CHAPTER VI

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE TURKO-AFGHÀNS IN INDIA, AND MORAL AS WELL AS MATERIAL CONDITIONS OF THE COUNTRY DURING THEIR RULE

1. The Turko-Afghan Government

A. The Central Government

The Muslim State in India was a theocracy, the existence of which was theoretically justified by the needs of religion. The Sultan was considered to be Caesar and Pope combined in one. In theory, indeed, his authority in religious matters was limited by the Holy Law of the Quran, and with the exception of 'Alá-ud-dín, no Sultan could clearly divorce religion from politics. But in practice, the Muslim Sultan of India was a perfect autocrat, unchecked by any restrictions; and his word was law. The Sultans at times paid, with two short breaks, only ceremonial allegiance to the Khalifahs of Baghdad and Egypt, but did not owe their power to them nor to the will of the people, though the Islamic theory of sovereignty was constitutional and democratic in character. In fact, the Muslim State in India was, to all intents and purposes, independent and autonomous, the Sultan being the mainspring of the entire system of administration. The real source of the Sultan's authority was military strength, and this was understood and acquiesced in, not merely by the unthinking rabble but also by the soldiers, the poets (e.g. Amir Khusrav) and the Ulema of the age. As the supreme head of the executive, the Sultan transacted the affairs of the State with the help of such officers and ministers as he might choose to select. The State being essentially military in character, the Sultan was the chief commander of forces; he was also the chief law-giver and the final court of appeal.

The autocracy of the Muslim Sultans of India was the inevitable result of the then circumstances. They had to be constantly on their guard against the hostility of the Hindu States, the Hindu fighting communities and the Mongol invaders. This required a strong centralised government, which gradually made itself despotic. Further, there was no hereditary Muslim aristocracy, conscious of
its own rights and privileges and eager to assert these against royal despoticism, although occasionally some nobles made their influence felt. There were also no popular assemblies, keen about constitutional liberty, and no strong public opinion, competent enough to oppose autocracy. Even the Ulemas, who exercised much influence in the State, had not the courage to openly oppose the Sultāns and depose an undesirable ruler in the same manner as Hildebrand deposed Henry IV. Succession to the Sultānate of Delhi was not determined by any recognised law, nor was there any definite principle. “Broadly speaking, the choice was limited, as a matter of convenience, to the surviving members of the deceased Sultān’s family. The priority of birth, the question of efficiency, the nomination of the dead king—these considerations sometimes received some attention, but the decisive voice seems to have been that of the nobles, who usually preferred personal convenience to the interests of the State.”

Even the most autocratic ruler cannot manage the task of administration single-handed. Thus the Sultāns of Delhi had to devise, from the beginning of their rule, an administrative machinery with a regular hierarchy of officers in charge of various departments, who, however, did not in any way check their authority but rather carried out their respective duties according to the former’s orders. The Sultāns had a council of friends and trusted officers called the Majlis-i-Khalwat, which they consulted when important affairs of State demanded attention. The councillors might express their opinions, which at times had some influence on the administration; but these were not binding on the Sultān. The Sultān received all courtiers, Khāns, Malik, and Amirs, in a court called Bār-i-Khās. He sat as the supreme judge in the Bār-i-Ām, where he tried cases, received petitions of the people and heard their complaints. The highest officer in the Central Government was the Ważir, who had control over the other departments of the State,—such as the Divān-i-Risālat or the Department of Appeals, the Divān-i-Ārz or the Military Department, the Divān-i-Ishā or the Correspondence Department, the Divān-i-Bandagan or the Department of Slaves, the Divān-i-Qazā-i-Mamālik or the Department of Justice, Intelligence and Posts, the Divān-i-Amir Kohi or the Department of Agriculture (created by Muhammad bin Tughluq), the Divān-i-Mustakhray or the Department to look after and realise arrears from collectors or agents (created by ‘Alā-ud-din Khalji), Divān-i-Khurāt or the Department of Charity (in Firuz Shāh’s reign), Divān-i-Istihqaq or the Department of Pensions,—and also over the Mint, the charitable institutions and the Kārkhdāna. Besides the high officers in charge of the various departments, there were other
subordinate officers like the Musta'fî-i-Mamâlik or the Auditor General, whose duty was to check the expenditure of the State; the Mushrif-i-Mamâlik, who was in charge of the accounts of receipts; the Majmu'dâr, who preserved the records of loans advanced by government; the Khâzin or the Treasurer; the Amir-i-Bihâr or the Controller of Boats; the Balkshih-i-Fanj or Paymaster of the Forces, and others. The Nâb-i-Wazîr-i-Mamâlik or the Deputy Wazir did not enjoy a very high status. The Tughluq period was "the heyday of the Wazirat in Muslim India", and from the days of the later Tughluqs the powers of the Wazir grew enormously. But these began to decline in the time of the Sayyids and the office of the Wazir became obscure under the Afgâns.

Justice was usually administered by the Qâzi-al-Qazâ'î, or the Lord Chief Justice, who was aided by Muftis to expound the law, which was based on the injunctions of the Quran, though rulers like 'Alâ-ud-dîn and Muhammad bin Tughluq were guided by considerations of policy. The penal law was excessively severe, the penalties of mutilation and death being usually inflicted on the culprits. Force and torture were employed to extort confession. The judicial procedure does not seem to have been very regular. Cases were started without due enquiries and, on most occasions, received summary trials. The law of debt, as we know from Marco Polo, was severe; and the creditors often invoked royal assistance to realise their dues from the debtors. The Kotwâl was the custodian of peace and order; and another officer of the municipal police was the Muhtasib, whose duties were to keep a strict watch over the conduct of the people, to control the markets and to regulate weights and measures. The Sultan kept himself informed of the movements of the people through a large number of spies. The old forts and castles were utilised as prisons. The prison "regulations were lax, and corruption prevailed among the officers".

The fiscal policy of the Turkish Sultâns of India was modelled on the theory of finance of the Hanâfi school of Muslim Jurists, which the former borrowed from the Ghaznavids whom they had supplanted. Thus the principal sources of revenue of the Delhi Sultânate were the Khârâj or land tax from the Hindu chiefs and landlords; land revenue obtained from the Khâlsâ or crown-lands, iqtâ's or lands granted to followers and officers (usually military) for certain years or for the lifetime of the grantee, who was known as the Muqta, and other classes of lands; Khams or one-fifth of the spoils of war; and religious tax. Besides these, abwaâbs or cesses and other kinds of taxes like the house tax, grazing tax, water tax, etc., were levied on the people. The State also derived
some income from trade duties. The *jizya* was originally a sort of tax levied on the non-Muslims "in return for which they received protection of life and property and exemption from military service". But in course of time, a religious motive was attached to it, and in India it was the only extra burden which the Hindus had to bear. Taxes were paid both in cash and kind. We have already given the important points regarding the revenue reforms of the Khaljis and the Tughlus. It may be noted here that the revenue policy of the State, and the satisfactory working or otherwise of the revenue department, varied according to the personality of the rulers. While no important changes in revenue administration are recorded to have been effected by Iltutmish, and only a few attempts were made by Balban to make it orderly, 'Alâ-ud-din's revenue policy was comprehensive, affecting all types of land tenures, and Muhammad bin Tughluq's vigorous but ill-advised revenue policy also deeply influenced the condition of the State. The rate of assessment also varied, being excessively high since the time of 'Alâ-ud-din, who charged 50 per cent on the gross produce of the land. In spite of his general leniency, Ghâyâs-ud-din Tughluq does not seem to have reduced the scale as fixed by 'Alâ-ud-din, and in the time of Muhammad bin Tughluq it was certainly not lower, if not higher, than this. The farming system was prevalent, and its lavish extension in the time of Firuz Shâh proved to be detrimental to the integrity of the State.

The standing army of the Sultânate consisted of the royal bodyguard, and the troops of the capital, which were, in times of need, reinforced by the levies sent by the provincial viceroy and the *mugtas*, and the contingents of Hindu troops. Men of different nationalities, such as Turks, Khataians, Persians and Indians, were enlisted in the army. The main branches of the army were the infantry, including numerous archers, the cavalry, and the elephants. There was nothing like artillery, which came to be used effectively in later times; but rockets and naphtha balls, and a machine discharging balls by the force of gunpowder, were used, though not with much effect, as early as the reign of Iltutmish. Further, a sort of mechanical artillery, consisting of various crude machines, like *manganiq*, *mangonel*, *mangons*, through which fire-balls, fire-arrows, pieces of rock, stones, earthen or iron balls, bottles full of naphtha, and scorpions and other poisonous reptiles, could be hurled against the enemy, were used in siege-craft in medieval India.

The Turkish Sultân of Delhi maintained a court,—though not so splendid as that of the Great Mughuls,—through which their majesty found expression. Harems, full of the wives and concubines of the Sultân and princes of the royal blood, were kept in
the apartments of the royal palace. Culture of a rather limited type was patronised in these courts, but their maintenance must have caused a heavy drain on the economic resources of the country.

B. Administration of the Provinces

The direct influence of the Sultān was limited to the area within striking distance of his forts and outposts, and the distant provinces were placed in the charge of viceroys, who were called Naib Sultāns. The number of provinces varied from twenty to twenty-five. A province was subdivided into smaller portions, which were in the charge of Mugals or of Amils; and there were further smaller units under Shiqdārs, whose jurisdiction did not extend over more than a few miles. Each province was “a replica of the Empire”, and the Naib Sultān exercised executive, judicial, and military functions in his territory almost as a despot, subject only to the control of the central government, which varied according to the strength or weakness of the latter. Muhammad bin Tughluq’s failure to control the provinces encouraged his viceroys to declare independence. The viceroy was paid from the revenue of his province, and after meeting the cost of his administration he had to remit the surplus to the central exchequer. He maintained a local militia and had to render military aid, at times, to the Sultān. Thus his position was somewhat like that of a feudal baron of medieval Europe. The intrigues of the nobles, and lack of co-operation among the officers, usually hampered the good working of the provincial government; and consequently peace and order were not perfectly maintained. Besides the imperial provinces, large tracts of land had of necessity to be left in the hands of old Hindu chieftains, who were not interfered with in ruling their ancestral territories so long as they sent tributes and presents to Delhi. The village communities continued unaffected by the establishment of a new government in the country.

C. The Muslim Nobility

The nobility exercised a predominant influence in the State as generals, administrators and sometimes as king-makers. But it was not a hereditary, homogeneous and well-organised body as was the case with the nobles of France or of England. Though the Turks formed the majority in this class, there were in it also men of other nationalities, like Arabs, Afghāns, Abyssinians, Egyptians, people of Java, and Indians. Such a heterogeneous class could hardly be expected to work with a common aim or principle and offer a healthy check to royal absolutism. Naturally the nobles
often occupied themselves with their mutual rivalries and pursued selfish interests at the cost of the welfare of the State. "The nobility," remarks a modern writer, "was nothing more than a mere agglomeration of disintegrating atoms," which failed to "evolve a workable constitution for the country." The State might have derived some benefit from its aristocracy, but it suffered more from a gross caricature of debased feudalism, which was largely responsible for its dismemberment.

The Turko-Afghan machinery of administration, briefly outlined above, lacked the force of habit, derived from tradition, and of will, derived from national support, both of which are necessary for the security and long tenure of a government. Its military and feudal character, which was the inevitable result of the circumstances under which it grew, was opposed to the traditional ancient government of the land, though the medieval Rajput States might have afforded a parallel to it. By the nature of its growth, it could seldom be established on the goodwill and support of the people. As a matter of fact, a tie of mutual attachment between the rulers and the masses of the people was in many cases absent. The State grew on military strength, its rulers were, in most cases, concerned with measures calculated to strengthen their own authority; and its aristocracy, without any consistent policy, pursued selfish interests. Its collapse was inevitable when the Sultans failed to command adequate force and the aristocracy grew more ambitious and turbulent.

2. Economic and Social Conditions

A. Economic

It is not easy to form an accurate idea of the economic condition of the vast numbers of the people of India, during the three centuries of Turko-Afghan rule. Some attempts have, however, been made recently to arrive at the facts of the matter by collecting incidental references from chronicles, the works of Amir Khusrau, folklore and fiction, poetry and ballads, the writings of Hindu as well as Muslim mystics, works on practical arts and treatises on law and ethics, the accounts left by foreign travellers, and some official and private correspondence. The country was then famous for her untold wealth. We know from Perishta how Mahmud of Ghazni carried off a vast booty, and it is striking that even after the thoughtless extravagance of Muhammad bin Tughluq, and the chronic disorders of the later Tughluq period, Timur captured an enormous booty in Delhi. But the State did not pursue any comprehensive economic policy aiming at the improvement of the
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condition of the people: and the few experiments of the Khalīqs or the Tughluqs did not produce permanent results. "On the whole," remarks a modern Muslim writer, "any big improvement in the method of production, a more equitable distribution of the economic wealth, or a better adjustment of the economic position of the various social classes, was outside the policy of the State."

India had, however, traditions of industrial organisation, through the guilds and crafts of the village communities and of the urban areas, and of widespread commerce, internal as well as external, which survived the shocks of political revolutions in spite of the absence of State guidance and support during the period under review. The Sultāns of Delhi, or, in later times, some of the minor provincial rulers, encouraged industries and trade only for their own political and administrative needs. Thus the royal kārkhanās or manufactories at Delhi sometimes employed 4,000 weavers of silk besides manufacturers of other stuffs to satisfy royal demands. There were no factories or large-scale industrial organisations such as we have to-day. In most cases the manufacturers dealt directly with the traders, though occasionally they disposed of their goods at fairs, and again sometimes a number of them were employed by some enterprising business men to manufacture goods under their supervision. Though agriculture formed the occupation of the bulk of the people, there were some important industries in the urban as well as rural areas of the country. These were the textile industry, including the manufacture of cotton cloth, woollen cloth and silks, the dyeing industry and calico-painting, the sugar industry, metal-work, stone and brick work, and the paper industry. The minor industries were cup-making, shoe-making, making of arms, especially bows and arrows, manufacture of scents, spirits and liquors, etc. Bengal and Gujārāt were especially renowned for the manufacture and export of textile goods. The excellence of Bengal goods has been highly praised by Amīr Khāsrav, and foreign travellers, like Mauhan, who visited Bengal in A.D. 1406, Bartheima, who came to India during the early part of the sixteenth century (1503-1508), and Barbosa, who came here about A.D. 1518.

The volume of India's internal trade during this period "was large except when thwarted by the monopoly of the State or rigid administrative control". Her commercial relations with the outside world also deserve notice. The sea-route connected her commercially with the distant regions of Europe, the Malay Islands and China, and other countries on the Pacific Ocean; and she had intercourse through land routes with Central Asia, Afgānistān, Persia, Tibet and Bhutān. The author of Masālīk-ullabsār writes:
"Merchants of all countries never cease to carry pure gold into India, and to bring back in exchange commodities of herbs and gums." The chief imports were articles of luxury for the richer classes and horses and mules; and the principal exports consisted of varieties of agricultural goods, and textile manufactures, the minor ones being tutenag, opium, indigo-cakes, etc. Some countries round the Persian Gulf were entirely dependent on India for their food supply. The ports of Bengal and Gujarāt were then chiefly used for India's export trade. Bartherma considered Bengal to be "the richest country in the world for cotton, ginger, sugar, grain and flesh of every kind".

The prices of goods were not uniform throughout the period. These were abnormally high in times of famine and scarcity, but very low in times of overproduction. Thus, owing to severe famines during the reign of Muhammad bin Tughluq, the price of corn rose to 16 and 17 jitals per seer and many people died of starvation. After Fīrūz Shāh's second attack on Sind, with the consequent scarcity in that province, the price of corn rose to 8 and 10 jitals per 5 seers, and of pulses to 4 and 5 tankās per maund, or 6.4 and 8 jitals per seer respectively. The reign of Ibrāhīm Lodi was again a period of exceptionally low prices. A man could then buy 10 maunds of corn, 5 seers of oil and 10 yards of coarse cloth for one Bukhālī which was equivalent to 1.6 jital in value. The prices during 'Alā-ud-din's reign have been considered as normal. These were (calculating per maund)—wheat 7½ jitals, barley 4 jitals, paddy or rice 5 jitals, pulses 5 jitals, lentils 3 jitals, sugar (white) 100 jitals, sugar (soft) 60 jitals, mutton 10 jitals, and ghee (clarified butter) 16 jitals; muslins of Delhi cost 17 tankās¹ a piece, of 'Aligarh 6 tankās; and blankets of coarse stuff cost 6 jitals and those of finer quality 36 jitals² for each piece. Comparing

¹The purchasing power of a tankā was about twelve times that of the present rupee.
²Comparative prices in the reigns of 'Alā-ud-din, Muhammad bin Tughluq and Fīrūz Shāh:

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<tr>
<th>Commodities</th>
<th>'Alā-ud-din</th>
<th>Tughluq</th>
<th>Shāh</th>
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<td>(prices in jitals per maund)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wheat</td>
<td>7½</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Barley</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>Paddy</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pulses</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lentils</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sugar (white)</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sugar (soft)</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>120, 140</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mutton</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghee</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>100</td>
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the prices of goods in the reigns of ‘Alā-ud-din, Muhammad bin Tughluq and Firuz Shah, we find that, generally speaking, these rose during the reign of the second Sultan but again went down almost to the previous level of ‘Alā-ud-din’s reign during the reign of Firuz Shah. On the whole, food and goods were cheap in the Dehāb area as well as in the provinces. Ibn Batūtah observes that he had nowhere seen “a country where the commodities sell cheaper” than in Bengal; eight dirhams were sufficient here for the annual expenses of a family of three. But we have no means of estimating the average income or cost of living of an Indian of those days. We should not, moreover, fail to note that the country, especially Bengal, suffered from an exceptional scarcity of money. It is, therefore, rather difficult to determine how far the people were benefited by the low prices of commodities then prevailing.

As regards the standard of living of the different classes of the society, the difference between that of the wealthier classes and of the peasants was “almost antipodal”. While the ruling and official classes rolled in opulence and luxury, the tillers of the soil had a very low standard of living. The incidence of taxation must have weighed heavily on them, and their condition became miserable in times of famine, when no adequate relief measures could be provided. Amir Khusraw significantly remarks that “every pearl in the royal crown is but the crystallised drop of blood fallen from the tearful eyes of the poor peasant”. Bābur, who was struck with the scanty requirements of the Indian rural folk, writes: “People disappear completely where they have been living for many years in about a day and a half.” Thus the peasants of Medieval India do not seem to have been much better off than their descendants of modern times. But, judged by standards of to-day, they had fewer needs. The villages being economically self-sufficient, the simple requirements of the rural population were supplied locally to their satisfaction. Further, in spite of political revolutions and intrigues at the metropolis, the villagers pursued their ordinary occupations of life with the utmost unconcern. Court politics seldom disturbed the even tenor of village life.

B. Social Life

It was a common practice with the Sultans and the nobles to maintain slaves, male as well as female. The number of royal slaves (Bandagān-i-khās) was usually large. ‘Alā-ud-din had 50,000 slaves and their number rose to 200,000 under Firuz Shah. Much care was taken of them by their masters, as they formed a
useful source of service and sometimes of pecuniary gain. The
Sultâns usually manumitted their slaves after some time, and
some of the slaves rose to political and social eminence by dint
of their merit and ability. Besides a large number of Indian slaves,
of whom the Assam slaves were most liked because of their strong
physique, male as well as female slaves were imported from other
countries like China, Turkestan, and Persia. The prices of slaves
fluctuated according to the courses of wars and famines. The institu-
tion of slavery might have served certain purposes for the rulers
and the nobles; but at the same time it could not but produce some
baneful social consequences. In fact, it was a "stamp of unpro-
gressiveness" and an unhealthy feature of social life.

Dependence of women on their husbands, or other male relatives,
was a prominent feature of social life among the Hindus as well
as the Muslims. But they enjoyed a position of respect and were
expected to observe strict fidelity in their conjugal life. They
generally lived in seclusion in the sphere of their homes; and the
Purdah system became more elaborate, both among the Hindus
and the Muslims, except in some coastal towns in Gujarât, owing
chiefly to the general sense of insecurity of the period caused by
inroads of foreign invaders, especially the Mongols. The culture
of the women varied according to the classes to which they belonged.
While the ordinary village women remained absorbed in their
domestic duties, some belonging to the upper class cultivated
arts and sciences. Rupamati and Padmâvati are good examples
of educated ladies. Both boys and girls were married at an
early age. The practice of Safi, or a wife burning herself on
the funeral pyre of her husband, was widely prevalent among
certain classes. According to Ibn Batûtah, a sort of permit
had to be procured from the Sultân of Delhi before the burning
of a widow. Though the general standard of social life was high,
being marked by charity and other virtues, there were a few vices
connected with the passion for wine and women.

3. Literature, Art and Architecture

A. Effect of the Impact of the Indian and the Islamic
Civilisations

So immense was the assimilative potentiality of the old Indian
civilisation that the earlier invaders of this country, the Greeks,
the Sakas and the Huns, were absorbed within the fold of her
population and completely lost their identity. But it did not
happen so with the Turko-Afghān invaders of India. In the wake of Muslim invasions, definite social and religious ideas, which differed fundamentally from those of Hindustān, entered into this country and a perfect absorption of the invaders by the original inhabitants could not be possible. The political relations between the new-comers and the indigenous people were sometimes characterised by bitter strife. But whenever two types of civilisation come into close contact with each other for centuries, both are bound to be influenced mutually. Thus, through long association, the growth of the numbers of the converted Indo-Muslim community, and the influence of several liberal movements in India, the Hindu and Muslim communities came to imbibe each other's thoughts and customs; and, beneath the ruffled surface of storm and stress, there flowed a genial current of mutual harmony and toleration in different spheres of life. As a matter of fact, both Hindus and Muslims had mutual admiration for each other's culture, since the early days of the advent of Islam into India, and one of the sources of Muslim mysticism was Indian. Famous Muslim scholars and saints lived and laboured in India during the Medieval period, and they helped the dissemination of the ideas of Islamic philosophy and mysticism in this land. The wholesome spirit of mutual toleration found expression in the growing veneration of the Hindus for the Muslim saints, particularly of the mystic school, and a corresponding Muhammadan practice of venerating Hindu saints; and it ultimately led to the common worship of Satyapīṭha (the True saint). It was probably due to this feeling of friendliness that conversion of the Muslims into the Hindu fold, and reconversion of the Hindus to their original faith, could be possible during this period and later on. It was out of the desire for mutual understanding that Hindu (Sanskrit) religious literature was studied and translated or summarised in the Muslim courts like those of Zain-ul-Abidin in Kāshmir and Husain Shāh in Bengal. Further, Muslim courts and Muslim preachers and saints were attracted to the study of Hindu philosophy like Yoga and Vedānta and the sciences of medicine and astrology. The Hindu astronomers similarly borrowed from the Muslims technical terms, the Muslim calculations of latitudes and longitudes, some items of the calendar (Zīch) and a branch of horoscopy called Tājīk, and in medicine the knowledge of metallic acids and some processes in istro-chemistry. The growth of Urdu, of the mingling “out of Persian, Arabic, and Turkish words and ideas with languages and concepts of Sanskrit origin, is a proof of the linguistic synthesis of the Hindus and the Muslims”. Some Muslims wrote in vernaculars
on topics of Hindu life and tradition, as Malik Muhammad Jayasi did on Padmī; and Hindu writers wrote in the Persian language on Muslim literary traditions, as Rāj Bhana Mal did in his chronicles. Numerous Muslim poets wrote in Hindi and Hindu poets in Urdu. Amir Khusrau is known to have been the author of some Hindi works. This assimilation between the two cultures led also to the springing up of new styles of art, architecture and music, “in which the basic element remained the old Hindu, but the finish and outward form became Persian and the purpose served was that of Muslim courts”. Some Muslims of aristocratic Hindu origin, or living in a Hindu environment, assimilated the Hindu customs of Sāti and Jauhar. Several intermarriages between the ruling members of the two communities helped this rapprochement and some again were the result of it. These inter-communal marriages, though sometimes tainted with compulsion as a condition of conquest, did much “to soften the acrimonious differences” between the two communities and assist the transplanting of the customs of the one to the fold of the other.

The spirit of harmony and co-operation was not absent in the political field also. Besides retaining, out of necessity, the existing machinery of local administration, the Hindu headmen and accountants of the villages, the Muslim State employed a large number of Hindus, who became prominent in different branches of administration. Thus Međīn Rāj of Chanderi and his friends held high positions in Mālwa; in Bengal, Husain Shāh employed Hindu officers, most prominent amongst whom were Purandar Khān, Rup and Sanātān; the Sultāns of Golkundā employed some Hindus as ministers; Yusuf ‘Ādil Shāh of Bījāpur entrusted the Hindus with offices of responsibility and the records of his State were ordinarily kept in the Marāṭhī language. Sultān Zain-‘ul-Ābidin of Kāshmir anticipated Akbar in his pro-Hindu and liberal policy. The Muslim subjects of Ibrahim ‘Ādil Shāh of Bījāpur described him as “Jagadguru” for his patronage of the Hindus in his State. Examples of Rājput chivalry towards the Muslims are not rare. Thus the Rājput hero, Rānā Sanga, was chivalrous enough to respect the independence of his vanquished foe, Mahmūd II of Mālwa; Qutlugh Khān after being defeated by Sultān ‘Alā-ud-dīn took refuge with Rānā Ban Pal of Santur; and it is well known how Hamīr Deva of Ranthambhōr gave shelter to a rebel chief of ‘Alā-ud-dīn Khalji at the risk of incurring the Sultān’s wrath. Even the Vijayanagar Emperors employed Muslims in their military service from the time of Deva Rāya II, and patronised “the cause of Islam in and outside their great
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capital”. A famous Muslim general, Asad Khān of Bījāpur, was once invited to Vijayanagar to witness the Mahānavami festival. Rānā Sanga had a contingent of Muslim troops under him in his war with Bābur, and Himū, a Hindu Beniā, who rose to be the chief minister of Ādil Shāh Sūr, was the commander and leader of the Afghān troops in their last important fight with the Mughuls in A.D. 1556. These official appointments might have been due more to political necessity than to any feeling of goodwill. But there can be no doubt that they facilitated the growth of amity between the Hindus and Muslims. In fact, in different aspects of life—arts and crafts, music and painting, in the styles of buildings, in dress and costume, in games and sports—this assimilation between the two communities had progressed so much that when Bābur came to India he was compelled to notice their peculiar “Hindu-stāni way”. Sir John Marshall has very aptly remarked that “seldom in the history of mankind has the spectacle been witnessed of two civilisations, so vast and so strongly developed, yet so radically dissimilar as the Muhammadan and Hindu, meeting and mingling together. The very contrasts which existed between them, the wide divergences in their culture and their religions, make the history of their impact peculiarly instructive. . . .”

Hinduism could not completely absorb Islam but was in turn influenced by it in two ways. On the one hand, the proselytising zeal of Islam strengthened conservatism in the orthodox circles of the Hindus, who, with a view to fortifying their position against the spread of the Islamic faith, increased the stringency of the caste rules and formulated a number of rules in the Smrīti works. The most famous writers of this class were Mādhava of Vijayanagar, whose commentary on a Parāsara Smrīti work entitled Kālanirñayā was written between A.D. 1335-1360; Viśeśvara, author of Madanapārijāta, a Smrīti work written for King Madanapāla (A.D. 1360-1370); the famous commentator of Mānu, Kuṭūkā, a Bengali author belonging to the Benares school by domicile; and Raghunandan of Bengal, a contemporary of Chaitanya. On the other hand, some of the democratic principles of Islam made their way into the social and religious systems of the Hindus, and led to the rise of liberal movements under some saintly preachers. With some differences in details, all these reformers were exponents of the liberal Bhakti cult, the message of which they sought to carry before the unlettered masses. They preached the fundamental equality of all religions and the unity of Godhead, held that the dignity of man depended on his actions and not on his birth, protested against excessive ritualism and formalities of religion and
domination of the priests, and emphasised simple devotion and faith as the means of salvation for one and all.

Among them, Rāmānanda occupies the first place in point of time, though it should be noted that there are differences of opinion regarding the dates of his birth and death. Born at Allahābād in a Kānyakubja Brāhmaṇa family, Rāmānanda travelled through the holy places of Northern India. He was a worshipper of Rāma and preached the doctrine of Bhākṭi in Hindi, to members of all classes and both sexes. Thus, of his twelve principal disciples, one was a barber, another a cobbler and the third a Muhammadan weaver.

Another famous Vaishnava saint was Vallabhaḥārāya, an exponent of the Krishna cult. He was born near Benares in A.D. 1479 of a Telugu Brāhmaṇa family, when the latter had come there on pilgrimage. He showed signs of genius in his early life. After finishing his education he went to the court of Krishṇadeva Rāya of Vijayanagar, where he defeated some Saiva pāṇḍits in a public discussion. He advocated renunciation of the world and "insisted on the complete identity of both soul and world with the Supreme spirit". His monism was known as Suddha-advaita or "Pure Non-Duality". But abuses later on appeared among the followers of Vallabhaḥārāya, and, as Monier-Williams writes, "Vallabhaḥārāyaism became in its degenerate form the Epicureanism of the East".

The greatest and most popular of the Vaishnava saints was Chaitanya (1486–1533). Born in a learned Brāhmaṇa family of Nadiā in Bengal in A.D. 1485, Chaitanya displayed a wonderful literary acumen in his early life and his soul soon aspired to rise above the fetters of this world. He renounced it at the age of twenty-four and spent the rest of his life in preaching his message of love and devotion—eighteen years in Orissa, and six years in the Deccan, Brindāvan, Gaur and other places. He is regarded by his followers as an incarnation of Viṣṇu. The essence of Chaitanyaism has been thus expressed by Krishṇadās Kāvīrāj, the author of Chaitanyacharitāmrita, the famous biography of Chaitanya: "if a creature adores Kṛṣṇa and serves his Gūru, he is released from the meshes of illusion and attains to Kṛṣṇa's feet"; and "leaving these (i.e. temptations) and the religious systems based on caste, (the true Vaishnava) helplessly takes refuge with Kṛṣṇa". Thus he was opposed to priestly ritualism and preached faith in Hari. He believed that through love and

1 Anantānanda, Kabir, Pīpā, Bhavānanda, Sukha, Sursura, Padmāvatī, Narhari, Rādāśe, Dhana, Sams and the wife of Sursura.
devotion, and song and dance, a state of ecstasy could be produced
in which the personal presence of God would be realised. His
gospel was meant for all, irrespective of caste and creed, and some
of his disciples were drawn from the lower strata of Hindu society
and from among Muslims. The influence of Chaitanya's teachings
on the masses of the people has been wide and profound.

In Mahārāṣṭra the religion of devotion was preached by Nāmādeva;
and among his followers a few were Muslim converts to Hinduism.
Nāmādeva, who belonged to a caste of tailors or calico-printers,
furnished probably during the first half of the fifteenth century.¹
With his faith in the unity of Godhead, he did not set much
store by idol-worship and external observances of religion. He
believed that salvation could be attained only through love of
God. Thus he said:

"Love for him who filleth my heart shall never be sundered,
Nāma has applied his heart to the true Name.
As the love between a child and his mother,
So is my soul imbued in the God."²

Kabir made the most earnest efforts to foster a spirit of harmony
between Hinduism and Islam. His life is shrouded in a good deal
of obscurity, and the dates of his birth and death are uncertain.²
He flourished either towards the close of the fourteenth century
or in the first quarter of the fifteenth century. A legend tells
us that he was born of a Brāhmana widow, who left him on the side
of a tank in Benares, and was then found and brought up by a
Muhammadan weaver and his wife. He is represented by tradition
to have been a disciple of Rāmānanda. Though, as Dr. Carpenter
puts it, "the whole background of Kabir's thought is Hindu",
he was also influenced to a great extent by Sūfi saints and poets
with whom he came in contact. Thus he preached a religion of
love, which would promote unity amongst all classes and creeds.
To him "Hindu and Turk were pots of same clay: Allah and
Rāma were but different names". He wrote:

¹ There are differences of opinion about the date of his birth. According to Macauliffe (The Sikh Religion, Vol. VI, p. 18) it is A.D. 1270; Dr. Bhan-
darkar (Vaishnavism and Sauratism, p. 89) and Carpenter (Theism in Medieval
India, p. 432) place him in the fourteenth century. Dr. Farquhar, however,
writes that he flourished "from 1400 to 1430 or thereabouts" (J.R.A.S.,
1920, p. 186).

² For different opinions, vide Tara Chand, Influence of Islam on Indian
Civilisation, pp. 146-7. According to Macauliffe and Bhandarkar, A.D. 1398,
but according to Westcott, Farquhar, Burns and others A.D. 1440 is the
date of his birth.
"It is needless to ask of a saint the caste to which he belongs;

The barber has sought God, the washerman and the carpenter—
Even Raidas was a seeker after God.
The Rishi Swapacha was a tanner by caste.
Hindus and Moslems alike have achieved that
End, where remains no mark of distinction."

Kabir did not believe in the efficacy of ritual, or external formalities, either of Hinduism or of Islam; to him the true means of salvation was Bhajan or devotional worship, together with the freedom of the soul from all sham, insincerity, hypocrisy and cruelty.
Thus he proclaimed:

"It is not by fasting and repeating prayers and the creed
That one goeth to heaven;
The inner veil of the temple of Mecca
Is in man's heart, if the truth be known.
Make thy mind thy Kaaba, thy body its enclosing temple,
Conscience its prime teacher;
Sacrifice wrath, doubt, and malice;
Make patience thine utterance of the five prayers.
The Hindus and the Mussalmans have the same Lord."

