Chapter Two

FOUNDATION OF THE DELHI SULTANAT

I. INDIA ON THE EVE OF THE TURKISH INVASIONS

The Caste System

The century and a half that followed the exploits of Sultan Mahmud (999-1030) in Hindustan saw the rise of the Rajput kingdoms, the intensification of the caste system and the growing Turkish pressure on the Gangetic plain. The situation created by the operation of these forces in the political and social life of the country paved way for the Ghurid conquest of Hindustan. The Rajput polity gave birth to feudal institutions; the caste system created water-tight compartments in society and killed all sense of common citizenship, while Turkish reconnoitering activity exposed the basic weakness of the Indian position and encouraged and facilitated military action on a large scale.

A discussion of the different theories about the origin of the Rajputs is irrelevant for our purposes here. We do not find any reference to the 'Rajputs' as such in the Kitabul Hind of Alberuni. It appears that slowly and gradually the Kshattriyas of Alberuni had emerged as a virile warrior race, soaked in a spirit of romantic militarism and chivalry, and came to be designated as Rajputs or Rajaputra—'scions of the royal blood'. They brought the country from the Sutlej to the Son river under their control. The Ghurids had mainly to deal with this new aristocracy as the political scene in the 12th century was dominated by the Chauhanas of Sambhar and Ajmer, the Paramaras of Malwa, the Kalachuris of Chedi, the Chandelas of Bundelkund, the Chalukyas of Gujarat, the Gahadavals of Kanauj, the Palas of Magadha, the Suras and later the Senas of western Bengal. This multi-state system was the main feature of political life in Hindustan during the last quarter of the 12th century, and India was a bundle of states which were independent for all intents and purposes. Mutual jealousies and attempts at aggrandize-
ment of power had led to constant fluctuations in the frontiers of kingdoms and had perpetuated deep feelings of incurable hostility.

These Rajput governments were typically feudal in character. Each kingdom was divided into fiefs held by the members of the ruling house, the kulas. Referring to the obligations of the vassals during the earlier period, Dr. A. S. Altekar says that the feudatories were not permitted to issue coins and they had to (a) mention the name of the overlord (in epigraphs), (b) attend the imperial court on ceremonial occasions, (c) pay a regular tribute, (d) make presents on festive occasions and when daughters were married, and (e) send a certain number of troops. But during our period even these obligations were neglected, while the power of the feudal lord to raise and maintain his own armies and to impose and realize his own taxes had resulted in the complete dispersion of political authority and had encouraged centrifugal tendencies. High offices in the state were a monopoly of this land-owning aristocracy, and had thus resulted in weakening of the authority of the king. Internecine conflict between these feudal lords—made possible on a large scale by the maintenance of their private armies—created further confusion.

When the Turks appeared on the Indian scene, feudalism had entered upon its last and by far the most disturbing phase of its history and the practice of sub-infeudation had gained ground. Most of the big feudatories had their own vassals, like samantas, thakkuras, rautas, etc. The Rashtrakutas, for instance, had their feudatories like the Gujarat Rastrakutas and the Silharas, who in turn had their own sub-feudatories. In Kashmir the damaras (feudal lords) were the most disturbing factor in political life. They lived in small castles, maintained their contingents and defied the authority of the central government as and when it suited their interests. In fact the actual administration of the country, particularly in the interior, was in their hands.

But this political system merely reflected the basic weakness of the social structure of the time. The principle of caste, which formed the basis of the Indian social system in the 11th and the 12th centuries, had annihilated all sense of common citizenship and killed all patriotic sentiments. Whatever the circumstances under which the system originated, it had resulted in the total annihilation of any sense of citizenship or of loyalty to the country as a whole. The demoralization that it had brought in its wake, both from the point of

1 The State and Government in Ancient India, Banaras, 1949, 225.
2 A. S. Altekar, Rashtrakutas and their Times, Poona, 1934, 265.
3 Rajatrangini, tr. Stein, VIII, 1028.
view of the individual and the community, was terrible in its consequences. 'In the exaltation of the group', observes Dr. Beni Prasad,

'it (caste system) largely sacrifices the individual values. It strikes at the root of individuality and amounts almost to a denial of personality. It refuses to admit that every individual is, in his nature, universal and that he has the right to seek his own self-expression, to determine his own ambitions and pursue his own interests. The principle of caste is the negation of the dignity of man as man.'

At the top of Indian society there were four varnas or castes—Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Sudra. Much, however, as these classes differed from each other, they lived together in the same towns and villages.

'The Hindus', writes Alberuni, 'call their caste varna, i.e. colours, and from a genealogical point of view they call them jataka, i.e. births. These castes are from the very beginning only four—Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Sudra.'

The Brahman stood at the top of the social system. He was considered as 'the very best of mankind'. Religion was his exclusive monopoly. According to Alberuni only the Brahmans and the Kshatriyas could learn the Vedas and therefore moksha was meant for them alone.

The Kshatriyas came next in the scale of social hierarchy. They were entrusted with the task of governing the country and protecting its frontiers. The two remaining castes—the Vaishyas and the Sudras—were assigned a lower place in the social hierarchy. The main function of a Vaishya was to cultivate land, breed cattle and do business either on his own behalf or on behalf of a Brahman. 'The Sudra is like a servant of the Brahman', remarks Alberuni. The Vaishyas and the Sudras were deprived of all sacred knowledge. According to Alberuni, if it was proved that a Sudra or a Vaishya had recited the Veda, his tongue was cut off. Commenting on this Professor Habib remarks: 'Such a policy may, or may not, have been necessary in the

4 The State and Government in Ancient India, 12.
5 Kitabul Hind, tr. Sachau, I, 100-1.
6 Ibid., I, 100-1.
7 Ibid., I, 104.
8 Ibid., II, 136.
9 Ibid., I, 125.
period of the Rig Veda. But in the eleventh century—in the generation of Alberuni, Avicenna and Sultan Mahmud—it was stupid, mad and suicidal; and the Brahmans, themselves a rationalistic and highly enlightened group, were destined to pay a terrible price for the most unpardonable of social sins.\footnote{10}

Below these four \textit{varnas} was the non-descript mass of humanity, known as \textit{Antyaja}. They were not reckoned amongst any caste, but were members of a certain craft or profession. There were eight classes or guilds of them: (1) fuller, (2) shoemaker, (3) juggler, (4) basket and shield maker, (5) sailor, (6) fisherman, (7) hunter of wild animals and of birds, and (8) weaver. They lived near the villages or towns of the four castes 'but outside them'.\footnote{11} 'If anybody wants', writes Alberuni, 'to quit the works and duties of his caste and adopt those of another caste, even if it would bring a certain honour to the latter, it is a sin.'\footnote{12}

The lowest people were \textit{Hadi}, \textit{Doma}, \textit{Chandala} and \textit{Badhatu}. They were assigned dirty work like the cleaning of villages and other services. 'In fact', observes Alberuni, 'they were considered like illegitimate children,' and 'are treated as outcasts'.\footnote{13} They were not allowed to live within the city-walls, and could only enter, presumably after due notice and at fixed hours, to perform that menial work of cleaning, etc., without which no city could exist.\footnote{14}

What exercised the most devastating influence on the social structure of early medieval India was the idea of physical pollution (\textit{chut}). Alberuni has noted with disgust and amazement the working of this idea in the social life of the people. He remarks that everything which falls into a state of impurity, strives, and quite successfully, to regain

