

# THE REIGN OF SULTAN BALBAN

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## PROLOGUE

**B**ALBAN, rising from the obscure ranks of slavery to the dizzying heights of kingship, made an indelible mark on the medieval Indian political scene. Ambitious and able, he worked with ruthless determination to shore up the tottering edifice of Turkish rule in India. Decline had set in after the death of Iltutmish and events had gone quite out of control of his weak successors till Balban stepped in to stem the rot. A practical person, his objectives were clear cut and well defined—to restore glory to the Crown and dignity to the Kingship, to suppress rebellion with utter ruthlessness and bring peace to his subjects tormented by hordes of lawless brigands, to administer fair justice with impartiality, to curb the unbridled powers of nobles and to consolidate his Empire and defend its frontiers from determined descendents of the Mongol Genghis Khan. He denied his slave origins and traced his descent from the Sassanid dynasty of Persia. Perhaps his nagging sense of inferiority made him to put an excessive emphasis on the purity of blood which led to his utter disregard for Muslims of Indian origin. He had respect only for Turkish blue blood and manners and customs of the Persian Court which he assiduously cultivated. He disregarded the entreaties of his advisers to conquer new territories and instead concentrated on consolidation and defence of the Empire from internal and external menace. He succeeded in his limited objectives of strengthening the foundations of Delhi Sultanate, keeping the Mongols at bay and ushering in an era of just peace for his subjects.

He failed, however, to evolve a system of administration, which would continue once his hand was removed from the helm. He weakened the power of the Turkish nobles to such an extent that later on they could not stand up to the Khalji Amirs. Above all his treatment of non-elite Indian Muslims and non-Muslims left much to be desired.

This book attempts to explain and analyse the successes and failures of Balban and to understand the man and his mind by putting him in his proper historical perspective.

# I

## INTRODUCTION

WHILE Iltutmish laid the foundations of Turkish rule in India it was Balban who built upon it. Much, indeed, had happened between the death of Iltutmish and Balban's advent to power thirty years later. The Turkish rule continued to thrive during this period in spite of the ascent of weaklings to the throne.<sup>1</sup> In northern India it became a power to reckon with and Delhi now came to be known as Darul Khilafat<sup>2</sup>—a title associated with either Baghdad or Damascus. Baghdad and Damascus had lost their lustre and Delhi shone in prominence and occupied a unique position in the entire Muslim world. It enjoyed a measure of security and stability which had ceased to exist in other Muslim states rocked by the depredations of Mongols. To this haven of security flocked statesmen, administrators, poets, philosophers and historians<sup>3</sup> and Delhi became the cultural and political hub of the Muslim world.<sup>4</sup>

Although in the interregnum of three decades between Iltutmish and Balban Delhi had suffered much political chaos and turmoil caused by deposition of Razia, Behram and Masud Shah, yet certain ideas and tendencies which were to shape and govern the future ideals and practices of kingship became discernible. It was Balban's task to give flesh and substance to these ideals of kingship. In order to understand how Balban

<sup>1</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), pp. 141, 143-144.

<sup>2</sup>Yahya refers to Delhi as 'Darul Mulk', *Tarikh-i-Mubarakshahi* (Tr.), p. 37.

<sup>3</sup>*Tabqat-i-Nasiri* by Minhaj-us-Siraj (Tr.), pp. 21-23.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*

Ulugh Khan occupied the fort and showed great skill and courage<sup>1</sup> According to Minhaj-us-Siraj it was due to the terror of Ulugh Khan that no Mongol invasion took place during 1247-48 A.D.<sup>2</sup> Ulugh Khan also advised the Sultan to proceed to Hindustan (Doab) to punish the rulers and inhabitants of Mawasat<sup>3</sup> for he hoped that such an expedition would fetch money which could be used to fight the Mongols. Consequently armies were sent to Doab and the fort of Talsanda was occupied.<sup>4</sup> Thereafter Ulugh Khan proceeded to subdue Dalakawa Malak who had occupied the territories between Kalinjar and Kara and had become a terror for the rulers of Kalinjar and Malwa.<sup>5</sup> Ulugh Khan was victorious and in 1248 A.D. he marched back to the capital with the booty.<sup>6</sup> Next, Ulugh Khan vanquished Raja Nahar Dev of Ranthambhor who was a very powerful Hindu ruler of the area.<sup>7</sup>

In the year 1249 A.D. Sultan Nasiruddin Mahmud who was greatly impressed by his achievements entered into a matrimonial alliance with the family of Ulugh Khan.<sup>8</sup> According to Minhaj-us-Siraj no king possessed such a brave and talented Malik.<sup>9</sup> Sultan married Ulugh Khan's daughter. His status was raised

<sup>1</sup> *Tabqat i Nasiri* by Minhaj us Siraj (Tr), p 84, *Tarikh i Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr) Vol I, p 130, *Tarikh i Mubarakshahi* by Yahya (Tr) p 33

<sup>2</sup> *Tabqat i Nasiri* by Minhaj us Siraj (Tr), p 85

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, pp 47, 85

<sup>4</sup> Near Kannauj according to Raverty (Tr), p 679, footnotes, Village Bilsar near Etah according to Cunninghams, according to *Comprehensive History of India*, Vol V, p 258, it is situated in Kannauj District, *Tarikh i Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr) Vol I, p 131 calls it Bitunda, *Tarikh i Mubarakshahi* by Yahya (Tr), p 33, names it Balsandah, *Tabqat i Akbari* (Tr) p 86 calls it Talsandah.

<sup>5</sup> *Tabqat i-Nasiri* by Minhaj us Siraj (Tr) pp 47-48, *Tarikh i Mubarakshahi* by Yahya (Tr) p 33, *Tarikh i Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr), Vol I, p 131

<sup>6</sup> *Tabqat i Nasiri* by Minhaj us Siraj (Tr), p 85, *Tarikh i Mubarakshahi* by Yahya (Tr) p 33, *Tarikh i Ferishta* (Tr), Vol I p 131

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid* *Comprehensive History of India*, Vol V, calls him Rana Bahar Dev p 259, see also *Tarikh i Mubarakshahi* by Yahya (Tr) p 34, *Tarikh-i Ferishta* (Tr), Vol I, p 131

<sup>8</sup> *Tarikh i Ferishta* (Tr), Vol I, p 131

<sup>9</sup> *Tabqat i Nasiri* by Minhaj us Siraj (Tr), p 86

from Malik to Khan<sup>1</sup> and he became Naib-i-Mamlakat<sup>2</sup>. His brother Saifuddin-Aibak was appointed to the post of Amir-i-Hajib. In due course of time Ulugh Khan was able to create a group of his own supporters in the court which made him quite powerful. Among them were Malik Taj-Uddin Tabar Khan, Naib-i-Amir-i-Hajib, Alauddin Ayaz Raihani (son of Minhaj-us-Siraj), Naib-i-Vakildar and Ikhtiyaruddin Aibak, the Amir-i-Akhur.

In 1251 A.D. Ulugh Khan marched at the head of an army towards Malwa and Kalinjar, subjugated Jahar Izar, a powerful Rai of the vicinity, and occupied the fort of Narnol constructed by the Rai.<sup>3</sup> Minhaj-us-Siraj considered this a great feat of valour because in a similar expedition Nusrat Taysi, during the reign of Iltutmish, had to retreat.<sup>4</sup>

In 1252 A.D. the Sultan marched towards Bias river accompanied by all Maliks and Khans.<sup>5</sup> In the meantime the party rival to Ulugh Khan, led by Imad-uddin Rayhan,<sup>6</sup> made an unsuccessful attempt on the life of Ulugh Khan. Imad-uddin Rayhan's machinations did not end and he prevailed upon the Sultan to send Ulugh Khan to Nagaur and to assign Hansi to a price.<sup>7</sup> After this was done, Imad-uddin Rayhan became the Vakildar. He took over the management of administration in his own hands and the officers who were appointed by Ulugh Khan were either removed or transferred.<sup>8</sup> Imad-Uddin's

<sup>1</sup>The rank of Khan which was given to a Prince was given as a special honour to Malik. No non-Turk seems to have enjoyed this rank. Balban enjoyed not only this title but the title of Ulugh Khan (the great Khan); see *Foundations of Muslim Rule in India* by Habibullah, p.248.

<sup>2</sup>*Futuh-us-Salatin* by Isami (Tr.), p. 303; *Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 142; *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr.), Vol. I, p. 129; *Tarikh-i-Mubarakshahi* by Yahya (Tr.), p. 32.

<sup>3</sup>*Tabqat-i-Nasiri* by Minhaj-us-Siraj (Tr.), p. 87.

<sup>4</sup>*Tabqat-i-Nasiri* by Minhaj-us-Siraj (Tr.) p.87; see also *Tarikh-i-Mubarakshahi* by Yahya (Tr.), p. 34; *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr.), Vol. I, p. 132.

<sup>5</sup>*Tabqat-i-Nasiri* by Minhaj-us-Siraj (Tr.), p. 87. Malik Balban of Badayun and Malik Quttiaq Khan of Biyana were among them.

<sup>6</sup>*Tabqat-i-Nasiri* by Minhaj-us-Siraj (Tr.), p. 87.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 50, *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr.), Vol. I., p. 132.

<sup>8</sup>*Tabqat-i-Nasiri* by Minhaj-us-Siraj (Tr.), p.88 Saifuddin Aibak was granted Iqta of Kara and Izzauddin Balban was appointed Amir-i-Hajib.

activities led to disquiet in the Empire

Meanwhile from Nagaur Ulugh Khan marched with his army to Ranthambhor, Bundi and Chittor<sup>1</sup> and humbled the well-organised army of Raja Nihar Dev, the ruler of Ranthambhor, and collected a large amount of money, horses and slaves and returned to Nagaur<sup>2</sup>

While Ulugh Khan was thus increasing his strength in the Court a number of Turkish Amirs turned against Rayhan who was an Indian born Muslim and hence looked down upon by Tajiks who considered Rayhan to be a low and mean man not deserving of any high post<sup>3</sup> Turkish Amirs did not want to be under the command of Rayhan. A number of Amirs from Kara, Awadh Badayun Tabarhinda, Sunam, Samana and Siwalik wrote letters to Ulugh Khan urging him to return to Delhi<sup>4</sup> Accordingly, Arsalan Khan from Tabarhinda Bat Khan Khaital from Sunam Ulugh Khan from Nagaur and Siwalik and Jalal Uddin Masud Shah from Lahore collected their armies and marched to Delhi<sup>5</sup> The Royal Army suffered a loss on meeting these combined armies and ultimately peace was sought. All the Maliks urged the Sultan to remove Imad Uddin Rayhan from his service<sup>6</sup> In 1254 A D Rayhan was removed from the post of Vakildar and was appointed Governor (Wali) of Badayun<sup>7</sup> Rayhan tried to subvert peace attempts by trying to assassinate Bat Khan when he reached Sultan's camp on behalf of Ulugh Khan. This, however, was foiled by Malik Hasan Ghorī who advised Bat Khan through a special messenger not to move out of his camp. Thus schemes of Ulugh Khan's rivals failed<sup>8</sup> Imad Uddin Rayhan was ordered to proceed towards Badayun and Minhaj us-Siraj the historian, who had earlier been deprived of his post of Qazi was called to negotiate the terms of peace

<sup>1</sup>*Tabqat i Nasiri* by Minhaj us-Siraj (Tr) p 88

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid*

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid*

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid*, p 88-89

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid* p 89

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid* also *Tarikh i Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr) Vol I p 133

<sup>7</sup>*Tarikh i Ferishta* (Tr) Vol I pp 132-133 *Tabqat i Nasiri* by Minhaj us Siraj (Tr) p 57

<sup>8</sup>*Tabqat i Nasiri* by Minhaj us Siraj (Tr) p 90

Ulugh Khan reached Delhi in January 1255 A.D. When he reached the imperial camp the Sultan granted him the rare privilege of kissing his hand (*Dast Bosa*).<sup>1</sup> According to Minhaj-us-Siraj a miraculous event occurred when Ulugh Khan reached there! It rained in Delhi which till now was facing a drought. So Ulugh Khan's return was treated as an auspicious omen.<sup>2</sup>

The restoration of Ulugh Khan to power fanned more ambitions in his heart. Isami informs us that Ulugh Khan did not attend the court on the pretext of illness. When the Sultan made inquiries about it he was told that Ulugh Khan had fallen ill because of his desire for royal *chatra* and wand. The Sultan agreed to give his *chatra* to him.<sup>3</sup> When Ulugh Khan arrived at the Court with it some nobles like Qutubuddin Hasan Ghorî made offensive remarks whereupon Ulugh Khan got him murdered.<sup>4</sup>

In 1255 A.D. Qutlugh Khan was sent as Governor of Awadh where he tried to raise the banner of revolt and was encouraged by Imaduddin Rayhan in this. Rayhan was, however, defeated and killed.<sup>5</sup> Royal armies were despatched to suppress these revolts. Ulugh Khan also gathered armies at Siwalik, Hansi, Sarsuti, etc. Qutlugh Khan and his followers fled Awadh and crossed the Saryu river. Ulugh Khan was sent in their pursuit. He reached the borders of Basan Kot (Bandi Kot) and Tirkhut, overpowered a number of Hindu Rajas and brought rich booty for the Sultan.<sup>6</sup> Ulugh Khan crossed Saryu river and reached Awadh. Qutlugh Khan fled towards Santur<sup>7</sup> and took shelter

<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>*Futuh-us-Salatin* by Isami (Tr.), p. 303; see also ed. by Mahdi Husain, Vol. II, pp. 283-285, *Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 142; *Tarikh-i-Mubarakshahi* by Yahya (Tr.), p. 32.

<sup>4</sup>*Futuh-us-Salatin* by Isami (Tr.), p. 303. When the Sultan enquired about it the Khan replied "There was a thorn that was doing permanent injury to the garden of the kingdom, I ordered it to be torn up. . . ." The king was hurt "but he could say nothing in the presence of Ulugh Khan". See also *Futuh-us-Salatin* ed. by Mahdi Husain, Vol. II, p. 287.

<sup>5</sup>*Tabqat-i-Nasiri* by Minhaj-us-Siraj (Tr.), p. 90, *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr.), Vol. I, p. 134.

<sup>6</sup>*Tabqat-i-Nasiri* by Minhaj-us-Siraj (Tr.), p. 90.

<sup>7</sup>Dehradun. There is some controversy regarding the location of Santur. See *Tabqat-i-Nasiri* by Minhaj-us-Siraj (Tr.), p. 53; *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr.), Vol. I, p. 134; *Tarikh-i-Mubarakshahi* by Yahya (Tr.), p. 37.

in the hills<sup>1</sup> He was assisted by Rana Ranpal—a reputed Hindu Raja Ulugh Khan was sent along with other Malik and a fierce battle ensued Ulugh Khan reached upto Silmur which was in the possession of Rana Ranpal but the latter fled and the fort was destroyed Minhaj us Siraj says that Ulugh Khan thus captured a place which so far had not been conquered by any one before him<sup>2</sup> Qutlugh Khan, however, escaped and joined Kashlu Khan the Amir of Sindh and Uch Ulugh Khan pursued them At this time he intercepted communications between the rebels and a faction of Amirs at the Capital including the Qazi and Shaikh ul Islam Ulugh Khan alerted the Sultan and thus the conspiracy was foiled<sup>3</sup> Qutlugh escaped and Kashlu Khan returned to his country

In the meantime the Mongols invaded Sindh in 1257 A D under the leadership of Nueen Sari<sup>4</sup> Malik Balban was responsible for instigating him The Mongols damaged the fort of Multan However, Ulugh Khan collected a huge army and other Amirs also on his advice, gathered with their forces which scared the Mongols so much that they returned to their country without even crossing the border<sup>5</sup>

Around this time Qutlugh Khan and Arslam Khan sent a message to Ulugh Khan seeking his intervention in securing pardon for them from the Court In 1258 both of them came to the Court and Ulugh Khan treated them with great deal of kindness which so overwhelmed the former rebels that they turned loyal to the Court It was upon the recommendation of Ulugh Khan that Qutlugh Khan was assigned Lakhnauti and Arslan Khan was given Kara<sup>6</sup> Ulugh Khan also promoted his cousin Sher Khan and got him the governorship of Bayana,

<sup>1</sup>*Tabqat i Nasiri* by Minhaj us Siraj (Tr) p 53 *Tarikh i Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr) Vol I p 134 *Tarikh i Mubarakshahi* by Yahya (Tr) p 34

<sup>2</sup>*Tabqat i Nasiri* by Minhaj us Siraj (Tr) p 91 *Tarikh i Mubarakshahi* by Yahya (Tr) p 35

<sup>3</sup>*Tabqat i Nasiri* by Minhaj us Siraj (Tr) pp 52, 54 and 91-93 *Tarikh i Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr) Vol I p 134 *Tarikh i Mubarakshahi* by Yahya (Tr) p 35

<sup>4</sup>*Tabqat i Nasiri* by Minhaj us Siraj (Tr) pp 53 and 91

<sup>5</sup>*Tabqat i Nasiri* by Minhaj us Siraj (Tr) p 93 see also *Futuh us Salatin* by Isami (Tr) p 303 *Tarikh i Mubarakshahi* by Yahya (Tr) p 36 *Tarikh i Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr) Vol I p 134

<sup>6</sup>*Tabqat i Nasiri* by Minhaj us Siraj (Tr) p 94

Kol, Jalesar and Gwalior.<sup>1</sup>

In 1260 A.D. Ulugh Khan proceeded towards Kohpaya (hill tract around the city) to punish the rebels<sup>2</sup> in this area who had let loose of reign of terror in Haryana, Siwalik and Bayana by plunder and arson. When Ulugh Khan was involved with Mongols these elements had taken away the camels of Ulugh Khan's officers. Now Ulugh Khan attacked the region with full force and for twenty days continuously fought, plundered and killed the people.<sup>3</sup> He offered the soldiers one Tanka for a severed head and two Tankas for the capture of a rebel. Malka was captured alongwith his family. Two hundred fifty rebels were imprisoned. One hundred and fortytwo horses alongwith 30 thousand Tankas were sent to the Court.<sup>4</sup> Thus adorned with success Ulugh Khan returned to the capital where he received great welcome and robes of honour were also distributed.<sup>5</sup>

The same year Halaku, Changiz Khan's grandson, sent his envoys from Khurasan and Iraq. They stayed for sometime at Marutha till a proper reception could be organised for them<sup>6</sup> which was done after Ulugh Khan's return. The streets were decorated, probably in the Mongol fashion, with the severed heads and bodies of the rebels. Mounted horsemen and soldiers with weapons lent splendour to a city decorated with flags. Spectacular pomp and pageant was displayed in the Court of the Sultan.<sup>7</sup> It was all done at the instance of Ulugh Khan<sup>8</sup> who had a tremendous capacity for organisation. This grand spectacle created a great impression upon the envoys. Halaku was so impressed by Ulugh Khan that he allowed the latter to use the word Khan for Ulugh Khan instead of Malik.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ibid, see also *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr.), Vol. I, p. 135.

<sup>2</sup>*Tabqat-i-Nasiri* by Minhaj-us-Siraj (Tr.), p. 94; *Tarikh-i-Mubarakshahi* by Yahya (Tr.), p. 37; *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr.), Vol. I, p. 135.

<sup>3</sup>*Tabqat-i-Nasiri* by Minhaj-us-Siraj (Tr.), pp. 94-95.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>*Tabqat-i-Nasiri* by Minhaj us Siraj (Tr.), p. 94.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid, pp. 96-97; *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr.), Vol. I, pp. 135-136; *Tarikh-i-Mubarakshahi* by Yahya (Tr.), p. 36.

<sup>8</sup>*Tabqat-i-Nasiri* by Minhaj us Siraj (Tr.), pp. 96-97.

<sup>9</sup>In Turkistan the word Khan was used by the King alone and others referred to as Malik. While translating the letters from Persian to Mongol language, the word Malik was used for Ulugh Khan, Halaku asked the translator to use the word Khan for Ulugh Khan; *Tabqat-i-Nasiri* (Tr.), p. 98.

So great was the power wielded by Ulugh Khan as Naib-i-Mamlakat that historians regard Sultan Nasir-Uddin simply as a non entity<sup>1</sup> Ulugh Khan, however, was not satisfied with it and was eager to get the crown for himself and remove all the hindrances on his way<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately there does not exist any contemporary record of Nasir-Uddin's last six years Barani is silent on this issue According to Yahya and Ferishta Sultan Nasiruddin fell ill and died<sup>3</sup> But Ibn Batuta states that his Naib killed him and became the King<sup>4</sup> Isami too declares that Nasir Uddin Mahmud was poisoned<sup>5</sup>

It is in this manner that Ulugh Khan enthroned himself and adopted the title of Ghiyasuddin Balban<sup>6</sup> In doing so he created a precedent for usurpation of political authority and Jalaluddin Khalji, Alauddin Khalji, Nasiruddin Shah, etc all followed him

Ulugh Khan's career throughout the period was marked by incessant activities and ceaseless efforts In dealing with the rebels he showed unusual courage, ability and dexterity especially

<sup>1</sup>*Tarikh-i Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr), p 142, *Futuh us-Salatn* by Isami (Tr), p 303, *Tarikh i Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr), Vol I, pp 129, 138 *Tarikh i Mubarakshahi* by Yahya (Tr) p. 33

<sup>2</sup>Isami narrates an anecdote that the sons of the Sultan and those of Ulugh Khan used to play together Once the sons of Ulugh Khan claimed that their father was the wisest man of the age. The princes replied that in spite of his age and prudence they could make him alight from the horse A bet of eighty dinars was made. When the princes were riding one day they deliberately dropped the whip Immediately Ulugh Khan picked it up and gave it to them Thus the princes won the bet and Ulugh Khan's sons had to ask their father to pay the amount That is how Ulugh Khan came to know the mind of the princes This gave him food for thought He thought that "one day by trickery and deceit they will arrest me, bind me and put me to death" Isami says, "I have heard that after careful planning he carried out a wicked design Poison was administered to the King There was a tumult all over the city but the King died in 1266-67 A D" *Futuh us-Salatn* by Isami (Tr), pp 303 304 and also Vol II, Ed by Mahdi Husain, pp. 288 290

<sup>3</sup>*Tarikh i Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr), Vol. I, p 136, *Tarikh i Mubarakshahi* by Yahya (Tr), p. 37, see also *Foundation of Muslim Rule in India* by Habibullah, p 136

<sup>4</sup>*Rehla* by Ibn Batuta (Tr), p 311.

<sup>5</sup>*Futuh us-Salatn* by Isami (Tr), p 304, Vol II, ed by Mahdi Husain, p 290

<sup>6</sup>*Futuh us-Salatn* by Isami (Tr) p 304

in case of Hindu rebels and the Mongols. He was indeed the guiding force in all such campaigns. He acquired plenty of experience both in warfare and administration.

Ruthlessness was one important feature of Balban's character. In this respect he set an example for Alauddin Khalji who also believed in severe measures. Balban was of the view that indiscipline and lawlessness should be most severely dealt with. He believed in setting an example by making the punishments most severe and ruthless. According to Balban the basic requirement of a successful sovereign was to create fear and awe among the masses. In this firm handling of affairs perhaps lies the secret of Balban's success.

Not only was Balban ruthless, he was highly ambitious too. He was not satisfied with promotions which came in rapid succession but his eyes were riveted on the throne itself.

An equally interesting aspect is his extreme fondness for wine and social gatherings.<sup>1</sup> He often organised convivial parties which were attended by distinguished Maliks and enlivened by wine, music and dancing. He gambled too, although money so won was distributed in charities. He thus enjoyed pleasures of luxury and luxuries of pleasures.<sup>2</sup>

But on ascending the throne he completely changed his ways and behaviour.<sup>3</sup> He not only gave up drinking but prohibited manufacture and consumption of wine throughout his dominion.<sup>4</sup>

Throughout the Sultanate period there was no law of succession to the throne and its absence created problems.<sup>5</sup> It was merit which generally was the deciding factor in the matters of succession. After the death of Iltutmish there was a continuous struggle for the crown which came to an end with the accession of Balban who had amply demonstrated his merit. In 1266 A.D. he ascended the throne in Qasr-i-Safid with the con-

<sup>1</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 156.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.* It was on moral and political and not on religious grounds that Balban seems to have given up alcohol. His sons continued to drink, see *Ibid.*, pp. 171, 180.

<sup>4</sup>*Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr.) Vol. I, p. 141.

<sup>5</sup>*Facets of Delhi Sultanate* by Rekha Joshi, pp. 6-34.

sent of the Malikhs and the people <sup>1</sup> There was no opposition to this move and the Vaziers, Amirs and Malikhs paid him homages <sup>2</sup> According to Barani, Sultan accorded welcome to and conferred honours and grants on his officers, friends and relatives in accordance with the Persian traditions and culture <sup>3</sup>

One of the tasks before Balban was to restore the prestige and dignity of the Crown which had been declining ever since the death of Iltutmish The four sons of Iltutmish were callow and naive who could not handle the delicate political and administrative problems They spent their time in revelry and merriment, unmindful of the tasks before them The indifference and laxity stirred up the ambition of their Turkish slaves known as Chehalgans <sup>4</sup>

The immediate predecessor of Balban was Nasiruddin Mahmud who was a mild natured and gentle person His gentleness taken for weakness further emboldened the slaves who, taking advantage of weak rulers, were trying to grab all the powers in their hands and as a result had become very powerful and ambitious <sup>5</sup> The slaves who had become Malikhs and Khans were vying with each other for power which generated conflicts, rivalry and competition among them <sup>6</sup> The prestige of the Shamsi empire had come totally under an eclipse

In the three decades following the death of Iltutmish the awe which the Sultan struck in the hearts of the people had vanished <sup>7</sup> People in their impertinence did not follow the government orders and things had come to such a sorry pass that only a strong military despot could set the matters right

Balban had learnt his lessons well and his experience and wisdom led him to base his royal authority on splendour and

<sup>1</sup>*Tarikh i Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr), Vol I, p 138, *Muntakhab ut Tawarikh* by Badaoni (Tr), Vol I, p 183

<sup>2</sup>*Tarikh i Mubarakshahi* by Yahya (Tr), p 37.