Another great preacher of the time was Nānak, the founder of Sikhism and the reviver of the pure monotheistic doctrine of the Upanishads. He was born in a Khatri family of Talwāndī (modern Nankana), about thirty-five miles to the south-west of the city of Lahore, in A.D. 1469, and spent his whole life in preaching his gospel of universal toleration, based on all that was good in Hinduism and Islam. As a matter of fact, his mission was to put an end to the conflict of religions. Like Kabir, he preached the unity of Godhead, condemned with vehemence the formalism of both Hinduism and Islam. Thus he wrote:

"Religion consisteth not in mere words;
He who looketh on all men as equal is religious.
Religion consisteth not in wandering to tombs or places of cremation, or sitting in attitudes of contemplation.
Religion consisteth not in wandering in foreign countries, or in bathing at places of pilgrimage.
Abide pure amidst the impurities of the world;
Thus shalt thou find the way to religion."
While advocating a middle path between extreme asceticism and pleasure-seeking, Nānāk exhorted his followers to discard hypocrisy, selfishness and falsehood. He proclaimed:

"Make continence thy furnace, resignation thy goldsmith, understanding thine anvil, divine knowledge thy tools, the fear of God thy bellows, austerities thy fire, divine love thy crucible, and melt God's name therein. In such a true mint the Word shall be coined. This is the practice of those on whom God looked with an eye of favour."

Nānāk's religion being a proselytising one, several Muslims were converted to it, and it gathered momentum under his successors.

B. Development of Provincial Literature

Besides producing far-reaching social and religious effects, the reform movements also gave a great impetus to the development of Indian literature in different parts of India. While the orthodox scholars continued to write in Sanskrit, the religious reformers, with their aim of preaching before the uneducated masses, wrote and spoke in a medium which could be easily understood by them. Thus Rāmānanda and Kabir preached in Hindi and did much to enrich its poetry; and the dohās and sakhiās of Kabir, permeated with devotional fervour, are brilliant specimens of Hindi literature. Nāmadeva greatly helped the development of Marāṭhi literature; Mirā Bāi and some other preachers of the Rādha-Krishna cult sang in Brajghāshā; Nānāk and his disciples encouraged Punjābi and Gurumukhi; and Bengali literature owes a heavy debt to the Vaishnavī teachers. The famous Vaishnavī poet Chandīdās, who was born, probably towards the end of the fourteenth century, in the village of Nānmīr in the Bīrūhām district of Bengal, is still held in great esteem and his lyrics are known even to the common folk of Bengal. His contemporary, Vidyāpāti Thākur, though a native of Mithilā, is regarded as a poet of Bengal and his memory is venerated by the people of this province. The patronage of the princely courts also considerably helped the growth of literature. Vidyāpāti was the court poet of a Hindu chief named Šiva Simha. The Muslim rulers of Bengal engaged scholars to translate the Rāmāyana and the Mahābhārata from Sanskrit into Bengali, which they understood and spoke. Thus Sultān Nusrat Shāh of Gaur had the Mahābhārata translated into Bengali. Vidyāpāti
says much in praise of this Sultān and also of Sultān Chiyās-ud-din. Kritivīś, whose Bengali version of the Rāmāyana has been regarded by some as the Bible of Bengal, enjoyed the patronage of a “King of Gaur”. Māladhar Vasu translated the Bhāgavata into Bengali under the patronage of Sultān Husain Shāh and received from him the title of Guraṇāja Khān. Husain Shāh’s general, Parāgal Khān, caused another translation of the Mahābhārata to be made by Paramēśvara, also known as the Kavindra, and Parāgal Khān’s son, Chuti Khān, governor of Chittagong, employed Śrīkara Nandi to translate the Asvamedha Purāṇa of the Mahābhārata into Bengali. We have already noted what great encouragement was given to the development of Telugu literature by the Vijayanagar court.

C. Literary Activity in Sanskrit

The period was not entirely barren of important compositions in Sanskrit, religious as well as secular, though in this respect it suffers in comparison with the preceding two or three centuries. About A.D. 1200 Pārthasāratī Miśra wrote several works on the Karma Mīmāṃsā, of which the Śāstra Dipikā was studied most widely. Some works which expounded the doctrines of the Yoga, Vaiśeshika, and Nyāya systems of philosophy were produced during this period. The more important dramas of the time were Hammir-mada-mardana by Jay Singh Suri (A.D. 1219–1229), Pradyumna-abhīṣadayaya by the Kerala prince Ravivarman, Pratīp Rudra Kalyān by Vidyānāth (A.D. 1300), Pārvatī Parinaya by Vāmana Bhatta Bāna (A.D. 1400), Gangādāsa Pratāpa Vilāsa, celebrating the fight of a prince of Chāmpāner against Muhammad II of Gujarāt, by Gangādhar, and the Vidagdhā Mādhava and the Lālita Mādhava, written about A.D. 1532 by Rupa Goswami, minister of Husain Shāh of Bengal, and author of no less than twenty-five works in Sanskrit. Sūrītī and grammatical literature flourished during this period in Mithilā and Bengal, the most famous writers being Padmanābha Datta, Vidyāpati Upādhyāya and Vāchaspati of Mithilā and Raghunandana of Bengal. It was also marked by the production of a mass of Jaina literature, secular as well as religious. The Vijayanagar rulers extended considerable patronage to scholars like Sāyana, his brother, Mādhava Vidyāranya, and others, and there was consequently a wide Sanskrit culture. We find instances of Muslim scholars possessing a knowledge of Sanskrit.
D. Persian Literature and Muslim Education

The Sultāns and Amirs of Delhi, and the Muslim rulers and nobles in the provinces, naturally encouraged literary activities in Persian, which they appreciated better. Amīr Khusrav declared with pride that Delhi developed into an intellectual competitor of Bukhārā, the famous university-city of Central Asia. The then Muslim rulers of India extended patronage to the Persian scholars who flocked to their courts from other parts of Asia under the pressure of Mongol inroads; established institutions for Muslim learning at Delhi, Jullundur, Firuzabād and other places; founded libraries, the most important one being the Imperial Library at Delhi, of which Amīr Khusrav was appointed the librarian by Jalāl-ud-dīn Khaljī; and also helped the growth of Muslim literary societies. The most famous of the Indian scholars who wrote in Persian during this period was Amīr Khusrav. He was a prolific writer, whose genius unfolded itself in poetry, prose and music, and whom destiny granted a long tenure of life. He first rose to fame during the reign of Balban and was the tutor of Prince Muhammad, the eldest son of the Sultan. Subsequently he became the court-poet of ‘Alā-ud-dīn Khaljī, also enjoyed the patronage of Ghiyās-ud-dīn Tughluq, and died in A.D. 1324–1325. Another poet of the time, whose fame was recognised outside India, was Shaikh Najm-ud-dīn Hasan, popularly known as Hasan-i-Dīhlavī. The first Khaljī ruler did not forget to patronise learning, and his successor, ‘Alā-ud-dīn, also seems to have been an enthusiastic friend of it. We are told by Barni that “the most wonderful thing which people saw in ‘Alā-ud-dīn’s reign was the multitude of great men of all nationalities, masters of every science and experts in every art. The capital of Delhi, by the presence of these unrivalled men of great talents, had become the envy of Baghdād, the rival of Cairo, and the equal of Constantinople”. The pious and learned scholar Nizām-ud-dīn Auliya and several other scholars flourished during this reign. Ghiyās-ud-dīn Tughluq, too, encouraged learned men; and, in spite of his fanciful projects, Muhammad bin Tughluq, himself a man of accomplishments, freely patronised poets, logicians, philosophers and physicians, and held discussion with them in his court. The most notable of the literary men of his time was Maulānā Muiyvyan-ud-dīn Umrānī, who wrote commentaries on the Husainī, Talkhis, and Misfāh. Firūz Shāh, himself the author of Fathāt-ı-Firūz Shāhī, showed great zeal for the cause of education and established several colleges with mosques attached to them.
Among the learned men of his time, the most eminent were Qāzi 'Abdul Muqtaḍar Shāhī, Maulāna Khwājāgi, and Ahmad Thānesvārī. Among the Lodis, Sultān Sikandar was himself a poet, and gave considerable encouragement to learning. Most of the rulers of the Bahmani kingdom and other independent Muslim dynasties, like those of Bijāpur, Ahmadnagar, Golkūndā, Mālwa, Jaunpur, Bengal, and even Multān, were also patrons of letters. The Muslim writers showed their skill in a branch of study which had been comparatively neglected by the Hindus. They wrote several first-rate historical books in elegant prose. Thus we have Minhāj-ud-dīn’s Tabaqāt-i-Nāsirī, which is a general history of the Islamic world and was named after one of his patrons, Sultān Nāsir-ud-dīn Mahmūd. Amir Khusraw’s historical mesnevis are full of valuable information, and his Tarīkh-i-'Alāi especially “contains an interesting account of the first few years of the reign of ‘Alā-ud-dīn Khājīj”. The most famous historian of the period was Zād-ud-dīn Bārī, a contemporary of Muhammad bin Tughluq and Fīrūz Shāh. Two other important historical works of the time are the Tarīkh-i-Fīrūz Shāhī of Shams-ī-Sirāj ‘Aff, written during the reign of Fīrūz Shāh, and the Tarīkh-i-Mubārak Shāhī of Yahiyyā bin Ahmad Sarhindī, which was written about eighty years after the death of Muhammad bin Tughluq and was largely used by later writers.

E. Art and Architecture

It is inaccurate to describe the architecture of the period as "Indo-Saracenic" or "Pathān", as some scholars like Fergusson and others have done. Nor can it be regarded as entirely Indian in "soul and body", as Haveli would ask us to believe. In fact, it represented a blending of Indian and Islamic styles, as did certain other aspects of the culture of the time. Sir John Marshall observed that "Indo-Islamic art is not merely a local variety of Islamic art", nor is it merely "a modified form of Hindu art. . . . Broadly speaking, Indo-Islamic architecture derives its character from both sources, though not always in an equal degree". There is no doubt that there existed in India certain Brahmamical, Buddhist and Jaina styles, while Islamic influences were slowly entering into this land from the middle of the seventh century A.D. At the same time, we should note that what we generally call Islamic art was not of a homogeneous and single type; but the followers of Islam, like the Arabs, the Persians, or the Turks, brought in their train the art of different parts of
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Western and Central Asia, Northern Africa and South-Western Europe. The mingling of these with the different indigenous styles of old Indian art during this period, according to the needs of religion and personal taste, led to the growth of new “Indian” styles of architecture, distinct in every province, like Jaunpur, Bengal, Bijāpur, Gujarāt, etc. In Delhi architecture Islamic influences predominated owing to the numerical strength of the Muslims there. “At Jaunpur, on the other hand, and in the Deccan, the local styles enjoyed greater ascendancy, while in Bengal the conquerors not only adopted the fashion of building in brick, but adorned their structures with chiselled and moulded enrichments frankly imitated from Hindu prototypes. So, too, in Western India they appropriated to themselves almost en bloc the beautiful Gujarātī style, which has yielded some of the finest buildings of medieval India; and in Kāshmir they did the same with the striking wooden architecture which must have been long prevalent in that part of the Himalayas.”

This amalgamation of exotic and indigenous architectural styles was possible owing to certain factors. The Muslims had of necessity to employ Indian craftsmen and sculptors, who were naturally guided in their work by the existing art traditions of their country. Further, in the earlier period of Muslim invasions, mosques were
constructed out of the materials of Hindu and Jaina temples, and sometimes the temples themselves were only modified to some extent to suit the requirements of the conquerors. Again, in spite of some striking contrasts between the Indian and Islamic styles, there were two points of resemblance between them which

favoured their fusion. One characteristic feature of many Hindu temples, as well as of Muslim mosques, was "the open court encompassed by chambers or colonnades, and such temples as were built on this plan naturally lent themselves to conversion into mosques and would be the first to be adapted for that purpose by the conquerors. Again, a fundamental characteristic that supplied a common link between the two styles was the fact that
both Islamic and Hindu art were inherently decorative. Ornament was as vital to the one as to the other; both were dependent on it for their very being”.

The best specimens of the Delhi style are offered by the Qutb group of mosques, the most famous of which is the Qutb Minâr, marked by free-standing towers, calligraphic inscriptions and stalactite corbelling beneath the balconies. The two principal monuments of 'Alâ-ud-dîn’s reign—the Jamâ‘at Khâna Masjid

at the Dargâh of Nizâm-ud-dîn Auliya and the 'Alâi Darwâza at the Qutb Minâr—show the growing preponderance of Muslim ideas over those of the Hindu architects. The architecture of the Tughluqs period lost the splendour, luxuriance and variety which characterised that of the Slave and Khalji regimes; it became prosaic, simple, austere and formal. This was due to the religious ideas of the Tughluqs and to the comparatively poor condition of the State finances during their rule. Under the Sayyids and the Lodi, attempts were made to revive the animated style of the Khalji period. But these succeeded only to a limited extent, and
ALAI DARWAZA AT THE QUTB MINAR, DELHI

TOMB OF FIRUZ SHAH, SON OF RAJAB, DELHI
the style could not "shake off the deadening effect of the Tughluq period".

Between A.D. 1400 and 1478, during the reigns of Ibrahim, Mahmud and Husain Sharqi, a new style of architecture developed in Jaunpur, which shows the indubitable influence of Hindu art. Its massive sloping walls, square pillars, smaller galleries and cloisters are clearly Hindu features, designed by Hindu masons, and the mosques of Jaunpur have no minarets of the usual type. In fact, many of the new buildings of Jaunpur were built out of the materials of old temples for a new purpose. The Abul Fazl Masjid, founded

in A.D. 1377, but completed in A.D. 1408, is one of the brilliant specimens of the Jaunpur style.

In Bengal also there grew up a mixed style of architecture, characterised by the use of bricks in the main, "the subsidiary use of stone, the use of pointed arches on short pillars, and the Muslim adaptation of the traditional Hindu temple style of curvilinear cornices copied from bamboo structures, and of beautifully carved Hindu symbolic decorative designs like the Lotus". The Adina Masjid at Pandy of 400 domes, built by Sikandar in A.D. 1308, is renowned for its magnitude and beauty. The other famous mosques of this province are the Chhota Son Masjid (Smaller Golden Mosque), built by Wali Muhammad during the reign of Husain Shah between
A.D. 1493-1519, the Barā Sonā Masjid (Greater Golden Mosque), completed by Nusrat Shāh at Gaur in 1526; and the Qudūs Rasūl, built by the same Sultān in A.D. 1530.

The province of Gujarāt also witnessed the growth of a beautiful style of architecture. A splendid indigenous style had already flourished there before the coming of the Muslims, and the buildings of the conquerors bear unmistakable signs of the influence of that style, though arches were occasionally used for symbolical purposes. Thus we find the use of fine wood-carving and also of delicate stone lattices and ornaments in the buildings of the new capital city, Ahmadābād, which was constructed by Ahmad Shāh, during A.D. 1411-1441, out of the ruins of old temples and buildings. The Jāmī' Masjid, the construction of which was begun in A.D. 1411, has 260 pillars supporting 15 stone domes, made of horizontally projecting courses in the indigenous style. Dr. Burgess, who has dealt exhaustively with the history and features of ancient
and medieval architecture in his five volumes of the Archaeological Survey of Western India, justly describes this style as "combining all the beauty and finish of the native art with a certain magnificence which is deficient in their own works". In the numerous buildings, mosques and tombs, built in Gujarāt since the accession of the Ahmad Shāhī rulers, the tradition of the old Indian art was predominant, though it was modified in certain respects according to the requirements of the followers of Islam.

At Dhūr, the old capital of the kingdom of Mālwā, two mosques were built wholly out of the remains of old buildings; the domes and pillars of these mosques were of Hindu form. But the buildings at Māndū, where the capital was soon transferred, were marked by the predominance of Mūslīm art traditions, as those of Delhi; "the borrowing or imitating" of native forms "seems to have been suppressed and the buildings clung steadily to the pointed arch style". Among the many buildings of splendid architectural beauty built in the fortified city of Māndū, situated in an extensive plateau over-looking the Narmadā, the following deserve mention—the Jāmī’ Masjīd, which was planned and begun by
Hüshang and completed by Mahmūd Khaljī, the Hindolā Mahāl, the Jahājī Mahāl, Hüshang's tomb, and Bāz Bahādur's and Rupamati's palaces. Marble and sandstone were used in many of these edifices.

The Muslim Sultāns of Kāśmīr continued the old tradition of stone and wooden architecture but grafted on it "structural forms and decorative motifs peculiarly associated with Islam." Thus here also we find a blending of Hindu and Muslim ideas of art.

In South India the architecture of the Bahmanids, who were patrons of art, letters and sciences, was a composite mixture of several elements—Indian, Turkish, Egyptian and Persian—the last of which was well-marked in some of the buildings like the Jāmi' Masjīd at Gulbarga, the Chānd Amār at Daulatabād (1435) and the College of Mahmūd Gāwān at Bīdar (1472). Many of the Bahmanī buildings were built on the sites of the old temples and out of their materials, and thus the influence of old Hindu art could not be avoided. Turkish and Egyptian elements entered through West Asiatic and African adventurers, who got employment in the Bahmanī kingdom; and the Persian element through the Persians, who poured into that kingdom in the latter half of the fifteenth century. The native Deccan art, however, began
to reassert itself in growing favour from the end of the fifteenth century. As the monuments which the Ādil Shāhīs of Būāpur built in the next century were constructed by Indian artists and craftsmen, "it was inevitable", writes Sir John Marshall, "that Indian genius should rise superior to foreign influence and stamp itself more and more deeply on these creations". We have already discussed the splendid outburst of art and architecture in the Vijayanagar Empire.

Thus we find that, in spite of some bitterness in political relations, the impact of Hindu and Islamic civilisations was producing harmony and mutual understanding in the spheres of society, culture and art, during the Turko-Mughān period. This harmony developed in the time of the great Mughal, Akbar, to an unprecedented degree and was not wholly lost even in the time of his successors and also of the later Mughuls.

The preachings of the saintly teachers of India with their ideal of uplift of the masses, the tolerant ideas of the Sūfi saints and scholars, and the growth of Indian provincial literature, might be regarded
as signs of modernism appearing as a result of the fusion of two civilisations, while the medieval Sultānate was hastening towards disintegration. Another noticeable feature of Indian history on the eve of Bābur's invasion was the rise or growth of indigenous states, like Vijayanagar, Orissa and Mewār, as a sort of protest against foreign domination. We should also note that the rulers of the independent Muslim kingdoms that arose on the ruins of the medieval Muslim Empire cannot all be regarded as aliens; the rulers of Gujarāt, Ahmadnagar and Berar were of indigenous origin. Many of the States, whether Hindu or Muslim, that grew up at this time represented local movements for "self-determination". But their chances were destroyed by another Turkish incursion, of which the leader was Bābur. Thus Bābur's invasion gave a new turn to the history of India.
PART II

Book II

THE MUGHLUL EMPIRE
CHAPTER I

MUGHUL-AFGHĀN CONTENT FOR SUPREMACY IN INDIA,
A.D. 1526-1556

1. Bābur

The history of India from A.D. 1526 to 1556 is mainly the story of the Mughul-Afghan contest for supremacy in this land. The previous Mughal (Mongol) invasions into India did not produce any tangible result except that they added, through the settlement of the “New Mussalmāns”, a new element to the Indian population and at times harassed the Turko-Afghan Sultāns. But the invasion of Timūr, who occupied a province of the Empire, the Punjab, accelerated the fall of the decadent Sultānate. One of his descendants, Bābur, was destined to attempt a systematic conquest of Northern India and thus to lay here the foundation of a new Turkish dominion, which being lost in the time of his son and successor, Humāyūn, in the face of an Afghan revival, was restored by the year 1556 and was gradually extended by Akbar. In fact, there were three phases in the history of the Mughal conquest of India. The first phase (1526-1530) was occupied with the subjugation of the Afghāns and the Rājpūts under Rānā Sanga. The second phase (1530-1540) commenced with the reign of Humāyūn, who made unsuccessful attempts to subjugate Mālwa, Gujarāt and Bengal, but was expelled from India by Sher Shāh, which meant the revival of the Afghan power. The third phase (1545-1556) was marked by the restoration of the Mughal dominion by Humāyūn and its consolidation by Akbar.

Bābur, a Chaghātai Turk, was descended on his father’s side from Timūr, and was connected on his mother’s side with Chingiz Khān.

1 The so-called Mughuls really belonged to a branch of the Turks named after Chaghātai, the second son of Chingiz Khān, the famous Mongol leader, who came to possess Central Asia and Turkestan, the land of the Turks. The establishment of the Mughal dominion in India can very well be regarded as “an event in Islamic and world history” in the sense that it meant a fresh triumph for Islam in India, at a time when its followers were gaining success in other parts of the world. Constantinople had been captured by the Turks in A.D. 1453, Sulaimān the Magnificent (1520-1566) extended the authority of the Turkish Empire over South-eastern Europe, and in Persia, Ismā‘īl Safavi (1500-1524) laid the foundation of the famous Safavi Empire.
In 1494 he inherited from his father, at the age of eleven, the small principality of Farghāna, now a province of Chinese Turkestan. But his early life was full of difficulties, which, however, proved to be a blessing in disguise by training him adequately to fight with the vicissitudes of fortune. He cherished the desire of recovering the throne of Timur, but was thwarted by his kinsmen and near relatives at Farghāna and the rivalry of the Uzbek chief Shaibānī Khan. His two attempts to take possession of the coveted city of Samarqand in 1497 and 1503 ended in failure. To add to his misfortunes, he was deprived of his own patrimony of Farghāna and had to spend his days as a homeless wanderer for about a year. But even in this period of dire adversity, he formed the bold design of conquering Hindustān like his great ancestor Timur, the story of whose Indian exploits he heard from an old lady of one hundred and eleven, mother of a village headman with whom he had found shelter for some time. Thus taking advantage of a rebellion in another part of the dominions of the Uzbegs, whose rising power had kept off the Timūrīs from their principalities, Bābur occupied Kābul in a.d. 1504. Being able to secure the help of Shāh Ismai'il Safavi of Persia against Shaibānī Khan, the Uzbek chief, Bābur tried once again to occupy Samarqand in October, 1511, but the Uzbegs under Shaibānī's successor finally defeated him in 1512. Bābur's ambitions towards the north-west being thus foiled, he decided to try his luck in the south-east, and led several expeditions in this direction, which were in the nature of reconnaissances, before he got an opportunity to advance into the heart of Hindustān after twelve years.

This opportunity came to Bābur when he was invited to India by a discontented party. It has already been pointed out how India was then distracted by the ambitions, disaffections and rivalries of the nobles, and the Delhi Sultanate existed in nothing but in name. The last nail in its coffin was driven by the ambition and revengeful spirit of some of its nobles. Two of them, Daulat Khan, the most powerful noble of the Punjab, who was discontented with Ibrāhīm Lodi because of the cruel treatment he had meted out to his son, Dilawar Khan, and 'Ālam Khan, an uncle of Ibrāhīm Lodi and a pretender to the throne of Delhi, went to the length of inviting Bābur to invade India. Probably Rānā Sanga had some negotiations with Bābur about this time.

Bābur had for some time been cherishing the ambition of invading Hindustān. His early training in the school of adversity had implanted in him the spirit of adventure. He at once responded to
the invitation, entered the Punjab and occupied Lahore in 1524. But his Indian confederates, Daulat Khān and ʿĀlam Khān, soon realised their mistake. When they saw that Bābur had no desire to give up his Indian conquests, they turned against him. This compelled Bābur to retire to Kābul, where he began to collect reinforcements with a view to striking once again.

The blow was not long in coming. He marched from Kābul in November, 1525, occupied the Punjab, and compelled Daulat Khān Lodi to submit. The more difficult task of conquering Delhi, which was certainly within the horizon of Bābur's ambition, was still to be accomplished. So he proceeded against Ibrāhīm Lodi, the nominal ruler of the shrivelled Afghan Empire, and met him on the historic field of Panipat on the 21st April, 1526. He had with him a large park of artillery and an army of 12,000 men, while the numerical strength of the troops of Ibrāhīm was vastly superior, being 100,000 according to Bābur's estimate. But Bābur had the strength of character and experience of a veteran general, while his enemy, as we are told by Bābur himself, "was an inexperienced man, careless in his movements, who marched without order, halted or retired without method and engaged without foresight". Thus by superior strategy and generalship and the use of artillery Bābur won a decisive victory over the Lodi Sultān, who, after a desperate resistance, fell on the field of battle with the flower of his army. "By the grace and mercy of Almighty God," Bābur wrote, "this difficult affair was made easy to me, and that mighty army, in the space of half a day, was laid in the dust." Bābur quickly occupied Delhi and Agra.

But the Mughul conquest of Hindustān was not an accomplished fact as a result of Bābur's victory over Ibrāhīm. It did not give him the virtual sovereignty over the country, because there were other strong powers like the Afghan military chiefs, and the Rājputs under Rānā Sanga, who also then aspired after political supremacy and were thus sure to oppose him. As a modern writer has aptly remarked, "the magnitude of Bābur's task could be properly realised when we say that it actually began with Panipat. Panipat set his foot on the path of empire-building, and in this path the first great obstacle was the opposition of the Afghan tribes" under a number of military chiefs, each one of whom exercised almost undisputed power within his domains or jāgirs. Nevertheless, the battle of Panipat has its own significance in the sense that it marked the foundation of Mughul dominion in India.

1 We have already pointed out that this was not the first occasion when artillery was used in India.
Shortly after occupying the Doab, Bābur suppressed the Afghān nobles in the north, south and east of it. He sent his own nobles to the unconquered parts of the country to expel the Afghān chiefs therefrom, while he engaged himself at Āgra in organising his resources with a view to meeting the brave Rājput chief, Rānā Sanga, a collision with whom was inevitable. As a matter of fact, it took place almost before the task of subduing the Afghān nobles had been completed. Rānā Sanga, a veteran and intrepid warrior, marched to Rayānā, where he was joined by Hasan Khān Mewātī and some other Muslim supporters of the Lodī dynasty. Thus the Rājputs and some of the Indian Muslims allied themselves together with the determination to prevent the imposition of another foreign yoke on India. But all the Afghān chiefs could not combine with the Rājputs at this critical moment, and thus Bābur’s task became comparatively easy. The course of Indian history might have taken a different turn if he had had to encounter the united strength of the Hindus and all the Muslims of India.

Rānā Sanga, the hero of Rājput national revival, was certainly a more formidable adversary than Ibrāhīm. He marched with an army, composed of 120 chiefs, 80,000 horse and 500 war elephants, and the rulers of Mārwār, Amber, Gwalior, Ajmer, and Chandī, and Sultān Mahmid Lodī (another son of Sultān Sikandar Lodī), whom Rānā Sanga had acknowledged as the ruler of Delhi, joined him. Moreover, the Rājputs, being “energetic, chivalrous, fond of battle and bloodshed, animated by a strong national spirit,” were ready to meet face to face the boldest veterans of the camp, and were at all times prepared to lay down their life for their honour”. Bābur’s small army was struck with terror and panic, and he himself also fully realised the magnitude of his task. But he possessed an indomitable spirit, and without being unnerved tried to infuse fresh courage and enthusiasm into the hearts of his dismayed soldiers. He broke his drinking cups, poured out all the liquor that he had with him on the ground, vowed not to take strong drink any longer, and appealed to his men in a stirring speech.

This produced the desired effect, and all his soldiers swore on the Holy Quran to fight for him. The Mughuls and the Indians met in a decisive contest at Khānuā or Kānūā, a village almost due west of Āgra, on the 16th March, 1527. The Rājputs fought with desperate valour, but Bābur, by using similar tactics as at Pānīpat, triumphed over them. The defeat of the Rājputs was complete. The Rānā escaped with the help of some of his followers, but died broken-hearted after about two years. Bābur followed
up his success at Khānum by crossing the Jamnā and storming the fortress of Chandeli, in spite of the gallant opposition of the Rājputs.

The battle of Khānum is certainly one of the decisive battles of Indian history. In a sense, its results were more significant than those of the first battle of Pānpat. The battle of Pānpat marked the defeat of the titular Sultān of Delhi, who had in fact ceased to command sovereign authority, while that of Khānum resulted in the defeat of the powerful Rājput confederacy. The latter thus destroyed the chance of political revival of the Rājputs, for which they had made a bid on the decay of the Turko-Afghān Sultānate. It is, of course, far from the truth to say that the Rājputs "ceased henceforth to be a dominant factor in the politics of Hindustān". In fact, their retirement from the field of politics was only temporary. They revived once again after about thirty years and exercised profound influence on the history of the Mughul Empire. Even Sher Shāh had to reckon with Rājput hostility. But the temporary eclipse of the Rājputs after Khānum facilitated Bābur's task in India and made possible the foundation of a new foreign rule. Rushbrooke Wilkins is right when he says that before the battle of Khānum, "the occupation of Hindustān might have been looked upon as a mere episode in Bābur's career of adventure, but from henceforth it becomes the keynote of his activities for the remainder of his life. His days of wandering in search of a fortune are now over, the fortune is his and he has but to show himself worthy of it. And it is significant of the new stage in his career, which this battle marks, that never afterwards does he have to stake his throne and life upon the issue of a stricken field. Fighting there is and fighting in plenty to be done; but it is fighting for the extension of his power, for the reduction of rebels, for the ordering of his kingdom. It is never fighting for his throne. And it is also significant of Bābur's grasp of vital issues that from henceforth the centre of gravity of his power is shifted from Kābul to Hindustān".

We have already noted how Bābur hurried to meet the Rājputs by leaving the task of thorough subjugation of the Afghan chiefs incomplete. But he could now turn his undivided attention to it. He met the allied Afghāns of Bihār and Bengal on the banks of the Gogra, near the junction of that river with the Ganges above Patna, and inflicted a crushing defeat on them on the 6th May, 1529. Thus, as a result of three battles, a considerable portion of Northern India was reduced to submission by Bābur, who became the master of a kingdom extending from the Oxus to the
Gogra and from the Himalayas to Gwalior, though there remained certain gaps to be filled in here and there.

But Babur was not destined to enjoy for long the fruits of his hard-won victories. He died at Agra at the age of forty-seven or forty-eight, on the 26th December, 1530. The Muslim historians relate a romantic anecdote regarding his death. It is said that when his son, Humayun, fell ill, Babur, by a fervent prayer to God, had his son's disease transferred to his own body, and thus while the son began to recover, the father's health gradually declined till he ultimately succumbed, two or three months after Humayun's recovery. A modern writer argues that Babur's death was due to the attack of a disease and that "there is no reason to believe the fantasy told by 'Abul Fazl that Babur died as the result of the sacrifice he performed for his son".

Babur's body was first laid at Arambagh in Agra, but was afterwards conveyed to Kabul, where it was buried in one of his favourite gardens.

During the four years that Babur spent in Hindustan, the Punjab, the territory covered by the modern United Provinces, and North Bahr, were conquered by him, and the leading Rajput state of Mewar also submitted to him. But he could effect nothing more than conquests, which alone do not suffice to stabilise an Empire, unless the work of administrative consolidation goes hand in hand with, or immediately follows, them. Thus, as a modern writer has remarked, "what he had left undone was of greater importance" than what he had done. Though his military conquests gave him an extensive dominion, "there was", writes Erskine, "little uniformity in the political situation of the different parts of this vast empire. Hardly any law could be regarded as universal but that of the unrestrained power of the prince. Each kingdom, each province, each district, and (we may almost say) every village, was governed, in ordinary matters, by its peculiar customs. . . . There were no regular courts of law spread over the kingdom for the administration of justice. . . . All differences relating to land, where they were not settled by the village officers, were decided by the district authorities, the collectors, the Zamindars or Jagirdars. The higher officers of government exercised not only civil but also criminal jurisdiction, even in capital cases, with little form or under little restraint". In fact, after his conquests, Babur had hardly any time to enact new laws,


2 As Babur himself tells us, he had a special liking for Kabul. "The climate is extremely delightful," he writes, "and there is no such place in the known world."
or to reorganise the administration, which continued to retain its medieval feudal nature with all its defects. He could not build a sound financial system. He spent much wealth in offering presents and gifts to his followers, and remitted certain duties for the Muslims. Nor could he leave behind him any "remarkable public and philanthropic institutions" to win the goodwill of the governed. Thus, taking these defects of Babur's work into consideration, it can very well be said that he "bequeathed to his son a monarchy which could be held together only by the continuance of war conditions, which in times of peace was weak, structureless and ineptitude." Nevertheless, he occupies an important place in the history of India, as he was the first architect to lay the foundation stone of the edifice of the Mughul Empire in India, on which the superstructure was raised by his illustrious grandson, Akbar.

Babur is one of the most romantic and interesting personalities in the history of Asia. A man of indomitable spirit and remarkable military prowess, he was no ruthless conqueror exulting in needless massacres and wanton destruction. An affectionate father, a kind master, a generous friend and a firm believer in God, he was an ardent lover of Nature and truth and "excelled in music and other arts". He probably inherited from his father the restless spirit of adventure and generosity of temperament that he did not lose even in the most troublesome period of his life, and derived his literary tastes from his maternal grandfather. As Lane-Poole observes, "He is the link between Central Asia and India, between predatory hordes and imperial government, between Timur and Akbar. The blood of the two great scourges of Asia, Chingiz and Timur, mixed in his veins, and to the daring and restlessness of the nomad Tartar he joined the culture and urbanity of the Persian. He brought the energy of the Mongol, the courage and spirit of the Turk, to the subjection of the illustrious Hindu, and, himself a soldier of fortune and no architect of empire, he yet laid the first stone of the splendid fabric which his grandson Akbar completed. . . . His permanent place in history rests upon his Indian conquests, which opened the way for an imperial line, but his place in biography and in literature is determined rather by his daring adventures and persevering efforts in his earlier days, and by the delightful Memoirs in which he related them. Soldier of fortune as he was, Babur was not the less a man of fine literary taste and fastidious critical perception. In Persian, the language of culture, the Latin of Central Asia, as it is of India, he was an accomplished poet, and in his native Turki he was master of a
pure and unaffected style alike in prose and verse.” His *Memoirs*, which deservedly hold a high place in the history of human literature, were translated into Persian by ‘Abdur Rahim Khāni-Khān in the time of Akbar in 1590, into English by Leyden and Erskine in 1826, and into French in 1871. Annette Susannah Beveridge has published a revised English version of these. There is also a small collection of his fine Turki lyrics.