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext{10}{\textit{Journal of the Aligarh Historical Research Institute}, April 1941, 86.}
\footnotetext{11}{\textit{Kitabul Hind}, I, 101.}
\footnotetext{12}{\textit{Ibid.}, I, 103.}
\footnotetext{13}{\textit{Ibid.}, I, 101-2.}
\footnotetext{14}{Though compiled more than a thousand years earlier, the following \textit{shlokas} of \textit{Manusmriti} have a relevance to the situation described by Alberuni and it may be safely assumed that the tide of public opinion was running strongly in favour of Manu's doctrines:}
\footnotetext{51.}{But the dwellings of Chandalas and Shwapachas shall be outside the village, they must be made Apapatras, and their wealth (shall be) dogs and donkeys.'}
\footnotetext{55.}{By day they may go about for the purpose of their work, distinguished by marks of the king's command, and they shall carry out the corpses (of persons) who have no relative; that is a settled rule.' (\textit{Manu}, Chapter X).}
\end{footnotes}
its original condition of purity. The sun cleanses and the fresh air, and salt in the sea-water prevents the spreading of corruption. If it was not so, life on this planet would have been impossible. The Brahmanic conception of contamination was, however, contrary to this established principle of nature. If a Hindu warrior was taken as prisoner by the Musalmans, and was subsequently released, he was disowned by his caste or guild. "I have repeatedly been told", writes Alberuni,

'that when Hindu slaves (in Muslim countries) escape and return to their country and religion, the Hindus order that they should fast by way of expiation, then they bury them in the dung, stale, and milk of cows for a certain number of days, till they get into a state of fermentation. Then they drag them out of dirt and give them similar dirt to eat, and of the like. I have asked the Brahmins if this is true, but they deny it and maintain that there is no expiation possible for such an individual, and that he is never allowed to return into those conditions of life in which he was before he was carried off as a prisoner. And how should that be possible? If a Brahman eats in the house of a Sudra for sundry days, he is expelled from his caste and can never regain it.'

These prisoners, disowned by their own community, often embraced Islam.

THE TURKISH PRESSURE

The period under review saw the Turks making persistent attempts at increasing the area of their influence in northern India. Their pressure was constantly felt in the Ganges valley. Their reconnoitring activity was aimed at securing footholds in areas beyond the Ravi. (1) According to Baihaqi, Ahmad Niyaltigin had penetrated as far as Banaras. (2) Mas'ud is reported to have captured Hansi. (3) The Rahan inscription of Madanpala refers to his father Govinda-chandra as having 'compelled the Hammira to lay aside his enmity by his matchless fighting.' (4) In an inscription of Lakhnapala of Badaun, his ancestor Madanpala, is mentioned as one who made Hammira's incursion into the 'river of the gods' (i.e. the Ganges) impossible. (5) The Sarnath inscription of Kumaradevi praises Govindachandra (1114-55) as one who had protected Varanasi from

15 Ibid., II, 162-63.
16 Baihaqi (ed. Ghani and Fayyaz), 402.
17 Ibid., 530-35.
18 I.A., XVIII, 16.
19 E.I., I, 64.
the wicked Turushka warrior. (6) Under Mas'ud III, Hajib Tughatiggin, the governor of the Punjab, penetrated up to a place across the Ganges which no one except Mas'ud had reached before. (7) Vijayachandra (1155-70) is also praised for his anti-Hammira activities. (8) The Delhi-Sivalik pillar inscription of Visaladeva, dated 1164, describes the king as one who had extirpated the mlecchas. (9) An inscription of Prithvi Rai I, dated 1167, records the fortification of Hansi to check the progress of the Hammira. (10) It appears from the diwan of Mas'ud Sa'd Salman that Badaun, Dahgan, Kanauj, Malwa and Kalinjar had to bear the brunt of attacks by the later Ghaznavid rulers. (11) An inscription at Kiradu (Jodhpur), dated 1178, records that a lady replaced an image broken by the Turushkas. (12) The Dabhoi inscription refers to the achievements of Lavanaprasada of the Chalukya Vaghela dynasty of Gujarat (circa 1200), against a Turushka king. (13) The Sundha Hill inscription speaks of Kilhana (circa 1164-94) as having defeated a Turushka and having erected a golden gateway.

A study of the works of the poets of the later Ghaznavid period—Saiyyid Hasan, Mas'ud Sa'd Salman, Runi, Sana'i and others—shows that India was a frequent topic of discussion in those lands, and incursions into India had become an almost regular feature of the life of the later Ghaznavid rulers.

The large scale military operations of the Ghurids in the last quarter of the 12th and the first quarter of the 13th century were neither abrupt nor unexpected. In fact they were the culmination of a series of sporadic incursions during the preceding century and a half, when areas were conquered and lost, and political influence was extended and pushed back. The frontiers of the Ghaznavid territory were thus in a state of constant flux.

MUSLIM SETTLEMENTS BEFORE THE GHURID CONQUEST

While the extension of Turkish political influence was stoutly resisted by the Rajputs during the later Ghaznavid period, Muslim
traders, merchants, saints and mystics peacefully penetrated into the country and settled at a number of important places. These Muslim emigrants lived outside the fortified towns amongst the lower sections of the Indian population, first because of caste taboos, and, secondly, because of the facility of establishing contacts with the Indian masses.

It appears that nearly half a century before the Ghurid conquest of northern India, isolated Muslim culture-groups had secured a foothold in the country. Ibn-i Asir writes about Banaras: 'There are Musalmans in that country since the days of Mahmud bin Subuktagan who have continued faithful to the law of Islam and constant in prayer and good work.' At Bahraich was the mausoleum of Saiyyid Salar Mas'ud Ghazi who 'was a soldier in the army of Sultan Mahmud'. The fact that his name and his grave survived through the long years between the Ghaznavid invasions and the Ghurid occupation of northern India, shows that there was some Muslim population to look after the grave and to preserve for posterity the tradition of the Salar's martyrdom. Shaikh Mu'inuddin Chishti came to Ajmer before the second battle of Tarain and his deep humanism and pious way of life attracted a band of devoted followers round him. Maulana Raziuddin Hasan Saghani, the famous author of Mashariqul Anwar, was born in Badaun long before the Ghurid occupation of that town. The existence of a Muslim colony at Kanauj is borne out by the early Arab accounts.

In some towns of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar there are Muslim shrines attributed by local tradition to the pre-Ghurid period. The grave of Miran Mulhim in Badaun, and of Khwaja Majduddin in Bilgram, the grave on the Uncha Tila Mohalla of Mallawan in Bilgram, the dargah of Lal Pir in Azmat Tola at Gopamau, the graveyard on the Bils Road in Badaun, the Ganj-i Shahidan of Asiwan in Unnao, the graves of Jaruha near Hajipur in Bihar, the

29 Elliot and Dowson, Vol. II, 251.
30 Barani, Tarikh-i Firuz Shahi, 491. See also Khusrau, I'jaz-i Khusraoi, Vol. II, 155. No contemporary reference to Salar Mas'ud is available in any work of the Ghaznavid period. According to Utbi, Sultan Mahmud had forbidden the crossing of the Ganges. Salar Mas'ud's relationship with Sultan Mahmud may be a later fiction. He might have entered the country in the latter half of the 11th century.
31 Siyarul Auliya, 46.
32 See infra for a brief account of his life.
33 Kanazut Tarikh (a history of Badaun by Raziuddin), 51-53.
35 Ibid., 130.
36 Ibid., 187.
37 District Gazetteer, Badaun, Vol. XV, 190.
38 District Gazetteer, Unnao, Vol. XXXVIII, 118.
grave of Imam Taqi Faqih near the western gate of Bari Dargah at Maner—is all considered to belong to the pre-Ghurid period and some families in these towns claim that their ancestors settled there during this period. Their claim may or may not be correct, but it is difficult to challenge local traditions with regard to the historicity of these graves, particularly when the existence of Muslim settlements in these areas is proved by evidence available from other sources.

The circumstances under which these Muslim colonics came to be established in India may be briefly indicated. India's trade-contacts with foreign lands date back to the Indus Valley Civilization, if not earlier. India produced certain commodities—like sugar, cotton, colouring material, in particular, indigo (nil) and katha—which the colder climes desperately needed, and foreign merchants were in a position to pay a higher price for them than the Indian consumer. India, on the other hand, needed foreign commodities—horses of good breed, dried fruits, pearls, precious stones of various types (the ruby of Badakhshan and the turquoise of Persia). A well-equipped warrior of the early middle ages, if we are to trust Persian literature of the period, had to provide himself with an Indian sword, a Persian bow and a Tatar lance.