<sup>3</sup>*Tarikh i Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr), p 141

<sup>4</sup>Ibid

<sup>5</sup>Ibid, pp 141-142

<sup>6</sup>Ibid p 143 They would say to each other "what art thou that I am not" and "what shall thou be".

<sup>7</sup>*Tarikh i Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr), pp 143-144, *Tarikh i Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr), Vol I, p. 138.

magnificent display of grandeur and power.<sup>1</sup> Immediately after his accession to the throne he attempted to revive the glory of the court by appointing loyal and awe-inspiring body-guards, leading grand processions which created feeling of reverence<sup>2</sup> and appointing to the court men of talent and calibre belonging to high families.<sup>3</sup> These people were honoured in the court and they were loyal and obedient to the Sultan alone.<sup>4</sup> According to Barani although Iltutmish might have had more treasures, armies and animals yet the authority, magnificence and majesty of Balban's court surpassed that of all the Sultans of Delhi.<sup>5</sup> Balban believed like Izzuddin Salari and Qutubuddin Hasan Ghorî, Maliks of Iltutmish's court, that a Sultan who does not insist on discipline, strict code of morality and show of splendour cannot inspire dread and reverence in people. What a Sultan can achieve by the display of his might and by commanding respect he cannot achieve by simple punitive measures or by being kind to the people.<sup>6</sup> These are the virtues of a Sultan and if he did not possess these qualities his subjects would become disobedient, corrupt and rebellious.<sup>7</sup>

Balban adopted the title of Zillillah which led him to behave like a super-human being.<sup>8</sup> Yet at the same time he took the advice of his councillors<sup>9</sup> and kept in mind the limitations imposed by conventions and religion.<sup>10</sup> So far as the duties of a sovereign were concerned, Balban probably believed in the Islamic tenets and accepted the sayings of the Ulema<sup>11</sup> while at the same time he himself had confessed that it was not possible

<sup>1</sup>*Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr.), Vol. I., p. 144; *Some Aspects of Muslim Administration* by Dr. R.P. Tripathi, pp. 34, 36.

<sup>2</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 144.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid* pp. 145-146.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid*, pp. 145-146.

<sup>6</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 146.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid*, p. 148.

<sup>8</sup>*Some Aspects of Muslim Administration* by Dr. R.P. Tripathi, p. 36.

<sup>9</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 159; *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr.), Vol. I, p. 141.

<sup>10</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), pp. 146, 149, 153-154, 156.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid*, p. 155

for him to act upon them fully<sup>1</sup>

The Turkish Sultans of Delhi believed in unlimited despotism Balban especially did not believe in dilution of political power He could not tolerate any defiance of his authority His

<sup>1</sup>Balban often quoted in presence of his sons and courtiers the discussions and discourses of Sayyid Nuruddin Mubarak Gaznavi and other Ulema which were held during the time of his master Iltutmish These Ulema criticized the un-Islamic practices of the Sultans

"Whatever the Kings do and deem essentials of Kingship—the way in which they eat drink, wine and dress themselves, the manner in which they sit get up and go out riding, the way in which they sit on their throne and compel the people to sit and perform prostration before them all this is opposed to the Prophet and amounts to claiming partnership in the attributes of God This would be a cause of their damnation in the next world "

"Owing to the omission of these acts which are against the will of God and the traditions of Mustafa, the salvation of the King is not possible except by the implementation of the following four policies for the protection of the faith, "First the King should protect the religion of Islam with correct faith and with the intention of strengthening it They should utilize the power, dignity and prestige of their Kingship in establishing supremacy of Kalama i Haqq in elevating the customs of Islam, in promulgating the commands of the Shariat

The second policy necessary for the salvation of Muslim Kings is this The open display of sins and shameless deeds and the publication of forbidden things should be suppressed among the Muslim people, and in the cities, habitations and towns of Islam, through the terror and power of Kingship The third principle the duty of enforcing the rules of the Shariat of Muhammad should be assigned to pious, God fearing and religious men Dishonest and Godless people, who have no regard for the rights of others, as well as cheats, swindlers, worldly people and self seekers—should not be allowed to sit on the Masnad of the Shariat

The fourth principle which is necessary for the protection of the true creed and the salvation of the Kings and enhancement in their status is the dispensation of Justice "

"Whenever the Kings implement these four policies with firm determination and sincere faith and establish truth at the centre through the terror and prestige of their royal authority, then even if their souls are polluted by sinful desire and in the essentials of Kingship they have ignored the Sunnah, their status will be among the religious people *Tarikh i Firoz shahi* by Barani (Tr) pp 153 155

This discourse has not been mentioned by any other authority—contemporary or later The views of Sayyid Mubarak seem to resemble very closely those of Barani It appears that either Barani has expressed his views through him or vice versa The authenticity of the sermon is doubtful See *Religion and Politics in India* by K. A. Nizami, p 160

despotism was of extreme kind.<sup>1</sup> Yet it had certain limitations. He could not afford to ignore public opinion completely. In view of the circumstances Balban followed the middle course. He was a curious mix of contradictions.<sup>2</sup> He was kind and polite and at the same time full of wrath and temper.

Balban realised that for the maintenance of the stability in the affairs of the state the authority of the King must remain supreme. He was a firm believer in the institution of Kingship.<sup>3</sup> He was of the view that the prestige of the state depended largely upon the acts of the ruler and his officials. He knew that a king lacking in vigour could not inspire reverence for the Crown.<sup>4</sup> It was, therefore, his political creed that all challenges to his authority—internal or external—should be ruthlessly suppressed.

Even as a Naib of Nasiruddin, Balban tried to stop the decline that had set in after the demise of Iltutmish and met a large measure of success. Although Barani has commented<sup>5</sup> on the deplorable condition of the Sultanate yet at the end of Nasiruddin Mahmud's reign the situation was well under control and there prevailed a "serene atmosphere in the country."<sup>6</sup>

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However Barani maintains that Balban wept bitterly after relating these sermons to his sons, relatives and other officers. The Sultan confessed that he was not capable of following these regulations and policies. As a matter of fact no Sultan could possibly follow them properly. As for Balban he firmly believed in dispensing quick and impartial justice and could not tolerate any obstacle in that matter.

<sup>1</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 155.

<sup>2</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 157.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid*, p. 152.

<sup>4</sup>*Politics in Pre-Mughal Times* by Ishwar Topa, pp. 64-65.

<sup>5</sup>*Foundations of Muslim Rule in India* by A.B.M. Habibullah, p. 135.

<sup>6</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), pp. 141, 144.

<sup>7</sup>*Tarikh-i-Mubarakshahi* by Yahya (Tr.), p. 37.

## II

### KINGSHIP

**D**URING the time of Iltutmish the Turkish Empire in India was in an embryonic stage and because of its unsettled state great caution and alertness was required for conducting the business of State. Iltutmish was cautious and whatever steps he took were guided by maturity of thought and judgement. When, however, Balban came to the throne the Turkish rule in India was well entrenched and the period of experimentation was over. The various forces which would determine the nature of Kingship had crystallised by now.

There were essentially three forces which were to determine Balban's ideal of Kingship. These were the character and composition of the population, the position and status of the Ulema, and the attitude of the nobility.

When Iltutmish came to power he had, as was to be expected, concerned himself solely with the interests of his co-religionists. This policy was not tenable when Balban came to power. A long period of sixty years had elapsed between the establishment of Turkish empire in India and coming of Balban to the throne. During this period the initial bitterness and hostility of the local population to the foreign dominance had diminished considerably if not obliterated totally. The Turks having decided to reside permanently in India had inevitably to multiply their points of contact with the Indian population. While a central administrative structure of some kind had been developed by various rulers local affairs continued to be managed by the Indians.<sup>1</sup> The Turks who had come to

<sup>1</sup>*Influence of Islam on Indian Culture* by Dr. Tara Chand p. 137, *Religion and Politics in India* by K. A. Nizami, pp. 322-323.

India were soldiers and had very little knowledge of intricate financial matters and Indian revenue organisation. Indian population was mostly agricultural and it was from agriculture that major income of the state was derived. If therefore, Hindus were not satisfied realisation of revenue would become difficult, if not impossible.<sup>1</sup> One way of satisfying the Hindus was to ensure for them peace and protection<sup>2</sup>. Much of the animosity between the victor and the vanquished had vanished. The spirit of that age has been expressed in poems by Amir Khusru who was born thirteen years before Balban came to power. In his Persian poems he has delineated the appreciation which the Turks had for Indian institutions, the people of India, India's climate, etc.<sup>3</sup> An understanding between the foreigners and local population was developing. Under these circumstances Balban although swayed by his co-religionists could not ignore the non-Muslim population. He was after all the ruler of all the people of Northern India and as a ruler was expected to dispense equal and impartial justice.<sup>4</sup> With justice was associated the dignity of sovereign.<sup>5</sup> Requirements of dispensing even-handed justice demanded a concept of sovereignty which would be acceptable, if not fully, at least partially as much to non-Muslim population as to the Muslims. Here, therefore, we find a tendency for secularisation—the tendency for separating religion from politics. Balban was able to chalk out for himself a radical line of action. It was different from Iltutmish's policies. It marked a deviation from tradition.

It is in this context that we should consider the status of the Ulema in relation to State and administration. The Ulema came to India as an institution familiar in the annals of Damascus and Baghdad. By virtue of the fact that the Ulemas were regarded as the repository of all theological

<sup>1</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 194; *The Government of the Sultanate* by U.N. Day, p. 201.

<sup>2</sup>*Epigraphia Indo Moslemica Year 1913-1914*, pp. 35-45; *Religion and Politics in India* by K.A. Nizami, p. 91.

<sup>3</sup>*Nuhsiphir* by Amir Khusrau (Rizvi, Tr.) pp. 179-181, See also *Qiran-us-Saadain* by Amir Khusrau (Rizvi, Tr.), pp. 286-287.

<sup>4</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), pp. 152-155.

<sup>5</sup>*Ib'id.* p. 155.

learning and the esteem in which they were held, they exercised an influence on the state which was sometimes out of proportion to their numbers<sup>1</sup> When a new sovereign ascended the throne the first to greet and confirm him would be the Ulema<sup>2</sup> followed by the nobles and then the masses It is true that some of the Ulema of Iltutmish's time were men of learning, imbued with common sense and spirit of self sacrifice and Iltutmish respected them<sup>3</sup> It was for these qualities that many concessions were given to them They were given free-hold grant of land, lavishly rewarded by the state and enjoyed places of honour in the court<sup>4</sup> and from their exalted positions influenced the affairs of the state Ulema during Iltutmish's period were real assets to the State But during the thirty years following Iltutmish's death the character of Ulema underwent rapid deterioration<sup>5</sup> Barani has criticised the Ulema of Balban's time and has made scathing comments on their selfishness, corruption, narrowmindedness, ambition and their attachment to secular objects<sup>6</sup> It was for Balban to decide what place to assign to the Ulema, who instead of being assets had now become liabilities,<sup>7</sup> in the matters of state Their participation was no longer in the interests of the State Balban, being a practical person, did not dissociate himself from them<sup>8</sup> but tried to keep them at an arm's length He however, honoured and respected the deserving Ulema specially Ulema-i-Akharat<sup>9</sup> Barani has mentioned in glowing terms such eminent Ulema as Maulana Burhan Uddin Balkhi, Qazi Sharfuddin

<sup>1</sup>*Nobility under the Sultans of Delhi* by S B P Nigam, p 119

<sup>2</sup>*Rahla* by Ibn Batuta (Tr) pp 309-310

<sup>3</sup>*Tabqat-i-Nasiri* by Minhaj us Siraj (Raverty, Tr), Vol I, p 622, *Futuh us Salatin* by Isami (Tr), p 301

<sup>4</sup>*Tabqat-i-Nasiri* by Minhaj us Siraj (Tr), p 22 also see Raverty (Tr) p 622 *Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr), p 153 *Religion and Politics in India* by K A Nizami, pp, 159, 162-164

<sup>5</sup>*Tabqat-Nasiri* by Minhaj us Siraj (Tr) pp 39-41

<sup>6</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr), pp 190-191, 230-231

<sup>7</sup>*Ib id*

Balban had ordered general massacre of the rebels at Lakhnauti but on the recommendation of the Qazi i Lashkar he pardoned them *Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr), p 199

<sup>8</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr), pp 157, 198, also see p 196 for quoting Qazi-Jalal ur rus that Sultan should treat Ulema with honour

Walwalji, Maulana Siraj Uddin Sijzi and Maulana Nazmuddin Damishq.<sup>1</sup> These Ulema came to India from foreign lands<sup>2</sup>. There is no doubt about their learning and erudition. It is said that Balban could not dine till these celebrities were with him on the table.<sup>3</sup>

In matters of politics Balban avoided taking counsel with the Ulema<sup>4</sup> and thus a great reactionary force in the activities of the state was relegated to the background if not totally eliminated.

The third factor in determining the ideals of Kingship was nobility which was for the first time in Turkish history organised by Iltutmish. His Corps of Forty included distinguished politicians, brave warriors, great organisers and men of talent<sup>5</sup> who contributed greatly to the well-being of the state by their achievements. The Turkish nobility originally had no hereditary claim. Every member of the Corps of Forty had received his honour at the hands of Iltutmish.<sup>6</sup> They did not claim it on the basis of heredity. This was because they were not the sons of the soil and had migrated into India from outside.<sup>7</sup>

The appointment, promotion and dismissal of the nobles depended on the will of the Sultan<sup>8</sup> particularly during Iltutmish's reign. The nobles were vested with some administrative authority and they were regarded as the pillars of the State.<sup>9</sup> According to the medieval concepts it was through the nobles that the glory of the Sultan was reflected. Sultan's authority in the Empire was enforced through the nobles.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), pp. 157, 201 ; *Rehla* by Ibn Batuta (Tr.), p. 312 relates an anecdote regarding Balban's regard for Ulema.

<sup>2</sup>*Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr.) Vol. I, p. 139 ; *Tarikh i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 201.

<sup>3</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), pp. 156-157, curiously enough Balban would not let them take their meals in his presence.

<sup>4</sup>*Nobility under the Sultans of Delhi* by S.B.P. Nigam, p. 128.

<sup>5</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), pp. 142-143.

<sup>6</sup>*Nobility under the Sultans of Delhi* by S.B.P. Nigam, pp. 26-27.

<sup>7</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 143; *Tabqat-i-Nasiri* by Minhaj-us-Siraj (Tr.), pp. 22-23. For names see the list given by Minhaj on p. 29.

<sup>8</sup>*Religion and Politics in India* by K.A. Nizami, pp. 124-125.

<sup>9</sup>*Nobility under the Sultans of Delhi* by S.B.P. Nigam, p. 101.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 21

In the thirty years after the death of Iltutmish the royal institution had undergone a sea change and presented an unhealthy state of affairs<sup>1</sup> In order to understand the transformation which this institution underwent during the post Iltutmish period we must have a brief look at the institution as it existed before Iltutmish and the changes wrought by Iltutmish in it

After Aibak's death the nobles controlled the destiny of the Empire One group of nobles crowned Aram Shah on the throne while another group invited Iltutmish from Badayun and proclaimed him the King<sup>2</sup> It clearly shows the power of the nobles at the time of Iltutmish's accession to the throne However, as a despot and an absolute monarch of outstanding merit Iltutmish was not willing to tolerate such authority on the part of nobles and to see them deciding the fortunes of the Empire He was able to liquidate the old nobility and create a new subservient one

Iltutmish had, however, brought into being a compact and united body of nobles and it was but natural that they should become ambitious and wish to acquire power<sup>3</sup> As long as Iltutmish was alive this ambition could not be realised This became evident during the closing years of Iltutmish's reign when he commended the nobles to consider his proposal of Razia succeeding him on the throne Prime Minister Junaidi could not swallow such a progressive suggestion and alongwith some other nobles he submitted to the Sultan that succession of a woman to the throne was inappropriate<sup>4</sup> It was only on the tremendous authority of Iltutmish that the nobles were made to accept his suggestion<sup>5</sup>

However, the outlook of these nobles changed vastly after passing away of Iltutmish<sup>6</sup> Most of them were Governors

<sup>1</sup>*Tarikh-i Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr), pp 143-144

<sup>2</sup>*Tabqat-i Nasiri* by Minhaj-us Siraj (Tr), p 8

<sup>3</sup>*Nobility under the Sultans of Delhi* by S B P Nigam, pp 26-27 *Some Aspects of the Muslim Administration* by R P Tripathi pp 28-32, *The Government of Sultanate* by U N Day, p 47

<sup>4</sup>*Tabqat-i Nasiri* by Minhaj-us Siraj (Tr), pp 33-34

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid*, p 34

<sup>6</sup>*Some Aspects of Muslim Administration* by R P Tripathi, p 32

or administrators of different areas of northern India and in the period of thirty years they had created vested interests in their territories.<sup>1</sup> At the inception of this institution the nobles had no interest in land but with the passage of time, in thirty years, it had become hereditary<sup>2</sup> and so had their status and position<sup>3</sup> The nobles became king-makers and influenced the order of succession.<sup>4</sup> They illustrated the dictum that the power of the nobles was inversely proportional to the powers of the King and vice-versa.

In short the nobles by the ineluctable logic of history became the arbiters of the destiny of the royalty. From the servants of the sovereign they became their makers and actually shared their authority by prerogative.<sup>5</sup>

While the nobles had become enormously powerful their quality had deteriorated. The nobles recruited by Iltutmish were men of talent. After their death their places were filled by their heirs because of the principle of hereditary succession to these posts.<sup>6</sup> The order of nobility was diluted. It no longer possessed that merit and individual ability which made it an asset for the state.

When Balban came to power, he recognised the importance of the order of nobles, and set his heart upon reformation and reorganisation of nobility. He started by a survey of the order of nobility and investigation of their claims and titles.<sup>7</sup> The result proved to be most revealing and exposed the corruption and weakness of the entire system. As a result of his investigations Balban divided them into three categories.<sup>8</sup>

In the first category came the old and infirm nobles who enjoyed positions and privileges which were inconsistent with their capacities. Balban considered them a liability on the

<sup>1</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 167.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 141.

<sup>4</sup>*Tabqat-i-Nasiri* by Minhaj-us-Siraj (Tr.), pp. 8, 32-34, 41.

<sup>5</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), pp. 141-143.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 168.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 167 ; *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr.), Vol. I, p. 143

<sup>8</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 168.

state and to be fair to them fixed pension for them <sup>1</sup>

In the second category came young men<sup>2</sup> who were capable and ambitious yet were reluctant to work whiling away their time in frivolities. They were enjoying remuneration from state which was out of proportion to the actual services performed by them. Balban cut their emoluments, cajoled them and made them feel their responsibilities<sup>3</sup>. He made it clear that they held office at his pleasure and that they should look upon the king as master and not as an equal. Their salaries were fixed according to their ability<sup>4</sup>.

In the third category came such diverse people as widows, minor children or slaves of the deceased nobles who had occupied his palace<sup>5</sup>. These persons had least claim on their position and Balban therefore, removed them while fixing certain allowances for their upkeep. He ordered that they should be provided food and cloth<sup>6</sup>.

During the period of Turkish rule in India sovereignty had to have three sanctions—spiritual, military and secular. Spiritual sanction meant confirmation of the title of the sovereign by the Caliph, military sanction meant possession of military talent and secular sanction meant obedience of the masses. These sanctions in relations to Balban's sovereignty had to be interpreted in a novel manner due to the change in circumstances and provide an interesting study.

By the year 1266 when Balban ascended the throne the Caliph of Baghdad had ceased to exist. Halaku had put to death the last of the Caliphs in the year 1258 A D<sup>7</sup>. Khilafat

<sup>1</sup>Balban gave them forty to fifty Tankas of allowance. *Tarikh-i Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr) p 168. see also *Tarikh-i Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr) Vol I p 143.

<sup>2</sup>*Tarikh-i Ferozshahi* by Barani (Tr) p 168.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid* p 168. The villages remained with them and from the revenue of the villages salaries were paid to them and rest was appropriated by the Diwan for the State.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid* p 168.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid* p 168.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid*.

<sup>7</sup>*Tabqat-Nasiri* by Minhaj us Siraj (Tr) p 54, *The Government of the Sultanate* by U N Day, p 51.

had thus become extinct and Balban could not look to it for spiritual sanction. Balban, therefore, initiated new ideas of Kingship—not new in the sense that they were unknown in the history of the world or in the history of India but new in the context of the recently established Turkish rule in India.

Balban realised the importance of having a moral and ethical sanction for the sovereign.<sup>1</sup> Formerly this was provided by the Caliph<sup>2</sup> but in view of Caliph's disappearance from the scene it was now impossible. Balban, therefore, propounded the theory that king is the shadow of God upon this earth.<sup>3</sup> The Caliph derived his authority from the Prophet of Islam. He was not a successor but a representative of the Prophet, that is, of God. When the very existence of Caliph ceased the corollary was that imperial power may be derived direct from God. And this was what Balban did. The statement is borne out by the words contained in the advice which Balban tended to his son Prince Muhammad<sup>4</sup> and

<sup>1</sup>*Politics in Pre-Mughal Times* by Ishwar Topa, pp. 66-67.

<sup>2</sup>*Tajut-Maasir* by Hasan Nizami (Tr.), p. 276 ; see also *The Caliphate* by Arnold, pp. 101-102.

<sup>3</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), pp. 148, 178 ; *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr.), Vol. I, p. 148. The Caliph was dead yet the name continued and respect was paid to him by Balban, see *The Caliphate* by Arnold, pp. 87, 207. It appears as if Balban did not have the knowledge of the death of Caliph for he advised Bughra Khan to seek confirmation of sovereignty by an Abbasid Caliph. *Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 196. Itutmish is also referred as viceregent of God, see *Tabqat-Nasari* (Tr. Raverty), Vol. I, p. 597 ; see also *Some Aspects of Muslim Administration* by R.P. Tripathi, p. 37 ; *Religion and Politics in India* by K.A. Nizami, p. 122 and footnote.

<sup>4</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), pp. 173-180. The advice given to Prince Muhammed can be divided in two parts; one was idealistic based on what Balban had heard about Kingship from great scholars during the time of Itutmish. Sultan himself confessed, "How can we the slaves be competent to rule in the manner in which Umbar b. Khatab and Umar b. Abdul Aziz ruled", *Tarikh-i-Firozshahi*. (Tr.) p. 173. The other was based on his personal political knowledge which could be followed "if we do not regularly observe these rules there is sure to be trouble and confusion in our territories", *Ibid.*, p. 173. Some of the advices in the first part of Wasayat are :

The heart of the King reflects the glory of God. The King shall,

therefore, strive for the purification of his heart and his soul and should always be thankful to God for his blessings (pp 173-174)

If the King allows the low born base, irreligious and faithless people to interfere in Government affairs, he is not only guilty of being ungrateful to God but occupies the territory of God against the orders of the Day of Creation (p 174)

He must follow the old King and see God's pleasure by doing approved and virtuous acts

The King alone is a real ruler who uses his God given glory, grandeur, army, attendants and treasures to extricate infidelity. He alone is a real King whose friends and officers administer absolute justice and root out oppression from his dominion

Pious religious minded, just and God fearing men alone should be appointed as qazis officials, Amirdads, the Muhatsibs so that the law of Shariat might be enforced through them

The King should realise that people follow the religion of their rulers. Jamshed the King of Kings used to say very often that the people are obedient and subordinate to King's orders (p 176)

The second part of Wasya was as follows

Royal dignity should be maintained in both public and private (p 176)

Kingship is the viceregency of God. Only nobles virtuous, wise and skilled people should be allowed to come near you

Under no circumstances you should allow the mean, vulgar and the faithless people and infidels to gather round you

Do not displease God by indulging in luxuries

Kingship and bravery are twins (p 177)

If a King lives in the same way as other people live and grants to people what others also can bestow, the glory of sovereignty vanishes. Kingship is not possible without these things—justice, beneficence, pomp, army, treasury, confidence of the people and a number of selected men to serve the King. Army and treasury are the two great essentials of Kingship (p 178)

Whenever you think of any expedition first consider its consequences carefully. Kingship cannot stand dishonour or humiliation

Do not be negligent in looking after your sons, brothers, helpers, officials and other people

You should have an eye on the revenues and expenditure of the Empire. Necessary expenditure should be incurred but there should be no extravagance for God does not like extravagant people (p 179)

Keep the army, subjects and the merchants happy and prosperous

There should be perfect peace and order in the country. Things sanctioned by the Shariat should be enforced.

Use moderation in handling the affairs of your people

Protect your person from wicked people. See also *Tarikh-i Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr.), Vol I, pp 148-150

Bughra Khan.<sup>1</sup>

According to Ferishta the first principle of Balban's sovereignty was to "allow nothing to induce him to forget the Majesty of God or the happiness of his subjects."<sup>2</sup> If, therefore, Iltutmish could think of a device for the sanctification of his legal authority in a diploma of investiture from the Caliph, Balban made an improvement by pronouncing that he derived his authority directly from God. This concept was in consonance with the age-old Indian tradition. In the Rajput period, Gupta period, and even earlier the King was regarded to be very incarnation of Lord Vishnu.<sup>3</sup> The King (Bhupati) derived authority direct from Vishnu—the upholder of the Universe. Like India in the Persian Empire (Sassanid

<sup>1</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), pp. 180, 190-198. Some of the advice given to Bughra Khan is as follows :

It is not advisable for any ruler of Lakhnauti to rebel against the Sultan of Delhi (Ibid, p. 91). Wilayatdari (governorship) and Iqlimdari (Kingship) are two different things. If a muqtai commits mistakes, he is dismissed by the King ; if a King commits mistakes, it leads to chaos and dissension.