2. Humāyūn and his Early Wars

Three days after the death of Bābur, Humāyūn ascended the throne of Hindustān at the age of twenty-three. The situation at his accession was not indeed a very easy one. He was confronted with several hostile forces on all sides, disarmed and so the more dangerous. There was hardly any unity in the royal family, and his cousins, Muhammad Zamān and Muhammad Sultān, were pretenders to the throne. Moreover, as the law of primogeniture was not strictly enforced among the Mussalmāns, his three brothers, Kānrān, Hindāl and ‘Askari, also coveted the throne. As Erskine remarks: “The sword was the grand arbiter of right, and every son was prepared to try his fortune against his brothers.” His court was also full of nobles who engineered plans for the possession of the throne. Further, the army at his disposal was a mixed body, composed of adventurers of diverse nationalities having conflicting interests. Thus, he could not safely count on the support of his relatives, his court, or his army. Again, Bābur’s legacy to Humāyūn was of a precarious nature. The former, as we have already noted, did not leave behind him a consolidated and well-organised Empire. In fact, “he had defeated the armies and broken the power of the reigning dynasty; but the only hold which he, or his race, yet had upon the people of India was military force”. The Rājputs had been only temporarily subdued. Though the Afghāns had been defeated, they were far from being permanently crushed. The numerous scattered Afghān nobles, always ripe for revolt, required only a strong and able leader to galvanise them into life, and this they found in Sher Shāh. The growing power of Gujarāt under Bahādur Shāh was also a serious menace to Humāyūn.

A ruler, possessed of military genius, diplomatic skill, and political wisdom, was the need of the hour. But Humāyūn lacked all of those. In fact, he himself proved to be his worst enemy. Though endowed with intellectual tastes and love of culture, he was devoid of the wisdom and discretion, as well as strong
determination and perseverance, of his father. As Lane-Poole observes, "he was incapable of sustained effort and after a moment of triumph would bury himself in his harem and dream away the precious hours in the opium-eater's paradise whilst his enemies were thundering at the gate. Naturally kind, he forgave when he should have punished; light-hearted and sociable, he revelled at the table when he ought to have been in the saddle. His character attracts but never dominates. In private life he might have been a delightful companion and a staunch friend. But as a king he was a failure. His name means 'fortunate', and never was an unlucky sovereign more miscalled".

The first mistake on the part of Humâyûn was that he showed indiscreet clemency, probably under the dying instructions of his father, towards his brothers, who being his jealous rivals should have been kept under effective control. 'Askari was given the title of Sambhal; Hindâl that of Alwar, and Kâmrân, the eldest of the three, was not only confirmed in the possession of Kâbul and Qandahâr but also secured after a military demonstration against Mir Yunnus 'Ali, Humâyûn's general at Lahore, the Punjab and the district of Hissâr Firûza, to the east of the Punjab proper. Thus Humâyûn struck at the root of the integrity of Bâbur's Empire.

Further, the transfer of the Indus region and beyond to Kâmrân deprived Humâyûn of the best recruiting ground for his army, the strength of which was absolutely necessary for the safety of the infant Mughul dominion in India. The possession of Hissâr Firûza gave Kâmrân the command of the high-road between the Punjab and Delhi.

Fortune, however, favoured Humâyûn in his early wars, before the hostile forces had grown uncontrollable. Five or six months after his accession he marched to besiege the fortress of Kâlnijar in Bundelkhand, on the suspicion that its Râjâ was in sympathy with the Afgâns. But he had to retire, after levying a certain amount of money from the Râjâ, to deal with the Afgâns menace in the east. He gained a decisive victory over the Afgâns at Dourah (Dauhrâ) and drove out Sultan Mahmûd Lodi from Jaunpur. He besieged Chûnâr, then held by the Afgân chief Sher Khan, but soon abandoned it, and without completely suppressing the rising Afgân chief accepted from him "a purely perfunctory submission", and thus allowed him free scope to develop his resources and power, while he had to march to the west to check the growing pretensions of Bahâdur Shâh of Gujarât.

Bahâdur Shâh had given definite provocation to Humâyûn. He had openly given shelter and help to many of the Afgâns refugees
and foes of the latter. The decline of Mewār had given him the opportunity to extend his territories at its expense, and after annexing Mālwa he besieged the famous Rājput fortress of Chitor, when Humāyūn reached Mālwa towards the end of 1534 without reaping the full advantage of his victory over the Afghāns. Severely harassed by the Gujarātis, Rāni Karnāvati of Mewār solicited Humāyūn's assistance against Bahādur Shāh. But the Mughul king paid no heed to this, nor did he, for his own sake, immediately attack Bahādur Shāh, but waited while the latter vanquished the Rājputs and stormed Chitor with the help of the Turkish engineer, Rūmī Khān (of Constantinople), and Portuguese and other European artillerymen. Humāyūn committed a fatal blunder by ignoring the Rājput appeal. Indeed, he lost a golden opportunity of winning for his own cause their sympathy and support, the inestimable worth of which was realised by his son, Akbar. For the present he defeated the troops of Bahādur Shāh in an engagement on the banks of an artificial lake near Mandasor, chased him from Māndū to Champāner and Ahmadābād and thence to Cambay till he was compelled to seek refuge in the island of Diu. But this victory of Humāyūn over the Gujarāt ruler was short-lived. The weakness of his character soon manifested itself here as in other events of his career. In the flush of victory, he, his brother, 'Askari, and most of his soldiers, plunged into feasting and revelry, as a natural sequel to which "his affairs fell into confusion; and even his own camp became a scene of uproar and insubordination". The Sultan of Gujarāt took advantage of this to recover his lost territories from the Mughuls. Humāyūn could not think of subduing him again, as his attention was drawn towards the east, where the Afghāns had grown immensely powerful. No sooner had he begun his return march than Mālwa was also lost to him. Thus "one year had seen the rapid conquest of the two great provinces; the next saw them quickly lost". The next stage in Humāyūn's career was marked by his ill-fated conflicts with Sher, the champion of Afghan revival.

3. Sher Shāh and the Sūrs: The Afghan Revival and Decline

Bābur's victories at Pānipat and Gogrā did not result in the complete annihilation of the Afghan chiefs. They were seething with discontent against the newly founded alien rule, and only needed the guidance of one strong personality to coalesce their isolated efforts into an organised national resistance against it. This they got in Sher Khān Sūr, who effected the revival of the
Afghan power and established a glorious, though short, regime in India by ousting the newly established Mughul authority.

The career of Sher Khan Sur, the hero of Indo-Muslim revival, is as fascinating as that of Râbars and not less instructive than that of the great Mughal, Akbar. Originally bearing the name of Farid, he began his life in a humble way, and, like many other great men in history, had to pass through various trials and vicissitudes of fortune before he rose to prominence by dint of his personal merit. His grandfather, Ibrahim, an Afghan of the Sur tribe, lived near Peshawar and his father's name was Hasan. Ibrahim migrated with his son to the east in quest of military service in the early part of Bahaddur Shah's reign and both first entered the service of Mahabat Khan Sur and Dad Khan Sahib Khull, jagirdars of the paranâs of Harana and Baksha in the Punjab, and settled in the paranâs of Bayana and Bepur, where probably Farid was born in A.D. 1472. After some time Ibrahim got employment under Janâl Khan Sarang Khân of Hisar Firdaus in the Delhi district. Farid was soon taken to Sasaram by his father, Hasan, who had been granted a jâgîr there by his master, Umar Khan Sarwân, entitled Khân-i-Vazir, when the latter got the governorship of Jaunpur. Hasan, like the other nobles of his time, was a polygamist, and Farid's step-mother had predominant influence over him. This made him indifferent to Farid, whereupon the latter left home at the age of twenty-two and went to Jaunpur. Thus the Afghan youth was forced into a life of adventure and struggle, which cast his mind and character in a heroic mould. For some time he devoted himself to study. By indefatigable industry and steady application, Farid early attracted the attention of his teachers at Jaunpur and quickly gained an uncommon acquaintance with the Persian language and literature. He was capable of reproducing from memory the Gulistan, Baháin, and Sikandar-nâmâ. Being pleased with this promising youth, Jumâl Khan, his father's patron, effected a reconciliation between him and his father, who allowed him to return to Sasarâm and to administer the paranâs of Sasarâm and Khawaspur, both then dependent on Rohiâs in Bihâr. The successful administration of those two places by Farid served to increase his step-mother's jealousy, and so leaving Sasarâm once again he went to Agra.

On the death of his father, Farid took possession of his paternal jâgîr on the strength of a royal firman, which he had been able

3 The old view of Dr Qamarzadeh that Farid was born at Hisar Firuzâ in A.D. 1486 has been recently pointed out to be wrong by Prof. Paramatma Saran in his paper on "The Date and Place of Sher Shâh's Birth," published in J. B. O. R. S., 1934, pp. 108-22.
to procure at Ágra. In 1522 he got into the service of Bahar Khán Lohání, the independent ruler of Bihár, whose favour he soon secured by discharging his duties honestly and assiduously. His master conferred on him the title of Sher Khán for his having shown gallantry by killing a tiger single-handed, and also soon rewarded his ability and faithfulness by appointing him his deputy (Vakil) and tutor (Akhâq) of his minor son, Julâl Khán.

But perverse destiny again went against Sher. His enemies poisoned his master's mind against him, and he was once more deprived of his father's jâgir. "Impressed by the complete success of Mughul arms" and with the prospect of future gain, he now joined Bâbur's camp, where he remained from April, 1527, to June, 1528. In return for the valuable services he rendered to Bâbur in his eastern campaigns, the latter restored Sasarâm to him.

Sher soon left the Mughul service and came back to Bihár to become again its deputy governor and guardian of his former pupil, Julâl Khán. While the minor king remained as the nominal ruler of Bihár, Sher became the virtual head of its government. In the course of four years he won over the greater part of the army to his cause and "elevated himself to a state of complete independence". Meanwhile, the fortress of Chunâr luckily came into his possession. Tâj Khán, the Lord of Chunâr, was killed by his eldest son, who had risen against his father for his infatuation with a younger wife, Lâd Mâlikâ. This widow, however, married Sher Khán and gave him the fortress of Chunâr. Humâyûn besieged Chunâr in 1531, but Sher Khán had taken no part in the Afghan rising of that year and saved his position by a timely submission to the Mughul invader.

The rapid and unexpected rise of Sher at the expense of the Lohání Afghânës made the latter, and even Julâl Khán, impatient of his control. They tried to get rid of this dictator. The attempt, however, failed owing to his "unusual circumspection". They then entered into an alliance (September, 1533) with Mahmûd Shâh, the King of Bengal, who was naturally eager to check the rise of Sher, which prejudiced his own prestige and power. But the brave Afghan deputy inflicted a defeat on the allied troops of the Bengal Sultan and the Lohánis at Surajgarh, on the banks of the Kiel river, east of the town of Bihär. The victory at Surajgarh was indeed a turning-point in the career of Sher. "Great as it was as a military achievement, it was greater in its far-reaching political result. . . . But for the victory at Surajgarh, the jâgîrdâr of Sasarâm would never have emerged from his obscurity into the
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arena of politics to run, in spite of himself, a race for the Empire with hereditary crowned heads like Bahadur Shahr and Humayun Padshah." It made him the undisputed ruler of Bihar in fact as well as in name.

Sher had an opportunity to increase his power when Humayun marched against Bahadur Shahr of Gujarat. He suddenly invaded Bengal and appeared before its capital, Gaur, not by the usual route through the Telibaghri passes (near modern Saehebganj on the E.I. Ry. Loop Line), but by another unfrequented and less circuitous route. Mahmud Shahr, the weak ruler of Bengal, without making any serious attempt to oppose the Afghan invader, concluded peace with him by paying him a large sum, amounting to thirteen lacs of gold pieces, and by ceding to him a territory extending from Kiul to Sagar, eighty-nine miles in length with a breadth of thirty miles. These fresh acquisitions considerably enhanced Sher's power and prestige, and, after the expulsion of Bahadur Shahr of Gujarat to Din, many of the distinguished Afghan nobles joined their rising leader in the east. Thus strengthened, Sher again invaded Bengal about the middle of October, 1537, with a view to conquering it permanently, and closely besieged the city of Gaur. Humayun, who on his way back from Gujarat and Malwa had been wasting his time at Agra, in his usual fashion, realised the gravity of the Afghan menace in the east rather too late and marched to oppose Sher Khun in the second week of December, 1537. But instead of proceeding straight to Gaur, by which he could have frustrated the designs of Sher Khun in alliance with the Sultan of Bengal, he besieged Chunar. The brave garrison of Sher Khun at Chunar baffled all the attempts of the assailants for six months, while Sher Khun was left free to utilise that time for the reduction of Gaur by April, 1538. Sher Khun had also captured the fortress of Rohat by queanable means and had sent his family and wealth there. Baffled in Bihar, Humayun turned towards Bengal and entered Gaur in July, 1538. But Sher Khun, cleverly avoiding any open contest with him in Bengal, went to occupy the Mughul territories in Bihar and Jaunpur and plunder the tract as far west as Kanpur.

Humayun, who was then whiling away his time in idleness and festivities at Gaur, was disconcerted on hearing of Sher's activities in the west and left Bengal for Agra before his return should be cut off. But he was opposed on the way, at Chaupasa near Buxar, by Sher Khun and his Afghan followers and suffered a heavy defeat in June, 1539. Most of the Mughul soldiers were drowned or captured; and the life of their unlucky ruler was saved
by a water-carrier, who carried him on his water-skin across the Ganges, into which he had recklessly jumped.

The victory over the sovereign of Delhi widened the limit of Sher Khán's ambition and made him the de facto ruler of the territories extending from Kanauj in the west to the hills of Assam and Chittagong in the east and from the Himalayas in the north to the hills of Jhārkhand (from Rohitás to Birbhūm) and the Bay of Bengal in the south. To legitimise what he had gained by the strength of arms and strategy, he now assumed the royal title of Sher Sháh and ordered the Khutba to be read and the coins to be struck in his name. Next year Humáyúñ made another attempt to recover his fortune, though he could not secure the co-operation of his brothers in spite of his best attempts. On the 17th May, 1540, the Mughuls and the Afgháns met again opposite Kanauj. The army of Humáyúñ, hopelessly demoralised, half-hearted and badly officered, was severely defeated by the Afgháns at the battle of the Ganges or Bilgráh, commonly known as the battle of Kanauj, and Humáyúñ just managed to escape. Thus the work of Bábúr in Indus was undone, and the sovereignty of Hindustán once more passed to the Afgháns. From this time Humáyúñ had to lead the life of a wanderer for about fifteen years.

The sons of Bábúr failed to combine even at such a critical moment, though Humáyúñ went to Lahore and did his best to win them over. Their selfishness triumphed over common interests and Sher Sháh was able to extend his authority to the Punjab also. The Afghán ruler marched, with his usual promptitude and vigour, to subdue the warlike hill tribes of the Gakkar country, situated between the upper courses of the Indus and the Jhelum. He ravaged this territory but could not thoroughly reduce the Gakkars, as he had to proceed hurriedly to Bengal in March, 1541, where his deputy had imprudently rebelled against his authority. He dismissed the rebel, "changed the military character of the provincial administration and substituted a completely new mechanism, at once original in principle and efficient in working". The province was divided into several districts, each of which was to be governed by an officer appointed directly by him and responsible to him alone.

Sher Sháh next turned his attention against the Rájpúts of the west, who had not yet recovered fully from the blow of Khánúa. Having subjugated Málwa in A.D. 1542, he marched against Púran Mál of Ráisin in Central India. After some resistance the garrison of the fort of Ráisin capitulated, the Rájpúts agreeing to evacuate the fort on condition that they were allowed to pass "un molested"
beyond the frontier of Málwa. But the Afgáns fell furiously on the people of the fort as soon as the latter had come outside the walls. To save their wives and children from disgrace, the Rágpats took their lives, and themselves died to a man, fighting bravely against their formidable foe, in 1543. The Rágan incident has been condemned by several writers as a great blot on the character of Sher Sháh. Sind and Multán were annexed to the Afgáñ Empire by the governor of the Punjab. There remained only one more formidable enemy of Sher Sháh to be subdued. He was Máldev, the Rágpát ruler of Márwár, a consummate general and energetic ruler, whose territories extended over about 10,000 square miles. Instigated by some disaffected Rágpát chiefs whose territories had been conquered by Máldev, Sher Khán led an expedition against the Ráthor chief in A.D. 1541. Máldev, on his part, was not unprepared. Considering it madness to risk an open battle with the Ráthors in their own country, Sher Sháh had recourse to a stratagem. He sent to Máldev a few forged letters, said to have been written to him by the Rágpát generals, promising him their help, and thus succeeded in frightening the Ráthor ruler, who retreated from the field and took refuge in the fortress of Sivan. In spite of this, the generals of the Rágpát army, like Jeta and Kama, with their followers, opposed Sher Sháh's army and fought with desperate valour, but only to meet a warrior's death. Sher Sháh won a victory, though at great cost, with the loss of several thousand Afgáns on the battlefield and coming near to losing his empire. The Rágpats lost a chance of revival and the path was left open for undisputed Afgáñ supremacy over Northern India. After this success, Sher Sháh reduced to submission the whole region from Ajmer to Ábú and marched to besiege the fort of Káhñjar. He succeeded in capturing the fort, but died from an accidental explosion of gunpowder on the 22nd May, 1545.

A brave warrior and a successful conqueror, Sher Sháh was the architect of a brilliant administrative system, which elicited admiration even from eulogists of his enemies, the Mughuls. In fact, his qualities as a ruler were more remarkable than his victories on the field of battle. His brief reign of five years was marked by the introduction of wise and salutary changes in every conceivable branch of administration. Some of these were by way of revival and reformation of the traditional features of the old administrative systems of India, Hindu as well as Muslim, while others were entirely original in character, and form, indeed, a link between ancient and modern India. "No government—not even the British," affirms Mr. Keene, "has shown so much wisdom
as this Pathān." Though Sher Shāh's government was a highly
centralised system, crowned by a bureaucracy, with real power
concentrated in the hands of the King, he was not an unbridled
autocrat, regardless of the rights and interests of the people. In the
spirit of an enlightened despot, he "attempted to found an empire
broadly based upon the people's will".

For convenience of administration, the whole Empire was
divided into forty-seven units (sarkārs), each of which was again
subdivided into several paraganās. The paraganā had one Amin,
one Shiqdār, one treasurer, one Hindu writer and one Persian
writer to keep accounts. Over the next higher administrative unit,
the sarkār, were placed a Shiqdār-i-Shiqdārān and a Munsif-i-
Munsifān to supervise the work of the paraganā officers. To check
undue influence of the officers in their respective jurisdictions,
the King devised the plan of transferring them every two or
three years, which, however, could not he long-enduring owing to
the brief span of his rule. Every branch of the administration
was subject to Sher Shāh's personal supervision. Like Asoka and
Harsha, he acted up to the maxim that "it behoves the great
to be always active".

Sher Shāh's land revenue reforms, based on wise and humane
principles, have unique importance in the administrative history
of India; for they served as the model for future agrarian systems.
After a careful and proper survey of the lands, he settled the land
revenue direct with the cultivators, the State demand being fixed
at one-fourth or one-third of the average produce, payable either
in kind or in cash, the latter method being preferred. For actual
collection of revenue the Government utilised the services of
officials like the Amins, the Maqūdāma, the Shiqdārs, the Qānūngos
and the Pativrās. Punctual and full payment of the assessed
amount was insisted on and enforced, if necessary, by Sher Shāh.
He instructed the revenue officials to show leniency at the time
of assessment and to be strict at the time of collection of revenues.
The rights of the tenants were duly recognised and the liabilities
of each were clearly defined in the kabuliyat (deed of agreement),
which the State took from him, and the pattā (title-deed), which
it gave him in return. Remissions of rents were made, and probably
loans were advanced to the tenants in case of damage to crops,
caused by the encampment of soldiers, or the insufficiency of
rain. These revenue reforms increased the resources of the State
and at the same time conduced to the interest of the people.

The currency and tariff reforms of Sher Shāh were also calculated
to improve the general economic condition of his Empire. He not
only introduced some specific changes in the mint but also tried to rectify "the progressive deterioration of the previous Kings". He reformed the tariff by removing vexatious customs and permitting the imposition of customs on articles of trade only at the frontiers and in the places of sale. This considerably helped the cause of trade and commerce by facilitating easy and cheap transport of merchandise.

This was further helped by the improvement of communications. For the purpose of imperial defence, as well as for the convenience of the people, Sher Shah connected the important places of his kingdom by a chain of excellent roads. The longest of these, the Grand Trunk Road, which still survives, extended for 1,500 km from Sonargaon in Eastern Bengal to the Indus. One road ran from Agra to Burhanpur, another from Agra to Jodhpur and the fort of Chitor, and a fourth from Lahore to Multan. Following the traditions of some rulers of the past, Sher Shah planted shade-giving trees on both sides of the established roads, and sarais or rest-houses at different stages, separate arrangements being provided for the Muslims and the Hindus. These sarais also served the purpose of post-houses, which facilitated quick exchange of news and supplied the Government with information from different parts of the Empire. The maintenance of an efficient system of espionage also enabled the ruler to know what happened in his kingdom.

To secure peace and order, the police system was reorganised, and the principle of local responsibility for local crimes was enforced. Thus the village headmen were made responsible for the detection of criminals, and maintenance of peace, in the rural areas. The efficiency of the system has been testified to by all the Muslim writers. "Such was the state of safety of the highway," observes Nizam-ud-din, who had no reason to be partial towards Sher Shah, "that if any one carried a purse full of gold (pieces) and slept in the desert (deserted places) for nights, there was no need for keeping watch."

Sher Shah had a strong sense of justice, and its administration under him was even-handed, no distinction being made between the high and the low, and not even the near relatives of the King being spared from its decrees. In the paraganā, civil suits were disposed of by the Amin, and other cases, mostly criminal, by the Qāżī and the Mir-i-Adal. Several paraganās had over them a Munsif-i-Munsifān to try civil cases. At the capital city there were the Chief Qāżī, the imperial Sadr, and above all, the Emperor as the highest authority in judicial as in other matters.
Though a pious Muslim, Sher Shah was not a fierce bigot. His treatment of the Hindus in general was tolerant and just. He employed Hindus in important offices of the State, one of his best generals being Brahmanit Gaur. "His attitude towards Hindus," observes Dr. Qasum, "was not of contemptuous sufferance but of respectful deference; it received due recognition in the State."

Sher Shah realised the importance of maintaining a strong and efficient army, and so reorganised it, borrowing largely the main principles of `Ali-ud-din Khalji's military system. The services of a body of armed retainers, or of a feudal levy, were not considered sufficient for his needs; he took care to maintain a regular army, the soldiers being bound to him, through their immediate commanding officer, by the strong tie of personal devotion and discipline. He had under his direct command a large force consisting of 150,000 cavalry, 25,000 infantry, 300 elephants and artillery. Garrisons were maintained at different strategic points of the kingdom, each of these, called a fauj, was under the command of a faujdár. Sher Shah enforced strict discipline in the army and took ample precautions to prevent corruption among the soldiers. Besides daily supervising the recruitment of soldiers, he personally fixed their salaries, took their descriptive rolls and revived the practice of branding horses.

Sher Shah is indeed a striking personality in the history of Medieval India. By virtue of sheer merit and ability he rose from a very humble position to be the leader of Afghan revival, and one of the greatest rulers that India has produced. His "military character" was marked by "a rare combination of caution and enterprise": his political conduct was, on the whole, just and humane; his religious attitude was free from medieval bigotry; and his excellent taste in building is well attested, even to-day, by his noble mausoleum at Sasarām. He applied his indefatigable industry to the service of the State, and his reforms were well calculated to secure the interests of the people. He had, remarks Erskine, "more of the spirit of a legislator and a guardian of his people than any prince before Akbar". In fact, the real significance of his reign lies in the fact that he embodied in himself those very qualities which are needed for the building of a national State in India, and he prepared the ground for the glorious Akbaride régime in more ways than one. But for his accidental death after

1 It does not seem to be fair to describe Sher Shah's religious policy as "narrow" as a modern writer has done. *Vide I.H.Q.*, December, 1936, pp. 600-1.
only five years' rule, the restoration of the Mughuls would not have been accomplished so soon. As Smith observes: "If Sher Shāh had been spared, the 'Great Moghul' would not have appeared on the stage of history." His right to the throne of India was better than that of Humāyūn. While Humāyūn had inherited the conquests of a Central Asian adventurer, who had not been able to create any strong claim, except that of force, for the rule of his dynasty in India, Sher Shāh's family, having from the frontier, had lived within India for three generations. Further, the latter's equipment for kingship was exceptionally high, and he had achieved a good deal more than the mere conquest of territories.

4. The Successors of Sher Shāh

The Afghan Empire built up by Sher Shāh did not long survive his death. The disappearance of his strong personality, and the weakness of his successors, led to the re-emergence of jealousies and refractoriness among the Afghan nobles, which plunged the whole kingdom into a welter of anarchy and thus paved the way for Mughul restoration. On Sher Shāh's death, his second son, Jalāl Khān, who was then at Rewārī, was proclaimed king under the title of Sultan Iskand Shāh, commonly known as Salīm Shāh. Salīm strengthened his position against the intrigues of his brother and his supporters, by drastic measures. He maintained the efficiency of the army and most of his father's wise reforms. "His internal administration was excellent." But he died young in November, 1554, and disorders soon followed. His minor son, Fīrūz Khān, was murdered by his maternal uncle, Mubāriz Khān (son of Nizām Khān Sūr, Sher Shāh's brother, and brother of Fīrūz Khān's mother, Bibi Bāī), who seized the throne and assumed the title of Muhammad 'Ādil Shāh. 'Ādil Shāh being an indolent and worthless prince, Hīnū, a purely self-made man, who rose from the position of an ordinary Benā of Rewārī in Mewāt to that of the chief minister of the Sūr monarch, tried to manage the affairs of the kingdom with tact, but the suspicious nature, and the follies, of his master frustrated his efforts with great prejudice to the interests of the decaying Afghan Empire. 'Ādil Shāh soon afterwards lost Bengal and Mālwa; his own relatives rebelled against him; and his authority was also challenged by two nephews of Sher Shāh, who asserted their claims to the throne.
5. Restoration of the Mughuls

This disturbed situation encouraged Humāyūn to attempt the restoration of his lost dominion after about fifteen years. He had been wandering from place to place in search of shelter and help. So intense was the jealousy of his brothers, especially of Kāmrān, that they showed him great unkindness even in these days of adversity, not to speak of their pooling their resources against the Afghāns. His attempts to find a rallying-ground in Sind also proved unsuccessful, because of the hostility of Shāh Hūsain, the governor of Sind, and the scarcity of provisions among his followers, whose numbers had been swelled by the influx of many fugitives. It was during his wanderings in the deserts of Sind that early in 1542 he married Humāida Bānū Begam, daughter of Shaikh 'Alī Ambar Jāini, who had been a preceptor to Humāyūn’s brother Hindāl. The Rājput princes dared not afford him shelter. He went to Amarkot, the Hindu chief of which, Rānā Prasād by name, had promised help to conquer Thatta and Bhakkar, but he disappointed him in the end. It was here that his son Akbar was born on the 23rd November, 1542. Bhakkar could not be conquered by Humāyūn, who failed also to secure asylum with his brother Kāmrān. Thus driven from pillar to post, Humāyūn left India and threw himself on the generosity of Shāh Tahmāsp. The young ruler of Persia helped him with a force of 14,000 men on his promising to conform to the Shīah creed, to have the Shāh's name proclaimed in his Khutba and to cede Qandahār to him on his success. Thus Persian help, which had once facilitated the success of Bābur’s eastern enterprise, now enabled his successor to recover his lost dominion. With it Humāyūn occupied Qandahār and Kābul in 1545. But Qandahār was not given to the Persians, and it proved henceforth to be a bone of contention between them and the Mughuls. Kāmrān was imprisoned, blinded and sent to Mecca, to which Humāyūn consented with the utmost reluctance, though his brother merited no lenient treatment in view of his past conduct. 'Askārī also proceeded to Mecca, but Hindāl fell dead in a night encounter.

Having overcome the hostility of his unkind brothers in the north-west, Humāyūn marched in November, 1554, to reconquer Hindūstān, for which he got an excellent opportunity in the civil wars among the Sūrs. In February, 1555, he captured Lahore. After defeating Sikandar Sūr, the rebel governor of the Punjab, who had been proclaimed Emperor by the Afghāns, in a battle near Sirhind, he occupied Delhi and Agra in the month of July of the same year.
Sikandar retired to the Siwalik Hills. Thus by a favourable turn of fortune, Humayun succeeded in recovering a part of what he had lost through his own weakness and indecision. But he did not live long enough to show if adversity had produced any wholesome effect on his character. He died on the 24th January, 1556, in consequence of an accidental fall from the staircase of his library at Delhi.

Akbar, who was then in the Punjab with his guardian Bairam, an old comrade of his father, was formally proclaimed on the 14th February, 1556, at the age of thirteen, as the successor of Humayun. But the Mughul supremacy over Hindustan was still far from being assured. As Smith writes, "before Akbar could become Padshah in reality as well as in name he had to prove himself better than the rival claimants to the throne, and at least to win back his father's lost dominion". As a matter of fact, India in 1556 "presented a dark as well as a complex picture". While the country had ceased to enjoy the benefits of the reforms of Sher Shāh through the follies and quarrels of his successors, it was subjected at the same time to the horrors of a terrible famine. Further, each of the independent kingdoms in different parts of India was contending for power. In the north-west, Mirzā Muhammad Hakim, Akbar's half-brother, governed Kābul almost independently. In the north, Kashmir was under a local Muhammadan dynasty and the Humāyūni States were also independent. Sind and Multān had become free from imperial control after the death of Sher Shāh. Orissa, Mālwa and Gujārāt and the local chieftains of Goidwāna (in the modern Central Provinces) were independent of the control of any overlord. South of the Vindhyas lay the extensive Vīravangar Empire, and the Muslim Sūltānate of Khānūndesh, Be'ar, Bīdar, Ahmadnagar, and Golkundā which felt little or no interest in northern politics. The Portuguese had established their influence on the western coast by the possession of Goa and Dūr. Humayun had been able to recover only a small fragment of his territories in Hindustan before he died. The Sūrs were still in occupation of the greater portion of Sher Shāh’s dominion. As Ahmad Yaqut tells us, "the country from Āgra to Mālwa, and the confines of Jumāpur, owned the sovereignty of 'Ādīl Shāh; from Delhi to the smaller Rohtās on the road to Kābul, it was in the hands of Shāh Sikandar; and from the borders of the hills to the boundaries of Gujārāt, it belonged to Ibrāhīm Khān". As for the claims to the lordship of Hindustan, there was nothing to choose between Akbar and the representatives of Sher. These "could be decided", as Smith writes, "only by the sword". Thus Akbar’s heritage was of a precarious nature, and
his task of building up an Empire was indeed a very difficult one.

Soon after Akbar's accession, Himū, the capable general and minister of ʿĀdil Shāh Sūr, came forward to oppose the Mughals. He first occupied Āgra and Delhi by defeating Tārīq Beg, the Mughal governor of Delhi, who was put to death under the orders of Bairam for his failure to defend Delhi. Having assumed the title of Rājā Vikramjīt or Vikramāditya, Himū met Akbar and Bairam at the historic field of Pānīpāt with a large army including 1,500 war elephants. He had initial successes against both the wings of the Mughal army, but the day was decided by a chance arrow which struck him in the eye. He lost consciousness, and his soldiers, deprived of their leader, dispersed in confusion. In this helpless condition, Himū was put to death, according to some, by Bairam, on the refusal of Akbar to kill him with his own hands, and, according to others, by Akbar himself at the instigation of his Protector.