The self-imposed dogmas of Hinduism, which we find in the Manusmriti and similar works, order the high-caste Hindu to confine himself to the region where the munja grass grows and the black gazelles graze; he is not to cross the sea or to go to countries where non-caste people govern; and the lowest group of non-castes, according to the Manusmriti, are the Yavanas, Pahlawas and Turushkas (Greeks, Persians and Turks). How the expansive character of Hinduism of the earlier centuries was changed into insularity by the time of the Smritis does not concern us here. But the presence of the Arab traders in all parts of India (except Kashmir) and the complete absence of the Hindu trader from Persia and Central Asia prove that the mandate of the Smritis was effective and that the Hindu commercial classes, so efficient in their work throughout the middle ages, had to leave the export and import trade of India to foreigners.

'Princes, anxious to improve their commerce,' says Dr. Habibullah, 'accorded generous treatment to the people who commanded the main trade routes of the civilized world. Bearded men in long skirted tunics, congregating for prayer at fixed intervals, in a rectangular building which contained no idols, and adhering to no caste rules, presented a sight whose novelty wore out with the

39 See Hasan Askari's article: Historical Significance of Islamic Mysticism in Medieval Bihar, Historical Miscellany, 10-11.
passage of time. As they established colonies and multiplied, they became an integral part of the population.'

These ‘Tazik’ colonies were established in the suburbs of many large cities with the consent of the Rai, who gave the Musalmans permission to build their houses, mosques, schools, store-rooms, shops, etc. and also a space for their graveyards. These colonies grew in size; this may have been due to mere growth of population, but perhaps when Shaikh Ali Hajweri says that he came to Lahore on account of ‘unpleasant people’ (probably the Ghuzz Turks), he is speaking for a large class of persons whom the recurrent political storms of Persia and Central Asia drove to this country, where they could earn a peaceful livelihood. A few cases, the accounts of which have survived, prove that these colonies attained to a high level of culture. The text-books were in Arabic; teaching was probably in Persian; but the mother-tongue was the local language.

Perhaps a digression about the lives of two Indian Muslims, one born before, and the other immediately after the Ghurid conquest of Delhi, may give a better insight into the life and conditions of these colonies.

1) Maulana Raziuddin Hasan Saghani: 40

This distinguished scholar of the Traditions of the Prophet and author of the Mashariqul Anwar was born in Badaun long before its conquest by the Turks. He received his early education in his home town which, it seems, had fairly developed arrangements for studies in Muslim religious subjects. An incident of his early student-days, which the Maulana could never forget, was that he once requested his teacher for the loan of a collection of Hadises, known as Mulakhkhas, but the teacher declined to lend it. His self-respect as well as his curiosity to learn was deeply hurt at this, but this might have been due to scarcity of books in those days. Later on—of course after the Ghurid conquest—he reached Koil (Aligarh) and became a deputy of the mushrif of Koil. One day the mushrif made some silly remark, which brought a smile on the Maulana’s face. The mushrif felt insulted and threw his inkpot at Maulana Raziuddin, who left his job disgusted and distressed and said: ‘One should not serve the ignorant’.

Later on he became tutor to a son of the governor of Koil on a salary of one hundred tankas a year. He could not, however, stick to

40 For biographical references see Fawa’idul Fu’ad, 103-4; Mu’jamul Udaba, Yaquti, Vol. III, 211; Faqatul Wafayat, Ibn Shakir, I, 133; Saroorus Sadur (MS). See also Religion and Politics in India during the 13th century, 152-54; The Contribution of India to Arabic Literature, 25.
this job for long and took to extensive travels in India. His erudition and learning earned fame and respect for him wherever he went. When he reached Nagaur, eminent scholars, like Qazi Hamiduddin and Qazi Kamaluddin, gathered round him and requested him to give lessons to them in the Traditions of the Prophet. Maulana Raziuddin taught one of his books, Misbahud Duja, to the scholars of Nagaur and issued certificates also. One of the residents requested him to instruct him in mysticism. The Maulana apologized and said: 'I am busy here because the people of Nagaur learn the science of Hadises from me these days. At present I have no time to instruct you in mysticism. If you desire to learn it, you may accompany me on my travels in non-Muslim areas where there will be no such crowd. I will then teach this subject to you.'

From Nagaur the Maulana proceeded to Jalore and Gujarat. Conditions in those areas were such that he could not move about freely. He changed his dress and roamed about incognito. During this journey he instructed the above-mentioned person in mysticism. Later on he proceeded to Lahore and from there he made his way to Baghdad. His scholarship attracted the Caliph's attention and he was offered a government job. In 1220 the Caliph Al-Nasir sent him as his envoy to the court of Ilutmish. He came to Delhi again, a second time a few years later and stayed here till 1239. 'In those days', Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya once told his audience, 'Delhi was full of scholars. Maulana Raziuddin was equal to them in (other departments) of knowledge, but he excelled all others in the science of Traditions.' That Badaun could provide educational facilities in theological subjects to a young Muslim student long before Muslim rule was established there shows that these settlements had struck deep roots and had developed cultural institutions.

2) Shaikh Hamiduddin Sufi: 41

This distinguished disciple of Shaikh Mu'inuddin Chishti of Ajmer was the first Muslim child to see the light of the day in Delhi after its conquest by Mu'izzuddin. In his early years he had led a very voluptuous life but when he joined the circle of Shaikh Mu'inuddin's disciples, he repented for his past sins and adopted a life of penitence and poverty. He settled at Suwal, a village near Nagaur, far from the hurry and bustle of city-life and took to cultivation. Whatever he needed—and his needs never exceeded a few maunds of grain and a few yards of rough hand-woven cloth—he himself produced and

41 For biographical details, see Saroors Sadur (MS.); Siyarul Auliya 156-64; Siyarul Arifin 13-14; Akbarul Akhyar 29-36. See also Nizami, Religion and Politics, 185-87.
scrupulously avoided coming into contact with the government of the day.

His life at Nagaur affords one of the earliest glimpses of Muslim family life in the Indian countryside. He lived in a small mud house and eked out his meagre subsistence by cultivating a single bigha of land. The principle of the rotation of crops being unknown in those days, he cultivated one-half of his land in one season and the other half in the next. He dressed himself like a typical Indian peasant and used two sheets of cloth to cover the upper and the lower parts of his body. He kept a cow in his house and himself milked it. His wife—a lady of fervent piety and strong mystic temperament—spent her time in cooking and spinning like a peasant woman. Like most of the villagers amongst whom he lived, Shaikh Hamiduddin was a strict vegetarian. His dislike for meat was so great that he warned his disciples against distributing meat-preparations for blessing his soul after his death. The family carried on conversation in Hindivi; mother was addressed as mai and brother as bhai.

Touched by his penitence and poverty, the muqta of Nagaur offered a plot of land and some cash to him. The Shaikh apologized and declined. The muqta then reported the matter to Ilutmish, who sent 500 silver tankas with a farman conferring a village on him. He hastened to inform his wife, just to examine her reaction to the prospects of a life of material prosperity and comfort. The couple was in such a state of penury at that time that the wife had a tattered dupatta on her head and the saint a grimy loin cloth on his body. ‘O Khwaja!’ replied his wife, ‘Do you want to disgrace years of spiritual devotion and penitence by accepting this gift? Do not worry. I have spun two sirs of yarn. It will suffice for preparing a loin cloth for you and a dupatta for me.’ Delighted at this reply, Shaikh Hamid told the muqta that he had decided not to accept the royal gift.
II. HISTORY OF GHUR DOWN TO THE RISE OF SULTAN MU'IZZUDDIN

GHUR

GHUR, THE REGION FROM WHERE the invaders came, lies in the west-centre of what is now Afghanistan, and comprises the basins of the upper Hari Rud, the Farah Rud, the Rud-i Ghur and the Khash Rud, together with the intervening mountain chains.\(^1\) Minhaj gives the following account of its geography:

‘The country of Ghur is intersected by five great mountain chains and the people of Ghur maintain that they are the loftiest in the world. First, Zar Murgh in Mayandish, at the foot of which the palace and capital of the Shansabanis was situated. The second mountain, known as Surkh Ghar,\(^2\) is also in the territory of Mayandish near Tajiz.\(^3\) The third, Ashk, in the district of Timran, is greater in size and altitude than any other part of the territory of Ghur; and the district of Timran is (situated) in the hollows and (on) its sides. The fourth is the largest and the loftiest mountain range of Warani, which runs through the district of Dawar and Walisht and on which the palace (qasr) of Kajuran\(^4\) is situated. Roen, famous throughout Ghur for its inaccessible height, is the fifth range, according to some, but others give the fifth place to the Faj (defile, pass) of Khaesar, which in length, breadth and height surpasses the comprehension of man.’

