosophy

**Mahanubhava** (also known as **Jai Krishni Pantha**) refers to Krishnaite Hindu denomination in India that was founded by Sarvajna Shri Chakradhar Swami (or Chakradhara), an ascetic and philosopher who considered as a reincarnation of Krishna by his devotees. Some sources list the founder as Govinda Prabhu with Chakradhara as its first "apostle". Mahanubhava Sampradaya was formed in modern-day Varhad region of Maharashtra in 1267. It has different names such as Jai Krishni Pantha in Punjab and Achyuta Marga in Gujarat. Mahanubhava Pantha was also known as **Paramarga** by its followers in 13th century.

In Mahanubhava, all members are accepted, irrespective of their castes, and the traditional ritualistic religion is rejected. Mahanubhava survives to the present. It teaches that Krishna is the only God.

## Sarvdnya Shri Chakradhar Swami

Shri Chakradhar propounded his philosophy like Shri Krishna from among the "Five Krishnas" (shri gopal krishna, shri dattatreya prabhu, shri chakrapani, shri govinda prabhu (gunam rāu) and shri chakradhara swami).

Shri Chakradhar was born in Bharuch, Gujarat. Although he was a Gujarati by birth, he had excellent command of the Marathi. He moved among all sections of society. He discoursed his philosophy among the people in their own language. He

used formulaic language full of meaning in a compact style. He exhorted his disciples to write only in Marathi.

## **Philosophy**

One of the most important aspects of Mahanubhava is asceticism. The fourfold teachings are: non-violence, celibacy, asceticism and bhakti. And the different aspects of Gods incarnations to be worshipped are: name, form, activity, deeds, place, vachans (Shruti), memories (Smriti) and the blessing of God incarnate. One can practice bhakti by memorising deeds of the almighty. The aspirant for salvation must sacrifice his country, village and his relations and offer his life to God. Chakradhara also taught the followers of Mahanubhava Sampradaya; when, where, how and how much alms they should be beg for.

The central theme of Mahanubhava was, "Feel the soul and not the body". Living the life of mendicant and practicing asceticism severely, the devotee should live according to principle, "God is mine and I am God's". The core of his code of behavior is summed up in the following line for the benefit of his followers: "Even if the head is cut off, the body should worship God". Besides teaching strict vegetarianism, the Mahanubhava Pantha forbids the use of alcohol and teaches non-violence.

## **Literature**

Mahanubhav's literature generally comprises works that describe the incarnations of gods, the history of the sect,

commentaries on the *Bhagavad Gita*, poetical works narrating the stories of life of Shri Krishna and grammatical and etymological works that are deemed useful to explain the philosophy of Mahanubhava.

*Leelacharitra* is thought to be the first biography written in the Marathi language. Mahimbhatta's second important literary creation was *Shri Govindaprabhucharitra* or *Rudhipurcharitra*, a biography of Swami's guru, Shri Govind Prabhu, in the form of 325 deeds. This was probably written in 1288, soon after the death of Shri Prabhu.

Apart from *Leelacharitra*, Keshobas (Keshavrajsuri) collected the Swami's aphoristic vachans or actually spoken words, known as Sutrapatha. Keshavrajsuri translated the "deeds" from *Leelacharitra* into Sanskrit in his work called "*Ratnamala*". Similarly he has written in Sanskrit *Dristantstotarm* based on *Dristantpatha*. The first Acharya of Mahanubhava is Nagdevacharya or Bhatobas. His biography was written by Narendra and Bhaidevbas in about 1308.

In this manner seven works which have been written are known as Satigrantha and they are accepted by the follower of the sect. These works and their writers are:

- Narendra : Rukminiswayamvara (1292)
- Bhaskarbhat Borikar : Shishupalvadha (1312)
- Bhaskarbhat Borikar : Uddhavgita (1313)
- Damodar Pandit : Vachhaharana (1316)
- Ravalobas : Sahayadrivaranana (1353)
- Narayanbas Bahahaliye : Riddhipurvarnana (1418)
- Vishvanath Balapurkar : Jnanaprabodha (1418).

## History

It was Nagadeva who systematized Mahanubhava. Mahadamba was a leading poetess of the movement. Mahanubhava Pantha followers worship Lord Krishna and other 4 gods namely Dattatreya, Chakrapani, Govinda Prabhu and Sarvajna Shri Chakradhara. They are fully vegetarian. They drink water by filtering it so as not to harm micro-organisms.

## Publications

The Mahanubhava Panth publishes *Mahanubhav Sandesh*, a newspaper in Marathi and Hindi. There are plans to eventual expand the publication to an English edition.

## Chakradhar Swami

**Sarvadnya Shri Chakradhar Swami** (also known as **Kunwar Haripaladeva**) was a spiritual master, and one of the most important exponents of the Vaishnavism tradition within Hinduism.

He is the founder of Mahanubhava Sampradaya of Krishnaite Vaishnavism in 1267. Shree Chakradhar Swami advocated worship of Lord Krishna and preached Dvaita. He did not recognize caste distinctions, and like Buddha had only two others viz the householder and recluses. Some sources claim that Govinda Prabhu as the founder and Chakradhara Swami as its first "apostle".

## **Life**

Chakradhar Swami was born in a Deshastha Brahmin family in Bharuch, Gujarat. Although he was a Gujarati, he had excellent command of the Marathi language. He moved among all sections of society. He discoursed his philosophy extremely effectively among the people in their own language. He used formulaic language full of meaning in a compact style. He insisted that his disciples should write only in Marathi and therefore, Marathi literature became rich with the writings of Chakradhar Swami and Mahanubhava Sampradaya.

## **Philosophy**

One of the most important aspects of the philosophy propounded by him is asceticism. His fourfold teachings are: non-violence, celibacy, asceticism and bhakti. And the different aspects of Gods incarnations to be worshipped are: name, form, activity, deeds, place, vachans (Shruti), memories (Smriti) and the blessing of God incarnate.

One can practice bhakti by memorising deeds of the Almighty. The aspirant for salvation must sacrifice his country, village and his relations and offer his life to God. Chakradhara Swami also taught the disciple of the sect when, where, how, how much alms they should be beg for. The central theme of his teaching was, "Feel the soul and not the body". Living the life of mendicant and practicing asceticism severely, the devotee should live according to principle, "God is mine and I am God's". The core of his code of behaviour is summed up in the

following line for the benefit of his followers: "Even if the head is cut off, the body should worship God".

Besides teaching strict vegetarianism, the Mahanubhava Panth forbids the use of alcohol and teaches non-violence. The religion survives to the present. It teaches that Krishna is the only ultimate of Gods and all the other gods are just powers of him. It is understood to various literatures in mahanubhav panth that nirvana (Moksha) can only be achieved by knowing and worshiping Krishna as the lone ultimate and thus one must give up on worshipping and getting involved unconsciously in the other powers of ultimate, It can be relatively explained as one should not be satisfied in loving the creation but love the creator.



## Chapter 16

# Birth of Saint Dnyaneshwar

**Sant Dnyaneshwar**, also referred to as **Jnaneshwar**, **Jnanadeva**, **Dnyandev** or **Mauli** or Dnyaneshwar Vitthal Kulkarni (27 August 1275– 1 december 1296) was a 13th-century Indian Marathi *saint*, poet, philosopher and yogi of the Nath Vaishnava tradition. In his short life of 21 years, he authored *Dnyaneshwari* (a commentary on the *Bhagavad Gita*) and *Amrutanubhav*. These are the oldest surviving literary works in the Marathi language, under the patronage of the Yadava dynasty of Devagiri, and these are considered to be milestones in Marathi literature. Sant Dnyaneshwar's ideas reflect the non-dualistic Advaita Vedanta philosophy and an emphasis on Yoga and oneness of Vishnu and Shiva, but an ardent devotee of Lord Vitthal (a form of Lord Krishna) of Pandharpur. His legacy inspired saint-poets such as Eknath and Tukaram, and he has been regarded as one of the founders of the Varkari (Vithoba-Krishna) Bhakti movement tradition of Hinduism in Maharashtra. Saint Dnyaneshwar disappeared in 1296.

## Biography

### Background

Dnyaneshwar was born in 1275 (on the auspicious day of Krishna Janmashtami) in a Marathi-speaking Deshastha Brahmin family in Apegaon village on the banks of Godavari river near Paithan in Maharashtra during the reign of the

Yadava king Ramadevarava. The kingdom with its capital Devagiri enjoyed relative peace and stability, the king was a patron of literature and arts.

Biographical details of Sant Dnyaneshwar's life are preserved in the writings of his disciples, Satyamalanath and Sachchidanand and also his contemporary Namdev. The various traditions give conflicting accounts of details of Dnyaneshwar's life. The date of composition of his work *Dnyaneshwari* (1290 CE), however is undisputed. According to the more accepted tradition on Dnyaneshwar's life, he was born in 1275 CE and he attained Sanjeevan (alive) samadhi in 1296 CE. Other sources state he was born in 1271 CE.

## **Life**

The biographical details of Sant Dnyaneshwar's short life of about 21 years are contested and its authenticity is in doubt. The available accounts are filled with hagiographic legends and miracles he performed, such as his ability to make a buffalo sing the Vedas and humble a yogi by riding a moving wall.

According to the accounts that have survived, Dnyaneshwar's father Vitthalapant was the kulkarni (hereditary accountant, usually Brahmin, who maintained land and tax records in villages) of a village called Apegaon on the banks of the Godavari River in Maharashtra, a profession he had inherited from his ancestors. He married Rakhumabai, the daughter of the Kulkarni of Alandi. Even as a householder, Vitthalapant longed for spiritual learning. His disillusionment with life grew as a result of the death of his father and because he had no children from his marriage. Eventually, with his wife's consent,

he renounced worldly life and left for Varanasi to become a sannyasin (renunciate). The ancestors of Vitthalpant (according to the narration in "Bhaktamal " published by Geeta Press Gorakhpur ) were native of Mithila. The Great-Grandfather of Shri Dnyaneshwar, Shri Harinath Mishraji was a devotee of Bhagwan Pundariknath, hence he settled in Alandi, near Pandharpur. The Grandfather of Dnyaneshwar Shri Raghunath Mishraji was also a spiritual and devotee of Bhagwaan. Shri Vitthalpantji son of Shri Raghunath Mishraji, later on, married Rukminibai, daughter Shri Shiddhopantji.

Once a saint came to the house of Vitthalpant, and informed him that he is proceeding to Kashi, to take Darshan of Great Sant Shri Ramanandacharya. Shri Vitthal pant accompanied him. On the way, he realized that the Sant accompanying him none but Vishwamitraji. Ultimately he reached Kashi in the Ashram of the Great Sant Shri Ramanandacharyaji where he took Diksha from him and he was renamed as " Bhavanandji"

Swami Shri Ramanandcharyaji while on the way to Rameshvaram stayed for some time at Alandi, where Rukminibai met him. Swamiji on learning that his disciple Shri Bhavanandji is the husband of Rukminibai, he by his Yogi Sadhana ordered Shri Bhavanandji to return to Grihastha Ashram. In obedience of orders of his Guru, Shri Bhavanandji returned and continued his family life. According to another version of these events Dnyaneshwar's father Vitthalapant came from a long line of teachers of the Nath yogi sect and being deeply religious, he went on a pilgrimage to Varanasi. There he met a *guru* (spiritual teacher), decided to renounce without his wife's consent.

Vitthalapant was initiated as a sannyasin by his spiritual teacher, Rama Sharma, who is also called Ramananda, Nrisimhashrama, Ramadvaya and Shripad in various sources. (He was not Ramananda, the founder of the Ramanandi Sampradaya.) When Ramashrama discovered that Vitthalapant had left his family behind to become a monk, he instructed Vitthalapant to go back to his wife and perform his duties as a householder. After Vitthalapant returned to his wife and settled down in Alandi, Rakhumabai gave birth to four children—Nivruttinath (1273 CE), Dnyaneshwar (1275 CE), Sopan (1277 CE) and Muktabai (1279 CE).

Orthodox Brahmins of the day saw a renunciate returning to his life as a householder as heresy. Dnyaneshwar and his brothers were denied the right to have the sacred thread ceremony for the full admission to the Brahmin caste. According to Pawar, this meant excommunication from the Brahmin caste.

Vitthalapant eventually left the town for Nashik with his family. One day while performing his daily rituals, Vitthalapant came face to face with a tiger. Vitthalapant and three of his four children escaped, but Nivruttinath became separated from the family and hid in a cave. While hiding in the cave he met Gahaninath, who initiated Nivruttinath into the wisdom of the Nath yogis. Later, Vitthalapant returned to Alandi and asked the Brahmins to suggest a means of atonement for his sins; they suggested giving up his life as penance. Vitthalapant and his wife gave up their lives, within a year of each other by jumping into the Indrayani river in the hope their children might be able to lead lives free of persecution. Other sources and local folk tradition claim that the parents committed

suicide by jumping in the Indrayani River. Another version of the legend states that Vitthalapant, the father threw himself into Ganges River to expiate his sin.

Dnyaneshwar and his siblings were accepted by and initiated into the Nath Hindu live tradition to which their parents already belonged, where the three brothers and the sister Muktabai all became celebrated yogis and Bhakti poets.

### **Travel and Samadhi**

After Dnyaneshwar had written *Amrutanubhav*, the siblings visited Pandharpur where they met Namdev, who became a close friend of Dnyaneshwar. Dnyaneshwar and Namadev embarked on a pilgrimage to various holy centers across India where they initiated many people into the Varkari sect; Dnyaneshwar's devotional compositions called *Abhangas* are believed to have been formulated during this period. On their return to Pandharpur, Dnyaneshwar and Namadev were honored with a feast in which, according to Bahirat, many contemporary saints such as "Goroba the potter, Sanvata the gardener, Chokhoba the untouchable and Parisa Bhagwat the Brahmin" participated. Some scholars accept the traditional view that Namdev and Dnyaneshwar were contemporaries; however, others such as W. B. Patwardhan, R. G. Bhandarkar and R. Bharadvaj disagree with this view and date Namdev to the late 14th century instead.

After the feast, Dnyaneshwar desired to go into *sanjeevan samadhi*, a practice to voluntarily die after entering into a deep meditative state. Preparations for the Sanjeevan Samadhi were made by Namdev's sons. Regarding Sanjeevan Samadhi,

Dnyaneshwar himself has emphatically talked about the relationship between higher awareness and light or pure energy in the form of electromagnetic radiation. On the 13th day of the dark half of the Kartik month of the Hindu Calendar, in Alandi, Dnyaneshwar, then was twenty one year old entered into *Sanjeevan samadhi*. His *samadhi* lies in the Siddhesvara Temple complex in Alandi. Namdev and other bystanders grieved his passing. According to tradition, Dnyaneshwar was brought back to life to meet Namdev when the latter prayed to Vithoba for his return. Dallmayr writes that this testifies to "the immortality of genuine friendship and companionship of noble and loving hearts". Many Varkari devotees believe that Dnyaneshwar is still alive.

## **Miracles**

Many miracles came to be associated with Dnyaneshwar's life, one of which was the revival of his disciple Sachchidanand's corpse. Fred Dallmyr summarizes one of these legends as follows from the hagiography by Mahipati: At age 12, Dnyaneshwar with his impoverished and outcaste siblings, went to Paithan to plead mercy from Paithan priests. There, they were insulted and ridiculed. As the children were suffering the bullying, on a nearby road was a man who was violently lashing an old buffalo, and the injured animal collapsed in tears. Dnyaneshwar asked the buffalo owner to stop out of concern for the animal. The priests ridiculed him for being more concerned about a beast and unconcerned about the teachings of the Vedas. Dnyaneshwar retorted that the Vedas themselves held all life to be sacred and a manifestation of the *Brahman*. The outraged priests pointed out that his logic implied that beasts should be able to learn

the Vedas as well. An undeterred Dnyaneshwar then placed his hand on the buffalo's forehead and it started reciting a Vedic verse in a deep voice. According to Fred Dallmayr, one may not be concerned whether this story accurately reflects Dnyaneshwar's biography, the story does have symbolic significance in the same manner as the story about Jesus in Jerusalem in Matthew 3:9.

In another miracle, Dnyaneshwar was challenged by Changdev, an accomplished yogi who rode on a tiger with his magical powers, to replicate this feat. Dnyaneshwar humbled Changdev by riding on a moving wall. Dnyaneshwar's advice to Changdev was given in 65 verses called the *Changdev Pasasthi*. Changdev became a disciple of Dnyaneshwar's sister Muktabai.

## **Writings**

- According to B. P. Bahirat, Dnyaneshwar was the first known philosopher who wrote in the Marathi language. At about age 16, he composed Dnyaneshwari in the year 1290, a commentary on Bhagavad Gita which later became a fundamental text of the Varkari sect. His words were recorded by Sacchidananda, who agreed to become Dnyaneshwar's amanuensis. *Dnyaneshwari* was written using the *Ovi*; a metre, which was first used to compose women's songs in Maharashtra, of four lines where the first three or the first and third lines rhyme and the fourth line has a sharp and short ending. According to W. B. Patwardhan, a scholar on

Dnyaneshwar, with Dnyaneshwar the *ovi* "trips, it gallops, it dances, it whirls, it ambles, it trots, it runs, it takes long leaps or short jumps, it halts or sweeps along, it evolves a hundred and one graces at the master's command". In *Dnyaneshwari*, at last he wrote "Pasaayadana" in which he prayed everything for others and all humanity and nothing for himself. Saint Dnyaneshwar himself believed that "The whole world has one soul- याविश्वाचाआत्माएकआहे" . He wrote *Dnyaneshwari* so that common people can understand philosophical aspects of life which were then understood only by those who knew Sanskrit i.e. High priestly class language and lower caste people were not allowed to learn Sanskrit language. So, this was a significant work in Indian history which simplified philosophy to common man.

His first text *Dnyanesvari* was in the vernacular Marathi language, as opposed to the classical Sanskrit language. According to Bhagwat, like other Bhakti poets, Dnyaneshwar choice of the vernacular language was an important departure from the prevailing cultural hegemony of Sanskrit and high-caste Hinduism, a trend which continued with later *bhakti* poets across India. Dnyaneshwar is to the Marathi literature what Dante is to the Italian, states Bhagwat.

According to tradition, Nivruttinath was not satisfied with the commentary and asked Dnyaneshwar to write an independent philosophical work. This work later came to be known as *Amrutanubhava*. Scholars differ on the chronology of the *Dnyaneshwari* and *Amrutanubhav*. Patwardhan has argued that *Amrutanubhav* is an earlier text than *Dnyaneshwari*



because the latter is richer in use of metaphors and imagery, and displays greater familiarity with many different philosophical systems, such as Samkhya and Yoga. However, both Bahirat and Ranade disagree with this view pointing out that in *Amrutanubhava*, author displays familiarity with involved philosophical concepts such as *Mayavada* and *Shunyavada*, and while the text has simpler language, it reveals Dnyaneshwar's "philosophical depth".

Dnyaneshwar's devotional compositions called Abhangas are believed to have been formulated during his pilgrimage to Pandharpur and other holy places when he got initiated into the Varkari tradition.

## **Influences**

The Mahanubhava sect and the Nath Yogi tradition were two prominent movements during Dnyaneshwar's time that influenced his works. Mahanubhavas were devotees of Krishna who disregarded the caste system, the Vedas and the worship of the deity Vitthala.

Dnyaneshwar differed significantly from Mahanubhava's religious precepts. His thought was founded on the philosophy of the later Vedic texts such as the Upanishads and the *Bhagavad Gita*, and devotion to Vitthala formed the cornerstone of the egalitarian Varkari sect founded by Dnyaneshwar. However, the literary style adopted by Mahanubhava writers influenced Dnyaneshwar's works. According to R. D. Ranade, Dnyaneshwar "stands to Mahanubhavas just in the same relation which Shakespeare stood to Elizabethan writers".

Dnyaneshwar was initiated into the Nath Yogi tradition by his brother Nivruttinath, sometime after the death of their parents; Sopana and Muktabai were initiated into the tradition by Dnyaneshwar himself. Founded by Gorakshanath, the Nath Yogi sect had introduced the system of *Hatha Yoga*, which emphasised on yogic poses and physical fitness. Gahaninath, a disciple of Gorakshanath, had initiated Nivruttinath into the Nath Yogi tradition. Dnyaneshwar's non-dualistic philosophy, usage of a vernacular language in his writing and an emphasis on yoga and oneness of Vishnu and Shiva were his inheritances from the Nath Yogi tradition.

The values of Universal brotherhood and compassion espoused in his works came from his interactions with the devotional Vitthala sect, a tradition which was already in existence during Dnyaneshwar's time. J. N. Farquhar also notes the influence of *Bhagavata Purana* on Dnyaneshwar's poetry.

## **Philosophy**

### **Ontology and epistemology**

Dnyaneshwar takes up the examination of being or brahman in *Amrutanubhava*. He considers being to be the substratum of thought which enables thought and cognition. Since being is prior to thought and concepts, it is distinct from Kantian categories, and methods of thought such as epistemological analysis cannot be applied to it. Dnyaneshwar believes that reality is self-evident and does not require any proof. It antedates dualistic divisions into knower and known, existence and nonexistence, subject and object, knowledge and

ignorance. Dnyaneshwar highlights the limitations of the traditional epistemological methods (*pramanas*) used in Indian philosophy. He points out that any perception is validated only by another deeper understanding, while in establishing the rationality of reason, reason itself is transcended. Dnyaneshwar even cautions against reliance on scriptural testimony, which is accepted as a valid source of knowledge by philosophers of Vedanta and Mīmāṃsā schools of philosophy. Scriptural validity, to him, stems from its congruence with experiential truth and not vice versa.