The result of the second battle of Pānīpāt was decisive. It brought to a close the Afghān-Mughal contest for supremacy in India by giving a verdict in favour of the latter. The victors soon occupied Delhi and Āgra. Sikandar Sūr surrendered to them in May, a.d. 1557, and was granted a fief in the eastern provinces, whence he was soon expelled by Akbar and died as a fugitive in Bengal (a.d. 1558-1559). Muhammad ʿĀdil died (1556) fighting at Monghyr against the governor of Bengal, Ibrāhīm Sūr, after wandering from place to place, found asylum in Orissa, where he was killed about ten years later (a.d. 1567-1568). Thus there remained no Sūr rival to contest Akbar's claims to sovereignty over Hindustān. The later anti-Mughal Afghān risings, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, were more or less too sporadic and local to be a serious menace to Mughul suzerainty.
CHAPTER II

AKBAR THE GREAT

2. End of the Regency

The second battle of Panipat marked the real beginning of the Mughul Empire in India and set it on the path of expansion. Between 1558 and 1560 Gwalior, Ajmer and Jamnapur were incorporated into it. But Akbar, held in the trammels of tutelage by his guardian and Protector, Baram Khan, was not yet free to act independently. The Protector had rendered valuable services to the Mughuls, but he had created many enemies by this time by using his power in a high-handed manner. Abdul Fazl writes that "at length Baram's proceedings went beyond all endurance". Akbar personally felt a desire to be king in fact as well as in name, and was also urged by his mother, Hamida Banu Begam, his foster-mother, Maham Anaga, and her son, Adam Khan, to get rid of the regent. In 1560 the Emperor openly expressed before Baram his determination to take the reins of government in his own hands and dismissed him. The Protector submitted to the decision of his master with apparent resignation and agreed to leave for Mecca. But when Akbar deputed Pir Muhammad, a personal enemy and former subordinate of Baram, to see his guardian out of the imperial domains, or as Badamí puts it, "to pack him off as quickly as possible to Mecca", the latter, considering it to be an insult, rebelled. He was defeated near Jullundur, but Akbar was wise enough to treat him with generosity in consideration of his past services. On his way to Mecca, Baram was stabbed to death in January, 1561, by a Lohání Afghan, whose father had been killed on a previous occasion by the Mughul troops under the command of the Protector. Though the Afghans plundered all that he had been carrying with him, his family escaped disgrace and his son, Abdur Rahim, received Akbar's protection and rose later on to be one of the chief nobles of the Empire.

The fall of Baram did not at once enable Akbar to assume fully the reins of government into his own hands. For two years more (A.D. 1560-1562), his foster-mother, Maha Anaga, her son, Adam
Khân, and their relatives, exercised an undue influence in the State. Ādam Khân and Pîr Muhammad effected the conquest of Mâlwa (1561) by methods which have been vividly described by Badāʿīnī, an eye-witness of their oppression; but they remained unpunished. Being at last impatient of their influence, Akbar caused the death of Ādam Khân. His mother died of grief after forty days. Thus by the month of May, 1562, Akbar was able to emancipate himself from harem influence.

2. Conquests and Annexations

✓ A strong imperialist by instinct, Akbar followed a policy of conquest for the expansion of his empire until the capture of Asirgarh in January, 1601. Unforeseen and uncontrollable circumstances prevented him from carrying it further. “A monarch”, he held, “should be ever intent on conquest, otherwise his neighbors rise in arms against him.” In fact, Akbar achieved the political unification of nearly the whole of Northern and Central India by frequent annexations extending over forty years. We have already noted how Mâlwa was conquered by Ādam Khân and Pîr Muhammad in 1561, but its ruler, Bāz Bahādur, soon recovered it and did not submit to the Mughuls until some years later. In 1564 Akbar sent Āṣaf Khân, governor of Karâ and the eastern provinces, to conquer the kingdom of Garah Katanga (in Gandâna), roughly corresponding to the northern districts of the Central Provinces. The reigning king of this tract, Bir Nârâyâ, was a minor, but it was ably governed by his mother, Durgâvatî, a Râjput lady of superb beauty and great valour. She gallantly opposed the imperialists but was defeated in a fight with them between Garah and Mandola (now in the Jhabulpore district). In the true Râjput spirit, she preferred death to disgrace and committed suicide.

✓ Thus “her end was as noble and devoted as her life had been useful”. The young ruler, Bir Nârâyâ, fought in a chivalrous manner against his enemies till he lost his life. The invaders captured a vast booty. Āṣaf Khân held the kingdom for some time, but it was subsequently made over to a representative of the old ruling family, who was compelled by the Mughuls to “part with that portion of his kingdom which now forms the kingdom of Bhopâl”.

As we have already noted, the battle of Khânua (1527) did not result in the total eclipse of Râjput influence in the north. Râjputâna still formed a powerful factor in the history of India. Gifted with the true insight of a statesman and liberal in outlook, Akbar realised the value of Râjput alliance in his task of building up an Empire in
India for his dynasty, which was a foreign one, at the cost of the Afghans, who were the "children of the soil". Thus he tried, as far as possible, to conciliate the Rājputs and secure and ensure their active cooperation in almost all his activities. By his wise and liberal policy, he won the hearts of most of them to such an extent that they rendered valuable services to his empire and even shed their blood for it. The Empire of Akbar was, in fact, the outcome of the co-ordination of Mughul prowess and diplomacy and Rājput valour and service. In 1562, Rājā Bihāri Mall, of Amber (Jaipur), tendered his submission to Akbar and cemented his friendship with him by a marriage alliance. Bihāri Mall, with his son, Bhaṅgān Dās, and grandson, Mān Singh, proceeded to Agra. He was given a command of 5,000 and his son and grandson were also admitted to high rank in the army. Thus was opened the way through which the Mughul Emperors were able to secure for four generations "the services of some of the greatest captains and diplomats that medieval India produced".

But Mewār, where the Rājput spirit had manifested itself "in its very quintessence", which had been provided with excellent means of defence in its steep mountains and strong castles, and which had contested with Bābur the supremacy of Northern India, did not bow its head in obedience to the Mughul Emperor. It offended him by giving shelter to Bāz Bahlādur, the fugitive ruler of Mālwa. Its independence was, however, galling to Akbar, who cherished the ideal of an all-India empire, the economic interests of which also demanded a control over Mewār, through which lay the highways of commerce between the Ganges-Jumna Doab and the western coast. The ambitious design of Akbar was facilitated by the prevalence of internal discord in Mewār, following the death of Rānā Sango, and by the weakness of Udai Singh, the unworthy son of a noble sire. "Well had it been for Mewār," exclaims Tod, "had the annals of Mewār never recorded the name of Udai Singh in the catalogue of her princes." When Akbar besieged the fort of Chitor in October, 1567, Udai Singh fled to the hills, leaving his capital to its fate. But there were some brave followers of the Rānā, notably Jaimall and Patta, who offered a stubborn opposition to the imperialists for four months (20th October, 1567, to 23rd February, 1568) till Jaimall was killed by a musket-shot fired by Akbar himself. Patta also fell dead later. The death of the leaders of the defence disheartened the besieged garrison, who rushed on their enemies sword in hand and fought bravely till they perished to a man. The Rājput women performed the rite of Jaukar. Akbar then stormed the fort of Chitor. According to
Abul Fazl 30,000 persons were slain, but the figure seems to be highly exaggerated. Akbar's wrath fell also upon what Tod calls "the symbols of regality". Thus he removed the huge kettledrums (eight or ten feet in diameter, the reverberation of which proclaimed for miles around the entrance and exit of the princes from the gates of Chitor) and also the massive candelabra from the shrine of the Great Mother of Chitor, to Agra.

Struck with terror at the fall of Chitor, the other Rajput chiefs, who had so long defied Akbar, submitted to him. In February, 1569, Rājā Surjana Hari of Ranthambhor surrendered to Akbar the keys of his fortress and entered into the imperial service. Rājā Rāmachándrā, the chief of Kāhinjār in Bundelkhand, followed suit in the same year. The occupation of Kāhinjār greatly strengthened Akbar's military position and marks an important step in the progress of Mughul imperialism. In 1570 the rulers of Bikaner and Jaisalmer not only submitted to the Mughul Emperor but also gave their daughters in marriage to him.

Thus, one by one, the Rajput chiefs acknowledged Mughul sway, but Mewār still refused to own it. Udaí Singh retained his independence though he had lost his ancestral capital. After his death on the 3rd March, 1572, at Gogundā, situated about nineteen miles north-west of Udaipur, Mewār found a true patriot and leader in his son Pratāp, who, being in every respect faithful to the traditions of his country, offered uncompromising resistance to the invaders. The magnitude of his task can be well understood when we note that without a capital, and with only slender resources, he had to oppose the organised strength of the Mughul Emperor, who was then "immeasurably the richest monarch on the face of the earth". Further, his fellow chiefs and neighbours and even his own brother, devoid of the high Rajput ideals of chivalry and independence, had allied themselves with the Mughuls. But no obstacle was too alarming for this national hero of Rājputāna, who was made of nobler stuff than his relatives. "The magnitude of the peril confirmed the fortitude of Pratāp, who vowed, in the words of the bard, 'to make his mother's milk repleetant,' and he amply redeemed his pledge."

The inevitable imperial invasion of his territory took place in April, 1576, under a body of troops commanded by Mān Singh of Amber and Āsaf Khān, and a furious battle was fought at the pass of Haldighāt near Gogundā. Pratāp was defeated, and barely escaped with his life, which was saved by the selfless devotion of the chief of Jhāla, who drew upon himself the attack of the imperialists by declaring himself to be the Rānā. Mounted on his
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beloved horse “Chatrak”, the Rānā betook himself to the hills, and his strongholds were captured by his enemies one by one. But Pratāp could not think of submission even in the midst of the direst adversity. Hunted from rock to rock by his implacable enemy, and “feeding his family from the fruits of his native hills”, he continued the war with undaunted spirit and energy and had the satisfaction of recovering many of his strongholds before he died on the 19th January, 1597, at the age of fifty-seven. The Rājput patriot was anxious for his motherland even at his last moment, for he had no faith in his son; and before he expired, he exacted from his chiefs “a pledge that his country should not be abandoned to the Turks”. “Thus closed the life of a Rājput whose memory,” observes Tod, “is even now idolized by every Sisodiā.” “Had Mewār,” he adds, “possessed her Thucydidēs or her Xenophon, neither the wars of the Peloponnesus nor the retreat of the ‘Ten Thousand’ would have yielded more diversified incidents for the historic muse than the deeds of this brilliant reign amid the many vicissitudes of Mewār. Undaunted heroism, inflexible fortitude, that sincerity which ‘keeps honour bright’, perseverance—with fidelity such as no nation can boast of, were the materials opposed to a soaring ambition, commanding talents, unlimited means, and the fervour of religious zeal: all, however, insufficient to contend with one unconquerable mind.” Pratāp’s is indeed an inspiring personality in Indian history. The Rājputs have produced able generals and more austere statesmen than Pratāp, but not more brave and noble patriotic leaders than he. Pratāp’s son, Amar Singh, tried to carry out the behest of his father but was attacked by a Mughul army under Mān Singh in 1599 and was defeated after a gallant resistance. Akbar could not undertake any other invasion of Mewār owing to illness.

After annexing Ranthambhūr and Kālinjār in A.D. 1569, the Mughuls subdued Gujarāt. With rich and flourishing ports on its coasts, Gujarāt had an attractive commercial position and a special economic advantage. Its possession had therefore been coveted by the preceding rulers of Delhi, even by Humāyūn, whose occupation of it was, however, temporary. But Akbar must have realised the importance of occupying this province for the interests of his Empire, and the prevailing distracted condition of Gujarāt under its nominal king, Muzaffar Shāh III, gave him an excellent opportunity for it. As a matter of fact, his intervention being sought by I’timād Khān, the leader of a local faction, had some justification. In 1572 Akbar marched in person against Gujarāt, defeated all opposition and pensioned off the puppet
king. He captured Surat on the 26th February, 1573, after besieging it for a month and a half, and the Portuguese, who came in touch with him on this occasion, courted his friendship. But no sooner had he reached his headquarters at Fatehpur Sikri than insurrections broke out in the newly conquered province, in which some of his own cousins took part. Highly enraged at this, Akbar marched hurriedly to Ahmadabad, having traversed six hundred miles in eleven days, and thoroughly vanquished the insurgents in a battle near Ahmadabad on the 2nd September, 1573. Gujarāt thus came under Akbar's authority and became henceforth an integral part of his Empire. It turned out to be one of its profitable sources of income, chiefly through the reorganisation of its finances and revenues by Todar Mal, whose work in that province was ably carried on by Shihāb-ud-din Ahmad from 1577 to 1583 or 1584. "The conquest of Gujarāt," remarks Dr. Smith, "marks an important epoch in Akbar's history." Besides placing its resources at the disposal of the Empire, it secured for it free access to the sea and brought it in contact with the Portuguese, which in some ways influenced the history of India. But the Mughuls made no attempt to build up any sea-power and their shortsightedness in this direction helped the intrusion of the European traders.

The more important province of Bengal was next conquered by the Mughuls. The Sür kings made themselves independent in Bengal during the short and stormy reign of Muhammad 'Adil Shāh and ruled it till 1564, when, taking advantage of the disorders following the murder of the reigning young king, Sulaimān Kararānī, governor of South Bihār, extended his authority over Bengal also. Till his death in a.d. 1572, Sulaimān formally recognised the overlordship of Akbar and maintained friendly relations with him. He transferred his capital from Gaur to Tāndā and annexed the Hindu kingdom of Orissa. But his son, Dāūd, who, according to the author of the Tabaqāt, "know nothing of the art of government", soon "forsook the prudent measures of his father". He incurred the Emperor's resentment not only by proclaiming his independence but also by attacking the outpost of Zamānīā on the eastern frontier of the Empire (situated in the Ghāzipur district of U.P.). In 1574 Akbar himself marched against the presumptuous governor of Bengal and expelled him from Patna and Hājipur during the rainy season. He returned to Fatehpur Sikri, leaving Mun'im Khān in charge of the Bengal campaign. Dāūd retreated towards Orissa and was defeated by the Mughul troops at Tukaroi near the eastern bank of the Suvarnarekha on the 3rd March, 1575. But this battle had no
decisive result owing to the ill-advised leniency of Mun‘im Khān towards the vanquished foe, who was consequently able to strike once more to recover Bengal in October, 1575. This necessitated another campaign against Dāūd, who was finally defeated and killed in a battle, near Rājmahal, in July, 1576. Bengal henceforth became an integral part of the Mughul Empire. But the weak policy of the imperial governor, Muzaffar Khān Turbati, who was “harsh in his measures and offensive in his speech”, gave rise to fresh troubles in that province. Further, the authority of the Emperor continued to be long resisted there by some powerful Bengal chiefs, the most important of whom were ‘Isā Khān of East Central Dacca and Mymensingh, Kesār Rāi of Vikrampur, Kandarpānārāyan of Chandradvīpa (Bakarganj) and Pratāpāditya of Jessore. Orissa was finally annexed to the Empire in 1592.

In the meanwhile, Akbar had to face a critical situation due to the sinister motives of his step-brother, Mirzā Muhammad Hakim, who governed Kābul as an independent ruler for all practical purposes. In conspiracy with some nobles of the eastern provinces, and some discontented officers of the court, like Khwāja Mansūr, the Diwān of the Empire, and others, he cherished the ambition of seizing the throne of Hindustān for himself and even invaded the Punjab. Considering it inadvisable to ignore any longer his intrigues and movements, Akbar marched from his capital on the 8th February, 1581, towards Afghanistan with about 50,000 cavalry, 500 elephants and a large number of infantry. Mirzā Muhammad Hakim, on hearing of the Emperor’s advance, fled from the Punjab to Kābul without offering any opposition to his brother. The Emperor thereupon entered Kābul on the 9th August, 1581. Mirzā Muhammad Hakim was defeated, but was restored to the government of his province on taking a vow of fidelity to the Emperor, who returned to Delhi early in December, 1581. The victory at Kābul brought immense relief to Akbar. It gave him, writes Smith, “an absolutely free hand for the rest of his life, and may be regarded as the climax of his career”. Kābul was formally annexed to the Delhi empire after the death of Mirzā Muhammad Hakim in July, 1585.

3. The North-West Frontier.

Every government in India has to deal with the complex north-west frontier problem. This region occupies a position of strategic as well as economic importance, and it is, therefore, highly necessary for a ruler of India to maintain effective control over it. The
Hindukush range, separating Central Asia from Southern Afghānistān, Baluchistān and India, becomes "much less forbidding" in the north of Herāt, and through this vulnerable point an external invader from Persia or Central Asia may easily enter the Kābul Valley and India. As the master of Kābul, the Mughul Emperor "must hold Qandahār or his dominion is unsafe. In an age when Kābul was a part of the Delhi Empire, Qandahār was our indispensable first line of defence". Qandahār was also an important trade centre, where merchants from different parts of Asia flocked together and exchanged their commodities. Through it goods were carried from India to other Asiatic countries more frequently than before, owing to the Portuguese domination of the Red Sea and their hostile relations with Persia. Further, the turbulent Afghān tribes of the frontier, such as the Uzbek and the Yūsufzai, were "very dangerous in their native hills, being democratic to a degree and fanatically attached to their liberty. Fighting in the fastnesses of their country which afford the best of natural defences, they...ever resisted any attempts to bring them into subjugation to any of the adjoining monarchies". Their attitude towards the Mughul Empire was far from friendly, but an imperialist like Akbar could hardly fail to realise the importance of effectively guarding this frontier. He was able to suppress the turbulence of the Uzbek, whose leader, 'Abdullāh Khān, remained friendly to the Mughul Emperor, and also to defeat the Roshniyās. The Yūsufzai, too, were crushingly defeated by a large Mughul army commanded by Rājā Todar Mall and Prince Murād,1 Abul Fazl writes: "A large number of them were killed and many were sold into Turān and Persia. The countries of Sawād (Swāt), Bāsaur and Buner, which have few equals for climate, fruits and cheapness of food, were cleansed of the evil-doers." Bhagwān Dās and Kūsim Khān being deputed at the head of 5,000 men to conquer Kāshmir, defeated its Sultān, Yūsuf Shāh, and his son, Ya'qūb, in 1586. Kāshmir was then annexed to the Empire. Sind and Baluchistān were conquered in 1589-1591 and 1595 respectively. Qandahār came into the possession of Akbar peacefully. Being harassed by his own relatives and also by the Uzbek, the Persian governor of Qandahār, Muzaffār Husain Mirzā, surrendered it to Akbar's

1 The Roshniyās were the followers of Bāyazid, who "had been preaching a special form of Muhammadanism in which communism on the one hand and the destruction of the enemies of Islam on the other, seem to have been two of the leading features. Add to this his suggestion that he was the Mebahdi (the Messiah) to come and we have all the elements of religious explosion". Kennedy, History of the Great Moghuls, p. 27.
representative, Shāh Beg, in A.D. 1595. Thus as a result of Akbar's policy in the north-west, important territories were added to his empire, its position was made secure on that frontier, and its prestige was immensely enhanced. By the year 1595 he made himself undisputed ruler of the area extending from the Himalayas to the Narmada and from Hindukush to the Brahmaputra, with the exception of a narrow strip of tribal area beyond the Indus and a few other tracts.

4. Akbar and the Deccan

Having thus consolidated his authority over Northern and Central India, Akbar decided to extend his sovereignty to the Deccan. In this he was but following the traditional policy of earlier northern imperial governments, like those of the Mauryas, the Guptas, the Khaljis and the Tughluqs. He had two definite objects in view. Firstly, with the ideal of an all-India Empire, he naturally sought to bring the Deccan Sultānates, Ahmadnagar, Bijāpur, Golkundā and Khāndesh, under his hegemony. Secondly, as a shrewd statesman, he wanted to utilise his control over the Deccan as a means of pushing back the Portuguese to the sea, because though his relations with them were apparently friendly, he did not think it wise to allow them to enjoy for themselves a part of the economic resources of the country and interfere in its politics. Thus Akbar's Deccan policy was purely imperialistic in origin and outlook. It was not influenced in the least by religious considerations as was the case, to a certain extent, with Shāh Jahān or Aurangzeb.

The Deccan Sultānates were not in a position to defend themselves against the onrush of Mughul imperialism, as they had almost exhausted their strength and sunk into inefficiency by indulging in quarrels among themselves after their temporary alliance against Vijayanagar in A.D. 1564-1565. Akbar first tried to extort from them a formal acknowledgment of his suzerainty over the Deccan by sending ambassadors to their respective courts in 1591. But all, except Khāndesh, returned evasive answers to his overtures. The failure of diplomatic missions led him to resort to arms. A large army under Bairam Khān's son, 'Abdur Rahim, and the Emperor's second son, Prince Murād, was sent against Ahmadnagar, which had been weakened by internal quarrels. Though the operations of the Mughul army were much hampered, as its two generals did not pull well with each other, Ahmadnagar was besieged by it in 1595. The city was defended with splendid courage
and extraordinary resolution by Chãnd Bibi, a dowager-queen of Bijãpur and daughter of Husain Nizãm Shãh. The besiegers concluded a treaty with Chãnd Bibi in 1596 whereby Berar was ceded to the Mughuls and the boy king of Ahmadnagar promised to recognise the overlordship of Akbar. But after the departure of the Mughuls, Chãnd Bibi “resigned her authority”, and a faction at Ahmadnagar, in violation of the treaty, contrary to her will and advice, renewed the war with the Mughuls in the next year with a view to expelling them from Berar. The Mughuls gained a victory over the Deccanis at Sûpa near Ashti on the Godavari in February, 1597. Internal dissensions prevailed in Ahmadnagar, and Chãnd Bibi being either “murdered or constrained to take poison”, the city was stormed without difficulty by the imperialists in August, 1600. But the kingdom was not finally annexed to the Empire till the reign of Shãh Jahãn.

Miûn Bahãdur Shãh, a ruler of Khãndesh, refused to submit to the imperial authority. Akbar, relieved of the danger of Uzbek invasion after the death of ‘Abdullah Khãn in 1598, marched to the south in July, 1599. He soon captured Burhãnpur, the capital of Khãndesh, and easily laid siege to the mighty fortress of Aãírãgarh, than which “it was impossible to conceive a stronger fortress, or one more amply supplied with artillery, warlike stores and provisions”. The besieged garrison, though greatly weakened owing to the outbreak of a terrible pestilence which swept off many of them, defended the fortress for six months, when Akbar hastened to achieve his end by subtle means. Unwilling to prolong the siege as his son Salîm had rebelled against him, the Emperor inveigled Miûn Bahãdur Shãh into his camp to negotiate for a treaty, on promise of personal safety, but detained him there and forced him to write a letter to the garrison with instructions to surrender the fort. The garrison, however, still held out. Akbar next seduced the Khãndesh officers by lavish distribution of money among them, and thus the gates of Aãírãgarh “were opened by golden keys”. This was the last conquest of Akbar.

Having organised the newly-conquered territories into three subahs of Ahmadnagar, Berar and Khãndesh, and appointed Prince Dânîyãl viceroy of Southern and Western India, that is to say, of the three Deccan subahs with Mûlwa and Gujarãt, Akbar returned to Aãgra in May, 1601, to deal with the rebellious Salîm. The Deccan campaigns of Akbar resulted in pushing the Mughul frontier from the Narmadã to the upper courses of the Krishnã rîver (called here the Bûlmã). But “the annexation was in form only. The new territory was too large to be effectively governed
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or even fully conquered. Everywhere, especially in the south and the west, local officers of the old dynasty refused to obey the conqueror, or began to set up puppet princes as a screen for their self-assertion. The Sultāns of Bijāpur and Golkundā seized the adjacent districts of their fallen neighbours”.

5. The Last Days of Akbar

The last days of Akbar were rendered unhappy by grief and anguish. His beloved friend and poet, Faizi, passed away in 1595. In eagerness to seize the throne, Salim set himself up as an independent king at Allahābād and entered into intrigues with the Portuguese to achieve his end. In 1602 he further wounded his father’s feelings by causing Abul Faizi, a close friend of the Emperor’s, to be put to death on his way back from the Deccan. In 1603 a temporary reconciliation was effected between father and son through the mediation of Sultānā Salimā Begam. But Salim again proceeded to Allahābād and began to act in a highly objectionable manner. Meanwhile Khān-i-A’zam, Bāğā Mān Singh and some other nobles of the court, plotted to secure the succession for Salim’s son, Khusrav. But their scheme failed owing to the opposition of other nobles. The other sons of Akbar had already died. Salim, the only surviving son of Akbar, became reconciled to his father after the removal of all the rival claimants. Akbar treated him like a petulant child, rebuked him severely, and confined him for some time before pardoning him in November, 1604. But Akbar’s end was drawing near. He was attacked by severe diarrhoea or dysentery in the autumn of 1605 and died on the 17th October.

6. Akbar’s Religion

The sublimity of Akbar’s conceptions, and the catholicity of his temperament and ideals, were moulded by various influences. Firstly, the influence of his heredity “endowed him with those qualities of head and heart that prepared him to receive the impress of his environments, and reflect it in the best possible way”. In spite of their being conquerors, Timūr and his descendants were lovers of art and literature and rose above religious orthodoxy, largely owing to their contact with Sūfism. Akbar’s mother, the daughter of a Persian scholar, sowed in his mind the seeds of toleration. Secondly, Akbar’s early contact with Sūfism, during his stay in the court of Kābul, where many Sūfī saints had fled away from Persia under the pressure of Safavi persecution, and
subsequently the influence of his tutor, ‘Abdul Latif, impressed upon his mind the worth of liberal and sublime ideas and made him eager to “attain the ineffable bliss of direct contact with the Divine Reality”. Lastly, his Rājput wives and his contact with Hinduism, and the reformation movements of his time, made an impression on his imaginative mind. Thus, “intelligent to an uncommon degree, with a mind alert and inquisitive, he was best fitted by birth, upbringing and association to feel most keenly those hankerings and that spiritual unrest which distinguished the century in which he lived. He was not only the child of his century, he was its best replica”. It might be that Akbar’s political aim of establishing an all-India Mughal Empire had some influence on his religious policy, as political factors largely influenced the religious settlement of his English contemporary, Queen Elizabeth. But there is no doubt that he had a yearning after truth and often “tempests of feeling had broken over Akbar’s soul”. We are told even by the hostile critic Badāūnī that “he would sit many a morning alone in prayer and melancholy, on a large flat stone of an old building near the (Fathpur) palace in a lonely spot with his head bent over his chest, and gathering the bliss of early hours”. The conflicts of the different religious sects shocked his soul, and he devoted himself “to the evolution of a new religion, which would, he hoped, prove to be a synthesis of all the warring creeds and capable of uniting the discordant elements of his vast empire in one harmonious whole”.

Akbar observed the external forms of the Sunnī faith until 1575, when his association with Shaikh Mubārak and his two sons, Fazı and Abul Fazl, produced a change in his views. He then caused a building to be constructed at Fathpur Sikri, called the ʿĪbādat-Khāna or the House of Worship, with a view to discussing philosophical and theological questions. He first summoned there the learned divines of Islam, but their discussions soon took the shape of “vulgar rancour, morbid orthodoxy and personal attacks” and they could not reply to some of the queries of Akbar to his satisfaction. In fact, their petty wranglings, of which Badāūnī gives a graphic picture, failed to satisfy his inquisitive soul, and led him to seek truth elsewhere. He therefore called to the ʿĪbādat-Khāna the wise men of different religions and sects, notably Hindu philosophers like Purushottama, Devī and some others; some Jain teachers, the most prominent of them being Hari Vijaya Suri, Vijaya Sen Suri and Bhānuchandra Upādhyāya; and Parsi priests and Christian missionaries from Goa. He patiently attended to the arguments of the exponents of each faith, and
"went so far in relation to each religion that different people had reasonable grounds for affirming him to be a Zoroastrian, a Hindu, a Jaina, or a Christian". But he was not converted to any of these faiths, and there is no reason to exaggerate the influence of Christianity over him more than that of any other religion. It seems that being dissatisfied with the bitter controversies of the Muslim divines, he was prompted to study "other religions by means of discourses and debates, which eventually resulted in his eclecticism" and in the promulgation of the Din-i-Ilahi. It was a new religion, "compounded", as the Jesuit writer Bartoli says, "out of various elements, taken partly from the Koran of Muhammad, partly from the scriptures of the Brahmans, and to a certain extent, as far as suited his purpose, from the Gospel of Christ". A firm believer in the policy of universal toleration, Akbar made no attempt to force his religion on others with the zeal of a convert or a religious fanatic, but appealed to the inner feelings of men.

Akbar's conception of universal toleration was indeed a noble one, and is a brilliant testimony to his national idealism. Relying on the evidence of Badāūnī, an uncompromising critic of Akbar, and on the writings of the Jesuits, who must have been dissatisfied with the Emperor for their failure to convert him to their faith, Smith wrongly remarks that "the Divine Faith was a monument of Akbar's folly, not of his wisdom. The whole scheme was the outcome of ridiculous vanity, a monstrous growth of unrestrained autocracy". Von Noer, the German historian of Akbar, gives a correct estimate of the Divine Faith when he writes: "Badāūnī certainly takes every opportunity of raking up the notion of Akbar's apotheosis for the purpose of renewing attacks upon the great emperor. He, however, was never in intimate relation to the Din-i-Ilahi; he repeats his misconceptions current among the populace, marred and alloyed by popular modes of perception. Akbar might justly have contemplated the acts of his reign with legitimate pride, but many incidents of his life prove him to have been among the most modest of men. It was the people who made a God of the man who was the founder and head of an order at once political, philosophic and religious. One of his creations will assure to him for all time a pre-eminent place among the benefactors of humanity—greatness and universal tolerance in matters of religion."

Akbar has been charged by Badāūnī, and the Jesuit writers, with having renounced Islam in his later years. It is, of course, true that, with a view to commanding the "indivisible allegiance of his subject", Akbar sought to check the undue influence of the
Ulemas, who, like the Popes in medieval Europe, exerted "a parallel claim to the obedience of the people"; and proceeded, step by step, to establish his position as the supreme head of the Church (Imâm-i-'Adîl). Thus in June, 1579, he removed the chief preacher at Fatehpur Sikri and read the Khutba in his own name, and in September, 1579, he issued the so-called Infallibility Decree, which made him the supreme arbiter in matters of religion. This must have caused profound resentment among the Ulemas and their supporters, but Akbar remained fearless. "He did not mean to assume the spiritual leadership of the nation without having spiritual attainments... From start to finish, from ascending the pulpit at Fatehpur Sikri to the propagation of Din-i-ruhi, Akbar was intensely sincere." It is unfair to denounce a man of such rational and liberal sentiments as having contempt for other religions being an enemy of any of these. He never denied the authority of the Quran, not even in the so-called Infallibility Decree. His ideal was a grand synthesis of all that he considered to be the best in different religions—a ideal essentially national, for which he is justly entitled to the gratitude of posterity.

7. Personality of Akbar

An intrepid soldier, a benevolent and wise ruler, a man of enlightened ideas, and a sound judge of character, Akbar occupies a unique position in the history of India. We know from Abul Fazl, and even from the hostile critic Badâ'înî, that he had a commanding personality and looked every inch a king. Jahângir remarks in his Memoirs that his father "in his actions and movements was not like the people of the world, and the glory of God manifested itself in him". Like other princes of the house of Timûr, Akbar was endowed with remarkable courage and uncommon physical strength. He was fearless in the chase as well as in the fields of battle, and, "like Alexander of Macedon, was always ready to risk his life, regardless of political consequences". He often plunged his horse into the full-flooded rivers during the rainy season and safely crossed over to the other side. Though a mighty conqueror, he did not usually indulge in cruelty for its own sake. Affectionate towards his relatives, he was not revengeful without cause, and his behaviour towards his brother, Hakim, shows that he could pardon a repentant rebel. On some rare occasions his temper got the upper hand and then the culprits were summarily dealt with, as is shown by his behaviour towards his maternal uncle, Mu'azzam, and his foster-brother, Âdam Khân. But he usually maintained perfect
self-control. His manners were exceedingly charming and his address pleasant, for which he has been highly praised by all who came in contact with him. He was able to win the love and reverence of his subjects, who considered the Ruler of Delhi to be the Lord of the Universe. Extremely moderate in his diet, he was fond of fruit and had little liking for meat, which he ceased to take altogether in his later years.

Though Akbar probably did not learn how to read and write,¹ he was not uncultured. Possessed of a fine literary taste, a profound intellectual curiosity and a marvellous memory, he took interest in the different branches of learning, such as philosophy, theology, history, and politics. He maintained a library full of books on various subjects, and was fond of the society of scholars, poets and philosophers, who read books to him aloud, and thus enabled him to be conversant with Sīfī, Christian, Zoroastrian, Hindu and Jaina literature. Smith writes that "anybody who heard him arguing with acuteness and lucidity on a subject of debate would have credited him with wide literary knowledge and profound erudition and never would have suspected him of illiteracy". He possessed also a fair taste for art, architecture and mechanical works, and is credited with many inventions and improvements in the manufacture of matchlocks. Gifted with indomitable energy and indefatigable industry, he erected a vast administrative machinery on a comprehensive plan, which will be described in a subsequent chapter. He looked, as we know from the Afīn-i-Akbari, "upon the smallest details as mirrors capable of reflecting a comprehensive outline".

Though ambitious of territorial conquests, through which the limits of the Mughul Empire were extended almost to the furthest limits of Northern India, Akbar was not a selfish and unbridled autocrat. He did not ignore the feelings of the conquered and trample on their rights and privileges with an eye only to self-interest. His ideal of kingship was high. "Upon the conduct of the monarch," said he, "depends the efficiency of any course of action. His gratitude to his Lord, therefore, should be shown in his just government and due recognition of merit; that of his people in obedience and praises." Endowed with the farsightedness of a genius, he built the political structure of the Mughul Empire, and its administrative system, on the co-operation and goodwill of all his subjects. He truly realised the unsoundness of ill-treating the Hindus, who formed the overwhelming majority of

¹ Some writers are now trying to prove Akbar's literacy. Vide Liberty, 30th December, 1931, and Indian Historical Quarterly, December 1940.
the population, or of relegating them permanently to a position of inequality and humiliation. This shows the transcendental ability of Akbar as a statesman. He not only meted out fair treatment to the Hindus and appointed them to high posts, as Sher Shah and his successors had done, but also tried to remove all invidious distinctions between the Muslims and non-Muslims. Thus he abolished the pilgrim tax in the eighth year and the jizya in the ninth year of his reign, and inaugurated a policy of universal toleration. In fact, he chalked out a rational path for anyone who would aspire to the position of a national ruler of India.