These mountain ranges, which rise to over 10,000 feet and become considerably higher as they run eastwards to the Hindukush, made Ghur difficult of access and shut her out completely from all cultural and commercial contacts with the outside world. The extent of this cultural isolation from the neighbouring areas may be gauged from the fact that when Sultan Mas'ud of Ghazni led a campaign into Ghur

\(^1\) Ahmad Ali Kohzad who rode on horseback through Ghur gives a good modern description of this region (Afghanistan, VI-IX, Kabul, 1951-54, 6 parts: ‘Along the Koh-i-Baba and Hari Rud’.)

\(^2\) The modern district of ‘Ghuri’ which lies to the south-west of Khanabad is distinct from the medieval Ghur.

\(^3\) Raverty, 318; Tabaqat-i Nasiri (ed. Habibi) I, 328. Ghar in Pushto means a mountain.

\(^4\) Tabaqat-i Nasiri (Habibi ed.) I, 328.

\(^4\) Ibid., 328.
in 1020, he had to employ local interpreters as the language spoken by the people was not intelligible on account of dialectical divergencies. Besides, geographical factors led to the fragmentation of political power in Ghur, and each fort came to exercise independent sway over the area immediately under its control. It was as late as the time of Qutbuddin Muhammad (ob. 1146-47) that a portion of Ghur—the petty principality of Warshada on the Hari Rud—developed a capital at Firuz Koh. Before that there was no centre from which the region could be controlled by a single ruler.

Ghur was mainly an agricultural area. Its valley-sides have, at present, deciduous woodlands covered with mulberry trees, walnut trees, apricots and vines. Even in the 10th century it was so fertile that Istakhri praised its fruitfulness, streams, meadows and tillage. There were no towns of note, but only agricultural settlements and—most typical features of the landscape—fortified places and towers (qasr, qil'a, hisar, kushak) in which a ‘bad tempered, unruly and ignorant people’ (Hududul Alam, 110), could defend themselves. The people enjoyed some fame as horse rearers. Besides, Ghur had a reputation for supplying slaves to the markets of Herat and Sistan.

The mountain ranges of this area, however, had great metalliferous value and it appears that iron was available in large quantities in Ghur. The people of Ghur specialized in the production of weapons and war-equipment and exported them to neighbouring lands. The anonymous author of Hududul Alam says that ‘from this province come slaves, armour (zirah), coats of mail (jaushan) and good arms’. According to Togan, the whole area from Ghur and Kabul to Qarluq was metal-working. It was probably on this account that the chief fortress of Ghur was known as Pul-i Ahangeran. When Mas'ud attacked Ghur in 1020, its chief, Abul Hasan Khalaf, brought him shields and cuirasses, and when the stronghold of Jurwas was captured, a tribute of arms was levied. The value of the Ghurid arms was recognized and appreciated by Mas'ud, who employed Ghurid officers as specialists in siege-warfare. When Izzuddin Husain of Ghur (493-540/1100-40) sent his annual tribute to the Seljuq Sultan Sanjar, it

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5 Istakhri (ed. de Goeye), 281; Baihaqi (ed. Chani and Feyyaz), 117.
7 Ibid., 118, 121.
8 Ibid., 120.
9 Hududul Alam, 110.
10 Z.D.M.G. Vol. XC (1936), 33-34.
12 Ibid., 118.
included particularly armours, coats of mail, steel helmets and other war material, together with ferocious watch dogs bred in Ghur.\textsuperscript{13}

Thus Ghur, though it had very recently opened its doors to Muslim cultural influences, possessed two of the most important and essential requisites of war in the middle ages—horses and steel.

**The Shansabani Dynasty**

The early history of the Shansabani dynasty, to which Mu'izzuddin belonged, is wrapped in mystery and romance. It is difficult to disentangle fiction from fact as our only authority on the subject is Minhajus Siraj and he too regrets in his *Tabaqat* that he was unable, while writing his book, to consult the authorities he had with him at Ghur. They were left behind when he fled to save his life from the Mongols. He had therefore to depend on his memory. He however had access to the *Tarikh-i Nasiri*\textsuperscript{14} and the *Tarikh-i Haizam Nabi*\textsuperscript{15} which he utilized in his account of the early Shansabanis. As has happened with many other ruling dynasties of the east, which have risen from very obscure and local origins, the dynasty of Mu'izzuddin was provided with a legendary hero, Zuhak, as its 'first ancestor'.

Zuhak was a repugnant figure in the tradition of Iranian lands but he was popular in the region of Ghazni and Zabolistan, and was, therefore, picked up by the genealogists of Ghur for the dynasty of Mu'izzuddin. Originally an Assyrian divinity, Zuhak was assigned by the Zoroastrians to the pandemonium of devils. Firdausi, searching for a representative of the type which he intensely disliked but could not afford to ignore, decided to make Zuhak immortal by reincarnating him as a Saracenic Arab. His descendants were supposed to have settled in Ghur after Faridun had overthrown Zuhak's 'thousand-year dominion'.

Shansab, the eponymous founder of the dynasty, was a descendant of Zuhak. According to Minhaj, he embraced Islam at the hands of the Caliph Ali, who bestowed upon him a standard and a 'covenant'. This seems highly improbable because, though we find Musalmans tinkering at the borders of Ghur from the time of the third Caliph Usman, this region was never brought under actual Muslim control and the campaigns referred to by Tabari and Ibn-i Asir were nothing more than mere raids. ‘Ghur’s value’, remarks Bosworth, ‘was

\textsuperscript{13} *Tabaqat-i Nasiri*, 47.
\textsuperscript{14} According to *Kashfuz Zunun* (Vol. II) this was one of the titles of Baihaqi's *Tarikh-i Al-i Subuktogin*. Abdul Hayy Habibi accepts this in view of the fact that Nasiruddin was the title of Subuktogin (*Tabaqat-i Nasiri* II, 282-83). This volume is extinct now.
\textsuperscript{15} For Habibi's note on this work see *Tabaqat-i Nasiri*, II, 299-305.
as a reservoir of slaves, and these could be obtained by occasional, temporary incursions.' Actual annexation of this area or establishment of overlordship is a much later phenomenon. The author of Hududul Alam, who was in the service of the Ferighunids and lived in the adjoining province of Guzgan, says (in his work completed in 982-83) that his masters exercised suzerainty over Ghur and that the Ghurids, formerly pagans, were mostly Musalmans in his time. This account has been considered 'exaggerated' by Minorsky. In fact, any exaggerated implications derived from this account of Hududul Alam would make the campaigns of Mahmud and Mas'ud in this area utterly meaningless. Istakhri definitely describes Ghur as a 'land of pagans' (darul kufr) and says that the only justification for including it in his account was that there were a few Musalmans there and because 'it was the biggest pagan enclave within the borders of Islam'.

Minhaj, however, says that every prince of the dynasty of Shamsab had to subscribe to the 'covenant' of the Caliph Ali before ascending the throne. The Ghurids had so great attachment with the Alids that they refused to recognize the Umayyad caliphate.

