CHAPTER FIVE

THE TUGHLUQS

I. SULTAN GHIYASUDDIN TUGHLUQ (1320-25)

NAME AND ETHNIC ORIGIN

Referring to Sultan Ghiyasuddin, Amir Khusrau observes in his Tughluq Nama:

'Thy name was Tughluq Ghazi, the revered one,
The Mongol chief too at that time had the same name, Tughluq.'

It is unmistakably clear from this verse that Tughluq was the personal name of the Sultan and not a tribal cognomen, as Sir Wolseley Haig has suggested. Asif confirms this when he says that Sultan Tughluq was the name of the first ruler of the dynasty and Sultan Muhammad that of the second. Numismatic and epigraphic evidence also corroborates Amir Khusrau. Sultan Muhammad used to call himself son of Tughluq Shah; but Firuz Shah and his successors never used Tughluq as a surname. It is, nevertheless, convenient, though quite incorrect, to give the name of Tughluq to the whole dynasty.

Considerable difference of opinion has existed among historians regarding the descent of Sultan Tughluq. Ibn-i Battuta writes on the authority of the famous Suhrawardi saint of Multan, Shaikh Ruknuddin Abul Fath, that Tughluq belonged to the Qarauna tribe of the Turks, who inhabited the hilly regions between Turkistan and Sind. Apart from the fact that Ibn-i Battuta's testimony is not confirmed by other writers of the period, the ethnic and etymological origin of the word Qarauna remains obscure and later writers, who have put different interpretations on it, have not been able to clarify the position. Marco Polo considered them people of mixed parentage, whose

1 Tughluq Nama, 138.
2 Asif, Tarikh-i Firuz Shahi, 27.
fathers were Tatars and mothers were Indians. Mzik holds that Qarauna is connected with the Sanskrit Karana, which means mixed caste, and is used for one whose father is a Kshattriya but whose mother is a Sudra. Ferishta, who made inquiries at Lahore about the origin of the Tughluqs, was told that Ghiasuddin’s father, Malik Tughluq, was one of the Turkish slaves of Balban and that his mother was a woman of a local Jat family. But this statement lacks confirmation by contemporary authorities.

The Rauzatus Safa refers to the Qaraunas as a tribe forming a special division in the Mongol army. Sultan Ghiasuddin’s being a Qarauna is, however, highly doubtful. In his speech before his accession, as reported by the contemporary authority of the Tughluq Nama of Amir Khusrau, Ghiasuddin frankly admits, what all his audience knew, that he was a man of no importance (auara mard) in his early career. Unless the king had said something to this effect, the poet could not have ventured to make this fact the basis of his speech. Efforts like those of Badr-i Chach to find a royal genealogy for the dynasty must, therefore, be dismissed as prompted by flattery. Keeping these diverse opinions in view, it may be concluded that both in India, Central Asia and Persia the term ‘Qarauna’ was used for a mixed race—the descendants of Mongol or Turkish fathers and non-Turkish mothers.

EARLY CAREER

There is no unanimity of opinion among the historians with regard to the time of Tughluq’s arrival in India. Aiff and Ibn-i Battuta place it during the reign of Alauddin Khalji, but Amir Khusrau clearly remarks in his Tughluq Nama that after searching for livelihood (in Delhi) for a considerable time, Tughluq was taken into the service of the imperial guard by Jalaluddin Khalji. The Tughluq Nama is silent about his coming from abroad, and this seems to imply that he was born in India. He won his first distinction during the siege of Ranthambhor under Ulugh Khan. It was, however, during the reign of Sultan Alauddin Khalji that Malik Tughluq rose

4 Yule’s Marco Polo, 98-99.
5 Die Reise des Arabers Ibn Battuta durch Indian and China, 97.
6 Ferishta, I, 130.
8 Tarikh-i Firuz Shahi, 36. Aiff says that the three brothers—Tughluq, Rajab and Abu Bakr—came to Delhi from Khurasan during the reign of Sultan Alauddin. The Khalji Sultan admitted them all in his service. But this error is clearly disproved by the Tughluq Nama.
9 Rehla, II.
10 Tughluq Nama, 136.
in position and prestige. He must have impressed the Sultan very early by his spirit of dedication and his martial talents, because the wardenship of the marches, which was assigned to him, was one of the most difficult posts in the empire. Tughluq rendered meritorious services to the sultanat as governor of Multan and later on of Dipalpur. He checked successfully the Mongol inroads into the country and effectively garrisoned the frontier towns. Ibn-i Battuta refers to an inscription which he saw in the Jama Masjid of Multan, in which twenty-nine of his victories against the Tatars were recorded.11 Perhaps Ibn-i Battuta’s memory deceived him about the number of campaigns, because Amir Khusrau mentions only eighteen such victories.12 No historian has given a list of these campaigns, but obviously some of them must have been mere skirmishes between the Mongols and the Indian troops posted to defend the western frontier.

According to Amir Khusrau there was a brief interval of obscurity in the career of Malik Tughluq after the death of Jalaluddin Khalji. Perhaps he did not change his loyalty as abruptly as the other Jalali nobles had done after the assassination of their master. He entered the service of Ulugh Khan, brother of Alauddin Khalji, and became his personal attendant. When Ulugh Khan died, he joined the service of Alauddin Khalji. ‘It is by his (Alauddin’s) favour that I have attained to the position you see me in’, he remarked at the time of his accession.13 His name is for the first time mentioned by Barani in connection with the invasion of Ali Beg and Khwaja Tartaq. According to Isami and Khusrau, on this occasion the supreme command was entrusted to a Hindu officer, Malik Nayak, and Tughluq was one of his chief subordinates. Subsequently when Iqbalmand made his appearance, Ghazi Malik marched against him and inflicted a crushing defeat on the invader. Perhaps it was after this success that he was appointed warden of the western marches and the iqtta of Dipalpur was assigned to him.

Though Tughluq had risen to an eminent position during the reign of Alauddin, it appears strange that he did not lift even his little finger to protest against the high-handedness of Malik Kafur, who had gathered all power in his hands and had started playing the role of a king-maker. Mubarak Khalji, however, recognized his services and confirmed him in his assignment.