Akbar tried to introduce humane social reforms. He was a patron of art and literature. All this will be described in subsequent chapters. From all points of view his reign forms one of the most brilliant periods in the history of India. Akbar, remarks Smith, "was a born king of men, with a rightful claim to be one of the mightiest sovereigns known to history. That claim rests securely on the basis of his extraordinary natural gifts, his original ideas, and his magnificent achievements".
CHAPTER III

JAHANGIR AND SHĀH JAHĀN

1. Jahāngir

A week after Akbar's death, Salim succeeded to the throne at Āgra at the age of thirty-six and assumed the title of Nīr-ul-din Muhammad Jahāngir Fādshāh Ghāzī. Though fond of pleasure he was not absolutely devoid of military ambition, and dreamt of conquering Transoxiana, the seat of government of the early Timūrids. Soon after his accession, he tried, in the words of Asad, "to win the hearts of all the people" by various measures. He granted a general amnesty to his opponents, released prisoners, set up the famous chain of justice between the Shāhburji in the fort of Āgra and a stone pillar fixed on the banks of the Jumna, and promulgated twelve edicts, which were ordered to be observed as rules of conduct in his kingdom:

1. Prohibition of cesses (zakât).
2. Regulations about highway robbery and theft.
3. Free inheritance of property of deceased persons.
4. Prohibition of the sale of wine and of all kinds of intoxicating liquor.
5. Prohibition of seizure of houses and of cutting off the noses and ears of criminals.
6. Prohibition of forcible seizure of property (Ghasbi).
7. Building of hospitals and appointment of physicians to attend the sick.
8. Prohibition of the slaughter of animals on certain days.
9. Respect paid to Sunday.
10. General confirmation of mansabs and jāgirs.
11. Confirmation of aina\(^1\) lands.
12. Amnesty to all prisoners in forts and in prisons of every kind.

These edicts do not seem to have had very great practical effect. The few changes that Jahāngir now effected in the offices of the State were intended to secure him a band of supporters. He

\(^{1}\) Described in the Waqiāt-i-Jahāngir as "lands devoted to the purposes of prayer and praise".

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rewarded Bir Singh Bundela, the murderer of Abul Fazl, with the dignity of a commander of 3,000 horse, while 'Abdur Rahamán, the son of the victim, and Mahá Singh, son of Mán Singh, were elevated only to the rank of a commander of 2,000. Mirzá Ghiyás Beg, a Persian adventurer and father of Núr Jahán, who was destined to be famous under the title of I'timád-ud-daulah, was raised to the rank of a commander of 1,500.

The "early pleasant dreams" of Jahángir were soon rudely disturbed by the rebellion of his eldest son, Khusrav, whose relations with his father had been far from friendly since the closing years of Akbar’s reign. Enjoying the kindness and favour of his grandfather, Khusrav was the most popular prince in the Empire, having many influential supporters like his maternal uncle, Mán Singh, and his father-in-law, Khán-i-A’zam Aziz Kóka, foster-brother of Akbar. Five months after Jahángir’s accession, he left Ágra, fled to the Punjab and rose in rebellion. Jahángir marched without delay against his son with a large army. He was so greatly perturbed that he even forgot to take his daily dose of opium on the first morning of his march. The Prince’s troops were easily defeated by the imperial forces near Jullundur and he was captured with his principal followers, Husain Beg and ‘Abdul ‘Azíz, while attempting to cross the Chenáb with a view to proceeding to Kábul. He was brought before his father with “his hands bound and a chain on his leg” in open darbár, and after being severely reproached was ordered to be imprisoned. His supporters were subjected to cruel punishments. The captive Prince was destined to suffer more till he met his doom in 1622. Khusrav and his nephew, Dárá Shukoh, are two pathetic figures in Mughul history.

The fifth Sikh Guru, Arjan, was sentenced to death, and all his property was confiscated by the Emperor. Apparently the charge against him was that he had helped the rebel prince Khusrav with a sum of money, and some writers believe that the Guru suffered the “penalty for high treason and contumacy”. But Jahángir’s own Mémoirs make it clear that the Emperor was not guided by purely political considerations. The unfortunate prince whom the Guru helped was, in the words of Terry, “a gentleman of a very lovely presence and fine carriage, exceedingly beloved of the common people . . . . the very love and delight

1 Jahángir himself writes: “I gave Khusrav into custody and I ordered these two villains (Husain Beg and 'Abdul 'Aziz) to be enclosed in the skins of a cow and an ass, and to be placed on asses, face to the tail, and so to be paraded round the city.” Elliot, Vol. VI, p. 300.

2 His tomb is situated just outside the Fort of Lahore.
of them all”. The Guru’s conduct may have been due to his charitable and holy disposition, and need not indicate any hostile intention towards the Emperor personally. The Guru himself justified his action on the grounds of his dharmic and gratitude for the past favours of Akbar “and not because he was in opposition” to the Emperor Jahangir. The execution of the Sikh divine was an impolitic step on the part of Jahangir, as it estranged the Sikhs, till then a peace-loving community, and turned them into foes of the Empire.

In May, 1611, Jahangir married Nur Jahân, originally known as Mihr-un-nisa, who considerably influenced his career and reign. Modern researches have discarded the many romantic legends about Mihr-un-nisa’s birth and early life and have proved the reliability of the brief account of Mu’tamid Khân, the author of Iqbal-Nâma-i-Jahângiri. According to it, Mihr-un-nisa was the daughter of a Persian immigrant, Mirzâ Ghiyâs Beg, who came to India with his children and wife in the reign of Akbar. She was born on the way to India at Qandahâr. Her father rose to high positions during the reigns of Akbar and his son. She was married, at the age of seventeen, to Ali Quil Beg Istâjhi, another Persian adventurer, who in the beginning of Jahangir’s reign received the jagir of Burdwan in Bengal and the title of Sher-afghân. When Jahangir heard that Sher-afghân had grown “insubordinate and disposed to rebellions”, he sent in A.D. 1607 his foster-brother, Qutb-ud-din, the new governor of Bengal, who was to the Emperor “in the place of a dear son, a kind brother, and a congenial friend”, to chastise him. An affray took place between Sher-afghân and Qutb-ud-din at Burdwan, in course of which the latter was killed. Sher-afghân was, in his turn, hacked to pieces by the followers of Qutb-ud-din, and Mihr-un-nisa was taken to the court with her young daughter. After four years, Mihr-un-nisa’s charming “appearance caught the king’s far-seeing eye and so captivated him” that he married her, and made her his chief queen. The Emperor, who styled himself Nur-ud-din, conferred on his new consort the title of Nur Mahal (Light of the Palace), which was soon changed to Nur Jahân (Light of the World). It is sometimes said that Jahangir had been in love with Mihr-un-nisa “when she was still a maiden, during the lifetime of Akbar”, and that his infatuation for her cost Sher-afghân his life. The truth of this opinion has recently been questioned on the ground that the contemporary Indian historians, and some

1 Terry, Voyage to East India, p. 411. Terry, Sir Thomas Roe’s chaplain, met Khurrav several times.
European travellers are silent about it and it was invented by later writers. But the cause of Muhr-un-nissa being brought to the court, and not to her father, who held an important post in the Empire, has not been explained. That Jahāngīr was not above the habit of having secret love affairs with the ladies of the court is proved by the case of Ānarkalī, for whom he raised in 1615 a beautiful marble tomb at Lahore, bearing the passionate inscription ‘‘Ah! Could I behold the face of my beloved once more, I would thank God until the day of resurrection.’’

Nār Jahān was indeed possessed of exquisite beauty, a fine taste for Persian literature, poetry and arts, ‘‘a piercing intellect, a versatile temper, and sound common sense’’. But the most dominating trait of her character was her inordinate ambition, which led her to establish an unlimited ascendancy over her husband. Her father, I'timād-ud-daulān, and brother, Āsaf Khān, became prominent nobles of the court, and she further strengthened her position by marrying her daughter by her first husband to Jahāngīr’s younger son, Prince Shāhryār.

The early part of Jahāngīr’s reign witnessed some important military successes. Attention was first directed towards Bengal, the annexation of which had not yet put an end to the Afghān opposition there. The frequent change of governors in Bengal encouraged the local Afghāns to rebel under Usmān Khān during the governorship of Islām Khān, who was, however, a capable man and took prompt measures to suppress the rebellion. The Afghāns were defeated by the imperialists on the 12th March, 1612, and their leader, Usman Khān, died from the effect of a severe wound in the head. The political power of the Afghāns, so long opposed to the Mughals, came to an end, and Jahāngīr’s conciliatory policy made them henceforth friendly to the Empire.

The most distinguished triumph of Mughal imperialism during the reign of Jahāngīr was its victory over the Rājputs of Mewār, who had so long defied its might. Amar Singh of Mewār was devoid of the unflinching resolution of Pratāp, and the policy of Prince Khurrām, the third son of Jahāngīr, compelled him to negotiate for peace. The Rānā and his son Karan submitted to the Mughals and recognised the suzerainty of the Empire. The Rānā himself was exempted from personal attendance at the imperial court, and no princess of his family was ever taken to the imperial harem. As Jahāngīr himself observed: ‘‘The real point was that as Rānā Amar Singh and his fathers, proud in the strength of their hilly

1 It became the Church of St. James from 1857 to 1887 and is now the Record Office of the Punjab Government.
country and their abodes, had never seen or obeyed any of the Kings of Hindustân, this should be brought about in my reign.” Jahângîr subsequently placed two life-size marble statues of the Rânâ and his son in the garden of his palace at Agra. By granting generous terms to Mewâr and adopting a conciliatory policy towards it, Jahângîr secured its loyalty for the Mughal Empire till Aurangzeb’s policy alienated Rânâ Râj Singh.

In the Deccan, Jahângîr pursued the forward policy of his father and a desultory war dragged on throughout his reign against the kingdom of Ahmadnagar. Complete success of the Mughal arms over the forces of Ahmadnagar was not possible, owing partly to the strength of the Deccan kingdom and partly to the weak conduct of the war by the imperial troops. The kingdom of Ahmadnagar was then ably served by its Abyssinian minister, Malik ‘Ambar, a born leader of men and one of the greatest statesmen that Medieval India produced. His reorganisation of the revenue system of the kingdom on sound lines contributed to its financial stability, and his training of the soldiers, mostly Marathas, in the guerrilla method of warfare enabled them to cope successfully with the imperialists. Mu’tamid Khan, the Mughal court chronicler, who could not have been biased towards Malik ‘Ambar, thus describes him: “This ‘Ambar was a slave, but an able man. In warfare, in command, in sound judgment, and in administration, he had no rival or equal. He well understood the predatory warfare, which in the language of the Deccan is called barqi-yari. He kept down the turbulent spirits of that country, and maintained his exalted position to the end of his life and closed his career in honour. History records no other instance of an Abyssinian slave arriving at such eminence.” The activities of the imperial troops were, on the other hand, greatly hampered by continual dissensions among the commanders. The nominal command of the campaigns was given first to Prince Parwez and subsequently to Prince Khurram. But ‘Abdur Rahim Khân-i-Khânân, and some other chief nobles, really controlled all affairs. They occupied their time more in mutual quarrels than in fighting against the Deccans. Only a partial success was gained by the Mughals in A.D. 1616, when Prince Khurram captured Ahmadnagar and some other strongholds. For this victory Khurram was rewarded by his father with the title of Shah Jahân (King of the World). He received various gifts, and was elevated to the rank of 30,000 zâr and 20,000 savâr. But the victory of the Mughals over Ahmadnagar was more apparent than real. The Deccan was far from being completely conquered by them. It has been justly remarked that “nothing could conceal the stern
reality that the expenditure of millions of rupees and thousands of lives had not advanced the Mughul frontier a single line beyond the frontier of 1605".

A notable military success of Jahāngīr's reign was the capture of the strong fortress of Kāngra in the hills of the north-eastern Punjab on the 16th November, 1620. But this event, in which Jahāngīr found cause for exultation, was quickly followed by disasters and rebellions which had no end till he closed his eyes for ever.

The first serious disaster for the Empire was the loss of Qandahār, which had long been a source of friction between the Mughuls and the Persians. Deceiving the Mughul officers by gifts and friendly professions, Shāh 'Abbās (1587–1629), one of the greatest rulers of Asia in his time, took advantage of internal disorders in the Empire to besiege Qandahār in 1621, and finally took it in June, 1622. The huge preparations of Jahāngīr for the recapture of Qandahār were in vain, as his son Shāh Jahān, whom he ordered to lead the expedition, apprehending that his absence from the capital would be utilised by Nūr Jahān to prejudice his claims to the throne, and to strengthen those of her son-in-law, Shabrār, did not move. Alienated by the intrigues of Nūr Jahān, Shāh Jahān soon rose in rebellion against his father, as the Emperor had not the courage or power to restrain the Empress. Placed on the horns of a dilemma—facing the Persian pressure on the north-west and the defection of Shāh Jahān within the heart of the Empire—Jahāngīr was in sore straits. His attention and efforts had soon to be diverted towards the suppression of the danger at home.

Shāh Jahān, joined by the aged officer 'Abdur Rahim Khān-i-Khānān, at first intended to march on Āgra, but an imperial army under the nominal command of Prince Parwuz and with Mahābat Khān as its real leader, completely defeated him at Balochpur, south of Delhi, in 1623. He was chased from province to province and met with repeated reverses. He first proceeded to the Deccan, whence he was driven to Bengal. But unable to maintain his hold there, he returned to the Deccan and for a few years wandered about seeking the alliance of Malik 'Ambar and others. He was finally reconciled to his father in 1625. His sons, Dārā Shukoh and Aurangzeb, were sent to the imperial court, probably to serve as hostages for his good behaviour; and he retired to Nāsik with his wife, Mumtāz Mahal, a niece of Nūr Jahān, and his youngest son, Mūrād. Thus ended the futile rebellion of Shāh Jahān, with no gain for him but with ample damage to the Empire.
An Afghan by birth, Mahābat Khān held only a marnaq of 500 in the beginning of Jahāngīr's reign. Being rapidly promoted to higher ranks, he rendered conspicuous services to the Emperor, especially in suppressing the rebellion of Shāh Jahān. But his success excited the jealousy of Nūr Jahān and her brother, Āṣaf Khān, and the queen's hostility drove him to rebellion. By a bold coup de main he made Jahāngīr a prisoner on the bank of the river Jhelum, while the Emperor was on his way to Kābul. Nūr Jahān managed to escape, but all her attempts to rescue her husband by force having failed, she joined him in confinement. She and her husband were finally able, by outwitting Mahābat Khān, to effect their escape to Rohtās, where the partisans of Jahāngīr had collected a large force. Mahābat Khān ultimately ran away to Shāh Jahān and made peace with him. But Nūr Jahān's triumph was short-lived, for the Emperor died on the 28th October, 1627. His body was buried in a beautiful tomb at Shāhdara, on the banks of the Rāvi.

Jahāngīr is a complex personality in Indian history. Terry writes of him: "Now for the disposition of that King it ever seemed unto me to be composed of extremes: for sometimes he was cruel and at other times he would seem to be exceedingly fair and gentle." Beveridge remarks: "Jahāngīr was indeed a strange mixture. The man who could stand by and see men flayed alive... could yet be a lover of justice and could spend his Thursday evenings in holding high converse.... He could procure the murder of Abul Fazl and avow the fact without remorse, and also pity the royal elephants because they shivered in winter when they sprinkled themselves with cold water.... One good trait in Jahāngīr was his hearty enjoyment of nature and his love of flowers." In the opinion of the Emperor's latest biographer, he was "a sensible, kind-hearted man, with strong family affections and unstinted generosity to all, with a burning hatred of oppression and a passion for justice. On a few occasions in his career as prince and emperor, he was betrayed, not without provocation, by fits of wrath into individual acts of cruelty. But, as a rule, he was remarkable for humanity, affability and an open mind". Francis Gladwin has also observed that "from the beginning to the end of his reign, Jahāngīr's disposition towards his subjects appears to have been invariably humane and considerate". He removed some vexatious transit duties and taxes and made an attempt to prohibit traffic in eunuchs. He had a strong sense of justice. "The first order that I gave," he writes, "was for fastening up the Chain of Justice." This chain,
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bearing sixty bells, could be shaken by the humblest of his subjects to bring their grievances to his notice. He imposed penalties without any consideration for the rank of the accused. Thus on passing the capital sentence on an influential murderer, he observed: "God forbid that in such affairs I should consider princes, and far less that I should consider Amirs." His reign saw the beginning of a new intercourse between Europe and India.

Possessed of a fine aesthetic taste, and himself a painter, Jahângîr was a patron of art and literature and a lover of nature. His Tâzuk (Memoirs) is a brilliant proof of his literary attainments. But he was given to excessive intemperance, which gradually spoiled the finer aspects of his character and was responsible for the inconsistency of his temper. Jahângîr's attitude towards religion was not so rational as that of his father, but he was not an eclectic or a Christian at heart. With a sincere belief in God, he did not remain satisfied with mere dogmas of any particular creed but was a deist. He loved to converse with Hindu or Muslim saints, and Christian preachers, and valued religious pictures, notably of Christians, but he did not accept the practices or rites of the Hindus, the Zoroastrians or the Christians.

2. Shâh Jahân

A. The Struggle for the Throne

The death of Jahângîr was followed by a short period of struggle for succession to the throne. Shâh Jahân was still in the Deccan when his father died in October, 1627, and though two of his brothers, Khusraw and Parwez, had already expired, there was another, Prince Shahryâr, with a position of advantage in the north. At the instance of his mother-in-law, Nîr Jahân, Shahryâr lost no time in proclaiming himself Emperor in Lahore. But Shâh Jahân's cause was ably served by Āsaf Khân, father of Mumtâz Mahal. With much alertness, Āsaf Khân sent a message to Shâh Jahân asking him to come to the north. At the same time, with a view to satisfying the people of the capital, he installed Prince Dâwar Bakhsh, son of the late Prince Khusrav, on the throne as a stop-gap Emperor, pending the arrival of Shâh Jahân. Having won over to his side the Mîr Bakhsâhi, Irâdat Khân, Āsaf Khân marched to Lahore, defeated the troops of Shahryâr, made him a prisoner and blinded him. Shâh Jahân hurried to Âgra from the Deccan and was proclaimed Emperor in the metropolis in February, 1628, under the lofty title of 'Abul Muzaffar Shihâb-ud-din
JAHANGIR AND SHAH JAHAN

Muhammad Sahib-i-qiran II, Shah Jahan Padshah Ghazi. Soon after this, Prince Dawai Baksh, whom the contemporary chronicler has aptly described as a "sacrificial lamb", was removed from the throne and consigned to prison, but he was subsequently released and went to reside in Persia as a pensioner of the Shah. Shah Jahan managed to remove all his possible rivals "out of the world". He lived to see two of his sons executed, a third driven out of the country. He himself spent his last days as a captive.

B. Rebellions

For the time being, however, everything went in the Emperor's favour. He began his reign with profound optimism and success. In recognition of their services, Asaf Khan and Mahabat Khan were promoted to high offices. The former was made the Wazir of the Empire and the latter governor of Agra. The Emperor easily suppressed two rebellions—one of Jughur Singh, a Bundela chief, son of Bir Singh Bundela, and the other of a powerful Afghan noble named Khân Jahan Lodi, an ex-vice-regent of the Deccan—which broke out in the first and the second year of his reign respectively. The Bundela chief was quickly overpowered and retreated into the mountains, whence, however, he continued to create trouble for the Emperor till 1634. Ultimately he was defeated by the imperialists, who forced him to leave his country, and he was killed on the way in a chance skirmish with the Gonds. More formidable than the Bundela rising was the rebellion of Khân Jahan Lodi, who had allied himself with Nizam-ul-mulk, the last of the Nizam Shahi rulers of Ahmadnagar, and had some Maratha and Rajput supporters. The success of his efforts, which meant the "carrying out of the traditional hostility of the Afghan chiefs to the Mughal dynasty", would have deprived the Empire of its southern provinces. But Shah Jahan, having fully realised the gravity of the situation, sent a body of efficient troops to suppress the rebellion. Chased from place to place, deserted by his allies and having lost his friends and relations in battle, the Afghan chief fought desperately against the imperialists for three years but was ultimately defeated at Tal Schonda, north of Kâlinjar, and cut to pieces with his sons, 'Aziz and Âmal, in the fourth year.

C. Treatment of the Portuguese and Capture of Hugli

The Portuguese had established themselves above Sâtgâon in Bengal in or about a.d. 1579 on the strength of an imperial firman,
and had gradually strengthened their position by the erection of large buildings round about Hugli, which became consequently more important than Sattgâon from the commercial point of view. But far from remaining satisfied with peaceful commercial pursuits, they gave offence to Shâh Jahân by some objectionable practices. They not only exacted heavy duties from the Indian traders, especially on tobacco (which had become by that time an important article of trade), at the cost of the revenues of the State, but also became arrogant enough to begin the abominable and cruel practice of slave trading, for which they kidnapped many orphan Hindu or Muslim children, whom they converted to Christianity. Their audacity rose so high that they captured two slave girls of Muntâz Mahal's. This must have been sufficient to incense the Mughal Emperor. The conversion of Indians to Christianity by some of the Jesuit missionaries added to his resentment against the Portuguese. After his accession to the throne, Shâh Jahân appointed Kâsim 'Ali Khân governor of Bengal and charged him with the duty of punishing the Portuguese. Hugli was accordingly besieged by a large army, under the command of Kâsim 'Ali Khân's son, on the 24th June, 1632, and was captured after three months. Many of the Portuguese, as we know from the court-chronicler, 'Abdul Hamîd Lahori, were killed and a large number of them were taken as prisoners to Agra, where they suffered terribly.

1) Famine in the Deccan and Gujûrât, 1630-1632

In the fourth and fifth years of the reign of Shâh Jahân an appalling famine of the most severe type desolated the Deccan and Gujûrât. The horrors of this terrible calamity have been thus described by 'Abdul Hamîd Lahori: "The inhabitants of these two countries were reduced to the direst extremity. Life was offered for a loaf, but none would buy: rank was to be sold for a cake, but none cared for it. The ever-bounteous hand was stretched out to beg for food, and the feet which had always trodden the way of contentment walked about only in search of sustenance. For a long time dog's flesh was sold for goat's flesh, and the pounded bones of the dead were mixed with flour and sold. When this was discovered, the sellers were brought to justice. Desperation at length reached such a pitch that men began to devour each other, and the flesh of a son was preferred to his love. The numbers of the dying caused obstructions in the roads, and every man whose dire sufferings did not terminate in death and who retained the power to move wandered off to the towns and villages of other
countries.” An English merchant-traveller, Peter Mundy, who went on business from Surat to Ágra and Patna and came back while the famine was raging, has also left a detailed account of its horrors.

E. The North-West Frontier Policy

Sháh Jahán was determined to recover the important province of Qandahár, without which the Mughul position on the north-west frontier remained comparatively weak. By skillful negotiations he seduced 'Ali Mardán Khán, the Persian governor of Qandahár, from his loyalty to the Sháh and persuaded him to surrender the fortress to the Mughuls. 'Ali Mardán entered the Mughul imperial service and was rewarded with money and honour. The action of 'Ali Mardán Khán deprived Persia of Qandahár, but the Mughuls could not retain it long. The Persians under their energetic ruler, Sháh 'Abbás II, made preparations in August, 1648, with a view to attacking Qandahár during winter, when the snowfall would make it difficult for the Mughuls to bring reinforcements from India. The courtiers of Sháh Jahán unwisely advised him to postpone the work of opposing the Persians till the season was over. “The natural consequence of neglecting an enemy followed. The Persian King triumphed over the depth of winter, his lack of provisions, and other difficulties, on which the courtiers of Sháh Jahán had built their hopes,” and besieged Qandahár on the 16th December, 1648. The Mughul garrison ultimately capitulated on the 11th February, A.D. 1649, owing largely to the weakness of Daulat Khán, the incapable Mughul governor of Qandahár. Early in May, Prince Aurangzib, with the chief minister, Sa'dulláh Khán, was deputed to make an attempt to recover Qandahár, and he attacked it on the 16th of that month. But this attempt failed before the superior military preparations and skill of the Persians. Sháh Jahán, however, would not abandon his design of recapturing Qandahár. After three years’ preparations the Emperor sent there a powerful expeditionary army with a siege-train, again under Aurangzib and Sa'dulláh Khán, while he himself remained encamped at Kábul to make arrangements for supplies of provisions and munitions of war. The imperial commanders invested Qandahár on the 2nd May, 1652. They had received strict instructions from their master not to deliver an assault on the fortress without making a breach, but they failed to effect it with their inefficient gunnery in the face of the superior artillery of the Persians. Thus the Mughul troops had no success this time also, and Sháh Jahán had to order the abandonment of the siege. A third attempt made
by the Emperor's eldest and favourite son, Dārā Shukoh (now exalted with the title of "Shāh Buxand Iqbal" or "King of Lofty Fortune"), in the following year, proved as unlucky as that of his brother. Qandahār was lost to the Mughuls for good, though the campaigns undertaken to recover it during the reign of Shāh Jahān cost no less than twelve crores of rupees, that is, more than half of the annual income of the State, besides valuable lives. Further, the repeated failures of the Mughul troops before Qandahār considerably affected the prestige of the Empire.

F. The Central Asian Policy

The Central Asian adventures of the Mughuls also ended in disasters. Shāh Jahān, like his father and grandfather, dreamt of reconquering the old territories of his ancestors in Central Asia. "Ever since the beginning of his reign," writes 'Abdul Hamid Lahorī, "the Emperor's heart had been set upon the conquest of Balkh and Badakhshān, which were hereditary territories of his house, and the keys to the acquisition of Samarkand, the home and capital of his great ancestor Timūr." But the difficulties of mobilising a large army through the lofty ranges of the Hindukush were great, and the utility of the enterprise for the Mughul Empire in India was very doubtful. Shāh Jahān, however, did not consider this. "The prosperity of his reign and the flattery of his courtiers had turned his head and he was dreaming the vainest of vain dreams." In 1646, circumstances being favourable owing to the outbreak of a civil war in the ruling house of the Ovān region, Prince Murād and 'Ali Mardān occupied Balkh and Badakhshān, which lay hemmed in between the Hindukush and the Oxus. But to consolidate these conquests became impossible. Sick of the uncongenial climate of Balkh and other difficulties, Prince Murād came back to India against the desire of his father, for which he was disgraced. The rezaīr, Sa'dullah Kān, was soon sent to Balkh to set things right. In the next year the Emperor, determined not to give up his conquests, dispatched Aurangzeb to Balkh with a large army. But the Uzbekīs now organised a national resistance against the Mughuls in the face of which Aurangzeb, in spite of his sincere and earnest efforts, could achieve nothing and had to retreat to India after suffering terrible hardships. The Central Asian campaigns cost the Mughul Empire immense loss of men and money. As Sir J. X. Sarkar remarks: "Thus ended Shāh Jahān's fatuous war in Balkh—a war in which the Indian treasury spent four crores of rupees in two years and realised from the
conquered a country a revenue of 221 lakhs only. Not an inch of
territory was annexed, no dynasty changed, and no enemy replaced
by an ally on the throne of Balkh. The grain stored in the Balkh
fort, worth five lakhs, and the provisions in other forts as well,
were all abandoned to the Bukharians, besides Rs. 50,000 in cash
presented to Nazar Muhammad's grandsons and Rs. 22,500 to
envoys. Five hundred soldiers fell in battle and ten times that
number (including camp-followers) were slain by cold and snow on
the mountains. Such is the terrible price that aggressive imperialism
makes India pay for wars across the north-western frontier.

G. Shâh Jahân and the Deccan States

Shâh Jahân resumed the traditional policy of expansion in the south,
the whole of which had not been, as we have already noted,
thoroughly subdued by Akbar. Akbar could only conquer Khândesh
and annex a portion of Berar. Jahângir's attempt to conquer
Ahmadnagar was successfully checked by its able minister, Malik
'Ambar. Bijâdar and Golconda continued to enjoy independence.
Much was still left to be accomplished before Mughal imperialism
could triumph completely over the Peninsula.

The Nizâm Shâhi kingdom of Ahmadnagar, because of its
proximity to the Mughul frontier in the south, was the first to feel
the weight of Mughul arms. After the death of Malik 'Ambar,
the saviour of Ahmadnagar from Mughul attack during the reign
of Jahângir, in 1626, the kingdom was in a moribund condition. In-
ternal dissensions between the Sultan and his minister, Fateh Khân,
the unworthy son of the noble Abyäsmân Malik 'Ambar, brought
the kingdom within the clutches of the Mughals in the course of a
few years. In 1630 the Mughals failed to capture Parenda, a
strong fortress belonging to Ahmadnagar. But Fateh Khân, dis-
satisfied with Sultan Nizâm-ul-mulk, entered into negotiations
with the Mughul Emperor and at the suggestion of the latter
secretly made away with his master. To perpetuate his own
influence he placed on the throne Nizâm-ul-mulk's son, Husain
Shâh, a boy only ten years old. He was not at all sincere in his
friendship with the Mughals. When the Mughals besieged
the fortress of Daulatabâd in 1631, he at first went against the
imperialists but was soon won over by them with a bribe of ten
and a half lacs of rupees, and surrendered the fortress. Thus
the same ignoble means which had given Asirgarh to the Mughals
were used by them also to secure Daulatabâd. Ahmadnagar
was annexed to the Mughul Empire in A.D. 1633, and the
nominal king, Hussain Shāh, was consigned to life-long imprisonment in the fort of Gwalior. The dynasty of the Nizām Shāhīs thus came to an end, though an unsuccessful attempt to revive it was made in 1633 by Shāhji, father of the celebrated Shivaji. As a reward for his help to the Mughuls, Fath Khān was enrolled in the imperial service at a liberal salary.

The independence of the Shahi States of Golkundā and Bijāpur was highly offensive to the imperialistic and religious zeal of Shāh Jahān. The encroachments of the imperial troops on their territories had already begun in 1629 and 1631 respectively. In the year 1635, when the rulers of those two States secretly helped Shāhji, who made an attempt to set up a Nizām Shāhī boy as the nominal Sullān of the now defunct kingdom of Admadnagar, the Mughul Emperor called upon them to acknowledge his suzerainty, to send tribute regularly, and to abstain from helping Shāhji. He marched in person to the Deccan to enforce his demands and on reaching Daulatābād on 21st February, 1636, made vigorous preparations to attack the Deccan States. Overawed by these, 'Abdulah Shāh, Sullān of Golkundā, acknowledged the suzerainty of Shāh Jahān by complying with all the demands of the latter, such as paying an annual tribute to the Emperor, and to striking coins, and having the Khutba read, in his name.

But the 'Adil Shāh of Bijāpur refused to submit to the imperial behest and made a bold stand to defend his rights. Three Mughul armies then attacked his kingdom from three sides—one, under Khān-i-Daurān, from Bīdar in the north-east, another, under Khān Jahān, through Sholāpur in the west, and the third, under Khān-i-Zamān, by way of Indāpur in the north-west. Though by resorting to the time-honoured expedients of cutting off the supplies of the enemy and poisoning the wells, the Bijāpur soldiers bravely defended the capital city, the rest of their kingdom was devastated by the Mughuls. Thus the Sullān was compelled to sue for peace, which was concluded in May, 1636. He acknowledged the suzerainty of the Mughul Emperor, and was required not to molest the kingdom of Golkundā, which was now a dependency of the Emperor. Besides being allowed to hold his ancestral kingdom, the Sullān got portions of the territory of the Ahmadnagar kingdom, the rest of which was absorbed into the Mughul Empire. Both the parties agreed not to suborn their respective officers, and the Sullān was not to assist, or give shelter to, Shāhji. "Thus after forty years of strife (1595–1636)," writes Sir J. N. Sarkar, "the affairs of the Deccan were at last settled. The position of the Emperor was
asserted beyond challenge, his boundaries clearly defined, and his suzerainty over the southern kingdoms formally established." The Emperor left the Deccan on the 11th July, 1636, and sent his third son, Aurangzeb, then a youth of eighteen, as viceroy of the Mughul Deccan. It was then a fairly extensive territory, comprising four provinces, Khândesh, Berar, Telungânâ, and Daulatâbâd, and estimated to yield an income of five crores of rupees a year. It contained sixty-four hill forts, some of which were still in the possession of Shâhji and other hostile chiefs.

The young viceroy engaged himself assiduously in suppressing the enemies of the Empire. He captured the district of Bâglâna, lying between Khândesh and the Surât coast, and compelled Shâhji to submit to him and surrender certain forts. In 1637 he went to Agra to marry Dilras Bânu Begum, daughter of Shâh Nawâz Khân of the Persian royal family, then employed as a Mughul officer. But Aurangzeb was much embarrassed in his Deccan administration for lack of finance and also by the influence of a hostile party under his brother, Dârâ Shukoh. In 1644 he proceeded to Agra to see his favourite sister, Jahânârâ, who had been severely burnt in the month of March and was cured at last in November by an ointment prepared by a slave named Arif.1 But three weeks after his arrival at Agra, Aurangzeb was forced by adverse circumstances to resign his post. The older historians have suggested some vague reasons for this sudden fall of Aurangzeb, which do not offer a true explanation of the situation. "Abdul Hamid Lâbori writes that "misdled by the wicked counsels of his foolish companions, he wanted to take to the retired life of an ascetic and had also done some acts which the Emperor disapproved of". In the opinion of Khâfi Khân, Aurangzeb, in order to "anticipate his father’s punishment of his bad deeds, himself took off his sword and lived for some days as a hermit," which caused his retirement from the Deccan viceroyalty. The real reason, as found in Aurangzeb's letters, was that owing to Dârâ Shukoh’s persistent hostility towards him and the partiality of Shâh Jahân for his brother, Aurangzeb found it difficult to carry on the Deccan administration and maintain his self-respect properly and so resigned in disgust.