## **Ethics**

Dnyaneshwar's moral philosophy comes out in his exposition of the 13th of *Bhagavad Gita*, in his commentary on the book *Dnyaneshwari*. He considers humility; non-injury in action, thought and words; forbearance in the face of adversity; dispassion towards sensory pleasures; purity of heart and mind; love of solitude and devotion towards one's Guru and God as virtues; and their corresponding moral opposites as vices. A pessimistic view of one's life is considered as a necessary condition for spiritual growth in *Dnyaneshwari*. Dnyaneshwar writes that saints do not perceive distinctions and are humble because they identify all objects, animate or inanimate, with their own Self.

Devotion to Guru occupies an important place throughout the commentary. Many of its chapters begin with an invocation to his Guru Nivruttinath, who is eulogized by Dnyaneshwar as the person who helped him "cross the ocean of existence". The discussion on virtue and vices continues in his elucidation of the 16th chapter of *Bhagavad Gita*, where virtues and vices are

called divine heritages and demonic heritages respectively. Divine heritage comprises fearlessness, which comes from a belief in unity of all objects; charity; sacrifice, which comes from performing one's duties and compassion in addition to virtues already enumerated; while demonic heritage consists of six vices— ignorance, anger, arrogance, hypocrisy, harshness and pride.

The doctrine of Karma Yoga in the Bhagavad Gita is resurrected in *Dnyaneshwari* and its utility as a means of achieving actionlessness through action and in establishing harmony between the two is examined. In the fourth chapter, the ideal *karma yogi's* actions are compared to the apparent movement of the Sun, which while appearing to rise and set is actually stationary; similarly, a *karma yogi*, though appears to act, doesn't really act. Performance of one's duties, acting without egoism, renunciation of the fruits of one's actions and offering one's actions to God are four ways which, according to Dnyaneshwar, result in actionlessness and Self-realisation. Dnyaneshwar's metaphysical conclusion that the world is a manifestation of the divine, and not an illusion, also creates an ethical framework which rejects renunciation and recommends performing one's duties and actions in the spirit of worship.

Traditional Indian scriptures see *ṛta*, a Hindu theological term similar to *dharma*, as a natural law that governs both the cosmos and human society. Performance of one's duties to uphold social institutions, such as marriage and family, thus becomes imperative, and duty overrides individual freedom. Dnyaneshwar is in agreement with tradition; he believes that divine order and moral order are one and the same and are inherent in the universe itself. He, therefore, recommends that

all social institutions be protected and preserved in their totality. However, when it comes to the institution of caste, his approach becomes more humanitarian and he advocates spiritual egalitarianism.

## **Reception and legacy**

Elements of Dnyaneshwar's life and writings, such as his criticism of parochialism of the priestly elite, a celebration of the family life and spiritual egalitarianism, would shape the culture of the Varkari movement. According to Dallmayr, Dnyaneshwar's life and writings have "developed into primary exemplars of genuine religiosity for the Varkari movement, as well as crucial sources and focal points of *bhakti* devotion". Devotees of the Varkari sect in the Hindu Shaka month of Ashadh join an annual pilgrimage called the Wari with symbolic Sandals (called Paduka in Marathi) of Dnyaneshwar carried in a palkhi, ' from Dnyaneshwar's shrine in Alandi to the Vitthala temple in Pandharpur . The *Padukas* (sandals) of Dnyaneshwar are carried in a *Palkhi* (palanquin) for the Dnyaneshwar inspired works of later poet-saints of the Varkari movement. His philosophy of *chidvilas* was adapted by Varkari writers, such as Namdev and Eknath, to their own works. *Amrutanubhava's* influence is visible in Eknath's *Hastamalak* and *Swatmsukha*. Tukaram's works imbibe and explain Dnyaneshwar's philosophical concepts such as the refutation of *Mayavada*. Many writers, beginning with Eknath, wrote commentaries were written on *Amrutanubhava*. However, prominent historians of Indian philosophy such as Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan and Surendranath Dasgupta who were primarily focused on Sanskrit

## Works

### Undisputed authorship

- *Dnyaneshwari* or *Bhavarthdipika* (1290 CE)
- *Amrutanubhava* or *Anubhavamrita* (1292 CE)
- *Changdev Pasashti* (1294 CE)
- *Haripath*
- *Abhangas*

### Works attributed to Dnyaneshwar

- Commentary on *Yoga Vasistha*
- *Pavana-Vijaya*
- *Pancikarana*

## Drushtanta and First Picture

Shri Sant Dnyaneshwar Maharaj has given Drushtant to Sant Gulabrao Maharaj when he was just 19 years old and given him a mantra of his own name (Swanaam). After that Drushtant, the first ever photo picture of Sant Dnyaneshwar Maharaj has been drawn by an artist based on the directions of Gulabrao Maharaj.

Even today one can see the same photo-frame at Samadhi Temple at Alandi. Sant Gulabrao Maharaj is also known as Pradnyachakshu Madhuradwaitacharya Pandhurangnath Maharaj.

## Chapter 17

# Murder of Muiz ud din Qaiqabad

## by Jalaluddin Firuz Khalji

### Muiz ud din Qaiqabad

**Muiz ud din Qaiqabad** (reigned 1287– 1 February 1290) was the tenth sultan of the Mamluk dynasty (Slave dynasty). He was the son of Bughra Khan the Independent sultan of Bengal, as well as grandson of Ghiyas ud din Balban (1266–87).

After the death of his son Muhammad, in 1286 at the hands of the Mongols, Ghiyas ud din Balban was in an unrecoverable state of shock. In his last days he called his son Bughra Khan, who was then the Governor of Bengal, to stay with him, but due to the stern nature of his father he slipped away to Bengal. Eventually, Balban chose his grandson and son of Muhammad, Kay Khusroe, to be his successor. However, when Balban died, Fakhr-ud-Din, the Kotwal of Delhi, set aside the nomination and chose for Muiz ud din Qaiqabad, son of Bughra Khan, to become ruler instead, he was only 17 years old

### Reign

After he became the Sultan, he indulged in the life of wine and women, the example set by the Sultan was also followed by his courtiers. His army met with his father's Bengal army near North Bihar, but due to the love for his father he ran towards him to embrace his crying. No battle took place and a lasting

peace treaty was agreed between Bengal and Hindustan, which was even respected by his successors. On his return to Delhi, he transferred Nizam-ud-Din to Multan, seeing the latter's hesitation, the Sultan ordered him to be poisoned. He appointed Jalal ud Din Firuz Khalji as a new commander of the army, but the murder and appointment sent a wave of dissent amongst the Turkish nobility. Taking advantage of this Jalal-ud-Din Firuz marched his army to Delhi.

After four years, he was murdered in 1290 by a Khalji noble. His infant son, Kayumars, was also murdered, ending the Slave dynasty and instigating the Khalji Revolution.

## **Coinage**

- Muiz ud din Qaiqabad struck coins in gold, silver, copper and billon.

## **Jalal-ud-din Khalji**

**Jalal-ud-din Khalji** (r. 1290–1296; died 19 July 1296) was the founder and first Sultan of the Khalji dynasty that ruled the Delhi Sultanate from 1290 to 1320.

Originally named **Firuz**, Jalal-ud-din started his career as an officer of the Mamluk dynasty, and rose to an important position under Sultan Muizzuddin Qaiqabad. After Qaiqabad was paralyzed, a group of nobles appointed his infant son Shamsuddin Kayumars as the new Sultan, and tried to kill Jalal-ud-din. Instead, Jalal-ud-din had them killed, and



became the regent. A few months later, he deposed Kayumars, and became the new Sultan.

As a Sultan, he repulsed a Mongol invasion, and allowed many Mongols to settle in India after their conversion to Islam. He captured Mandawar and Jhain from the Chahamana king Hammira, although he was unable to capture the Chahamana capital Ranthambore. During his reign, his nephew Ali Gurshasp raided Bhilsa in 1293 and Devagiri in 1296.

Jalal-ud-din, who was around 70 years old at the time of his ascension, was known as a mild-mannered, humble and kind monarch to the general public. During the first year of his reign, he ruled from Kilokhri to avoid confrontations with the old Turkic nobles of the imperial capital Delhi. Several nobles considered him as a weak ruler, and unsuccessfully attempted to overthrow him at different times. He meted out lenient punishments to the rebels, except in case of a dervish Sidi Maula, who was executed for allegedly conspiring to dethrone him. Jalal-ud-din was ultimately assassinated by his nephew Ali Gurshasp, who subsequently ascended the throne as Alauddin Khalji.

The **Khalji** or **Khilji** Pashto (غلجیان) dynasty was a Turko-Afghan dynasty which ruled on the Delhi sultanate, covering large parts of the Indian subcontinent for nearly three decades between 1290 and 1320. Founded by Jalal ud din Firuz Khalji as the second dynasty to rule the Delhi Sultanate of India, it came to power through a revolution that marked the transfer of power from the monopoly of Turkic nobles to Afghans. Its rule is known for conquests into present day South India and successfully fending off the repeated Mongol invasions of India.

The Khaljis of the Khalji Dynasty were of Turko-Afghan origin whose ancestors, the Khalaj, are said to have been initially a Turkic people who migrated together with the Iranian Huns and Hephthalites from Central Asia, into the southern and eastern regions of modern-day Afghanistan as early as 660CE where they ruled the region of Kabul as the Buddhist Kabul Shahis. The Khalaj were from the very beginning going through a process of assimilation into the Pashtun tribal system, during their reign in India they were already treated entirely as Afghans by the Turkic nobles of the Delhi Sultanate.

The modern Pashto-speaking Ghilji Pashtuns, who make up the majority of the Pashtuns in Afghanistan, are the modern result of the Khalaj assimilation into the Pashtuns. Between the 10th and 13th centuries, some sources refer to the Khalaj people as of Turkic, but some others do not. Minorsky argues that the early history of the Khalaj tribe is obscure and adds that the identity of the name *Khalaj* is still to be proved.

Mahmud al-Kashgari (11th century) does not include the Khalaj among the Oghuz Turkic tribes, but includes them among the Oghuz-Turkman (where Turkman meant "Like the Turks") tribes. Kashgari felt the Khalaj did not belong to the original stock of Turkish tribes but had associated with them and therefore, in language and dress, often appeared "like Turks". The 11th century *Tarikh-i Sistan* and the Firdausi's *Shahnameh* also distinguish and differentiate the Khalaj from the Turks. Minhaj-i-Siraj Juzjani (13th century) never identified Khalaj as Turks, but was careful not to refer to them as Pashtuns. They were always a category apart from Turks, Tajiks and Pashtuns. Muhammad ibn Najib Bakran's *Jahan-nama* explicitly describes them as Turkic, although he notes

that their complexion had become darker (compared to the Turks) and their language had undergone enough alterations to become a distinct dialect. The modern historian Irfan Habib has argued that the Khaljis were not related to the Turkic people and were instead ethnic Pashtuns. Habib pointed out that, in some 15th-century Devanagari Sati inscriptions, the later Khaljis of Malwa have been referred to as "Khalchi" and "Khilchi", and that the 17th century chronicle *Padshahnama*, an area near Boost in Afghanistan (where the Khalaj once resided) as "Khalich". Habib theorizes that the earlier Persian chroniclers misread the name "Khalchi" as "Khalji" . He also argues that no 13th century source refers to the Turkish background of the Khalji. However, Muhammad ibn Najib Bakran's *Jahan-nama* (c. 1200-1220) described the Khalaj people as a "tribe of Turks" that had been going through a language shift.

## **History**

### **Jalal-ud-din Khalji**

- Main article: Jalaluddin Firuz Khalji

Khaljis were vassals of the Mamluk dynasty of Delhi and served the Sultan of Delhi, Ghiyas ud din Balban, as a minor part of the Muslim nobility. The last major Turkic ruler, Balban, in his struggle to maintain power over his insubordinate Turkish officers, destroyed the power of the Forty. However this indirectly damaged the Turkish integrity of the nobility, which had opposed the power of the non-Turks. This left them vulnerable to the Khalji and Indo-Muslim

faction, which had been strengthening due to the ever-growing number of converts, to take power through a series of assassinations. One by one the Mamluk officers were murdered, and the last ruler of the Turkic Mamluk dynasty - the 17-year old Muiz ud din Qaiqabad - was killed in the Kailu-gheri Palace during the coup by Jalal ud din Firuz Khalji.

Jalaluddin Firuz Khalji, who was around 70 years old at the time of his ascension, was known as a mild-mannered, humble and kind monarch to the general public.

Jalaluddin succeeded in overcoming the opposition of the Turkish nobles and ascended the throne of Delhi in January 1290. Jalal-ud-din was not universally accepted: During his six-year reign (1290–96),

Balban's nephew revolted due to his assumption of power and the subsequent sidelining of nobility and commanders serving the Mamluk dynasty. Jalal-ud-din suppressed the revolt and executed some commanders, then led an unsuccessful expedition against Ranthambhor and repelled a Mongol force on the banks of the Sind River in central India with the help of his nephew Juna Khan.

### **Alauddin Khalji**

Alauddin Khalji was the nephew and son-in-law of Jalal-ud-din. He raided the Deccan peninsula and Deogiri - then the capital of the state of Maharashtra, looting their treasure. He returned to Delhi in 1296, murdered Jalal-ud-din and assumed power as Sultan. He would appoint his Indo-Muslim allies such as Zafar Khan (Minister of War), Nusrat Khan (Wazir of Dehli), Ayn al Mulk Multani, Malik Karfur, Malik Tughlaq, and Malik

Nayk(Master of the Horse) who were famous warriors but non-Turks, which resulted in the emergence of an Indo-Muslim state.

To secure a route to Gujarat's trading ports, Ayn al-Mulk Multani was sent to conquer the Paramara kingdom of Malwa. Its Rai defended it with a large Rajput army, but he was defeated by Multani who became the governor of the province. Then Nusrat Khan was sent to conquer Gujarat itself, where he defeated its Solanki king. Nusrat Khan plundered its chief cities and sacked its temples, such as the famous temple of Somnath which had been rebuilt in the twelfth century. It was here where Nusrat Khan captured Malik Kafur who would later become a military general. Alauddin continued expanding Delhi Sultanate into South India, with the help of generals such as Malik Kafur and Khusraw Khan, collecting large war booty (*Anwatan*) from those they defeated. His commanders collected war spoils from conquered kingdoms and paid khums (one fifth) on *ghanima* (booty collected during war) to Sultan's treasury, which helped strengthen the Khalji rule.

Alauddin Khalji reigned for 20 years. He attacked and seized states of Ranthambhor (1301 AD), Chittorgarh (1303), Māndu (1305) and plundered the wealthy state of Devagiri. He also withstood two Mongol raids. Alauddin was also known for his cruelty against attacked kingdoms after wars. Historians note him as a tyrant, and that anyone Alauddin Khalji suspected of being a threat to this power was killed, along with the women and children of that family. In 1298, between 15,000 and 30,000 people near Delhi, who had recently converted to Islam, were slaughtered in a single day, due to fears of an uprising. He also killed his own family members and nephews, in 1299–

1300, after he suspected them of rebellion, by first gouging out their eyes and then beheading them.

In 1308, Alauddin's lieutenant, Malik Kafur captured Warangal, overthrew the Hoysala Empire south of the Krishna River and raided Madurai in Tamil Nadu. He then looted the treasury in capitals and from the temples of south India. Among these loots was the Warangal loot that included one of the largest known diamonds in human history, the Koh-i-Noor. Malik Kafur returned to Delhi in 1311, laden with loot and war booty from Deccan peninsula which he submitted to Alauddin Khalji. This made Malik Kafur, born in a Hindu family and who had converted to Islam before becoming Delhi Sultanate's army commander, a favorite of Alauddin Khalji.

In 1311, Alauddin ordered a massacre of Mongols in the Delhi Sultanate wherein between 15,000 and 30,000 Mongol settlers, who had recently converted to Islam, were killed after Khalji suspected them of plotting an uprising against him.

### **The last Khalji sultans**

Alauddin Khalji died in December 1315. Thereafter, the sultanate witnessed chaos, coup and succession of assassinations. Malik Kafur became the sultan but lacked support from the amirs and was killed within a few months.

Over the next three years following Malik Kafur's death, another three sultans assumed power violently and/or were killed in coups. First, the amirs installed a six-year-old named Shihab-ud-din Omar as sultan and his teenage brother, Qutb ud din Mubarak Shah, as regent. Qutb killed his younger brother and appointed himself sultan; to win over the loyalty of

the amirs and the Malik clan he offered Ghazi Malik the position of army commander in the Punjab. Others were given a choice between various offices and death. After ruling in his own name for less than four years, Mubarak Shah was murdered in 1320 by one of his generals, Khusraw Khan. Amirs persuaded Ghazi Malik, who was still army commander in the Punjab, to lead a coup. Ghazi Malik's forces marched on Delhi, captured Khusraw Khan, and beheaded him. Upon becoming sultan, Ghazi Malik renamed himself Ghiyath al-Din Tughluq, becoming the first ruler of the Tughluq dynasty.

## **Economic policy and administration**

Alauddin Khalji changed the tax policies to strengthen his treasury to help pay the keep of his growing army and fund his wars of expansion. He raised agriculture taxes from 20% to 50% – payable in grain and agricultural produce (or cash), eliminating payments and commissions on taxes collected by local chiefs, banned socialization among his officials as well as inter-marriage between noble families to help prevent any opposition forming against him; he cut salaries of officials, poets and scholars in his kingdom.

Alauddin Khalji enforced four taxes on non-Muslims in the Sultanate - *jizya* (poll tax), *kharaj* (land tax), *kari* (house tax), and *chari* (pasture tax). He also decreed that his Delhi-based revenue officers assisted by local Muslim *jagirdars*, *khuts*, *mukkadims*, *chaudharis* and *zamindars* seize by force half of all produce any farmer generates, as a tax on standing crop, so as to fill sultanate granaries. His officers enforced tax payment by beating up middlemen responsible for rural tax collection. Furthermore, Alauddin Khalji demanded, state Kulke

and Rothermund, from his "wise men in the court" to create "rules and regulations in order to grind down the common man, so as to reduce them to abject poverty and deprive them of wealth and any form of surplus property that could foster a rebellion; At the same time, he confiscated all landed property from his courtiers and officers. Revenue assignments to Muslim *jagirdars* were also cancelled and the revenue was collected by the central administration. Henceforth, state Kulke and Rothermund, "everybody was busy with earning a living so that nobody could even think of rebellion."

Alauddin Khalji taxation methods and increased taxes reduced agriculture output and the Sultanate witnessed massive inflation. In order to compensate for salaries that he had cut and fixed for Muslim officials and soldiers, Alauddin introduced price controls on all agriculture produce, goods, livestock and slaves in the kingdom, as well as controls on where, how, and by whom these could be sold. Markets called *shahana-i-mandi* were created. Muslim merchants were granted exclusive permits and monopoly in these *mandi* to buy and resell at official prices.

No one other than these merchants could buy from farmers or sell in cities. Alauddin deployed an extensive network of *Munhiyans* (spies, secret police) who would monitor the *mandi* and had the power to seize anyone trying to buy or sell anything at a price different than the official controlled prices. Those found violating these *mandi* rules were severely punished, such as by cutting out their flesh. Taxes collected in form of seized crops and grains were stored in sultanate's granaries. Over time, farmers quit farming for income and shifted to subsistence farming, the general food supply



worsened in north India, shortages increased and Delhi Sultanate witnessed increasingly worse and extended periods of famines. The Sultan banned private storage of food by anyone. Rationing system was introduced by Alauddin as shortages multiplied; however, the nobility and his army were exempt from the per family quota-based food rationing system. During these famines, Khalji's sultanate granaries and wholesale *mandi* system with price controls ensured sufficient food for his army, court officials and the urban population in Delhi. Price controls instituted by Khalji reduced prices, but also lowered wages to a point where ordinary people did not benefit from the low prices. The price control system collapsed shortly after the death of Alauddin Khalji, with prices of various agriculture products and wages doubling to quadrupling within a few years.

### **Historical impact**

The tax system introduced during the Khalji dynasty had a long term influence on Indian taxation system and state administration,

Alauddin Khalji's taxation system was probably the one institution from his reign that lasted the longest, surviving indeed into the nineteenth or even the twentieth century. From now on, the land tax (*kharaj* or *mal*) became the principal form in which the peasant's surplus was expropriated by the ruling class.

- —□ *The Cambridge Economic History of India: c.1200-c.1750*,

## Slavery

Within Sultanate's capital city of Delhi, during Alauddin Khalji's reign, at least half of the population were slaves working as servants, concubines and guards for the Muslim nobles, amirs, court officials and commanders. Slavery in India during the Khalji dynasty, and later Islamic dynasties, included two groups of people - persons seized during military campaigns, and people who defaulted on their taxes. The institution of slavery and bondage labor became pervasive during the Khalji dynasty; male slaves were referred to as *banda*, *qaid*, *ghulam*, or *burdah*, while female slaves were called *bandi*, *kaniz* or *laundi*.

## Architecture

Alauddin Khalji is credited with the early Indo-Mohammedan architecture, a style and construction campaign that flourished during Tughlaq dynasty. Among works completed during Khalji dynasty, are Alai Darwaza - the southern gateway of Qutb complex enclosure, the Idgah at Rapri, and the Jamat Khana Masjid in Delhi. The Alai Darwaza, completed in 1311, was included as part of Qutb Minar and its Monuments UNESCO World Heritage site in 1993. Perso-Arabic inscriptions on monuments have been traced to the Khalji dynasty era.