Incidentally, mention may be made of a mission which Qutbuddin

11 Rehla, II, 29.
12 Tughluq Nama, 138. Barani, however says that he won twenty battles against the Mongols. Tarikh-i Firuz Shahi, 416.
13 Tughluq Nama, 137.
Mubarak assigned to Malik Tughluq. According to Isami, after the accession of Shihabuddin Umar, his regent, Malik Kafur, sent for Ainul Mulk Multani from Devagiri and deputed him to crush the rebellion of Haidar and Zirak in Gujarat. He marched from Devagiri, but while he was encamping at Chitor, he heard of the assassination of Kafur. He stopped where he was and carefully watched the rapid developments that were taking place in the politics of Delhi. Qutbuddin, on attaining to power, deputed Malik Tughluq to go and persuade Ainul Mulk to resume his march. But though he was welcomed by Ainul Mulk at Chitor, the latter’s officers were reluctant about undertaking any enterprise. ‘We have not seen the Sultan yet’; they wanted to wait for a month or so. Sensing the cause of their reluctance, Malik Tughluq immediately returned to Delhi and suggested that farmans and khilats be sent to every officer of Ainul Mulk confirming him in his post. This advice was accepted and Malik Tughluq succeeded in bringing round the leaders to resume their march to Gujarat. Malik Tughluq accompanied the army; but Ainul Mulk Multani remained in supreme command. Nevertheless, Ghazi Tughluq had rendered a commendable diplomatic service.

RISE TO POWER

In the preceding chapter Ghazi Malik’s role in organizing a movement against Khusrau Khan has been described in detail. The nobles acted wisely in placing the crown on the head of Ghazi Malik, who had proved his worth as a leader of mature experience and dauntless courage. According to Ibn-i Battuta, Ghazi Malik was at first reluctant to wear the crown and asked Bahram Aiba Kishlu Khan to accept it. But when the latter, after refusing the offer added: ‘If you do not accept, we will make your son our king’, Tughluq immediately accepted the crown. The version of the Moorish traveller seems highly improbable. The correct account of the reason advanced by the nobles and recorded by the Tughluq Nama has already been given. It had become impossible for Tughluq to remain a subordinate officer.

Ghazi Malik assumed the style of Ghiyasuddin Tughluq. Though not young in years, he was gifted with boundless enthusiasm, an unerring judgement, firm determination and the desire to be methodical in all matters of administration. In accordance with the time-honoured practice, he reconstituted the administrative machinery, including in it his friends, relatives and supporters. He gave the office of naib barbek to his nephew, Malik Asaduddin. Another nephew, Malik Bahauddin, was appointed arz-i mamalik. Malik Jafar was made naib-i arz. Malik Shadi, the son-in-law of the Sultan, was made supervisor of the revenue ministry (diwan-i wizarat). Qazi
Kamaluddin, the qaziul quzzat, was honoured with the title of sadr-i jahan, and Qazi Shamsuddin was appointed qazi of Delhi.

Rising as he did from the position of a plebeian, the new Sultan, on the one hand, distributed honours and posts to his relatives and friends, and on the other, emulating the example of Balban, ennobled his own sons with high sounding titles. The eldest son, Malik Fakhruddin, was given the title of Ulugh Khan; and the remaining four sons were entitled Bahram Khan, Zafar Khan, Mahmud Khan and Nusrat Khan. Curiously enough, the names of Abu Bakr and Rajab, the two brothers of the Sultan, and of his nephew, Kamaluddin Firuz, who at this time must have been a stripling of fourteen, do not find a mention in this list. Perhaps the two brothers were dead by this time, and the nephew was too young to be invested with any distinction. We do not also come across the names of the fathers of his other nephews.

Bahram Aiba was given the title of Kishlu Khan and was accorded the unprecedented honour of being addressed by the Sultan as his 'brother'. To his iqta of Uchch was added that of Multan. Tatar Khan, an adopted son of the Sultan, became Tatar Malik and the iqta of Zafarabad was assigned to him. Qutlugh Khan, son of Burhanuddin, was raised to the position of naib wazir of Devagir. It was with this reconstituted machinery of the empire that Ghiyasuddin initiated his policy of administrative reforms and the restoration of the royal authority.

THE PROBLEMS BEFORE THE SULTAN

The empire which Ghiyasuddin was called upon to administer was seething with innumerable thorny problems. Its vastness militated against any uniform control of the outlying and distant areas. There were frequent convulsions in the provinces. Sind was only nominally under Delhi; taking advantage of the troubles at the centre, its chief, Amar, had seized Thatta and Lower Sind and had virtually become independent. Similarly, Gujarat had been plunged into a state of turmoil after the recall of Ainul Mulk Multani. The efforts of Malik Dinar, Zafar Khan, Husamuddin and Wajihuddin Quraishi to restore order had completely failed. In Rajputana, Chitor, Nagaur and Jalor were some of the important imperial strongholds, but they were subject to unexpected attacks by the adventurous Rajput chiefs.

In the east the loyalty of Bengal, the 'problem province' of the empire, was of a fitful character. Its ruler, Shamsuddin Firuz, a descendant of Balban, had died in 1322. His two sons, Shihabuddin Bughra Shah and Ghiyasuddin Bahadur Shah, had revolted against
him during his life-time. Bahadur Shah had established himself at Sonargaon; on the death of his father he also seized Lakhnauti, and expelled his two brothers, Shihabuddin and Nasiruddin. This development impelled the intervention of the Sultan of Delhi. Tirhut and Jajnagar were still in the hands of powerful Hindu rais and zamindars.

Nor was condition in the Deccan assuring in any way. It had been merely overrun by Alauddin Khalji, who was content with the acknowledgement of his overlordship by the rulers of the south. But the loyalty which they professed was skin-deep and expeditions had to be sent to reinforce royal authority in Devagiri and Telingana. To improve the situation, Qutbuddin Mubarak Khalji had changed the policy of his father and taken the forward step of appointing his own officers in the erstwhile Yadava kingdom, which thus became a part of the Delhi empire. When political convulsions occurred at Delhi, Rai Pratap Singh Rudra Deva of Telingana threw off even the mask of outward allegiance to Delhi. In utter disregard of the agreement, which he had concluded with Khusrau Khan in 1318, he marched against the fort of Bhadrakot, on the frontiers of the Maratha country, ejected the imperial garrison and occupied it. Also after improving his resources, he repelled the attacks of the ruler of Orissa and extended his domination as far as the Western Ghats, and from the Godavari to the Jalar river. The imperial authority in Ma'abar had also been overthrown; though Vira Ballala of the Hoysala land did not show a mailed fist, he too had become virtually independent.

Apart from these unsatisfactory political conditions, which demanded the immediate attention of the new Sultan, the administrative machinery was completely out of gear. The officers and their men had been bribed to ensure their support; both Qutbuddin Mubarak and Khusrau Khan had spent lavishly in order to strengthen their position by satisfying the soldiers. Reckless distribution of money by Khusrau Khan is said to have completely depleted the treasury. The revenue system of Alauddin Khalji had completely broken down, and as a result the financial stability of the state had received a serious setback.