After his resignation of the viceroyalty of the Deccan, Aurangzeb was appointed governor of Gujarât in February, 1645, and was subsequently sent on expeditions to Balkh, Badakhshân and

1 It has been shown by Sir William Foster (Indian Antiquary, 1911) and Dr. Smith (Oxford History, p. 401), that the story of an English surgeon named Gabriel Boughton curing Jahânârâ is not true.
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Quaidabād, which, as we have already seen, ended in fallacy, On removing from Quaidabad, Aurangzeb could not stay at court in safety, or honourably, owing to the hostility of Dārā Shukoh. He was, therefore, sent to the Deccan as its viceroy for the second time in the beginning of A.D. 1653. From November, 1653, either Daulatábād or Aurangzábād was the headquarters of his government.

The task before Aurangzeb was immensely difficult. During the few years following his resignation, the administration of the Deccan had fallen into utter confusion, and its financial condition had become deplorable, through a "succession of short viceroyalties and incompetent viceroys". The administration ran on a constant financial deficit, which had to be made good by draining the imperial exchequer. But this was indeed a shortsighted policy. To improve the finances of the Deccan was, therefore, Aurangzeb's first concern. He not only took steps to promote agriculture in the interests of the peasantry but also adopted certain revenue measures, which considerably improved the economic conditions of his territory and have made his viceroyalty famous in the history of land settlements in the Deccan. He fortunately received valuable assistance from an able Persian revenue officer named Murshid Qull Khan. Belonging originally to the company of 'Ali Mardān Khan, Murshid Qull came to the Deccan with Aurangzeb as divān of Daulatábād and Telingâna and subsequently also of Bazar and Khánedah. For the purpose of revenue-collection, the Deccan subah was divided into two parts, the Paingbât or the Lowlands and the Balâghî or the Highlands, each having its own divâns or revenue-minister. The former comprised the whole of Khánedah and one half of Bazar and the latter covered the rest of the territories under vicerodal control. Besides reorganizing the Deccan finances, Murshid Qull extended there Todar Mall's system of survey and assessment, with some changes suited to local conditions. These, in the areas which were thinly populated and where agriculture was in a comparatively backward stage he retained the traditional system of a fixed lump sum payment per plough, while elsewhere he introduced the system of kâlī (metayership), under which the tenure of the State varied according to the nature of the crop and the source of water. In certain parts he introduced another revenue system known as the jārat. According to it, the revenue due, to be paid in kind, was fixed per māni on a uniform price of the produce, after a panel of revenue inspectors had ascertained it. This revenue system was to be paid in kind, usually in grain, but occasionally in other produce, such as cloth or cotton. This system was found to be more equitable and more remunerative to the State than the old system of a fixed amount to be paid in cash.
raised villages and help the agriculturists with advance payment.
On the whole, the wise measures of Murshid Quli contributed to
the restoration of prosperity in the Deccan, though the accumu-
lated evils of several years' bad government were too numerous
to be removed completely within a short time. Sir J. N. Sarkar
observes on the authority of Bhimsen Burhanpur, the author of
Nuzhat-i-Dilkusha, that in 1658 there was not "a single piece of
waste land near Aurangabad; wheat and pulse sold at 2½ maunds
a rupee, jowar and bajra at 3½ maunds, molasses at half a maund,
and yellow oil (ghosa) at 4 seers".¹

Having thus reorganised the internal administration, Aurangzeb
turned his attention towards destroying the independence of
the rich Shahi States of Golkundé and Bijapur. Excuses for immediate
attack were not lacking. So far as the State of Golkundé, already
a tributary of the Mughul Empire since 1636, was concerned, it
had been frequently in arrears in payment of the stipulated tribute.
A more plausible plea was found in the Sultan's treatment of his
powerful minister, Mir Jumla, who had assured the protection of
the Mughul.

Muhammad Sa'id, better known as Mir Jumla, was a Persian
merchant-adventurer. Like several other adventurers, he made
a vast fortune, by trading in diamonds and precious stones, and
soon entered the service of 'Abdullah Qutb Shah, the Sultan of
Golkundé. His exceptional talents, military genius, and adminis-
trative capacity, were appreciated by his master, who made him
the chief minister of the State. Mir Jumla took advantage of this
position to make himself the virtual dictator of the State. He
went further and soon carved out a dominion for himself by exten-
sive conquests in the Karnatak. This dominion, about three
hundred miles long and fifty miles broad, yielded him an annual
revenue of forty lacs of rupees and enabled him to maintain a
powerful army, especially strong in artillery. Thus, though his
"rank was that of a noble, he possessed the power, wealth and
grandeur of a ruling prince". Naturally alarmed at the growing
power and wealth of his minister, the Sultan tried to coerce him
into obedience and arrested his son, Muhammad 'Amla Khila,
with his family, for his insolent behaviour towards him. Mir Jumla
then entered into intrigues with the Mughul Emperor and Aurang-
zeb. The latter realised that the friendship of this discontented
and semi-independent officer would be of immense service to him
in his projected attack on Golkundé.

Thus the Sultan of Golkundé was betrayed by Mir Jumla.

Aurangzeb procured an order from Shāh Jahān bidding the Sultan of Golkundā release Mir Jumla’s family, but without allowing the Sultan a reasonable time to reply to the Emperor’s letter, he declared war against him. Acting under Aurangzeb’s instructions, his son, Prince Muhammad Sultan, attacked Hyderabad in January, 1656, and the Mughal soldiers plundered the country. Aurangzeb himself reached there on the 6th February and besieged Golkundā the next day. His ambition was nothing short of the complete annexation of the kingdom. But the intervention of Shāh Jahān, under the influence of Dārā Shukoh and Jahānārā, prevented it. In obedience to the orders of his father, Aurangzeb was compelled to raise the siege of Golkundā on the 30th March, 1656, and the kingdom thus got a further lease of life on paying to the Mughal Emperor an indemnity of ten lacs of rupees and ceding to him the district of Rangir (modern Mānīkdrug and Chinoor). Prince Muhammad Sultan, Aurangzeb’s son, was married by proxy to the Sultan’s daughter, and, by a secret arrangement, Aurangzeb extorted a promise from the Sultan to make his new son-in-law his heir. Mir Jumla was soon afterwards appointed prime minister of the Empire.

Next came the turn of the kingdom of Bijāpur, which had fallen into disorder after the death of its capable ruler, Muhammad ‘Ādil Shāh, on the 4th November, 1656. This presented an opportunity to Aurangzeb for the fulfilment of his design. He obtained Shāh Jahān’s permission to invade the kingdom on the ground that the new ruler of Bijāpur, a youth of eighteen years, was not the son of the deceased Sultan but his origin was obscure. This was nothing but a flimsy pretext and it is clear that the war against Bijāpur was wholly unrighteous. Bijāpur was not a vassal State, but an independent ally of the Mughal Emperor, and the latter had no lawful right to confirm or question the succession at Bijāpur. The true reason for the Mughal interference was the helplessness of its boy-king and the discord among his officers, which presented a fine ‘opportunity for annexation’, as Aurangzeb expressed it.”

With the assistance of Mir Jumla, Aurangzeb invaded the kingdom early in January, 1657, and, after a prolonged siege, reduced the fortress of Bīdar towards the end of March and of Kalyānī on the 1st August. Further conquest of the Deccan was prevented by the sudden intervention of Shāh Jahān under the influence of Dārā Shukoh and other opponents of Aurangzeb. The Emperor granted peace to the Sultan of Bijāpur (1657), as conditions of which the latter had to pay a heavy indemnity, like the Sultan of Golkundā, and surrender Bīdar, Kalyānī and Parenda. The
illness of Sháh Jahán, and the consequent scramble for the throne among his sons, postponed the complete fulfilment of Aurangzéb’s designs in the Deccan, which thus gained a respite for about thirty years.

II. War of Succession

Sháh Jahán’s last days were made highly tragic by the outbreak of a terrible war of succession among his sons. It broke out as soon as he fell ill in September, 1657, and subjected the old Emperor to extreme humiliation and agony till his exit from this world. Sháh Jahán had four sons, all of mature age at that time—Dárá Shukoh aged 43, Shuja aged 41, Aurangzéb aged 39, and Mumtaz aged 33—and two daughters, Jahánará, who sided with Dárá Shukoh, and Rausmanará, who joined the party of Aurangzéb. All the brothers had by that time gained considerable experience in civil and military affairs as governors of provinces and commanders of armies, but there were differences among them in personal qualities and capacities. The eldest of them, Dárá Shukoh, was in the confidence of his father, who desired him to be his successor. A man of eclectic views, liberal disposition, and scholarly instincts, Dárá Shukoh mixed with the followers of other faiths and studied the doctrines of the Vedánta, the Talmud, the New Testament and the works of Súfí writers. He caused a Persian version of the Atharva Veda and the Upanishads to be made with the assistance of some Bráhmana scholars and aimed at founding a modus vivendi among the apparently hostile creeds. For this he naturally incurred the displeasure of the orthodox members among his co-religionists, who went against him. But he was not a heretic. He never "discarded the essential dogmas of Islam, he only displayed the eclecticism of the Súfis, a recognised school of Islamic believers. If he showed contempt for the external rites of religion, he only shared the standpoint of many noble thinkers of all Churches, such as John Milton". His latest biographer has aptly remarked: "It is hardly an exaggeration to say that any one who intends to take up the solution of the problem of religious peace in India must begin the work where Dárá had left it, and proceed on the path chalked out by that prince." But the excessive fondness of his father for him, and his constant presence at the court, prevented the growth in him of the qualities of an astute politician or the abilities of a brave general and also bred in him a

sense of pride, which made him contemptuous of advice. Hiar-
nger was, however, "seldom more than momentary". The second
brother, Shuja', then governor of Bengal, possessed intelligence
and was a brave soldier. But his excessive love of ease and pleasure
made him "weak, indolent, and negligent, incapable of sustained
effort, vigilant caution, and profound combination". The youngest,
Murtid, then governor of Gujarât, was no doubt frank, liberal and
brave, but was addicted to hard drinking and could not there-
fore develop the qualities needed for leadership. Aurangzeb, the
third brother, was the ablest of all. He possessed uncommon
industry and profound diplomatic and military skill, and an
unequalled capacity for administration. Further, as a zealous
Sunni Mussalman, he naturally obtained the support of the orthodox
Sunnis. As we shall see, the differences in the character of the rival
princes did much to influence the course of the struggle. Dârâ
Shukoh, a liberal man but an ill-qualified general and statesman,
was a poor match for the clever and intelligent Aurangzeb; Shuja'
and Murâd had also to suffer for their incompetence before the
superior generalship and tact of Aurangzeb.

Dârâ Shukoh alone of the four brothers was present at Ágra
when Shâh Jâhân fell ill in September, 1657. The illness was indeed
serious and it was suspected by the three absentee brothers that
their father had really expired and the news had been suppressed
by Dârâ Shukoh. So prevaricating is the position of an autocracy
that even the illness of the Emperor gave rise to confusion and
disorder in the kingdom, which became more intense as soon as the
fratricidal contest commenced. Shuja proclaims himself Emperor
at Bâjmahal, the then capital of Bengal, and marched towards the
metropolis of the Empire. But on arriving near Benares he was
defeated by an army sent against him under Dârâ Shukoh's son,
Sulaimân Shukoh, and was forced to retire to Bengal. Murâd also
crowned himself at Ahmadâbâd (5th December, 1657). He joined
Aurangzeb at Malwa and formed an alliance with him. They entered
into an agreement to partition the Empire, which was solemnised
in the name of God and the Prophet. The terms of the agreement
were: (i) "one-third of the booty would belong to Murâd Bakhsh
and two-thirds to Aurangzeb, (ii) after the conquest of the Empire,
the Punjab, Afghanistân, Kâshmir and Sind would belong to
Murâd, who would set up the standard of kingship there, issue
coins and proclaim his own name as king". The combined troops
of Aurangzeb and Murâd marched towards the north and reached
Dharmât, fourteen miles south-south-west of Ujjain. The Emperor
sent Râjâ Jaswant Singh of Jodhpur and Qâsim Khan to check
JAHANGIR AND SHAH JAHAN

their advance. The hostile armies met at Dharmat on the 15th April, 1658, where the imperialists were signally defeated, owing partly "to the evils of divided counsels" and jealousy between the Hindu and Muslim soldiers and partly to the inferior military tactics of Jaswant Singh as compared with those of Aurangzeb, who had "aged in war". The Rajputs fought with desperate valour and suffered heavy losses, while Qasim Khan did almost nothing to serve the cause of his master. When Jaswant Singh fled to Jodhpur his proud wife shut the gates of the castle against him for retreat from the field of battle. The battle of Dharmat immensely added to Aurangzeb's resources and prestige. As Sir J. N. Sarkar remarks: "The hero of the Deccan wars and the victor of Dharmat faced the world not only without loss but with his military reputation rendered absolutely unrivalled in India".

The victorious princes crossed the Chambal over a neglected ford and reached the plain of Samugarh, eight miles to the east of Agra Fort. Darâ Shukoh had also advanced there towards the end of May to meet his opponents with an army of 50,000 soldiers "formidable in appearance only" but "composed of a miscellaneous host of diverse classes and localities, hastily put together and not properly co-ordinated nor taught to act in concert". A battle ensued on the 29th May. It was hotly contested and both parties fought bravely, Murad getting three wounds in the face. True to the tradition of their race, the Rajputs under Darâ Shukoh fought gallantly under their brave young leader, Râm Singh, and perished to a man in making a desperate attack upon the division of Prince Murad. Unluckily for Darâ Shukoh, his elephant being severely wounded by an arrow, he got down from it and mounted a horse. "That action," observes Smith, "settled the fate of the battle." Finding the howdah of their master's elephant empty, the surviving troops thought that he had fallen and dispersed from the field in utter confusion. Filled with despair, Darâ Shukoh fled towards Agra, leaving his camp and guns to be captured by his enemies, and reached there "in an unspeakably wretched condition". The defeat of Darâ Shukoh was in fact due to some tactical errors on the part of his generals and to the weaker condition of his artillery, and it was not caused wholly, as some accounts would lead us to believe, by the artful advice of Khalilullah, who was in charge of the right wing of his army.

The battle of Samugarh practically decided the issue in the succession war among the sons of Shah Jahan. The discomfiture of Darâ, with the loss of many of his soldiers, made it easier for Aurangzeb to realise his ambition. It may very well be said that
the capture of the throne of Hindustān by Aurangzeb was almost a logical sequel to his victory at Samūgarh. Soon after this victory he marched to Āgra and seized the fort there on the 8th June following, defying all efforts of Shāh Jahān for an amicable settlement and baffling the attempts of the imperial defenders of the fort to prevent its capture.

Deprived of his throne, Shāh Jahān had to suffer most callous treatment. When Aurangzeb, as a sort of offensive measure against the defenders of the Āgra fort, stopped the supply of water from the Jumārā, the unhappy Emperor had to quench his thirst in the dry summer of June with brackish water from the wells within the fort. He wrote to Aurangzeb in a pathetic tone:

"Praised be the Hindus in all cases,
As they ever offer water to their dead,
And thou, my son, art a marvellous Mussalmān,
As thou causest me in life to lament for (lack of) water."

Placed under strict confinement as an ordinary prisoner Shāh Jahān was denied even the common conveniences. Aurangzeb turned a deaf ear to all requests of the Emperor and Jahānūrā for reconciliation; and the unhappy Emperor "at last bowed to the inevitable, and, like a child that cries itself to sleep, ceased to complain". He found solace in religion, and, in a spirit of resignation, passed his last days in prayer and meditation in the company of his pious daughter, Jahānūrā, till at last death, at the age of seventy-four, on the 22nd January, 1666, relieved him of all his miseries.

From Āgra Aurangzeb started towards Delhi on the 13th June, 1658. But on the way he halted at Rupnagar near Mathurā to crush the opposition of his brother, Murād, who had by that time been able to see through the design of his brother and had grown jealous of him. Instead of meeting Murād in the open field, Aurangzeb inveigled him into a trap. The unfortunate Prince was imprisoned first in the fort of Salimgarh, whence he was removed to the fortress of Gwāhir in January, 1659, and was executed on the 4th December, 1661, on the charge of murdering Diwān 'Āli Naqī. Already after Murād's arrest, Aurangzeb had gone to Delhi, where, on the 21st July, 1658, he crowned himself as Emperor.

Aurangzeb next proceeded to deal with his other rivals. The defeat of Dārā Shukoh at Dharāmāt and Samūgarh emboldened Shujā to make a fresh bid for power. But his hopes were shattered when Aurangzeb signally defeated him at Khajwah, near Allah-ābād, on the 5th January, 1659. He was chased by Mir Jumla
through West Bengal to Dacca and thence to Arákān in May, 1660. Nothing was again heard of Shujā. He was probably slaughtered with his family by the Arákānese. Aurangzeb’s eldest son, Prince Muhammad, having quarrelled with Mir Jumla, joined Shujā for a time. But he was punished for this with imprisonment for life and met his death about 1676.

When fortune went against Dārā Shukoh, his son, Sulaimān Shukoh, was also deserted by his generals and soldiers, who thought that there was no gain in following the “losing side any longer”. After fleeing from place to place, Sulaimān Shukoh, with his wife, a few other ladies, his foster-brother, Muhammad Shāh, and only seventeen followers, found refuge with a Hindu Rājā of the Garhwal Hills, who “was all kindness and attention to his princely guest in distress”. But pressed by Aurangzeb, his host’s son betrayed him into the hands of his enemies on the 27th December, 1660.

The captive prince, then in the prime of his youth and singularly handsome, was brought in chains before Aurangzeb and told him that he would prefer immediate death to slow poisoning by means of posūṭā drink or “infusion of opium-pappy heads”. Aurangzeb promised “that this drink should not be administered, and that his mind might be perfectly easy”. But the promise was not kept, and the dreadful drink was administered every morning to the unlucky prince until in May, 1662, “he was sent to the next world through the exertions of his keepers”. Dārā Shukoh’s younger son, Siphr Shukoh, and Murād’s son, Izīd Bakhsh, not being considered serious rivals, were granted their lives and were subsequently married to the third and the fifth of Aurangzeb’s daughters respectively.

The story of Dārā Shukoh’s end is no less sad and pathetic than that of his brother, Murād, or of his son, Sulaimān Shukoh. After the capture of Āgra by Aurangzeb and the captivity of Shāh Jahan, Dārā Shukoh fled from Delhi to Lahore, where he busied himself in preparations to encounter the pursuing troops of Aurangzeb. He adopted some measures to guard the ferries over the Sutlej and hoped that as the rains set in, it would take some time for Aurangzeb to reach Lahore. “But in hoping thus,” writes Sir J. N. Sarkar, “he had counted without Aurangzeb’s energy and strength of will, before which every obstacle—human or physical—gave way.” About a month after Dārā’s arrival at Lahore, his “dreaded rival” crossed the Sutlej with his army and drove Dārā with his family to Multān. The fugitive prince, still chased from place to place by the chief officers of Aurangzeb, who himself had returned to the east in September, 1657, to remove
the dangers created by Shujā and Sulaimān Shukoh, at last succeeded in reaching Gujarāt. Here he was unexpectedly fortunate in being welcomed (January, 1659) and helped financially by its newly appointed governor, Shāh Nawāz Khān, who cherished resentment against Aurangzeb. Being thus able to recuperate his strength to some extent, Dārā was thinking of returning to the Deccan, where he expected support from the Shiah rulers of Bijāpur and Golkundā. This would have been the right policy for him. But Jai Singh, who had already won over by Aurangzeb, lured him by promises of help to march towards Ajmer. The Rājput chief, whose conduct during this war of succession was questionable, proved false to his promises and Dārā could not get the much-hoped-for Rājput help. He was forced to fight with Aurangzeb, who had arrived near Ajmer. Considering it inadvisable, in view of his scanty resources, to meet the overwhelming strength of his enemy’s army in a pitched battle in the open field, Dārā entrenched himself in a strong and admirably selected position at the pass of Daurā, four miles south of Ajmer, and fought for three days, 12th-14th April, 1659. But he was ultimately defeated and found safety in hurried flight. Hunted from place to place (Rājputāna, Cutch and Sind) by the troops of Aurangzeb under Jai Singh and Bahādur Khān, Dārā found no asylum in India. He hurried towards the north-west frontier in June, 1659, and sought shelter with Jiwān Khān, the Afghān chief of Dūidar (a place nine miles east of the Bolān Pass), whom he had saved, a few years back, from the sentence of death passed on him by Shāh Jahān. But on the way to Dūdar “the greatest of all misfortunes” befell him. His wife, Nādirah Begam, who had been his devoted companion in his days of wanderings and had been suffering for some time from an attack of diarrhoea, now succumbed to prolonged hardships and want of medicine and rest. This threw Dārā into utter bewilderment and intense grief.1 “Mountain after mountain of trouble,” remarks Khāfi Khān, “thus pressed upon the heart of Dārā, grief was added to grief, sorrow to sorrow, so that his mind no longer retained its equilibrium.” To add to his misfortune, the faithless Afghān chief betrayed him and made him over, with his two daughters and his second son, Sipāh Shukoh,

1 It should be noted that the Mughul princes, in spite of their polygamous habits, showed an intense passion of conjugal love. As Dr. Smith points out, "A beautiful album in the India Office Library is a pathetic memorial of Dūdar Shukoh's love". It bears the following inscription in his handwriting: "This album was presented to his nearest and dearest friend, the Lady Nādirah Begam, by Prince Muhammad Dārā Shukoh, son of the Emperor Shāh Jahān, in the year 1051" (A.D. 1641-1642).
to Bahadur Khan, who brought the captives to Delhi on the 23rd August, 1659. On the 29th of the same month they were paraded throughout the city. "To complete his humiliation," writes Sir J. N. Sarkar, "Darä was seated in an uncovered howdah on the back of a small female elephant covered with dirt. . . . Exposed to the full blaze of an August sun, he was taken through the scenes of his former glory and splendour. In the bitterness of disgrace, he did not raise his head, nor cast his glance on any side, but sat like a crushed twig." His tragic plight excited pity in the hearts of the citizens. Bernier, an eye-witness of the scene, writes: "The crowd assembled was immense, and everywhere I observed the people weeping, and lamenting the fate of Darä in the most touching language. . . . From every quarter I heard piercing and distressing shrieks . . . men, women and children wailing as if some mighty calamity had happened to themselves." But not a single hand could be raised to rescue the unfortunate prince, as he was gir£ round by cavalry and archers. Then a popular riot, directed against the traitor Malik Jiwán Khan, broke out on the 30th August. This riot hastened the end of Darä, whose life could no longer be prolonged by Aurangzeb. His case was placed before the Doctors of Muslim law, who condemned him on a charge of deviation from the Islamic faith. On the night of the 30th August the executioners snatched Sip hi r away from his father's embrace and beheaded Darä. By Aurangzeb's order his corpse was paraded throughout the city to let the people know that their favourite was no more, and then buried in a vault under the dome of the tomb of Humâyûn. Thus the reign of Shâh Jahân, which had begun with high prospects, came to a close in a series of dark tragedies.

1. A Critical Estimate of Shâh Jahân's Character and Reign

Shâh Jahân was not essentially an unrelenting or excessively pleasure-seeking ruler, as European writers like Roe, Terry, Bernier, and De Lact considered him to be, and, as a modern writer, Dr. Smith, also holds. There are, of course, certain instances of his severity. Stern as a conqueror and unsparing to his political rivals, Shâh Jahân indeed acquired his throne by means that left unpleasant memories; but when we take into consideration the circumstances in which he had been placed through the ceaseless intrigues of Nûr Jahân, "we lose", as Dow writes, "half our rage in the pressure of circumstances that drove him to such a ghastly step". Further, "for these early crimes he
made ample amends by the strict justice and clemency of his government and his solicitude for the well-being of his subjects”. Thus he did much to alleviate the sufferings of the people during the severe famine of 1631–1632 and displayed considerable industry in the task of administration. Though not as great a warrior as some of his ancestors, Shāh Jahān was not devoid of military qualities. He was a zealous champion of his faith. He revived the pilgrimage tax and took steps not only to check the conversion of the Muslims to other faiths but also to add to their number. Brought up by Ruqayyā Begam, he could read and speak in Turki, and trained in his early life by such eminent teachers as Mullā Qāsim Beg Tabrizi, Hakim Dāwār, Shaikh ‘Abdul Khair and Shaikh Sūfī, he could speak both Persian and Hindi. Not pitiless by nature, Shāh Jahān was a loving father and a devoted husband. He had an intense love for Muntāz Mahal, whom he had married in 1612. The couple enjoyed a happy life for about nineteen years, and Muntāz was her husband’s unfailing friend and prudent adviser in the days of his adversity. She died in child-birth in 1631, and to immortalise her name, Shāh Jahān built on her grave the famous Tāj Mahal, which stands unrivalled as a memorial of conjugal attachment.

The reign of Shāh Jahān is usually considered to have been the golden period of Mughal rule in India, which then reached its climax. There was no serious challenge to the Emperor’s authority before the war of succession. No grave external menace threatened India itself. The period saw the development of the export trade between India and Western Asia and the beginning of the export trade with Europe, and the finances of the State were flourishing. It was also marked by pomp and splendour, which were amply attested by brilliant productions in architecture, like the magnificent Tāj, the Pearl Mosque of Agra, the Dīwān-i-‘Am, the Dāwān-i-khān, the Jāmī’ Masjid and the “celebrated Peacock Throne”. All these lead one to believe that peace and prosperity prevailed throughout the Empire. But a careful study of the accounts of the contemporary European travellers, and the records of the English factories in India, show “that there were shadows in the picture which were ignored by the court annalists”. Beneath the surface of outward splendour and apparent prosperity, there were some grievous anomalies in the economic system of the country. The factory records of the time bear out the statement of Bernier that the misrule of the provincial governors “often deprived the peasant and artisan of the necessaries of life”. Further, the maintenance of an elaborate bureaucracy and a large
army, and the expenses incurred for the splendid architectural monuments, imposed a heavy burden upon the agriculturists and the manufacturers, on whose prosperity depended the very existence of the Empire. Thus began a process of national insolvency, which, being accelerated during the next reign, proved to be one of the potent causes of the subsequent disintegration of the mighty Timurid Empire in India, which had been reared and developed by the genius of Akbar and his coadjutors. In short, India under Shāh Jahān resembles France under Louis XIV in many respects. The military system of the State was also growing weaker and the revenue administration was growing lax.
CHAPTER IV

AURANGZEB 'ALAMGIR (1658-1707)

1. Two Halves of the Reign

Aurangzeb's remarkable reign of fifty years can be "naturally divided into two equal parts", each having its own well-defined features distinguishing it from the other. During the first part, that is from 1658 to 1681, the north remained the centre of interest and of all important developments, civil and military, while the south "figured as a far-off and negligible factor". But in the second half of the reign the centre of political gravity shifted from Northern India to the Deccan, where the Emperor went in 1681 with his family, his court and the bulk of his army, and the administration of the north was consequently neglected, plunging the whole of it into disorder and anarchy. The Emperor was able to crush the Muslim Sultanesates of Bijapur and Golconda, but in his struggle with the nascent nationalism of the Marathas, the issue remained undecided. The Deccan exodus produced disastrous consequences for the Empire, and the long reign of Aurangzeb in spite of his wonderful industry and splendid devotion to duty, culminated in tragedy.

2. Accession and Two Coronations

We have already related the story of Aurangzeb's acquisition of the throne. He was twice enthroned—once on the 21st July 1658, immediately after his occupation of Agra, and again with great éclat in June, 1659, after his decisive victories at Khajurah and Deorāī. The Khutba was read in his name and he assumed the title of 'Alamgir (Conqueror of the World) with the additions of Padshāh (Emperor) and Ghāzi (Holy Warrior). Like some other Muslim rulers, Aurangzeb began his reign with attempts to alleviate the distress of the people, caused by general administrative disorders during the war of succession and the famine prices of goods. He remitted many vexations cesses and taxes, but, as in the case of earlier rulers, his prohibition, except in one or two cases, "had no effect".

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3. Territorial Expansion: North-Eastern Push

The territorial expansion of the Mughal Empire, which was a process continuing through two centuries, went on pace in the reign of Aurangzeb. If we exclude the losses of the preceding reign in Qandahār and Central Asia, the conquests of the Emperors had remained intact, and before the rise of the Marātha kingdom in the south, Aurangzeb's "ambitious and enterprising officers" successfully extended their master's dominion. Palāmanū was conquered in 1661 by Dāūd Khān, the governor of Bihār. On the eastern frontier of the Empire, the officers of Aurangzeb found ample scope for their energies. In 1661 Mir Jumla, the governor of Bengal, set out with a well-equipped army towards this frontier to check the aggressions of the Āhoms. A people of Mongoloid origin, the Āhoms had migrated from their original home in Upper Burma and occupied a part of the Brahmaputra valley as early as the thirteenth century A.D. Gradually extending their territories to the west during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, they established a dominion which by the end of the seventeenth century stretched up to the Bar Nadi river in the north-west and the Kaliṅg river in the south-west. Here they were gradually Hinduised and adopted the Hindu religion and customs. At the same time, the eastern limit of the Mughal Empire had been extended up to the Bar Nadi river by the conquest of Koch Häjo, embracing the present districts of Kāmarūpā and Gōalpārā. This made a conflict between the Mughals and the Āhoms inevitable. As a matter of fact, the Mughals had already had to fight hard with the Āhoms, when the latter raided the eastern frontier of the Empire during the reign of Shāh Jāhān, and a peace was concluded early in 1639. But taking advantage of the war of succession, the Āhoms occupied Gauhātī in 1658 and seized 140 horses, 40 pieces of cannon, 200 matchlocks and much property. To punish these aggressors, Mir Jumla started from Dacca early in November, 1661, with a powerful army of 12,000 cavalry and 30,000 infantry, provided with artillery, provisions for siege, and a number of armed boats, which were indispensably necessary for carrying on war in those parts. His early operations were successful. He conquered both Cooch Bihār and Assam, and sharing with the common soldiers all the hardships which the "opposition of Nature and man" could impose during his "triumphant march", he reached Garbāgon, the capital of the Āhom kingdom, on the 17th March, 1662. The Āhoms now offered little resistance and left their capital and property to the mercy of the imperialists, who got enormous spoils
But Nature soon fought for the Ahoms. With the commencement of the rainy season, Mir Jumla’s army suffered terribly from the unhealthy climate and lack of provisions and medicine. Emboldened by this, the Ahoms, who had been scared away and not crushed, soon resumed the offensive and began to harass the Mughuls, whose sufferings increased owing to the outbreak of pestilence and famine in their camp. But, undaunted by the odds, the Mughal governor continued to fight and resumed the offensive after the rains. Considering that further resistance would be of no avail, the Ahoms concluded a treaty of peace with the imperialists. Thus, “judged as a military exploit”, remarks Sir J. N. Sarkar, “Mir Jumla’s invasion of Assam was a success”.

The Ahom king, Jayaditya, promised to pay an annual tribute, and a heavy war indemnity, a part of which was to be delivered immediately and the rest was to be cleared off during the next twelve months in three equal instalments. The Mughuls were also to occupy more than half the province of Darrang and in elephants. But this success was purchased at a great cost. It caused immense hardships to the Mughuls and the loss of many lives, including that of Mir Jumla himself, one of Aurangzeb’s best generals, who died on the 30th March, 1663, on his way back to Delhi. It was also short-lived. A few years later the Ahoms reoccupied Kamarupa. The Mughul government carried on a long desultory warfare, but with no permanent advantage.

Shāista Khān, son of Aṣṣū Khan and maternal uncle of Aurangzeb, was appointed governor of Bengal after the short and unsuccessful administration of an acting viceroy, which immediately followed the death of Mir Jumla. He held this post for about thirty years, with a break of less than three years, and died at Agra in 1691, when he was more than ninety years old. He chastised the Portuguese pirates, annexed the island of Sonlip in the Bay of Bengal, which had been a stronghold of pirates, and conquered Chittagong (1666) from their ally, the King of Arakān. But the evil of piracy could not be wholly eradicated. It continued to harass the people of eastern Bengal till late in the eighteenth century.

4. The North-West Frontier Policy

Out of political and economic considerations, Aurangzeb had to follow a forward policy on the north-west frontier, where the turbulent Muslim tribes had all along proved a source of great anxiety to the Mughul Empire. The scanty produce of the fields of that region forced upon the growing numbers of the hardy
Afghan clans living there the habits of highway robbery and of blackmailing the rich cities of the north-western Punjab. In order to keep the north-western passes open and the valleys at their foot safe, the government of Aurangzeb first tried to win over these hillmen by payments of money. But "even political pensions were not always effective in securing obedience". Troubles began early in A.D. 1667, when the Yusufzais rose in arms under one of their leaders named Bhagû. A large number of them crossed the Indus above Attock and invaded the Hazâra district, while other bands began to ravage the western Peshâwâr and Attock districts. The Yusufzai rising was, however, suppressed in the course of a few months.