## Disputed historical sources

Historians have questioned the reliability of historical accounts about the Khalji dynasty. Genuine primary sources

and historical records from 1260 to 1349 period have not been found. One exception is the short chapter on Delhi Sultanate from 1302 to 1303 AD by Wassaf in Persia, which is duplicated in *Jami al-Tawarikh*, and which covers the Balban rule, start of Jalal-ud-din Chili's rule and circumstances of the succession of Alauddin Khalji. A semi-fictional poetry (*mathnawi*) by Yamin al-Din Abul Hasan, also known as Amir Khusrau, is full of adulation for his employer, the reigning Sultan. Khusrau's adulation-filled narrative poetry has been used as a source of Khalji dynasty history, but this is a disputed source. Three historical sources, composed 30 to 115 years after the end of Khalji dynasty, are considered more independent but also questioned given the gap in time. These are Isami's epic of 1349, Diya-yi Barani's work of 1357 and Sirhindi's account of 1434, which possibly relied on now lost text or memories of people in Khalji's court. Of these Barani's text is the most referred and cited in scholarly sources.

## **Early life**

Jalal-ud-din was a member of the Khalaj tribe, a tribe of Turkic origin that after migration from Turkistan had settled in Afghanistan for over 200 years. Before his ascension to the throne, Jalal-ud-din was known as Malik Firuz. He and his brother Shihabuddin (father of Alauddin Khalji) served the Delhi Sultan Balban for several years. He rose to the position of *sar-i-jandar* (chief of the royal bodyguards), and was later appointed as the governor of the frontier province of Samana. As the governor of Samana, he distinguished himself in the Sultanate's conflicts with the Mongol invaders.

After Balban's death in 1287, Delhi's kotwal Malik al-Umara Fakhruddin enthroned Balban's teenage grandson Muiz ud din Qaiqabad (or Kayqubad) with the title Muizzuddin. Qaiqabad was a weak ruler, and the administration was actually run by his officer Malik Nizamuddin. After Nizamuddin was poisoned by some rival officers, Qaiqabad summoned Jalal-ud-din from Samana to Delhi, gave him the title "Shaista Khan", appointed him as the *ariz-i-mumalik*, and made him the governor of Baran.

By this time, Qaiqabad's health had deteriorated, and two rival factions of nobles vied for the power in Delhi. One faction, led by Malik Aytumur Surkha, sought to maintain the power of the old Turkic nobility, and wanted to retain Balban's family on the throne. The other faction, led by Jalal-ud-din, supported the rise of the new nobility.

## **As a regent of Kayumars**

When Qaiqabad was incurably paralyzed, Malik Surkha and his associate Malik Kachhan appointed his infant son Kayumars (or Kayumarth) on the throne with the title Shamsuddin II. The two nobles then conspired to kill their rival nobles, including Jalal-ud-din (then Malik Firuz). At this time, Jalal-ud-din was conducting an inspection of the royal army at Bhugal Pahari (Baharpur according to Ziauddin Barani). His nephew Malik Ahmad Chap, who held the office of *naib-i amir-i hajib*, informed him about the conspiracy. Jalal-ud-din then moved his quarters to Ghiyaspur, and summoned his relatives from Baran on the pretext of preparing for an impending Mongol invasion. Other officers on Surkha's hit list also joined the Khaljis.

Shortly after, Jalal-ud-din received an order summoning him to the royal court in Delhi, and realized that this was part of a plot to kill him. He excused himself on the pretext of conducting an inspection of the army at Kannauj. Kachhan then personally marched from Delhi to Kannauj, and told Jalal-ud-din that his presence was sought in Delhi immediately. Jalal-ud-din pretended not knowing anything about the conspiracy, and requested Kachhan to rest in a tent, while he finished the inspection. In the tent, Jalal-ud-din had Kachhan beheaded, and had his body thrown into the Yamuna River, starting a war between the two rival factions.

Jalal-ud-din's sons marched to Delhi, entered the royal palace, and brought the titular Sultan Kayumars to Jalal-ud-din's camp. Malik Surkha and his associates tried to retrieve Kayumars, but were captured and killed. Jalal-ud-din's men also abducted some sons of Malik al-Umara Fakhruddin, the kotwal of Delhi, and therefore, Fakhruddin dissuaded the people of Delhi from trying to retrieve Kayumars.

After eliminating the officers of the rival faction, Jalal-ud-din continued to acknowledge Kayumars as the Sultan of Delhi. He became the governor of Bhatinda, Dipalpur and Multan provinces. Initially, he offered Kayumars' regency to Balban's nephew Malik Chajju and Fakhruddin. However, Malik Chajju preferred to be the governor of Kara-Manikpur, and Fakhruddin also rejected the offer. Therefore, Jalal-ud-din himself became the regent.

Qaiqabad died on 1 February 1290: according to Yahya Sirhindi he died of starvation after being neglected, but another account states that he was murdered on Jalal-ud-din's

orders by an officer whose father had been executed by him. Kayumars' titular reign (1290) lasted for around 3 months, before he was deposed by Jalal-ud-din.

## **Ascension to the throne**

Jalal-ud-din (known as Malik Firuz until this point), ascended the throne of Delhi in June 1290, at the unfinished Kilokhri (also Kilughari or Kailugarhi) Palace near Delhi. At the time of his ascension, Jalal-ud-din was very unpopular. He had little support among the old Turkic nobles, who viewed him as an Afghan (Pashtun), wrongly believing him to be of non-Turkic ancestry. In addition, he was an old man of around 70 years, and his mild nature was seen as unsuitable for the position. Because of his unpopularity, he decided not to move to Balban's palace at Delhi, and lived at Kilokhri for around one year. He finished the palace, and turned Kilokhri into an important town.

Jalal-ud-din avoided making any radical changes to the administrative set-up, and retained the old Turkic nobles in the offices that they held during Balban's reign. For example, Fakhruddin was retained as the *kotwal* of Delhi, Khwaja Khatir was retained as the *wazir*, and Balban's nephew Malik Chajju was retained as the governor of Kara-Manikpur. The surviving members of Balban's royal family moved to Kara under Chajju's governorship.

At the same time, Jalal-ud-din appointed his relatives and associates to the important offices. He appointed his brother Yaghrash Khan as the head of the army ministry (*ariz-i-mamalik*), and his nephew Ahmad Chap as *naib-i barbek*. He

gave his eldest son Mahmud the title Khan-i-Khan; the next two sons were given the titles Arkali Khan and Qadr Khan. He also appointed his nephews Ali Gurshasp (later Sultan Alauddin) and Almas Beg as *Amir-i-Tuzuk* (equivalent to Master of ceremonies) and *Akhur-beg* (equivalent to Master of the Horse) respectively.

Gradually, Jalal-ud-din overcame the initial hostility that he had faced from the citizens of Delhi. He gained reputation as a humble and kind-hearted monarch, as opposed to the preceding despots like Balban. After entering Delhi, he had the royal entrance to the Red Palace dismounted, and refused to sit on the king's seat in the royal audience-hall, saying that the crown had been forced upon him because of the malicious intents of Surkha and Kachhan.

## **Malik Chajju's revolt**

While the general public admired Jalal-ud-din as a kind-hearted and sincere person, a section of nobles despised him as a weak ruler. In August 1290, Balban's nephew Malik Chajju Kashli Khan, who now headed the former royal family, staged a revolt against Jalal-ud-din at Kara. Chajju seems to have opted for the governorship of the easternmost province of Kara-Manikpur to remain away from imperial control, and possibly, because he hoped to seek support from his cousin Bughra Khan (father of Qaiqabad), who had become an independent ruler of the eastern Bengal region in 1287.

Chajju styled himself as Sultan Mughisuddin, and declared his independence. As a mark of his sovereignty, he issued his own coins, and had the *khutba* read in his name. Ali Hatim Khan,

the governor of Awadh, as well as other older nobles appointed in the eastern region, supported him. Chajju was also supported by a number of Hindu chiefs of the Gangetic plains, who had not paid their tribute for some years, and who swore allegiance to Balban's family. Under these circumstances, Jalal-ud-din's loyal officers in the Ganga-Yamuna Doab region started withdrawing from the region.

Chajju was confident that he enjoyed more support than Jalal-ud-din, who was yet to find favour among the old nobles of Delhi and its neighbouring areas. Therefore, he marched towards Delhi along the left bank of the Ganges River, and then the Ramganga River. He probably planned to enter Delhi from Amroha area. At Badaun, his supporters Malik Bahadur and Alp Ghazi joined him with their troops.

Jalal-ud-din set out to crush the revolt after appointing his eldest son, who held the title *Khan-i Khanan*, in-charge of Delhi. He led his army towards Badaun via Koil (modern Aligarh). The vanguard of his army, led by his second eldest son Arkali Khan, marched ahead of the rest of the army, and spotted Chajju's army on the other side of the Ramganga River. Chajju's soldiers had seized all the boats, so Arkali Khan's contingent could not cross the river. At night, Arkali Khan sent a raiding party to Chajju's camp on rafts and skiffs. The raids caused panic among Chajju's soldiers, who deserted their camp, and moved northwards. Arkali Khan plundered the deserted camp for two days, and then pursued the enemy. He came across Chajju's army at a Ramganga river crossing, and fought an indecisive battle. Meanwhile, Jalal-ud-din's army crossed the Ganges river at Bhojpur (near Farrukhabad), and engaged Chajju's supporters in another battle.



At night, an agent of Chajju's Hindu supporter Bhim Deva (Biram Deva Kotla according to *Tarikh-i Mubarak Shahi*) informed him that Jalal-ud-din would attack his army from rear. Chajju then secretly left the camp with some of his followers. In the morning,

Arkali Khan crossed the river, and easily defeated the remaining army of Chajju. Chajju's supporters Alp Ghazi and Bhim Deva were killed, while Malik Masud and Malik Muhammad Balban were captured. The rest of Chajju's army then surrendered. Chajju himself took shelter in a walled village, but the village headman turned him over to Jalal-ud-din's army.

Aakali Khan then joined Jalal-ud-din, and the combined imperial army marched to the eastern districts to punish the chiefs who had supported Chajju. Some chiefs, such as that of Rupal, surrendered and saved themselves by offering heavy tributes. Others, such as that of Kahsun, faced plundering raids. The Hindu rebels were executed, and the Muslim rebels of Indian origin were sold as slaves.

Jalal-ud-din treated the Turkic Muslim rebels kindly, despite objections by his nephew Ahmad Chhap. When the imprisoned rebel nobles were brought to his camp in chains, he disapproved of their mistreatment. He ordered them to be released, dressed well and entertained. He invited the high-ranking rebel nobles, such as Amir Ali Sarjandar, to a feast. Even Malik Chajju, who was captured a few days later, was sent to an honourable confinement at Multan instead of being executed; his associates were released. Jalal-ud-din openly praised the rebels for their loyalty to their deceased master

Balban. When Ahmad Chhap objected to such leniency, Jalal-ud-din declared that he was incapable of being tyrannical, and argued that the pardoned nobles would be grateful to him and remain loyal to him.

## **Mongol invasion**

Sometime after Chajju's revolt, the Mongols invaded the north-west frontier of the Delhi Sultanate. The invasion was led by Abdullah, who was a grandson of Hallu (Hulagu Khan) according to Ziauddin Barani, and a son of "the prince of Khurasan" according to Yahya's *Tarikh-i Mubarak Shahi*.

The frontier provinces of Dipalpur, Multan, and Samana were governed by Jalal-ud-din's son Arkali Khan. Jalal-ud-din personally led an army to repulse the invaders. The two armies faced each other at a place named Bar-ram, and their vanguards engaged in some skirmishes. The skirmishes ended with advantage for the Delhi forces, and the Mongols agreed to retreat. Jalal-ud-din called Abdullah his son after exchanging friendly greetings.

A group of Mongols, led by Ulghu (another grandson of Hulagu), decided to embrace Islam, and sought Jalal-ud-din's permission to settle in India. In the Delhi Sultanate, the Mongols were regarded as hardened criminals, who had been involved in murders and highway robbery. Despite this, Jalal-ud-din accepted their regrets, and allowed them to settle in the lower Ganges plain, on the Lakhnauti (Bengal) frontier of his kingdom. He also provided the new settlers with accommodation, allowances and social ranks. These Mongols came to be known as "New Muslims".

## **Ranthambore campaign**

The Chahamana king Hammira-deva ruled a kingdom centred around Ranthambore, located to the south-west of Delhi. Hammira's expansionist policy had threatened the Ajmer and Haryana frontiers of the Delhi Sultanate, which prompted Jalal-ud-din to invade his kingdom.

### **Siege of Mandawar**

Jalal-ud-din marched via Rewari and Narnaul to reach the Alwar frontier of Hammira's kingdom. He first besieged fortress of Mandawar (called "Mandor" by Ziauddin Barani and Yahya Sirhindi). Mandawar was once a part of the Delhi Sultanate, but had been lost to the Chahamanas in the preceding years; Jalal-ud-din recaptured it in 1292. After this victory, he raided the countryside, obtaining a large number of cattle.

According to Yahya's *Tarikh-i Mubarak Shahi*, the siege of Mandawar lasted for four months. However, historian A. B. M. Habibullah believes that this was the duration of the entire Ranthambore campaign, including the sieges of Mandawar, Jhain and Ranthambore.

Jalal-ud-din's eldest son, *Khan-i Khanan*, died on the eve of the Mandawar campaign.

### **Siege of Jhain**

In 1291, Jalal-ud-din marched across the Karauli region to Jhain, a town that guarded the approaches to the Chahamana capital Ranthambore. A reconnaissance party of the Delhi

army, led by Qara Bahadur, defeated a Chahamana contingent. Jalal-ud-din then sent a larger detachment to besiege the Jhain fort. When the invaders reached within two *farsangs* of the fort, a Chahamana army led by Gardan Saini came out of the fort and engaged them in a battle. The Delhi army emerged victorious, and Gardan Saini was killed in action. The invaders then pursued the retreating Chahamana soldiers across Chambal, Kunwari and Banas rivers. The remaining Chahamana contingents stationed at Jhain then evacuated the fort, and retreated to Ranthambore.

Following this victory, the invaders engaged in plunder, and dismantled the Jhain fort. Jalal-ud-din, an iconoclast, broke the non-Islamic idols, although he admired their sculpture and carvings.

Three days after this, the Shah entered Jhain at midday and occupied the private apartment of the rai. He then visited the temples, which were ornamented with elaborate work in gold and silver.

Next day he went again to the temples, and ordered their destruction, as well as of the fort, and set fire to the palace, and thus made hell of paradise. While the soldiers sought every opportunity of plundering, the Shah was engaged in burning the temples, and destroying the idols. There were two bronze idols of Brahma each of which weighed more than a thousand mans. These were broken into pieces and the fragments distributed amongst the officers, with orders to throw them down at the gates of the masjid on their return.

- —□ *Miftahul-Futuh*

The *Miftah al-Futuh*, written by his courtier Amir Khusrau, claims that thousands of defenders were killed in the siege of Jhain, while the Delhi army lost only one Turkic soldier.

## **Siege of Ranthambore**

After conquering Jhain, Jalal-ud-din ordered his army to besiege the Ranthambore Fort, which was situated on a steep hill, and was reputed to be impregnable. He issued orders for the construction of siege engines such as *maghrabis* (catapults), *sabats*, *gargajes*, and a *pasheb* (mound to reach the hilltop). According to the Delhi chronicler Ziauddin Barani, he abandoned the siege when he came out to inspect the progress of the construction, and realized the ensuing siege would cost many Muslim lives. Barani states that Jalal-ud-din declared he would not risk the hair of a single Muslim for "ten such forts". Jalal-ud-din's nephew Ahmad Chap opposed this decision saying that it would embolden the Hindus, and asked him to emulate the earlier Muslim kings such as Mahmud and Sanjar, "whose undoubted piety never limited their kingly action." But Jalal-ud-din argued that the comparisons to Mahmud and Sanjar were unfair, because their dominions did not include "a single idolater".

## **Conspiracies against Jalal-ud-din**

### **Conspiracy of Tajuddin Kuchi**

Several of Jalal-ud-din's courtiers believed that he was a weak king, who could not inspire the necessary fear among his subjects and the enemies of the Sultanate. During the

Ranthambore campaign, some of his closest associates met at the house of Malik Tajuddin Kuchi. In a drunken stupor, they talked about killing Jalal-ud-din and raising Tajuddin to throne.

When Jalal-ud-din came to know about this, he summoned the erring courtiers to a private conference. But instead of punishing them, he shamed them by daring them to kill him with his own sword. The courtiers asked for forgiveness, attributing their behavior to alcohol intoxication, with Nusrat Sabbah making a "clever and flattering confession". The meeting ended with wine-drinking and poetry recitals by Jalal-ud-din.

### **Alleged conspiracy of Sidi Maula**

Jalal-ud-din was lenient towards his detractors, and even the most persistent detractors were only banished to their *iqtas* for one year. The only instance in which he meted out more severe punishments was during the alleged conspiracy of Sidi Maula.

Sidi Maula was a foreign-born religious leader, who belonged to a sect of unorthodox Muslim *dervishes*. He owned a huge *khanqah*, and had been reputed for his vast charities since the reign of Qaiqabad. His institution attracted most of the dispossessed Balban-era amirs and officers. His followers also included Jalal-ud-din's nobles, including Qazi Jalal Kashani and the now-deceased crown prince *Khan-i Khanan*.

Sidi Maula allegedly planned to kill Jalal-ud-din to become *khalifa*, although these allegations were never proven. According to a near-contemporary account, the allegations were first made by the jealous *dervishes* of a rival sect. It was

alleged that Sidi Maula had asked Hathya *Paik* and Niranjan *Kotwal* to assassinate Jalal-ud-din on a Friday. These two were Balban-era Hindu officers (*pahilwans* or wrestlers, according to Ziauddin Barani). Malik Ulghu, the Mongol commander who had entered Jalal-ud-din's service, reported the allegations to Arkali Khan, while Jalal-ud-din was busy besieging Mandawar. Arkali Khan, who disliked the associates of his elder brother *Khan-i Khanan*, accepted the allegations as true, and arrested the alleged conspirators.

When Jalal-ud-din returned to Delhi, the alleged conspirators were brought before him, and pleaded not guilty. The orthodox Muslim *ulama*, who were unable to present any concrete evidence against the accused, suggested a trial by fire. When Jalal-ud-din was convinced that the accused were guilty, he ordered the Hindu conspirators Hathya and Niranjan to be executed. He then banished Qazi Jalal Kashani and the Balban-era officers who followed Sidi Maula. Next, Jalal-ud-din turned to Sidi Maula, and lost his composure when Sidi Maula repeatedly denied his involvement in the conspiracy. An annoyed Jalal-ud-din asked a group of *qalandars* to knife Sidi Maula. Arkali Khan later had the wounded Sidi Maula crushed under the feet of an elephant.

Sidi Maula's execution was followed by a severe dust storm, and a drought resulting from the failure of seasonal rains. These conditions resulted in a severe famine, during which the prices of foodgrains became exorbitant, and a number of people committed suicide by jumping into the Yamuna River. Sidi Maula's admirers considered these unfortunate events as proof of his innocence.

## Ali Gurshasp's conspiracy

After deposing Malik Chajju, Jalal-ud-din had appointed his nephew Ali Gurshasp (later Sultan Alauddin Khalji) as the governor of Kara. Ali's father had died when he was young, and Jalal-ud-din had brought him and his brother Almas Beg (later Ulugh Khan) up. Jalal-ud-din had also married his daughters to Ali and Almas. Ali's domestic life was miserable, as he was not on good terms with his wife and his mother-in-law, and he wanted to end his dependence on Jalal-ud-din's family. At Kara, the former supporters of Malik Chajju instigated him to overthrow Jalal-ud-din.

To raise money for a coup against Jalal-ud-din, Ali raided Bhilsa in 1293. Bhilsa was a temple town in the Paramara kingdom of Malwa, which had already been weakened by Vaghela, Chahamana, and Yadava invasions. As a result of this raid, he obtained a large number of cattle and precious metals. During his stay in Bhilsa, he came to know about the immense wealth of the southern Yadava kingdom, as well as the routes leading to their capital Devagiri. He shrewdly surrendered the loot from Bhilsa to Jalal-ud-din to win the Sultan's confidence, but withheld the information on the Yadava kingdom. Pleased with the loot, Jalal-ud-din gave Ali the office of *Ariz-i Mamalik*, which was once held by Ali's father. He also granted Ali the governorship of Awadh in addition to that of Kara-Manikpur. He also granted Ali's request to use the surplus revenue for enlisting additional troops to raid the other wealthy but weakly-defended territories beyond Chanderi.

Over the next few years, Ali secretly planned a raid on Devagiri. In 1296, he set out for Devagiri with an 8,000-strong



cavalry. He left the administration of Kara to Alaul Mulk, who misled Jalal-ud-din's administration in Delhi about Ali's real destination. At Devagiri, Ali collected a large amount of wealth. When Jalal-ud-din heard about Ali's success at Devagiri, he was pleased at the prospect of a vast treasure coming to him. He moved to Gwalior, hoping that Ali would come there to meet him en route to Kara. However, Ali marched directly towards Kara. Jalal-ud-din's councillors, such as Ahmad Chap, advised him to intercept Ali at Kara, but Jalal-ud-din trusted his nephew, and returned to Delhi. In Delhi, Ali's brother Almas Beg assured the Sultan of Ali's loyalty.

After reaching Kara, Ali sent Jalal-ud-din a detailed report on the raid, and expressed concern that his enemies may have poisoned Jalal-ud-din's mind against him. He asked for a signed letter of pardon, which Jalal-ud-din dispatched immediately. At Kara, Jalal-ud-din's messengers were astonished when they learned about Ali's military strength and his plans to dethrone Jalal-ud-din. Ali detained them, and prevented them from communicating with Delhi. Meanwhile, Almas Beg convinced Jalal-ud-din that Ali always carried poison in his handkerchief and would commit suicide out of guilt, if not personally pardoned by Jalal-ud-din. A gullible Jalal-ud-din, concerned about his beloved nephew, asked Almas to visit Kara and dissuade Ali from committing suicide, promising to visit Kara himself shortly after.