A King should use moderation in the levying of taxes, neither should he tax heavily nor lightly. A King should be very careful about two things : regular payment of the salaries to his soldiers and production of enough grain to meet the needs of the people (p. 194).

There should be consistency and stability in royal orders (p. 194).

Special attention should be paid towards the recruitment and maintenances of the army.

A King should not neglect the worship of God. Five times prayers should be offered punctually (p. 195). Balban further advised him (p. 196) :

"Mahmud, I have given you instructions according to the requirements of the time. But if give I instructions of religious minded Kings and say that you should use all your courage and valour in the destruction and annihilation of infidelity and shirk...to follow traditions of Prophet...to seek the approval of Abbasid Caliphs for your government and to appoint at the Capital Ulema, Mashaikh Sayyids, scholars well versed in exegesis, traditionists ....you should commit yourself to the protection of some holy person. Beware you should never attach yourself to a man of the world."

<sup>2</sup>*Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr.), Vol. I, p. 141.

<sup>3</sup>Lord Vishnu is the creator of the Universe according to Hindu mythology.

Persia)<sup>1</sup> too the concept of the King as incarnation of God was held. According to Dr K A Nizami the "actual implication of this concept was that the source of a King's power lay, not with the nobles of the people, but with God only and consequently his actions could not be subject of public scrutiny".

Balban had risen from rank. He had belonged to the Group of Forty nobles and rose to be the Sultan. Thus now he was called upon to discover a device whereby he may create distinction between himself and the nobility. He, therefore, enunciated the second principle of sound of sovereignty that a King is born and a King is not made.<sup>1</sup> This of course, is a corollary of the first principle in the sense that only that individual could become the King whom God had so destined.<sup>3</sup>

A King has to fulfil a divine mission and this is not given to everybody.<sup>4</sup> Since everyone knew the antecedents of Balban the problem before the Sultan was how to erase that stigma of slavery.<sup>5</sup> He declared that he was not the descendant of Bari tribe but came from the line of Afrasiabs, the Sassanid Kings.<sup>6</sup> Keeping this in view he conferred upon his grand children such names as Kaikhusru, Kaimur and Kaiqubad. Thus, Balban put himself upon a pedestal higher than the nobles thereby trying to prove the dictum that the King is born and not made. Iltutmish was made the King by the nobles and the Ulema but Balban became the King because, as he believed, he was born to be one.

The next ideal of Balban's view of kingship was that a King should not be forgetful of the happiness of his subjects.<sup>7</sup> How

<sup>1</sup> *Tarikh-i Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr) pp 150-151

<sup>2</sup> *Comprehensive History of India* Vol V p 281

<sup>3</sup> *Tarikh-i Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr) pp 173-175 and also p 195

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, 173-175

<sup>5</sup> *Tarikh-i Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr), 173-175

<sup>6</sup> The fact that he was a slave always seems to have rankled in his mind. See *Tarikh-i Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr), pp 173, 176, 193, 196. Since there is no reference available it is difficult to say when Balban was manumitted.

<sup>7</sup> *Tarikh-i Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr), pp 150-151

<sup>8</sup> *Tarikh-i Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr), pp 178, 194, *Tarikh-i Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr), Vol. I, p 141

was that happiness to be ensured? Balban believed that only that person should become the King who was imbued with the virtues of generosity, having courage of his conviction and being able to discriminate between what is right and what is wrong.<sup>1</sup> Over and above the King must be just.<sup>2</sup> This aspect has been summed up by Ferishta in the following words<sup>3</sup>: "to make selections from men of character for the offices of Government. So far as Balban is concerned in his behaviour and conduct, his attitude and discipline he gave sufficient proof of his courage.<sup>4</sup> He would stick to his decision whatever be the consequences. And because he believed in the purity of administration he was very particular in recruiting officers from amongst men of blue blood. He was so careful about purity of blood that the very sight of a low and mean man made his blood boil."<sup>5</sup>

Although historically it is not quite correct to refer to Ferishta as an authority on the reign of Balban yet we find that he has beautifully summed up the principles and ideals of sovereignty as conceived by that illustrious monarch. There are four of them on which this historian has laid stress and his very words may be quoted: "First to assume dignity and exercise power at proper seasons and allow nothing to induce him to forget the Majesty of God or the happiness of his subjects. Secondly, not to permit immorality and indelicacy to be openly practised within his realm, without imposing heavy fines or some other punishment. Thirdly to make selections from men of character for the offices of Government and not to permit men of notoriously vicious habits to find an asylum within his realm. Fourthly, to be patient and just in the administration of justice."<sup>6</sup> "These are the the rules," said this prince, "which I have adopted for my own conduct, they are those on which I hope my successor will also act. . . ."<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 178.

<sup>2</sup>*Ib'd*; *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr.), Vol I, pp. 140-141.

<sup>3</sup>*Ib'id*, Vol. I, p. 141.

<sup>4</sup>*Ib'd*, p. 138.

<sup>5</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), pp. 149-150.

<sup>6</sup>*Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr.), Vol. I, p. 141.

<sup>7</sup>*Ib'd*.

It, however, remains to be seen how far these principles and ideals were based on the realities of the situation. And in this connection it must be borne in mind that ever since the death of Iltutmish the glory and the dignity of sovereign had considerably waned<sup>1</sup>. The immediate successor of Iltutmish Ruknuddin Firoz was thrown out of office hardly less than six months after his accession<sup>2</sup>. Razia who made an attempt to assert herself and on whom encomiums have been bestowed by historians was unable to hold her own against her rivals in the political field<sup>3</sup>. Bahram and Masud appear to be mere puppets<sup>4</sup>. It is true that Nasiruddin Mahmud was able to remain on the throne for twenty years. The character sketch of this sovereign which has been portrayed by Minhaj us Siraj<sup>5</sup> and following him by other historians does not and cannot carry conviction because it was not the age when monarch of simple nature could hold his own against crafty and scheming people around him. Nasiruddin Mahmud has been called a saintly King<sup>6</sup> and all sorts of stories almost fables—have gathered round his personality.

When we carefully sift facts from fiction we can place little credence on these tales while keeping the reality of the times in mind seem apocryphal. No doubt he did possess certain virtues and qualities but they were by no means such as to infuse new vigour and vitality in the Kingship. Perhaps it was with Nasiruddin Mahmud and his predecessors in mind that Balban is reported to have said that a king who could not inspire his subject with fear did not deserve to rule<sup>7</sup>. In the medieval period fear was the basis of King's authority—fear of the military might of the sovereign. And awe so generated bred respect<sup>8</sup>. The soft successors of Iltutmish lacked this awe-

<sup>1</sup>*Tarikh-i Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr), p. 141

<sup>2</sup>*Tabqat-i Nasiri* by Minhaj us-Siraj (Tr), p. 33

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 33-36

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.* pp. 37-43

<sup>5</sup>*Tabqat-i Nasiri* by Minhaj us Siraj (Tr), pp. 45-55

<sup>6</sup>*Tarikh-i Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr), pp. 141-142. *Tarikh-i Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr) Vol. I p. 136. Ibn Batuta (Tr), p. 311

<sup>7</sup>*Tarikh-i Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr) pp. 146, 148

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.* p. 146

inspiring quality and when the mantle of sovereignty fell upon the shoulders of Balban he was called upon to revitalize the glory of the throne and to refurbish the tarnished image of the ruler.<sup>1</sup>

Balban declared that a King was always a King<sup>2</sup> wherever he was, whether before his subjects, his officers or even the members of his family.<sup>3</sup> Balban tried to live and project that ideal image of the ruler in which he believed. He behaved, acted, talked and walked in a manner which he considered befitting for the king. Interesting description of Balban and his processions are available. More than seventy years old when he ascended the throne he had a long, flowing, milky white beard and a towering personality.<sup>4</sup> As Barani put it, shining of the sun, the glittering of the sword and the brightness of his face all taken together made a spectacular show.<sup>5</sup> Seated on the Takhat-Ravan which was carried on the shoulders of four persons, five hundred chosen men with drawn swords, richly dressed preceded him proclaiming his approach and clearing the way.<sup>6</sup> A number of horsemen clad in glittering armour followed him.<sup>7</sup>

These Chaoush and Naqibs would shout loudly proclaiming the arrival of the procession.<sup>8</sup> The shouts of Bismillah reverberated in the air.<sup>9</sup> Horses (from Persia and Arabia) and elephants covered with gold trimmings further enhanced the glamour.<sup>10</sup> The pomp and magnificence of these processions created a glorious image of the Sultan. The Sultan's glory became manifest before the populace. It is related by Barani that such was the grandeur of the Sultan's surroundings and so impressive was his personality that when ambassador of foreign

<sup>1</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), pp. 142-144.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 146, 176.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 176-177.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 145.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 144.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 144-145 ; *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr.), Vol. I, p. 140.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firazshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 145.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 145.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr.), Vol. I, p. 140.

countries were led in his presence they would go into a swoon<sup>1</sup> The Sultan maintained diplomatic relations with foreign countries and such contacts helped in enrichment of the cultural life of his court

Balban organised his court in accordance with the Persian traditions and laid great emphasis on proper protocol and etiquette<sup>2</sup> He exuded dignity when sitting on the throne surrounded by Hajibs, Salahdars, Jandars, etc Very few people were allowed to approach him<sup>3</sup> Most of the Malikhs had to stand before him except a few privileged ones who were allowed to sit at the back<sup>4</sup> On ceremonial occasions the court acquired a special grandeur<sup>5</sup> Embroidered carpets, rich cloths, gold and silver vessels were laid out<sup>6</sup> and presents were exchanged between the Sultan and Amirs Poetry and music further enlivened the atmosphere "For days after these festivals people talked about decorations at the Court", wrote Barani<sup>7</sup> This grand spectacle inspired reverence in the minds of the masses reverence born out of awe and grandeur And this was all "to assume dignity"

Balban's predecessors in the post-Iltutmish era had failed to be assertive at the critical moments when they should have asserted themselves The result was that their grip over the events slackened and when they woke from their slumbers to take the matters in their hands they found that it was too late Ruknuddin Firoz threw himself recklessly into the indulgence of vices and when the gravity of his situation glared him in the face he tried in vain to wrest the power from those who had usurped it The same could be said about Razia, Bahram and

<sup>1</sup>*Tarikh-i Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr), p 145

<sup>2</sup>*Tarikh-i Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr), pp 146-147 Barani writing about the decoration and arrangements of the court says that the most intelligent people of the age used to remark that no one could do better than the Sultan

<sup>3</sup>*Tarikh-i Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr), p 145 The Sultan introduced Persian ways of salutation in the Court (Khakbos)

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid*, p 145

<sup>5</sup>*Tarikh-i Firishia* by Ferishta (Tr), Vol I, p 140

<sup>6</sup>*Tarikh-i Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr), p 146

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid*, p 147

Masud. Balban did not make this mistake and exercised effective power from the beginning.<sup>1</sup>

When Balban came to power he saw that the men who wielded power had become immoral, corrupt and prey to all the vices. The rulers before him, nobles and priests were leading a licentious life.<sup>2</sup> Bahram and Masud had fallen in the clutches of Durvesh and incompetent persons.<sup>3</sup> Nobles<sup>4</sup> and the masses<sup>5</sup> followed the example of the King. Such licence and laxity of morals could not be conducive to the stability of the Empire. Therefore, Balban decided that he should raise the moral tone in the life of the court. To set an example he gave up drinking.<sup>6</sup> He was very punctilious in his duties and was a hard task matter.<sup>7</sup> He would punish even the smallest misdemeanour.<sup>8</sup> He would always appear fully attired.<sup>9</sup> He ordered his officers also to be properly dressed with caps and socks before coming to the Court.<sup>10</sup> He never smiled and was never flippant.<sup>11</sup> Informal gaiety and laughter became foreign to the imperial court and the court became sombre, sober, solemn and serious.

Dispensation of impartial justice was another concern of Balban and he considered it to be the fundamental duty of the sovereign. Peace and tranquility of the empire depended on this. Balban did not hesitate to inflict the most severe punishment even to highest officer on the complaint of the meanest

<sup>1</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 143.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 141-144, also see *Tabqat-i-Nasiri* by Minhaj-us-Siraj (Tr.), p. 38.

<sup>3</sup>*Tabqat-i-Nasiri* by Minhaj-us-Siraj (Tr.), pp. 39-40, 43.

<sup>4</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), pp. 175-176.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 176.

<sup>6</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 156; *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr.), Vol. I, p. 141.

<sup>7</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), pp. 147, 155-156.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 157; *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr.), Vol. I, p. 141.

<sup>9</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 147. Barani records that the clothes of the Sultan fitted him so well that it appeared as if they were stitched on his body.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 147.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*,

and lowest in his realm<sup>1</sup> In matters of justice Balban would not care for any relationship<sup>2</sup> He would never be slack nor would he care for anything when matters concerning justice came before him<sup>3</sup> Balban was so stern in this matter that, nobody dared to violate the law<sup>4</sup>

Next in priority was to make selection of men of character for holding offices Balban wanted to raise kingship to the supreme ethical, moral and political height Such a progress and development depended upon the quality of the associates who would be selected for administration<sup>5</sup> It, therefore, became essential to select men of character ability and talent for government and administrative jobs<sup>6</sup> It must be repeated that Balban believed in the nobility of character and purity of blood<sup>7</sup> Why should there be so much stress on this aspect? A very valid reason was that sixty years had elapsed since the establishment of Turkish rule During this period the structure of the ruling class had changed in certain ways In the beginning the Turks and the Afghans had the monopoly of government employment, but because of the fall in the number of foreigners and also because of the process proselytization quite a large number of Indians had also been taken in the government employment.<sup>8</sup> This element gradually tended to grow in proportion and number with the result that a stage came when the leaders of the Indian elements strove to seize

<sup>1</sup> *Tarikh i Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr), pp 152, 155, *Tarikh i Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr) Vol I, p 140

<sup>2</sup> *Tarikh i Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr), p 155

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid* (Tr) p 155

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, p 152 *Muntakhab-ut Tawarikh* by Badaoni (Tr), Vol I, p 184

<sup>5</sup> *Tarikh i Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr) pp 144, 150, 174, 177, *Tarikh i Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr), Vol I p 138, *Muntakhab ut Tawarikh* by Badaoni (Tr) Vol I, p 184

<sup>6</sup> *Tarikh i Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr) p 144, 150, *Tarikh i Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr) Vol I, p 138

<sup>7</sup> *Tarikh i Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr), p 151 refers to Sultan Iltutmish for removing thirty three persons and not Balban as assumed by Dr R P. Tripathi in *Some Aspects of Muslim Administration* p 34 see also *Religion and Politics in India* by K A. Nizami, pp 106-7

<sup>8</sup> *Religion and Politics in India* by K A. Nizami pp 320-323, *Comprehensive History of India*, Vol V, pp 225-226

power from the hands of the foreigners. During the reign of Nasiruddin Mahmud, Balban was a victim of what may be considered aggression on the part of Indian elements. Imaduddin Rayhan nearly deprived him of power.<sup>1</sup> This insult he could not forget and forgive. When he became Sultan, he settled scores with Indians converted to Islam. He drove them from power, and replaced them by choosing men of character<sup>2</sup> and for him only Turks were men of character and pure blood. Balban tried to restore the monopoly of Turks and, therefore, they alone were appointed to high government offices.<sup>3</sup> Balban disliked to talk to ordinary persons and traders, howsoever rich they might be, and discouraged his officers to recommend such persons for any post.<sup>4</sup> In the first year of his reign Balban ordered for an able person of high origin to be presented before him for the post of Khawajagi of Amroha. Accordingly Malik Alauddin Kishli Khan (Amir Hajib) and Malik Nizamuddin Buzgala (Nayab Vakildar) selected Kamal Mahiyar and presented him before the Sultan.<sup>5</sup> When Balban enquired about the meaning of Mahiyar and was told that he was the son of a Hindu slave, the Sultan lost control over himself out of anger.<sup>6</sup> After some time he called Adil Khan Shamsi Azmi, Timur Khan, Malikul-Umra, Fakhruddin Kotwal and Imadul-Mulk Rawat-i-Arz for private audience. Then he called Kishli Khan, Nizamuddin Buzgala, the Nayab Amir Hajib, Nayab Vakildar and Khas Hajib Isam and told them about the presentation of low-bred person for the post of Khawajagi.<sup>7</sup> The Sultan explained to all the officers that in future he would

<sup>1</sup>*Tabqat-i-Nasiri* by Minhaj-us-Siraj (Tr.), p. 50.

<sup>2</sup>*Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr.), Vol. I, p. 138 ; *Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), pp. 144, 177.

<sup>3</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Ferishta (Tr.), Vol. I, p. 138.

<sup>4</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), pp. 147-149. During the reign of Balban Fakhr Baoni a very rich person was very anxious to talk to the Sultan. But all his efforts bore no fruits. Ultimately he approached some high officers who recommended him to Sultan. But the latter refused to talk to him for it would undermine the royal prestige. *Ibid.*, p. 147, see also *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr.), Vol. pp. 138-139.

<sup>5</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 149.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, (Tr.), p. 149.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, (Tr.), p. 150.

never tolerate the recommendation for such a low and mean person because he was a descendant of the family of Afrasiyab. He warned his officers not to recommend an Iqta or high post such as *Khwājgi*, *Mushrifī* (accounts) and *Mudabbiri* (correspondence) to a low bred person howsoever able he might be. Otherwise they would be punished severely.<sup>1</sup> So long as the Sultan was alive no person of low parentage could aspire for a high post.

Thus in the eyes of Balban, the salvation of a monarch lay in the fulfilment of four duties (i) to protect religion and follow the ideals of Shariat, (ii) to suppress immorality and sin (iii) to appoint pious and God-fearing officers and, (iv) to administer justice.<sup>2</sup> Balban's own statement bears witness to the fact as to how far did he follow these duties, "All that I can do is to crush the cruelties of the cruel and to see that all persons are equal before law. The glory of the state rests upon a rule which makes its subjects loyal and disciplined, but does not make the rich prosperous - or the indigent happy - a cause of sedition and rebellion."<sup>3</sup>

Thus in the eyes of Balban kingship depended upon power, prestige and dignity of a sovereign.<sup>4</sup> Since sovereignty was the representation (Naibi)<sup>5</sup> of God, the King must keep the honour and the glory of this gift. And best way to repay this gratitude was to discharge the kingly duties with utmost care and to look after the welfare of the people.

Balban's concept of monarchy was 'pragmatic and materialistic'.<sup>6</sup> The Sultan was influenced by both idealistic and practical aspects.<sup>7</sup> No doubt when Balban thought in terms of ideal he was always conscious of his own limitations.<sup>8</sup> The

<sup>1</sup>*Ibid*, (Tr), p 150

<sup>2</sup>*Tarikh i Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr), pp 153 155

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid*, p 155

<sup>4</sup>*Some Aspects of Muslim Administration* by R.P. Tripathi p 37, *The Government of the Sultanate* by U N Day, p 42

<sup>5</sup>*Tarikh i Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr), p 176

<sup>6</sup>*Politics in Pre Mughal Times* by Ishwar Topa, p 67

<sup>7</sup>As a Muslim Balban had certain ideals of Kingship as a ruler and statesman he had different ideals. *Politics in Pre Mughal Times* by Ishwar Topa, pp 70 71

<sup>8</sup>*Tarikh i Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr) pp 155, 173

ideals of Nuruddin Mubarak Gaznavi profoundly influenced him but he wept bitterly because he was unable to put them into practice.<sup>1</sup> It was beyond his attainment specially in view of the fact that even other great Sultans were unable to live up to them.<sup>2</sup>

Balban's advice to his sons<sup>3</sup> contains his ideals of kingship. Since Barani was not a contemporary of Balban it is obvious that he did not hear it personally. It is likely that these ideas might be Barani's own and put in the mouth of Balban. The veracity of these statements is doubtful. But no one can say that the behaviour and conduct of Balban was not in accordance with these ideals. A review of Balban's speeches indicate that kingship being divine and entrusted to a particular person "only that King performs his duty towards his Bestower who utilises his wealth, position, strength, awe, force, Government servants, treasury and all for the destruction of corruption, opposition, rebellion and conspiracy. If he is not able to completely wipe out corruption and sin he must endeavour to reduce it."<sup>4</sup> Balban further advised his son that "You should keep in mind the dignity of sovereignty while dealing with your own wives, children, friends and slaves... You should always endeavour to talk and associate only with people of high birth... pure blood, loyal, artistic in nature... conscious of their rights..."<sup>5</sup> According to Balban the subjects "pick up taste for such things in which they discover the monarch's fondness...." The peculiarities of the monarch's taste are also created in the subject.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 155; see also *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr.), Vol. I, p. 141.

<sup>2</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 155.

<sup>3</sup>Quoted earlier in footnote.

<sup>4</sup>*The Political Theory of the Delhi Sultanate* by Prof. Habib and Dr. Afsar S. Khan, pp. 97-101.

<sup>5</sup>*The Government of the Sultanate* by U.N. Day, p. 41. See also *Foundation of Muslim Rule in India* by Habibullah, p. 273. Barani's views about Government expressed in *Fatawa-i-Jahandari* are very much similar to those of Balban.

<sup>6</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 174.

<sup>7</sup>*Ib'd.*, pp. 176-177.

<sup>8</sup>*Ib'd.*, p. 176.

Balban, however, suffered from a feeling of severe inadequacies in attaining these ideals. He claimed to be a descendent of Afrasiyab yet he could not forget that he was basically a slave unable to attain the ideals of kingship<sup>1</sup>. His excessive emphasis on purity of blood perhaps stems from his feeling of inferiority. Unlike him Alauddin Khalji never claimed descent from a royal line and never insisted on the purity of blood. It is difficult to believe that Balban said all that is attributed to him and whether he had a philosophical bent of mind at all.

We have seen that at the time of Balban's accession chaotic conditions prevailed in the empire and lawlessness was rampant<sup>2</sup>. A ruler with firm and realistic approach to the problems of the day was needed to stop the deterioration. Balban was, therefore, right in following a ruthless policy of blood and iron. He was very clear about the policies which he had to follow and which he had formulated by his own long experience and wisdom. He was a shrewd and keen observer of human nature. He knew that persons with ambition were liable to create problems in the empire and he, therefore made it a point to suppress all such persons<sup>3</sup>. It seems doubtful that Balban could have encouraged and tolerated "people of their rights"<sup>4</sup>. He was guided more by political expediency than by noble thoughts.

The various essentials of kingship to which Balban referred showed his worldly approach and practical wisdom, Army, treasury, associates and confidence of the people were the basic things for kingship in the eyes of Balban<sup>5</sup>. He believed

<sup>1</sup>*Tarikh-i Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr) pp 173, 176, 196, Balban confessed the fact that he was a Shamsi Slave. There are no references to Balban's manumission and it is difficult to say whether he has manumitted. See also *Foundation of Muslim Rule in India* by Habibullah, p 286

<sup>2</sup>*Tarikh-i Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr), p 141-144

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid*, p 157

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid* p 177 This was an advice given by Balban to his son

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid*, p 178

that the army which was the mainstay of the state should be well organised.<sup>1</sup> Royal majesty can be maintained by ostentatious show and by inspiring fear in the mind of the populace.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>A King must have under his command ten Khans, each Khan must have ten Maliks, each Malik ten Amirs, each Amir ten Sipahsalar, each Sipahsalar ten Sar Khails (Generals) and each Sar Khail ten horsemen or footmen. See *Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 225. This scale of the army leads to 1,000,000 which does not seem possible.

<sup>2</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 174.

## ESTABLISHMENT OF PEACE

**I**MMEDIATELY after his accession Balban found that Mewaties had grown in number and had become very bold<sup>1</sup> Residing in the neighbourhood of Delhi, they came to the city in the night, forced their entry in the houses, attacked, plundered, and molested the people The large dense forest which had grown around Delhi made their task easy It was difficult for people and traders to feel secure<sup>2</sup> Barani writes, "the daring of the Mewaties in the neighbourhood of Delhi was carried to such an extent that the western gates of the city were shut at after noon prayer and no one dared to go out of the city after that hour whether one travelled as a pilgrim or enjoy by the side of Sultani (Shamshi) tank The Mewaties would assault the water carriers and the girls who were fetching water (from the tank) they would strip them and carry off their clothes"<sup>3</sup>

Naturally, therefore, Balban considered suppression of Mewaties to be of prime concern in the very first year of his reign For one year he occupied himself with clearing the forest and punishing the Meos<sup>4</sup> A large number of them

<sup>1</sup>Mewaties were operating in Mathura Alwar and Bhartpur *Tarikh i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr) p 163, *Tarikh i Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr), Vol I p 142, *Muntakhob ut Tawarikh* by Badaoni (Tr) Vol I, p 185, *Tarikh i Mubarakshahi* by Yahya (Tr) p 37

<sup>2</sup>*Tarikh i Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr) p 163, *Tarikh i Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr) Vol I p 142

<sup>3</sup>*Tarikh i Firozshahi* by Barani (E&D) Vol III p 104 (Tr), p 163

<sup>4</sup>*ib d* p 163 *Tarikh i Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr), Vol I, p 142, *Muntakhob-ut Tawarikh* by Badaoni (Tr), Vol I, p 185

were put to death.<sup>1</sup> He built a fort at Gopalgir and established a number of military posts around Delhi<sup>2</sup> and posted Afghan soldiers there. Although the Sultan lost a number of soldiers in the campaign he was at last able to free the people of the scourge of the Mewaties.<sup>3</sup> At this very time the fort of Jalali<sup>4</sup> was repaired as a security measure for this area.<sup>5</sup> Once more Afghan soldiers were posted there and land was assigned free of tax.<sup>6</sup> Barani writes that "the den of robbers was thus converted into a guard house and Mussalmans and guardians of the way took the place of highway robbers. It remains standing to this day."<sup>7</sup>

Meanwhile disturbances broke out in Katehar.<sup>8</sup> Rebels had run amok in Badayun and Amroha, plundering and pillaging villages.<sup>9</sup> They openly challenged the power of the governors of Badayun and Amroha. Even the governors of neighbouring places failed to check them.<sup>10</sup>

Balban returned from Kampil and Patiali amidst great rejoicings, Barani informs that "his mind was bent upon

<sup>1</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (E&D), p. 104, "in this campaign one hundred thousand royal army were slain", (Tr.), pp. 163-164; *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* say that 1,00,000 Mewaties were killed (Tr.), Vol. I., p. 142. *Comprehensive History of India*, Vol. V, says that in this conflict Yak Lakhī, a slave of Sultan was killed, p. 278.