It appears from the accounts of Tabari and Ibn-i Asir that campaigns were undertaken against Ghur in the years 47/667 and 107/725-26. The latter was led by Abu Munzir Asad. On this occasion the Ghurids concealed their possessions in inaccessible caves. Asad refused to be baffled by the situation. He let down men in crates (tawabit) at the end of chains and appropriated these valuables. Sporadic attacks of the Umayyads on Ghur continued throughout the period. But geography made it practically impossible to maintain any permanent control—political or cultural—over this area as the mountain routes, dangerous to traverse during summer, became absolutely blocked in winter. Minhaj says that when Abu Muslim Khurasani raised the standard of revolt against the Umayyads, one of the members of the Shamsabani family, Amir Faucel, marched to his help. During the caliphate of Harun-ur Rashid some tribes approached the Caliph seeking arbitration of their differences. This again seems to be either pure fiction or an 'attempt to project into the past an explanation for the political situation of later times'.

Minhaj further states that during the time of Ya'qub bin Lais (later 9th century) rival parties of Musalmans and pagans amongst the chieftains of Ghur were at daggers drawn with each other. This again

16 Hududul Alam, 110, 342.
17 Istakhri, ed. de Goeje, 245.
18 Minhaj, 113.
does not seem to be true in view of what Istakhri has categorically stated about the religious set-up of Ghur.

Gardizi\textsuperscript{19} and Baihaqi\textsuperscript{20} say that about 369/979-80, the Samanid prince, Amir Nuh bin Mansur, sent Abu Ja‘far Zubaidi to conquer Ghur, but he was forced to retire after taking a few forts. Later on, when Subuktagin was governor of Ghazni and Zabulistan on behalf of the Samanids, he made several attacks on Ghur. It appears from some \textit{qasidas} of Unsuri that in one of these campaigns, Mahmud, who was a boy at that time, had also participated. Subuktagin levied a tribute on the Shansabani prince, whose name is given as Muhammad bin Suri.\textsuperscript{21}

Muhammad bin Suri asserted his independence after the death of Subuktagin by withholding the tribute and harassing the \textit{caravans}. This excited the fury of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni. In 401/1011 he sent Altuntash, governor of Herat, and Arslan Jazib, governor of Tus, as his advance-guards, and, undeterred by geographical difficulties, himself dashed to Ghur. Muhammad bin Suri entrenched himself in inaccessible hills and ravines and Mahmud had to resort to a ruse. He feigned flight. This drew out the mountain people into the plain in the hope of plundering the retreating army. Mahmud then inflicted a crushing defeat on Muhammad bin Suri and captured him and his son, Shis. In 405/1015 Mahmud marched to Khwabin, the southwestern district of Ghur, and captured some forts. A few years later Mas‘ud was sent against Tab, the north-western part of Ghur. He was helped by Abul Hasan Khalaf and Shirwan, the chieftains in control of the south-western and north-eastern regions of Ghur respectively. Mas‘ud captured many forts in Ghur and with the possible exception of the inaccessible interior, brought the entire region of Ghur under Ghaznavid control. ‘No one’, remarks Abul Fazl Baihaqi, ‘has penetrated so far into Ghur or performed such exploits there as Sultan

\textsuperscript{19} Zainul Akhbar, 46-47.
\textsuperscript{20} Tarikh-i Al-i Subuktagin, 134.
\textsuperscript{21} This name, given by Minhaj (74,320), creates considerable confusion. This is definitely a Muslim name and, if it has been correctly recorded by Minhaj and his later copyists, shows that Muslim political influence was fairly well-established in Ghur when Subuktagin turned his attention towards it. Uthbi calls him Ibn Suri and says that he was a ‘Hindu’. Perhaps the term ‘Hindu’ is used by him as a general term for ‘pagan’.

The authors of \textit{Tarikh-i Guzida} (G.S.M. facs, London 1910, 408-8) and \textit{Rauzatus Safa} (ed. Riza Quli, Tehran, 1270-74, IV, 241) supply some interesting information about the descendants of Ibn Suri. According to them a grandson of Ibn Suri fled to India and took up residence in an idol-temple. His son, Husain, became a Muslim, went on to Delhi and grew rich as a trader, carrying goods between India and Ghur. But all this seems a later fabrication.
Mas'ud. Whether from compulsion or free choice, the chiefs (amirs) of Ghur came to pay him homage. They were terrified by his achievements and held their breaths in fear. Neither books nor traditions record that the Ghurids had been so submissive to a king as to Mas'ud.

While Muhammad bin Suri was rebelling against Sultan Mahmud, his eldest son, Abu Ali, kept on assuring the Sultan of his loyalty and goodwill. This treason saved the dynasty from extinction. Mahmud placed Abu Ali on his father's throne. Abu Ali reigned until sometime during Mas'ud's reign. Minhaj says that many Islamic institutions were established in Ghur by him. He built Friday mosques and madrasas in the land of Ghur and endowed them liberally with aqaf (endowments). He held the religious leaders and ulama in great respect, and considered it his duty to venerate hermits and ascetics.22

Abu Ali allowed his younger brother, Shis, to return to Ghur and live there with him. But Shis's son, Abbas, effected a coup d'etat and threw his uncle into prison. Abbas made strenuous efforts to fortify, garrison and repair the castles and strongholds of Ghur, but he was a tyrant and the chiefs of Ghur were so tired of his ruthless behaviour that they invited Sultan Raziuddin Ibrahim, son of Sultan Mas'ud of Ghazni, to rid them of the tyrant. Ibrahim captured Abbas and took him to Ghazni. He did not, however, extinguish the family, but acting upon the precedent set by Sultan Mahmud, placed Abbas's son, Muhammad, on the throne. Muhammad maintained very good relations with his Ghaznavid overlord.

Before the narrative of the history of Ghur to the rise of Mu'izzuddin is resumed, a very important problem has to be considered. What was the religious pattern of Ghur at this time and what agencies worked to bring it into the fold of Islam?

Conversion of Ghur

We know very little about the pre-Muslim religion of Ghur and no contemporary record of the conversion of Ghurids to Islam has survived. Since Tukharistan, Bamyan and Kabul were active centres of Buddhism, it may be assumed that the people of Ghur also believed in some sort of Mahayana Buddhism. It may also be noted in this connection that the lands to the south of Ghur—such as Zamindawar, Ghazni and Qusdar—adjoined the Indian world and until the 10th century were culturally, and often politically, a part of it. Kabul, Ghazni and Bust were key points in the commercial intercourse between the eastern Islamic world and India, and the geographers

22 Tabaqat-i Nasri, 41.
often designate them 'the merchant's resort' or 'the entrepot' for India. The first two towns had in early Ghaznavid times colonies of Indian traders permanently residing there.23 There is nothing improbable, therefore, in the region of Ghur being inhabited mostly by Buddhists.

The expansion of Islamic political and cultural influences in Ghur began with Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni (338-421/998-1030), who is reported to have appointed teachers to instruct the people of Ghur in the precepts of Islam after his campaign of 1010-11.24

Sultan Mâhmud, we are told, had patronized the Karamis.25 It was probably due to him that this sect spread in Ghur and acted as a bridge between Mahayana Buddhism and Islam.

The Karami26 sect is so known after Muhammad bin Karam (ob. 869), a native of Sijistan, who was persecuted in the early stages of his religious propaganda but subsequently his sect spread in Ghur, Gharjistan, Bamiyan and other adjoining regions. Baghdadi says that 'weavers' and 'distressed people' of the villages of Naishapur particularly felt attracted towards this sect.27 Regarding its religious beliefs Baghdadi says: 'Ibn Karam urged his followers to ascribe corporeality to the object of his worship. He held that He is a body, possessing an end and limit below, where He comes into contact with His Throne.'28 Thus the Karamis placed Allah on His Throne as Buddha had sat on his lotus. The Karami sect became, in course of time, a half-way house between Islam and Buddhism and assumed great importance in the religious life of Ghur. It seems that its followers succeeded in winning over the Shansabani chiefs also to their fold.

