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Edited By P. M. Holt, Ann K. S. Lambaton and Bernard Lewis

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PART V

THE INDIAN SUB-CONTINENT

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CHAPTER I

MUSLIM INDIA BEFORE THE MUGHALS

THE GHAZNAVIDS AND GHURIDS

When Alptigin rebelled against the Samanids he established himself at Ghazna in 352/962, where his slave and son-in-law Sebüktigin succeeded him in 367/977 and started vigorously to expand his dominions. Jayapāla of Waihind saw danger in the consolidation of the kingdom of Ghazna and decided to destroy it. He therefore invaded Ghazna, but was defeated and agreed to pay an indemnity. He defaulted, took the field again and was once more defeated. This was the beginning of the struggle between the Ghaznavids and the Hindu Shāhīs.

Sebüktigin died in 387/997 and in the following year was succeeded by the famous Maḥmūd. The latter defeated Jayapāla (391/1001), who immolated himself by fire because his subjects thought that he had brought disaster and disgrace to the dynasty. Jayapāla's son Ānandapāla carried on the struggle, and in a few years succeeded in organizing a confederacy of the Hindu rulers of Ujjayn, Gwalior (Gwālyār), Kālinjar, Kannawj, Delhi (Dihli) and Ajmēr. This powerful confederacy was defeated at Peshāwar in 399/1008, despite the fact that during the greater part of the battle Maḥmūd and his army were hard-pressed. The tide turned when Ānandapāla's elephant was hit by an arrow, took fright and ran away. On this the Hindu army broke and fled. The Hindu Shāhī dominions came into Maḥmūd's possession and a governor was appointed to reside at Lahore (Lāhawr). He decided to teach the Hindu rajas a lesson so that they should not venture to combine against him again. He soon discovered that they were incredibly rich, having vast hoards of treasures, and that the Hindu temples also were repositories of great wealth. This also must have whetted his appetite for expeditions. Nagarkōt, Thānesar, Kannawj and Kālinjar were all conquered and left in the hands of the Hindu vassals. His last expedition was against Somnāth, which he captured in 415/1024 after a trying march through the desert. He returned to Ghazna in 417/1026. Four years later, in 421/1030, he died.

It would have been impossible for Maḥmūd to control all the vanquished Hindu kingdoms because of his involvement in Central Asia.

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Therefore, he contented himself with the annexation of the Panjāb only. He was neither a mere robber nor a bloodthirsty tyrant, as some modern writers have called him, and shed no blood except in the exigencies of war. He did despoil and destroy many Hindu temples, but in his dealings with his own Hindu subjects he was tolerant, as is evident by his employment of Hindus, some of whom lived in Ghazna and rose to high posts. Maḥmūd's reputation as a great patron of culture and literature has remained undiminished throughout the ages. It was under his patronage that the well-known epic *Shāh-nāma* was written by Firdawsī. The story that Firdawsī was shabbily treated and wrote a poem maligning the sultan has been contested. One of the greatest scholars at his court was Abū Rayḥān Muḥammad al-Bīrūnī.

Maḥmūd's successor, Mas'ūd, maintained control over Lahore, and when he heard that its governor Aḥmad Niyaltigin had rebellious intentions he sent a Hindu general, Tilak, against him. Niyaltigin was defeated and killed. Mas'ūd decided to retire to Lahore after his defeat at the hands of the Seljuks but he was deposed by his guards near the Marghila Pass between Attock (Ātak) and Rāwalpindī in 432/1040. The dynasty, however, continued to rule until Mu'izz al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Sām ousted them from Lahore in 582/1186. One of the Ghaznavid rulers of Lahore, Ibrāhīm (451-92/1059-99) deserves special mention because he was able not only to secure peace by entering into a treaty with the Seljuks, but was also to make inroads into the Hindu kingdoms of the Gangetic plain. Under him and his son Mas'ūd III (492-508/1099-1115) Lahore rose to be a great centre of culture.

The Ghaznavid monarch Bahrām (512-47/1118-52) came into conflict with the rulers of Ghūr. After a protracted conflict 'Alā' al-Dīn Ḥusayn (known as *Jabhānsūz*) destroyed the city of Ghazna (545/1150) which was reduced to ashes. Bahrām was able to reoccupy a dilapidated Ghazna after *Jabhānsūz* had been defeated and imprisoned by Sultan Sanjar of the Seljuk dynasty. When Bahrām died, the Oghuz Turks occupied Ghazna, and the dynasty once again moved to Lahore. The power of the Ghūrīs revived and prospered under Ghiyāṣ al-Dīn Muḥammad. His brother, Muḥammad b. Sām (who had the title of Shihāb al-Dīn as a prince) was destined to extend Muslim rule over the greater part of northern India. He took Ghazna, Mūltān and Uch in 570/1175 and then turned towards Gujarāt in 573/1178. This expedition resulted in failure, and he decided to consolidate his position in the Panjāb which he did by capturing Peshāwar in 574/1179, Siālkot in