<sup>2</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 164; *Futuh-us-Salatin* by Isami (Tr.), p. 304.

<sup>3</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 164; *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh* by Badaoni (Tr.), Vol. I, p. 185; Ferishta says, that "the tract thus cleared afterwards proved excellent arable land and became well cultivated," *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* (Tr.), Vol. I., p. 142.

<sup>4</sup>Jalali is situated eleven miles east of Aligarh, *Foundation of Muslim Rule in India* by A.B.M. Habibullah, p. 152, footnote.

<sup>5</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (E&D) Vol. III, p. 105, (Tr.) p. 164, *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr.) Vol. I, p. 142.

<sup>6</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 164.

<sup>7</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (E&D), Vol. III, p. 105.

<sup>8</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 165 (E&D) Vol. III, p. 105; *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr.), Vol. I, p. 142; *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh* by Badaoni (Tr.), Vol. I, p. 185.

<sup>9</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (E&D) Vol. III, p. 105 (Tr.). p. 165.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*

suppressing the disturbances at Katehar, so he ordered the main body of his army (Qalb) to be prepared for service and he spread the report that he was going to the hills on a hunting excursion <sup>1</sup> He, however, marched towards Katehar where he reached after three days and sent forward five thousand archers <sup>2</sup> According to Barani he "gave them orders to burn down Katehar and destroy it, to slay every man and to spare none but women and children, not even boys who had reached the age of eight or nine years He remained for some days at Katehar and directed the slaughter The blood of the rioters ran in streams, heaps of slain were seen near every village and jungle and the stench of the dead reached as far as the Ganges" <sup>3</sup>

Rebellion had spread in Doab also <sup>4</sup> Rebels had been committing robberies and had rendered the roads unsafe Balban ordered that the forests around the city should be felled and the towns and territories of Doab be assigned to distinguished Chiefs "Balban directed to lay waste and destroy the villages of the marauders, to slay the men, to make prisoners of the women and children, to clear away the jungle and to suppress all lawless proceedings" <sup>5</sup> The Amirs who were entrusted with this task cut the forest, punished the disobedient, and compelled the people of Doab to "obedience and submission" <sup>6</sup>

Balban then paid his attention to Hindustan (Awadh) <sup>7</sup> the approach roads to which had become unsafe by marauding

<sup>1</sup>*Tarikh i Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr), p 165

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid*, p 106 Ferishta say that Sultan marched with five hundred select cavalry, *Tarikh i Ferishta* (Tr), Vol I, p 142

<sup>3</sup>*Tarikh i Firozshahi* by Barani (E&D) Vol I p 106 This seems to be an exaggeration because Balban went there to save the people and the peasants from the rebels See also *Tarikh i Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr) Vol I, p 142, *Muntkhab us Tawarikh* by Badaoni (Tr), Vol I, p 185

<sup>4</sup>*Tarikh i Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr), p 164, *Tarikh i Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr), Vol I p 142

<sup>5</sup>*Tarikh i Firozshahi* by Barani (E&D), Vol III, p 105 (Tr), p 164

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid*, p 164

*Ibid* *Tarikh i Mubarakshahi* by Yahya (Tr) p 38

bands of robbers. Balban undertook to clear the road under his personal supervision. It was a rare occasion when Balban went out of the capital. "Balban marched out (of the city) twice to open the road to Hindustan and proceeded to neighbouring Kampil and Patiali. There he remained for five or six months putting the rebels to the sword."<sup>1</sup> The marauders were put to death. A lot of booty was collected from that region which brought down the prices in Delhi<sup>2</sup>. Balban built forts at Kampil, Patiali and Bhojpur which were the strongholds of the rebels.<sup>3</sup> Here too Afghan soldiers were posted and land assigned to forts was made tax free.<sup>4</sup> Balban thus brought to an end the insecurity caused by the rapacious plunder and despoilation of the land by the robbers.<sup>5</sup>

'The whole district was ravaged and so much plunder was made that the royal army was enriched ..from that time unto the end of the glorious reign no rebellion made head in Katehar and the countries of Badayun, Amroha, Sambal and Kanwari continued safe from the violence and tribulance of the people of Katehar".<sup>6</sup>

According to Yahya's accounts Balban next attacked the Koh-payah Santur and made the chiefs of those places "food for the sword."<sup>7</sup> This expedition was undertaken to punish the hill chiefs who assisted the rebels, Thereafter the Sultan decided to invade the Jud mountains (the salt range),<sup>8</sup> and

<sup>1</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 164 (E&D) Vol. III, p. 105; *Tarikh-i-Farishta* by Farishta (Tr.), Vol. I, p. 142, *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh* by Badaoni (Tr.), Vol. I, p. 185.

<sup>2</sup>*Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr.), Vol. I, p. 142.

<sup>3</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 164.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid* p. 164, *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr.) Vol. I, p. 142.

<sup>5</sup>*Tarikh-i-Mubarakshahi* by Yahya (Tr.), p. 38.

<sup>6</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 164.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid*, p. 165.

<sup>8</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (E&D) Vol. III, p. 106; (Tr.), p. 165; *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr.), Vol. I, p. 142; *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh* by Badaoni (Tr.), Vol., I, p. 185.

<sup>9</sup>*Tarikh-i-Mubarakshahi* by Yahya (Tr.), pp. 37-38.

<sup>10</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (E&D) Vol. III, p. 106, (Tr.), p. 165; *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr.), Vol. I, pp. 142-143; *Tarikh-i-Mubarakshahi* by Yahya (Tr.), p. 38.

marched with proper force to punish the rebels. Barani writes that "the country was plundered and a large number of horses fell into the hands of the soldiers, so that the price of a horse in the army came to be forty Tanakas".<sup>1</sup>

Balban did not make efforts to expand his empire.<sup>2</sup> He realised that the state was not yet properly consolidated and its authority weakened by the feeble successors of Iltutmish. The Central government was not yet strong enough to curb the power of the provincial governors. The Hindus were ready to challenge the Sultan. The Mongols were constantly moving and threatening the Empire. It would not have in these circumstances been prudent to follow a policy of expansionism.

In his heart Balban wished to emulate the glorious deeds of Sultan Mahmud and Sanjar by occupying far off territories but the circumstances were not favourable for such a venture.<sup>1</sup> He was aware of the ever present danger of Mongol invasion should he attempt to leave the capital on an expedition.<sup>2</sup> He was

<sup>1</sup>*Tarikh-i Ferozshahi* by Barani (E&D), Vol III, p 106. Ferishta says that this country was famous for its breed of horses. *Tarikh-i Ferishta* (Tr) Vol I, p 143.

<sup>2</sup>Some close friends and Malikhs of Sultan such as Adil Khan Timur Khan and other (old Shamsi slaves) often represented to him that Qutubuddin Aibek and Iltutmish conquered Jhain, Malwa, Ujjain Gujrat and other countries and carried off treasures from Rais and Ranas. 'How is it that with your well equipped and disciplined army you do not undertake any distant campaign and never move out of your territory to conquer other regions.' *Tarikh-i Ferozshahi* by Barani (E&D) Vol III, p, 102, *Tarikh-i Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr), Vol I pp 141-142.

<sup>3</sup>*Tarikh-i Ferozshahi* by Barani (E&D), Vol III, p 103. "If this anxiety which admonishes me that I am the guardian and protector of Musalman, was removed then I would not stay one day in my capital, but would lead forth my army to capture treasures and valuables, elephants and horses and would never allow the Rais, and Ranas to repose in quiet at a distance."

<sup>4</sup>"The thoughts (about conquest) which you have expressed have also been very active in my mind, but you have not considered the horders of Changiz Khan and the evil they have brought upon the women and children, the flocks and herds of my frontiers. These Mughals have established themselves in Ghazni, in Turmuz and in Mawaraun Nahr. The accursed wretches have heard of the wealth and prosperity of Hindustan and have set their heart upon conquering and plundering it. They have

also conscious of the fact that new conquests would bring in their wake problems of their settlement and administrative organisation<sup>1</sup> necessitating deployment of a large number of loyal officers and a properly equipped army.<sup>2</sup> Were he to send trusted officers to administer new territories the centre would be deprived of their services. He could only trust loyal and faithful servants in far flung areas, where, otherwise, in case of an uprising he would have to send another army leading to unnecessary bloodshed.<sup>3</sup> "For me to seize and occupy other countries would only bring harm to the kingdom."<sup>4</sup> Thus Balban followed the wise, "strengthen and consolidate your kingdom for it is wiser than to seize others that are difficult to hold and would only weaken your own."<sup>5</sup>

Few and far between were the occasions when Balban left the capital.<sup>6</sup> Fond though he was of game he never halted outside the capital at night.<sup>7</sup> He went out only for suppression

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taken and plundered Lahore ..They watch opportunity of my departure on a distant campaign to enter my cities and ravage the whole Doab. They even talk about the conquest and sack of Delhi. I have devoted all the revenues of my Kingdom to the equipment of my army and I hold all my forces ready and prepared to received them. I never leave my Kingdom nor will I go to any distance from it. In the reigns of my patrons and predecessors there was none of this difficulty of the Mughals; they could lead their armies where they please, subdue the dominions of the Hindus and carry off gold and treasures, staying away from their capitals a year or two." *Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (E&D) Vol, III, pp.102-3; see also *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr.), Vol. I, pp. 141-142.

<sup>1</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 160.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.* p. 160.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.* p. 160.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.* p. 160.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.* p. 161.

<sup>6</sup>Amir Khusran's remark that Balban used to conquer daily is nothing but poetical hyperbole. *Diwan-i-Wastul Hayat* (Tr.), p. 284. Isami records that Balban attacked Chittor in the second year and Lahore in the sixth year after his accession. *Futuh-us-Salatin* (Tr.), p. 304.

<sup>7</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 162.

of rebels<sup>1</sup> and restoration of order.<sup>2</sup> All his energies Balban directed towards consolidation and strengthening of his Empire.

<sup>1</sup>*Ibid* p 161 (towards Kampil and Patiali) p 165 (to Katchar) p 166 (to Jud Hills) p 183 (to suppress Tughril Beg) See also *Tarikh-i Mubarakshahi* by Yahya (Tr.) pp 37-78

<sup>2</sup>*Tarikh-i Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.) p 167 He went towards Lahore to restore the city which was target of Mongol invasion.

## IV

### THE BENGAL PROBLEM

**R**EBELLION of Tughril Beg, the Governor of Lakhnauti, was an important landmark in the history of Balban's period.<sup>1</sup> Lakhnauti has appropriately been called Bulghakpur (the city of strife) also. It had a history of rebellion against the central authority by its Governors ever since the time of Muhammad Ghorī.

When Balban came to the throne Tatar Khan (son of Arsalan Khan) was the Governor of Lakhnauti and he had sent sixtythree elephants to Balban in the first year of this reign.<sup>2</sup> Tatar Khan was followed by Tughril Beg Khan who was appointed Balban.<sup>3</sup> Tughril Beg was a slave of the Sultan yet "he was a Turk and a very active, bold, courageous and generous man."<sup>4</sup> A combination of circumstances and advice from men surrounding him germinated the desire for independence in his mind. He attacked Jajnagar and captured a lot of booty including elephants and valuables. He was advised that neither the Sultan, old and pre-occupied with Mongol invasion, nor his sons and

<sup>1</sup> According to Barani the rebellion took place after fifteen or sixteen years of Balban's accession. *Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* (E&D) Vol. III, p. 112; According to Ferishta it took place round 1279 A.D. *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* (Tr.), Vol. I, p. 145; According to Isami it took place in 1270-71 A.D. *Futuh-us-Salatin* (Tr.), p. 304, ed by Mahdi Husain, Vol. II, p. 292.

<sup>2</sup> *Tarikh-i-Ferozshahi* by Barani (E&D) Vol. III, p. 103.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 112.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 113, *Tarikh-i-Ferista* by Ferishta (Tr.), Vol. I, p. 145. The early account of Tughril's rebellion given by Yahya differs from Barani, *Tarikh-i-Mubarakshahi* (Tr.), pp. 38-39.

nobles were in a position to leave the capital<sup>1</sup> According to Ferishta and Yahya, Sultan Balban was ill and his long absence gave rise to the rumours that he was dead<sup>2</sup> Self-willed and daring<sup>3</sup>, Tughril was persuaded by close associates to declare himself an independent king This he proceeded to do by reading Khutba in his name, issuing coins and assuming the title of Mughis Uddin<sup>4</sup> As a gesture of defiance he refused to send war booty to Balban He won over the people to his side by distributing money amongst them

Balban was shocked by the teachery of Tughril Khan for the latter was his favourite slave Barani writes that "in his anger and sorrow he lost his rest and appetite and became more and more incensed"<sup>5</sup> In order to quell the rebellion Balban sent Amir Khan (known as Abtagin—the long haired) who was holding the fief of Awadh<sup>6</sup> and who was assisted by Tamar Khan Malik Tajuddin and other nobles<sup>7</sup> Amir Khan crossed the Sarju River<sup>8</sup> for Lakhnauti where Tughril Khan vanquished him and took several soliders from the defeated army in his service<sup>9</sup> When this news reached Balban "his rage and shame increased a hundred fold"<sup>10</sup> So enraged was Balban

<sup>1</sup>*Tarikh i Firozshahi* by Barani (E&D) Vol III p 113

<sup>2</sup>*Tarikh i Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr), Vol I p 145, *Tarikh i Mubarakshahi* by Yahya (Tr) p 38

<sup>3</sup>*Tarikh i Firozshahi* by Barani (E&D) Vol III, p 113 *Tarikh i Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr) Vol I p 145

<sup>4</sup>*Tarikh i Firozshahi* by Barani (E&D) Vol III p 113 *Tarikh i Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr) Vol I p 145 According to Yahya, Balban was ill and news of his long absence created suspicion in the minds of the people In Lakhnauti the two Amirs Tughril Khan and Amir Khan had a confrontation Tughril Khan succeeded and assumed the royal canopy and adopted the title of Muizuddin<sup>5</sup> *Tarikh i Mubarakshahi* (Tr) p 38

<sup>6</sup>*Tarikh i Firozshahi* by Barani (E&D), Vol III p 113

<sup>7</sup>*Futuh us Salatin* by Isarni (Tr) p 304 call him Tirmati, see also Vol II ed by Mahdi Hussain p 292

<sup>8</sup>*Tarikh i Firozshahi* by Barani (E&D) Vol III, p 114, *Tarikh i Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr) Vol I p 145

<sup>9</sup>*Tarikh i Firozshahi* by Barani (E&D) Vol III p 114, *Tarikh i Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr) Vol I p 145

<sup>10</sup>*Tarikh i Firozshahi* by Barani (E&D) Vol III p 114

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid* Vol III p 111 *Tarikh i Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr), Vol I p 145

that he ordered Amir Khan to be hung to death—a decision which according to some heralded the beginning of the end for Balban.<sup>1</sup>

The second expedition which Sultan sent under Malik Tirmati<sup>2</sup> met the same fate and numerous captured soldiers were converted to his side with the help of money.<sup>3</sup> “The news of this second defeat overwhelmed the Sultan with shame and anger.”<sup>4</sup> Much to the Sultan’s chagrin the third punitive expedition under Shahabuddin, the Amir of Awadh, met with the same shameful fate.<sup>5</sup> The Sultan then decided to take the matters in his own hands<sup>6</sup> in the year 1210-81. The Sultan then resorted to the subterfuge of leaving for Samana and Sunam which were under Bughra Khan, on the pretext of hunting expedition but in reality to make necessary arrangements.<sup>7</sup> Malik Sunj Sarjandar<sup>8</sup> was appointed the Naib of Samana and Bughra Khan was asked to accompany the Sultan.<sup>9</sup> The Sultan instructed Prince Muhammad of Multan to remain vigilant and appointed Malik-ul-Umra Kotwal as his lieutenant at Delhi to look after the state in his absence.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (E&D), Vol. III, p. 114; *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr.), Vol. I, p. 145; *Futuh-us-Salatin* by Isami (Tr.), p. 304,

<sup>2</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (E&D) Vol. III, p. 114 does not give the name of the commander; *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr.), Vol. I, p. 145 calls him ‘Tirmuny Toork’; *Tarikh-i-Mubarakshahi* by Yahya (Tr.), p. 39 calls him Malik Shihabuddin the Amir of Oudh; *Tabaqat-i-Akbari* by Nizammuddin (Tr. Be De), p. 108 calls him Tamar Khan Shamsi; *Futuh-us-Salatin* by Isami (Tr.), p. 304 calls him Bahadur, see also *Futuh-us-Salatin*, ed by Mahdi Husain, Vol. II, pp. 293-224. *Comprehensive History of India*, Vol. V, p. 294, also calls him Bahadur.

<sup>3</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (E&D), Vol. III, p. 114.

<sup>4</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani, Vol. III, p. 115.

<sup>5</sup>*Tarikh-i-Mubarakshahi* by Yahya (Tr.), p. 39.

<sup>6</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (E&D), Vol. III, p. 115; *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr.), Vol. I, p. 145; *Tarikh-i-Mubarakshahi* by Yahya (Tr.), p. 40; *Futuh-us-Salatin* by Isami (Tr.), p. 304, mentions the year 1271-72.

<sup>7</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (E&D), Vol. III, p. 115; *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr.), Vol. I, p. 146.

<sup>8</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (E&D) Vol. III, p. 115.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid*, p. 115.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid*, p. 115; *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr.), Vol. p. 146.

After making adequate arrangements at the capital the Sultan left for Lakhnauti determined to teach Tughril Khan the lesson of his life<sup>1</sup> Even the rains did not deter him<sup>2</sup> On reaching Awadh he ordered "a general levy and two lakhs of men of all classes were enrolled"<sup>3</sup> A number of boats were collected and the Sultan crossed the river Saryu The rains hampered the movement of the army<sup>4</sup> When Tughril heard about the arrival of Sultan he is reported to have said "if any one besides the Sultan had come against me, I would have found him and fought it out But as the Sultan has left his duties at Delhi, and has come against me, in person, I cannot withstand him"<sup>5</sup> Taking advantage of Sultan's delay Tughril fled, followed by many others who were afraid of Sultan's anger<sup>6</sup> Tughril moved towards Jajnagar hoping that the Sultan would leave Lakhnauti but Balban stayed in Lakhnauti for a long time before he went in pursuit of his enemy Hisamuddin (maternal grandfather of Barani) was appointed Governor of Lakhnauti<sup>7</sup> Balban marched quickly and arrived at Sunargaon The Rai of that place Raja Dhanuj Rai met Balban and agreed to check the flight of Tughril by water<sup>8</sup> The Sultan was bent upon capturing Tughril Khan

When the Sultan reached Jajnagar he discovered that Tughril had fled and he, therefore, sent Malik Barbak Bektar

<sup>1</sup> *Tarikh i Firozshahi* by (E&D) Vol III p 115, *Futuh us Salatin* by Isami, Ed by Mahhi Husain, Vol II p 296

<sup>2</sup> *Tarikh i Firozshahi* by Barani (E&D), Vol III, p 115, *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr), Vol I, p 146

<sup>3</sup> *Tarikh i Firozshahi* by Barani (E&D) Vol III, p 115

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid* p 115, *Diwan i Wasifful Hayat* by Amir Khusru (Tr) p 284

<sup>5</sup> *Tarikh i Firozshahi* by Barani (E&D) Vol III pp 115 116

<sup>6</sup> *Tarikh i Firozshahi* by Barani (E&D) p 116, *Tarikh i Mubarakshahi* by Yahya (Tr) p 40, *Futuh us Salatin* by Isami (Tr), p 304, *Diwan-i Wasifful Hayat* by Amir Khusru (Tr), p 284

<sup>7</sup> *Tarikh i Firozshahi* by Barani (E&D) Vol III, p 116, *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr), Vol I, p 146

<sup>8</sup> *Tarikh i Firozshahi* by Barani (E&D), Vol III p 116, *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr), Vol I, p 146, *Tarikh i Mubarakshahi* by Yahya (Tr), pp 39-40, *Diwan i Wasifful Hayat* by Amir Khusru (Tr), p 284

alongwith a small contingent of troops to look for Tughril.<sup>1</sup> At last after making numerous attempts to locate him,<sup>2</sup> Muhammad Sherandaz (the chief of Kol)<sup>3</sup>, his brother Malik Mukadder, and Tughril<sup>4</sup> Kush who were searching for him ran into some corn dealers who were returning from the camp of Tughril Khan. They were forced to divulge information about Tughril.<sup>5</sup> On receiving this news Malik Barbak Betkar captured Tughril Khan<sup>6</sup> who was taken by surprise.<sup>7</sup> Tughril Kush shot him by arrow and Mukadder cut off his head.<sup>8</sup> Sultan was immediately given this news. Tughril's family and servants were captured. Much booty was collected in the form of money, horses, arms, slaves<sup>9</sup>, etc. Balban bestowed robes of honour and gave rewards to the party who chased Tughril.<sup>10</sup> While he was

<sup>1</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (E&D), Vol. III, p. 117; *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr.), Vol. I, p. 146. Ferishta names Malik Barbak Bektar as Malik Yar Beg Birlass.

<sup>2</sup>*Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr.), Vol. I, p. 146; *Tarikh-i-Mubarakshahi* by Yahya (Tr.), p. 40.

<sup>3</sup>According to Barani Malik Mukadder was the brother of Malik Sherandaz. The latter was also the Chief of Kol. See *Tarikh-i-Ferozshahi* (E & D), Vol. III, p. 117. Ferishta does not mention anything about Malik Sherandaz. According to him Malik Mukadder was the brother of Malik Yar Beg Birlass. The former was the Chief of Kol. *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* (Tr.), Vol. I, p. 146.

<sup>4</sup>*Tarikh-i-Ferozshahi* by Barani (E & D), Vol. III, p. 117; *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr.), Vol. I, p. 146, Calls Malik Mukadder as Tughril Kush considering him one and same person while Barani calls them two different persons.

<sup>5</sup>*Tarikh-i-Ferozshahi* (E & D), Vol. III, p. 117; *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr.), Vol. I, p. 146.

<sup>6</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (E & D), Vol. III, p. 118.

<sup>7</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (E & D), Vol. III, p. 118; *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr.), Vol. I, p. 147.

<sup>8</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (E & D), Vol. III, p. 118; *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr.) Vol. I, p. 147. According to Yahya Malik Nektar fell upon Tughril "imprisoned him and later he flayed and sent body to Sultan". *Tarikh-i-Mubarakshahi* (Tr.), p. 40. According to Isami, Ali killed him by his sword; *Futuh-us-Salatun* (Tr.), p. 304; *Diwan-i-Wastul Hayat* by Amir Khushru (Tr.), p. 284.

<sup>9</sup> *Tarikh-i-Ferozshahi* by Barani (E & D), Vol. III, p. 118.

<sup>10</sup>*Tarikh-i-Ferozshahi* by Barani (E & D), Vol. III, p. 119; *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr.), Vol. I, p. 147.

unhappy at the haste with which Tughril was killed<sup>1</sup> he bestowed special favour on Muhammad Sherandaz. He gave the title of Tughril Kush to the person who shot Tughril<sup>2</sup>. Mukadder received an award for severing the head of the enemy<sup>3</sup>.

The Sultan ordered that the family and associates of Tughril Khan should also be killed at gibbets<sup>4</sup>. Some prisoners who belonged to Delhi were taken there to be punished.

Bughrī Khan was put in charge of Lakhnauti<sup>5</sup> and he was given the booty acquired there except for gold and elephants which the Sultan took to Delhi<sup>6</sup>. The Sultan also advised his son not to neglect his royal duties and indulge in wine and parties. The Sultan warned him also not to think of any evil designs against the kingdom of Delhi<sup>7</sup>. He gave a lot of advice to his son before leaving for Delhi<sup>8</sup>.

Balban received tumultuous welcome and presents at several places on way to Delhi<sup>9</sup>. He was given rousing reception in Delhi. Whole of the city was decorated and all the renowned and learned persons—Qazis, Saiyyeds, Alims—came to receive him<sup>10</sup>. Sultan distributed largesse to the poor and gave robes

<sup>1</sup>*Tarikh-i Firozshahi* by Barani (E&D), Vol III, p 119. *Tarikh-i Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr) Vol I, p 147.

<sup>2</sup>Barani speaks of Malik Mukadder and Tughril Khush as two different persons while Ferishta holds that Mukaddar shot Tughril and he was Tughril Khush. Barani p 119, Ferishta p 147, *Futuh us Salatin* by Isami (Tr), p 304 calls him Ali. Also see *Futuh us-Salatin*, ed by Husa in Vol II, pp 297-298.