Thus the problems which confronted Ghiyasuddin Tughluq were not only vast in their magnitude, but also complicated in their nature. Though primarily a military leader, Ghiyasuddin was quick to size up the situation, and through a series of bold but well-calculated measures, he brought the machinery of the sultanat to an even keel. Barani very significantly observes that he achieved in days what others would have taken years to accomplish.14 His firm and vigorous

14 Tarikh-i Firuz Shahi, 428.
administration gave people peace and prosperity and, in the words of Barani, ‘they felt as if Alauddin had come to life again’.

**ECONOMIC MEASURES**

Soon after his accession, Ghiyasuddin addressed himself to the task of rehabilitating the depleted exchequer and organizing the finances of the empire. For this purpose he chalked out a practical scheme of revenue reforms, which was in essence a compromise between the rigour of Alauddin Khalji’s methods and the extravagant leniency of his successors. Barani says that moderation (*tariqa-i *tīdal wa rasm-i miyana ravi*) was the keynote of his policy in all administrative affairs.  

Although the crabbed words of Barani render it difficult for us to understand the details of his agrarian policy, it is possible to form some idea of the Sultan’s objectives. He tried to tackle the problem at three levels: Of the *maqtaś* (i.e. provincial governors), of the *muqaddams* (i.e. village headmen) and of the peasants. The consideration of the welfare of the peasant was uppermost in his mind. His orders were to treat the peasants in such a way that wealth did not tempt them to raise the standard of rebellion; nor were they to be made paupers, because in that case they would give up cultivation. The steam-roller reforms of Alauddin Khalji had paralysed the economic life of the agriculturists. The burden of taxation had been so heavy that all the incentives to work had dried up, and they were no longer interested in improving or expanding cultivation. The advantages they had been enjoying for centuries had disappeared, leaving them in the grip of penury and poverty. The *maqtaś* were also faced with difficulties. Decreasing cultivation and the unwillingness of the *muqaddams* to serve as links between them and the peasants, because their perquisites had been abolished, must have adversely touched their pockets. Such a dismal state of affairs cried for a change. Ghiyasuddin Tughluq rose equal to the occasion and made a serious attempt to regulate revenue affairs with firmness and sympathy.

To lighten the burden of the peasants, he rescinded Alauddin’s rule of measurement (*hukm-i masahat*) and the yield per *biswa*, and substituted for it crop-sharing (*hukm-i hasil*). It was advantageous in two ways: First, it ensured to the producer the benefit accruing from improved cultivation; and secondly, it made allowances for a complete

---

15 Ibid., 425.
16 Ibid., 427.
17 Ibid., 431.
or partial failure of crops. Barani, while praising this method, says that it was no longer necessary to take into account calamities, or differentiate between the areas which had produced a harvest and those which had not. But Barani is ambiguous with regard to the proportion of the state demand. He says: 'The Sultan ordered the revenue officials not to assess more than one in ten or eleven upon "iqta" and other lands either by guess or computation or on the reports of informers or on the statements of enhancement-mongers.'¹⁸ This cryptic sentence may mean either that the state demand was not to exceed a tenth of the total produce, or it may be (more rationally) interpreted to suggest that the extra-enhancement in the revenue was not to exceed one-tenth or one-eleventh. Considering the fact that in inaugurating the revenue reforms the two-fold objective of the Sultan was to afford relief to the peasants and also to rehabilitate the finances, it is highly unlikely that he would have reduced his demand to one-tenth of the produce. The traditional rate was one-fifth of the produce, which had been increased to one-half during the reign of Alauddin Khalji. But Alauddin's system had also guaranteed against famine, and under the succeeding systems this was not possible. Though it may be argued that this exorbitant rate could not have been applied in the post-Alauddin period, it must be conceded that, in the midst of confusion, variations must have occurred. Barani tells us that Qutbuddin Mubarak Khalji 'removed from among the people the heavy revenues and severe demands'.¹⁹ This, however, does not mean that he abolished the revenue altogether. In all probability he reduced its incidence to some figure lower than that fixed by Alauddin. And it may safely be presumed that this rate must have been the traditional one-fifth of the produce. Ghiyasuddin gave to it a legal sanction with the proviso that, wherever possible, it may be enhanced by one-tenth or one-eleventh. The following remark of Barani clearly shows that this enhancement was in the nature of surcharge over the existing rates. 'Land revenue was to be increased', he says, 'by degrees and gradually, because the weight of a sudden enhancement would ruin the country and bar the way to prosperity.'²⁰

Instructions were issued to the officers to see that cultivation increased from year to year, and that the government revenue was also proportionately enhanced. Increase in the incidence of taxation was to be gradual, and such that it did not affect the prosperity of the peasantry and did not reduce its interest in its holdings. The Sultan repeatedly warned the revenue officials against increase in taxation,

¹⁸ Ibid., 429.
¹⁹ Ibid., 383.
²⁰ Ibid., 430.
which rendered it difficult for the peasant to cultivate his holdings or bring virgin lands under the plough. He laid down rules of conduct for the maqtašs and governors regarding the realization of the land revenue, and took all possible precautions to save the peasant from their high-handedness and oppression.

Chiyasuddin Tughluq did not believe in Alauddîn Khalji's principle of levelling down the village headman to the rank of the ordinary peasant. He realized fully the utility of their services in the process of collecting the government demand. They had been performing this duty for generations and had acquired experience and traditional dignity. He is said to have remarked: 'It cannot be denied that abundant responsibility rests on the shoulders of chiefs and headmen.' So he ordered the restoration of their perquisites and exempted their cultivation and pasturage from assessment. But at the same time he insisted that 'the chief or headman (Hindu) be kept in such a condition that he may not become oblivious (of the authority of the government) and rebellious and refractory from excessive affluence'. Thus, he accorded a lenient but firm treatment to the village headman. His services were utilized, his status was restored, but he was prevented from becoming mischievous or defiant.

In this new set-up the practice of farming of the land revenue was discouraged. But it could not be avoided at the highest level, because the governors held their posts on farming terms; the surplus revenue (fawazil) to be remitted by them to the treasury was a stated sum, and not a matter to be settled annually on the basis of actual receipts and sanctioned expenditures. Piecing together all the relevant but stray references in Barani's Tarikh-i Firuz Shahi, it is possible to form a fairly vivid picture of the rules framed for the guidance of maqtašs and governors. The Sultan was agreeable to allowing the maliks and amîrs 'a half-tenth or half-eleventh, and one-tenth or one-fifteenth of the revenue of their own territory'. Similarly, if the agents and deputies appropriated half-a-per cent in addition to their salary, they were not to be disgraced, nor was the amount to be recovered from them by torture. But if they deviated from this norm and appropriated considerable sums, they were to be subjected to humiliations and the disgrace of flogging and fetters, and the money was to be recovered from them in full. They were required to make only slender demands on their iqtas, and to reserve out of this demand something for their agents. This modification of the farming system cast a heavier responsibility on the shoulders of governors and maqtašs. They were to see that revenue was realized without oppression and high-handedness, that excessive demands were not made from the peasants and that the village headmen did not pass on their liabilities to the
peasants. And they, in their turn, were enjoined to be scrupulously fair and honest on pain of being treated with rudeness and severity by the ministry of revenue.