A serious tension appeared in the religious life of Ghur, which was largely dominated by the Karamis, when Sultan Ala'uddin Jahansuz received emissaries from Alamut, the centre of the Ismaili heretics, and permitted them to carry on their religious propaganda through the length and breadth of his territory. The 'heretics' of Alamut, according to Minhaj, had set their ambition on converting the people of Ghur.

23 Istakhri, 245, 280; Ibn Hauqal, 450; Maqdisi, 303-4; Hududul Alam, 111; Bosworth in Central Asiatic Journal, Vol. VI, 124.
24 I.A., IX, 156 as cited by Bosworth, 122-23, 127-28, 'The Early Islamic History of Ghur'.
25 Generally pronounced as Karami, but Bosworth insists on its correct form being Karami.
26 For an account of the life and teachings of the founder of the sect, see Sa'id Na'ây's extensive notes in Tarikh-i Bâthâqî (Vol. II, 915-88); Encyclopaedia of Islam (Vol. III, 773-74).
28 Ibid., 18-30.
to their faith and making them submissive.29 Alauddin’s attitude was perhaps determined by political considerations. By inducting the Ismailis into Ghur, he wanted to reduce Karami religious influence. Since the Karamis were opposed to the Batinis, there ensued a bitter conflict between the two. Sultan Saifuddin Muhammad (son of Sultan Alauddin Jahansuz) reversed the policy of his father, and ordered the execution of all ‘heretics’ throughout his territory.30

According to Minhaj both the brothers—Ghiyasuddin and Mu’izzuddin—were initially Karamis.31 Later on they got converted to the Shafi’i and the Hanafi schools of Sunni law respectively. The circumstances in which their conversion took place and the reactions that it provoked have been described by Minhaj and Ibn-i Asir.

Minhaj says that when Mu’izzuddin ascended the throne of Ghazni, he found that the citizens of that region believed in Imam Abu Hanifa and so he conformed to their faith by accepting the Hanafi persuasion. It thus appears a simple decision based on a simple situation. But if—as Professor Habib asks—perchance, the citizens of Ghazni had still been Buddhists?

Ibn-i Asir gives a slightly different version. He says that it was due to the pressure exercised by the people of Khurasan, who were hostile to the Karamis, that the two brothers gave up their faith in the Karami doctrines. The conversion of Ghiyasuddin to the Shafi’i persuasion was the result of more deliberate thinking and was largely due to the efforts of Shaikh Wahiduddin Marwarrudi.32 The Karami scholars-priests resented this conversion and their leader, Imam Sadruddin Ali Haizam Naishapuri, a professor at a college in Afshin (Gharjistan), wrote a satire on the Sultan. The satire ran:

‘There are plenty of Shafi’i merchant in Khurasan. Your Majesty will find them waiting before the palaces of all the princes. But you will search the seven climes in vain for a king who belongs to the Shafi’i sect... If it was necessary to change your ancestral faith, you might have become a Hanafi like other kings... By God! Imam Abu Hanifa and Imam Shafi’i will both tell you on the Day of

29 Tabaqat-i Nasiri, 83.
30 Ibid., 65.
31 Ibid., 77.
32 Ibn-i Asir gives his name as Shaikh Wahiduddin Abul Fath. According to Minhaj, Ghiyasuddin dreamt one night that he was present in a mosque with Qazi Wahiduddin Marwarrudi, when Imam Shafi’i came in and led them both in prayer. Next day the Sultan asked the Qazi to deliver a sermon. Before commencing the sermon, the Qazi related a dream he had the previous night. It was in every detail the same as the Sultan’s dream. This incident decided Ghiyasuddin’s wavering mind and he adopted the Shafi’i persuasion.
Judgement: “It is not good to fly needlessly from one door to another.” 33

It is, however, obvious that the abandonment of the Karami doctrines by Chiyasuddin and Mu‘izzuddin was connected with the extension of their power into Khurasan and Ghazni and was facilitated by the intensive religious activity initiated in Ghur and its adjoining areas by the Muslim mystics and philosophers. If the followers of Muhammad bin Karam attracted the people from Mahayana Buddhism to the Karami faith, it was the activity of mystics which facilitated transition from the Karami faith to orthodox Islam. The whole region was soon overrun by the Muslim mystics. On one side the city of Chisht, 34 only a few miles from Firuz Koh, emerged as a great centre of mystic propaganda and on the other side the movement of Shaikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (1077-1166) spread far and wide into the area. Later on the activities of Muslim philosopher-saints like Maulana Fakhruddin Razi (1144-1209) added momentum to these efforts at changing the religious pattern of Ghur.

Referring to the impact of the mystic movement of Shaikh Abdul Qadir Jilani on Ghur and its adjoining areas, Professor Habib remarks:

“For over a century, this (the Karami) sect, the most backward of Muslim sects, held the field in these hilly tracts. Then a great change came over the Muslim world. Shaikh Abdul Qadir of Jilan took the revolutionary step of publishing the esoteric doctrines of mysticism, which he in common with all mystics held to be the fundamental principles of the Muslim faith, broadcast among the Musalmans. The New Mystic Movement, if it may be so-called in contra-distinction to the esoteric mysticism of earlier days, developed with remarkable rapidity. The change inaugurated by the great Shaikh met with the approval of all thoughtful Musalmans. The mystics were organized into regular “orders” (silsilahs) and took to their work with an earnestness and zeal which has, in the history of Islam, been only surpassed by the fiery revolutionism of the early Saracens. Educating the Musalmans, most of whom were still immersed in the old-world ideas of anthropomorphic paganism, was as much the work of a mystic missionary as the conversion of the infidel. Now a mystic is the very opposite of a pagan. 33

33 Minhaj, 78-79. It appears from Ibn-i Asir that the Karamis had to put up a strong fight against the Hanafis and the Shafi‘is. In 488/1095 the Karamis and the joint forces of the Hanafis and the Shafi‘is staged a civil war at Naisbapur (Ency. of Islam III, 773).

34 Mariq has now shown (Le minaret de Djam, 13-20, 55-64) that the 200 feet tall Minaret of Jam standing on the right bank of the Hari Rud between Chisht and Ahangeran marks the site of the Ghurid fortress-capital.
He lives by the light of his inner faith, preferring the unseen to the visible. He holds space and time in contempt and denies their reality. The materialistic references in sacred texts are explained, or explained away. God, the One, the Absolute, is the totality of Existence. There is no distinction between God and not-God; for God alone exists. The threats of Hell are as immaterial to the true mystic as the “hopes of paradise”—both are dismissed away as meaningless fears. We live for the Lord alone. . . . Even the hill-tribes of Ghur were included in the extensive propaganda of the New Mystic leaders.35

Shaikh Abdul Qadir Jilani had tremendous powers of persuasion and eloquence.36 ‘His sermons are said’, writes Margoliouth, ‘to have effected the conversion of many Jews and Christians to Islam as well as of many Muslims to higher life.’37 The Shaikh was a critic of the Karamis and there are critical references in his lectures and treatises to this sect. In his Ghunyat he speaks of the Karamis as still numerous in Khurasan.38

Another important factor in the conversion of Ghur to orthodox Islam was the work of Imam Fakhruddin Razi (543-606/1149-1209), a distinguished philosopher, saint and scholar of exegesis. The process of converting the people of Ghur to Islam had started long before he appeared on the scene, but his discussions at the dialectical level with other Muslim sects played a very vital role in the religious history of Ghur. He had intimate relations with Sultan Ghiyasuddin and Mu’izzuddin and had lived in Ghazni for many years. Sultan Ghiyasuddin allowed him to open a school for the general public within the royal palace in Herat. His madrasa thus became a focal point for the dissemination of Muslim culture and learning in that region. It is said that more than three hundred of his disciples accompanied him when he moved from one place to another. He was opposed bitterly by the Mu’tazilites, the Karamis and the Carmathians on account of his trenchant criticism of these cults. His theological disputations with the Karamis are recorded by Ibn-i Asir and others. Once a munazara at Firuz Koh between the Karami scholar, Ibn Qudwa, and the Maulana led to a very serious situation and the Sultan had to ask him to move to Herat.39 It is interesting that while Ghiyasuddin was patronizing

36 Shaikh Abdul Haqq, Akhbarul Akhyar, 12-15.
38 Ghunyatul Tahsin, Cairo, 1288, I, 81.
the Maulana, his son-in-law and cousin, Malik Ziauddin Muhammad, (who later ruled in Ghur and Zamindawar with the title Alauddin), was a supporter of the Karamis. The Maulana has particularly criticized the Karamis in his Asas-us Taqdis fi ilm-ul Kalam. He was an excellent preacher, writes Anawati, ‘... His preaching converted many Karamis to Sunnism.’ It is pointed out by some scholars that he had exercised some influence over Ghiyasuddin in converting him from the Karami faith. The Karamis were so bitter against him that, according to Ibn al-Qifti, he was poisoned at their instigation.