## **Assassination**

In July 1296, Jalal-ud-din marched to Kara with a large army to meet Ali during the holy month of Ramazan. He directed his commander Ahmad Chap to take the major part of the army to

Kara by land, while he himself journeyed down the Ganges River with 1,000 soldiers. When Jalal-ud-din's entourage came close to Kara, Ali sent Almas Beg to meet him. Almas Beg convinced Jalal-ud-din to leave behind his soldiers, saying that their presence would frighten Ali into committing suicide. Jalal-ud-din boarded a boat with a few of his companions, who were made to unbuckle their weapons. As they rode the boat, they saw Ali's armed troops stationed along the riverbank. Almas told them that these troops had been summoned to accord a worthy reception to Jalal-ud-din. Jalal-ud-din complained about Ali's lack of courtesy in not coming to greet him at this point. However, Almas convinced him of Ali's loyalty by saying that Ali was busy arranging a presentation of the loot from Devagiri and a feast for him.

Satisfied by this explanation, Jalal-ud-din continued his journey to Kara, reciting Quran on the boat. When he landed at Kara, Ali's retinue greeted him, and Ali ceremoniously threw himself at his feet. Jalal-ud-din lovingly raised Ali, gave him a kiss on cheek, and chided him for doubting his uncle's affection. At this point, Ali signaled his follower Muhammad Salim, who struck Jalal-ud-din with his sword twice. Jalal-ud-din survived the first blow, and ran towards his boat, but the second blow killed him. Ali raised the royal canopy over his head, and proclaimed himself the new Sultan. Jalal-ud-din's head was put on a spear and paraded across Ali's provinces of Kara-Manikpur and Awadh. His companions on the boat were also killed, and Ahmad Chap's army retreated to Delhi.

According to the contemporary writer Amir Khusrau, Ali ascended the throne (as Alauddin Khalji) on 19 July 1296 (16 Ramazan 695). The later writer Ziauddin Barani dates Jalal-

ud-din's death and Ali's ascension to 20 July 1296, but Amir Khusrau is more reliable.

## **Amir Khusrau**

**Abu'l Hasan Yamīn ud-Dīn Khusrau** (1253–1325 AD), better known as **Amīr Khusrau Dehlavī**, was an Indo-Persian Sufi singer, musician, poet and scholar who lived under the Delhi Sultanate.

He was an iconic figure in the cultural history of the Indian subcontinent. He was a mystic and a spiritual disciple of Nizamuddin Auliya of Delhi, India. He wrote poetry primarily in Persian, but also in Hindavi.

A vocabulary in verse, the *ʿhāliq Bārī*, containing Arabic, Persian and Hindavi terms is often attributed to him. Khusrau is sometimes referred to as the "voice of India" or "Parrot of India" (*Tuti-e-Hind*), and has been called the "father of Urdu literature."

Khusrau is regarded as the "father of qawwali" (a devotional form of singing of the Sufis in the Indian subcontinent), and introduced the ghazal style of song into India, both of which still exist widely in India and Pakistan. Khusrau was an expert in many styles of Persian poetry which were developed in medieval Persia, from Khāqānī's *qasidas* to Nizami's *khamsa*. He used 11 metrical schemes with 35 distinct divisions. He wrote in many verse forms including ghazal, masnavi, qata, rubai, do-baiti and tarkib-band. His contribution to the development of the ghazal was significant.

## **Family background**

Amir Khusrau was born in 1253 in Patiyali, Kasganj district, in modern-day Uttar Pradesh, India, in what was then the Delhi Sultanate, the son of Amir Saif ud-Din Mahmud, a man of Turkic extraction and Bibi Daulat Naz, a native Indian mother. Amir Khusrau was a Sunni Muslim. He grew up in Kesh, a small town near Samarkand in what is now Uzbekistan. When he was a young man, the region was despoiled and ravaged by Genghis Khan's invasion of Central Asia, and much of the population fled to other lands, India being a favored destination. A group of families, including that of Amir Saif ud-Din, left Kesh and travelled to Balkh (now in northern Afghanistan), which was a relatively safe place; from here, they sent representations to the Sultan of distant Delhi seeking refuge and succour.

This was granted, and the group then travelled to Delhi. Sultan Shams ud-Din Iltutmish, ruler of Delhi, was himself a Turk like them; indeed, he had grown up in the same region of Central Asia and had undergone somewhat similar circumstances in earlier life. This was the reason the group had turned to him in the first place. Iltutmish not only welcomed the refugees to his court but also granted high offices and landed estates to some of them. In 1230, Amir Saif ud-Din was granted a fief in the district of Patiyali.

Amir Saif ud-Din married Bibi Daulat Naz, the daughter of Rawat Arz, an Indian noble and war minister of Ghiyas ud-Din Balban, the ninth Sultan of Delhi. Daulatnaz's family belonged to the Rajput community of modern-day Uttar Pradesh.

## Early years

Amir Saif ud-Din and Bibi Daulatnaz became the parents of four children: three sons (one of whom was Khusrau) and a daughter. Amir Saif ud-Din Mahmud died in 1260, when Khusrau was only eight years old. Through his father's influence, he imbibed Islam and Sufism coupled with proficiency in Turkish, Persian, and Arabic languages. He was known by his sobriquet *Tuti-i Hind* ("Parrot of India"), which according to the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* "compares the eloquent poet to the sweet-talking parrot, indicates his canonical status as a poet of Persian." Khusrau's love and admiration for his motherland is transparent through his work.

Khusrau was an intelligent child. He started learning and writing poetry at the age of nine. His first divan, *Tuhfat us-Sighr* (The Gift of Childhood), containing poems composed between the ages of 16 and 18, was compiled in 1271. In 1273, when Khusrau was 20 years old, his grandfather, who was reportedly 113 years old, died.

## Career

After Khusrau's grandfather's death, Khusrau joined the army of Malik Chajju, a nephew of the reigning Sultan, Ghiyas ud-Din Balban. This brought his poetry to the attention of the Assembly of the Royal Court where he was honored.

Nasir ud-Din Bughra Khan, the second son of Balban, was invited to listen to Khusrau. He was impressed and became Khusrau's patron in 1276. In 1277 Bughra Khan was then

appointed ruler of Bengal, and Khusrau visited him in 1279 while writing his second divan, *Wast ul-Hayat* (The Middle of Life). Khusrau then returned to Delhi. Balban's eldest son, Khan Muhammad (who was in Multan), arrived in Delhi, and when he heard about Khusrau he invited him to his court. Khusrau then accompanied him to Multan in 1281. Multan at the time was the gateway to India and was a center of knowledge and learning. Caravans of scholars, tradesmen and emissaries transited through Multan from Baghdad, Arabia and Persia on their way to Delhi. Khusrau wrote that:

I tied the belt of service on my waist and put on the cap of companionship for another five years. I imparted lustre to the water of Multan from the ocean of my wits and pleasantries.

On 9 March 1285, Khan Muhammad was killed in battle while fighting Mongols who were invading the Sultanate. Khusrau wrote two elegies in grief of his death. In 1287, Khusrau travelled to Awadh with another of his patrons, Amir Ali Hatim. At the age of eighty, Balban called his second son Bughra Khan back from Bengal, but Bughra Khan refused.

After Balban's death in 1287, his grandson Muiz ud-Din Qaiqabad, Bughra Khan's son, was made the Sultan of Delhi at the age of 17. Khusrau remained in Qaiqabad's service for two years, from 1287 to 1288. In 1288 Khusrau finished his first masnavi, *Qiran us-Sa'dain* (Meeting of the Two Auspicious Stars), which was about Bughra Khan meeting his son Muiz ud-Din Qaiqabad after a long enmity. After Qaiqabad suffered a stroke in 1290, nobles appointed his three-year-old son Shams ud-Din Kayumars as Sultan. A Turko-Afghan named Jalal ud-Din Firuz Khalji then marched on Delhi, killed Qaiqabad and

became Sultan, thus ending the Mamluk dynasty of the Delhi Sultanate and starting the Khalji dynasty.

Jalal ud-Din Firuz Khalji appreciated poetry and invited many poets to his court. Khusrau was honoured and respected in his court and was given the title "Amir". He was given the job of "Mushaf-dar". Court life made Khusrau focus more on his literary works. Khusrau's ghazals which he composed in quick succession were set to music and were sung by singing girls every night before the Sultan. Khusrau writes about Jalal ud-Din Firuz:

The King of the world Jalal ud-Din, in reward for my infinite pain which I undertook in composing verses, bestowed upon me an unimaginable treasure of wealth.

In 1290 Khusrau completed his second masnavi, *Miftah ul-Futuh* (Key to the Victories), in praise of Jalal ud-Din Firuz's victories. In 1294 Khusrau completed his third divan, *Ghurrat ul-Kamaal* (The Prime of Perfection), which consisted of poems composed between the ages of 34 and 41.

After Jalal ud-Din Firuz, Ala ud-Din Khalji ascended to the throne of Delhi in 1296. Khusrau wrote the *Khaza'in ul-Futuh* (The Treasures of Victory) recording Ala ud-Din's construction works, wars and administrative services. He then composed a khamsa (quintet) with five masnavis, known as *Khamsa-e-Khusrau* (Khamsa of Khusrau), completing it in 1298. The khamsa emulated that of the earlier poet of Persian epics, Nizami Ganjavi. The first masnavi in the khamsa was *Matla ul-Anwar* (Rising Place of Lights) consisting of 3310 verses (completed in 15 days) with ethical and Sufi themes. The second masnavi, *Khusrau-Shirin*, consisted of 4000 verses. The

third masnavi, *Laila-Majnun*, was a romance. The fourth voluminous masnavi was *Aina-e-Sikandari*, which narrated the heroic deeds of Alexander the Great in 4500 verses. The fifth masnavi was *Hasht-Bihisht*, which was based on legends about Bahram V, the fifteenth king of the Sasanian Empire. All these works made Khusrau a leading luminary in the world of poetry. Ala ud-Din Khalji was highly pleased with his work and rewarded him handsomely. When Ala ud-Din's son and future successor Qutb ud-Din Mubarak Shah Khalji was born, Khusrau prepared the horoscope of Mubarak Shah Khalji in which certain predictions were made. This horoscope is included in the masnavi *Saqiana*.

In 1300, when Khusrau was 47 years old, his mother and brother died. He wrote these lines in their honour:

A double radiance left my star this year  
Gone are my brother and my mother,  
My two full moons have set and ceased to shine  
In one short week through this ill-luck of mine.

Khusrau's homage to his mother on her death was: Where ever the dust of your feet is found is like a relic of paradise for me.

In 1310 Khusrau became a disciple of Sufi saint of the Chishti Order, Nizamuddin Auliya. In 1315, Khusrau completed the romantic masnavi *Duval Rani - Khizr Khan* (Duval Rani and Khizr Khan), about the marriage of the Vaghela princess Duval Rani to Khizr Khan, one of Ala ud-Din Khalji's sons.

After Ala ud-Din Khalji's death in 1316, his son Qutb ud-Din Mubarak Shah Khalji became the Sultan of Delhi. Khusrau wrote a masnavi on Mubarak Shah Khalji called *Nuh Sipihr* (Nine Skies), which described the events of Mubarak Shah



Khalji's reign. He classified his poetry in nine chapters, each part of which is considered a "sky". In the third chapter he wrote a vivid account of India and its environment, seasons, flora and fauna, cultures, scholars, etc. He wrote another book during Mubarak Shah Khalji's reign by name of *Ijaz-e-Khusravi* (The Miracles of Khusrau), which consisted of five volumes. In 1317 Khusrau compiled *Baqia-Naqia* (Remnants of Purity). In 1319 he wrote *Afzal ul-Fawaid* (Greatest of Blessings), a work of prose that contained the teachings of Nizamuddin Auliya.

In 1320 Mubarak Shah Khalji was killed by Khusro Khan, who thus ended the Khalji dynasty and briefly became Sultan of Delhi. Within the same year, Khusro Khan was captured and beheaded by Ghiyath al-Din Tughlaq, who became Sultan and thus began the Tughlaq dynasty. In 1321 Khusrau began to write a historic masnavi named *Tughlaq Nama* (Book of the Tughlaqs) about the reign of Ghiyath al-Din Tughlaq and that of other Tughlaq rulers.

Khusrau died in October 1325, six months after the death of Nizamuddin Auliya. Khusrau's tomb is next to that of his spiritual master in the Nizamuddin Dargah in Delhi. *Nihayat ul-Kamaal* (The Zenith of Perfection) was compiled probably a few weeks before his death.

## **Shalimar Bagh Inscription**

A popular fable which has made its way into scholarship ascribes the following famous Persian verse to Khusrau:

Agar Firdaus bar ru-ye zamin ast, Hamin ast o hamin ast o hamin ast.

In English: "If there is a paradise on earth, it is this, it is this, it is this." This verse is believed to have been inscribed on several Mughal structures, supposedly in reference to Kashmir, specifically a particular building at the Shalimar Garden in Srinagar, Kashmir (built during the reign of Mughal Emperor Jahangir).

However, recent scholarship has traced the verse to a time much later than that of Khusrau and to a place quite distant from Kashmir. Historian Rana Safvi inspected all probable buildings in the Kashmir garden and found no such inscription attributed to Khusrau. According to her the verse was composed by Sa'adullah Khan, a leading noble and scholar in the court of Jahangir's successor and son Shah Jahan. Even in popular memory, it was Jahangir who first repeated the phrase in praise of Kashmir

## **Contributions to Hindustani Music**

### **Qawwali**

- **Qawwali** is a form of Sufi Islamic devotional singing, originating from the Indian subcontinent, and notably popular in the Punjab and Sindh regions of Pakistan; in Hyderabad, Delhi and other parts of India, especially North India; as well as the Dhaka and Chittagong Divisions of Bangladesh.

Originally performed at Sufi shrines or dargahs throughout South Asia, it gained mainstream popularity and an international audience in late 20th century. Qawwali music received international exposure through the work of Aziz Mian,

Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan and Sabri Brothers largely due to several releases on the Real World label, followed by live appearances at WOMAD festivals. Other famous Qawwali singers include Fareed Ayyaz & Abu Muhammad, Rahat Fateh Ali Khan, Badar Miandad, Rizwan & Moazzam Duo, the late Amjad Sabri, Wadali Brothers, Nizami Bandhu, Bahauddin Qutbuddin, Qutbi Brothers, among others. Most modern Qawwali singers including Ustad Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan and Fareed Ayyaz & Abu Muhammad belong to the famed 'Qawwal Bachon ka Gharana' school of Qawwali, which was based in Delhi.

## **Origins**

Delhi's Sufi saint Amir Khusrow of the Chisti order of Sufis is credited with fusing the Persian, Arabic, Turkish, and Indian traditions in the late 13th century in India to create Qawwali as we know it today. The word *Sama* is often still used in Central Asia and Turkey to refer to forms very similar to Qawwali, and in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, the formal name used for a session of Qawwali is *Mehfil-e-Sama*.

Originally, musical instrument use in Qawwali was prohibited. The following conditions were initially placed on Qawwali:

“Sima’ (to listen to Qawwali) is permissible if a few conditions are met. The singer must be an adult and not a child or a female. The listener must only listen to everything in the remembrance of Allah. The words that are sung must be free from obscenity and indecency and they must not be void. Musical instruments must not be present in the gathering. If all these conditions are met, Sima’ is permissible.”

“...Someone complained to the Sultan of the Mashaa’ikh that some of the dervishes danced in a gathering where there were musical instruments. He said, they did not do good as something impermissible cannot be condoned.”

- —□ *Siyar al-Awliya*

Moreover, such Sufi Saints, such as Nizamuddin Auliya, the teacher of the famous Sufi singer, Amir Khusrow, were quite blunt about the prohibition:

Musical instruments are Haram.

- —□ *Fawa'id al-Fu'aad*

Eventually however, musical instrument use found its way into Qawwali and modern performers of musical Qawwali will justify their use of instruments by saying that the Sufi Saints do not stop them when they use them near their shrines. Instruments such as Harmoniums, tabla and dholak are now common in many Qawwali parties.

## **Song content**

The songs which constitute the qawwali repertoire are primarily in Persian, Urdu, Hindi, Bengali and Punjabi. There are some in Persian from the Mughal era, and a smattering in Saraiki and dialects of north India like Braj Bhasha and Awadhi. There is also qawwali in some regional languages but the regional language tradition is relatively obscure. Also, the sound of the regional language qawwali can be totally different

from that of mainstream qawwali. This is certainly true of Chhote Babu Qawwal, whose style of singing is much closer to the Bengali Baul music than to the qawwali of Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, for example.

The poetry is implicitly understood to be spiritual in its meaning, even though the lyrics can sometimes sound wildly secular, or outright hedonistic. The central themes of qawwali are love, devotion and longing (of man for the Divine).

Qawwalis are classified by their content into several categories:

- A hamd (حمد), Arabic for praise, is a song in praise of Allah. Traditionally, a qawwali performance starts with a hamd.
- A na`at (نعت), Arabic for description, is a song in praise of Muhammad. The opening hamd is traditionally followed by a naat.
- A manqabat (plural manaqib, مناقب, which means characteristics) is a song in praise of either Imam Ali or one of the Sufi saints. Manaqib in praise of Ali are sung at both Sunni and Shi'a gatherings. If one is sung, it will follow right after the naat. There is usually at least one manqabat in a traditional programme.
- A marsiya (مرثية), Arabic for lamentation for a dead person, is a lamentation over the death of much of Imam Husayn family in the Battle of Karbala. This would typically be sung only at a Shi'a gathering.
- A ghazal (غزل), Arabic for love song, is a song that sounds secular on the face of it. There are two extended metaphors that run through ghazals—the

joys of drinking and the agony of separation from the beloved. These songs feature exquisite poetry, and can certainly be taken at face value, and enjoyed at that level. In fact, in Pakistan and India, ghazal is also a separate, distinct musical genre in which many of the same songs are performed in a different musical style, and in a secular context. In the context of that genre, the songs are usually taken at face value, and no deeper meaning is necessarily implied. But in the context of *qawwali*, these songs of intoxication and yearning use secular metaphors to poignantly express the soul's longing for union with the Divine, and its joy in loving the Divine. In the songs of intoxication, "wine" represents "knowledge of the Divine", the "cup-bearer" (*saaqi*) is God or a spiritual guide, the "tavern" is the metaphorical place where the soul may (or may not) be fortunate enough to attain spiritual enlightenment. (The "tavern" is emphatically **not** a conventional house of worship. Rather, it is taken to be the *spiritual context* within which the soul exists.) Intoxication is attaining spiritual knowledge, or being filled with the joy of loving the Divine. In the songs of yearning, the soul, having been abandoned in this world by that cruel and cavalier lover, God, sings of the agony of separation, and the depth of its yearning for reunion.

- A kafi is a poem in Punjabi, Seraiki or Sindhi, which is in the unique style of poets such as Sultan Bahoo, Shah Hussain, Bulleh Shah and Sachal Sarmast. Two of the more well-known Kafis include *Ni Main Jana Jogi De Naal* and *Mera Piya Ghar Aaya*.

- A **munajaat** (مناجاة), Arabic for a conversation in the night or a form of prayer, is a song where the singer displays his thanks to Allah through a variety of linguistic techniques. It is often sung in Persian, with Mawlana Jalāl-ad-Dīn Rumi credited as its author.

## Composition of a qawwali party

A group of qawwali musicians, called a *party* (or **Humnawa** in Urdu), typically consists of eight or nine men including a lead singer, one or two side singers, one or two harmoniums (which may be played by the lead singer, side singer or someone else), and percussion.

If there is only one percussionist, he plays the tabla and dholak, usually the tabla with the dominant hand and the dholak with the other one (i.e. a left-handed percussionist would play the tabla with his left hand). Often there will be two percussionists, in which case one might play the tabla and the other the dholak. There is also a chorus of four or five men who repeat key verses, and who aid percussion by hand-clapping.

The performers sit cross-legged on the ground in two rows — the lead singer, side singers and harmonium players in the front row, and the chorus and percussionists in the back row.

Before the fairly recent introduction of the harmonium, qawwalis were usually accompanied by the sarangi. The sarangi had to be retuned between songs; the harmonium didn't, and was soon preferred.

Women used to be excluded from traditional Muslim music, since they are traditionally prohibited from singing in the presence of men. These traditions have changed, however, as is evident by the popularity (and acceptance) of female singers such as Abida Parveen. However, qawwali has remained an exclusively male business. There are still no mainstream female qawwals. Although *kafi* singer Abida Parveen has increasingly incorporated qawwali techniques into her performances, she is still not considered a qawwali singer.

## **Musical structure of Qawwali**

Songs are usually between 15 and 30 minutes long. However, the longest commercially released qawwali runs slightly over 115 minutes (Hashr Ke Roz Yeh Poochhunga by Aziz Mian Qawwal). The qawwali maestro Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan has at least two songs that are more than 60 minutes long.

Qawwalis tend to begin gently and build steadily to a very high energy level in order to induce hypnotic states both among the musicians and within the audience. Almost all Qawwalis are based on a Raga from the Hindustani classical music tradition. Songs are usually arranged as follows:

- They start with an instrumental prelude where the main melody is played on the harmonium, accompanied by the tabla, and which may include improvised variations of the melody.
- Then comes the alap, a long tonal improvised melody during which the singers intone different long notes, in the raga of the song to be played.