Even this hazy picture of land revenue reforms brings into bold relief the sound and wholesome features of the Sultan’s fiscal administration. While conceding that the rule of measurement did not altogether disappear, and that it gave place only slowly to assessment on the basis of crop-sharing, it cannot be denied that due regard was paid to safeguarding the interest of the producing class, and that steps were taken to protect it from rack-renting and oppression, and to guarantee to it the benefits accruing from extended and improved cultivation. Rules for the guidance of officers at the various levels were laid down, and every effort was made by the soldier-sovereign to enforce them effectively. We need not wonder that the income of the royal exchequer improved considerably and the Sultan was enabled to undertake schemes of political consolidation.

REORGANISATION OF THE ARMY

Next to finances, the Sultan’s attention was absorbed by the affairs of the army. Alauddin Khalji had created an effective war-machine, which had fallen to pieces under his weak successors. Ghiasuddin, a veteran military leader, strove hard to reorganize the army as efficiently as possible. The key-note of his military policy was to keep the soldiers satisfied, economically and otherwise. Barani very significantly remarks that he was more affectionate towards his soldiers than their own parents. He saw to it that there was no misappropriation of their salaries and allowances. Barani’s erroneous remark that Sirajul Mulk Khwaja Haji was reappointed minister of war was probably due to his failing memory, that famous war-veteran had vanished from the scene and we do not find him playing any part in the campaigns of the reign. Much of the effectiveness of the army depended on the way the horses were maintained. Ghiasuddin rigorously enforced the regulations of Alauddin Khalji with regard to descriptive rolls (hulyah) and branding (dagh). Within two years of his accession, Ghiasuddin had so effectively organized his army that he could think of sending a campaign to the distant south.

THE WARANGAL CAMPAIGN

Having set the administrative machinery in order, the Sultan turned his attention to the task of restoring his prestige and authority in the outlying parts of the empire. Telangana claimed his immediate attention as Rai Pratap Rudra Deva had reasserted his independence
and refused to pay any tribute. The Sultan appointed his son, Ulugh Khan, to deal with the recalcitrant Rai. In 721/1321 the prince left Delhi at the head of a large army, and a number of seasoned and experienced officers of the Alai period accompanied him.21 He traversed the distance to the Maratha country in much less time than had been taken previously by any army. He stopped for a while at Devagiri to rest and recruit, and then resumed his march to Warangal, the capital of Telingana. He did not meet any opposition on the way. On reaching Warangal he laid siege to the fort, which was famous in the Deccan for its massiveness and strength. It had seventy bastions, each of which was guarded by a naik. Amir Khusrau has described the fort in connection with Malik Kafur’s Deccan campaigns.

According to Isami,22 the siege dragged on for about six months without any prospects of success. The Sultan grew suspicious of the loyalty of Ulugh Khan and sent weekly letters to him expressing his dissatisfaction at the delay. The reasons for such a misunderstanding have not been explained by Isami, but he exonerates Ulugh Khan of all reasonable designs. The garrison defended the fort resolutely, but with the passage of time scarcity of provisions threatened to break its back. The besiegers, on their part, adopted the two-fold strategy of a scorched earth policy and of closing all sources of supply to the garrison. Rudra Deva, hard-pressed as he was, opened negotiations for peace and offered to pay a tribute provided the prince raised the siege and retired from his territory. He thought that, like Malik Kafur before him, Ulugh Khan would be satisfied with acceptance of the overlordship of the Sultan of Delhi. But Ulugh Khan’s intention was to annex the territory and he did not discuss terms of peace.

Two important facts emerge from the statements of Isami and Barani: First, that for a month despatches did not reach the army from Delhi as the line of communication was broken; and second, that there prevailed some unrest among the imperial officers, who were probably tired of campaigning in a distant and hostile land. Ibn-i Battuta’s statement that the prince meditated rebellion is not worthy of credence; it is not supported by Barani or Isami, neither of whom were favourably inclined towards Ulugh Khan. The former blames Shaikhzada Damishqi and Ubaid for the mischief; the latter holds only Ubaid responsible. Isami tells us23 that Ubaid, who was also an astrologer, was commissioned by Ulugh Khan to forecast the

21 Ibid., 446. See also Futuh-us Salatin, Madras ed. 392.
22 Futuh-us Salatin, Madras ed. 392.
23 Ibid., 395.
date of the fall of the fort. After a week’s calculation, he predicted a date and offered to be executed if his prophesy did not come true. The date turned out to be wrong, and Ubaid had to do something to save his life. So he spread among the officers the rumour of the Sultan’s death and said that the prince was concealing it from them because he intended to make a short shrift of them all. But this statement cannot be accepted in full. Ubaid did spread the rumour; but how could he have convinced the great officers of the evil intentions of the prince?

There is, however, no doubt that this rumour led to great consternation and commotion in the imperial camp and that the officers became restless owing to their desire to leave for Delhi. What worsened the position of Ulugh Khan further was the rumour that some one had been already raised to the Delhi throne. This incorrect rumour completely paralysed Ulugh Khan. Some of the great officers of the Delhi army came to an understanding with Rai Rudra Deva, who promised by a sacred oath on the Ganges and Somnath that he would refrain from attacking them during their retreat. They broke up their camp, set fire to their entrenchments and left the place in great haste.

This treacherous betrayal by a section of his officers, at a time when victory was not very far off, came as a great shock to Ulugh Khan. He had, however, no alternative but to follow the retreating army. On the way he made an attempt to bring round the disaffected officers, but was disappointed at their pretexts and vague apologies. When he arrived at Katgir, he was joined by Mujir Abu Raja, who sent letters to the neighbouring zamindars asking them to apprehend the rebels and destroy them. Many of the soldiers of Tamar and Tigin were put to the sword at Kalyan.

Ulugh Khan proceeded to Devagiri where he was welcomed by his younger brother, Mahmud Khan, the maqta of the province. Mahmud took the conspirators and their accomplices to Delhi, where condign punishments were meted out to them. Some were beheaded and others were trampled under the feet of elephants. Another army was recruited at the capital and sent to Ulugh Khan with instructions to invest Warangal again and complete the conquest of Telengana. This despatch of the second army proves that the Sultan was not in any way suspicious of the loyalty of Ulugh Khan, who marched with the fresh reinforcements against Warangal. On this occasion Ulugh Khan was more cautious and took effective steps to guard his line

24 Ibid., 395.
of communications. He seized Bidar and several other forts along his route and posted strong garrisons to protect them.