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576/1181, Lahore in 582/1186 and Bhatinda in 587/1191. At this the Hindu raja of Ajmēr and Delhi marched upon Bhatinda and when the sultan went to meet the danger he was wounded and had to be hastily moved to Ghazna. The sultan, however, was not daunted and he defeated Prithvirāja in 588/1192 at Nardīn, near Tarā'orī. Delhi and Ajmēr then passed to the sultan. Two years later he turned his attention to Kannawj and Banāras, which were added to the Muslim empire. His general Muḥammad b. Bakhtiyār Khaljī conquered Bihār and Bengal. The conquest of Bengal is one of the romances of history. It was with the incredibly small force of eighteen troopers that Muḥammad b. Bakhtiyār captured the capital city of Nadiyā. Ghiyāṣ al-Dīn having died in 599/1203, Shihāb al-Dīn Muḥammad assumed the title of Mu'izz al-Dīn and was officially invested as sultan. The major conquests, however, had already been made. The last few years of his life were mostly spent in dealing with difficulties in Central Asia, where in 602/1205 he suffered defeat at the hands of the Kara-Khitay. On rumours of this defeat reaching the Khokars they rose in rebellion which the sultan crushed in person. However, on his way back to Ghazna he was assassinated by an Ismā'īlī *fidā'i* at Damīk in 603/1206. Mu'izz al-Dīn Muḥammad was not as brilliant as Maḥmūd of Ghazna, but he left a lasting impact on the history of India. He was reputed to be a mild and benevolent man, a good general and a just ruler.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SULTANATE OF DELHI

Three months later the sultan's slave and general, Quṭb al-Dīn Aybak, was enthroned as sultan of Delhi, and thus was ushered into existence the sultanate which gradually brought the greater part of the sub-continent under its sway, and established Muslim rule on a firm foundation. After a short reign of five years he died and was succeeded by his son Ārām Shāh, who proved incompetent. In his place was elected Shams al-Dīn Iltutmish, who was Aybak's son-in-law. A struggle between the powerful slaves and generals of Mu'izz al-Dīn Muḥammad was inevitable, and Iltutmish had first to deal with his rivals. He was still in the throes of this struggle when Jalāl al-Dīn Mengübirdi of Khwārazm entered his dominions, being pursued by the famous Mongol conqueror Chingiz Khān. It was with some difficulty that Iltutmish was able to get rid of Jalāl al-Dīn, who ultimately left for Persia. In 632/1234 the Ismā'īlīs organized a *coup d'état* to assassinate the monarch and to establish their rule. They entered the mosque one Friday when the sultan was praying, and had

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hewed their way almost up to him when he made his escape. The effort was frustrated.

Iltutmish was one of the greatest sultans of Delhi. To him goes the credit of consolidating the empire. He was able to avert an imminent Mongol invasion by cold-shouldering Jalāl al-Dīn. He was ably assisted by Niẓām al-Mulk Kamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Junaydī, who had considerable administrative talent and insight. About this time the Ṣūfī orders became very active, and contributed considerably to the growth of Islam in the newly-conquered areas.

Iltutmish died in 633/1236. He had thought highly of his daughter Raḍiyya as a possible heir, because she was more capable than her brothers. After her brother Fīrūz had ruled ineffectively for six months she then succeeded, but found it difficult to manage 'the Forty', a group of powerful officers who had rendered meritorious service in the reign of Iltutmish. After his death, however, they robbed the throne of all power and raised one prince after another to the throne. Raḍiyya showed some spirit and fought for her throne, but she was defeated, and, while in flight, was killed by some Hindus (637/1240). Her half-brother Bahrām was raised to the throne on promising that authority would rest in the hands of a group of high officials. This proved too irksome for the young sultan, who tried to free himself from tutelage, and was therefore deposed in 639/1242. Yet another son, Mas'ūd, was now raised to the throne and was deposed in 644/1246 because he too tried to assert his authority. Then came to the throne Nāṣir al-Dīn Maḥmūd, a pious and kindly prince, who reigned till his death in 664/1266 with all power vested in the hands of Balban, a capable slave of Iltutmish and one of the powerful Forty.