<sup>3</sup>*Tarikh-i Firozshahi* by Barani (E & D), Vol III p 119.

<sup>4</sup>*Tarikh-i Firozshahi* by Barani (E & D), Vol III, p 119. Sultan is said to have not even spared a Kalandar and his followers who was a favourite of Tughril. See also *Tarikh-i Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr), Vol I pp 148, *Muntakhab ut Tawarikh* by Badaoni (Tr) Vol I, p 185.

<sup>5</sup>*Tarikh-i Firozshahi* by Barani (E & D) Vol III, p 120. *Tarikh-i Mubarakshahi* by Yahya (Tr) p 40, *Futuh us Salatin* by Isami (Tr) p 304, *Diwan Wastul Hayat* by Amir Khushru (Tr) p 284.

<sup>6</sup>*Tarikh-i Firozshahi* by Barani (E & D) Vol III, p 120.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid*, p 120.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid* p 120.

<sup>9</sup>*Tarikh-i Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr), p 198, *Tarikh-i Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr), Vol I, p 148.

<sup>10</sup>*Tarikh-i Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr) p 198.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid*, p 198. *Tarikh-i Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr), Vol I, p 148.

of honour to eminent people.<sup>1</sup> Fakhruddin Kotwal was specially honoured and given the title of Birader-i-Malik-ul-Umra.<sup>2</sup> Prisoners brought from Lakhnauti were then ordered to be hanged but on the intercession of Qaz-i-Lashkar, they were pardoned.<sup>3</sup>

The conduct of punitive expeditions to subdue the rebellion in Bengal exposed grave weaknesses of Sultan's military organisation and caused him considerable embarrassment. Three generals who were dispatched by him to quell the uprising met with failure which while on the one hand pointed to the strength and courage of the rebels, on the other hand to the weakness of the royal army—an army which was carefully nurtured and organised by the Sultan.

It is again a matter of surprise that in spite of an army equipped and organised with infinite care the Sultan had to order a special recruitment at Awadh on his way to Bengal. The only possible explanation is that probably it was difficult to march a very big army to distant Bengal. It also betrays the grave anxiety and concern of the Sultan and it seemed that his confidence was shaken before, by sheer dint of effort, he brought the expedition to a successful culmination.

<sup>1</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.) p. 199.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid*, p. 199; *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr.), Vol. I, p. 148.

## THE MONGOL PROBLEM

THE problem of the defence of the vulnerable north-western frontier where the daunting shadow of Mongols was looming at the door steps had been of grave concern to the Sultans of Delhi. After the death of Iltutmish the Mongol presence on the frontier was being felt more and more and these hordes had become overtly active in the Indus region.

During the reign of Sultan Bahram Shah Ogatai (1227-41) sent an army under the command of Tayir<sup>1</sup>. In 1241 A.D. the Mongols invaded Lahore<sup>2</sup> and Malik Qaradash, the Muqta of Lahore, though brave and courageous failed to face them and fled to Delhi. The Mongols occupied the city in December 1241 A.D.<sup>3</sup> The Sultan then appointed Malik Qutubuddin Hasan alongwith others to fight and defend the frontier against the Mongols<sup>4</sup>. In 1244-45 A.D.<sup>5</sup> the Mongols led by Manguta<sup>5</sup> again attempted another attack and proceeded towards Uch. When Sultan Alauddin Masud assembled his armies and reached near the Bias river the Mongols ran

<sup>1</sup>According to Ferishta 'This invasion took place under Toormoosh reen Khan' *Tarikh i Ferishta* (Tr), Vol I, p 115

<sup>2</sup>*Tabqat i Nasiri* by Minhaj us Siraj (Tr) p 39, *Tarikh i Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr) Vol I p 125

<sup>3</sup>*Tabqat i Nasiri* by Minhaj us Siraj (Tr), p 39, *Tarikh i Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr), Vol I, pp 125-126, *Tarikh i Mubarakshahi* by Yahya (Tr), pp 28-29

<sup>4</sup>*Tabqat i Nasiri* by Minhaj us Siraj (Tr), p 40

<sup>5</sup>Ogatai died immediately after the capture of Lahore by Mongols in 1247 A.D. It was probably due to the death of the Khan that the campaigns were stopped for some time

<sup>6</sup>*Tabqat i Nasiri* by Minhaj us Siraj (Tr) pp 42, 83-84, *Tarikh i Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr), Vol I, p 128. *Tarikh i Mubarakshahi* by Yahya (Tr), p 31

away from Uch and left for Khurasan in<sup>1</sup> the beginning of 1246 A.D. Balban had played a significant role in this campaign:

In the year 1246 A.D., after the succession of Nasiruddin Mahmud, Balban again chased the Mongols who had come upto Jhelum river.<sup>2</sup> According to Minhaj-us-Siraj no Mongol army dared invade Sindh during the year 1247-1248 due to courage and bravery of Ulugh Khan.<sup>3</sup> The visitations of Mongols did not stop and they continued to molest the frontier.<sup>4</sup> In 1257 A.D. Mongols again came from Khurasan to Uch and proceeded to Milan but Malik Kishlu Khan made a treaty with their leader Sari Nuyeen.<sup>5</sup>

In the year 1260 A.D. Halaku sent his emissaries to Delhi.<sup>6</sup> They were given a grand reception which was specially organised by Ulugh Khan.<sup>7</sup> Halaku was very pleased with this reception. He expressed his goodwill towards the Sultan by announcing to the Mongol soldiers under the leadership of Saki Nuyeen that "if the hoof of your horse enters the dominion of Sultan Nasiruddin all the four legs of the horse shall be cut off."<sup>8</sup> Thus it was due to Ulugh Khan's valour and tact that peace was established on the frontier.<sup>9</sup>

At the time of coming to power Balban was well acquainted with all the aspects of Mongol menace.<sup>10</sup> Mongol power was also luckily weakening at this time.<sup>11</sup>

Balban believed in personally supervising the arrangements and visited Rewari regularly on the pretext of hunting expedi-

<sup>1</sup>*Tabqat-i-Nasiri* by Minhaj-us-Siraj (Tr.), p. 42; *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr.), Vol. I, p. 128; *Tarikh-i-Mubarakshahi* by Yahya (Tr.), p. 31.

<sup>2</sup>*Tabqat-i-Nasiri* by Minhaj-us-Siraj (Tr.), pp. 46, 84.

<sup>3</sup>*Tabqat-i-Nasiri* (Tr.), p. 85.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 49, invasion in 1250-51 AD; p. 50, invasion in 1253-54 A.D.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 54.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 94; *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr.), Vol. I, p. 135; *Tarikh-i-Mubarakshahi* by Yahya (Tr.), p. 36.

<sup>7</sup>*Tabqat-i-Nasiri* by Minhaj-us-Siraj (Tr.), pp. 96-97. *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr.), Vol. I, pp. 135-135.

<sup>8</sup>*Tabqat-i-Nasiri* by Minhaj-us-Siraj (Tr.), p. 98.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup>The Mongols used to plunder Lahore and send expedition to India almost every year. *Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), pp. 159-160.

<sup>11</sup>Halaku had also died.

tion to keep a watch over the Mongol activities<sup>1</sup> and to check the defence arrangements there<sup>2</sup> During the Mongol invasion of 1241 A D Lahore had been completely devastated and immediately after the Juh campaign the Sultan left for Lahore<sup>3</sup> and ordered for the reconstruction of fort there<sup>4</sup> "the towns and villages of Lahore which the Mongols had devastated and laid waste, he re-peopled and appointed architects and managers"<sup>5</sup>

The Sultan put his best officials to defend the frontier Sher Khan, a cousin of the Sultan and a distinguished slave, was in charge of the defence of the frontiers Barani says that "he repaired the forts of Bhatinda and Bhatnir and held charge of the districts of Sannam, Lahore, Dipalpur and other territories exposed to the inroads of the Mongols the terror of his name and the greatness of his power deterred the Mongols from assailing the frontiers of Hindustan"<sup>6</sup>

Balban wanted to concentrate all his energies towards the defence of the frontiers<sup>7</sup> and it is for this reason that he refrained from undertaking any expeditions<sup>8</sup> to conquer new territories

When some of his advisers asked him why he did not annex new territories Balban is said to have replied that, "you have not considered the hordes of Changiz Khan, and the evil they have brought upon the women and children, the flocks and herds of

<sup>1</sup>*Tarikh i Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr), p 162, *Tarikh i Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr) Vol I, p 141

<sup>2</sup>*Tarikh i Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr), pp 162-163 Halaku observed that Balban's motive in going on hunting expeditions was actually to supervise the defence of his empire and keep the army vigilant It should not be forgotten that Halaku had died by this time

<sup>3</sup>*Tarikh i Firozshahi* by Barani (E & D), Vol III, p 107, *Tarikh i Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr), Vol I, p 143

<sup>4</sup>*Tarikh i Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr) (E & D) Vol III, p 107, *Tarikh i Mubarakshahi* by Yahya (Tr) p 38

<sup>5</sup>*Tarikh i Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr) (E & D) Vol III, p 107, *Tarikh i Mubarakshahi* by Yahya (Tr) p 38, *Tarikh i Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr), Vol I p 143

<sup>6</sup>*Tarikh i Firozshahi* by Barani (E & D) Vol III, p 109

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid*, pp 102-103, *Tarikh i Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr), Vol I p 142

<sup>8</sup>*Tarikh i Firozshahi* by Barani (E & D) Vol III, p 103, *Tarikh i Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr) Vol I, p 142.

my frontiers. . . These accursed wretches have heard of the wealth and property of Hindustan and have set their heart upon conquering and plundering it. They have taken and plundered Lahore within my territories, and no year passes that they do not come here and plunder the village. They watch the opportunity of my departure on a distant campaign to enter my cities and ravage the whole Doab. They even talk about the conquest and rule of Dehli. . . I never leave my kingdom, nor will I go to any distance from it. In the reign of my patrons and predecessors there was none of this difficulty of Mongols. . ."<sup>1</sup> Balban thus kept his army in a state of preparedness as an instrument of defence<sup>2</sup> and not of aggression. After the death of Sher Khan<sup>3</sup> the Sultan conferred Samana and Sannam on Tamar Khan who also belonged to the group of 'forty slaves.'<sup>4</sup> Sher Khan had acquitted himself well in the defence of other territories under his possession. "He had also shown himself able to give a good account of the Mongols"<sup>5</sup> Minhaj-us-Siraj has surprisingly not given any glowing account of the achievements of Sher Khan.<sup>6</sup> The performance of the nobles who were appointed in his place was, however, dismal and according to Barani "the Mongols made head against them and these frontier countries were exposed to their ravages."<sup>7</sup>

As soon as Balban had put down his rivals he appointed his own followers to strengthen his position on the frontiers. He appointed his son Prince Muhammad, the heir apparent, as the

<sup>1</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (E & D), Vol. III, pp. 102-103. .

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid*, p. 193.

<sup>3</sup>Balban poisoned him to death. According to Barani "He did not even come there when Sultan Balban succeeded, and so the Sultan, although the Khan, was his cousin, caused him to be poisoned." *Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* (E & D) Vol. III, p. 109; *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr.), Vol. I, p. 143.

<sup>4</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (E & D), Vol. III, p. 109; *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr.), Vol. I, p. 143.

<sup>5</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (E & D), Vol. III, p. 109.

<sup>6</sup>*Tabqat-i-Nasiri* by Minhaj-us-Siraj (Tr.), pp. 78-79. According to him Sher Khan even went to Mangu Khan. His loyalties created doubt in the mind of Ulugh Khan, the Naib, hence he deprived him of the frontier posting and assigned him Kol, Bhiyan, Mahaban, Gwalior, etc. near Delhi.

<sup>7</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (E & D), Vol. III, p. 109; *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr.), Vol. I, pp. 143-144.

Governor of Sind and its dependent frontier districts<sup>1</sup> The Sultan "bestowed on him the title of a Kaam-i-Milk"<sup>2</sup> while giving him this appointment The Prince used to visit him annually with lots of presents<sup>3</sup>

After some time Balban appointed his other son Bughra Khan to Samana and made in him in charge of "Samana, Sannam and all other dependencies"<sup>4</sup> The Sultan gave him adequate instructions at the time of departure<sup>5</sup> For Balban Samana was "an important territory and its army most useful" It is for this reason that the Prince was asked to refer all important matters to the Sultan<sup>6</sup>

Around this period the Mongols crossed the Beas river<sup>7</sup> Balban sent armies from three sides—Prince Muhammad from Multan, Bughra Khan from Samana and Malik Barbak Bektars

<sup>1</sup>*Tarikh-i Firozshahi* by Barani (E & D), Vol III, p. 109, *Futuh us-Salatin* by Isami (Tr), p. 304, *Tarikh-i Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr) Vol I p. 144, *Tarikh-i Mubarakshahi* by Yahya (Tr) p. 40

<sup>2</sup>*Tarikh-i Firozshahi* by Barani (E & D), Vol III, p. 110 See also *Futuh us-Salatin* by Isami, Ed by Mahdi Husain, Vol II, p. 299, who says the title of Qaan Malik was bestowed on the prince

<sup>3</sup>*Tarikh-i Firozshahi* by Barani (E & D), Vol III, p. 111 Once the prince paid visit to Balban after three years because the latter had gone to suppress the rebellion of Tughril Khan See p. 122 See also *Tarikh-i Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr), Vol I, pp. 144, 148, *Tarikh-i Mubarakshahi* by Yahya (Tr), p. 40

<sup>4</sup>*Tarikh-i Firozshahi* by Barani (E & D), Vol III, p. 111, *Tarikh-i Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr) Vol I, p. 144

<sup>5</sup>*Tarikh-i Firozshahi* by Barani (E & D) Vol III, p. 111 Balban "commanded him to increase the allowances to the old soldiers and to enlist twice as many more new men to be particularly careful in appointing officers for his army so that he might be ready to repel away advances of the Mongols All matters beyond his capacity were to be referred direct to the Sultan" *Tarikh-i Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr) Vol I, pp. 144-145

<sup>6</sup>*Tarikh-i Firozshahi* (E & D) Vol III p. 111

<sup>7</sup>*Tarikh-i Firozshahi* by Barani (E & D), Vol III, p. 112 See also *Futuh us-Salatin* by Isami Ed by Mahdi Husain Vol II, pp. 299-301 Isami informs that two Mongol contingents penetrated into boundary line of Multan Since the Mongols were large in number Indian soldiers fled away Prince Muhammad Khan was annoyed at their behaviour and fined all his chiefs Later on the word 'fine' was changed into offerings and presentations because of the disgrace

from Delhi.<sup>1</sup> The three of them managed to check the Mongols who could not cross the Beas river.<sup>2</sup>

When Balban had to proceed to Lakhnauti to suppress Tughril Khan he made proper arrangements for the security of the frontiers. As was his wont Balban pretended that he was going to Samana and Sannam<sup>3</sup> on hunting expedition whereas the real reasons for his going there was to make arrangements for the march on Lakhnauti as well as to prepare the defence of his frontiers—Malik Sunj Sarjandar was appointed the Naib and Commander of Samana.<sup>4</sup> Bughra Khan was ordered by the Sultan to accompany him to Lakhnauti.<sup>5</sup> Prince Muhammad was put in over all charge of Samana and he was duly instructed.<sup>6</sup> In fact Prince Muhammad was made responsible for the defence of whole of North Western Frontier.

In 1285 A.D. another Mongol invasion under Samar, "the bravest dog of all the dogs of Changiz Khan,"<sup>7</sup> took place. Isami's version is different. According to him an ailing Balban had called the Prince from Multan.<sup>8</sup> When the Prince was about to return to Multan he received the news of the uprising against him by the Sumrath tribe.<sup>9</sup> The Prince immediately went to sup-

<sup>1</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (E & D), Vol. III, p. 112. Each army had about seventeen or eighteen thousand horses. See also *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr.), Vol. I, p. 150.

<sup>2</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (E & D), Vol. III, p. 112. See also *Diwani Wastul Hayat* by Amir Khusru (Tr.), p. 284.

<sup>3</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (E & D), Vol. III, p. 115.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid*, p. 115.

<sup>5</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (E & D), Vol. III, p. 115.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid*. "He wrote to his son at Multan, directing him to be careful of his country, and to give a good account of the Mongols, adding that he had placed the forces of Samana at his disposal."

<sup>7</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (E & D), Vol. III, p. 122, (Tr.), p. 200; *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr.), Vol. I, p. 150 says "Teimoor Khan . . . of the family of Changiz Khan . . . at this time invaded Hindoostan with twenty thousand chosen horses to revenge the death of the Mongols who had been slain during the former year." Badaoni calls him Itimar. He was accompanied by 30,000 men. See *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh* (Tr.), Vol. I, p. 188.

<sup>8</sup>*Futuh-us-Salatin* by Isami (Tr.), p. 304.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid*. See also *Futuh-us-Salatin*; ed by Mahdi Hasan, Vol. II, p. 304.

press them and camped at Jatrai Tamar, the Mongol chief, with his army of thirty thousand soldiers<sup>1</sup> attacked and devastated the territories in Divalpur and Lahore and marched towards Multan<sup>2</sup> The Prince received the news rather late when the enemy was at very close quarters Prince was advised by his officers quietly to go back to Multan and let the army do the fighting The Prince declined to do so and took up arms himself against the Mongols<sup>3</sup> He fortified the place strongly<sup>4</sup> and gave the Mongols<sup>5</sup> a good fight although in the end owing to the very large enemy force he was overwhelmed and was killed while fighting valiantly<sup>6</sup>

He was honoured with the title of "Martyr Prince"<sup>7</sup> A large number of soldiers were also killed in the battle<sup>8</sup> Even Amir Khusrau, the famous poet and historian was apprehended and

<sup>1</sup>*Futuh us Salatin* by Isami (Tr), p 304, Ferishta calls him Timoor Khan See *Tarikh-i Ferishta* (Tr), Vol I p 150, *Tabqat-i Akbari* by Nizamuddin Ahmad calls him Tamar, Yahya also calls him Tamar, *Tarikh-i Mubarakshahi* by Yahya (Tr), p 43

<sup>2</sup>*Tarikh-i Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr), Vol I, p 150

<sup>3</sup>*Futuh us Salatin* by Isami (Tr), p 304 See Vol II, Ed by Mahadi Husain, pp 307-311 The Prince was killed in Hindjatraila place in the vicinity of Multan The battle according to Yahya was fought in the garden of Nayyar on the bank of the river Lahore See *Tarikh-i Mubarakshahi* by Yahya (Tr) p 41 and 43

<sup>4</sup>*Tarikh-i Mubarakshahi* by Yahya (Tr), p 43 Yahya praises the strategy of the Khan-i Shahid

<sup>5</sup>*Futuh us Salatin* by Isami (Tr) p 304, *Diwan-i Wastul Hayat* by Amir Khusrau (Tr) p 285, *Tarikh-i Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr), Vol I, pp 150-151

<sup>6</sup>*Futuh us Salatin* by Isami (Tr) p 304, see Ed by Mahdi Hasan Vol II, p 308, *Tarikh-i Mubarakshahi* by Yahya (Tr), pp 46-47, *Diwan-i Wastul Hayat* by Amir Khusrau (Tr), p 285, Amir Khusrau praises the prince and condemns the Mongols Writing about their appearance he writes that they had bald heads and they wore caps made of owl feathers They did not have any beard They had broad face and flat nose They were extremely dirty people and used to stink, *ibid*, pp 284-85

<sup>7</sup>*Tarikh-i Firozshahi* by Barani (C & D), Vol III, p 122, *Tarikh-i Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr) Vol I, p 144

<sup>8</sup>*Tarikh-i Firozshahi* by Barani (E & D), Vol III, p 122 The details of the battle are also given by Ferishta *Tarikh-i Ferishta* (Tr), Vol I, pp 150-151, *Tarikh-i Mubarakshahi* by Yahya (Tr), pp 41-46

could escape from incarceration with great difficulty.<sup>1</sup>

Death of the Prince, the eldest son of Balban, was a great blow to the Sultan. Multan alongwith other territories was conferred on Kai Khusrau, his grandson.<sup>2</sup> Balban had again appointed his blood relation to Multan.

The north-western frontier extended only up to the River Beas during the reign of Balban. Although due to Balban's strong defence measures the Mongols could not advance beyond the River Beas yet their raids continued. It is true that strong measures were adopted for defending the frontiers yet the fact remains that at the time of need succour could not reach the beleaguered army. Prince Muhammad found himself in a most unenviable situation when no relief could come for his rescue from the centre. The Sultan could only ensure status quo and cannot be given any credit for finding a permanent solution to the problem.

The frontier problem had three consequences for Balban. He had to concentrate all his energies on the defence of the frontier and consequently he was unable to expand the boundaries of his Empire by annexing new territories. His energies were expended on pacifying the internal squabbles and defending the frontier.

These enterprises, naturally, led Balban to invest large sums of money to equip and enlarge his army. Balban is reported to have said, "I have devoted all the revenue of my kingdom to equip my army and I hold all my forces ready and prepared to receive them (Mongols)."<sup>3</sup>

Loss of Prince Muhammad, the eldest son, was also a great loss for Balban personally as well as for the State in the sense that a worthy successor to the throne was lost.

<sup>1</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (E & D), Vol. III, p. 122; *Diwan-i-Wastul Hayat* by Amir Khusru (Tr.), p. 285. *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr.), Vol. I, p. 151. According to Barani Amir Khusrau is said to have composed an elegy on the death of the prince. But according to Yahya it was composed by Amir Hasan. See *Tarikh-i-Mubarakshahi* (Tr.), pp. 41-42. The former seems to be correct.

<sup>2</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (E & D), Vol. III, p. 123; *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr.), Vol. I, p. 151; *Tarikh-i-Mubarakshahi* by Yahya (Tr.), p. 48.

<sup>3</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 160.

One important fallout of the activities of rapacious and destructive Mongols was migration into India of a large number of scholars, statesmen and princes who came to Delhi for protection<sup>1</sup> and were welcomed with open arms by Balban<sup>2</sup> He gave them allowances and places of residence which were named after their countries or their races<sup>3</sup> They adorned the Sultan's court, added lustre to it and spread his fame far and wide He was the only ruler of the Muslim state who had not been subdued by the Mongols Ferishta says that "in the retinue of those princes were some of the most illustrious men of learning whom Asia at that time produced The Court of India, therefore, in the days of Ghias Deen Balban was esteemed the most polite and magnificent in the world"<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Tarikh i Firuzshah* by Barani (Tr), pp 142-143, *Tabqat i-Nasiri* by Minhaj us Siraj (Tr), pp 22-23

<sup>2</sup>*Tarikh i Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr), Vol I, p 139 "From Toorkistan, Masmurool Zehr, Khorestan Irak Ajam, Azoorbaijanz Iran and Rooma who had been driven from their countries by the arms of Changiz Khan were enabled to find an honourable asylum at his court at Delhi"

<sup>3</sup>*Tarikh i Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr) Vol I, p 139 Such as "The Mohulla Abassy, the Mohulla Sunjurry, the Mohulla Roomy, Mohulla Sunkury"

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid*, p 139

## ADMINISTRATION

VERY little information is available about the structure of administration during Balban's reign. Whatever information can be gleaned from the contemporary records gives only a blurred outline and little details.

From the records it appears that Balban had divided the central government into four main departments whose functions were clearly delineated. The mention of the four departments and their functions by Bughra Khan immediately after Balban's death shows the existence of these departments.<sup>1</sup>

The functions of the government were entrusted to four officers who were chosen from amongst the most capable and experienced persons available to him.<sup>2</sup> The highest office was that of Diwan-i-Wizarat.<sup>3</sup> The second in the hierarchy was Diwan-i-Risalat.<sup>4</sup> He was listened to with great deal of respect and lots of confidence was reposed in him. Next in rank was Diwan-i-Arz who was entrusted with all the work relating to the Army.<sup>5</sup> On the lowest echelon was Diwan-i-Insha whose function was to examine various applications, and matters of vilayats, Muqtas and officers to whose queries he had to send suitable replies.<sup>6</sup> Honest, capable and compliant persons who were men of confidence and knew some secrets of the state,<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 229.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid*, p. 229.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid*.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid*.