Rai Rudra Deva was taken by surprise when he found the imperial troops besieging him again. Though not well-equipped at the time, he decided to face the invader and tire him out by patiently prolonging the siege. In spite of his past experience, Ulugh Khan could not hasten the pace of operations, and the siege dragged on for about five months. In the end when disease and hunger began to stare the garrison in the face, the Rai decided to surrender. He sent messengers to the prince begging for quarter and offering to give up the fort. The imperial army occupied the fort, plundered the houses and demolished some public buildings. The Rai with all his relations and dependants was escorted to Delhi by Qadr Khan. He was not, however, destined to bear the humiliations of captivity. He died before he could be presented before the Sultan; he may have committed suicide.

The conquests of Guttí, Kunt and Ma‘abar were perhaps a continuation of the Warangal campaign. It appears that Guttí at this time was in the hands of a Telugu chief, called Jaglapi Gangudeva. He surrendered it to Ulugh Khan. Rajamundry (Rajamahendri) was occupied by another imperial officer, Salar Alavi. A Pandyan chronicler places the conquest of Madura by the Turks in 1323, which lends support to the presumption that the conquest must have been made by Ulugh Khan or one of his officers.

Telingana now became a part of the Delhi empire and Ulugh Khan made provisional arrangements for its administration. He changed the name of Warangal to Sultanpur, and divided the kingdom of Telingana into several administrative units. For the sake of convenience as much as from considerations of policy, he did not ignore local talent and utilized it as far as he could. He retained the old Hindu officers at their posts and accorded a generous treatment to some of the former ministers. Nor did he antagonize the population by acts of vandalism or the demolition of temples. Despite all this, the hold of the Delhi government on the region remained uncertain and shaky. The achievement of Ulugh Khan was acclaimed at the court with festive rejoicings.

THE JAJNAGAR EXPEDITION

Another offshoot of the Telingana campaign was the expedition to Jajnagar (Orissa) undertaken to chastize Bhanudeva II (1306-

26 Tarikh-i Firuz Shahi, 450.
27 Futuh-us Salatin, 402-3.
28), who had given support to Rudra Deva and had entered into alliances with the chiefs of Gondwana. Ulugh Khan left Warangal about the middle of 1324 and, skirting along the eastern coast, subdued the petty naiks and seized Rajamahendri. When he reached the frontier of Jajnagar, he was opposed by the Rai, who had a large army at his beck and call. A sanguinary conflict ensued at the end of which the forces of Delhi plundered the camp of the enemy, took much booty in addition to a whole train of war-elephants, which was taken to Telingana and from there despatched to Delhi. According to Isami, the Sultan conferred a robe of honour on Ulugh Khan for his brilliant exploits and celebrated the victory for two or three weeks with great pomp and eclat. An inscription at Rajamahendri dated Ramazan 724/September 1324 refers to Ulugh Khan’s victories in Orissa and calls him ‘Khan of the world’.30

A MONGOL INVASION

Operations in the Deccan had hardly been completed when a sudden tumult on the western frontier became a source of anxiety to the Sultan. Gurshasp, the governor of Samana, sent a message to inform the court that two Mongol armies, led by Shir Mughul, had crossed the Indus and were pressing forward. An army was immediately sent under the command of Malik Shadi, the naib wazir, and other officers; instructions were given to them to march to Samana and reinforce Gurshasp, who gave battle to the invaders at two places, inflicted crushing defeats on them and took a large number of prisoners. The triumphant army then returned to the capital where the officers were duly rewarded.

THE GUJARAT CAMPAIGN

Shortly afterwards there was a rebellion in Gujarat. Isami neither gives the names of its leaders nor indicates the place of the rebellion. He simply says that the rebels collected together inside a lofty fort. In fact, ever since the death of Alauddin Khalji this province had only nominally formed a part of the empire. The Sultan sent Malik Shadi to Gujarat to suppress the rebels. Shadi soon reached the trouble-spot and besieged the fort. Skirmishes continued for some time, but in the end the garrison resorted to a trick. Some of them obtained the permission of Malik Shadi to enter his camp in order to

28 Hajjud Dabir, III, 860.
29 Futuh-us Salatin, 403.
30 Archaeological Survey of India, 1025-26, 150.
31 Futuh-us Salatin, 404.
32 Ibid., 409 et seq.
entertain him with their music and dancing. But the persons wearing female attire were soldiers in disguise, and had concealed arms and weapons under their dress. They took the Malik by surprise and stabbed him to death. This sudden development demoralized the imperial army, which broke up and fled pell-mell to Delhi. Ghiyasuddin was very deeply hurt and pained at the tragic end of Malik Shadi, his trusted naib wazir. Isami does not tell us his authority, but stories of this type have been often related by both Hindu and Muslim medieval historians and have to be regarded with suspicion.

THE BENGAL CAMPAIGN

The Gujarat campaign and its disastrous end did not affect the Sultan's programme in other parts of the country. Fratricidal quarrels and internecine struggles in Bengal had attracted his attention, and he organized an expedition to the eastern region. The circumstances which favoured him in Bengal were as follows. An independent kingdom had been established in Bengal under Bughra Khan, the second son of Sultan Balban, who held sway over that region. Shamsuddin Firuz Shah, a descendant of Bughra Khan, died in 1322, leaving four sons—Shihabuddin Bughra Shah, Nasiruddin, Ghiyasuddin Bahadur and Qutlu Khan. There was a fratricidal conflict between the sons of Firuz, and Ghiyasuddin Bahadur's ambition created chaos everywhere. He expelled Shihabuddin, who had succeeded his father at Lakhnauti, murdered Qutlu Khan, and subjected Nasiruddin to pin-pricks. According to the Riyazus Salatin, Nasiruddin and Shihabuddin took refuge with Ghiyasuddin Tughluq and implored his help in overthrowing their unscrupulous brother. But Isami says that when Ghiyasuddin Tughluq had crossed the river Gomti on his way to Bengal, he was joined by Nasiruddin, who told the Sultan about his efforts to persuade his brother Ghiyasuddin Bahadur, called Bura, to recognize the suzerainty of Delhi. Barani says that some nobles came from Lakhnauti and complained to the Sultan of the high-handedness of the ruler of Bengal. Ghiyasuddin Tughluq responded to their appeal and decided to march in person to Bengal.