- The lead singer begins to sing some preamble verses which are typically not part of the main song, although thematically related to it. These are sung unrhythmically, improvised following the raga, and accompanied only by the harmonium. After the lead singer sings a verse, one of the side singers will repeat the verse, perhaps with his own improvisation. A few or many verses will be sung in this way, leading into the main song.
- As the main song begins, the tabla, dholak and clapping begin. All members join in the singing of the verses that constitute the refrain. The lyrics of the main verses are never improvised; in fact, these are often traditional songs sung by many groups, especially within the same lineage. However, the tunes are subtly improvised within the framework of the main melody. As the song proceeds, the lead singer or one of the side singers may break out into an alap. Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan also popularized the interjection of sargam singing at this point. The song usually builds in tempo and passion, with each singer trying to outdo the other in terms of vocal acrobatics. Some singers may do long periods of sargam improvisation, especially alternating improvisations with a student singer. The songs usually end suddenly.

The singing style of qawwali is different from Western singing styles in many ways. For example, in words beginning with an "m", Western singers are apt to stress the vowel following the "m" rather than the "m" itself, whereas in qawwali, the "m" will usually be held, producing a muted tone. Also in qawwali,

there is no distinction between what is known as the chest voice and the head voice (the different areas that sound will resonate in depending on the frequency sung). Rather, qawwals sing very loudly and forcefully, which allows them to extend their chest voice to much higher frequencies than those used in Western singing, even though this usually causes a more noisy or strained sound than would be acceptable in the West.

## **Traditional sequence of a Chishtiya Sufi Order qawwali performance**

- Instrumental: This is supposed to be the announcement of the arrival of Moinuddin Chishti, as Sufi believes their saints are free of time-space. Also that Nabi, Siddiq, Shaheed, and Saleh category of faithfuls are never dead, just gone into some other state from where they visit whenever they are mentioned, especially if there is a function in their honor.
- Hamd
- Na`at
- Manqabat Ali
- Manqabats in praise of Sufi saints
- Manqabat Shaikh: Praise of the Shaikh/Pir if the performance is at an Urs celebration
- Rang or Badhawa: If it is an Urs performance, then it is usually Rang, a poem by Amir Khusro. The audience is often asked to stand when the Rang is sung. If it is the Shaikh's birthday, it is usually the Badhawa.

## Tarana and Trivat

**Tarana** is a type of composition in Hindustani classical vocal music in which certain words and syllables (e.g. "odani", "todani", "tadeem" and "yalali") based on Persian and Arabic phonemes are rendered at a medium (*madhya laya*) or fast (*drut laya*). It was invented by Amir Khusro (1253-1325 CE), and is similar to the Qalbana form of Sufi poetry. In modern times, the tarana is most commonly associated with the singer Amir Khan, who helped popularize it and researched its origins and the syllables used. Nissar Hussain Khan was also well known for tarana singing. Tarana was also used by Sikh Tenth Guru Gobind Singh in his

### Form

The structure consists of a main melody, usually short, repeated many times, with variation and elaboration at the performer's discretion. There is a second, contrasting melody, usually with higher notes, which is introduced once before returning to the main melody. The tarana may include a Persian couplet, and may use syllables from sitar or tabla such as "dar-dar" or "dir-dir"; singers might recite full compositions (e.g. tihais, gats, tukdas) within the body of the tarana.

### History of tarana

In the words of Thakur Jaidev Singh, an influential commentator on Indian music:

[Tarana] was entirely an invention of Khusrau. Tarana is a Persian word meaning a song. Tillana is a corrupt form of this word. True, Khusrau had before him the example of Nirgit songs using śuk-akāras (meaningless words) and pākāras (mnemonic syllables of the mridang). Such songs were in vogue at least from the time of Bharat. But generally speaking, the Nirgit used hard consonants. Khusrau introduced two innovations in this form of vocal music. Firstly, he introduced mostly Persian words with soft consonants. Secondly, he so arranged these words that they bore some sense. He also introduced a few Hindi words to complete the sense.... It was only Khusrau's genius that could arrange these words in such a way to yield some meaning. Composers after him could not succeed in doing so, and the tarana became as meaningless as the ancient Nirgit.

## **Derivatives**

The *thillana* from Carnatic music is based on the tarana, according to Balasaraswati, and is widely used in dance performances.

## **References**

### **Sitar**

Khusrau is credited for the invention of the sitar. At the time, there were many versions of the Veena in India. He rechristened the 3 stringed Tritantri Veena as a *Sehtaar* (Persian for 3 stringed), which eventually became known as the *sitar*.

## **Legacy**

The **Riddles of Amir Khusrow** were developed during the royal courts of more than seven rulers of the Delhi Sultanate. During this time, Khusrow wrote not only many playful riddles, but songs and legends which have been a part of popular culture in South Asia ever since.

Additionally, his riddles and songs and legends are considered to be an important early witness to the Hindustani language. His riddles in particular involve fun double entendre or, wordplay. Innumerable riddles by this poet are being passed through oral tradition for the past seven centuries with a notable increase in recent times. However, there is some debate about whether Khusrow was the real author of the riddles attributed to him; some riddles transmitted under his name concern subjects which did not exist in Khusrow's own time, such as the gun and hookah.

The collection contains 286 riddles, divided into six groups, 'apparently on the basis of the structure of the riddle and the structure of the answer'; 'these riddles are "in the style of the common people", but most scholars believe they were composed by Khusro'. The riddles are in Mātrika metre.

## **Examples**

One sequence of the riddles is posed as a dialogue between a woman describing some mundane phenomenon and an interlocutor who imagines she is talking about sex, asking 'Who, girl, your man?' For example:

He visits my town once a year. He fills my mouth with kisses and nectar. I spend all my money on him. *Who, girl, your man?* No, a mango. He stays up all night alone with me and only leaves at the crack of dawn. His departure breaks my heart. *Who, girl, your man?* No, an oil lamp.

## **Editions and translations**

- Amir Khusrau Dehlavi, *Jawahar-i-Khusravi*, ed. by Rashid Ahmad Salim (Aligarh: Majmua-i-Rasail Institute Press, 1917).
- Brajratna Das, *Khusro kī Hindī Kavītā* (Kashi, 1922)
- Gopi Chand Narang, *Amir Khusrau ka Hindavi Kalam* (Delhi: Photo Offset Printer, 1987)
- *In the Bazaar of Love: The Selected Poetry of Amīr Khusrau*, trans. by Paul E. Losensky and Sunil Sharma (New Delhi: Penguin, 2011), pp. 114-16 (nos 74-78)
- Ankit Chadha, *Amir Khusrau: The Man in Riddles* (Gurgaon: Penguin, 2016) (popular adaptation of twenty riddles for children)

## **In popular culture**

The 1978 film *Junoon* opens with a rendition of Khusrau's *Aaj Rung Hai*, and the film's plot sees the poem employed as a symbol of rebellion.

*Amir Khusro*, a documentary feature covering his life and works directed by Om Prakash Sharma released in 1974. It was produced by the Government of India's Film's Division.

*Amir Khusro*, an Indian television series based on Khusrau's life and works aired on DD National, the national public broadcaster, in the 1980s. He was portrayed by actor Bhawani Muzamil as a court poet of Alauddin Khalji in the 2018 Indian film *Padmaavat* by Sanjay Leela Bhansali.

One of Khusro's poems on Basant, *Sakal bun phool rahi sarson*, was quoted in an issue of Saladin Ahmed's *The Magnificent Ms. Marvel*. The inclusion of the poem - used to illustrate a pivotal moment in the comic - drew praise on social media. On the 25th December, 2020 Pakistani singer Meesha Shafi and the instrumental funk band Mughal-e-Funk collaborated and released a rendition of the poem.

## Works

- *Tuhfat us-Sighr* (The Gift of Childhood), 1271 - Khusrau's first divan, contains poems composed between the ages of 16 and 18.
- *Wast ul-Hayat* (The Middle of Life), 1279 - Khusrau's second divan.
- *Qiran us-Sa'dain* (Meeting of the Two Auspicious Stars), 1289 - Khusrau's first masnavi, which detailed the historic meeting of Bughra Khan and his son Muiz ud-Din Qaiqabad after a long enmity.
- *Miftah ul-Futuh* (Key to the Victories), 1290 - Khusrau's second masnavi, in praise of the victories of Jalal ud-Din Firuz Khalji.
- *Ghurrat ul-Kamaal* (The Prime of Perfection), 1294 - poems composed by Khusrau between the ages of 34 and 41.

- *Khaza'in ul-Futuh* (The Treasures of Victories), 1296 - details of Ala ud-Din Khalji's construction works, wars, and administrative services.
- *Khamsa-e-Khusrau* (Khamsa of Khusrau), 1298 - a quintet (khamsa) of five masnavis: *Matla ul-Anwar*, *Khusrau-Shirin*, *Laila-Majnun*, *Aina-e-Sikandari* and *Hasht-Bihisht* (which includes *The Three Princes of Serendip*).
- *Saqiana* - masnavi containing the horoscope of Qutb ud-Din Mubarak Shah Khalji.
- *Duval Rani - Khizr Khan* (Duval Rani and Khizr Khan), 1316 - a tragedy about the marriage of princess Duval Rani to Ala ud-Din Khalji's son Khizr Khan.
- *Nuh Sipahr* (Nine Skies), 1318 - Khusrau's masnavi on the reign of Qutb ud-Din Mubarak Shah Khalji, which includes vivid perceptions of India and its culture.
- *Ijaz-e-Khusravi* (The Miracles of Khusrau) - an assortment of prose consisting of five volumes.
- *Baqia-Naqia* (Remnants of Purity), 1317 - compiled by Khusrau at the age of 64.
- *Afzal ul-Fawaid* (Greatest of Blessings), 1319 - a work of prose containing the teachings of Nizamuddin Auliya.
- *Tughlaq Nama* (Book of the Tughlaqs), 1320 - a historic masnavi of the reign of the Tughlaq dynasty.
- *Nihayat ul-Kamaal* (The Zenith of Perfection), 1325 - compiled by Khusrau probably a few weeks before his death.
- *Ashiqqa* - Khusro pays a glowing tribute to Hindi language and speaks of its rich qualities. It is a



masnavi that describes the tragedy of Deval Devi. The story has been backed by Isaami.

- *Qissa Chahar Dervesh* (The Tale of the Four Dervishes) - a *dastan* told by Khusrau to Nizamuddin Auliya.
- *ʿĪhāliq Bārī* - a versified glossary of Persian, Arabic, and Hindavi words and phrases often attributed to Amir Khusrau. Hafiz Mehmood Khan Shirani argued that it was completed in 1622 in Gwalior by ʿĪyā ud-Dīn ʿĪhusrau.
- *Jawahir-e-Khusravi* - a divan often dubbed as Khusrau's Hindavi divan.

## **Chapter 18**

# **Other Related Stubs**

## **Mongol invasions of India**

The Mongol Empire launched several invasions into the Indian subcontinent from 1221 to 1327, with many of the later raids made by the Qaraunas of Mongol origin. The Mongols occupied parts of the subcontinent for decades. As the Mongols progressed into the Indian hinterland and reached the outskirts of Delhi, the Delhi Sultanate led a campaign against them in which the Mongol army suffered serious defeats.

## **Background**

After pursuing Jalal ad-Din into India from Samarkand and defeating him at the battle of Indus in 1221, Genghis Khan sent two tumens (20,000 soldiers) under commanders Dorbei the Fierce and Bala to continue the chase. The Mongol commander Bala chased Jalal ad-Din throughout the Lahore region and attacked outlying province Multan, and even sacked the outskirts of Lahore. Jalal ad-Din regrouped, forming a small army from survivors of the battle and sought an alliance, or even an asylum, with the Turkic rulers of Delhi Sultanate, but was turned down.

Jalal ad-Din fought against the local rulers in Punjab. After being defeated by many of them in the open, he retreated to the outskirts of Punjab seeking refuge in Multan.

While fighting against the local governor of Sindh, Jalal ad-Din heard of an uprising in the Kirman province of southern Iran and he immediately set out for that place, passing through southern Baluchistan on the way. Jalal ad-Din was also joined by forces from Ghor and Peshawar, including members of the Khalji, Turkoman, and Ghori tribes. With his new allies he marched on Ghazni and defeated a Mongol division under Turtai, which had been assigned the task of hunting him down. The victorious allies quarreled over the division of the captured booty; subsequently the Khalji, Turkoman, and Ghori tribesmen deserted Jalal ad-Din and returned to Peshawar. By this time Ögedei Khan, third son of Genghis Khan, had become Great Khan of the Mongol Empire.

A Mongol general named Chormaqan sent by the Khan attacked and defeated Jalal ad-Din, thus ending the Khwārazm-Shāh dynasty.

## **Mongol conquest of Kashmir**

Some time after 1235 another Mongol force invaded Kashmir, stationing a darughachi (administrative governor) there for several years, and Kashmir became a Mongolian dependency. Around the same time, a Kashmiri Buddhist master, Otochi, and his brother Namu arrived at the court of Ögedei. Another Mongol general named Pakchak attacked Peshawar and defeated the army of tribes who had deserted Jalal ad-Din but were still a threat to the Mongols. These men, mostly Khaljis, escaped to Multan and were recruited into the army of the Delhi Sultanate. In winter 1241 the Mongol force invaded the Indus valley and besieged Lahore. However, on December 30, 1241, the Mongols under Munggetu butchered the town before

withdrawing from the Delhi Sultanate. At the same time the Great Khan Ögedei died (1241).

The Kashmiris revolted in 1254–1255, and Möngke Khan, who became Great Khan in 1251, appointed his generals, Sali and Takudar, to replace the court and appointed the Buddhist master, Otochi, as darugachi of Kashmir. However, the Kashmiri king killed Otochi at Srinagar. Sali invaded Kashmir, killing the king, and put down the rebellion, after which the country remained subject to the Mongol Empire for many years.

## **Intrusion into Delhi Sultanate**

The Delhi prince, Jalal al-Din Masud, traveled to the Mongol capital at Karakorum to seek the assistance of Möngke Khan in seizing the throne from his elder brother in 1248. When Möngke was crowned as Great Khan, Jalal al-Din Masud attended the ceremony and asked for help from Möngke. Möngke ordered Sali to assist him to recover his ancestral realm. Sali made successive attacks on Multan and Lahore. Sham al-Din Muhammad Kart, the client malik (ruling prince) of Herat, accompanied the Mongols. Jalal al-Din was installed as client ruler of Lahore, Kujah and Sodra. In 1257 the governor of Sindh offered his entire province to Hulagu Khan, Mongke's brother, and sought Mongol protection from his overlord in Delhi. Hulagu led a strong force under Sali Bahadur into Sindh. In the winter of 1257 - beginning of 1258, Sali Noyan entered Sind in strength and dismantled the fortifications of Multan; his forces may also have invested the island fortress of Bakhkar on the Indus.

But Hulagu refused to sanction a grand invasion of the Delhi Sultanate and a few years later diplomatic correspondence between the two rulers confirmed the growing desire for peace.

Ghiyas ud din Balban's (reigned: 1266–1287) one absorbing preoccupation was the danger of a Mongol invasion. For this cause he organized and disciplined his army to the highest point of efficiency ; for this he made away with disaffected or jealous chiefs, and steadily refused to entrust authority to Hindus; for this he stayed near his capital and would not be tempted into distant campaigns.

Large-scale Mongol invasions of India ceased and the Delhi Sultans used the respite to recover the frontier towns like Multan, Uch, and Lahore, and to punish the local Ranas and Rais who had joined hands with either the Khwarazim or the Mongol invaders.

## **Chagatai Khanate-Dehlavi Wars**

### **Transformation of the Delhi Sultanate**

There was a rapid change in the balance of power in Northern India as power violently shifted from the Turkic nobles to a new Indo-Mussalman nobility. A khalji family, who had migrated a century ago to India by accompanying Ghori, would identify themselves with the Indian Muslim communities, and their khalji and Indo-Muslim faction would grow in strength due to the rising number of converts. With a series of assassinations, they would finally usurp the throne in 1290 and appoint their Indo-Muslim allies such as Zafar Khan (Minister of War), Nusrat Khan (Wazir of Dehli), Ayn al Mulk

Multani, Malik Karfur, Malik Tughlaq, and Malik Nayk (Master of the Horse) who were famous warriors but non-Turks, which resulted in the emergence of an Indo-Muslim state. The internal administrative changes during this period allowed for rapid conquests and territorial expansion of the Sultanate into the rest of India. At about this time the Mongol raids into India were also renewed (1300)

### **Rise of the Chagatais**

After civil war broke out in the Mongol Empire in the 1260s, the Chagatai Khanate controlled Central Asia and its leader since the 1280s was Duwa Khan who was second in command of Kaidu Khan. Duwa was active in Afghanistan, and attempted to extend Mongol rule into India. The medieval sources claim invasions by hundreds of thousands of Mongols, numbers approximating (and probably based on) the size of the entire cavalry armies of the Mongol realms of Central Asia or the Middle East: about 150,000 men. A count of the Mongol commanders named in the sources as participating in the various invasions might give a better indication of the numbers involved, as these commanders probably led tumens, units nominally of 10,000 men. These invasions were led by either various descendants of Genghis Khan or by Mongol divisional commanders; the size of such armies was always between 10,000-30,000 cavalry although the chroniclers of Delhi exaggerated the number to 100,000-200,000 cavalry.

The Muslim Negudari governor Abdullah, who was a son of Chagatai Khan's great grandson, invaded Punjab with his force in 1292, but their advance guard under Ulghu was defeated and taken prisoner by the Khalji Sultan Jalaluddin. The 4000

Mongol captives of the advance guard converted to Islam and came to live in Delhi as "new Muslims". The suburb they lived in was appropriately named Mughalpura. Chagatai tumens were beaten by the Delhi Sultanate several times in 1296–1297.

### **Battle of Jaran-Manjur**

Unlike the previous invasions, the invasions during the reign of Jalaluddin's successor Alauddin were major Mongol conquests. In the winter of 1297, the Chagatai noyan Kadar led an army that ravaged the Punjab region, and advanced as far as Kasur.

Alauddin's army, led by Ulugh Khan and probably Zafar Khan defeated the invaders on the Battle of Jaran-Manjur on 6 February 1298 where quite a large number of them were taken prisoner.

### **Siege of Sehwan**

Later in 1298–99, a Mongol army (possibly Neguderi fugitives) invaded Sindh, and occupied the fort of Sivistan. These Mongols were defeated by Zafar Khan: a number of them were arrested and brought to Delhi as captives. At this time, the main branch of Alauddin's army, led by Ulugh Khan and Nusrat Khan was busy raiding Gujarat. When this army was returning from Gujarat to Delhi, some of its Mongol soldiers staged a mutiny over payment of *khums* (one-fifth of the share of loot). The mutiny was crushed, and the mutineers families in Delhi were severely punished.

## **Battle of Killi**

In late 1299, Duwa dispatched his son Qutlugh Khwaja to conquer Delhi. Alauddin led his army to Kili near Delhi, and tried to delay the battle, hoping that the Mongols would retreat amid a scarcity of provisions and that he would receive reinforcements from his provinces. However, his general Zafar Khan attacked the Mongol army without his permission. The Mongols feigned a retreat, and tricked Zafar Khan's contingent into following them. Zafar Khan and his men were killed after inflicting heavy casualties on the invaders. The Mongols retreated a couple of days later: their leader Qutlugh Khwaja was seriously wounded, and died during the return journey.

## **Siege of Delhi**

In the winter of 1302–1303, Alauddin dispatched an army to ransack the Kakatiya capital Warangal, and himself marched to Chittor. Finding Delhi unprotected, the Mongols launched another invasion around August 1303. Alauddin managed to reach Delhi before the invaders, but did not have enough time to prepare for a strong defence. He took shelter in a heavily-guarded camp at the under-construction Siri Fort. The Mongols ransacked Delhi and its neighbourhoods, but ultimately retreated after being unable to breach Siri. This close encounter with the Mongols prompted Alauddin to strengthen the forts and the military presence along their routes to India. He also implemented a series of economic reforms to ensure sufficient revenue inflows for maintaining a strong army.

Shortly afterward, Duwa Khan sought to end the ongoing conflict with the Yuan Khagan Temür Öljejtü, and around



1304 a general peace among the Mongol khanates was declared, bringing an end to the conflict between the Yuan Dynasty and western khanates that had lasted for the better part of a half century. Soon after, he proposed a joint attack on India, but the campaign did not materialize.

### **Battle of Amroha**

In December 1305, Duwa sent another army that bypassed the heavily guarded city of Delhi, and proceeded south-east to the Gangetic plains along the Himalayan foothills.

Alauddin's 30,000-strong cavalry, led by Malik Nayak, defeated the Mongols at the Battle of Amroha. A large number of Mongols were taken captive and killed.

### **Battle of Ravi (1306)**

In 1306, another Mongol army sent by Duwa advanced up to the Ravi River, ransacking the territories along the way. This army included three contingents, led by Kopek, Iqbalmand, and Tai-Bu. Alauddin's forces, led by Malik Kafur, decisively defeated the invaders.

### **Dehlavi counteroffensives**

In that same year the Mongol Khan, Duwa, died and in the dispute over his succession this spate of Mongol raids into India ended. Taking advantage of this situation, Alauddin's general Malik Tughluq regularly raided the Mongol territories located in present-day Afghanistan.

## **Late Mongol invasions**

In 1320 the Qaraunas under Zulju (Dulucha) entered Kashmir by the Jehlam Valley without meeting any serious resistance. The Kashmiri king, Suhadeva, tried to persuade Zulju to withdraw by paying a large ransom. After he failed to organize resistance, Suhadeva fled to Kishtwar, leaving the people of Kashmir to the mercy of Zulju. The Mongols burned the dwellings, massacred the men and made women and children slaves. Only refugees under Ramacandra, commander in chief of the king, in the fort of Lar remained safe. The invaders continued to pillage for eight months until the commencement of winter. When Zulju was departing via Brinal, he lost most of his men and prisoners due to a severe snowfall in Divasar district.