<sup>5</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), pp. 229-230.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid*, p. 230.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid*.

were given this post

The Sultan did not, wisely enough, trust any one single officer with all the responsibilities and powers<sup>1</sup> He did not allow any officer any liberties with him and kept them in their places<sup>2</sup> No one officer was allowed to have complete control over the public affairs He balanced their powers evenly and saw to it that no one became more powerful than the other and thus he managed to control the bickerings and jealousies of the officers and their resentments too<sup>3</sup>

In accordance with these principles Balban did not allow his wazir to become too powerful He ensured that no individual officer had both military and financial powers so that too much power might not be concentrated in one hand<sup>4</sup> He centralised all the powers in his hands All the important appointments were made by him or by his consent<sup>5</sup> He maintained an efficient, intelligence system to be kept informed of various goings on in his Empire<sup>6</sup>

In administrative matters Balban believed in moderation<sup>7</sup> He held the belief that masses, peasants, merchants and soldiers should all be kept satisfied and Government regulations must be properly enforced<sup>8</sup>

### Wazir

The Sultans of Delhi followed to a large extent the administrative pattern of the Abbassid rulers The Abbassid believed in the institution of Wizarat,<sup>9</sup> which had assumed great impor-

<sup>1</sup>Ibid, p 230

<sup>2</sup>Ibid

<sup>3</sup>Ibid

<sup>4</sup>In order to prevent his officers from gathering too much power in their hands Balban assigned all important territories to his sons

<sup>5</sup>Tarikh i Firozshahi by Barani (Tr), pp 180, 184, 149

<sup>6</sup>Tarikh i Firozshahi by Barani (E & D) Vol III, p 101

<sup>7</sup>Tarikh i Firozshahi by Barani (Tr) p 194

<sup>8</sup>Ibid pp 194-195, Tarikh i Ferishta by Ferishta (Tr), Vol. I, p 149

<sup>9</sup>Under the Abbassids there were two types of Wazirs—Wazir i Tafwid and Wazir i Tanfiz The former enjoyed unlimited powers and were capable persons, the latter's powers were limited and he had to carry out the orders of the Caliph It was under the latter caliphs, who were engrossed in pleasures that the wazirs gradually acquired unlimited power *Some Aspects of Muslim Administration* by Dr R P Tripathi, pp 161-162, *Orient under the Caliphs* by Khuda Bakhsha, p 221, *The Government of the Sultanate* by U N Day, pp 67-68

gave independence in financial matters to Imad ul Mulk.<sup>1</sup>

Balban had divided the work of the state among his ministers who according to Bughra Khan were the four main pillars of the state<sup>2</sup> *Diwan-i-Wizarat* was one among them. In principle he enjoyed precedence over all other departments<sup>3</sup>

### Justice

Impartial administration of justice administered without fear or favour was the hallmark of Balban's regime. From the seat of Justice he would care neither for his relatives nor for his associates. He treated both low and high equally<sup>4</sup> and even slaves and maids were secure in his protection<sup>5</sup>. The Sarjandar of Balban, Malik Bak Bak, who had the jagir of Badayun, killed one of his attendants in a state of intoxication. When the Sultan came to know about it on his visit to Badayun he ordered that Malik Bak Bak be beaten to death in front of the widow<sup>6</sup>. The spies who had failed to report this matter to the Sultan were also punished<sup>7</sup>. Another incident which is narrated is of Haibat Khan, the Kara Beg of Balban who also killed a man in state of inebriation<sup>8</sup>. The Sultan had him flogged and left him at the mercy of the widow. He could escape with great difficulty only after giving 20,000 Tanakas<sup>9</sup>.

Balban chastised the officers who failed to carry out his command<sup>10</sup>. Most severe punishment was meted out to rebels and miscreants<sup>11</sup>. While deciding on punishments he would think

<sup>1</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr), pp 203-204

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid*, pp 229-230. These four pillars were *Diwan-i-Wizarat*, *Diwan-i-Risalat*, *Diwan-i-Arz* and *Diwan-i-Insha*

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid* p 229

<sup>4</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (E & D) Vol III, p 100, see also *Rehla* by Ibn Batuta (Tr) p 311 who also calls Balban a very just Sultan

<sup>5</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (E & D) Vol III pp 100-101

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid* p 101, *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr) Vol I, p 140

<sup>7</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (E & D), Vol III p 101

<sup>8</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (E & D) Vol III p 101. He was the Governor of Awadh. *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr) Vol I p 140

<sup>9</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* (E & D) Vol III, p 101. *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr) Vol I pp 140-141

<sup>10</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (E & D) Vol III p 114

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid*, pp 119-122, *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr) Vol I p 138

only of the welfare of the state.<sup>1</sup>

Balban laid a great deal of emphasis on the system of informers (Barids) and spread their net throughout the empire.<sup>2</sup> This institution was also a creation of Abbassids from whom Balban adopted it. The informers were the eyes and ears of the Sultan.<sup>3</sup> The system of intelligence was used extensively by all the Sultans of Delhi but Balban developed it as a very effective tool to spy on his officers to be able to exact obedience from them. According to Barani, "they discharge their duties with efficiency and honesty. He did not give them too large a field of observation."<sup>4</sup>

The Sultan saw their reports personally and never neglected them.<sup>5</sup> If the Barids failed to perform their duties, they were also punished severely.<sup>6</sup> The system was so effective that it deterred office holders from deviating from the narrow and the strait.<sup>7</sup>

Sultan also appointed Qazis and Muftics to dispense justice. He held them in great respect.<sup>8</sup> Balban it seems had made a

<sup>1</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 157. "I have heard from the narrators of the Balbani regime that in spite of his generosity and justice and lots of prayers . . . Balban was a cruel tyrant in punishing rebels and opponents. He would annihilate a whole army and city for the crime of rebellion . . . In killing and binding bold rebels, he threw aside all the principles of religion and did whatever he considered to be beneficial for his few days of Kingship, whether permitted by the Shariat or not. The love of power totally overcame him when punishing rebels." See also *Futuh-us-Salatin* by Isami (Tr.), p. 304 and Vol. II, ed by Mahdi Husain, pp. 312-313, who says that an innocent man was killed alongwith other prisoners. His mother wailed and wept in vain and she left the palace only when news of the death of Balban's son Khan Shahid came. She felt that justice was done to her by God.

<sup>2</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (E & D), Vol. III, p. 101. According to Barani he also appointed "Barids for great cities and for important and distant towns."

<sup>3</sup>*The Theory of Force and Organisation of Defence in Indian Constitutional History* by Nagendra Singh, pp. 11 and 149.

<sup>4</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (E & D), Vol. III, p. 101.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup>"The spies who had been stationed to watch the fief of Badayun and had made no report, were hanged over the gate of the town". *Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* (E & D) Vol. III, p. 101.

<sup>7</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (E & D), Vol. III, p. 101.

<sup>8</sup>*Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr.), Vol. I, p. 148. The Qazies and Muftics and learned men proceeding in a body to petition obtained their pardon. See *Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 157. The Qazies of the army received the title of Hamaran, p. 201 for Muftics.

thorough observation of the character of his Qazis and treated them accordingly<sup>1</sup>

Since everyone was familiar with the Balban's concept of justice for all no one veered from the path of justice<sup>2</sup> The Sultan while discussing the sermons of Nuruddin Gaznavi said that while he found himself incapable of following other principles, he could follow one without difficulty and that was to be stern in the matters of justice<sup>3</sup> The inflexible justice of Balban greatly helped in establishing peace and security Ferishta says that the Sultan "became so renowned for his justice and wisdom of his administration that his alliance was courted by Kings of Persia and Tartary"<sup>4</sup>

### Army

The most important problem that the Sultans of Delhi faced was the maintenance of peace and order To maintain law and order, to crush the ever-erupting rebellions, and defend the disturbed frontiers the Sultans needed a well equipped and organised army Army was the most effective instrument at his command Even at the time of succession the intervention of the army was decisive because there were no rules laid down for succession Army was thus an organisation on which depended the might of the state

According to Barani "in the first year after his accession, the ripe judgement and experience of Balban was directed in the first place to the organisation of his army, for the army is the source and means of government<sup>5</sup> Actuated by the desire to make his kingdom safe for peace loving populace, to punish his foes and to stabilise his frontier Balban concentrated on making his army a powerful weapon in his hands

<sup>1</sup>Balban said "I have three Qazies, one of them does not fear me but fears God, the other one does not fear God but fears me the third one neither fears me nor God" These three Qazies were Fakhr Naqila Qazi, Lashkar and Minhaj us Siraj Sarur us Udur, pp 47-48, as quoted by K.A. Nizami in *Religion and Politics*, p 166 Qazi Fakhruddin Naqila, see *Tarikh-i Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.) p 140

<sup>2</sup>*Tarikh-i Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.) pp 152, 155

<sup>3</sup>Ibid, p 153

<sup>4</sup>Ibid Vol I, p 138

<sup>5</sup>*Tarikh-i Firozshahi* by Barani (E & D) Vol III, p 100

Barani has written that "the cavalry and infantry, both old and new, were placed under the command of Maliks of experience, of chiefs who held the first rank in their profession and were brave, dignified and faithful."<sup>1</sup> Balban gave special attention to cavalry.<sup>2</sup> Horses of chosen breed (Bharchi and Tatar) were procured by him from Multan in large number.<sup>3</sup> Best Indian horses were brought from the Siwalik region, Samana, Bhatinda, Bhatnir, Khokhar country, Chitwan (Jats) and Mandahran.<sup>4</sup> Balban brought horses from Jood mountains in such large numbers that the prices of horses came down to 30-40 Tankas.<sup>5</sup> Balban had now procured sufficient horses for his army. He was so confident of the superiority of his cavalry that he is supposed to have remarked that "I know well that no (Indian) ruler can raise his hand against the army of Delhi because the armies of the Rais and Ranas though consisting of a lac paiks (footmen) and dhanuks (bowmen) cannot face my army. Barely six or seven thousand horsemen of Delhi are enough to ravage and destroy them."<sup>6</sup>

He gave importance to elephants also in his army. According to Balban, "one elephant was worth five hundred horsemen."<sup>7</sup> He used to procure elephants from Lakhnauti and Bengal.<sup>8</sup> The

<sup>1</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (E & D), Vol. III, p. 100.

<sup>2</sup>It was probably the importance given to cavalry that in the coins of the period horse is seen standing magnificently. See *Chronicles of the Pathan Kings of Delhi* by Edward Thomas, p. 79.

<sup>3</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 161. Prince Muhammad brought him Tatar and Baharji horses from Multan. Ibid, p. 200. Even Bughra Khan was asked by Balban to send him horses regularly, Ibid, p. 191.

<sup>4</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 161.

<sup>5</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 166; *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr.), Vol. I, p. 143.

<sup>6</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 161. The army of Delhi was known as Hashmi-Qalb (consisting of efficient horses) or Hashmi-Hazrat. See pp. 165 and 204. Although Balban was proud of his cavalry yet while suppressing the rebellion of Tughril Beg he had to enlist a fresh contingent of troops at Awadh (Tr.), p. 184.

<sup>7</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (E & D), Vol. III, p. 103.

<sup>8</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 161, (E & D) Vol. III, p. 103. In the first year of his reign Tatar Khan (son of Arslan Khan) sent 63 elephants from Lakhnauti to Delhi. Bughra Khan was also asked to send elephants to the capital, Ibid (Tr.), p. 191. After the suppression of Tughril Khan's rebellion Balban gave all the spoils of Tughril to Bughra Khan except elephants which he took to Delhi, (E & D) Vol. III, p. 120.

capital was full of large number of horses and elephants.<sup>1</sup> Barani writes that "the Sultan frequently observed to his associates that elephants and horses were the strength of Hindustan."<sup>2</sup>

He also had a posse of archers, five thousand of whom he took with himself when he went to suppress the rebellion in Katehar.<sup>3</sup> Balban had a personal army, too, consisting of a contingent of troops containing about one thousand cavalry of whom he knew every individual. According to Barani, "a thousand horsemen belonging to the palace guards, each man of whom was acquainted with his person accompanied him, besides a thousand old and trusty footmen and archers."<sup>4</sup> This contingent of troops always accompanied Balban on his hunting expedition.<sup>5</sup>

On special occasion Balban raised a special army as he did when he went to overcome the rebellious Tughral Khan and ordered a general levy at Awadh.<sup>6</sup> Two hundred thousand men from different classes were enrolled to accompany the Sultan in his campaign.

The bravery and courage of Afghan soldiers made particular impression on his mind. After suppressing rebellion in Mewat, Kampil, Patiali and Bhojpur he placed these regions under Afghan soldiers.<sup>7</sup> Afghan garrisons were also placed in the fort of Jalali.<sup>8</sup>

Balban was cautious in making recruitment to the army especially of officers' level. Nobles themselves recruited the contingent of troops. He issued instruction from time to time regarding the recruitment of troops. Balban instructed Bughra Khan when he was appointed Governor of Samana and Sunam to increase the allowance of old soldiers and the number of soldiers.<sup>9</sup> Balban instructed him to remain well informed about the forces and be careful in recruitment of his officers.<sup>10</sup> He

<sup>1</sup>*Tarikh-i Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr), p. 161

<sup>2</sup>*Tarikh-i Firozshahi* by Barani (E & D), Vol. III, p. 103

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid*, p. 106

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid*, p. 103

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid*

<sup>6</sup>*Tarikh-i Firozshahi* by Barani (E & D), Vol. III, p. 115

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid*, pp. 104-105

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid*, p. 105

<sup>9</sup>*Tarikh-i Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr), p. 180

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid*, pp. 180, 195

believed that the soldiers should be kept contented by giving them enough emoluments. He told Bughra Khan to "consider no expense for the army as too great and let your *ariz* engage himself in maintaining the old and recruiting new troops and keeping himself informed about every expenditure."<sup>1</sup> Balban appointed his own relations in important places.<sup>2</sup>

Balban laid great emphasis on personal supervision of the army. All important matters especially appointments were looked into by the Sultan personally.<sup>3</sup> Even his sons who were given important posts were to send regular reports to him regarding goings on in their domain.<sup>4</sup> Bughra Khan whom Balban considered to be least capable of his sons was given charge of Samana and Sunam and was told clearly what exactly he had to do. "Sultan desired him not to be hasty in business, but to consult his officers and trusted followers on all matters of importance concerning the army and country."<sup>5</sup> The Sultan also placed his informers around his son to keep a watch over his activities and "took great pains to obtain information of his doings."<sup>6</sup>

Balban undertook an expedition after great deal of premeditation.<sup>7</sup> He directed important campaigns like the one against Tughril Khan personally. After he had given a lot of thought to a campaign and decided to go in for it he would instruct Diwan-i-Wizarat and Diwan-i-Arz to keep army ready and make war materials in the Karkhana. Not even his close associates had an inkling of where he was going to strike. Only on the eve of departure did he call the Khans and Maliks and disclosed to them the plan and places of campaign.<sup>8</sup> Even Malik Bektar who was a close confidant of the King could not penetrate the secret thoughts of Sultan.<sup>9</sup>

He did not grudge any amount of expenditure on the army

<sup>1</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (E & D), Vol. pp. 109, 111.

<sup>2</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.) p. 195, ((E & D), Vol. III, pp. 109, 111.

<sup>3</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (E & D), Vol. III, p. 111, (Tr.), p. 184.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid*, pp. 115, 122.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid*, p. 111.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid*, p. 112.

<sup>7</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 166.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid*, p. 166.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid*, p. 167.

and he wanted it to be well equipped for meeting all contingencies

Barani has quoted Balban as saying that "I have devoted all the revenues of my kingdom to equip my army, and I hold all my forces ready and prepared" <sup>1</sup> Balban, in all probability, used to go to Rewari to keep his army in proper trim.<sup>2</sup> He placed his army under the control of brave, experienced and loyal Maliks<sup>3</sup> and appointed loyal and honest staff in Diwan-i-Arz, the department which looked after the army. Imdad ul-Mulk was in charge of Diwan i Arz <sup>4</sup> This department was responsible for recruiting new soldiers, maintaining old soldiers and keeping tabs on the army <sup>5</sup> Records of the soldiers were maintained in his office <sup>6</sup> Honest and loyal<sup>7</sup> Imadul Mulk enjoyed full confidence of Balban so much so that he made Diwan i Arz independent of the control of the Wazir which gave him full financial freedom <sup>8</sup> Imad-ul Mulk performed his duties with utmost care and took keen interest in the organisation of these departments <sup>9</sup> He kept the staff contented and happy <sup>10</sup> He insisted that no one should take bribes and all should perform their duties properly.<sup>11</sup>

Qazi i Laskar of Balban was a religious minded and revered person <sup>12</sup> Balban greatly respected his words and when the latter

<sup>1</sup>*Tarikh i Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr ) p 160

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid*, p 162 Barani's statement that Halaku complimented Balban who felt happy on it seems to be apocryphal because Halaku was dead by then See also *Tarikh i Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr ) Vol I, p 141

<sup>3</sup>*Tarikh i Firozshahi* by Barani (E & D) Vol III, p 100

<sup>4</sup>He was a slave of Ilutmish and rose to the post of arji mamalik He continued to hold this post after Ilutmish's death and occupied the same after Balban's accession *Tarikh i Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr ), p 204

<sup>5</sup>*Tarikh i Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr ) p 195

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid* (E & D), Vol III, p 107

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid*, (Tr ), p 204

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid*, p 204

<sup>9</sup>*Tarikh i Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr ) p 204 He enquired from soldiers if they had a weak horse and then he would substitute it with a strong one He often gave them financial help and tried to know about their problems

<sup>10</sup>*Tarikh i Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr ), p 204 205 He used to reward his officers personally and entertained them at his residence

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid*, p 204

<sup>12</sup>*Tarikh i Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr ) p 199

requested for the pardon of the rebels whom Balban had brought from Lakhnauti to be hanged, Balban acceded to his request.<sup>1</sup> The Sultan had great respect for the Qazi of his army too whom he gave the title of Hamran.<sup>2</sup>

Balban had raised the salary of his soldiers<sup>3</sup> and to some of them he gave villages in lieu of salary in cash. He, however, discovered after some time that a large number of cavalarymen were not performing their duties.<sup>4</sup> In the second or third year of his accession when he went on an expedition to Lahore to rebuild the place which had been devastated in 1241 A.D. by Mongols he discovered to his chagrin that old Shamshi military grantees numbering about two thousand cavalrymen who were paid through land grants in Doab did not perform their duties.<sup>5</sup> A number of them had died and numerous others had grown too old to perform any work. Some even sent proxies and others quietly stayed at home. The successors of the deceased nobles were enjoying the grants as hereditary.<sup>6</sup> Such irregularities were being committed with the connivance of the clerks of the Diwan-i-Arz Department.<sup>7</sup> Such corrupt practices were detrimental to the efficiency of the army. He had a detailed enquiry conducted in the affair of the Shamshi Iqtadars.<sup>8</sup> As a result of the enquiry the Sultan divided Iqtadars into three categories. In the first category came the old and infirm whom he gave pension of forty or fifty Tankas and resumed their villages.<sup>9</sup> In the second category came those who were young and capable and to such persons he gave allowances and assigned them work equal to this and the

<sup>1</sup>Ibid, p. 199. See also *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr.), Vol. I, p. 148, "The Kazies, Mufties and learned men proceeding in a body to petition, obtained their pardon."

<sup>2</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 157.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid, p. 204.

<sup>4</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (E & D), p. 107, (Tr.), p. 167.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 167.

<sup>7</sup>These Iqtadars used to send bribe to the office of Diwan-i-Arz and Naib-i-Arz in the form of wine, oil, ghee, corn and birds, etc. *Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 167.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid, p. 167, *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr.), Vol. I, p. 143.

<sup>9</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 168; *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta Vol. I, p. 143.

surplus revenue of their villages was taken by the State<sup>2</sup> In the third category came the widows, slaves, etc. of the deceased nobles from whom grants were taken away and they were given allowances for food and clothes<sup>2</sup>

As was to be expected these orders created a lot of commotion and a number of the old grantees approached Malik ul-Umra, the Kotwal of Delhi. They regarded the land as *inam* land<sup>3</sup> The Kotwal interceded on their behalf<sup>4</sup> and succeeded in having the order withdrawn<sup>5</sup> Balban preferred the method of cash payment but could not do away with the assignment system<sup>6</sup>

Summing up briefly we can state that Balban did not bring about any radical reform in the army but a number of steps which he took to equip and organise his army definitely made it working efficient. A great weakness of the military organisation of the Delhi Sultanate was that the power of recruitment and maintenance of troops was delegated to provincial governors who could exploit this privilege by packing their armies with their own men and then raise standard of rebellion against

<sup>1</sup>*Tarikh i Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr), p. 168.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid*

<sup>3</sup>*Tarikh i Firozshahi* by Barani (E & D) Vol III, p. 108, *Tarikh i Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr), Vol I, p. 143

<sup>4</sup>*Tarikh i Firozshahi* by Barani (E & D), Vol III, p. 108. Barani describes the Kotwal "going to the court he stood thoughtful and dejected before the Sultan who observing his State inquired what was the matter. The Kotwal replied, 'I have heard that the Muster Master is turning off all the old men and that the officers of the exchequer are resuming the lands which support them. This has filled me with sorrow and fear for I am an old man and feeble, and if old men are to be rejected in the day of judgement and are to find no place in heaven, what will become of me'"

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid*, p. 108. It is not clear whether all the grants were restored or only of the old grantees. Barani writes "The Sultan was moved with compassion and sending for the revenue officers, he directed that the villages should be confirmed to the grantees and that the orders passed respecting them should be treated as inoperative." According to Prof. Habib Ullah the order only in respect of the aged holders was rescinded. *Foundation of Muslim Rule in India*, p. 139. But Barani leads to the conclusion that all the Iqtadar received back their villages, *Tarikh i Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr) p. 169, see *Tarikh i Ferishta* Vol I, p. 143

<sup>6</sup>He assigned lands to Afghan soldiers in Gopalgir, Kampil, Patiali, Bhojpur and Jalali, See *Tarikh i Firozshahi* by Barani (E & D), Vol III, pp. 104-105

the Central Government. The rebellion of Tughril Beg is one such example. Clearly it happened because of lack of effective control of the centre over the provincial army.<sup>1</sup>

### Forts

As a part of general defence preparedness Balban paid a lot of attention to the building of forts. Fear of Mongol invasion from across the border made building of forts necessary. Details of construction of forts by Iltutmish are not extant but we do get references of organisation of forts and appointment of officers there.<sup>2</sup>

Sultan Balban built a large number of forts in various places to ensure security and order.<sup>3</sup> After the suppression of the rebellion of Mewaties he built a fort at Gopalgir<sup>4</sup> and also established a number of posts in the vicinity of the city.

He put these forts under the charge of Afghan soldiers to whom land was assigned free of taxes.<sup>5</sup> Balban next went to suppress the rebellion at Kampil, Patiali and Bhojpur and "erected in these places three strong forts in which he placed Afghan garrisons. He set apart cultivable lands for the garrison and under the protection of these forces robbery was suppressed."<sup>6</sup> He also repaired the fort of Jalali,<sup>7</sup> placed it under the Afghan soldiers and "appropriated the land of the place to its support."<sup>8</sup> According to Yahya, Balban "laid the foundation of a fortress at Makar-Khachuri and giving it a new name returned to the capital. After that he went out to the environs of the city

<sup>1</sup>*The Theory of Force and Organisation of Defence in Indian Constitutional History* by Nagendra Singh, p. 154.

<sup>2</sup>*Tabqat-i-Nasiri* by Minhaj-us-Siraj (Tr.), p. 28.

<sup>3</sup>*Futuh-us-Salatin* by Isami (Tr.), p. 304, see also Ed by Mahdi Husain, Vol. II, p. 291. "His Majesty built a new fortress of Jalali and Rurki."

<sup>4</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani, Vol. III, p. 104; *Futuh-us-Salatin* by Isami (Tr.), p. 304.

<sup>5</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (E & D), Vol. III, p. 104.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 105; *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr.), Vol. I, p. 142; *Tarikh-i-Mubarakshahi* by Yahya (Tr.), p. 38.

<sup>7</sup>The fort of Jalali is situated 11 miles east of Aligarh, see footnote in *Foundation of Muslim Rule in India* by Habibullah, p. 152, *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr.), Vol. I, p. 142, *Futuh-us-Salatin* by Isami, Ed by Mahdi Husain, Vol. II, p. 291.

<sup>8</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (E & D), Vol. III, p. 105.

a built a fort there ”<sup>1</sup>

In the second or third year of his reign the Sultan marched to Lahore which had to suffer at the hands of the Mongols in 1241 A D and “ordered the rebuilding of the Fort which the Mongols had destroyed ”<sup>2</sup> For this purpose ‘architects and managers’ were appointed <sup>3</sup>

The forts were assigned to trusted and capable Maliks and a number of Afghan soldiers were posted there Land, free of taxes was assigned to the forts for their maintenance Details regarding appointment of officers in the forts are, however, not available <sup>4</sup> Rulers following Balban also realised the importance of forts and continued Balban’s tradition For example Alauddin Khalji ordered for the repair of old forts and construction of new forts whenever necessary <sup>5</sup>

### Revenue

Not much is known about the revenue administration in the early Sultanate period Basically soldiers the Sultans knew little about and cared little for the details of administration. As the administration took shape, the Sultans followed Muslim theory of finance in revenue administration <sup>6</sup>

The main source of revenue of the Sultan was derived from Khalsa and other types of lands Apart from it Khams (war booty), Zakat and other Abvab’s also contributed to the state-income

When Balban came to power he decided to give top priority to reorganisation and re equipping of the army for the purposes of the defence of the realm He needed money for this pur-

<sup>1</sup>*Tarikh i Mubarakshahi* by Yahya (Tr ) p 38

<sup>2</sup>*Tarikh i Firozshahi* by Barani (E & D) Vol III, p 107, *Tarikh i Mubarakshahi* by Yahya (Tr ), p 38

<sup>3</sup>*Tarikh i Firozshahi* by Barani (E & D), Vol III, p 107, *Tarikh i Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr ) Vol I, p 143

<sup>4</sup>For the management of the fort there used to be a Kotwal Qazi and Mirdad *Tabqat i Nasiri* by Minhaj us Siraj (Raverty Tr ) Vol I, p 620, also see *Tarikh i Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr ) p 77 for appointment of able Kotwals in the forts

<sup>5</sup>*Tarikh i Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr ), p 71

<sup>6</sup>*Some Aspects of Muslim Administration* by Dr R P Tripathi pp 239 and appendix, pp 338 348

pose. He is reported to have said, "I have devoted all the revenues of my kingdom to equip my army."<sup>1</sup> He discovered that the Sultans preceding him had distributed "tracts of land among their own followers and officials."<sup>2</sup> These lands were called Iqtas and the persons who got these were called Muqtas.<sup>3</sup> The Iqta holders were supposed to keep a portion of their earning from the land and give the rest to the State. The Iqta holders tended to steal government's share of the revenue by not declaring it. Moreover after the death of Iltutmish a number of Iqtas, especially in Doab, became hereditary.<sup>4</sup> After the death of Iqta holder his widow, slaves or children continued to enjoy the grants.<sup>5</sup> All this maladministration led to leakage of revenue. The Sultan decided to investigate and ordered an inquiry into the matter.<sup>6</sup> He rescinded the grants from widows, children and slaves of the old and infirm persons. He gave them allowances. He tried to bring these lands in Khalsa but on the intervention of Fakhruddin Kotwal made him withdraw his order.<sup>7</sup> But the very fact of promulgation of this order had its impact and, according to Dr. R.P. Tripathi, "the attitude of the Sultan acted as warning to other Muqtas and might have prevented for the time other Iqtas from becoming hereditary."<sup>8</sup> Balban did not create new Iqtas and transferred his Muqtas in quick succession.<sup>9</sup> He laid great emphasis on proper rendering of accounts by Muqtas from different provinces. Prince Muhammad used to visit him annually alongwith treasure and presents.<sup>10</sup> Similarly Bughra Khan was

<sup>1</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 160.