The power of such a military oligarchy could not last. A modern speculation that if the Forty had exercised this power wisely they might have succeeded in establishing some constitutional precedents is baseless, because there was no ground of traditions or social institutions into which constitutionalism could have roots. The Forty were united neither in their outlook nor in their interests, the only binding factor was their aversion, for selfish reasons, to a powerful monarchy. This negative factor also disappeared when the Mongol pressure increased to such an extent that the very existence of the sultanate was threatened. The Mongols had penetrated Sind, Mūltān and the west Panjāb and had sacked Lahore in 638/1241, and some nobles had even begun to look to them for patronage and support. The Forty were divided into several

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groups because of mutual jealousies, their time and resources wasted in domestic quarrels. Hindu chieftains were discovering that the authority of the sultanate was not all-pervading, and the fear instilled by the rapid spread of Muslim power was wearing off. Gwalior and Ranthambor were lost and Katehr was giving trouble. Even the suburbs of Delhi had become unsafe, through the depredations of highwaymen, and the gates of Delhi had to be closed before dusk. Communications with Bengal were all but disrupted by Hindu robbers in the Do'āb. Bengal was under Muslim rule but virtually independent. It must have been obvious to all but the most selfish and short-sighted that the sultanate could not last long without vigorous effort and the strengthening of the central authority.

Nāṣir al-Dīn Maḥmūd entrusted all authority to Balban, and did not interfere with the administration throughout his reign except for a brief period of two years (651–3/1253–5) when, as the result of a palace conspiracy, Balban was removed from office. Balban was too circumspect to use his power in a manner that would alienate any strong group which might try to oust him with the help of the monarch. When Maḥmūd died in 664/1266, Balban ascended the throne with the title Ghiyāṣ al-Dīn, and began to assert himself fully. He belonged to a noble family of Ilbārī Turks of Central Asia, but was carried away as a slave during a Mongol incursion to Baghdād. He was ultimately sold to Iletmish at Delhi. He showed capacity and steadily rose to a position of eminence.

After his accession, Balban's first concern was to instil a sense of discipline into the officers. He strengthened the central army by reorganizing the department of recruitment and salaries—the office of the *'arīḡ-i mamālik*. After having strengthened the central army, he turned to the Forty and reduced their power. Those who resisted were heavily punished, and others soon saw the advantage of conforming to the new discipline. Balban established an exacting court etiquette. He deported himself with great dignity, never permitting anyone to take any liberty with him. It is said that even his personal valet did not see him half-dressed, bare-headed, or without his socks and shoes. He strengthened his intelligence system, and kept himself informed of the doings of his officers to stop them from indulging in any rebellious activities.

He limited himself to the area that he had inherited and made no effort even to recover parts of Mālwā which had been conquered earlier and then lost. He turned his attention to the improvement of peace and

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order. The forest near Delhi was cleared, and nests of robbers were rooted out. Katehr was again reduced to submission. Balban spent about a year in the districts of Patiālī, Bhojpur and Kampil in the Do'āb to punish the robbers and to suppress rebellions. He built forts and established townships of Muslims so that they might look after the security of the region. He then turned his attention to the Mongols and reorganized the administration of Sind and the west Panjāb. The capable Shēr Khān Sunqar was given command of the area and, on his death, Balban's eldest son, Muḥammad Khān, was appointed governor. These preparations kept the Mongols in check, though their incursions, in one of which the prince was killed, did not stop completely.

Balban decided to bring Bengal under his control. The main reason seems to be that the sultans of Delhi were dependent on Bengal for their supply of elephants, and an unfriendly Bengal could cut off these supplies. Two expeditions sent against the rebellious governor, Ṭughril, were defeated. Then Balban took the field in person in 679/1280. Ṭughril fled and took shelter in the forest of Orissa, from where he was captured and executed with his main supporters. The governorship was entrusted to Balban's second son, Bughrā Khān.

In 684/1285, when the news of the death of his eldest son, Muḥammad Khān, reached Balban, he heard it with fortitude and conducted his business as if nothing had happened, but at night he was disconsolate. He sent for Bughrā Khān with the intention of keeping him near the throne, so that he might succeed him without difficulty, but the prince left Delhi without permission. Balban died in 686/1287. He was succeeded by his worthless grandson, Kay-Qubād, who had been brought up under strict control, but who, when he was no longer under the tutelage of his grandfather, completely lost control over himself, and gave himself up to pleasure. His father, Bughrā Khān, marched from Bengal, and reached the river Ghāgrā (Gogra) at the same time as Kay-Qubād; because of the intercession of some nobles there were no hostilities. Bughrā Khān gave fatherly advice to Kay-Qubād, who seems to have made an effort to reform himself, but, even before he reached Delhi, he had been enticed back to his old ways. When shortly afterwards he was struck by paralysis his infant son Kayūmarṣ displaced him, as a puppet in the hands of first the Turkish faction and then of the Afghān party; his Khaljī deputy, Fērōz, defeated his rivals, and ascended the throne in 689/1290 under the title of Jalāl al-Dīn Fērōz Khaljī.