But in 1672 the Afridis rose in revolt against the Mughuls under their chieftain Akmal Khân, who crowned himself king and summoned all the Pathâns to organise themselves in a sort of national war. In the month of May the insurgents inflicted a crushing defeat on Muhammad Amin Khân at 'Ali Masjid. Muhammad Amin, and some of his senior officers, escaped, but the Mughuls lost everything else. This victory increased the prestige and resources of Akmal Khân and lured more recruits to his side so that "the whole of the Pathân land from Attock to Qandahâr" rose in arms. The Khattak clan of the Pathâns also joined the Afridis, and Khush-hâl Khân, the poet and hero of the former, "became the leading spirit of the national rising and inspired the tribesmen with his pen and sword alike". In February, 1674, the Afghâns assailed an imperial force under Shujâ'at Khân, who was killed, though the remnant of his army was rescued by a Râthor contingent, sent by Jaswant Singh to support the Mughuls.

This disaster convinced Aurangzeb that more serious efforts were necessary to restore imperial prestige in the north-west. He went in person to Hasan Abdâl, near Peshâwâr, early in July, 1674, and by a clever combination of diplomacy and arms achieved much success. Many Afghan clans were bought over with presents, pensions, jiaghirs, and offices, while the more refractory ones were subdued by arms. When the situation had considerably improved, the Emperor left the Punjab for Delhi by December, 1675. The success of Aurangzeb was confirmed by the wise policy of Amin Khân, the capable governor of Afghânistân from 1677 to 1698, who followed a tactful conciliatory policy under the wise advice of his wife, Sâhibji, a daughter of 'Ali Mardân Khân. Thus the Mughul Emperor was able to suppress the Afghan risings, and restore imperial prestige, in the north-west "by following the
policy of paying subsidies, or by setting up one clan against another—or, to use his own metaphor, breaking two bones by knocking them together." The Khattak hero, Khūsh-hāl, continued to fight for several years more, till his own son proved to be his worst enemy and betrayed him to the Mughuls.

There is no doubt that the frontier wars of the Mughuls were brought to a successful conclusion. But their indirect effects were prejudicial to the interests of the Empire. As Sir J. N. Sarkar observes: "Ruinous as the Afgān war was to imperial finances, its political effect was even more harmful. It made the employment of the Afgāns in the ensuing Rājpūt war impossible, though the Afgāns were just the class of soldiers who could have won victory in that rugged and barren country. Moreover, it relieved the pressure on Shivāji by draining the Deccan of the best Mughul troops for service on the north-west frontier. The Marātha chief took advantage of this division of his enemy's strength to sweep in a dazzling succession of triumphs through Golkonda to the Kārnāta and back again through Mysore and Bījāpur to Rāigarh, during the fifteen months following December, 1675. It was the climax of his career; but the Afridis and the Khattaks made his unbroken success possible."

5. Relations with the Muslim World outside India

Between 1661 and 1667 Aurangzeb received "complimentary embassies" from some foreign Muslim powers, such as the Sharif of Mecca, the Kings of Persia, Balkh, Bukhārā, Kāshgār, Urganj (Khiva) and Shahr-i-nān, the Turkish governors of Basra, Hadrānamūt, Yaman and Mocha, the ruler of Barbary, and the King of Abyssinia. From Constantinople only one embassy came during his reign, in June, 1590. "His policy at the beginning was," remarks Sir J. N. Sarkar, "to dazzle the eyes of foreign princes by the lavish gifts of presents to them and their envoys, and induce the outer Muslim world to forget his treatment of his father and brothers, or at least to show courtesy to the successful man of action and master of India's untold wealth, especially when he was free with his money."

6. Aurangzeb's Religious Attitude and Policy

Aurangzeb was above all a zealous Sunni Muslim, and his religious policy was not influenced by any consideration of worldly gain. As one who secured the throne as the champion of Sunni
orthodoxy against the liberal Dārā, he tried to enforce strictly the Quranic law, according to which it behoves every pious Muslim to "exert himself in the path of God", or, in other words, to carry on holy wars (jihād) against non-Muslim lands (dār-ul-harb) till they are converted into realms of Islam (dār-ul-Islām). This made him extremely puritanic in temperament, so that he took several steps to enforce "his own ideas of the morose seriousness of life and punctilious orthodoxy". He simplified the customary celebrations on his birthday and coronation day. From the eleventh year of his reign he discontinued the practice of Jharokā-daršān, a practice by which his predecessors appeared every morning on the balcony on the wall of the palace to accept the salute of the people, who then gathered on the ground in front. In the same year he forbade music at court and dismissed the old musicians and singers. But music, though banned from the court, could not be "banished from the human soul". It continued to be secretly practised by the nobles, and the imperial prohibition had some force only in important cities. In the twelfth year the ceremony of weighing the Emperor's body on two birthdays against gold, silver and other commodities was given up, and royal astronomers and astrologers were dismissed. But the belief of the Muslims in astrology was too deeply rooted in their minds to be removed by an imperial ordinance; it remained active till late in the eighteenth century. In order to avoid the Kalima (Muhammadan confession of faith) on the coins being defied by men of other faiths, he forbade its use. He also abolished the Nauroz, which the Mogul emperors of India had borrowed from Persia. He appointed Censors of Public Morals (Muhtasibs) to "regulate the lives of the people in strict accordance with the Holy Law".

Aurangzeb personally practised what he sought to enforce on others. His private life was marked by a high standard of morality, and he scrupulously abstained from the common vices of his time. Thus he was regarded by his contemporaries as a "dervish born in the purple" and the Muslims venerated him as a "Zindā Pir" or living saint. To "promote general morality", he issued a number of regulations. He passed an ordinance prohibiting the production, sale and public use, of wine and bhāng. Manucci tells us that the dancing girls and public women were ordered either to get themselves married or to leave the kingdom. The Emperor also passed strict orders against singing obscene songs, and stopped the burning of faggots and processions during certain religious festivals. It is mentioned in the official "guide-books" of Aurangzeb's reign that he forbade Sati (December, 1663), but "the evidence of
contemporary European travellers in India shows that the royal prohibition was seldom observed”.

The Emperor, however, did not rest satisfied with these regulations only. He issued other firman and ukases, which marked the inauguration of a new policy in regard to important sections of the people. The year 1679 saw the reimposition of the jizya tax on “unbelievers”.

The new regulations and ordinances must have produced a deep impression on the people affected, and added much to the difficulties with which the imperial government had to deal. No one can deny the Emperor Aurangzeb the credit of being a sincere and conscientious exponent of the faith that was in him. But it is also true that his ardour and zeal made him oblivious of the fact that the country over which destiny had placed him to rule was not inhabited by a homogeneous population but included various elements rich in their religious traditions and ideals, which needed tactful and sympathetic understanding. Aurangzeb certainly made a mistake in identifying the interests of the State with those of his faith and in offending those who differed from it. This policy generated feelings of discontent among certain sections of the people, which by distracting his energies during the remainder of his reign proved to be one of the most potent causes of the decline and fall of the Mughul Empire.

7. Reaction against the New Policy

A. The Jats, the Bundelas and the Satnamis

The first serious outbreak of anti-imperial reaction took place among the Jats of the Muttrā (Mathurā) district, where the imperial faujdar, 'Abdun-Nabi, had oppressed them greatly. In 1650 the sturdy Jat peasantry rose under a leader, Gokha, zamindār of Tilpat, killed the faujdar, and kept the whole district in disorder for a year, till they were suppressed by a strong imperial force under Hasan 'Āli Khān, the new faujdar of Muttrā. Gokha was put to death and the members of his family converted to Islam. But this did not crush the Jats permanently. They rose once again in 1685 under the leadership of Rājā Rām and plundered Akbar’s tomb at Sikandra in 1688. Rājā Rām was defeated and slain and the principal stronghold of the Jats was reduced in 1691. But they soon found a more formidable leader in Churānān, who welded the disorganised Jāta into a strong military power and organized an armed resistance against the Mughuls after Aurangzeb’s death.
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The second armed protest against Aurangzeb's policy was led by the Bundelkhand prince, Chhatrasal. We have already traced the early relations of the Mughuls with the Bundelkas. Chhatrasal's father, Champa Rai, had risen against Aurangzeb during the early part of his reign, but had been pressed by the Emperor, he committed suicide to escape imprisonment. Chhatrasal had served the Emperor in the Deccan, where, inspired by the example of Shivaji, he "dreamed of taking to a life of adventure and independence". The discontent of the Hindu population of Bundelkhand and Malwa gave him the opportunity to stand forth "as the champion" of his faith and Bundelkhand liberty by 1671. He gained several victories over the Mughals, and succeeded in carving out an independent principality for himself in Eastern Malwa with its capital at Panna, before his death in 1731.

Another revolt occurred in March, 1672, among the Satnamis, who were originally an inoffensive sect of Hindu devotees with their centres at Narnol (in the Paliada State) and Mewat (Alwar region). Khafi Khan writes of them: "These men dress like devotees, but they nevertheless carry on trade and agriculture, though their trade is on a small scale. In the way of their religion, they have dignified themselves with the title of 'Good name', this being the meaning of Satnam. They are not allowed to acquire wealth in any but a lawful calling. If any one attempts to wrong or oppress them by force, or by exercise of authority, they will not endure it. Many of them have weapons or arms." The immediate cause of the rise of the Satnamis was the murder of one of them by a Mughul foot-soldier. They occupied Narnol, and when the situation proved to be serious the Mughul Emperor "ordered his tents to be brought out". The untrained Satnami peasants were soon overpowered by a large imperial force. "Very few of them escaped, and that tract of country was cleared" of them.

B. The Sikhs

The new imperial policy caused discontent among the Sikhs also. We may conveniently give here a short history of the Sikhs during the reigns of the predecessors of Aurangzeb before we deal with his relations with them. The Sikh community, destined to play an important part in the history of Modern India, came into being during the period of religious revival which marked the history of India in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. It was originally founded as a religious sect by Guru Nanak, a religious preacher of saintly disposition, who emphasised the
fundamental truth underlying all religions, and the chief features of whose system were its "non-sectarian character" and its harmony with secular life. He died in 1538 after nominating one of his disciples, Angad (1538–1552), as his successor, excluding his two sons. Angad and the next Guru, Amandás (1552–1574), were men of high character. Amandás was succeeded in the Guru's office by his son-in-law, Rāmdás (1574–1581). Akbar, who had a great veneration for this Guru, granted him a plot of land at Amritsar containing a pool, which was enlarged and improved and on the side of which was constructed a famous Sikh temple. It was during Rāmdás' pontificate that the succession to the spiritual headship of the Sikhs became hereditary. The fifth Guru, Arjan Mal (1581–1606), was a man of great organising capacity. Under him the Sikh community grew in numbers and spread far and wide over the Punjab. He compiled the Ādi Granth, or "the First Sacred Book", as the original Sikh scripture is called, by collecting select verses from the works of his four predecessors as well as from those of the Hindu and Muhammadan saints who had appeared since the days of Jайдev. He did his best to consolidate the Church, and the prestige and wealth of the Guru increased considerably. As a contemporary remarked: "The Emperor (Akbar) and Kings bow before him. Wealth ever cometh to him." His predecessors had been content with the "fluctuating voluntary offerings" of their disciples, but Guru Arjan tried to organise the finances of his Church by introducing the system of a more or less compulsory "spiritual tribute" to be collected by a band of his agents called misards. The early Gurus were religious preachers and did not interfere in politics, but Guru Arjan gave his blessings to the rebel prince Khusraw. Jahāngīr, who had probably grown suspicious of the Guru for his great wealth and influence, put him to death in 1606 on a charge of treason. This must have offended the Sikhs, whose hostility to the Mughul Empire was not, however, openly manifested at this time. The next Guru, Har Govind (1606–1645), son of Arjan, was a man of warlike and adventurous spirit, and gathered a small army round him. Though employed under Jahāngīr, he had to undergo twelve years' imprisonment in Gwāilūr for his refusal to pay the arrears of the fine that had been imposed on his father. He rose against Shāh Jahān and defeated an imperial army at Sangrāma near Amritsar in 1628. But he was ultimately overpowered and forced to take refuge at Kiratpur in the Kāshmir Hills, where he died in 1645 after nominating his younger grandson, Har Rāi (1645–1661), as his successor. Har Rāi was followed in the Guruship,
after his death in 1661, by his second son, Har Kishan (1661–1664). Nothing important happened during the regimes of these two Gurus, but "the fiscal policy of Arjan, and the armed system of his son, had already formed the Sikhs into a kind of separate state within the empire".

Har Kishan died in 1664, and after some quarrels about succession to the Guruship, Teg Bahādur, second son of Har Govind, the sixth Guru, was recognised as the spiritual head of the community by most of the Sikhs. He settled at Anandpur, six miles from Kiratpur. He lived for a few months at Patna in Bihār, where his son, Guru Govind, was born (A.D. 1666). He joined Rājā Rām Singh, son of Mirzā Rājā Jai Singh, in the Assam war (A.D. 1668), but soon returned to his original abode at Anandpur and was drawn into hostilities with the imperial government. He protested against certain measures of the Emperor and encouraged the Brāhmaṇas of Kashmir to resist these. This was too much for Aurangzeb to tolerate. He caused the Sikh divine to be arrested and brought over to Delhi, where he was offered the choice between death and conversion. Teg Bahādur preferred his faith to his life and was executed after five days (A.D. 1675). Thus he gave his head but not his faith (sir diā saṅ na diā). The martyrdom of the Guru inspired the Sikhs with feelings of revenge against the Mughul Empire and made an open war inevitable. The son and successor of Teg Bahādur, Guru Govind, was one of the most remarkable personalities in Indian history. He set himself to the task of organising his followers with the thoroughness "of a Grecian law-giver". He instituted the custom of baptism (Pahul) by water stirred with a dagger. Those who accepted the new form of baptism were known as the Khalsa (pure) and were given the appellation of Singha (lions). They had to wear the five Ks—Ks (long hair), Kangha (comb), Kripan (sword), Kachcha (short drawers), and Kara (steel bracelet). They were not to show their backs to the foe in battle. They were ever to help the poor and the unfortunate. Guru Govind compiled a supplementary Granth, known as the Dasveca Padshah kā Granth ('the Book of the Tenth Sovereign'). He fought against some neighbouring hill-princes and Mughul officers with remarkable courage and tenacity. It is said that he assisted Bahādur in his contest for the throne, and subsequently proceeded with him to the Deccan. An Afgān fanatic stabbed him to death, towards the end of 1708, at Nandur on the banks of the Godāvari.
C. The Rājput War

The comparatively minor anti-imperial risings were suppressed by Aurangzeb. But more formidable revolts, also originating as a sort of reaction against the Emperor’s policy, produced disastrous consequences for his Empire. Failing to realise the value of the alliance of the Rājputs, who had previously contributed so much to the growth of the Empire, he introduced a change in the policy of the State towards them. Rājā Jay Singh of Amber, whom he considered to be a powerful leader of Rājput opposition against his own policy, lost his life in the Deccan in 1667.

The conquest of Mārwār next engaged his attention from more than one consideration. It occupied a position of strategic importance as controlling certain military and commercial routes from the Mughul capital to the rich cities and ports in Western India. Further, its position as a powerful military State in Northern India at that time was a standing annoyance to Aurangzeb. He suspected that its chief, Jaswant Singh, formerly a partisan of Dārā Shukoh, might stand forth as the leader of opposition to his policy.

The Emperor soon had a favourable opportunity to give effect to his designs against Mārwār. While commanding the Mughul frontier posts in the Khyber Pass and the Peshāwār district, Rājā Jaswant Singh died at Jamrūd on the 10th December, 1678. On hearing this news Aurangzeb forthwith took steps to annex Mārwār. He appointed there his own officers as sunjār, qilāhār, kotwāl and amīn, and brought it under direct Mughul rule. The Rāthors, thrown into confusion and dismay by the death of their chief, failed to present any united national resistance. In the month of May, Indra Singh Rāthor, the chieftain of Nagor and grand-nephew of Jaswant, was recognised as the Rānā of Jodhpur on payment of a “succession fee” of thirty-six lacs of rupees. But he was nothing more than a nominal ruler, surrounded by Mughul officers.

Thus the Emperor’s policy seemed to have been crowned with success. But Mārwār was not really subdued. Every Rājput house in that kingdom became determined to undo the imperial coup de main, and “a new factor now entered the scene to disturb and eventually to defeat the imperial policy”. Already in the month of February, 1679, two posthumous sons of Jaswant were born at Lahore. One of them died soon after birth, but the other, Ajit Singh, survived and was taken to Delhi by the principal followers of his father, who requested the Emperor to recognise him as
heir to the deceased Rājā. But the Emperor offered to bring him up in his harem, or, according to another contemporary account, "the throne of Jodhpur was offered to Ajit on condition of his turning a Muslim". This extraordinary proposal of the Emperor severely wounded the feelings of the Rāthors, who vowed to sacrifice their lives rather than accept these terms. But devotion and reckless courage only could be of no avail against the organised strength of the imperialists. Luckily for the Rāthors, they had, at this critical moment, a worthy leader in Durgādās (a son of Jaswant's minister Askaran), "the flower of Rāthor chivalry".

In the history of Rājputāna, Durgādās is justly regarded as one of the immortals for his selfless devotion to the cause of his country in the face of terrible odds. "Mughul gold could not seduce, Mughul arms could not daunt, that constant heart. Almost alone among the Rāthors he displayed the rare combination of the dash and reckless valour of a Rājput soldier with the tact, diplomacy and organising power of a Mughul minister of state." A band of "death-loving" Rājputs rushed upon the imperial force that had been sent to seize the Rānis and Ajit Singh, and, taking advantage of the prevailing confusion, Durgādās rode away with the intrenched victims, clad in male attire. He covered nine miles before the imperialists could overtake him, but here a small band of Rājputs under Ranchordās Jodha tried to hold back the pursuers as long as they could, and Durgādās was able to reach Jodhpur on the 23rd July, 1679, with the Rānis and Ajit. Aurangzēb now called up heavy reinforcements from different provinces, and the three princes, Mu'azzam, 'Azam and Akbar, were placed in command of separate divisions of the army. He himself marched to Ajmer in August, 1679, to direct the military operations. Jodhpur was captured and pillaged.

But this aggressive policy of the Mughul Emperor led the brave Sisodiās of Mewār to join the desperate Rāthors of Mārwār. Rānā Rāj Singh of Mewār was a relative of Ajit Singh, whose mother was a Sisodiā princess. He also considered that the annexation of Mārwār exposed Mewār to the danger of Mughul conquest. Further, the revival of the jizya, after many years, incensed him highly. Through the Rāthor-Sisodiā alliance, the Rājput war assumed the aspect of a national rising in defence of liberty.

Aurangzēb at once invaded Mewār, but the Rānā, considering it unwise to meet face to face the superior strength of the Mughuls, deserted the towns and hamlets of Mewār and retired with all his subjects to mountain fastnesses after laying waste
the plains below. The Mughuls easily occupied Chitor. Sure of
success, the Emperor started for Ajmer, leaving a strong force in
Chitor under Prince Akbar. But he was soon disillusioned. The
Rajputs carried on a guerilla warfare and fell on the Mughul out-
posts with so much courage that “the command of Mughul out-
posts went a-begging; captain after captain declining the danger-
ous honour and offering excuses”. Emboldened by their successes,
the Rajputs surprised the Mughul army under Prince Akbar in
May, 1650, and carried off its provisions. Reduced to starvation,
the imperial army stood “motionless through fear”, as Prince
Akbar complained. Holding Prince Akbar responsible for this
discomfiture, the Emperor placed the command of the army at
Chitor in the hands of Prince ‘Azam and sent Akbar to Mārwār.

Smarting under the disgrace of his removal, Prince Akbar
dreamt of wresting the crown of Delhi from his father in alliance
with the Rajputs, whose worth he must have sufficiently under-
stood during his war with them. The Rajput chiefs pointed out
to him how his father’s policy was destroying the stability of
the Mughul Empire, and hoping thus to “place a truly national
king on the throne of Delhi they promised to back him with the
armed strength of the two greatest Rajput clans, the Sisodhās
and the Rāthors”. With his army of about 50,000 men, “including
the best blood of Rājputāna”, Prince Akbar arrived near Ajmer
on the 15th January, 1681. Aurangzeb’s situation was then
critical, as the two main divisions of his army were quartered
near Chitor and the Rājasmudra lake. Had the Prince promptly
utilised this “fine opportunity”, the Emperor might have been
cought at a disadvantage. But he whiled away his time in
indolence and pleasure and thus allowed his shrewd father to
make preparations to defend himself. By writing a letter to
his rebellious son, which the Emperor contrived should reach
the Rajputs, he led Akbar’s allies to believe that the Mughul
Prince was playing false with them. The stratagem of the
Emperor proved successful, as the Rajput allies of Prince Akbar,
suspecting treachery, deserted him and he hurriedly “rode away
for dear life in the track of the Rajputs”. The Rajputs, however,
soon discovered the fraud played on them, and the chivalrous
Rāthor chief, Durgādās, convinced of the Prince’s innocence,
gallantly saved him from his father’s vengeance and escorted
him, through Khāndesh and Baglāna, to the court of the Marāthā
king, Shambhujī. But the self-indulgent successor of Shivāji
could afford no effective aid to the fugitive Mughul prince, whose
dream of an Indian Empire, “based on Hindu-Muslim reconciliation
and amity, remained an idle one”. About six years later the disappointed Mughul prince set out for Persia, where he died in A.D. 1704.

Though Prince Akbar’s rebellion could not change the ruler of Delhi, it gave great relief to the Rānā of Mewār, but his temporary success against the Mughuls caused great misery to his subjects. The sufferings of the Mughuls had also been considerable, and they could not gain any definite success against the Rājpūts. These considerations led the Emperor and the Rānā, Jay Singh, son and successor of Rāj Singh, to conclude a treaty in June, 1681. The Rānā ceded a few districts in lieu of jizya and the Mughuls withdrew from Mewār. Mārwār, however, had to continue a “thirty years’ war” before a peace was concluded on honourable terms. Under the able leadership of Durgādās, the Rāthrās ceaselessly carried on a guerilla warfare and harassed the Mughul outposts so that the Mughul officers were compelled to pay chauth to their unrelenting foe to save themselves from his aggression. The war dragged on till, after Aurangzeb’s death, his son and successor, Bahlādur Shāh I, recognised Ajit Singh as the Rānā of Mārwār in A.D. 1709.

The Rājput wars of Aurangzeb produced disastrous consequences for his Empire. Thousands of lives were sacrificed and enormous sums were wasted on the desert land without any lasting success to the Emperor. “Damaging as this result was to imperial prestige, its material consequences were worse still.” It was an act of political unwise to provoke Rājput hostility and thus forfeit the devoted service of gallant chiefs and soldiers, so long friends of the Empire, in his wasting wars in the Deccan, or in the important work of holding under control the north-western frontier, where the restless Afghān tribes were still far from being pacified.

8. Aurangzeb and the Deccan

During the first half of Aurangzeb’s reign his attention was engrossed with affairs in the north, and the Deccan was left to the viceroy. The decadent southern Sultanates had not been able to recover fully from the blows that had been inflicted on them, and the Marāthas rose at their expense. The rise of the Marāthas, as a sort of challenge to the Mughul Empire, complicated the political situation in the Deccan, the full significance of which the Emperor could not realise at first. During the first twenty-four years of his reign his viceroy in the Deccan could
achieve no definite success either against the Sultānates or against the Marāthas.

The death of Shivāji in 1680 in no way improved the imperial position in the Deccan, notwithstanding Aurangzeb’s determination to consolidate his supremacy. The flight of the rebellious Prince Akbar to the Marātha king, Shambhūji, and the alliance between the “disturber of India” and the “infernal son of the infernal father”, as Aurangzeb called these two, brought a complete change in his policy towards the Deccan. Having now realised the necessity of marching there in person to check this menace to imperial interests, he patched up a peace with Mewār in June, 1681. Leaving Ajmer for the Deccan on the 8th September, 1681, he arrived at Burhānpur on 23rd November, 1681, and at Ahmadnagar on the 1st April, 1682. His mind must have been full of high hopes, and he could not foresee that destiny was dragging him to the south to dig the graves of himself and his Empire. The first four years were spent in unsuccessful attempts to seize Prince Akbar and in rather disastrous campaigns against the Marāthas. Some of the forts of the latter were conquered by the imperialists, but the sturdy folk whom Shivāji had inspired with new aspirations could not be thoroughly suppressed.

The conquest of the decayed Sultānates next engaged the Emperor’s attention. As in the case of Shāh Jahān, Aurangzeb’s attitude towards the Shah Sultānates of the Deccan was influenced partly by imperial interests and partly by religious considerations. Bijāpur, weakened by party factions and the rise of the Marāthas, submitted to the invaders. The last Mughul siege of the city began on the 11th April, 1685, and the Emperor himself went there in July, 1686. The besieged garrison held out gallantly, but, exhausted by lack of provisions and the death of countless men and horses, caused by the outbreak of a famine, they capitulated in September, 1686. Sikandar, the last of the Ādil Shāhīs, surrendered to the Emperor and the dynasty founded by Yūsuf Ādil Shāh ceased to exist. On entering Bijāpur the Emperor destroyed all the fine paintings and frescoes in Sikandar’s palace. Bijāpur not only lost its independence, but was turned into a desolate city. “A few years later,” writes Sir J. N. Sarkar, “Bhimson noticed how the city and its equally large suburb Naarspur looked deserted and ruined; the population was scattered, and even the abundant water-supply in the city wells had suddenly grown scanty.”

Next came the turn of the Qutb Shāhī kingdom of Golkundā. Early in February, 1687, Aurangzeb himself appeared before
Golkundā and the Mughul troops besieged the local fortress within a few days. But the citadel was well stocked with food and ammunition, which enabled the besieged to hold out bravely for about eight months. In spite of using every possible means—mines, bombardments and escalades—the besiegers could achieve no definite success but were harassed by famine and pestilence and incurred heavy losses from the reprisals of their enemies. Aurangzeb, however, held on with grim tenacity and gathered fresh reinforcements. On the failure of valour and arms, Aurangzeb, following the example of Akbar before Asirgarh, made use of "the golden key" to capture Golkundā. An Afghan soldier of fortune named Abdullah Pani, then employed in the service of Abul Hasan, the Sultān of Golkundā, was suborned by the Emperor and allowed the Mughuls to pour into the fort by opening its main gate. But one faithful Golkundā noble, 'Abdul Razzaq Lāri, spurned the Emperor's tempting offers of money and fought single-handed till he fell covered with seventy wounds. He was nursed back to recovery by the Mughuls and at last accepted a high rank under the Emperor. 'Abul Hasan was sent off to the fortress of Daulatbād to spend his last days on a pension of Rs. 50,000 a year, and Golkundā was annexed (September, 1687) to the Mughul Empire.

According to writers like Elphinstone and Smith, the annihilation of the Southern Sultānates was an impolitic step on the part of Aurangzeb. They hold that it "freed the Marātha chiefs from any fear of local rivalry", which the Mughul Emperor might have utilised to his advantage against the Marathas. But it is doubtful if any sincere alliance between the Sultānates and their aggressor, the Mughul Emperor, was possible and also if they could check the rise of the Marathas. As Sir J. N. Sarkar observes, "since Akbar had crossed the Vindhya, the Deccan Sultānates could never forget that the sleepless aim of the Mughul Emperors was the final extinction and annexation of all their territories". He also points out that it would have been impossible for the decadent Sultānates to check the Marathas effectively as they had already organised themselves into a progressive national State.

Having achieved one of the two objects of his Deccan policy, that is, the annexation of the decadent Sultānates of the Deccan, Aurangzeb turned towards the other, that is, the suppression of the renascent Marātha power. His attempts were at first crowned with success. Shambhūji was executed on the 11th March, 1689, his capital Rāigarh was captured, and though his brother, Rāja-rām, escaped, the rest of his family, including his young son,
AURANGZEB 'ALAMGIR

Shâhâb, were made prisoners. In the course of the next few years the Emperor extended his conquest further south and levied tribute on the Hindu States of Tanjore and Trichinopoly.

But in fact by the year 1690 Aurangzeb had already reached the zenith of his power and was the lord paramount of almost the whole of India—from Kâbul to Chittagong and from Kâshmir to the Kâveri. "All seemed to have been gained by Aurangzeb now; but in reality all was lost. It was the beginning of his end. The saddest and most hopeless chapter of his life was now opened. The Mughul Empire had become too large to be governed by one man or from one centre.

. . . . His enemies rose on all sides; he could defeat but not crush them for ever. . . . Lawlessness reigned in many places of Northern and Central India. The old Emperor in the far-off Deccan lost all control over his officers in Hindustân, and the administration grew slack and corrupt; chiefs and zamindârs defied the local authorities and asserted themselves, filling the country with tumult. In the province of Agra in particular, there was chronic disorder. Art and learning decayed at the withdrawal of Imperial patronage; not a single edifice, finely written manuscript, or exquisite picture, commemorates Aurangzeb’s reign. The endless war in the Deccan exhausted his treasury; the government turned bankrupt. The soldiers, starving from arrears of pay, mutinied; and during the closing years of his reign the revenue of Bengal, regularly sent by the able diwan Murshid Quli Khân, was the sole support of the Emperor’s household or his army, and its arrival was eagerly looked forward to. Napoleon I used to say, ‘It was the Spanish ulcer which ruined me’. The Deccan ulcer ruined Aurangzeb."

The Emperor failed to subjugate the Marâthas or conquer their land. They recovered by 1691 and carried on a war of national resistance against the Mughuls, first under Râjârâm and some other able Marâtha chiefs, and then, after Râjârâm’s death in 1700, under his brave widow Târâ Bâi.

9. Last Days of Aurangzeb

Thus, as years rolled on, Aurangzeb saw before his eyes failure piled upon failure and his Empire exhausted. Fear for the future of the Empire filled his mind with anguish, and made him extremely unhappy. His advice to his rebellious sons to save the Empire by partition went unheeded. Conscious of his failure and seriously apprehensive of the imminent disaster, he wrote to his son 'A'zâm: "I came alone and am going alone. I have not done well to the country and the people, and of the future there is no hope." To
Kām Bakhsh he wrote: "I carry away the burden of my shortcomings. . . . Come what may, I am launching my boat." The deep pathos of these letters is bound to move every human heart and to rouse in it sympathy for the old monarch on his "lonely death-bed". Worn out in mind and body by heavy cares and hard toil, the Emperor died at Ahmadnagar in the morning of the 3rd March, 1707, "with the Muslim confession of faith on his lips". His body was carried to Daulatabad and was interred in the compound of the tomb of the famous Muslim saint Burhān-ud-din.

10. Aurangzeb as a Man and a Ruler

To judge the character and policy of a personality like Aurangzeb is indeed a perplexing task. Some have taken into consideration mainly his faults, and not his good qualities, which they have mostly ignored. There is no reason why he should be singled out for severe strictures for the manner in which he secured the throne. In this, he was simply following the example that had become almost traditional in the Timūrid family in India. It would be unjust to throw on him the entire responsibility for the war of succession; it would have come at any rate, as none of the brothers was willing to make any compromise. It should not be forgotten that while Shāh Jahān removed all his possible rivals Aurangzeb did not put to death all his nephews. It is indeed hard to defend Aurangzeb’s harsh treatment of his old father, but in justice to him it should be noted that at least he was not a parricide, of which we find numerous instances in the history of India and of other countries.

Aurangzeb’s private life was simple, pious and austere. He was not a slave to his passions and scrupulously abstained from indulging in prohibited food, drink or dress. The number of his wives “fell short even of the Quranic allowance of four”, which was a praiseworthy restraint for an Emperor in those days, though it was below the standard of Dārū Shukoh and Khusrav. He was an ardent student of Muslim theology, and an expert calligraphist, and tried to “educate his children in sacred lore”. But it is a pity that he seldom encouraged art and letters. The only literary production which received his patronage was the Fatwāwa-i-Ālamgiri, which has been regarded as “the greatest digest of Muslim law made in India”. Aurangzeb was a pious Muslim, and with the zeal of a Puritan he scrupulously observed the injunctions of the Holy Quran. Once during the Balkh campaign he knelt down to finish his prayers at the proper time, though the fighting
was going on all around him. No one can deny him the credit of being sincere in his religious convictions. But this extreme puritanism made him stern and austere and dried up the springs of the tender qualities of heart. He thus "lacked sympathy, imagination, breadth of vision, elasticity in the choice of means, which alone for a hundred faults of the head".

Undaunted bravery, grim tenacity of purpose, and ceaseless activity, were some of his prominent qualities. His military campaigns gave sufficient proof of his unusual courage, and the manner in which he baffled the intrigues of his enemies shows him to have been a past-master of diplomacy and state-craft. His memory was wonderful, and his industry indefatigable. He personally read all petitions and passed orders on them with his own hand. The Italian physician Gemelli-Careri, who visited India during the reign of Aurangzeb and saw him in 1685 when he was seventy-seven years old, "admired to see him endorse the petitions with his own hand, without spectacles, and by his cheerful, smiling countenance seemed to be extremely pleased with the employment".