Before embarking upon his eastern campaign, the Sultan made adequate arrangements for the governance of the empire during his absence. The unexpected Mongol invasion and the tragedy in Gujarat had been a sufficient warning. He sent for Ulugh Khan from the Deccan and appointed a council of regency consisting of Ulugh Khan, Shahin (the akhur bek) and Ahmad Ayaz. He then left Delhi for the east. When he arrived near Tirhut, Nasiruddin and some rais and zamindars of that region paid homage to him. Though Barani, Yahya,
Nizamuddin, Badauni and others designate Nasiruddin as the ruler of Lakhnauti, the fact is that he had only claims on Lakhnauti and was a fugitive from that place. He certainly did not come to Delhi but he might have sent some of his supporters to solicit the assistance of Tughluq Shah; when the latter actually arrived on the borders of Tirhut, Nasiruddin explained to him the recalcitrant attitude of his brother.

The Sultan appointed Bahram Khan with a host of other officers, including Zulchi and Nasiruddin, and ordered them to march on Lakhnauti. The rival forces confronted each other near Lakhnauti and the battle opened with an attack led by Bahadur on Zulchi, who commanded the centre. But he was easily pushed back and his army was thrown into confusion. The imperial forces pursued the retreating Bengali soldiers for some distance. During his flight Bahadur was reminded of a beautiful slave-girl, who had been left behind in the abandoned camp. He returned post-haste, recovered her, and took to flight again. Having crossed two or three hills, he suddenly arrived near a river where he got stuck up in the quagmire. He was taken prisoner and produced before Bahram Khan.

The victorious army returned to the imperial camp, where the prisoners of war were led before the Sultan who, on seeing Bahadur, offered thanks to God for the success achieved by his men. Isami remarks that at that time, besides the Sultan, there were two other kings in the camp—one who had come to make peace and the other who had resorted to war and had been defeated. Bahadur was put in chains; Nasiruddin was confirmed as the tributary ruler of Lakhnauti. Satgaon and Sonargaon were placed in charge of Tatar Khan. Letters of victory (jath namas) were read in the mosques of Delhi and the success of the imperial armies was celebrated with pomp.33 A coin bearing the names of Ghiyasuddin Tughluq and Nasiruddin Ibrahim Shah points to the existence of their joint sovereignty.

**THE ATTACK ON TIRHUT**

On his way back from Bengal the Sultan led an attack on Tirhut. Isami says that the Rai fled to the jungles, but was hotly pursued by the imperial army, which lost its way and had to cut down a large number of trees. After considerable difficulties the invaders reached a fort, but it was very strong and could not be taken. The lands adjacent to it were laid waste and a large number of men were killed. Ghiyasuddin placed Tirhut under the charge of Ahmad Khan, son of Yal Talbagha,34 and started on his journey back to the capital.

33 Tarikh-i Firud Shahi, 452.
34 Futuh-us Salatin, 418.
THE AFGHANPUR TRAGEDY

After his successful campaigns in Bengal and Tirhut, the Sultan proceeded by forced marches towards Tughluqabad which, according to Isami, had been founded on the eve of the eastern expedition. A temporary wooden pavilion was hastily erected at Afghanpur, a small village at a distance of three or four karohs from the new town. Here the Sultan was welcomed, and he was to rest till an auspicious time for his entry into the capital. The formalities being over, food was served. The Sultan partook of it along with some of the courtiers. 'When the maliks and amirs', writes Barani, 'came out to wash their hands, a thunderbolt of calamity from the sky descended upon the people of the earth, and the roof of the pavilion, under which the Sultan was seated, fell all of a sudden, crushing him and five or six others to death.'35

This tragic event has been the subject of considerable controversy.36 While Barani's tantalizing brevity does not help us in examining the problem in all its aspects, Isami and Ibn-i Battuta supply some interesting information which needs critical examination before it can be accepted. Ibn-i Battuta, who arrived in India almost eight years after the event, built up a chain of circumstances to sustain his theory of evil motives on the part of his benefactor, Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq. Its starting point is a remark of Bahram Aiba addressed to Ghazi Malik that if the latter was reluctant to wear the crown, his son would be elected. This is how the ungrateful Moorish traveller has imparted the first touch to the picture of misunder-

35 Tarikh-i Firuz Shahi, 452. Elliot's translation of the underlined portion as 'a thunder-bolt from the sky descended upon the earth' (Vol. III, 235) is misleading.
36 The problem has been discussed in all its details by Sir Wolseley Haig (JRAI, July 1922, 330-31), Dr. Ishwari Prasad (A History of Qarauna Turks in India, 46 et seq), Dr. A. Mahdi Husain (The Rise and Fall of Muhammad bin Tughluq, 66 et seq) and Dr. Moinul Haq (Muslim University Journal, 1939: 'Was Muhammad bin Tughluq a Parricide?'). Sir W. Haig and Dr. Ishwari Prasad suspect Jauna Khan, while the last two exonerate him completely of all such charges. Dr. Ishwari Prasad has quoted a large number of authorities to bring home the charge of parricide against him. To support his contention he draws upon the explicit and implicit statements of Yahya Sirhindhi, Abul Fazl, Nizamuddin Ahmad, Badauni and others who confirm the views of Isami and Ibn-i Battuta. On the other hand, Agha Mahdi Husain, placing his reliance on Ferishta, Haji Muhammad Qandhari, Rai Bindraban (Lububb Tawarikh-i Hind, IO, Ms. f.38) and Muhammad Bulaq (Mahtubat Ta’libin), has come to just the opposite conclusion—namely that the fall of the pavilion was only an accident and not the result of any conspiracy. But this impressive array of authorities on either side leaves out the common sense point of view. With the exception of Isami and Ibn-i Battuta, the other authors, cited by the critics or admirers of Ulugh Khan, belong to a much later period, and each of them draws his cue from earlier works according to his own preferences.
standing between the father and the son. The second touch is furnished in ascribing treasonable designs to Ulugh Khan on the occasion of the first campaign to Telingana. The picture is completed by Ibn-i Battuta when he refers to the grant of sovereignty to Ulugh Khan by Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya in a state of ecstasy, and the prince's lending his shoulders to the hearse of the Shaikh which, according to him, annoyed the Sultan. It is also reported that the unbounded generosity of Ulugh Khan and the purchase of a large number of slaves by him, had alienated the Sultan's mind from him. Finally, the prophesy of an astrologer that the Sultan would not return from the campaign alive is cited to create an atmosphere in which the prince's complicity in some heinous conspiracy against his father may not appear incredible. But curiously enough, Ibn-i Battuta has definitely stated that the pavilion was constructed in accordance with the instructions of the Sultan himself.