The next major Mongol invasion took place after the Khaljis had been replaced by the Tughlaq dynasty in the Sultanate. In 1327 the Chagatai Mongols under Tarmashirin, who had sent envoys to Delhi to negotiate peace the previous year, sacked the frontier towns of Lamghan and Multan and besieged Delhi. The Tughlaq ruler paid a large ransom to spare his Sultanate from further ravages. Muhammad bin Tughluq asked the Ilkhan Abu Sa'id to form an alliance against Tarmashirin, who had invaded Khorasan, but an attack didn't materialize. Tarmashirin was a Buddhist who later converted to Islam. Religious tensions in the Chagatai Khanate were a divisive factor among the Mongols.

No more large-scale invasions or raids into India were launched after Tamashirin's siege of Delhi. However, small groups of Mongol adventurers hired out their swords to the

many local powers in the northwest. Amir Qazaghan raided northern India with his Qara'unas. He also sent several thousand troops to aid the Delhi Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq in suppressing the rebellion in his country in 1350.

## **Timur and Babur**

The Delhi sultans had developed cordial relations with the Yuan dynasty in Mongolia and China and the Ilkhanate in Persia and the Middle East. Around 1338, Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq of the Delhi Sultanate appointed Moroccan traveler Ibn Battuta an ambassador to the Yuan court under Toghon Temür (Emperor Huizong). The gifts he was to take included 200 slaves.

The Chagatai Khanate had split up by this time and an ambitious Mongol Turk chieftain named Timur had brought Central Asia and the regions beyond under his control. He followed the twin policies of Imperialism and Islamization, shifting various Mongol tribes to different parts of his empire and giving primacy to the Turkic people in his own army. Timur also reinforced the Islamic faith over the Chagatai Khanate and gave primacy to the laws of the Shari'ah over Genghis Khan's shamanist laws. He invaded India in 1398 to make war and plunder the wealth of the country.

Timur's empire broke up and his descendants failed to hold on to Central Asia, which split up into numerous principalities. The descendants of the Mongol Chagatais and the descendants of Timur empire lived side by side, occasionally fighting and occasionally inter-marrying.

One of the products of such a marriage was Babur, founder of the Mughal Empire. His mother belonged to the family of the Mongol Khans of Tashkent.

Babur was a true descendant of Timur and shared his beliefs: he believed that rules and regulations of Genghis Khan were deficient as he remarked, "they had no divine authority."

Even though his own mother was a Mongol, Babur was not very fond of the Mongol race and wrote a stinging verse in his autobiography:

- "Were the Mughals an angel race, it would be bad,
- Even write in gold, the Mughal name would be bad."

When Babur occupied Kabul and began invading the Indian subcontinent, he was called a Mughal like all the earlier invaders from the Chagatai Khanate. Even the invasion of Timur had been considered a Mongol invasion since the Mongols had ruled over Central Asia for so long and had given their name to its people.

## **Turkish slaves in the Delhi Sultanate**

**Turkish slaves** throughout the Islamic world, and in the **Delhi Sultanate** were valued members of society. Their value, for their patrons, was their military capabilities, their loyalty and discipline. Their ability to capitalize on opportunity for social mobility, while maintaining their own unique cultural identity created an interesting tension in their social narrative. Their

slave origins created a discrepancy in their nobility. This discrepancy was often eluded in commentary by the Persian Chroniclers of the time.

## **Origins**

The need to secure the Sultanate regime from Mongol marauders led to the delineation of a frontier that needed to be defended. To guard the Punjab marches, there was increasingly more and more slaves that were being bought. Their allegiance was not along ethnic lines, and their dedicated patronage allowed them to incorporate themselves into the military hierarchy as trusted officers and commanders. The Sultanate bought Turks in order to develop a strong cavalry arm and in particular to amass a corps of mounted archers. This was a proprietary way to build their military capacity, by taking advantage of a unique skillset. Jalaluddin Firuz Khalji and Ghiyath al-Din Tughluq were both frontier military commanders. When they tried to capitalize on their achievements, and take over the Delhi Sultanate they were not given support because of their un-noble origins. When looking at the high level of military success, advancement and capacity that the Turkish Slaves added, it is disproportionate to popular sentiment regarding their Turkic origins.

## **Turkishness**

The Delhi Sultanate was shaped in many ways by the Turkish Slaves. To a significant extent the early Delhi Sultans, themselves of Turkic origin, deliberately sought to import exclusive signs of "Turkishness". The Persian Chroniclers had

to learn the Turkish language, and the Turkic language spread throughout the Sultanate.

It is undeniable that the Turks strongly resisted cultural influences whether Hindu or Buddhist, and retained their unique identity which actually centered around a Persian culture and Islam. Turks, being brought into a foreign land, having no particular ethnic allegiance still maintained a cultural identity. In addition to holding high rank in the military, certain Turks, that were particularly dedicated to their patron also enjoyed holding ceremonial positions in court. The sultans even honored non-Turks with Turkish titles.

## **Social status**

As one Sufi saint noted "they were slaves, not learned in the secretarial or Islamic sciences, they were rude, bellicose and vain and their military calling undoubtedly led to unjust killing of innocent people". One can see when viewing how the institution of Turkish Slaves in the Delhi sultanate created a problem.

Their excellence was preceded by slave origins. These origins were often not spoken of, where possible, in order to create a more refined image.

The quality of being a Turk per se, was not a problem it was their slave origin that created a challenge. It was ironic that these marginalized groups happened to be the political elites and Sultans of Delhi in itself creates a telling commentary on the incomplete state of evidence and the dire need to rewrite the narrative of the sultanate.

## **Life in the Sultanate**

There existed a racial divide among the Persians and the Arabs, this was displayed in social riots. The free counterparts to the slaves were distinct members of society, and were not able to predicate the term to which the Sultanate and the slaves would maintain its power. Authority was derived mostly from their patronage, and while they were deployed as military slaves it did not hinder their ability to seize political power. Their privileged job opportunities were not invulnerable to critique because of their slave origin. This shows that while status within the Sultanate can be seen through post - their origins were inescapable social paradigms. This is a subtle continuity of the hierarchical class structure based on birth from the Indian caste system. They were termed 'new Muslims' within the Sultanate.

## **Reputation**

Turkish slavery was very distinct from the conventional idea of a slave-master relationship. While it was based on subservience, the high ranking positions and yielded power that resulted from their careers created an aura of power, rather than weakness and submission. Their reputation did not hinge on social status but on their relationship and their career. They had a mixed reputation for greed and turbulence as well as for martial accomplishments and perseverance in Islam. They had subordinates of their own, and they had a level of autonomy that created a dismay from onlookers who were aware of their Slavic origins. Within the Sultanate, which was composed of Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims, Turks, Afghans

and many other groups - the reputation of the Turks was of high stature - regarding them as elites in the community

## **Impact**

The infusion of immigrants from the Afghan Punjab frontier into the Delhi Sultanate helped shape its future. Social and cultural history of Muslim society, and the reproduction of authority within the Delhi Sultanate can be attributed to these slaves. Their ambition was often degraded by their social status, through the scope of the existing ideals of the Persian Chroniclers and the institutionalized caste system of the Hindus. The outsiders, the deployed slaves, and their purpose can be said to be more than just military assets. They created for themselves their own circles of elites.

They did this while maintaining their identity. Their language spread throughout the sultanate. Their story, often eluded by the narratives of the time, is one of dedication and discipline. Skills and expertise in battle acted as a catalyst to gain favor, reverence, that lead to high ranking positions which placed them as an authority in a heterogeneous society. The deliberate tension within the Delhi Sultanate due to their Slavic origins, only further displays their importance in society. The role of the Sultans, as former Slaves, and their attempt to spread turkishness, by electing Turkish titles to non-Turks, and by incorporating the Turkish slave into high governing ranks in the court - shapes the landscape both socially and politically. These 'new Muslims' helped shape the identity of the Delhi Sultanate and help instil the Islamic Culture into this Indian Kingdom.



## **Studies**

In the broader context of learning about South Asian history, one can find an inconclusive range of facts surrounding the portrayal of day-to-day life. Often, certain aspects of society or identity are left out because either they are thought to be insignificant or not part of the greater narrative. As one can see in the example of the Turkish Slaves, the court chroniclers chose to elude aspects of their history. So, as the authors that have been referenced in this article have done, one must piece together the puzzle. To do this, the authors thought outside the box and looked beyond court scribes, into memoirs, personal letters, and documents indirectly linked to the topic. Turkish slaves provide a narrative of capitalizing on opportunity, building authority, and creating a reputation so large that its true origins had to be hidden, for they may tarnish views on their accomplishments. It is also questioned if the deployment into the frontiers and employment into the Delhi Sultanate a way for the 'Turkish' culture to flourish or it was a way to ensure the authority of Islam could flourish, through the installation of military men into the capital.

## **Sultan Nasiruddin Mahmud Shah**

**Nasir ud din Mahmud Shah** (reigned: 1246–1265) was the eighth sultan of the Mamluk Sultanate (Slave dynasty). He was son of Shams ud Din Iltutmish (1211-36). The *Tabaqat-i Nasiri*, written by the court historian Minhaj-i-Siraj, is dedicated to Sultan Nasiruddin Mahmud. It is the only available contemporary source of history of his reign and thus undoubtedly the most reliable source. He ascended to the

throne of Delhi Sultanate in 1246 at the tender age of 17 or 18 after the disposition of Masud Shah. He succeeded Ala ud din Masud after the chiefs replaced Masud when they felt that he began to behave as a tyrant.

As a ruler, Mahmud was known to be very religious, spending most of his time in prayer and copying the Quran. However, it was actually his father-in-law and Deputy Sultan or Naib, Ghiyas ud din Balban, who primarily dealt with the state affairs.

After Mahmud's death in 1266, Balban (1266–87) rose to power as Mahmud had no children to be his heir.

## **Early life**

Nasiruddin Mahmud was a son of Iltutmish. Firishta mistakenly mentioned him as Iltutmish's youngest son. But Iltutmish's youngest son was Qutubuddin, who was blinded and killed by Shah Turkan. Mahmud's mother held the title of Malika-i-Jahan Jalal-ud-Dunya wa ud-Din, but her actual name is not known. She was most probably a concubine of Iltutmish. He was born in the year of 626 Hijri (1229 A.D.), in Delhi's Kasr-Bagh (the Garden Castle), few times after the untimely death of Iltutmish's eldest son and heir-apparent Nasiruddin Mahmud Shah who governed Bengal and Oudh under Iltutmish's sovereignty. Iltutmish, being greatly aggrieved by the sudden loss of his favourite son, bestowed upon the newborn the name and the title previously held by the deceased prince. Infant Mahmud, along with his mother, was sent to the castle of nearby town Luni. He was brought up and received his education there. On May 10, 1242, Sultan

Muiz ud din Bahram was dethroned and Amirs and Maliks took the possession of Delhi from him. Mahmud along with his brother Jalal-ud-Din Masud Shah and nephew Ala ud din Masud was brought to Firuzi castle, the royal residence from the confinement of the white castle by the amirs and Ala ud din Masud was chosen as the Sultan. Both the brothers remained in confinement until September, 1243, when Masud ordered them to be released and conferred upon Mahmud the city of Bharaj and its dependencies. Mahmud left Delhi and went to his fief with his mother. He undertook expeditions against the rebels in that territory and the adjacent mountains.

## **Personal life**

Unlike many of his predecessors and successors, Mahmud strictly followed monogamy. He spent most of his time writing down verses of the Quran. He sold the handwritten copies and used the money for his personal expenses. Surprising enough, he had no servants to carry out his personal tasks. His wife had to cook the food for the family.

## **Tughlaq dynasty**

The **Tughlaq dynasty** (تغلق or Arabic script: طغلق ) also referred to as Tughluq or Tughluk dynasty, was a Muslim dynasty of Turkic origin which ruled over the Delhi sultanate in medieval India. Its reign started in 1320 in Delhi when Ghazi Malik assumed the throne under the title of Ghiyath al-Din Tughluq. The dynasty ended in 1413.

The dynasty expanded its territorial reach through a military campaign led by Muhammad bin Tughluq, and reached its zenith between 1330 and 1335. It ruled most of the Indian subcontinent.

## **Origin**

The etymology of the word "Tughluq" is not certain. The 16th-century writer Firishta claims that it is a corruption of the Turkic term "Qutluq", but this is doubtful. Literary, numismatic and epigraphic evidence makes it clear that Tughluq was the personal name of the dynasty's founder Ghiyath al-Din, and not an ancestral designation. Historians use the designation "Tughluq" to describe the entire dynasty as a matter of convenience, but the dynasty's kings did not use "Tughluq" as a surname: only Ghiyath al-Din's son Muhammad bin Tughluq called himself the son of Tughluq Shah ("bin Tughluq").

The ancestry of the dynasty is debated among modern historians because the earlier sources provide different information regarding it. Tughluq's court poet Badr-i Chach attempted to find a royal Sassanian genealogy for the dynasty from the line of Bahram Gur, which seems to be the official position of the genealogy of the Sultan, although this can be dismissed as flattery. The Moroccan traveler Ibn Battuta states that Tughluq belonged to the "Qarauna tribe of the Turks", who lived in the hilly region between Turkestan and Sindh, based on the claim of a Sufi saint Rukn-e-Alam. However, this is not corroborated by other contemporary sources. Qara'unas were Mongols or associated with Mongol armies, whom Tughluq despised, and it is unlikely that Tughluq was a Qara'una.

Another Tughluq's court poet Amir Khusrau in his *Tughluq Nama* makes no mention of Tughluq's arrival in India from a foreign-land, which seems to imply he was born in India. His own court poet states that Tughluq described himself frankly as a man of no importance ("*awara mard*") in his early life and career. The historian Ferishta, based on inquiries at Lahore, wrote that the knowledgeable historians and the books of India had neglected to mention any clear statement on the origin of the dynasty, but wrote that there was a rural founding myth that Tughluq's father was a Turkic slave of Balban who made an alliance with a Jatt chieftain of Punjab, and that Tughluq's mother may have been a Jatt lady. However there is no contemporary sources corroborate this statement. The historian Fouzia Ahmed points out that as per Amir Khusrau's assertion, Tughluq was not a Balbanid slave because he was not part of the old Turkic nobility and his family only became emergent during Khalji rule. Instead, Tughluq expressed his loyalty to the ethnically heterogenous Khalji regime through which he first entered military service rather than to Balban because his father was never part of Balban's old Sultanate household. According to historian Peter Jackson, Tughlaq was of Mongol or Turko-Mongol stock.

## **Rise to power**

The Khalji dynasty ruled the Delhi Sultanate before 1320. Its last ruler, Khusro Khan, was a Hindu slave who had been forcibly converted to Islam and then served the Delhi Sultanate as the general of its army for some time. Khusro Khan, along with Malik Kafur, had led numerous military campaigns on

behalf of Alauddin Khalji, to expand the Sultanate and plunder non-Muslim kingdoms in India.

After Alauddin Khalji's death from illness in 1316, a series of palace arrests and assassinations followed, with Khusro Khan coming to power in June 1320, after killing the licentious son of Alauddin Khalji, Mubarak Khalji, initiating a massacre of all members of the Khalji family and reverting from Islam. However, he lacked the support of the Muslim nobles and aristocrats of the Delhi Sultanate. Delhi's aristocracy invited Ghazi Malik, then the governor in Punjab under the Khaljis, to lead a coup in Delhi and remove Khusro Khan. In 1320, Ghazi Malik launched an attack with the use of an army of Khokhar tribesmen and killed Khusro Khan to assume power.

## Chronology

- Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq
- After assuming power, Ghazi Malik renamed himself as Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq - thus starting and naming the Tughlaq dynasty. Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq is also referred in scholarly works as Tughlak Shah. He was of mixed Turko-Indian origins; his mother was a Jatt noble and his father was likely descended from Indian Turkic slaves.

Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq rewarded all those *maliks*, *amirs* and officials of Khalji dynasty who had rendered him a service and helped him come to power. He punished those who had rendered service to Khusro Khan, his predecessor. He lowered the tax rate on Muslims that was prevalent during Khalji dynasty, but raised the taxes on Hindus, wrote his court

historian Ziauddin Barani, so that they might not be blinded by wealth or afford to become rebellious. He built a city six kilometers east of Delhi, with a fort considered more defensible against the Mongol attacks, and called it Tughlakabad.

In 1321, he sent his eldest son Ulugh Khan, later known as Muhammad bin Tughlaq, to Deogir to plunder the Hindu kingdoms of Arangal and Tilang (now part of Telangana). His first attempt was a failure. Four months later, Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq sent large army reinforcements for his son asking him to attempt plundering Arangal and Tilang again. This time Ulugh Khan succeeded. Arangal fell, was renamed to Sultanpur, and all plundered wealth, state treasury and captives were transferred from the captured kingdom to Delhi Sultanate.

The Muslim aristocracy in Lukhnauti (Bengal) invited Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq to extend his coup and expand eastwards into Bengal by attacking Shamsuddin Firoz Shah, which he did over 1324–1325 AD, after placing Delhi under control of his son Ulugh Khan, and then leading his army to Lukhnauti. Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq succeeded in this campaign. As he and his favorite son Mahmud Khan were returning from Lakhnauti to Delhi, Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq's eldest son Ulugh Khan schemed to kill him inside a wooden structure (*kushk*) built without foundation and designed to collapse, making it appear as an accident. Historic documents state that the Sufi preacher and Ulugh Khan had learnt through messengers that Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq had resolved to remove them from Delhi upon his return. Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq, along with Mahmud Khan, died inside the collapsed *kushk* in 1325 AD, while his eldest son watched. One official historian of Tughlaq court

gives an alternate fleeting account of his death, as caused by a lightning bolt strike on the *kushk*. Another official historian, Al-Badā' unī' Abd al-Kadir ibn Mulūk-Shāh, makes no mention of lightning bolt or weather, but explains the cause of structural collapse to be the running of elephants; Al-Badaoni includes a note of the rumor that the accident was pre-planned.

- Patricide

According to many historians such as Ibn Battuta, al-Safadi, Isami, and Vincent Smith, Ghiyasuddin was killed by his son Ulugh Juna Khan in 1325 AD. Juna Khan ascended to power as Muhammad bin Tughlaq, and ruled for 26 years.

- Muhammad bin Tughluq

During Muhammad bin Tughluq's rule, Delhi Sultanate temporarily expanded to most of the Indian subcontinent, its peak in terms of geographical reach. He attacked and plundered Malwa, Gujarat, Mahratta, Tilang, Kampila, Dhur-samundar, Mabar, Lakhnauti, Chittagong, Sunarganw and Tirhut. His distant campaigns were expensive, although each raid and attack on non-Muslim kingdoms brought new looted wealth and ransom payments from captured people. The extended empire was difficult to retain, and rebellions all over Indian subcontinent became routine.

He raised taxes to levels where people refused to pay any. In India's fertile lands between Ganges and Yamuna rivers, the Sultan increased the land tax rate on non-Muslims by tenfold in some districts, and twentyfold in others. Along with land taxes, dhimmis (non-Muslims) were required to pay crop taxes



by giving up half or more of their harvested crop. These sharply higher crop and land tax led entire villages of Hindu farmers to quit farming and escape into jungles; they refused to grow anything or work at all. Many became robber clans. Famines followed. The Sultan responded with bitterness by expanding arrests, torture and mass punishments, killing people as if he was "cutting down weeds". Historical documents note that Muhammad bin Tughluq was cruel and severe not only with non-Muslims, but also with certain sects of Muslims. He routinely executed *Sayyids* (Shia), *Sufis*, *Qalandars*, and other Muslim officials. His court historian Ziauddin Barni noted,

Not a day or week passed without spilling of much Muslim blood, (...)

- —□ *Ziauddin Barni, Tarikh-I Firoz Shahi*

Muhammad bin Tughlaq chose the city of Deogiri in present-day Indian state of Maharashtra (renaming it to Daulatabad), as the second administrative capital of the Delhi Sultanate. He ordered a forced migration of the Muslim population of Delhi, including his royal family, the nobles, Syeds, Sheikhs and 'Ulema to settle in Daulatabad. The purpose of transferring the entire Muslim elite to Daulatabad was to enroll them in his mission of world conquest. He saw their role as propagandists who would adapt Islamic religious symbolism to the rhetoric of empire, and that the Sufis could by persuasion bring many of the inhabitants of the Deccan to become Muslim. Tughluq cruelly punished the nobles who were unwilling to move to Daulatabad, seeing their non-compliance of his order as equivalent to rebellion. According to Ferishta, when the

Mongols arrived to Punjab, the Sultan returned the elite back to Dehli, although Daulatabad remained as an administrative centre. One result of the transfer of the elite to Daulatabad was the hatred of the nobility to the Sultan, which remained in their minds for a long time. The other result was that he managed to create a stable Muslim elite and result in the growth of the Muslim population of Daulatabad who did not return to Dehli, without which the rise of the Bahmanid kingdom to challenge Vijayanagara would not have been possible. Muhammad bin Tughlaq's adventures in the Deccan region also marked campaigns of destruction and desecration of Hindu and Jain temples, for example the Swayambhu Shiva Temple and the Thousand Pillar Temple.

Revolts against Muhammad bin Tughlaq began in 1327, continued over his reign, and over time the geographical reach of the Sultanate shrunk particularly after 1335. The Vijayanagara Empire originated in southern India as a direct response to attacks from the Delhi Sultanate. The Vijayanagara Empire liberated southern India from the Delhi Sultanate. In 1336 Kapaya Nayak of the Musunuri Nayak defeated the Tughlaq army and reconquered Warangal from the Delhi Sultanate.