In spite of his vitality and strength of character, Aurangzeb, as a ruler of India, proved to be a failure. He hardly realized that the greatness of an Empire depends on the progress of its people as a whole. In the intensity of his religious zeal he ignored the feelings of important sections of the people and thus roused forces hostile to his Empire. Indeed, the history of India since the days of the Mauryas clearly shows that political progress in this land is dependent on the policy of religious toleration which would seek to create harmony in the midst of various discordant elements. To build up a united India, while accentuating religious differences, is bound to remain an idle dream. Further, Aurangzeb's plodding industry and capacity for work in one sense went against him by implanting in his mind a sense of over-confidence, and excessive distrust of his officers. This led him to interfere constantly in the minutest affairs of the State. It resulted in keeping the local officers in a state of perpetual tutelage, and crushing their initiative, sense of responsibility, and efficiency, which could not but produce "administrative degeneration in an extensive and diversified empire like India". Khāfi Khān gives the following estimate of the Emperor from the point of view of an orthodox Sunni: "Of all the sovereigns of the House of Timūr—nay of all the sovereigns of Delhi—no one, since Sikandar Lodi, has ever been apparently so distinguished for devotion, austerity and justice. In courage, long-suffering and sound judgment, he was unrivalled. But from reverence of the injunction of the Law
he did not make use of punishment, and without punishment the administration of a country cannot be maintained. Dissensions had arisen among his nobles through rivalry. So every plan and project that he formed came to little good and every enterprise which he undertook was long in execution and failed of its object.” Aurangzeb had many sterling qualities: but he was not a successful ruler; he was a great soldier but not a farseeing leader of men, a shrewd diplomat but not a sound statesman. In short, he was not a political genius, such as Akbar alone among the Mughuls had been, who could initiate a policy and enact laws to mould the life and thought of his contemporaries or of future generations. Largely owing to the Emperor’s lack of political foresight, the symptoms of the disintegration of the Mughul Empire appeared before he left this world. His weak successors only hastened the process of decay. The reign of the puritan Emperor was a great tragedy.

11. The Marāthas and the Mughuls in the Seventeenth Century

A. Rise of the Marāthas

The rise of the Marātha power introduced an important factor in Indian politics during the second half of the seventeenth century, as that of Vijayanagar had done in a previous age. The Marāthas had brilliant traditions of political and cultural activities in the early Middle Ages of Indian history, when they upheld the national cause under the Yādavas of Devagiri. They lost their independence with the fall of the Yādava Rāmechandradeva in the time of ‘Ālā-ud-dīn, but in forty years they began again to play an important part in the Bahmani kingdom and subsequently in the succeeding Sultānate. The seventeenth century saw them organised into a national State. There is no doubt that Shivāji was the hero of this Marātha national unity, but it has to be noted that the ground was prepared for his glorious achievements by several other factors.

Firstly, the geography of Mahārāshtra exercised a profound influence in moulding the character and history of its people. Enclosed on two sides by mountain ranges like the Sahyadri running from north to south, and the Sātpura and the Vindhyā running from east to west, protected by the Narmadā and the Tāpti rivers and provided with numerous easily defensible hill-forts, the Marātha country “could not be annexed or conquered by one cavalry dash or even one year’s campaigning”. The
rugged and unproductive soil of the land, its precarious and scanty rainfall, and its meagre agricultural resources, kept the Marāthas immune from the vices of luxury and idleness and helped them to develop the virtues of "self-reliance, courage, perseverance, a stern simplicity, a rough straight-forwardness, a sense of social equality, and consequently pride in the dignity of man as man". Secondly, the Marāthi religious reformers, Ekanāth, Tukārām, Rāmdāsa and Vāman Pandit, preaching, through successive centuries, the doctrines of devotion to God and of equality of all men before Him, without any distinction of caste or position, and the dignity of action, had sown in their land the seeds of a renaissance or self-awakening which is generally the presage of a political revolution in a country. Rāmdāsa Samarth, Guru of Shivājī, exerted a profound influence on the minds of his countrymen and inspired them with ideals of social reform and national regeneration through his disciples in matha (monasteries) and his famous work known as Dasabodha. Thirdly, literature and language supplied another bond of union among the sons of Mahārāṣṭra. The devotional songs of religious reformers were composed in the Marāthi language, and consequently a forceful Marāthi literature grew up during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries to inspire the people of the land with noble aspirations. "Thus," observes Sir J. N. Sarkar, "a remarkable community of language, creed and life was attained in Mahārāṣṭra in the seventeenth century even before political unity was conferred by Shivājī. What little was wanting to the solidarity of the people was supplied by his creation of a national State, the long struggle with the invader from Delhi under his sons, and the imperial expansion of the race under the Peshwās."

The Marāthas had also acquired some previous experience of political and military administration through their employment in the Sultānates of the Deccan. Shāhjāhān, father of the famous Shivājī, began his career as a trooper in the army of the Sultān of Ahmadnagar. He gradually rose to distinction, acquired vast territorial possessions in that State, and played the kingmaker during the last years of the Nizām Shāhī rule. But his success excited the jealousy of others, and after the annexation of Ahmadnagar by Shāh Jāhān, he entered the service of the Bijāpur State in 1636. Here also he earned considerable fame and received an extensive fief in the Karnātak, besides his old jāgīr of Poona, which he had held as a servant of the Ahmadnagar State.
Shivaji was born in the hill-fort of Shinvur near Junnar in 1630, as the writers of one school hold, or in 1627, as some modern historians say.¹ Shahji removed to his new jagir with his second wife, leaving Shivaji and his mother Jijabai under the guardianship of an able Brahmana, Dadaji Khonddev. Neglected by her husband, Jijabai, a lady of virtuous temperament and extraordinary intellect, infused into her child’s mind high and inspiring ideas by reciting stories of heroism, spirituality and chivalry in past ages, and stimulated his zeal in defence of religion. “If ever great men owed their greatness to the inspiration of mothers”, wrote Ramade, “the influence of Jijabai was a factor of prime importance in the making of Shivaji’s career.” The influence of Dadaji Khonddev also combined to make him bold and enterprising. We do not know if Shivaji received any formal literary education, but he grew up as a brave and adventurous soldier, “inspired by a real desire to free his country from what he considered to be a foreign tyranny, and not by a mere love of plunder”. His early intimacy with the hillmen of the Maval country, ninety miles in length and about twelve to fourteen miles in breadth along the Western Ghats, was of immense value to him in his subsequent years, as the Mavalis turned out to be “his best soldiers, his earliest comrades, and his most devoted commanders”. Through his mother, he was descended from the Yadava rulers of Devagiri, and on his father’s side he claimed descent from the brave Sisodiás of Mewar. Thus the sentiment of glorious heredity, and the influence of early training and environment, combined to rouse in the young Maratha soldier aspirations for founding an independent kingdom. He chose for himself a “career of independence”, which, though full of risk, “had undreamt-of advantages to compensate for the risk, if only he could succeed”.

The growing weakness of the Deccan Sultanates, and the prolonged campaigns of the imperialists in the north, greatly favoured the rise of the Maratha power. In 1646 Shivaji captured the fortress of Torna, five miles east of which he soon built the fort of Rajgarh. After the death of Dadaji Khonddev (1647), who probably did not approve of these risky enterprises, Shivaji acquired many forts from their hereditary owners, or the local officers of Bijapur, by

¹ Sarkar’s Shivaji, p. 26; J.I.H., 1927, pp. 177-97. Mr. Dasaratha Sharma has brought to light (J.B.O.R.S., June, 1934) a contemporary record of Shivaji’s birth (that is, a horoscope of Shivaji preserved in the Bikaner Fort Library), according to which Shivaji was born in Samvat 1680.
force, bribery or trickery, and also built new ones. He thus came to possess a considerable estate, protected by a long chain of hill-forts. He had to suspend offensive operations against Bijapur for a few years (1649–1655) as his father was put under arrest by the Bijapur Government and was released on condition of his son’s good behaviour. But he utilised this time in consolidating his conquests, and in January, 1656, annexed the small Maratha principality of Javili, by having its semi-independent Maratha prince, Chandru Rao More, done to death by one of his agents. The extent and revenue of Shivaji’s heritage were by this time more than doubled. He came into conflict with the Mughals for the first time in 1657, when, taking advantage of Aurangzeb and his troops being engaged in the invasion of Bijapur, he raided the Mughul districts of Ahmadnagar and Junnar and even looted the city of Junnar. Aurangzeb promptly reinforced his officers in that part and Shivaji was defeated. When ‘Adil Shah concluded peace with Aurangzeb, Shivaji also submitted to him. Aurangzeb never trusted Shivaji, but he patched up the peace as his presence in the north became necessary owing to his father’s illness. Shivaji next turned his attention to the North Konkan, captured Kalyan, Bhawandi and Mhului, and proceeded as far south as Mahad.

Temporarily relieved from internal strife and immediate Mughul invasion, the Sultan of Bijapur decided to destroy the power of Shivaji once for all, and sent a large force against him, early in A.D. 1659, under Azal Khan, one of the foremost nobles and generals of the kingdom, ‘to bring back the rebel (Shivaji) dead or alive’. Azal Khan reached Wai, twenty miles north of Satara, within a fortnight. Failing to bring Shivaji out of his stronghold of Pratapgarh, the Bijapur general opened negotiations with him through a Maratha Brahmana, named Krishnaji Bhaskar, and invited him to a conference. Shivaji received the envoy with respect, and appealed to him in the name of religion to disclose the real intention of Azal Khan. Moved by this, Krishnaji Bhaskar hinted that the Bijapur general had mischief in his mind, which was confirmed by what Shivaji learnt from Gopinath, his own envoy to Azal. This put Shivaji on the alert, and he proceeded to meet his adversary in a conference, apparently unarmed but with concealed weapons and clad in armour, with a view to meeting craft with craft if necessary. It has been unanimously alleged by the Marathas that, as the two embraced each other, the strong and stalwart Muslim general held the short and slim Maratha chief’s neck in his left arm with “an iron grip” and with his right hand tried to thrust a dagger into the body of Shivaji, whose hidden armour,
however, saved him from harm. Shivaji immediately killed Azfal by rending his body with his bāghnahk or gloves with steel claws. With the help of his troops, who were lying in ambush, he defeated the leaderless Bijapur troops and plundered their camp. Khāfi Khan and Duff charge Shivaji with having treacherously murdered Azfal Khān, who, in their opinion, did not first try to strike Shivaji. But Maratha writers have justified Shivaji’s treatment of Azfal as an act of self-defence against the attack of the Bijapur general. The contemporary factory records accord with the statement of the Maratha chroniclers.

Shivaji next entered the South Konkan and the Kolhapur district. But, in July, 1660, he was invested in the Panhālā fort by a Bijapur force under Śidī Jauhar and was forced to evacuate it. He was soon confronted with a new danger—Shaista Khān, the new Mughul governor of the Deccan, commissioned by Aurangzeb to suppress the Maratha chief’s activities, occupied Poona, captured the fort of Chākan and drove away the Marathas from the Kalyān district. But Shivaji soon patched up a truce with the Bijapur State, through the intervention of his father, who still held a position of importance there. Thus he became free to turn his whole attention to the Mughuls. After about two years’ desultory fighting, he secretly entered into Shaista Khān’s apartments in Poona with some attendants on the 15th April, 1663, ‘‘surprised and wounded the Mughul viceroy of the Deccan in the heart of his camp, in his very bed-chamber, within the inner ring of his body-guards and female slaves’’, slew his son, Abul Fath, one captain, forty attendants and six women of his harem, and then went safely away to the neighbouring stronghold of Singhaghar. The Mughul viceroy lost his thumb and barely escaped with his life. This daring exploit immensely increased the prestige of Shivaji, who soon performed another feat, not less adventurous than the one described above. During the period 16th—29th January, 1664, he attacked and sacked Surat, the richest seaport on the west, without hindrance, as the governor of the place had taken to his heels instead of opposing him. The Maratha chief decamped with rich plunder exceeding ten million rupees in value. Only the local English and Dutch factories successfully resisted him and escaped being plundered.

Indignant at these repeated reverses, which greatly affected Mughul prestige and influence in the Deccan, Aurangzeb sent, early in 1665, Jay Singh, Rājā of Amber, and Dilīr Khān to the Deccan with an expeditionary force to punish Shivaji. Jay Singh, a tactful and brave general, who combined with varied military
experience, gained during his campaigns in different parts of the Empire, much diplomatic skill and foresight, proceeded cautiously against the clever Maratha chief. Raising a ring of enemies round Shivaji, he besieged the fort of Purandhar. The beleaguered garrison in the fort maintained a heroic resistance for some time, during which its “Prabhu” commander, Munar Baji Deshpande of Mahad, lost his life with 300 Mavlis. The Mughuls also blockaded Rajgarh, the seat of Shivaji’s government. Considering the cost of further resistance, Shivaji concluded the treaty of Purandhar with Jay Singh on the 22nd June, 1663, whereby he ceded to the Mughuls twenty-three of his forts, retaining only twelve for himself, promised to supply a contingent of 5,000 cavalry to act with the Mughul army in the Deccan, and was permitted to compensate himself for his territorial losses by collecting chauth and sardesh-mukht in some districts of the Bijapur kingdom. He soon joined the imperialists in a war against Bijapur. But Jay Singh’s Bijapur campaign ended in failure. He, however, pled Shivaji “with high hopes”, and using “a thousand devices” prevailed upon him to visit the imperial court at Agra.

Jay Singh’s object in sending Shivaji to the imperial court was to remove him from the troubled area of the Deccan, but it is very difficult to understand what led Shivaji to agree to his proposal. Mr. Sardesai writes that the consideration which led Shivaji to go to the imperial court was his desire to see with his own eyes the Emperor, his court, and the sources of his strength, with a view to preparing his plans for future operations against him properly. We know, on the other hand, that Jay Singh had to persuade him to take such a risky step by holding out promises of reward and honour and taking solemn oaths to be responsible for his safety at Agra. To secure the consent of the Emperor to the occupation of the island of Janjira, then held by the Siddis, an imperial servant, might have also been an objective of the Maratha chief. With the assurance of the astrologers and concurrence of the majority of his officers, he started for Agra with his son, Shambhuji, and reached there on the 9th May, 1666.

But Shivaji was coldly received by Aurangzeb and ranked as a noble commanding 5,000 men, which wounded his sense of honour so much that he created a scene and swooned. On being restored to his senses, he accused the Emperor of breach of faith, whereupon he was placed under guard. Thus his “high hopes were dashed to pieces and he found himself a prisoner instead.” An ordinary man would have given way to despair under such
trying circumstances, but, being gifted with extraordinary resourcefulness, he resorted to a stratagem to effect his escape. Pretending to recover from his feigned illness, he began sending out of his house every evening baskets of fruits and sweetmeats for Brāhmaṇas, mendicants and nobles, as thanksgiving offerings for his fictitious recovery. After a few days, when the guards had relaxed their vigilance and allowed the baskets to go out unchecked, Shivāji and his son concealed themselves in two empty baskets and slipped out of Āgra, eluding all the spies of the Mughul Emperor. He

hastened with Shambhūji to Muttrā and, leaving his fatigued son there in charge of a Marāṭha Brāhmaṇa, reached home, in the guise of a mendicant, on the 30th November, 1666, by following a roundabout way, via Allahābād, Benares, Gayā and Telengāna.

For three years after this, Shivāji remained at peace with the Mughuls and utilised the period in organising his internal administration. Aurangzib granted him the title of Rājā and a jāgīr in Berar, and raised his son Shambhūji to the rank of a noble of 5,000. But war was renewed in 1670. The position of the imperialists being weaker than before, owing to a bitter quarrel between the viceroy,
Shāh 'Ālam, and his lieutenant, Dilīr Khān, Shivāji recovered almost all the forts surrendered by him in 1665. In the month of October, 1670, he sacked Surāt for the second time and captured immense booty in cash and kind. He then carried daring raids into Mughul provinces and repeatedly defeated Mughul generals in open fight. In 1672 he demanded chautk from Surāt.

The tribal risings in the north-west then engaged Aurangzeb's attention more than anything else, and a part of the Mughul army was transferred from the Deccan to that region. The desultory fighting of the Mughul captains against Shivāji from 1672 to 1678 led to no success. The Marātha hero was then in the full tide of power. On the 18th June, 1674, he formally crowned himself king at Rāigarh with great pomp and splendour, and assumed the title of Chhatrapati (Lord of the Umbrella, or king of kings).

Besides being relieved of pressure from the Mughuls, owing to their preoccupations in the north-west, Shivāji secured the friendship of the Sultān of Golkundā, and conquered in one year (1677) Jinji, Vellore, and the adjoining districts. These greatly enhanced his prestige and gave him the possession of a vast territory in the Madras Carnatic and the Mysore plateau, covering sixty leagues by forty, yielding him an annual revenue of 20 lacs of kuns and containing 100 forts. His successful career came to a close with his premature death at the age of fifty-three (or fifty, according to some) on the 14th April, 1680. Shivāji's kingdom extended roughly along the entire coast from Rāmnagar (modern Dharampur State in the Surāt Agency) in the north to Kārwār in the south, excluding the Portuguese, African and English settlements of Damān, Salsette, Bassein, Chaul, Goa, Janjirā and Bombay. On the east, its boundary ran in an irregular line from Baglana in the north, through the Nāsik and Poona districts and round the whole of Sātārā, to Kolhāpur in the south. His last conquests brought within the limits of his dominions the Western Carnatic, extending from Belgaum to the banks of the Tuṅgabhadrā, opposite to the Bellary district of the modern Madras Presidency, and also a large part of the present kingdom of Mysore.

C. Shivāji's Government

Shivāji was not merely a daring soldier and a successful military conqueror, but also an enlightened ruler of his people. As Mr. Rawlinson observes: "Like nearly all great warriors—Napoleon is a conspicuous example—Shivāji was also a great administrator, for the qualities which go to make a capable general are those
which are required by the successful organiser and statesman." His system, like that of the Muslim rulers of India, was an autocracy, of which he himself was the supreme head. But in the actual discharge of State business he was helped by a council of eight ministers—the asktaprodhān—whose functions were chiefly advisory. The eight ministers were: (i) The Peshwā or the Prime Minister, who had to look after the general welfare and interests of the kingdom, (ii) the Aṃātya or the Finance Minister, whose duty was to check and countersign all public accounts, (iii) the Mantri, who had to preserve a daily record of the king's acts and the proceedings of his court, (iv) the Sachiva or the superintendent, who was in charge of the king's correspondence and had also to check the accounts of the mahāls and paraganās, (v) the Sumant or the Foreign Secretary, (vi) the Senāpati or the Commander-in-chief, (vii) the Pandit Rāo and Dānadhyaḥaksha or the Royal Chaplain and Almoner, and (viii) the Nyāyadhīsa or the Chief Justice. All the ministers, excepting the Nyāyadhīsa and the Pandit Rāo, held military commands besides their civil duties, and at least three of them were placed in charge of provincial administration as well. The ministers were in charge of different departments of the State, which were no less than thirty in number. Shivāji divided his kingdom into a number of provinces, each being placed under a viceroy, who held office at the king's pleasure and was assisted like him by a staff of eight chief officers. The viceroy of the Karnāṭaka had a position somewhat different from that of the other provincial governors, and he exercised more power and discretion.

For purposes of revenue collection and administration, Shivāji's kingdom was divided into a number of prants or provinces. Each prant was subdivided into paraganās and tarfs, and the village formed the lowest unit. Shivāji abandoned the existing practice of farming out land revenue and substituted for it direct collection from the ryots through State officials, who had "no right to exercise the powers of a political superior (overlord) or harass the ryots". The assessment was made after a careful survey of lands, for which purpose a uniform unit of measurement was introduced. The State dues were fixed at 30 per cent of the expected produce, which was after some time raised by Shivāji to 40 per cent after he had abolished other kinds of taxes or cesses. The cultivators knew definitely the amount of their dues, which they could pay without any oppression. They were given the choice of payment either in cash or in kind. The State encouraged agriculture by granting advance loans from the treasury to the ryots for the purchase of
seed and cattle, and the latter repaid these by easy annual instal-
ments. It is wrong to say, as Fryer has done, that the State officers
practised extortions and oppressions on the cultivators, though it
might have been that Shivāji, with a view to making his kingdom
financially sound, was strict in the matter of revenue collection.
Modern researches have amply proved that the revenue adminis-
tration of Shivāji was humane, efficient, and conducive to the
interests of his subjects, as even Grant Duff admitted many
years ago.

As the hilly regions of Mahārāṣṭra did not yield much in land
revenue, Shivāji often levied chauth and sarādeshmukhī on the
neighbouring tracts, which were completely at his mercy, and also
on the Mughul provinces as well as some districts of the Bijāpur
kingdom. The practice of levying chauth had already been in vogue
in western India, as we find that the Rājā of Rāmnagar exacted
it from the Portuguese subjects of Damān. Scholars differ in
their opinions regarding the nature of the chauth contribution.
Ranade, who compares it with Wellesley’s subsidiary system,
writes that it was “not a mere military contribution without any
moral or legal obligation, but a payment in lieu of protection
against the invasion of a third power”. Sir J. N. Sarkar expresses
a different opinion when he writes: “The payment of the chauth
merely saved a place from the unwelcome presence of the Marāṭha
soldiers and civil underlings, but did not impose on Shivāji any
corresponding obligation to guard the district from foreign invasion
or internal disorder. The Marāṭhas looked only to their own gain
and not to the fate of their prey after they had left. The chauth
was only a means of buying off one robber; and not a subsidiary
system for the maintenance of peace and order against all enemies.
The lands subject to the chauth cannot, therefore, be rightly called
spheres of influence.” According to Mr. Sardessai, it was a tribute
realised from hostile or conquered territories. Dr. Sen writes that
the chauth was a contribution exacted by a military leader, which
was justified by the exigencies of the situation. Whatever might
be the theory of this burdensome imposition, which amounted to
one-fourth of the government revenue, in practice it was nothing
but a military contribution. The sarādeshmukhī was an additional
levy of 10 per cent, which Shivāji demanded on the basis of
his claim as the hereditary Sarādeshmukh (chief headman) of
Mahārāṣṭra. But this was a legal fiction. The exaction of chauth
and sarādeshmukhī gave to the Marāṭhas influence over the districts
which lay beyond their jurisdiction and was followed by their easy
annexation.
The organisation of the Marātha army by Shivāji on a new model is a brilliant proof of his military genius. Previously the Marātha fighting forces consisted mostly of cavalry, who had been in the habit of working half the year upon their fields, and engaged themselves during the dry season in active service. Shivāji, however, introduced a regular standing army. His soldiers had to be always ready for duty, and were provided with pay and quarters during the rainy season. The strength of this force rose from thirty to forty thousand cavalry and ten thousand infantry. Shivāji built a considerable fleet, the crews for which were recruited from among the low-caste Hindus of the Bombay coast. Although the achievements of the Marātha navy under Shivāji were not very remarkable, yet in later times the Marātha fleet under the Angriyas gave considerable trouble to the English, the Portuguese, and the Dutch. According to the Sabānisad Bhukhar, he maintained an elephant corps numbering about 1,200 and a camel corps numbering 3,000 or 1,500. We do not know definitely what was the strength of his artillery, but Orne writes that “he had previously purchased eighty pieces of cannon and lead sufficient for his matchlocks from the French Director at Surat.”

There was a regular gradation of officers both in the cavalry and the infantry. The cavalry had two branches—the bāryās or soldiers provided with pay and equipment by the State, and the sīlabārs, who equipped themselves at their own cost and supplied the pay and equipment of the soldiers whom they brought to the service of the State, but were paid a stipulated sum by the State to defray the expense of service in the field. In the cavalry, 25 troopers formed a unit; over twenty-five men was placed a havaldār, over five havaldārs one jumladār, and over ten jumladārs one hāzārī, who received 1,000 huns a year. Higher ranks over hāzārīs were pānjhāzārīs and the sarnobat or supreme commander of the cavalry. In the infantry, nine privates (pāiks) formed the lowest unit under a nāik. Over five nāiks there was one havaldār, over two or three havaldārs one jumladār, and over ten jumladārs one hāzārī. Instead of five hāzārīs as in the cavalry, there were seven hāzārīs in the infantry under the command of the sarnobat of the infantry. Although Shivāji in most cases led the army in person, it was formally under a senapati, or commander-in-chief, who was a member of the council of ministers. Since forts played an important part in the history of the Marāthas, ample precaution was taken to maintain the garrisons there in an efficient condition. Every fort was under three officers of equal status, viz. the havaldār, the sābnis, and the sarnobat, who were to act together and thus to serve
as a check on one another. Further, to prevent treachery on the part of the fort-officers, Shivaji arranged “that in each garrison there should be a mixture of castes”.

Though regular and generous in making payments and giving rewards to the soldiers, Shivaji did not forget to enforce strict discipline on them. He drew up a set of regulations for their conduct so that their morals might not be lowered. The more important of these regulations laid down, “No woman, female slave, or dancing girl, was to be allowed to accompany the army.” A soldier keeping any of these was to be beheaded. Cows were exempt from seizure, but bullocks might be taken for transport only. Brahmans were not to be molested, nor taken as hostages for ransom. No soldier should misbehave himself during a campaign.” As regards spoils of war, Shivaji ordered that “whenever a place was plundered, the goods of poor people, pulsaqah (copper money), and vessels of brass and copper, should belong to the man who found them; but other articles, gold and silver, coined or uncoined, gems, valuable stuffs or jewels, were not to belong to the finder but were to be given up without the smallest deduction to the officers and to be by them paid over to Shivaji’s government”.

D. An Estimate of Shivaji

Both as a ruler and a man, Shivaji occupies a distinguished place in the history of India. A born leader of men, who could throw a spell over all who came in contact with him, he elevated himself, by dint of his unusual bravery and diplomacy, from the position of a jagirdar to that of a Chhatrapati and became an irresistible enemy of the mighty Mughul Empire, then at the zenith of its power. The most brilliant of his achievements was the welding together of the Maratha race, “scattered like atoms through many Deccani Kingdoms”, into a mighty nation in “the teeth of opposition of four great powers like the Mughul empire, Bijapur, Portuguese India, and the Abyssinians of Junjira”. He left an extensive kingdom at his death. “The territories and the treasures, however, which Shivaji acquired, were not so formidable to the Mughuls,” writes Grant Duff, “as the example he had set, the system and habits he had introduced, and the spirit he had infused into a large proportion of the Maratha people.” The Maratha nation that he built up defied the Mughul Empire during

1 We may contrast with this the influence of the harem that accompanied the Mughul army.
and after Aurangzeb’s reign, and remained the dominant power in India during the eighteenth century, so that a descendant of Aurangzeb became the virtual puppet of a Marātha chief, Mahādāji Sindhia. The Marātha power also competed with the English for supremacy in India till it was finally crushed in the time of Lord Hastings.

It would be unjust to describe Shivāji as “an entrepreneur of rapine or a Hindu edition of Alāudden or Tamarlene”, as Khāfi Khān and even some modern writers have done. A great constructive genius, he possessed all the essential qualities needed for the national regeneration of a country. “His system was his own creation and, unlike Ranjit Singh, he took no foreign aid in his administration. His army was drilled and commanded by his own people and not by Frenchmen. What he built lasted long; his institutions were looked up to with admiration and emulation, even a century later in the palmy days of the Peshwā’s rule.” He was not a relentless conqueror indulging in unnecessary cruelty and plunder for the sake of plunder. His chivalrous conduct during his campaigns towards women and children, including those of the Muslims, has been eulogised even by Khāfi Khān, a hostile critic: “Shivāji had always striven to maintain the honour of the people in his territories . . . and was careful to maintain the honour of women and children of Muhammadans when they fell into his hands. His injunctions upon this point were very strict, and anyone who disobeyed them received punishment.” Rawlinson rightly observes: “He was never deliberately or wantonly cruel. To respect women, mosques, and non-combatants, to stop promiscuous slaughter after a battle, to release and dismiss with honour captured officers and men—these are, surely, no light virtues.” Shivāji’s ideal was the restoration of an indigenous Empire in his country, and he pursued it with singleness of purpose. But he had no time to work it out in full.

In his private life, Shivāji remained immune from the prevalent vices of the time, and his moral virtues were exceptionally high. Sincerely religious from his early life, he did not forget the lofty ideals with which he had been inspired by his mother and his guru Rāmdāś, in the midst of political or military duties. He sought to make religion a vital force in the uplifting of the Marātha nation and always extended his patronage to Hindu religion and learning. “Religion remained with him”, remarks a modern Marāthis writer, “an ever-fresh fountain of right conduct and generosity; it did not obsess his mind or harden him into a bigot.” Tolerant of other faiths, he deeply venerated Muslim saints and granted rent-free
lands to meet the expenses of illumination of Muslim shrines and mosques, and his conduct towards the Capuchin fathers (Christian monks) of Surat, during its first sack by him, was respectful. Even his bitterest critic, Khāfi Khān, writes: “But he (Shivāji) made it a rule that whenever his followers went plundering, they should do no harm to the mosques, the Book of God, or the women of any one. Whenever a copy of the sacred Quran came into his hands he treated it with respect and gave it to some of his Mussalmān followers. When the women of any Hindu or Muhammadan were taken prisoners by his men, he watched over them until their relations came with a suitable ransom to buy their liberty.”

E. Shambhūji and his Successors

Shivāji was succeeded by his eldest son, Shambhūji, who, though pleasure-loving, was brave. His chief adviser was a Brāhmaṇa from Northern India named Kavi-Kulash, whose morals were not above reproach. Under the new king the Marātha power weakened but did not become entirely inert. Shambhūji himself realised the nature of the Mughul menace, and fought the mighty force which Aurangzeb had brought to the Deccan with courage and resolution till he was surprised and captured (11th February, 1689), at Sangameshwar, twenty-two miles from Ratnagiri, by an energetic Mughul officer named Muqarrab Khān. His minister, Kavi-Kulash, and twenty-five of his chief followers, were also captured with him. The two chief captives were brought to the imperial camp at Bahādurgharh and were publicly paraded. After being tortured in various ways for more than three weeks, the captives were put to death on the 11th March, 1689. The imperialists quickly captured many of the Marātha forts, and even besieged the Marātha capital at Rāigarh. But Rājārām, younger brother of Shambhūji, slipped out of the city, disguised as a mendicant, and after various adventures reached Jinji in the Karnātak. The capital city had in the meanwhile capitulated, and Shambhūji’s family, including his infant son, Shāhā, had been captured by the Mughuls. Thus the Marātha power seemed to be completely overthrown.

But the spirit with which Shivāji had inspired his people could not die out so easily. The Marāthas recovered quickly and again began a war of national resistance to the Mughuls, which ultimately exhausted the resources of the latter. In Maharashtra the Marātha recovery was effected by leaders like Rāmchandra Pant, Shankaraji Malhar, and Parashurām Trimbak. Parashurām became Pratimidhi
or regent in 1701. In the eastern Carnatic affairs were ably managed by Pralhād Nirājī, the first Pratinidhi. The Marāṭha captains now fought and raided in different quarters on their own account. Aurangzeb was, in fact, confronted by "a people's war" and he "could not end it, because there was no Marāṭha government or state-army for him to attack and destroy". Two able and active Marāṭha generals, Santājī Ghorpāde and Dhanājī Jādāva, swept on from one area to another, caused great loss and confusion to the Mughuls, and carried their daring raids, according to the Marāṭha chronicles, even to the Emperor's camp. Many officers of the Mughul Deccan purchased safety by paying chanīth to the Marāṭhas, and some of them even joined the enemy in plundering the Emperor's people. As Sir J. N. Sarkar observes, "the Mughul administration had really dissolved, and only the presence of the Emperor with all his troops in the country held it together, but it was now a delusive phantom. Santā and Dhanā were the heroes of this period; the initiative lay entirely with them, and they upset every plan and calculation formed by the imperialists".

Jinji, having stood a siege of about eight years, was captured by Zu'llīqār Khān in January, 1698. But Rājārām had escaped to Sātārā, where he gathered a powerful army and resumed the struggle in the northern Deccan, where Aurangzeb had assembled his forces. The imperialists besieged the fort of Sātārā in December, 1699, but the garrison defended it heroically till, after the death of Rājārām on the 12th March, 1700, it was surrendered on certain terms by his minister, Parashurām. The Emperor now seized fort after fort of the Marāṭhas in person, but what they lost one day was regained by them the next day and the war was protracted interminably.

After the death of Rājārām, his widow, Tārā Bāi, a lady of masterly spirit, guided the destiny of the Marāṭha nation at this juncture as regent for her minor son, Shivājī III. She was, as even the hostile critic Khāfī Khān admitted, "a clever, intelligent woman, and had obtained reputation during her husband's lifetime for her knowledge of civil and military matters". Having organised the administration of the State and suppressed the quarrels of the rival parties for succession to the throne, she, as Khāfī Khān tells us, "took vigorous measures for ravaging the imperial territory and sent armies to plunder the six subahs

1 The party of Tārā Bāi and her son; that of Raja Bāi, another wife of Rājārām and mother of Shambhūjī II; and that which supported the cause of Shāhū, son of Shambhūjī I.
of the Deccan as far as Sironj, Mandasor and the subahs of Mâlwa". The Marâthas had already invaded Mâlwa in 1699. In 1703 a party of them entered Berar (a Mughul province for a century). In 1706 they raided Gujrat and sacked Barodâ, and in April or May, 1706, a large Marâtha army threatened the Emperor's camp at Ahmadnagar, whence they were repulsed after a long and severe contest. Thus by this time the Marâthas, with their resources enormously increased through raids, practically became masters of the situation in the Deccan and also in certain parts of Central India. As an eye-witness, Bhimsen, wrote: "The Marâthas became completely dominant over the whole kingdom and closed the roads. By means of robbery they escaped from poverty and rose to great wealth." Their military tactics also underwent a change, the immediate effect of which was good for them. As Manucci noted in 1704: "These (Marâtha) leaders and their troops move in those days with much confidence, because they have cowed the Mughul commanders and inspired them with fear. At the present time they possess artillery, musketry, bows and arrows, with elephants and camels for all their baggage and tents. . . . In short, they are equipped and move about just like the armies of the Mughuls. . . . Only a few years ago they did not march in this fashion. In those days their arms were only lances and long swords two inches wide. Armed thus, they used to prowl about on the frontiers, picking up here and there what they could; then they made off home again. But at the present time they move like conquerors, showing no fear of any Mughul troops." Thus all the attempts of Aurangzeb to crush the Marâthas proved quite futile. Marâtha nationalism survived as a triumphant force which his feeble successors failed to resist.