Isami, who finished his work in 1350, describes the episode as follows: When the Sultan arrived near the Jumna, the prince hastened to wait upon him and crossing the river, appeared in full view of the imperial army. On seeing the Sultan, he immediately dismounted from his horse, kissed the feet of his father, offered prayers for his long life and apologized for his shortcomings. Isami, unlike Ibn-i Battuta, has ascribed the construction of the pavilion to the initiative of Ulugh Khan, who entrusted the work to Ahnad Ayaz. He goes on to say that the Sultan did not embrace the prince open-heartedly, because of the adverse reports which had been conveyed to him about his behaviour during his absence. The Sultan entered the pavilion, which had been lavishly decorated. Having taken his seat in it, he ordered the huge elephants to race in the yard in front of him. This caused vibrations in the ground and brought down the newly constructed pavilion. The Sultan was crushed to death under it. The narrator concludes with the condemnation of the prince, who is alleged to have conspired with Ahmad Ayaz to bring about the death of his father by making tempting promises to him. The fact that Ahmad Ayaz was subsequently appointed wazir by Ulugh Khan is cited in support of the allegation.

Sultan Muhammad's complicity in the death of his father cannot be proved or disproved merely on the basis of positive or ambiguous statements of contemporary or later historians. We should try to understand the totality of circumstances in which the tragedy occurred. If we piece together the various events, beginning with the Tughluq revolution and ending with the accession of Muhammad bin Tughluq, we can form a fair estimate of the problem and arrive at a satisfactory conclusion. As the akhur bek of Nasiruddin Khusrau
Khan, Sultan Muhammad could not reconcile himself to the new set-up. He fled from the court and joined his father at Dipalpur. He did not lag behind in the struggle which ensued, and it was in recognition of his services that the title of Ulugh Khan was conferred on him. He was deputed to the supreme command of the army in its two campaigns against Telengana. Had his father suspected his loyalty, he would have withdrawn him from the Deccan. Isami's hint to this effect is only an indication of his hatred for Ulugh Khan. Finally, while leaving for Bengal, the Sultan included Ulugh Khan in the council of regency, which would have been impossible unless he had enjoyed the full confidence of his father. Moreover, he had already been declared heir-apparent, and as such he could not have been assailed by any anxiety about the succession.

The charge of being a parricide is based on the hypothesis of strained relations between Ulugh Khan and his father, and a curious argument is put forward in this connection. It is stressed that much bitterness had arisen between Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya and Sultan Chiyasuddin Tughluq because of the inquisitorial proceedings instituted by the Sultan to recover money which Khusrau Khan had sent to the Shaikh, and which the Shaikh was unable to reimburse as he had distributed the money amongst the poor. It is further argued that since the Shaikh and Ulugh Khan were on friendly terms, relations between the Sultan and his son must have been unhappy. But the stage at which this strain arose has not been pointed out. It could not have been coeval with the accession of Chiyasuddin Tughluq to the throne, because such a supposition militates against the chain of events cited above. Nor can it be believed that intimacy between Ulugh Khan and the Shaikh had developed during the Sultan's absence in Bengal. Over and above everything else, no historian has associated politics with the name of the Shaikh. Following the traditions of the Chishti silsilah, he even abstained from visiting the courts of kings, not to speak of dabbling in politics which was entirely against his nature. In short, even presuming that the Sultan did not entertain a friendly regard for the Shaikh, to conclude that it affected his relations with his own son is straining the argument too far. It is also not warranted by facts.

Ibn-i Battuta's version is based on hearsay, and the same applies to the statements of Isami, who clearly admits that he had heard the story from old men, though he is not reluctant to admit that the building, having been newly constructed, collapsed because of the vibrations caused by the running of elephants. He could have stopped his narrative and retained its logic, but in his frenzy to denounce Ulugh Khan, he added the story of a conspiracy unmindful of the
fact that he was contradicting himself. He does not even hint that the elephants were made to race at the instance of Ulugh Khan; this, according to Isami, was done at the order of the Sultan who was destined to die on account of an accident, and not owing to any conspiracy. Isami has prefaced his remarks about the part of Ulugh Khan by saying that a discreet man can interpret the event like this, which shows that he himself was not certain of its veracity. Ibn-i Battuta, who wrote even later than Isami, refers only to one elephant which Ulugh Khan had presented to the Sultan. The moment it entered the pavilion, the structure collapsed, killing the Sultan and his young son, Mahmud. The story as recorded by him appears to be unworthy of credence, though he has narrated it on the authority of a pious man like Shaikh Ruknuddin. Incidentally, it appears amazing that Shaikh Ruknuddin, who was on the best of terms with Muhammad bin Tughluq, should have taken a foreigner into confidence about this matter regarding the reigning monarch. Perhaps Ibn-i Battuta’s memory failed him or he deliberately and maliciously associated a saint’s name to lend an air of authenticity to his otherwise incredible statement.

Having thus disposed of the evidence of Ibn-i Battuta and Isami, it appears to be appropriate to adduce some circumstantial evidence to controvert the charge of parricide preferred by modern and medieval writers. In the first place, after the assumption of royal authority, reciprocal affection continued between Muhammad bin Tughluq and his mother. Secondly, his claim to the throne was challenged neither by any of his surviving brothers nor by any group of nobles, and there is no mention of their loyalty having been purchased by promises of rewards and promotions. Finally, Ulugh Khan’s nature belies such an allegation against him. He was normally kind-hearted and affectionate towards the members of his family.

The view advanced by some scholars that the pavilion was destroyed by lightning must be examined with reference to the time of the death of the Sultan. Dr. Ishwari Prasad places it in Rabiiul Awwal A.H. 725 (or February-March 1325) which, according to him, is not the time when lightning is generally expected. On the other hand, Dr. Mahdi Husain, on the authority of Ali Ahmad Hasan, the author of Basatinul Uns and a courtier of Sultan Chivasuddin Tughluq, whom he had accompanied in the Lakhnauti expedition, places the event in May 1325, when hot winds were blowing and the temperature was very high. But Ali Ahmad does not refer to lightning.

It is difficult to understand as to why the cryptic and euphemistic expression of Barani has been subjected to so much scrutiny and why he has been accused of the charge of suppressio veri. Perhaps he never intended to mean that the building was struck by lightning. He
only wanted to convey the impression that a calamitous event had occurred, which in its suddenness and intensity was like the fall of lightning. In these circumstances it would be quite fair to accept the versions of Ibn-i Battuta and Isami that the pavilion collapsed because it had been hurriedly constructed and its foundations were not strong. In fact, it was a temporary structure for a temporary purpose. But the motive attributed to Ulugh Khan by these historians cannot be accepted. They are unnatural and militate against circumstantial evidence.