<sup>2</sup>*Some Aspects of Muslim Administration* by Dr. R.P. Tripathi, p. 244.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 244. "According to Muslim law a Muqta was not considered the owner of the Iqta but was simply allowed within defined limits the ownership of the usufruct. Usually an Iqta was given to military men for a number of years. . . ." It could not legally be hereditary . . ."

<sup>4</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.) p. 167.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 168-69 ; *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr.), Vol. I, p. 143.

<sup>8</sup>*Some Aspects of Muslim Administration* by Dr. R.P. Tripathi, p. 250 ; *Religion and Politics in India* by K.A. Nizami, p. 131.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (E and D) Vol. III, p. 111 (Tr.), p. 173. see also *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr.), Vol. I, p. 148.

also warned to send regular reports and presents from Lakhnauti<sup>1</sup> Balban had assigned all the important provinces to his sons in order to ensure loyalty and control over them<sup>2</sup>

In order to systematise and rationalise the Iqta system Balban appointed an officer known as 'Khwaja'<sup>3</sup> He kept a watch over Muqta Balban was very particular about the appointment of Muqtas and grant of Iqtas to his officers<sup>4</sup> Balban used to gather information about them through his Barids<sup>5</sup> "These spies were greatly feared by the nobles and officials"<sup>6</sup> He granted large areas of cultivable land for the maintenance of army and forts<sup>7</sup>

Among the officials of the revenue department reference is found of Mushrif (incharge of income), Mutsarrif (incharge of correspondence) and amils (collector)<sup>8</sup> In the villages Chaudharis and Muqaddams<sup>9</sup> had considerable influence. The latter was like a village headman

Details regarding scale of taxes during the time of Balban are not available. It does not seem plausible that Balban might have tried to increase the taxes manifold to earn as much revenue as possible<sup>10</sup> Balban seems to have believed in modera-

<sup>1</sup>*Tarikh i Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr), p 191

<sup>2</sup>After the death of prince, Muhammad Balban assigned Multan to Kai Khusrau, his grand son, *Tarikh i Ferozshahi* by Barani (Tr) p 201, *Tarikh i Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr), Vol I p 151

<sup>3</sup>*Tarikh i Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr), pp 144-150 Balban condemned his officers for recommending the name of Kamal Mahiyar to the Khwajgi of the Iqta of Amroha because his father was a Hindu slave, *Some Aspects of Muslim Administration* by R.P. Tripathi, p 251, *Religion and Politics in India* by K.A. Nizami, p 131 The details of the functions of Khwaja are not known

<sup>4</sup>*Tarikh i Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr), p 150 Balban warned his officers to be very careful in recommending the names of persons for the post of Khwajgi, Mushrif and Mudabbari, etc

<sup>5</sup>*Tarikh i Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr), p 155

<sup>6</sup>*Tarikh i Firozshahi* by Barani (E & D), Vol III, p 101

<sup>7</sup>*Tarikh i Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr), p 164, (E & D), Vol III, p 105

<sup>8</sup>*Tarikh i Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr), p 150 Ref of Malkiyani and Mafruzi is also given on p 198

<sup>9</sup>The exact nature of their duties are not clear *Tarikh i Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr), p 193 Barani writes that when Sultan returned from Lakhnauti to Delhi, officers, Rai Chaudharis, Muqaddams came to pay him respect alongwith presents

<sup>10</sup>*Some Aspects of Muslim Administration* by Dr R.P. Tripathi, p 253

tion as far as the recovery of Kharaj is concerned.<sup>1</sup> He was of the opinion that "neither so much should be realised as to impoverish people nor so less as to make them rich and rebellious."<sup>2</sup>

He was frugal and did not believe in extravagance. He held that half of the income should be saved for the hour of need.<sup>3</sup> Extra income from Kharaj after spending on the army was deposited in the state treasury.<sup>4</sup> He did not believe in wasteful expenditure.<sup>5</sup> He, therefore, kept the revenue department under close watch.<sup>6</sup>

Another source of income for the state was the booty acquired by the army (Khams) which incidentally enriched the army also.<sup>7</sup>

As far as the method of assessment<sup>8</sup> are concerned it appears that Balban adopted both the methods<sup>9</sup> compounding as well as sharing. The method of measurement was started later by Alauddin Khalji.

### *Iqtas*

Minhaj-us-Siraj and Barani in their accounts have given details of Iqtas granted to various officers by the Sultans of Delhi. There are no references of grants of new Iqtas during the reign of Balban. Balban was not in favour of these grants.<sup>10</sup> He

<sup>1</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 194.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid*, p. 194. It is doubtful if this regulation was enforced in matter of realization of revenue in villages.

<sup>3</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 179.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid*, p. 159.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid*, p. 179.

<sup>6</sup>According to U.N. Day "During the reign of Balban greater supervision of the Khalsa land was attempted by appointing Shiqdar in Khalsa land." *Government of the Sultanate*, p. 118. No such ref. is given by Barani.

<sup>7</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 165. All the spoils of Tughril were given to Bughra Khan except elephants and gold (E & D), Vol. III, p. 120; see also (Tr.), p. 165.

<sup>8</sup>There were three methods of assessment: Batai (Sharing), Muqtai or Kankut (estimation) and measurement. *The Government of the Sultanate* by U.N. Day, pp. 115, 117.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid*, p. 118.

<sup>10</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (E & D), Vol. III, pp. 107-108.

*Iqtas After Ilutmish up to the time of Balban*

<i>Name of Iqta</i>	<i>Name of Holder</i>	<i>Period</i>	<i>Reference</i>
Lkooor	Fakhrulmulik Kareem Uddin Laghri	Bahram Shah	<i>Tabqat i Nasiri</i> by Minhaj us Siraj (Tr), p 63
Kannauy	Timur Khan	Razia Sultan	Ibid, p 64
Kara	Timur Khan	Razia	Ibid
Jalandhar (Vilayat)	Hindu Khan Mubarak	Bahram Shah	Ibid p 65
Janjane	Tajuddin Sanjar Tabar Khan Mahmud	Nasir Uddin Mahmud	Ibid, p 70

Kasmandi and Mandiyan (situated in the Vilayat of Hindustan, i.e., territory near Aligarh and Awadh)	Fajuddin Sanjar Tabar Khan	Ibid.
Balaram	Malik Tajuddin Arsalan Khan Tanjar Khwarizmi	Ibid. p. 73
Palwal, Kama and Kasrak	Arkali Dad Bak Saifuddin Samsi Azmi	Ibid. p. 78
Amroha (mentioned for the first time as Iqta)	Balban	<i>Tarikh-i-Firozshahi</i> by Barani (Tr.), p. 149.
Kanauri (Katehar)	Balban	Ibid (E & D), Vol. III, p. 106

made an attempt to abolish the system of land grants<sup>1</sup> but had to revise his orders due to the intervention of Fakhruddin Kotwal of Delhi and Iqta grants continued in some form or the other

### Currency

With the establishment of Delhi Sultanate a new currency was not immediately introduced. The existing currency (of mixed metal) was adopted with some modifications<sup>2</sup>. For the first time Iltutmish had issued pure silver coins known as Tanka. And Tanka became the standard monetary unit of the Sultans. Iltutmish also issued Jitals and Adls-coins of lower denomination<sup>3</sup>.

When Balban ascended the throne he introduced some important changes in the currency. For the first time he inscribed the name of the sovereign<sup>4</sup> on the coins. It is from his time onwards that we come across mixed metal pieces which had bilingual inscription on them. They were of the value between the old currency (Delhiwala) and Jital<sup>5</sup>. Balban seems to have established some mints also. Thus,<sup>6</sup> certain improvements were introduced in the currency during the reign of Balban.

After the death of Iltutmish there was tremendous accretion in the power of the nobles and they became a force to reckon

<sup>1</sup>Balban advised Bughra Khan "to promote the industrious and faithful officials and to give them grants of lands" *Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (E & D), Vol III, p 111. Also see (Tr), p 170 for grants of Iqtas, (E & D) Vol III, p 109

<sup>2</sup>*Foundation of Muslim Rule in India* by Habib Ullah, p 235. The mixed metal coin was known as Delhiwala. It was later on replaced by Jital.

<sup>3</sup>*The Sultanate of Delhi, their Coinage and Metrology* by H N Wright, pp 71-73. Copper coins were known as Adls, existing pieces were known as Jital.

<sup>4</sup>J A S B, *J Delh*, Vol I, p 64

<sup>5</sup>*The Sultanate of Delhi their Coinage and Metrology* by H N Wright, pp 80-81

<sup>6</sup>J A S B, 1904, p 66, 1910 No 1, p 566. A copper coin of Balban was minted at Khitta Sultanpur.

with in the affairs of the state.<sup>1</sup> The power of the nobles grew at the cost of weaklings who sat on the throne of Delhi and who were immersed in their own pleasures unable to govern with a firm hand.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>According to Barani, "in possessions and display in grandeur and dignity, they vied with each other, and in their proud vaunts and boasts everyone exclaimed to the others, 'what art thou that I am not, and what wilt thou be that I shall not be?'" *Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* (E & D), Vol. III, p. 99; *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr.), Vol. I, p. 138.

<sup>2</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (E & D), Vol. III, p. 98.

## VII

### NOBILITY

**B**ALBAN rose from the rank of a slave to the dizzying heights of the Sultan. From the band of Turk slaves known as The Forty<sup>1</sup> he had gradually risen to be a Malik, a Khan, and then the King<sup>2</sup>. He had accumulated vast experience and had become well conversant with the affairs of the state. He had learnt from experience that an assertive nobility was antithetical to an effective ruler. The wings of the nobles must be clipped in order to remove the fetters on the powers of the ruler. This was what Balban believed and this was what he proceeded to put into practice.

Balban had autocratic tendencies and could brook no opposition to his ambitions and hence the power of the nobles had to be limited<sup>3</sup>. Balban had no desire to depend on nobles or exercise his power vicariously. He was not at all enamoured of the idea of being the first among the equals. He wanted to be the supreme authority<sup>4</sup>. He did not allow his Amirs or Generals to become powerful and discouraged such activities.

<sup>1</sup>*Tarikh-i Firozshahi* by Barani (E & D), Vol III p 97 *Tarikh-i Mubarakshahi* by Yahya (Tr), p 32, *Muntakhab ut Tawarikh* by Badaoni (Tr), Vol I, p 184, *Tarikh-i Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr) Vol I pp 137-38

<sup>2</sup>*Tarikh-i Firozshahi* by Barani (E & D), Vol III, p 99

<sup>3</sup>*Some Aspects of Muslim Administration* by R P Tripathi pp 34-35

<sup>4</sup>*Nobility under the Sultans of Delhi* by S B P Nigam, p 44

which made them influential.<sup>1</sup> He was ruthless in the execution of his ambition and killed a number of Shamshi Amirs and Khans who he thought aspired for the throne.<sup>2</sup> He throttled their efforts to assume independence and murdered them by secretly mixing poison in their drinks.<sup>3</sup> He poisoned his cousin Sher Khan.<sup>4</sup> Extreme punishment was reserved for those nobles who were found guilty of injustice.<sup>5</sup>

He also instituted an inquiry in the matter of land grant to the nobles.<sup>6</sup> The old and the infirm were pensioned off and the widows, children, and the slaves who had assumed hereditary rights on the lands of dead nobles were dispossessed and given allowances. Others were treated with severity and although their grants were spared they were deprived of all the surplus revenues.<sup>7</sup>

Balban did all in his power to emasculate the Turkish Amirs. A network of *barids* (informers) was established throughout the Empire to spy on the nobles.<sup>8</sup> "These spies", says Barani, "were greatly feared by the nobles and officials."<sup>9</sup> As is to be expected he gained influence at the cost of the nobles. No doubt his undue harshness considerably weakened the inherent power of this class.<sup>10</sup>

Balban had in his Empire some Maliks who had earned well-deserved fame and were great assets to the empire.<sup>11</sup> Malik Alauddin Kishli Khan was one amongst them.<sup>12</sup> He was well-

<sup>1</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 203. See how Balban felt annoyed at the generosity of Kishli Khan who was his nephew. He however, appreciated it in case of Malik Sarjandar—the slave Malik, *Ibid*, p. 206.

<sup>2</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 157.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid*.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid*, p. 169.

<sup>5</sup>The case of Malik Bak Bak may be cited who was flogged to death by Balban. *Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* (Tr.), p. 152.

<sup>6</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (E & D), Vol. III, p. 107; *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr.), Vol. I, p. 143.

<sup>7</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (E & D), Vol. III, p. 108.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid*, p. 101.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid*.

<sup>10</sup>*Comprehensive History of India*, Vol. V, p. 286. *Nobility under the Sultans of Delhi* by S.B.P. Nigam, pp. 42-43.

<sup>11</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 202.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid*, p. 202. He was the cousin of Balban.

known for his generosity and charity<sup>1</sup> and was good at hunting, archery and ball playing.<sup>2</sup> Barani has recorded that Halaku had heard so much about him that he sent him a dagger as token of appreciation.<sup>3</sup> Sultan Balban was jealous of the fame of the Malik.<sup>4</sup> He was appointed to the post of Amir Hajib<sup>5</sup>

Imadul Mulk was another famous Malik and was appointed by Balban to the post of Arz-i-Mamalik<sup>6</sup> He was very close to Sultan and the latter held him in great esteem.<sup>7</sup> The Sultan gave him full control in the matters of appointment in the Diwan-i-Arz Department.<sup>8</sup> Imad ul-Mulk performed his duties with great care and responsibility.<sup>9</sup> He was generous by nature and hence quite popular.<sup>10</sup>

Malik-ul-Umra, Fakhruddin Kotwal also acquitted himself with distinction in the service of the Sultan. He was also famous for his charity.<sup>11</sup> Balban reposed immense faith and trust in him.

<sup>1</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), pp. 203-204. Sometimes he used to give all his belongings in charity and had nothing left except the clothes he was wearing

<sup>2</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 203. It should be noted that Halaku was dead by this time.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid*, p. 203.

<sup>4</sup>While Balban was jealous of him and did not appreciate his generosity, he felt quite pleased for the same qualities in case of Malik Amir Ali Sarjandar because he was a slave noble. See *Religion and Politics in India*, p. 133.

<sup>5</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 203.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid*, p. 204.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid*, p. 204.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid*, p. 204.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid*, pp. 204-205

<sup>10</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 205. Imad-ul-Mulk used to feed his staff (of Diwan-i-Arz) at his residence. Special food was given to some members and the left-over was distributed amongst the poor. He gave a number of villages in waqf for charity.

Imad ul-Mulk was famous for eating betel. Whenever he ate betel it was offered to everybody around him.

<sup>11</sup>He gave endowments to 12,000 Quran readers who read it continuously throughout the day

The Kotwal used to change his clothes and bedding everyday. These were distributed in charity and also given in dowry to poor girls. Every year he used to give dowry for the marriage of 1,000 poor girls. If somebody brought a copy of Quran he would always purchase it and give it to or his wife was keen to read it. *Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), pp. 205-6

When he left for Lakhnauti to suppress Tughril Khan's rebellion he gave the charge of Delhi to Fakhruddin.<sup>1</sup> The Sultan was so pleased by the efficient manner in which he ran the affairs of Delhi that he gave the latter a robe of honour. He addressed him as Birader-i-Malik-ul-Umra.<sup>2</sup> This created resentment and jealousy among other nobles.<sup>3</sup> It was this regard which Sultan had for the Kotwal that people approached him to recommend their cases to Sultan.<sup>4</sup>

Amir Ali Sarjandar also occupied pride of place in Balban's Court.<sup>5</sup> He was known as Hatim Khan and Shah of his time because of his charitable disposition.<sup>6</sup> Amir Khusru, the famous poet, was in his service and wrote a poem praising him.<sup>7</sup>

Some Amirs of the time of Iltutmish also survived during the reign of Balban and added lustre to his court.<sup>8</sup> Amirs of this period vied with each other in the matters of charity.<sup>9</sup> Excessive generosity of the Amirs made them live beyond their means.<sup>10</sup> They held lavish social gatherings at their houses and constantly competed with each other for charity and alms giving. Things had reached such a pass that the officers of the Amirs used to take loan on interest from the Multani merchants of

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 184.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 198-199.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 199.

<sup>4</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr), pp. 168-169.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 206.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid, pp. 206-7. He used to distribute in charity thousands—never less than hundreds. He would never give a horse or clothes to anyone without a bag of silver Tonkas. The word 'Jital' was never uttered by him. The Sultan heard stories about his charity and was very pleased by it. He increased his Iqta and grants. It is recorded that once the Sultan told him that it was better to give charity when one was not intoxicated. Accordingly the Khan gave up drinking and increased the amount of charity. Ibid, p. 207.

<sup>7</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 206.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 207.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid, p. 207. If one Khan gave dinner to 500 persons the other would feel ashamed and would try to arrange for the dinner of 1000 persons. If one Malik spent 200 Tankas the other would feel ashamed till he had spent 400 Tankas. If one Khan has given 50 horses in charity and distributed clothes to 200 persons the other would feel envious till he had arranged for 100 horses and 500 clothes for charity.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid, p. 207.

Delhi in order to be able to arrange these entertainments That is how the Multani merchants became so rich <sup>1</sup>

*Officers and Maliks of Balban*<sup>2</sup>

Sadr-ı Jahan Fakhruddin Nakela—Qazi  
 Khwaja Husain Basari—Wazir  
 Imad ul Mulk Rawat ı Arz  
 Malik Alauddin Kishli Khan—Barbak  
 Malik Nizamuddin Buzgala—Vakil ı dar  
 Adil Khan Shamsı  
 Timur Khan Shamsı  
 Malik Ikhtiyar Uddin Bektars Sultanı Barbak  
 Amin Khan Asıgeen Muyedraz  
 Malik Amir Ali Sarjandar  
 Haibat Khan Akhurbak Maisara  
 Malik Buta, Sarjandar  
 Malik Muhammad Sardar  
 Malik Targı Sarısilahdar Maisara  
 Malik Ikhtiyaruddin Katmiranı  
 Malik Tashmand Akhurbak Maisara  
 Umdtul Mulk Khwaja Aladbır  
 Malik Kiyamuddin Illaqadabır  
 Malik Saunj Sar Jandar  
 Malik Abajı Akhurbke Maimna  
 Malik Targı Sarısilahdar Maimna  
 Malik Muqaddır Tughrıl Kush  
 Malik Shıhabuddin Khalı  
 Amir Jamalnayab Dadbak  
 Malik Nasıruddın Kuchi Dadbak's son  
 Malik Tajuddin  
 Malik Nasıruddın Dana Shahnak Peel Maimna  
 Malik Aıjuddin Shahnak Peel Maisara  
 Khwaja Sharfuddin Rashdı Mustaufı  
 Khwaja Khatıruddın Nayıb Wazır  
 Malik Alauddın Shanak  
 Malik Fakhruddin Nıyıb Wazır Aıtman Surkha

<sup>1</sup>*Tarikh i Firozshahı* by Baranı (Tr ) p 207

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid*, p 140

Malik Nasiruddin Barki

Malik Ikhtayaruddin

Maik Jamaluddin Aitigin Barid-i-Mamalik

The sons and grandsons of the Sultan are also included in this list.<sup>1</sup> It seems that they were also treated as courtiers.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 140. Prince Muhammad, Bughra Khan, Kaikhusrau and Kaikubad are mentioned in this list.

<sup>2</sup>The sons of Ilutmish are included in such list. See *Tabqat-i-Nasiri* by Minhaj-us-Siraj (Tr.), p. 29.

## VIII

### EDUCATION AND LEARNING

**B**ALBAN had great respect for men of learning. Distinguished scholars and artistes graced his court.<sup>1</sup> The Mongols forced a large number of scholars and men of letters to desert other Muslim states and take shelter at Balban's court.<sup>2</sup> The Sultan's example was followed by nobles and people.

Balban was very keen to impart the best education to his sons.<sup>3</sup> He arranged for them instructions in language, grammar, etc.,<sup>4</sup> and employed the best teachers for this purpose.<sup>5</sup> The books which Sultan Iltutmish had procured from Baghdad for his sons were also obtained by Balban for his sons.<sup>6</sup>

His gave practical advice to his sons<sup>7</sup> based on his observation and experience. He knew that his son Bughra Khan did not match his other brothers in wit and intelligence and was

<sup>1</sup>*Tarikh-i Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr), p. 201. Sayyid Muntakhabuddin, Sayyid Jalaluddin, Sayyid Aziz and Sayyid Muinuddin of Samana, Sayyids of Kaithal of Janjir of Bayana and Badayun and others. See also *Tarikh-i Ferishta* (Tr), Vol. I, pp. 139, 152.

<sup>2</sup>*Tarikh-i Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr), p. 201, *Tarikh-i Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr), Vol. I, p. 139.

<sup>3</sup>Bughra Khan related to Kaiqubad the manner in which they were given education by his grandfather, *Tarikh-i Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr), p. 224.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 224-225.

<sup>5</sup>*Tarikh-i Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr), p. 224-225.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 225. The books were *Abab-us Salatin* and *Masir us-Salatin*.

<sup>7</sup>*Tarikh-i Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr), pp. 173-180, 190-198, *Tarikh-i Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr), Vol. I, pp. 148-150.

pleasure-loving. He gave him special instructions.<sup>1</sup>

Prince Muhammad, the eldest son of the Sultan, was a very able, learned, cultured and honest man.<sup>2</sup> Sultan loved him exceedingly,<sup>3</sup> named him heir-apparent, appointed him the governor of Sindh and gave him the title of Qaan-i-Malik. He showed great promise and had political dexterity and penchant for administration.<sup>4</sup> He also surrounded himself with artistes and talented persons.<sup>5</sup> It was an atmosphere congenial to intellectual intercourse and poems from *Shahnama*, *Diwan-i-Sunai* and *Diwan-i-Khakani* were recited.<sup>6</sup> Intellectual discussions took place among scholars.<sup>7</sup>

The famous poets Amir Khusru and Amir Hasan were in his service when the Prince was posted in Multan and received many rewards from him.<sup>8</sup> The Prince appreciated the great poetic muse and honoured the poets.<sup>9</sup>

The Prince was well behaved, possessed poise, and was moderate in everything he did. Neither would he drink too much nor utter any indecent word.<sup>10</sup> He respected spiritual men like Shaikh Usman for whom he built a Khankah.<sup>11</sup> He invited Shaikh Saadi twice from Sheeraj who because of his inability to come sent his Ghazals.<sup>12</sup> He organised Sama in his assemblies.<sup>13</sup> The Prince "evinced great taste in literature and made a choice collection of poetry . . ."<sup>14</sup>

All this resulted in the flowering of culture and animated

<sup>1</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), pp. 190-191.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 170; *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* (Tr.), Vol. I, p. 144.

<sup>3</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 170.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 179-171.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 171.

<sup>8</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 171; *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr.), Vol. I, p. 144; *Tarikh-i-Mubarakshahi* by Yahya (Tr.), p. 40.

<sup>9</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 171.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 171. Balban gave up drinking after his accession (p. 156) but his sons continued to drink, pp. 188-189.

<sup>11</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 171.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 172.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup>*Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr.), Vol. I, p. 144.

intellectualism in the court of the Prince and indeed in the empire

### *Men of Letters*

A number of philosophers, men of learning and *tabibs* (physicians) flourished under the kingship of Balban. Maulana Badruddin Damishqi, a highly eminent, pious and knowledgeable person was unrivalled in the field of medicine.<sup>1</sup> Maulana Hamiduddin Mutriz<sup>2</sup> and Maulana Husamuddin Marigala<sup>3</sup> were also renowned physicians. Maulana Hamiduddin Mutriz was also a distinguished astrologer.<sup>4</sup>

Famous saints like Shaikhur Shukhul Alam Fariduddin Masud a great sufi saint, Shaikh Saduruddin, Shaikh Qutubuddin, Shaikh Badruddin Gaznavi, Shaikh Malik Yaa Parra, Devy Sam<sup>5</sup> flourished and received his patronage.

Singers and Qawals who sang extremely well were also a part of his court.

Military glory of the empire was thus matched by the glory of the court which had luminaries of distinction in every branch of learning.<sup>6</sup>

### *Religion*

Balban was a deeply religious man who said his five compulsory prayers as well as five recommended prayers<sup>7</sup> and did not miss his prayers even if he went out.<sup>8</sup> His son, Bughra Khan, praised him that no saint or scholar could offer so many prayers

<sup>1</sup>*Tarikh i Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr) p 202

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid*

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid*

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid*

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid*

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid* pp 146-198

<sup>7</sup>*Tarikh i Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr) pp 156 and 231. Balban used to enjoy the various namaz—*Ishraq*, *Chasht*, *Awwabin*, *Tahajjud*. He was the only Sultan who offered special prayers during *Shab-i-Qadar* falling during *Ramzan*, *Fawaid ul Fuad*, pp 231-232, *Religion and Politics in India* by K. A. Nizami, p 298.