The Seven Stars

The Shansabani ruler, Muhammad, whom Sultan Ibrahim of Ghazni had set up on the throne, was followed by his son, Qutbuddin Hasan. It was about this time that the Shansabani princes began to show signs of imperialistic ambitions and sought to extend their authority beyond Mayandish, the principal centre of their power. Qutbuddin Hasan was killed while suppressing a rebellion and was succeeded by his son, Izzuddin Husain (1110-46), a very notable figure in Shansabani history for his sons are known as the ‘Seven Stars’ in the history of Ghur. An important development in the politics of this region led to an increase in the political position of Ghur. The Ghaznavid empire shrank and was reduced to southern and eastern Afghanistan and the Punjab. Ghur consequently became a buffer region between the truncated Ghaznavid empire and the powerful empire of the Seljuqs. As the Ghaznavid influence waned after Ibrahim (ob. 492/1099), the prestige of the Seljuqs began to wax and the Shansabanis were drawn towards the Seljuq sphere of influence. Izzuddin was initially confirmed in his position by Sultan Mas'ud III, son of Ibrahim of Ghazni, but in 1107-8 Sanjar attacked Ghur and Izzuddin was made a captive. This was a turning point in the history of Ghur. The Ghurids maintained close relations with the Seljuqs and recognized their overlordship by sending them armouries, coats of mail and a local breed of fierce dogs as a tribute.

After Izzuddin Husain’s death, his territory was divided by his son, Saifuddin Suri, amongst his brothers as follows: Saifuddin himself retained Istiya as his capital; Qutbuddin Muhammad got Warshad (where he founded the town of Firuz Koh and assumed the

40 Printed, Cairo, 1954/1935. In another work, l'Ittidad taraj-ul Muslimin wal mushrikin (Cairo, 1356), Razi has referred to seven branches of the Karamis.


42 Shahrzuri, Tarikhul Hukama, as cited by Abdu Salam Nadiwi in Imam Razi, Azamgarh 1950, 11.


44 Tabaqat-i Nasiri, 48, tr. 339. Recent excavations carried out by the French
title of Malik ul Jibal); Nasiruddin Muhammad got Madin; Alauddin Husain got Waziristan; Bahauddin Sam received Sanga, the chief place of Mayandish; and Fakhruddin Mas'ud was assigned Kashi. This division did not work, and Qutbuddin retired to the court of Bahram Shah Ghaznavi as a protest against this distribution of the patrimony. But Bahram's courtiers created difficulties for him. They poisoned Bahram's ears against him and assured him that the Ghurid prince was casting evil eyes on his haram. Bahram flew into rage at this report and threw Qutbuddin into prison and later poisoned him. This enraged the Shansabani princes and, inspired by feelings of brotherly devotion, they swore that his death would not go unrevenged. Saifuddin Suri consequently marched on Ghazni. He expelled Bahram and ascended the Ghazni throne with the title of 'Sultan'.

The people of Ghazni made outward professions of loyalty to him; he was thus lulled into a false sense of security and deceived into sending his army back to Ghur under his brother, Bahauddin Sam. As soon as winter set in, and all communications between Ghur and Ghazni were cut off, they sent secret messages to Bahram Shah and advised him to return. When Bahram reappeared in Ghazni, the people deserted Saifuddin and went over to him. Bahram now retaliated for the wrong done to him. He ordered Saifuddin's face to be blackened and had him paraded through the city on an old cow. Men, women and children jeered as his feeble cow plodded slowly through the streets. After being thus insulted, Saifuddin was later put to death.

Bahauddin Sam's blood began to boil when he heard about the treatment meted out to his brother. He started for Ghazni but died in 544/1149 of an ulcer on the way. The youngest of the 'stars', Alauddin Husain, now took upon himself the duty of avenging the wrong done to his brothers. Bahram Shah was defeated by him; he fled to India where he died soon after and was succeeded by his son, Khusrau Malik. Alauddin burnt ruthlessly the city of Ghazni and massacred the people. He earned the title of Jahansuz (World-burner) on account of this incendiaryism. He was the first to call himself 'al-Sultan al-Mua'zzam', while the Shansabaniis before him simply used to style themselves as Amirs or Malikis. He stopped paying tribute to the Seljuqs in 1152. In a conflict with Sanjar he met with a crushing defeat and was kept in captivity for some time. Impressed by his wit and

Archaeological Delegation have unearthed the city of Firuz Koh. The site has been identified with the present Jam, where a large minaret still exists. The town was destroyed by Ogatai, son of Chengiz Khan, in 1222. See A. Marieq and G. Wiet, Le minaret de Djam. La découverte de la capitale des Sultans Ghurids (XIIe-XIIIe Siècles) & Mems. de la Delegation Archéologique Française en Afghanistan, XVI, Paris, 1959; in which the discovery of Firuz Koh has been described.
interest in poetry, Sanjar set him free and sent him back to his capital. On his return he started the consolidation of his power in Ghur and the extension of his authority in Gharjistan, Bamiyan and the adjoining regions.

Ala'uddin Jahansuz gave imperialistic ambitions and expansionist zeal to the Shansabanis. Fortunately for him there was a vacuum of power in the region. The Ghaznavids had gone down; Sanjar had been captured by the Ghuzz. Ala'uddin took advantage of this situation and started expanding his power. A tripartite division of the Ghurid empire emerged out of this situation. The senior branch ruled over Ghur from Firuz Koh and looked for expansion westwards into Khurasan. When Ghazni was finally taken in 1173-74, another branch was established there and this branch looked towards India for its expansion. In the newly conquered Bamiyan, Fakhruddin Mas'ud was installed and he ruled over Tukharistan, Badakhshan and Shughnan up to the bank of Oxus.

Ala'uddin was succeeded by his son, Saifuddin Muhammad, who was killed in a feud. The next heirs to the throne were the two sons of Bahauddin Sam—Ghiyasuddin (1163-1203) and Shihabuddin, who later took the title of Mu'izzuddin (1173-1206). Under them the Ghurid kingdom, according to Barthold, rose to the rank of a world power.

On his return from Ghazni, Jahansuz had appointed his nephews to the governorship of Sanjah, but the efficient administration of this area by them roused his suspicions and he imprisoned them in a fort in Gharjistan. Saifuddin set them free, but they had a very hard time after their release. On Saifuddin's death, Ghiyasuddin ascended the throne. Shihabuddin was then appointed governor of Takinabad with instructions to capture Ghazni, which was then in the hands of the Ghizz Turks. After its conquest in 1173-74, Ghiyasuddin gave the kingdom to Shihabuddin. 'Though Shihabuddin's subordinate principality of Ghazni', writes Professor Habib, 'expanded into an empire, he always recognized his elder brother as his sovereign and abided by whatever orders Ghiyasuddin was pleased to give.' Shihabuddin never undertook any campaign without his brother's permission.