In 1338 his own nephew rebelled in Malwa, whom he attacked, caught and flayed alive. By 1339, the eastern regions under local Muslim governors and southern parts led by Hindu kings had revolted and declared independence from Delhi Sultanate. Muhammad bin Tughlaq did not have the resources or support to respond to the shrinking kingdom. By 1347, Bahmanid Sultanate had become an independent and competing Muslim kingdom in Deccan region of South Asia.

Muhammad bin Tughlaq was an intellectual, with extensive knowledge of Quran, Fiqh, poetry and other fields. He was deeply suspicious of his kinsmen and *wazirs* (ministers), extremely severe with his opponents, and took decisions that caused economic upheaval. For example, after his expensive campaigns to expand Islamic empire, the state treasury was empty of precious metal coins. So he ordered minting of coins from base metals with face value of silver coins – a decision that failed because ordinary people minted counterfeit coins from base metal they had in their houses.

Ziauddin Barni, a historian in Muhammad bin Tughlaq's court, wrote that the houses of Hindus became a coin mint and people in Hindustan provinces produced fake copper coins worth crores to pay the tribute, taxes and jizya imposed on them. The economic experiments of Muhammad bin Tughlaq resulted in a collapsed economy, and nearly a decade long famine followed that killed numerous people in the countryside. The historian Walford chronicled Delhi and most of India faced severe famines during Muhammad bin Tughlaq's rule, in the years after the base metal coin experiment. Tughlaq introduced token coinage of brass and copper to augment the silver coinage which only led to increasing ease of forgery and loss to the treasury. Also, the people were not willing to trade their gold and silver for the new brass and copper coins. Consequently, the sultan had to withdraw the lot, "buying back both the real and the counterfeit at great expense until mountains of coins had accumulated within the walls of Tughluqabad."

Muhammad bin Tughlaq planned an attack on Khurasan and Irak (Babylon and Persia) as well as China to bring these

regions under Sunni Islam. For Khurasan attack, a cavalry of over 300,000 horses were gathered near Delhi, for a year at state treasury's expense, while spies claiming to be from Khurasan collected rewards for information on how to attack and subdue these lands. However, before he could begin the attack on Persian lands in the second year of preparations, the plunder he had collected from Indian subcontinent had emptied, provinces were too poor to support the large army, and the soldiers refused to remain in his service without pay. For the attack on China, Muhammad bin Tughlaq sent 100,000 soldiers, a part of his army, over the Himalayas. However, Hindus closed the passes through the Himalayas and blocked the passage for retreat. Kangra's Prithvi Chand II defeated the army of Muhammad bin Tughluq which was not able to fight in the hills. Nearly all his 10,000 soldiers perished in 1333 and were forced to retreat. The high mountain weather and lack of retreat destroyed that army in the Himalayas. The few soldiers who returned with bad news were executed under orders of the Sultan.

During his reign, state revenues collapsed from his policies. To cover state expenses, Muhammad bin Tughlaq sharply raised taxes on his ever-shrinking empire. Except in times of war, he did not pay his staff from his treasury. Ibn Battuta noted in his memoir that Muhammad bin Tughlaq paid his army, judges (*qadi*), court advisors, wazirs, governors, district officials and others in his service by awarding them the right to force collect taxes on Hindu villages, keep a portion and transfer rest to his treasury. Those who failed to pay taxes were hunted and executed. Muhammad bin Tughlaq died in March 1351 while trying to chase and punish people for rebellion and their refusal to pay taxes in Sindh (now in Pakistan) and Gujarat

(now in India). Historians have attempted to determine the motivations behind Muhammad bin Tughlaq's behavior and his actions. Some state Tughlaq tried to enforce orthodox Islamic observance and practice, promote jihad in South Asia as *al-Mujahid fi sabilillah* ('Warrior for the Path of God') under the influence of Ibn Taymiyyah of Syria. Others suggest insanity.

At the time of Muhammad bin Tughlaq's death, the geographic control of Delhi Sultanate had shrunk to Vindhya range (now in central India).

- Feroz Shah Tughluq

After Muhammad bin Tughluq died, a collateral relative, Mahmud Ibn Muhammad, ruled for less than a month. Thereafter, Muhammad bin Tughluq's 45-year-old nephew Firuz Shah Tughlaq replaced him and assumed the throne. His rule lasted 37 years. Firuz Shah was, like his grandfather, of Turko-Indian origins.

His Turkic father Sipah Rajab became infatuated with a Hindu princess named Naila. She initially refused to marry him. Her father refused the marriage proposal as well. Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlaq and Sipah Rajab then sent in an army with a demand for one year taxes in advance and a threat of seizure of all property of her family and Dipalpur people. The kingdom was suffering from famines, and could not meet the ransom demand. The princess, after learning about ransom demands against her family and people, offered herself in sacrifice if the army would stop the misery to her people. Sipah Rajab and the Sultan accepted the proposal. Sipah Rajab and Naila were married and Firoz Shah was their first son.

The court historian Ziauddin Barni, who served both Muhammad Tughlaq and first 6 years of Firoz Shah Tughlaq, noted that all those who were in service of Muhammad were dismissed and executed by Firoz Shah. In his second book, Barni states that Firuz Shah was the mildest sovereign since the rule of Islam came to Delhi. Muslim soldiers enjoyed the taxes they collected from Hindu villages they had rights over, without having to constantly go to war as in previous regimes. Other court historians such as 'Afif record a number of conspiracies and assassination attempts on Firoz Shah Tughlaq, such as by his first cousin and the daughter of Muhammad bin Tughlaq.

Firoz Shah Tughlaq tried to regain the old kingdom boundary by waging a war with Bengal for 11 months in 1359. However, Bengal did not fall, and remained outside of Delhi Sultanate. Firuz Shah Tughlaq was somewhat weak militarily, mainly because of inept leadership in the army.

- An educated sultan, Firoz Shah left a memoir. In it he wrote that he banned torture in practice in Delhi Sultanate by his predecessors, tortures such as amputations, tearing out of eyes, sawing people alive, crushing people's bones as punishment, pouring molten lead into throats, putting people on fire, driving nails into hands and feet, among others. The Sunni Sultan also wrote that he did not tolerate attempts by Rafawiz Shia Muslim and Mahdi sects from proselytizing people into their faith, nor did he tolerate Hindus who tried to rebuild their temples after his armies had destroyed those temples. As punishment, wrote the Sultan, he put many Shias,

Mahdi and Hindus to death (*siyasat*). Shams-i Siraj 'Afif, his court historian, also recorded Firoz Shah Tughlaq burning a Hindu Brahmin alive for converting Muslim women to infidelity. In his memoirs, Firoz Shah Tughlaq lists his accomplishments to include converting Hindus to Sunni Islam by announcing an exemption from taxes and *jizya* for those who convert, and by lavishing new converts with presents and honours. Simultaneously, he raised taxes and *jizya*, assessing it at three levels, and stopping the practice of his predecessors who had historically exempted all Hindu Brahmins from *jizya* tax. He also vastly expanded the number of slaves in his service and those of amirs (Muslim nobles). Firoz Shah Tughlaq reign was marked by reduction in extreme forms of torture, eliminating favours to select parts of society, but an increased intolerance and persecution of targeted groups. After the death of his heir in 1376 AD, Firuz Shah started strict implementation of Sharia throughout his dominions.

Firuz Shah suffered from bodily infirmities, and his rule was considered by his court historians as more merciful than that of Muhammad bin Tughlaq. When Firuz Shah came to power, India was suffering from a collapsed economy, abandoned villages and towns, and frequent famines. He undertook many infrastructure projects including an irrigation canal connecting Yamuna-Ghaggar and Yamuna-Sutlej rivers, bridges, madrasas (religious schools), mosques and other Islamic buildings. Firuz Shah Tughlaq is credited with patronizing Indo-Islamic architecture, including the installation of *lats* (ancient Hindu

and Buddhist pillars) near mosques. The irrigation canals continued to be in use through the 19th century. After Feroz died in 1388, the Tughlaq dynasty's power continued to fade, and no more able leaders came to the throne. Firoz Shah Tughlaq's death created anarchy and disintegration of kingdom. In the years preceding his death, internecine strife among his descendants had already erupted.

- Civil wars

The first civil war broke out in 1384 AD four years before the death of aging Firoz Shah Tughlaq, while the second civil war started in 1394 AD six years after Firoz Shah was dead. The Islamic historians Sirhindi and Bihamadkhani provide the detailed account of this period. These civil wars were primarily between different factions of Sunni Islam aristocracy, each seeking sovereignty and land to tax dhimmis and extract income from resident peasants.

Firuz Shah Tughluq's favorite grandson died in 1376. Thereafter, Firuz Shah sought and followed Sharia more than ever, with the help of his wazirs. He himself fell ill in 1384. By then, Muslim nobility who had installed Firuz Shah Tughluq to power in 1351 had died out, and their descendants had inherited the wealth and rights to extract taxes from non-Muslim peasants. Khan Jahan II, a wazir in Delhi, was the son of Firuz Shah Tughluq's favorite wazir Khan Jahan I, and rose in power after his father died in 1368 AD. The young wazir was in open rivalry with Muhammad Shah, the son of Firuz Shah Tughluq. The wazir's power grew as he appointed more amirs and granted favors. He persuaded the Sultan to name his great-grandson as his heir. Then Khan Jahan II tried to



convince Firuz Shah Tughlaq to dismiss his only surviving son. Instead of dismissing his son, the Sultan dismissed the wazir. The crisis that followed led to first civil war, arrest and execution of the wazir, followed by a rebellion and civil war in and around Delhi. Muhammad Shah too was expelled in 1387 AD. The Sultan Firuz Shah Tughluq died in 1388 AD. Tughluq Khan assumed power, but died in conflict. In 1389, Abu Bakr Shah assumed power, but he too died within a year. The civil war continued under Sultan Muhammad Shah, and by 1390 AD, it had led to the seizure and execution of all Muslim nobility who were aligned, or suspected to be aligned to Khan Jahan II.

While the civil war was in progress, predominantly Hindu populations of Himalayan foothills of north India had rebelled, stopped paying Jizya and Kharaj taxes to Sultan's officials. Hindus of southern Doab region of India (now Etawah) joined the rebellion in 1390 AD. Sultan Muhammad Shah attacked Hindus rebelling near Delhi and southern Doab in 1392, with mass executions of peasants, and razing Etawah to the ground. However, by then, most of India had transitioned to a patchwork of smaller Muslim Sultanates and Hindu kingdoms. In 1394, Hindus in Lahore region and northwest South Asia (now Pakistan) had re-asserted self-rule. Muhammad Shah amassed an army to attack them, with his son Humayun Khan as the commander-in-chief. While preparations were in progress in Delhi in January 1394, Sultan Muhammad Shah died. His son, Humayun Khan assumed power but was murdered within two months. The brother of Humayun Khan, Nasir-al-din Mahmud Shah assumed power – but he enjoyed little support from Muslim nobility, the wazirs and amirs. The Sultanate had lost command over almost all eastern and

western provinces of already shrunken Sultanate. Within Delhi, factions of Muslim nobility formed by October 1394 AD, triggering the second civil war.

Tartar Khan installed a second Sultan, Nasir-al-din Nusrat Shah in Ferozabad, few kilometers from the first Sultan seat of power in late 1394. The two Sultans claimed to be rightful ruler of South Asia, each with a small army, controlled by a coterie of Muslim nobility. Battles occurred every month, duplicity and switching of sides by amirs became commonplace, and the civil war between the two Sultan factions continued through 1398, till the invasion by Timur.

- Timur's Invasion

The lowest point for the dynasty came in 1398, when Turco-Mongol invader, Timur (Tamerlane) defeated four armies of the Sultanate. During the invasion, Sultan Mahmud Khan fled before Tamerlane entered Delhi. For eight days Delhi was plundered, its population massacred, and over 100,000 prisoners were killed as well.

## **Ibn Battuta's memoir on Tughlaq dynasty**

Ibn Battuta, the Moroccan Muslim traveller, left extensive notes on Tughlaq dynasty in his travel memoirs. Ibn Battuta arrived in India through the mountains of Afghanistan, in 1334, at the height of Tughlaq dynasty's geographic empire. On his way, he learnt that Sultan Muhammad Tughluq liked gifts from his visitors, and gave to his visitors gifts of far greater

value in return. Ibn Battuta met Muhammad bin Tughluq, presenting him with gifts of arrows, camels, thirty horses, slaves and other goods. Muhammad bin Tughlaq responded by giving Ibn Battuta with a welcoming gift of 2,000 silver dinars, a furnished house and the job of a judge with an annual salary of 5,000 silver dinars that Ibn Battuta had the right to keep by collecting taxes from two and a half Hindu villages near Delhi.

In his memoirs about Tughlaq dynasty, Ibn Batutta recorded the history of Qutb complex which included Quwat al-Islam Mosque and the Qutb Minar. He noted the 7-year famine from 1335 AD, which killed thousands upon thousands of people near Delhi, while the Sultan was busy attacking rebellions. He was tough both against non-Muslims and Muslims. For example,

Not a week passed without the spilling of much Muslim blood and the running of streams of gore before the entrance of his palace. This included cutting people in half, skinning them alive, chopping off heads and displaying them on poles as a warning to others, or having prisoners tossed about by elephants with swords attached to their tusks.

- —□ *Ibn Battuta, Travel Memoirs (1334-1341, Delhi)*

The Sultan was far too ready to shed blood. He punished small faults and great, without respect of persons, whether men of learning, piety or high station. Every day hundreds of people, chained, pinioned, and fettered, are brought to this hall, and those who are for execution are executed, for torture tortured, and those for beating beaten.

- —□ *Ibn Battuta, Chapter XV Rihla (Delhi)*

In Tughlaq dynasty, the punishments were extended even to Muslim religious figures who were suspected rebellion. For example, Ibn Battuta mentions Sheikh Shinab al-Din, who was imprisoned and tortured as follows:

On the fourteen day, the Sultan sent him food, but he (Sheikh Shinab al-Din) refused to eat it. When the Sultan heard this he ordered that the sheikh should be fed human excrement [dissolved in water]. [His officials] spread out the sheikh on his back, opened his mouth and made him drink it (the excrement). On the following day, he was beheaded.

- —□ *Ibn Battuta, Travel Memoirs (1334-1341, Delhi)*

Ibn Battuta wrote that Sultan's officials demanded bribes from him while he was in Delhi, as well as deducted 10% of any sums that Sultan gave to him.

Towards the end of his stay in Tughluq dynasty court, Ibn Battuta came under suspicion for his friendship with a Sufi Muslim holy man. Both Ibn Battuta and the Sufi Muslim were arrested. While Ibn Battuta was allowed to leave India, the Sufi Muslim was killed as follows according to Ibn Battuta during the period he was under arrest:

(The Sultan) had the holy man's beard plucked out hair by hair, then banished him from Delhi. Later the Sultan ordered him to return to court, which the holy man refused to do. The man was arrested, tortured in the most horrible way, then beheaded.

- —□ *Ibn Battuta, Travel Memoirs (1334-1341, Delhi)*

## **Slavery under Tughlaq dynasty**

Each military campaign and raid on non-Muslim kingdoms yielded loot and seizure of slaves. Additionally, the Sultans patronized a market (*al-nakhkhās*) for trade of both foreign and Indian slaves. This market flourished under the reign of all Sultans of Tughlaq dynasty, particularly Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq, Muhammad Tughlaq and Firoz Tughlaq.

Ibn Battuta's memoir records that he fathered a child each with two slave girls, one from Greece and one he purchased during his stay in Delhi Sultanate. This was in addition to the daughter he fathered by marrying a Muslim woman in India. Ibn Battuta also records that Muhammad Tughlaq sent along with his emissaries, both slave boys and slave girls as gifts to other countries such as China.

## **Muslim nobility and revolts**

The Tughlaq dynasty experienced many revolts by Muslim nobility, particularly during Muhammad bin Tughlaq but also during other rulers such as Firoz Shah Tughlaq.

The Tughlaq's had attempted to manage their expanded empire by appointing family members and Muslim aristocracy as na'ib (نائب) of Iqta' (farming provinces, اقطاع) under contract. The contract would require that the na'ib shall have the right to force collect taxes from non-Muslim peasants and local economy, deposit a fixed sum of tribute and taxes to Sultan's treasury on a periodic basis. The contract allowed the na'ib to keep a certain amount of taxes they collected from peasants as

their income, but the contract required any excess tax and seized property collected from non-Muslims to be split between na'ib and Sultan in a 20:80 ratio (Firuz Shah changed this to 80:20 ratio). The na'ib had the right to keep soldiers and officials to help extract taxes. After contracting with Sultan, the na'ib would enter into subcontracts with Muslim amirs and army commanders, each granted the right over certain villages to force collect or seize produce and property from dhimmis.

This system of tax extraction from peasants and sharing among Muslim nobility led to rampant corruption, arrests, execution and rebellion. For example, in the reign of Firoz Shah Tughlaq, a Muslim noble named Shamsaldin Damghani entered into a contract over the iqta' of Gujarat, promising enormous sums of annual tribute while entering the contract in 1377 AD. He then attempted to force collect the amount deploying his coterie of Muslim amirs, but failed. Even the amount he did manage to collect, he paid nothing to Delhi. Shamsaldin Damghani and Muslim nobility of Gujarat then declared rebellion and separation from Delhi Sultanate. However, the soldiers and peasants of Gujarat refused to fight the war for the Muslim nobility. Shamsaldin Damghani was killed. During the reign of Muhammad Shah Tughlaq, similar rebellions were very common. His own nephew rebelled in Malwa in 1338 AD; Muhammad Shah Tughlaq attacked Malwa, seized his nephew, and then flayed him alive in public.

## **Downfall**

The provinces of Deccan, Bengal, Sindh and Multan had become independent during the reign of Muhammad Bin Tughlaq. The invasion of Timur further weakened the Tughlaq

empire and allowed several regional chiefs to become independent, resulting in the formation of the sultanates of Gujarat, Malwa and Jaunpur.

The Rajput states also expelled the governor of Ajmer and asserted control over Rajputana.

The Tughlaq power continued to decline until they were finally overthrown by their former governor of Multan, Khizr Khan.

Resulting in the rise of the Sayyid Dynasty as the new rulers of the Delhi Sultanate.

## **Indo-Islamic Architecture**

- The Sultans of Tughlaq dynasty, particularly Firoz Shah Tughlaq, patronized many construction projects and are credited with the development of Indo-Islamic architecture.

## **Sayyid dynasty**

The dynasty was ruled from 1414 to 1451 CE. The **Sayyid dynasty** was the fourth dynasty of the Delhi Sultanate, with four rulers ruling from 1414 to 1451. Founded by Khizr Khan, a former governor of Multan, they succeeded the Tughlaq dynasty and ruled the sultanate until they were displaced by the Lodi dynasty.

## Origins

A contemporary writer Yahya Sirhindi mentions in his *Takhrikh-i-Mubarak Shahi* that Khizr Khan was a descendant of prophet Muhammad. Members of the dynasty derived their title, Sayyid, or the descendants of the Islamic prophet, Muhammad, based on the claim that they belonged to his lineage through his daughter Fatima. However, Yahya Sirhindi based his conclusions on unsubstantial evidence, the first being a casual recognition by the famous saint Sayyid Jalaluddin Bukhari of Uch Sharif of his Sayyid heritage, and secondly the noble character of the Sultan which distinguished him as a Prophet's descendant. According to Eaton, Khizr Khan was son of a Khokhar (Punjabi) chieftain.

## History

Following Timur's 1398 Sack of Delhi, he appointed Khizr Khan as deputy of Multan (Punjab). Khizr Khan captured Delhi on 28 May 1414 thereby establishing the Sayyid dynasty. Khizr Khan did not take up the title of Sultan and nominally, continued to be a *Rayat-i-Ala* (vassal) of the Timurids - initially that of Timur, and later his grandson Shah Rukh.

Khizr Khan was succeeded by his son Sayyid Mubarak Shah after his death on 20 May 1421. Mubarak Shah referred to himself as *Muizz-ud-Din Mubarak Shah* on his coins. A detailed account of his reign is available in the *Tarikh-i-Mubarak Shahi* written by Yahya-bin-Ahmad Sirhindi. After the death of Mubarak Shah, his nephew, Muhammad Shah ascended the throne and styled himself as Sultan Muhammad Shah. Just



before his death, he called his son Sayyid Ala-ud-Din Shah from Badaun, and nominated him as successor. The last ruler of the Sayyids, Ala-ud-Din, voluntarily abdicated the throne of the Delhi Sultanate in favour of Bahlul Khan Lodi on 19 April 1451, and left for Badaun, where he died in 1478.

## **Kings**

### **Khizr Khan**

Khizr Khan was the governor of Multan under Firuz Shah Tughlaq. When Timur invaded India, Khizr Khan, a Sayyid from Multan joined him. Timur appointed him the governor of Multan and Lahore. He then conquered the city of Delhi and started the rule of the Sayyids in 1414. He was ruling in the name of Timur. He could not assume an independent position in all respects. As a mark of recognition of the suzerainty of the Timurids, the name of the Timurid ruler (Shah Rukh) was recited in the khutba but as an interesting innovation, the name of Khizr Khan was also attached to it. But strangely enough, the name of the Timurid ruler was not inscribed on the coins and the name of the old Tughlaq sultan continued on the currency. No coins are known in the name of Khizr Khan.