THE SULTAN AND SHAIKH NIZAMUDDIN AULIYA

It is said that Sultan Ghiyasuddin Tughluq’s relations with Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya, the greatest sufi-saint of the period, were far from cordial. The reasons for this estrangement are given as follows. Khusrau Khan, on his accession, sent a gift of five lakh tankas to the Shaikh, who accepted them but, as was the practice of his khanqah, distributed the entire amount amongst the needy and the poor. When Ghiyasuddin Tughluq came to the throne, he demanded back money from all recipients of Khusrau Khan’s favours. To this royal demand the Shaikh replied that since the money belonged to the public treasury (baitul mal) he had distributed it among the people. This reply, it is said, offended the Sultan and he became hostile towards the Shaikh. This seems to be a very exaggerated view of the situation. Ghiyasuddin Tughluq had been a prominent officer of the state since the days of Jalaluddin Khalji and, as such, he must have known the Shaikh and his pious and dedicated ways of life. According to Shaikh Nasiruddin Chiragh of Delhi, gifts and presents flowed into his khanqah continuously like the water of the Jumna.37 But the Shaikh, Nasiruddin Chiragh continues, never kept anything for the morrow. He accepted gifts with one hand and distributed them with the other. Apart from this, the Shaikh had throughout maintained an attitude of superb indifference towards mundane affairs. He never visited the rulers and never dabbled in politics. ‘While monarchs came and went’, writes Dr. Wahid Mirza, ‘and dynasties rose and fell, while ambitious princes fought and contested, conspired and planned, and while courtiers flattered and betrayed, the saint stuck to the duty which he had imposed upon himself and carried on his work of spiritual salvation calmly and quietly in his sequestered monastery at Ghiaspur.’38 Ghiyasuddin Tughluq could not possibly have been ignorant of all this, and knowing all this, he could not have resented the Shaikh’s remarks.

37 Khairul Majalis, 257.
38 Life and Works of Amir Khusrau, 135.
Another reason for this alleged estrangement is said to have been the Shaikh’s fondness of audition parties (sama). Amir Khurd, the author of Siyarul Auliya, has given us details of the incident, which should be seen in its proper perspective. From the earliest years of the foundation of the sultanat of Delhi, the ulama had been critical of the mystic practice of holding audition parties, and they had even prevailed upon Iltutmish to hold a mahzar on this issue against Qazi Hamiduddin Nagauri.39 Similarly, during the time of Ghiasuddin Tughluq some ulama, who were jealous of Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya’s tremendous influence over the people, raised a great hue and cry against the Shaikh’s practice of holding frequent sama parties and presented the matter before the Sultan in such religious colours that he could not but convene a meeting of scholars to consider the religious and legal aspects of the problem. Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya was also invited to attend the meeting and to explain his attitude to the ulama and convince them. Since there were certain ulama, who had personal grudges against the Shaikh and wanted to discredit him, they misbehaved at the meeting. The Sultan’s attitude was that of a neutral observer. The Shaikh was, however, distressed at the arrogance and narrow-mindedness of the ulama. When the Shaikh cited a hadis (saying of the Prophet) in support of his action, the ulama cried out that they did not want a hadis, but a verdict of Imam Abu Hanifa on the matter. The Shaikh was pains at this attitude of disrespect towards the traditions of the Prophet and, according to Amir Khurd,40 predicted a miserable future for the insolent ulama. In the whole episode there is little or nothing to suggest that Ghiasuddin Tughluq himself was, in the least, disrespectful to the Shaikh. The uproar of the ulama in the presence of the Sultan, however, may have created the impression that perhaps these scholars enjoyed his tacit support; but there is no evidence to substantiate this view and, in fact, the Sultan made several attempts to make them behave coolly. Apart from this, he was so thoroughly convinced of the point of view of the Shaikh that he rejected the proposal of the Qazi to declare sama illegal.

The story that the Sultan had sent a message to the Shaikh asking him to vacate Delhi before he entered the capital after his successful Bengal campaign, and that the Shaikh had remarked in reply ‘Delhi is still far off’ (Hunuz Delhi dur est) is a later fabrication and lacks contemporary confirmation. The Shaikh was seriously ill at this time and had given up eating for some forty days before his death.41 He

39 Futuh-us Salatin, 117-20
40 Siyarul Auliya, 531.
41 Ibn-i Battuta’s statement that the Shaikh had died before the accident of the
was more busy with God at this time than with the Sultan’s return or the prince’s future. Credulous writers of later years have given the entire episode of the Shaikh’s relationship with Ghiyasuddin a complexion which has no historical authenticity.

ESTIMATE

Sultan Ghiyasuddin Tughluq was a sovereign of uncommon abilities, clear-headed, firm and methodical. Like many other rulers, he rose to the top from small beginnings and laid no claim to blue blood. Unlike Balban he had no fictitious royal genealogy fabricated for himself. He depended for his position on his own merits. His rise was not meteoric. He gradually moved up from rank to rank, gathering experience and gaining insight into men and their affairs. By temperament he was cool and calculating. In moments of crisis he stood firm like a rock. Though trained in the methods of Alauddin Khalji, he refrained from ruthlessness. He possessed a kind and generous heart, and was devout and God-fearing. According to Barani, his personal life was chaste and pure, and he was free from all those blemishes which tarnished the character of many medieval monarchs.

In remodelling his administrative system, he followed a middle path which combined firmness with fairness. He enacted a code of laws for the guidance of his officers and for securing uniformity in their decisions. Like Balban, he was keen on surrounding himself with able men, but unlike Balban he had no fads concerning purity of blood. In his eyes only merit counted, and not wealth or birth. He firmly put down corruption and embezzlement. In order to save his officers from petty temptations, he paid them well. He was fair and just towards his people. His revenue reforms must have immensely benefited the Hindu intermediaries, because he restored their privileges and perquisites. In his army also there was a fair percentage of Hindu officers and soldiers. Though faced with the necessity of placating his co-religionists, he was not prepared to go beyond certain limits. He did not hesitate in compelling the ulama to disgorge their ill-gotten gains from Khusrau Khan, and in this respect he treated them on a par with the soldiers and other persons. He reorganized the departments of police and justice, which inspired wholesome fear and respect in the hearts of the people. The highways became safe from robbers and thieves, and peace and security prevailed in the empire. His military system

Sultan is absurd. The Shaikh died on 18 Rabi II and the Sultan died in Rabi I of the same year

The Shaikh’s long and painful illness seems to have been stoppage of urination owing to the growth of the prostate gland, a disease of old age for which the physicians of those days had no remedy.
was efficient. A seasoned soldier and a successful general, he had almost a paternal affection for his soldiers.

In short, the founder of the Tughluq dynasty was a sovereign of wide sympathies, of firm determination and sound judgement. He was keen to resuscitate the healthy traditions of the Delhi sultanat. He gave a new meaning to the methods and ideals of Alauddin Khalji and, by removing the sharp edge of cruelty from them, he rendered them more acceptable and workable. He could not be an innovator, but he did play successfully the role of a preserver and consolidator. His achievements mark the growth of liberal tendencies in the administrative system of the Delhi sultanat.