<sup>8</sup>*Tarikh i Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr) p 156

as he did.<sup>1</sup> Balban was insistent that his 'sons too should' offer their prayers regularly and would become very angry if they defaulted.<sup>2</sup>

He liked to narrate to his sons the saying of Hadis that "offering prayers in congregation is my practice, whoever gives it up is a hypocrite."<sup>3</sup> He said some litanies (*aurad*) daily,<sup>4</sup> kept vigils,<sup>5</sup> and fasted during Ramzan.<sup>6</sup> He led a life sanctioned by religion and morality. Before he ascended the throne he drank liberally and lived a profligate life but after becoming the Sultan he gave up all the vices.<sup>7</sup> He did not do anything which *Shara* forbade.<sup>8</sup> It was only in political matters that he did not bother about the dictates of *Shara* and did whatever was expedient.<sup>8</sup>

Balban had great reverence for the Ulema and honoured Qazi Sharafuddin, Maulana Siajuddin Sijzi, and Maulana Najmuddin Damishqi.<sup>10</sup> After the Friday *namaz* he visited Maulana Burhanuddin Balkhi regularly.<sup>11</sup> He had a lot of faith in Baba Farid also.<sup>12</sup> He had immense regard for Shaikh Farid Uddin Gani-i-

<sup>1</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 231; Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya also praised the religious learning and observance of regularity in prayers by Balban *Fawaid-ul-Fuad*, pp. 231-232 as quoted by K.A. Nizami in *Religion and Politics in India*, p. 120.

<sup>2</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), pp. 195 and 231. Not only his sons but anybody who failed to perform his prayers was not liked by Balban; *Ibid*, p. 231.

<sup>3</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 195.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid*, p. 156.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid*, p. 156. He would perform prayers throughout the night during the month of Haji.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid*, pp. 156, 157, 231. Religious festivals like Sab Barat were celebrated during the reign of Balban with great enthusiasm. Young boys, used to flood lit the city on this night. *Religion and Politics in India* by K.A. Nizami, p. 297.

<sup>7</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 156; *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr.), Vol. I, p. 141.

<sup>8</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 156.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid*, p. 157.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid*.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid*.

<sup>12</sup>*Siyar-ul-Auliya*, p. 72, quoted by K.A. Nizami in *Religion and Politics in India* p. 243. The saint had to accept some coins sent by Balban but he immediately distributed them, *Ibid*., p. 245.

Shakhar (Ajodhan) Shaikh Ali Chisti<sup>1</sup> and other scholars and saints<sup>2</sup> He liked to be surrounded on his dinner table by Qazis and other theologians<sup>3</sup> and visited them<sup>4</sup> He took great interest in sermons (*tazkir*) and often went to listen to these<sup>5</sup> He was occasionally so moved in such gatherings that he would cry bitterly<sup>6</sup> On learning about the death of a saint or scholar he would attend the funeral offer prayers and help the family members financially<sup>7</sup> He gave respect to the Qazies of the army gave them the title of Hamran and "accepted their recommendations"<sup>8</sup>

### Charity

Balban believed in charity even as a Khan and spent large sums of money on distributing largesse In his youth he enjoyed gambling yet whatever he earned in this he gave as alms<sup>9</sup> He often gave horses, costly clothes and other things as presents to saints and other associates<sup>10</sup> He supported the family of religious men who had died<sup>11</sup> He gave<sup>12</sup> succour to the poor and the needy<sup>12</sup>

### Ulema

The Ulema who were the repositories of theological learning exercised great influence on the policies of the state indirectly or

<sup>1</sup>*Tarikh i Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr) Vol I p 15<sup>2</sup> *Siyar-ul Auliyah* pp 79 80 and 212 213 as quoted by K A Nizami in *Religion and Politics in India* p 121

<sup>3</sup>*Tarikh i Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr) pp 201 202 *Tarikh i Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr) Vol I p 152 Among other learned Salats were Shaikh Bahauddin Zakaria and his son Shaikh Badruddin Asraf of Ghazni Qutubuddin Bakhtiyar Kakri and Sidi Maula

<sup>4</sup>*Tarikh i Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr) p 156-157

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid* p 157

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid*

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid*

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid*

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid*

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid* (Tr) p 156

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid* p 156

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid* p 157

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid*, p 156

directly by interpreting the Muslim law.<sup>1</sup> Sometimes the Ulema did not interpret the law strictly according to the letter of scripture in order to please their patrons and for such laxity they were criticised by the sovereigns.<sup>2</sup> Over the period of time most of the Ulema had ceased to be the pious interpreters of Shariat but had become materialistic and selfish.

By the time Balban came to power the standard of Ulema had deteriorated to a noticeable extent.<sup>3</sup> Balban was conscious of lack of honesty, truth and righteousness on the part of Ulema.<sup>4</sup> The Sultan divided the Ulema in two parts—Ulema-i-Akharat who hated materialism and preferred spiritual life like the sufis and saints and Ulema-i-Duniya who sought mundane pleasures and were greedy and self-centred.<sup>5</sup> The latter class had become so numerous that even Bughra Khan warned Kaiqubad to be careful and not to accept their advice since it was not based on right conduct and morality.<sup>6</sup>

After becoming the ruler Balban patronised the Ulema-i-Akharat<sup>7</sup> and advised his son Bughra Khan also to invite Ulema to his kingdom and treat them with respect.<sup>8</sup> He had great respect for Maulana Burhan Uddin Balkhi, Qazi Sharafuddin Walva Ji, Maulana Siraj-Uddin Sanjari and Nijmuddin Danishqi.<sup>9</sup> He made it a practice to call on Burhanuddin Balkhi after every Friday *namaz*.<sup>10</sup> He even took the Ulema's advice on

<sup>1</sup>*Life and Conditions of the People of Hindustan* by K.M. Ashraf, pp. 96-97.

<sup>2</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firazshahi* by Barani (Tr.), pp. 190-191, 230.

<sup>3</sup>See for role of Ulema *Tabqat-i-Nasiri* by Minhaj-us-Siraj (Tr.), pp. 38-39, 53-54. The events make it clear that the Ulema had divided themselves in cliques and each group wanted to fulfil its ambition. Minhaj-us-Siraj himself belonged to the party of Balban, *Ibid*, p. 49. Conspiracy of Qazies to dethrone Nasir Uddin was detected by Balban and the rebellion were suppressed. *Ibid*, pp. 53-54.

<sup>4</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 190-191, 230.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid*, pp. 230-31.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid*.

<sup>7</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), pp. 157, 198 ; Ibn Batuta relates a story which shows the respect which he had for the Ulema in his early life. (Tr.), p. 312.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid*, pp. 196, 230.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid*, p. 157.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid*.

various matters. Barani has given a list of prominent Ulema of Balban's realm.<sup>1</sup> Balban occasionally sought their advice and accepted their recommendations also.<sup>2</sup> On Qazi-i-Laskar's recommendation a large number of rebels from Lakhnauti were pardoned.<sup>3</sup> The Sultan bestowed the title of Harman to the Qazies of the army in order to honour them.<sup>4</sup> Although Balban had great regard for Shariat he did not mind disregarding it if it was contrary to the interest of the State.<sup>5</sup>

The Sultan made no pretence of the fact that he was not quite capable of following the sacred laws (Din Panahi) to the letter.<sup>6</sup>

He never suffered interference from Ulema in the matters of the state although in other matters he took their advice.

### Architecture

Balban was not a great builder and there are no striking buildings constructed by him. Some of his constructions are, however, worth mentioning.

He erected a house known as Darul Aman (House of Tranquility)<sup>7</sup> which according to Ibn Batuta is his best work.<sup>8</sup> Legend says that if a person who was indebted to someone went inside this house his debts were paid off by the Sultan. If a person were guilty of a crime, murder or misdeed and went inside the house the members of the aggrieved family were compensated by the Sultan.<sup>9</sup> Ibn Batuta says that the tomb of Balban was also built in that house which he himself had visited.<sup>10</sup> The construction of the tomb of Balban began in about

<sup>1</sup>Ibid, p. 201. Maulana Buchanuddin Malkh, Maulana Burhanuddin Bazaz, Qazi Rafiuddin Gazruni, Qazi Shamsuddin Marazi, Qazi Rukunuddin Samana, Qazi Jalaluddin Kashani, Qazi Sadiduddin, Qazi Jahiruddin, Qazi Jalaluddin etc., see also *Tarikh i Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr.), Vol. I, p. 152.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid, p. 157.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid, Harman is the other name given to Mecca and Madina.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid, p. 157.

<sup>6</sup>*Tarikh i Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 155.

<sup>7</sup>*Rehla* by Ibn Batuta (Tr.), p. 311; see also *Tarikh i Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 209.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid, p. 311.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid, p. 311.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid, p. 311, *Tarikh i Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 209.

1280 A.D.<sup>1</sup> In this building appears the first true arch.<sup>2</sup> According to Percy Brown, "It is a notable landmark in the evolution of style."<sup>3</sup>

Balban gave most important place in state polity to construction and renovation of forts at various places.<sup>4</sup> He rebuilt the town of Lahore which was devastated by Mongols in 1241 A.D.<sup>5</sup> Architects and managers were appointed there for this purpose.<sup>6</sup> The Sultan constructed a number of roads in various directions<sup>7</sup> which must have improved means of communication to a great extent. He also built big open mosques at Kampil, Patiali and Bhojpur.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Indian Architecture (Islamic Period)* by Percy Brown, p. 15.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid*, p. 15. True arch was produced by means of radiating voussoirs. See for details p. 15; *Archaeology and Monumental Remains of Delhi* by Carr Stephen, (1876), pp. 79-80.

<sup>3</sup>*Indian Architecture* by Percy Brown, p. 15.

<sup>4</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (E & D). Vol. III, p. 104-7; *Tarikh-i-Mubarakshahi* by Yahya (Tr.), pp. 37-38; *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr.), Vol. I, p. 142. These forts were built at Gopalgir, Kampil, Patiali, Bhojpur, Jalali, Lahore etc.

<sup>5</sup>*Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta ((Tr.), Vol. I, p. 142.

<sup>6</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (E & D), Vol. III, p. 107.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid*.

<sup>8</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 164.

## IX

### SUCCESSION

**M**UHAMMAD Sultan, the eldest son of Balban, enjoyed the title of Qaan-i-Malik<sup>1</sup> and was also known as Khan-i-Shaheed.<sup>2</sup> He was initially appointed to the Iqta of Kol and its adjacent territories.<sup>3</sup> He displayed great administrative abilities and became very popular due to his able administration.<sup>4</sup> A man of letters, he was extremely cultured and patronised scholars, artists and talented persons.<sup>5</sup> He was a pious person and welcom-

<sup>1</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 170.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 170. Barani informs that due to his abilities Prince Muhammad became a great source of inspiration to all so much so that great Khans and Maliks gave the name of Muhammad to their sons. All these Muhammads became very famous due to their talents. Muhammad Kishlu Khan was unsurpassable in archery, Muhammad Kashli Khan (Malik Alauddin) was known for his charity and Muhammad Arslan Khan (Tatar Khan of Lakhnauti) was known for his courage, sacrifice and generosity. But among all these Muhammad's the son of Sultan Balban Muhammad Sultan was most cultured and talented.

<sup>5</sup>*Tarikh-i-Mubarakshahi* by Yahya (Tr.), p. 40, *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr.), Vol. I, p. 144. Among them were Amir Khusrau and Amir Hasan who were rewarded profusely by the Prince. The *nadims* of his court used to read *Shahname*, *Diwan-i-Sanna'i*, *Diwan-i-Khakan* and Shaikh Nizami's *Khamsa*. Discussion used to take place over them. *Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), pp. 170-171.

ed and honoured the saints and religious minded people.<sup>1</sup> He built Khankas for them and assigned villages for their maintenance.<sup>2</sup> He invited Shaikh Saadi of Sheeraj twice to Multan,<sup>3</sup> but due to old age the Shaikh was unable to come and sent him *ghazals* written in his own hands.<sup>4</sup>

Balban was very fond of Prince Muhmmad and loved him dearly.<sup>5</sup> He appointed him the heir-apparent and gave him the canopy.<sup>6</sup> He was appointed as Governor of Sindh and adjacent territories and left for Multan accompanied by a big army and reputed Amirs.<sup>7</sup> The Prince used to visit the Sultan every year and present him treasures.<sup>8</sup> Balban used to advise him on numerous matters from time to time.<sup>9</sup> In the year 1285-1286 A.D. the Khan of Multan fought his last and valiant battle against the Mongols in which he was killed.<sup>10</sup> He then came to be known as Khan-i-Saheed.<sup>11</sup> This news caused extreme mental anguish to Balban.<sup>12</sup>

Eighty years old Balban was completely shattered by the death of the Prince.<sup>13</sup> The brilliant Prince had been well tutored by the Sultan to take over the reins of administration.<sup>14</sup> Though outwardly calm the sorrow gnawed at the Sultan who could not

<sup>1</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 171. When Shaikh Usman, a reputed old saint, reached Multan, the Prince welcomed him with great respect and offered him presents. He tried to retain him in Multan but could not succeed in doing so.

Shaikh Qadava (the son of Bahauddin Zakaria) was also called by the Prince in his gathering. *Ghazals* were also recited, Ibid, p. 172. See also *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr.), Vol. I, p. 144.

<sup>2</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 171.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid, p. 172; *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr.), Vol. I, p. 144.

<sup>4</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 172.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.; *Tarikh-i-Mubarakshahi* by Yahya (Tr.), p. 40.

<sup>8</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 173; *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr.), Vol. I, p. 144.

<sup>9</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 173; *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr.), Vol. I, p. 148.

<sup>10</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 200; *Tarikh-i-Mubarakshahi* by Yahya (Tr.), p. 41.

<sup>11</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 200.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr.), Vol. I, p. 151.

<sup>14</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 200.

sleep and wept bitterly<sup>1</sup> Though broken-hearted and grief stricken, the Sultan could not ignore the interests of the empire and had to nominate a successor Prince Muhammad fulfilled the requirements of the heir apparent The Prince, the eldest son, was competent in the matters of administration, was brave, popular among the people and the Sultan reposed great faith in him

The younger son of the Sultan was Bughra Khan who had the title of Nasiruddin<sup>2</sup> Sultan, however, did not think much of Bughra Khan and while he gave him the territories of Sunam and Samana he also appointed *barids* to report on him<sup>3</sup> He instructed the Prince not to indulge in reveleries and orgies and to take Sultan's advice on all important matters<sup>4</sup> When Bughra Khan was appointed Governor of Lakhnauti<sup>5</sup> he instructed him similarly It shows clearly that the Sultan had little faith in his abilities

After Prince Muhammad's death the emblems of sovereignty were given to his (Prince Muhammad's) son Kai Khusrau<sup>6</sup> who was brought under the supervision of the Sultan<sup>7</sup> and he was sent to Multan in place of his father<sup>8</sup>

The Sultan called Bughra Khan to Delhi from Lakhnauti<sup>9</sup> and requested him to take over the reins of the Empire after his death because the Sultan did not have any other son<sup>10</sup> and the two grandsons Kai Khusrau and Kaiqubad were too young to be entrusted with state responsibilities<sup>11</sup> He did not want any one else to occupy the throne of Delhi for then his offsprings would have to accept the new ruler's suzerainty Bughra Khan, however, was reluctant to shoulder the responsibility of the Kingship and

<sup>1</sup>Ibid, p 201

<sup>2</sup>Ibid p 180

<sup>3</sup>Ibid

<sup>4</sup>Ibid *Tarikh i Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr) Vol. I, pp 144 145

<sup>5</sup>*Tarikh i Firuzshahi* by Barani (Tr) pp 190-191

<sup>6</sup>Ibid, p 201

<sup>7</sup>Ibid

<sup>8</sup>Ibid, *Tarikh i Mubarakshahi* by Yahya (Tr) p 48

<sup>9</sup>*Tarikh i Firuzshahi* by Barani (Tr), p 207 *Tarikh i Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr) Vol I, p 151

<sup>10</sup>*Tarikh i Firuzshahi* by Barani (Tr), p 208

<sup>11</sup>Ibid

ignoring the wishes of his father went back to Lakhnauti.<sup>1</sup> The throne for which battles were fought and blood was shed was ironically brushed aside by Bughra Khan when offered on a platter.

The Sultan again fell ill, this time not to recover, after Bughra Khan left for Lakhnauti.<sup>2</sup> He knew that his end had come. He had to appoint a successor for the throne could not remain vacant.<sup>3</sup> The Sultan called Malik Fakhruddin Kotwal, Khwaja Hasan Basari and other confidants and disclosed his desire to nominate Kai Khusru as his successor.<sup>4</sup> He was instructed by the Sultan himself, yet he was too young and inexperienced.<sup>5</sup> Unfortunately Bughra Khan was not present in the capital.<sup>6</sup> Since there was no alternative Kai Khusrau was appointed his successor by Balban.<sup>7</sup> Balban died the third day after his nomination.<sup>8</sup> He had to take recourse to this action for he knew well the greed of the nobles around and a vacant throne would have started a battle for succession with unknown results.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ibid, p. 208.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., *Tarikh-i-Mubarakshahi* by Yahya (Tr.), p. 48 ; *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr.), Vol. I, p. 151.

<sup>5</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 208.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid, p. 209.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid, p. 210.

## DESPOTISM

**B**ALBAN inherited a kingdom seething with unrest. Chaos reigned everywhere and it was difficult to contain the prevailing anarchy.<sup>1</sup> Nobles and the Ulema, the pillars of the empire, had become devoid of character. The prestige of the crown had suffered very greatly. Under these circumstances, in order to retrieve the lost glory of the crown Balban had to adopt a tough line of action. From a slave he had risen to be a Sultan and as a result he was conversant with the power structure of the empire and knew well where the threat to his authority lay. He knew that not only the unruly had to be punished but an example had to be made of them that others would also not dream of raising the banner of revolt. It was an age when no quarters could be given and none asked for—an age in which magnanimity would have seemed weakness and making concessions a confession of defeat. Balban was the product of his age and possessed 'fierce temper and implacable resolution'.<sup>2</sup>

Balban's despotism was tempered with wisdom. He was open to correction<sup>3</sup> and was not loath to consult his chosen nobles whom he would often call to discuss various problems.<sup>4</sup> He frankly disclosed his mind and put his views before them.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ibid, pp 143-144

<sup>2</sup>Ibid p 143

<sup>3</sup>Tarikh i Firozshahi by Barani (E & D), Vol III, p 117

<sup>4</sup>Ibid, p 111

<sup>5</sup>Tarikh i Firozshahi by Barani (Tr), pp 159-160, Ibid, Vol I, p 141.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid, pp 149-150

He often accepted the recommendations of his officers like the Kotwal and the Qazi and on their intercession pardoned those whom he had decided to punish.<sup>1</sup>

There was a softer side to his character also. He cried without restraint when he was not able to follow the Shariat (*Din Panahi*).<sup>2</sup> According to Barani the Sultan used to give vent to his emotions tearfully after listening to the discourses of Sheikhs and Sayyids.<sup>3</sup> Such outbursts were caused by intensity of religious feelings. He could control his feelings totally if he wished as at the time of his son's death he remained unmoved in the public. His public face was different from his private face. He was always stern and unbending publicly but would often break down in the privacy of his apartments.

He was always concerned with the welfare of his subjects particularly the infirm and the helpless. He had instructed his officials to help them in crossing bridges, river, etc.<sup>4</sup> He advised his sons also to look after the interests of the people and keep them satisfied.<sup>5</sup> He was a benevolent despot, paternal towards his subjects.<sup>6</sup>

He dealt even-handed justice and his moods did not affect his verdict. He dealt with the guilty very strictly although he might be in his most cheerful moods.<sup>7</sup> He was firmly of the belief that a ruler should not act against the laws of the prophet,<sup>8</sup> should be God-fearing, should perform his religious duties regularly and should respect the Ulema and religious minded people.<sup>9</sup>

The fact that Balban was ruthless but just endeared him to the masses and he was deeply mourned on his death by the

<sup>1</sup>*Tarik-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), pp. 168-169, 199.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 155.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 157.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.* (Tr.), p. 156.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 178, 194.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 210.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 152.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 179.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 195.

courtiers<sup>1</sup> and the people<sup>2</sup> alike Barani observed that wise and experienced people were very much grieved by his death The day he died the lawless elements started stirring again<sup>3</sup> and people again started losing their faith in the protection of the state.<sup>4</sup> Ages after he had died people praised his reign for the stability and security he gave to his subjects<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Tarikh i Firuzshah* by Barani (Tr ), p 209 They threw mud on their head and tore away their clothes The Kotwal Fakhruddin was so deeply grieved that he slept on floor for about six months after the death of Balban Other Malik and Sadr, etc slept on the floor for 40 days, Ibid, p 209

<sup>2</sup>Several other distinguished people of Delhi also slept on the floor for 40 days after Balban's death, Ibid, (Tr ), pp 209 210

<sup>3</sup>Ibid , p 210

<sup>4</sup>Ibid

<sup>5</sup>Ibid

## EPILOGUE

**B**ALBAN "a prince of just principles and endowed with many great and amiable qualities"<sup>1</sup> was a creation of his environment. A man of political wisdom, his vast experience was firmly imprinted on his mind and his ambitions were always tempered with caution. He knew from experience who were the stumbling blocks in the path of achievement of his ambition to resuscitate the dignity and glory of the Kingship. With extreme determination he set about the task of purging the body politic of such elements.

Death of Sultan Iltutmish was precursor of much chaos and disquiet in the empire.<sup>2</sup> Balban knew that order was the prerequisite for the successful governance of the empire and, therefore, he firmly put down indiscipline, disorderliness and disobedience.<sup>3</sup> He established peace in his realm, suppressed contumacy in Doab and other adjacent regions of the empire, strengthened the defence of the western frontier, restructured the nobility, evolved an outline of the structure of the central government, established diplomatic relations with foreign countries whose ambassadors visited his court,<sup>4</sup> centralised power in his hands, and above all restored dignity to kingship. These, in brief, were his achievements.

He laid great emphasis on purity of race and has come in for criticism for his racial prejudices<sup>5</sup> For restoring the dignity of the crown Balban considered it necessary to eliminate-

<sup>1</sup>*Tarikh-i-Ferishta* by Ferishta (Tr.), Vol. I, p. 137.

<sup>2</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), pp. 143-144.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid*, p. 144.

<sup>4</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 145. In the reign of Iltutmish, Qazi Jalalurus came to Delhi as an ambassador from Baghdad, p. 196.

<sup>5</sup>*Foundations of Muslim Rule in India* by Habibullah, pp. 149-150.

all low born person including the Indian Muslims from the administration. The leader of Indian Muslims had humiliated and outmanoeuvred him and this rankled in his mind.

It was a time when no fresh wave of Turkish immigrants was coming to India and the state was being transferred in nature from Turkish to Indo Muslim. This was a natural phenomenon which Balban tried to impede by his partial attitude towards the Turks.

It is interesting to note that although the Sultan was extremely partial to men of Turkish origin he adopted the customs and manners of the Persians.<sup>1</sup> He cared little for Turkish conventions and was enamoured of Persian traditions.

Balban has been criticised for his treatment of the Turkish nobles.<sup>2</sup> He treated the nobles ruthlessly, weeded out undesirable elements, punished the unruly and thus made them aware of his powers. He put the arrogant, ambitious and interfering nobles in their place. He saw to it that they no longer posed a threat to the crown. This resulted in the weakening of the Turkish nobility and in the long run was responsible for the success of the Khalji Amirs against them. On the other hand Balban succeeded in bringing to an end the struggle for supremacy between the nobles and the Sultan which was no mean achievement.

Balban laid extreme emphasis on the recruitment and proper organisation of the army and spent the major portion of the revenues of the state on the upkeep of the army. However, he is criticised for not introducing any important reforms in the organisation of the army. Although he spent large sums of money of the army and made strenuous efforts to make it strong yet the army often failed to rise to the occasion as, for example, happened in the case of Tughril Khan's rebellion. Balban has come in for criticism<sup>3</sup> for this weakness of the army. Yet on the whole he succeeded to a large extent in introducing efficiency and rooting out corruption and laxity from this department.

Balban failed in the field of administrative organisation. He

<sup>1</sup>*Tarikh-i Firuzshahi* by Barani (Tr) pp 145, 150, *Foundations of Muslim Rule in India* by Habibullah p 256

<sup>2</sup>*Religion and Politics in India* by K. A. Nizami, pp 143-144

<sup>3</sup>*A Comprehensive History of India* by M. Habib and K. A. Nizami, Vol V, p 303

did not create either a system of local government or land revenue organisation. The reforms in the army only touched the fringe and cannot be called significant. He cannot be called a great statesman. He did not possess vision. His exclusion of non-Turks from administration produced disastrous results and this narrow-minded policy was responsible for bringing Khaljis to power.

His policies were reactionary and in his desire to purify the administration and purge it of undesirable elements he went too far in discriminating between the people of Turkish and non-Turkish extraction.<sup>1</sup>

Although while selecting officers he laid emphasis on merit and ability, he also saw to it that they were not outspoken and would not dare to voice dissent. He failed to lay foundation of institutions which would continue without him at the helm of affairs. No sooner was his stern hand removed from the helm the ship of the State started floundering.

<sup>1</sup>*Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* by Barani (Tr.), p. 144.

## THE SLAVE DYNASTY

1. Qutb-ud-Din Aibak	A.D. 1206-10
2. Aram Shah	1210-11
3. Iltutmish	1211-36
4. Rukn-ud-din-Firoz Shah	1236
5. Raziya	1236-40
6. Behram Shah	1240-42
7. Ala-ud-din Masud Shah	1242-46
8. Nasir-ud-din Mahmud	1246-66
9. Ghayas-ud-din Balban	1266-86
10. Kaiqubad	1287-90

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