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THE KHALJĪ SULTANATE IN DELHI

The Khaljīs were Turks by origin, but had resided in Afghanistan so long that they were no longer regarded as Turks. Their rise, therefore, was disliked by the Turks. Gradually the animosity wore off; but not before Jalāl al-Dīn had suppressed the rebellion of Chhajjū Khān (690/1291), a scion of the house of Balban, and executed a *darwīsh*, Sīdī Mawlā, who had become a centre of rebellious conspiracies. Fērōz had distinguished himself as a general and administrator, but was more than seventy years old at the time of his enthronement. He was mild, and did not like to take stern measures even when they were necessary. Many of his followers were dissatisfied because they saw in his mildness a danger to their own position. Apart from his solitary action against Sīdī Mawlā, Fērōz's nature led him to abstain from executing even robbers and thugs, who were deported instead. He treated Chhajjū Khān with quixotic mildness to the consternation of his supporters. Towards the close of Fērōz's reign in 694/1294 his nephew and son-in-law, Muḥammad, set out from Karā, at the head of 8,000 horse, crossed the Vindhya and after a march of two months through difficult terrain, appeared before Devagiri and captured it. A huge booty of gold, silver, pearls, jewels and silk fell into his hands. When he returned he was summoned to court, but he pretended that he was afraid of punishment, having undertaken the expedition without royal permission. Fērōz was persuaded to go to Karā and reassure Muḥammad. He was also motivated by the hope of obtaining some of the wealth that Muḥammad had brought with him. He was, however, assassinated and Muḥammad proclaimed himself sultan as 'Alā' al-Dīn Muḥammad Khaljī in 695/1296.

Despite the circumstances in which he came to the throne, 'Alā' al-Dīn made a great impact upon the history of India. He was efficient, imaginative and strong. His expedition against Devagiri is in itself one of the boldest military ventures in history. His murder of Fērōz is no doubt a blot on his character, but he was motivated in this as much by the desire to maintain the authority of the Khaljīs as by self-interest.

'Alā' al-Dīn was soon able to make a correct assessment of the political situation. He undertook the task of securing his dominions from Mongol inroads and to extend his sovereignty further afield. This needed considerable organization and great resources. He therefore tightened his control over his officers as well as over Hindu chiefs, raised large sums of money through additional taxation, and built up a large army through

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rigid economy and establishing successfully a system of price-control. He introduced great austerity, and frowned upon any laxity in morals or indulgence in loose talk and intrigue. He further improved the intelligence services, and made them so efficient that the possibility of treasonable talk and association was eliminated. To stop the officials from organizing themselves into groups, he prohibited intermarriage without royal permission. He stopped convivial and drinking parties, so that the officers would not become too familiar with one another and establish relationships injurious to the state. He raised the state levy of agricultural produce from twenty per cent to fifty per cent in many areas and, to reduce any ensuing hardship, he eliminated the perquisites which Hindu chiefs used to extract from the peasantry. He also stopped the commission which the state paid them on the realization of the revenue. He examined the titles of rent-free grants of land given in previous reigns for pious purposes, and resumed them wherever they were no longer justified. In the same way, he abolished all grants in money which were no longer deserved. For the purpose of increasing his army and equipping it properly, he fixed salaries at a level lower than previously. His grants to poets and scholars also were not lavish.

For the purpose of removing any difficulty which smaller salaries might entail to public servants and others, he fixed prices at a reasonably low level, and was able to maintain them successfully throughout his reign. The system adopted was scientific and sensible. By lowering salaries he reduced the circulation of money, which had been artificially stimulated by the treasure that poured into Delhi as a result of the conquest of rich Hindu kingdoms. By raising the state levy on agricultural produce, he induced the peasant to cultivate more land, to enable him to make up for the lost margin in his net income. He ensured a continuous supply of food by the purchase of all surplus grain from the peasants, and bringing it to the town to ensure a constant supply. The cultivator was encouraged to pay the state in grain, which was stored at numerous places, and if, through a natural disaster or some unforeseen circumstance, the normal supply failed, the state granaries were able to make up the deficiency. Storage seems to have been managed skilfully, because as late as Ibn Baṭṭūṭa's visit to Delhi (1334–42), when the city was in the grip of a famine, rice stored in the reign of 'Alā' al-Dīn Khaljī was given to the public. The prices of other articles were also fixed, and they could be sold only in the *Sarā-yi 'adl* where royal officials supervised the transactions. The measures succeeded extremely well, and