### **Mubarak Shah**

Mubarak Shah was the son of Khizr Khan, who ascended the throne in the year 1421, unlike his father, he hardly made any attempt in recovering the lost territories of the kingdom. Mubarak Shah (r. 1421–1434) was the second monarch of the Sayyid dynasty which ruled the Delhi Sultanate. He succeeded

his father, Khizr Khan to the throne. The Sayyids were subservient to Timur's successor, Shah Rukh, and while Khizr Khan did not assume the title of sultan, Mubarak Shah was acknowledged as one by Sirhindi. However, it is also known that Mubarak Shah received a robe and a chatr (a ceremonial parasol) from the Timurid capital of Herat which indicates that the fealty continued in his time. He was murdered in 1434 and succeeded by his nephew, Muhammad Shah.[1][2]

### **Muhammad Shah**

Muhammad Shah was a nephew of Mubarak Shah. He ruled from 1434–1443. Muhammad Shah acceded to the throne with the help of Sarwar ul Mulk.

After that Shah wanted to free himself from the domination of Sarwar ul Mulk with the help of his faithful vizier Kamal ul Mulk. His reign was marked by many rebellions and conspiracies, and he died in the year.

### **Alam Shah**

The last ruler of the Sayyid dynasty, Alauddin Alam Shah was defeated by Bahlol Lodi, who started the Lodi dynasty.

## **Lodi dynasty**

The **Lodi dynasty** was an Afghan dynasty that ruled the Delhi Sultanate from 1451 to 1526. It was the fifth and final dynasty of the Delhi Sultanate, and was founded by Bahlul Khan Lodi when he replaced the Sayyid dynasty.

## **Bahlul Lodi**

Bahlul Khan Lodi (r. 1451–1489) was the nephew and son-in-law of Malik Sultan Shah Lodi, the governor of Sirhind in (Punjab), India and succeeded him as the governor of Sirhind during the reign of Sayyid dynasty ruler Muhammad Shah. Muhammad Shah raised him to the status of an *Tarun-Bin-Sultan*. He was the most powerful of the Punjab chiefs and a vigorous leader, holding together a loose confederacy of Afghan and Turkish chiefs with his strong personality. He reduced the turbulent chiefs of the provinces to submission and infused some vigour into the government. After the last Sayyid ruler of Delhi, Alauddin Alam Shah voluntarily abdicated in favour of him, Bahlul Khan Lodi ascended the throne of the Delhi sultanate on 19 April 1451. The most important event of his reign was the conquest of Jaunpur. Bahlul spent most of his time in fighting against the Sharqi dynasty and ultimately annexed it. He placed his eldest surviving son Barbak on the throne of Jaunpur in 1486.

## **Sikandar Lodi**

Sikandar Lodi (r. 1489–1517) (born Nizam Khan), the second son of Bahlul, succeeded him after his death on 17 July 1489 and took up the title *Sikandar Shah*. He was nominated by his father to succeed him and was crowned sultan on 15 July 1489. He founded Agra in 1504 and built mosques. He shifted the capital from Delhi to Agra. He abolished corn duties and patronized trade and commerce. He was a poet of repute, composing under the pen-name of Gulruk. He was also patron of learning and ordered Sanskrit work in medicine to be

translated into Persian. He curbed the individualistic tendencies of his Pashtun nobles and compelled them to submit their accounts to state audit. He was, thus, able to infuse vigor and discipline in the administration. His greatest achievement was the conquest and annexation of Bihar.

## **Ibrahim Lodi**

Ibrahim Lodi (r. 1517–1526), the youngest son of Sikandar, was the last Lodi Sultan of Delhi. He had the qualities of an excellent warrior, but he was rash and impolitic in his decisions and actions. His attempt at royal absolutism was premature and his policy of sheer repression unaccompanied by measures to strengthen the administration and increase the military resources was sure to prove a failure. Ibrahim faced numerous rebellions and kept out the opposition for almost a decade.

He was engaged in warfare with the Afghans and the Mughal Empire for most of his reign and died trying to keep the Lodi Dynasty from annihilation. Ibrahim was defeated in 1526 at the Battle of Panipat. This marked the end of the Lodi Dynasty and the rise of the Mughal Empire in India led by Babur (r. 1526–1530).

## **Fall of the empire**

By the time Ibrahim ascended the throne, the political structure in the Lodi Dynasty had dissolved due to abandoned trade routes and the depleted treasury. The Deccan was a coastal trade route, but in the late fifteenth century the supply

lines had collapsed. The decline and eventual failure of this specific trade route resulted in cutting off supplies from the coast to the interior, where the Lodi empire resided.

The Lodi Dynasty was not able to protect itself if warfare were to break out on the trade route roads; therefore, they didn't use those trade routes, thus their trade declined and so did their treasury leaving them vulnerable to internal political problems. In order to take revenge of the insults done by Ibrahim, the governor of Lahore, Daulat Khan Lodi asked the ruler of Kabul, Babur to invade his kingdom. Ibrahim Lodi was thus killed in a battle with Babur. With the death of Ibrahim Lodi, the Lodi dynasty also came to an end.

## **Afghan factionalism**

Another problem Ibrahim faced when he ascended the throne in 1517 were the Pashtun nobles, some of whom supported Ibrahim's older brother, Jalaluddin, in taking up arms against his brother in the area in the east at Jaunpur. Ibrahim gathered military support and defeated his brother by the end of the year.

After this incident, he arrested those Pashtun nobles who opposed him and appointed his own men as the new administrators. Other Pashtun nobles supported the governor of Bihar, Dariya Khan, against Ibrahim.

Another factor that caused uprisings against Ibrahim was his lack of an apparent successor. His own uncle, Alam Khan, betrayed Ibrahim by supporting the Mughal invader Babur.

## **Rajput invasions and internal rebellions**

- Rana Sanga, the Hindu Rajput leader of Mewar (r. 1509–1526), extended his kingdom, defeated the Lodi king of Delhi and was acknowledged by all the Rajput clans as the leading prince of Rajputana. Daulat Khan, the governor of Punjab region asked Babur to invade the Lodi kingdom, with the thought of taking revenge from Ibrahim Lodi.

## **Market reforms of Alauddin Khalji**

In the early 14th century, the Delhi Sultanate ruler Alauddin Khalji (r. 1296-1316) instituted price controls and related reforms in his empire. He fixed the prices for a wide range of goods, including grains, cloth, slaves and animals. He banned hoarding and regrating, appointed supervisors and spies to ensure compliance with the regulations, and severely punished the violators. The reforms were implemented in the capital Delhi, and possibly, other areas of the Sultanate.

Alauddin's courtier Amir Khusrau states that Alauddin's objective was the welfare of the general public. However, Ziauddin Barani (c. 1357), the main source of information about the reforms, states that the Sultan's objective was to subjugate the Hindus and to maintain an unprecedentedly large army (the low prices would make low salaries acceptable for the soldiers). The reforms changes were revoked shortly after Alauddin's death, by his son Qutbuddin Mubarak Shah.

## Background

The main source of information about Alauddin's reforms is Ziauddin Barani, a Delhi Sultanate chronicler who wrote around half-a-century after Alauddin's death. Barani provides a numbered list of Alauddin's regulations, but his account does not contain the verbatim text of the royal orders. Barani's has reproduced the regulations from his memory, organizing them in a logical sequence.

Barani's account, at least his narration of Alauddin's price control measures, is corroborated by other writers who mention the reforms with lesser detail. Alauddin's courtier Amir Khusrau mentions the price control measures, attributing these to Alauddin's desire for public welfare. The 16th century chronicler Firishta also describes the reforms, and besides Barani, his account seems to be based on Shaikh Ainuddin Bijapuri's now-lost *Mulhiqat-i Tabaqat-i Nasiri*. While Bijapuri was not a contemporary of Alauddin, he may have had access to other lost works that described these reforms.

## Objective

Alauddin's courtier Amir Khusrau, in his *Khazainul Futuh* (1311), states that Alauddin reduced and fixed prices because of his "great regard for general prosperity and abundance, and for the happiness and comfort of the select as well as the commons." A later anecdote also states that Alauddin implemented his price control measures for the welfare of the citizens. This anecdote was mentioned by the 14th century writer Hamid Qalandar, and is originally said to have been

narrated by *Malikut Tujjar* ("Prince of Merchants") Qazi Hamiduddin to the Sufi saint Nasiruddin Chiragh Dehlavi, during the early reign of Firuz Shah Tughlaq (r. 1351-1388). Hamiduddin told Nasiruddin that he once entered Alauddin's chamber, and found him engaged in deep thought. Alauddin told Hamiduddin that he wanted to do something for the benefit of the common people, because the God had made him the leader of these people. Alauddin stated that he considered giving away all his treasures and property, but then realized that the benefits of such a distribution would not reach *all* the people. He then got the idea of lowering and fixing the price of grains, which would benefit *all* the people.

Contrary to these accounts, Barani states that Alauddin (who was a Muslim) introduced these reforms to be able to maintain an unprecedentedly large army, and to subjugate his Hindu subjects. According to Barani, the 1303 Mongol invasion of Delhi prompted Alauddin to raise a large army to deal with the Mongol threat. However, such a large army would be a drain on the state treasury, unless the soldiers' salaries could be lowered substantially.

Alauddin was the first Sultan of Delhi to pay all his soldiers in cash. He determined that the maximum salary he could pay to a well-equipped cavalryman as 234 *tankas*, with an additional 78 *tankas* for a cavalryman with two horses. It appears that the cavalryman was expected to maintain his own horse and equipment from this salary. An increase in this salary would exhaust the treasury in 5–6 years. Alauddin's ministers told him that such low salaries would be acceptable to the soldiers, if the prices of necessary commodities were reduced. Alauddin then asked his counsellors for ways to reduce the prices



without resorting to tyranny, and on their advice, decided to regulate the market prices. Barani also states that the Hindu traders indulged in profiteering, and Alauddin wanted to punish the Hindus. However, much of Delhi's overland trade with Western and Central Asia was controlled by Khorasani and Multani merchants, many of whom were Muslims, and were impacted by Alauddin's reforms. Moreover, the cheap prices resulting from Alauddin's price control measures benefited the general public, which included the Hindus.

## **Establishment of markets**

Alauddin implemented price control measures by setting up following types of markets in Delhi:

- *Mandi*, the central grain market, plus grocery shops in every neighbourhood
- *Sera-i Adl*, the central market for manufactured commodities and imported goods
- Markets for slaves and animals
- General markets for other commodities

## **Appointment of market controller**

Alauddin appointed Malik Qabul Ulugh Khani as controller of the grain markets, and a friend of Malik Qabul as an assistant controller.

The Sultan granted Malik Qabul extensive territories as *iqta'*, and placed a large cavalry and infantry under his charge. Alauddin also appointed one of his own close associates as an intelligence officer of the grain market.

The controller strictly regulated the market prices, and informed Alauddin of any violations. The government strictly punished the shopkeepers who tried to sell goods above the regulated price, and those who tried to cheat by using false weights. The traders considered Alauddin's regulations as burdensome, and frequently violated them; the drastic punishments led to further resentment among the traders.

### **Government-run granaries**

Alauddin's administration set up granaries, and stocked them with grain collected from the peasants. According to Barani, the government's share of the grain in the crown territory (*khalisa*) in the Doab region was collected in kind, and taken to the government-run granaries in Delhi.

In the Jhain region, half of the government's share was collected in kind and taken to the Jhain town; when needed, the stores were transferred to the government-run granaries in Delhi. Firishta mentions that the government's share was collected and stored in various towns, not just Delhi.

The stores in the government-run granaries were released and sold at fixed price during the times of scarcity.

### **Anti-hoarding measures**

Alauddin's administration mandated registration for the transporters who bought the farming produce from the peasants and carried it to the towns. The government banned hoarding, and held the transporters, their agents and their families collectively responsible for any violations.

Alauddin placed the transporters under the controller of the grain market. His administration arrested the former leaders of the transporters, and handed them over to the controller, Malik Qabul. Alauddin asked Malik Qabul to keep them in chains until they collectively agreed to abide by certain conditions imposed on them, and gave sureties for each other. These conditions required the transporters to adhere to Alauddin's regulations. The transporters were also ordered to settle in the villages at specific distances along the Yamuna River, so as to ensure rapid transport of grains to Delhi. They were required to bring their families, cattle and goods to their new residences. A supervisor was appointed to oversee their operations.

According to Barani, because of these changes, the transporters brought so much grain to Delhi that no releases were required from the government-run granaries.

### **Ban on regrating**

Alauddin banned regrating, the practice of buying goods at a lower price and selling them at a higher price. All the government officials in the Ganga-Yamuna Doab region were required to guarantee that they would not permit any regrating in their area of authority. If any regrating was discovered in a particular territory, the officials in-charge were answerable to the throne. The regrated grain was confiscated by the government, and the violator was severely punished.

According to Barani, such regulations made it impossible for a merchant, a peasant, a grocer or anyone else to sell even minute quantities of grains above the regulated price.

## **Ban on taking surplus grain home**

Alauddin's administration allowed the cultivators to take limited quantity of grain from fields to their homes for personal consumption. Alauddin required his revenue officers to sign written agreements promising that they would take severe measures to ensure that the cultivators in the Doab region were unable to take the surplus grain to their houses for regrating. This would force the cultivators to sell the grain to the transporters at low prices.

Barani states that the cultivators were also given the option of taking the surplus grain to the market themselves, and selling it there for a profit, at the prices fixed by Alauddin. Firishta clarifies that the cultivators could sell the grain at the markets in the nearest town: they were not required to visit the central market in Delhi.

## **Daily reports**

Alauddin sought daily reports about the grain market from three independent sources:

- The market superintendent
- The intelligence officers
- The secret spies

The 16th century chronicler Firishta states that although Alauddin was illiterate at the beginning of his reign, he gradually acquired the ability to read these reports, which included hastily-scribbled notes written in Persian script. Any variance in the reports from the three sources resulted in

punishment for the market superintendent. The officials were aware that Alauddin received reports from three different sources, and thus, found no opportunity to deviate from the market rules.

### **Rationing during drought**

Even during the times of scarce rainfall, there was no increase in the grain prices during Alauddin's reign. When the rains failed, the grocers of every neighbourhood (*mohalla*) in Delhi were given a daily allowance of grain from the central market. The allowance was determined by the population of the neighbourhood. People were also allowed to purchase  $\frac{1}{2}$  *mann* of grain directly from the central market at one time. The allowance was higher for the landless nobles and other distinguished men, and varied on the number of their dependants. Alauddin ordered his officers to maintain law and order in market during times of drought. If a stampede resulted in the death of a helpless citizen, the law required the superintendent in-charge of the market to be punished.

### ***Sera-i Adl***

The *Sera-i Adl* (literally "Place of Justice") was an exclusive market in Delhi for manufactured and imported goods. The goods sold at *Sera-i Adl* included cloth, sugar, herbs, dry fruits, butter (including ghee) and lamp-oil.

### **Establishment**

Alauddin established the *Sera-i Adl* on an extensive piece of unused land near the Green Palace (*Koshak-i Sabz*), on the

inner side of the Badaun Gate. The market remained open from morning to the afternoon prayer. The Sultan ordered every specified commodity to be sold only at the *Sera-i Adl* at the prices fixed by his administration. Any violation of this regulation resulted in confiscation of the commodity, and punishment to the seller.

### **Registration of merchants**

Alauddin ordered all the merchants of his empire (not just Delhi), both Hindu and Muslim, to be registered with the Ministry of Commerce.

Their businesses were regulated. The merchants of Delhi were required to sign a written agreement promising to bring the imported commodities to *Sera-i Adl*, and to sell them at the officially fixed rates.

Barani states that these merchants brought such large quantities of goods to *Sera-i Adl* that the goods accumulated in Delhi and remained unsold.

### **Prevention of regrating**

After Alauddin fixed the prices of cloth, several merchants would purchase costly cloth at *Sera-i Adl* in Delhi and sell it outside Delhi a higher rate. To avoid such regrating, Alauddin appointed the rich Multani merchants as officers of *Sera-i Adl*, and asked them to sell their goods directly to the public, in such a way that these goods did not fall into the hands of the other merchants. The Multani merchant-officers were given 2 million *tankas* from the treasury, possibly as a subsidy, or as an advance.

## **Permit for buying expensive fabrics**

Alauddin ordered that certain expensive fabrics, which were deemed unnecessary for the general public, could be bought only with a permit. These permits had to be issued personally by specific state-appointed officers (*Parwana Ra'is*). The officers issued permits to *amirs*, *maliks*, and other important persons in accordance with their incomes. This ensured that people could not buy such fabrics at a cheap price in Delhi and sell it elsewhere at a higher price.

## **Elimination of merchants**

During Alauddin's reign, any man who wanted to join the cavalry had to appear for a review with a horse and equipment. The state would reimburse the cost of the horse, if the candidate passed the review and joined the army, and if his horse died or became useless during the service. However, the candidate was expected to pay for his horse before the review. Taking advantage of this situation, several wealthy people entered into the business of purchasing and rearing horses, and colluded with the brokers to raise prices.

As part of his market reforms, Alauddin ordered these horse merchants to be arrested and imprisoned in remote forts. Capitalist investors were banned from participating in the horse trade. Alauddin also eliminated the merchants from the markets for other animals and slaves.

Barani does not mention who sold slaves and animals after the merchants were arrested. The later writer Firishta clarifies that Alauddin imprisoned the merchants only temporarily: After the

prices had stabilized, they were allowed to buy and sell horses on the condition that they would not violate Alauddin's price-fixing regulations.

### **Supervision of brokers**

Alauddin's administration closely supervised the brokers participating in the slave and animal markets. The brokers were responsible for grading the goods and estimating their prices. Before Alauddin's reforms, the leading brokers would help the wealthy merchants raise the prices, and took commissions from both the merchants and the buyers. As part of his market reforms, Alauddin ordered the brokers to be screened carefully to prevent any price rises. The erring brokers were imprisoned with the merchants in remote forts.

### **Investigations**

As the horses were required for Alauddin's army, he gave special attention to horse trade. He ordered the leading horse brokers and their horses to be brought before him for a detailed investigation every forty days or two months. Barani states that the brokers were treated so harshly that they wanted to die. Alauddin also appointed spies to the slave and animal markets, and thoroughly analyzed their reports.

### **General markets**

According to Barani, Alauddin's Ministry of Commerce (*diwan-i riyasat*) dictated the prices of all the goods sold in the general markets spread across Delhi. These prices were determined by Alauddin and his staff according to the production cost of the



goods. Barani mentions that Alauddin's price control measures were directed at all kinds of goods, "from caps to socks; from combs to needles; from vegetables, soups, sweetmeats to chapatis."

Alauddin selected Yaqub Nazir as his Minister of Commerce, and also appointed him as the censor, and the superintendent of weights and measures. Barani describes Yaqub Nazir as an honest but "rude and cruel" man. The Minister appointed a superintendent for every market to ensure that the shopkeepers adhered to the price list sanctioned by Alauddin's administration. The superintendents were also responsible for maintaining proper prices for the commodities that could not be included in the official price list.

Yaqub Nazir regularly checked the prices in the general markets, and meted out humiliating punishments to the erring shopkeepers. These punishments scared the shopkeepers into reducing their prices.

However, the shopkeepers used other methods to make illegal profits, including use of false weights, sale of low-quality commodities, and lying to young and ignorant customers. To address this problem, Alauddin started sending child employees of the royal pigeon-house to make test purchases, which would be reviewed by Yaqub Nazir. Barani states that if a shopkeeper did not give full weight to the child customer, the Minister would carve out double the due weight of flesh from the shopkeeper's body. Such severe punishments finally ensured adherence to Alauddin's price-fixing regulations in the general markets.

## **Extent of implementation**

Barani states that Alauddin's market reforms (such as price control) were implemented in the city of Delhi, the capital of the empire. He states that the regulations implemented in Delhi tended to be followed in other towns, but does not explicitly state if this was the case with Alauddin's reforms. The later writer Firishta suggests that the price control regulations were implemented in the territories other than Delhi as well.

## **Impact**

Alauddin's reforms allowed him to raise a powerful army, which decisively defeated the Mongols.

Alauddin's courtier Amir Khusrau greatly praises his reforms, portraying them as public welfare measures. He states that the low fixed prices of grains and supply from the royal granaries benefited the public during the times of scarce rainfall. According to an anecdote mentioned by the 14th century writer Hamid Qalandar, even after the Sultan's death, people respected Alauddin for reducing and fixing the price of grains: they made pilgrimages to his tomb to have their prayers fulfilled.

The cheap prices enabled the general public to indulge in frequent entertainment activities. Hamid Qalandar, who wrote during the early reign of Firuz Shah Tughluq (r. 1351-1388), quotes Nasiruddin Chiragh Dehlavi as follows:

In those days entertainments were common. During the days of the pilgrimages and on the last Wednesday of the month of Safar it was difficult to find (sitting) accommodation in the public enclosures, in the public gardens or by the side of the tanks. There was music and dancing on every side. These feasts would cost a tanka or more.

According to Nasiruddin, even beggars could afford cotton-stuffed garments during Alauddin's reign. In fact, an officer called Kafur Muhrdar would distribute such garments among the poor.

According to historian Banarsi Prasad Saksena, the contemporary Muslims had limited participation in the business because of Islamic restrictions (see *riba*). Alauddin's reforms must have caused "discomforts" to the two leading Hindu mercantile communities: the Nayakas (who traded grains) and the Multanis (who traded cloth). Saksena believes that these discomforts were compensated by guaranteed profits resulting from Alauddin's price fixing.

## **Revocation**

Alauddin's market reforms ended a few months after his death, when they were revoked by his son Qutbuddin Mubarak Shah. This led to an increase in prices, and consequently, wages. Mubarak Shah also released a large number of prisoners that Alauddin's administration had arrested for various reasons.