45 According to Minhaj the original name of both brothers was Muhammad (Tabaqat-i Nasiri, 67), which in Ghurid dialect was pronounced as Hamad. Their mother used to call the elder one Habshi and the younger one Zang, probably because they were dark in complexion. The titles of both these brothers were, however, Shamsuddin and Shihabuddin. After his accession to the throne, Shamsuddin's title became Ghiyasuddin. After his conquest of Khurasan, Malik Shihabuddin's title became Mu'izzuddin (Tabaqat-i Nasiri, 68-69).

46 Turkistan Down to the Mongol Invasion, 338.

47 'Shihabuddin of Ghur' in The Muslim University Journal, No. 1, January 1930.
III. INDIAN CAMPAIGNS OF SULTAN MU‘IZZUDDIN
(1175-92)

MULTAN

Sultan Mu‘izzuddin’s first military movement towards India took place in 571/1175, when he attacked the Carmathians of Multan. Some hundred and fifty years earlier Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni had delivered a severe blow to the Carmathian rulers and had dislodged them from Multan, but soon after his death they had regained their position.¹ Mu‘izzuddin succeeded in overthrowing their power again. It is not known what administrative machinery was devised for Multan by Mu‘izzuddin, but the Carmathian power could never again be established in that area. However the bitterness that it left in the heart of Carmathians, who had a very effective secret organization, ultimately led them to assassinate Mu‘izzuddin.

UCHCH

Having established his hold over Multan, Mu‘izzuddin must have directed his attention towards Uchch. Minhaj does not mention the campaign of Uchch separately but he refers to it subsequently, when the Sultan marched towards Nahrwala (Anhilwara), as a Ghurid possession. According to Ferishta, Uchch was taken in 572/1176.² The Sultan assigned Uchch to Ali Kirmaj. It appears from the Tabaqat-i Nasiri that Malik Nasiruddin Aitam³ was in charge of Uchch when the battle of Andkhud took place. Later on Mu‘izzuddin assigned Uchch to Qubacha.⁴

NAHRWALA

In 574/1178-79 Mu‘izzuddin marched through Uchch and Multan to Nahrwala. Epigraphic evidence shows that Turkish pressure had

¹ Adabul Harb, f. 76a.
² Ferishta, Vol. I, 56. Ibn-i Asir (XI, 77) gives an account of the conquest of Uchch which seems based on hearsay. It has been quoted by the Indian historians, Nizamuddin (Tabaqat-i Akbari, Vol. I, 36) and Ferishta (Vol. I, 56) with slight variations. According to this account Mu‘izzuddin had intrigued with the wife of the Bhatti Rai of Uchch and had promised to marry her if she poisoned her husband. The story lacks confirmation. Besides it is doubtful if Bhatti rulers were in possession of Uchch. The probability is that it was held by the Carmathians.
³ Both the editions of Tabaqat-i Nasiri (Habibi, I, 419; Asiatic Society, 142) give his name as Nasiruddin Aitam, but Raverty gives it as Nasiruddin Aetamur (531).
⁴ Ibid., 142.
been felt in western Rajputana during the preceding decades. Nagaur was conquered by Bahalim, Bahram's governor of the Punjab. But the nature of this conquest was such that Shaikh Raziuddin Hasan Saghani had to change his clothes while moving in that region. Western Rajputana was thus a better known area to the Muslim soldiers than the Gangetic Doab. Mu'izzuddin thought of repeating the exploits of Mahmud and of reaching southern India and its temple-treasures through Rajputana and Gujarat. Mu'izzuddin's army must have been exhausted when it reached the foot of Mount Abu. This was his first encounter with an Indian ruler. The Rai of Nahrwala had a fairly strong army at his beck and call and a very large number of elephants. The battle was fought at Kavadra, a village near Mount Abu. Mu'izzuddin's army was completely routed in the conflict, but somehow he escaped with his defeated army from Gujarat.

PESHAWAR

The defeat of Nahrwala was a lesson in military strategy for Mu'izzuddin. If he thought of emulating Mahmud, he was mistaken. Resources, leadership and circumstances had made a tremendous difference in the situation. He revised his whole plan of operations in the light of experience. In 575/1179-80 he attacked Furshor (Peshawar), which was probably included in the Ghaznavid possessions of Hindustan at that time, and conquered it.

LAHORE

Peshawar was the first step towards Tarain. Within a couple of years (577/1181-82) he marched towards Lahore. But Khusrau Malik was too weak to offer any resistance and decided to negotiate with Mu'izzuddin. As a token of his sincere intention to maintain cordial relations with Mu'izzuddin, he sent him one of his sons along with an elephant. But this was bound to be a temporary arrangement only because the possession of Lahore was absolutely necessary to Mu'izzuddin for the further expansion of his power in the country; also in the background of Shansabani relations with the House of Mahmud this arrangement could hardly last long.

In 578/1182 Mu'izzuddin marched against Debal and conquered the whole area up to the sea coast. The Sumra ruler acknowledged his suzerainty.

5 Ibid., 24.
6 Savorus Sadur (MS).
7 Minhaj says that Bhim Deo was Rai at this time (116). Epigraphic evidence, corroborated by Hindu records, however, shows that Mularaja II was the ruler of Anhilwara at this time. I.A., 1877, 186, 198.
During the next three years there was a lull. In 581/1184-85 Mu'izzuddin's forces marched towards Lahore and ravaged the whole territory. Khusraw Malik was again forced to shut himself up within the city-walls. While going back to Ghazni, Mu'izzuddin gave instructions for occupying and garrisoning the fort of Sialkot.\(^8\) Husain bin Kharmil was put in charge of the fort. In the changed strategy of the Sultan, Sialkot was to occupy a very important place, and Mu'izzuddin wanted to strengthen it as a base of operations for further expansion in the country. Khusraw Malik, however, considered this consolidation of Ghurid power so close to his capital as a threat to his own kingdom. He mustered his available resources, and with the cooperation of the Khokar\(^9\) tribes he besieged the fort of Sialkot. But the siege proved a difficult one for him and he had to return to Lahore ignominiously. He had offended Mu'izzuddin without achieving anything. In 582/1186 Mu'izzuddin appeared before Lahore, determined to efface the last vestige of Ghaznavid power in India. Khusraw Malik, whose resources were meagre compared with the duties he was called upon to perform, started negotiations and came out to meet Mu'izzuddin. Undeterred by any moral scruples, Mu'izzuddin took him into custody and sent him to the fort of Balarwan in Gharjistan, where he was put to death sometime after 587/1192.\(^10\)

Thus Lahore became a Ghurid possession. Mu'izzuddin now had his military stations from Debal to Sialkot and from Peshawar to Lahore. An important aspect of his conquest, which is generally lost sight of, is the consolidation of his power in Sind and the Punjab before he embarked upon a war with the Rajput kingdoms. That this whole area was to act as one unit is clear from the fact that Ali Karmakh, who was the Sipah Salar and wali of Multan, was stationed at Lahore. While Ali Karmakh was the military and the executive chief of the area, the duties of judicial administration were assigned to Maulana Sirajuddin, father of the author of the *Tabaqat-i Nasiri*; and a staff that needed twelve camels for its conveyance was assigned to him.

\(^8\) According to a late chronicle, *Raj Darshani*, I.O., 507 f.45 (as cited by Habibullah, *Foundation*, 35), Sialkot, which formed the boundary towards the state of Jammu, was hostile to Khusraw Malik. The Rai of Jammu, Chakra Deo, invited and helped Mu'izzuddin against Khusraw.

\(^9\) Minhaj, 117. According to *Raj Darshani* (f.45b) the Khokars were originally subjects of Jammu but had withheld the payment of taxes and had allied themselves with Khusraw. Upon this the Rai invited Mu'izzuddin and it was at his suggestion that Sialkot was garrisoned (*Foundation*, 36).

\(^10\) Minhaj gives three different dates for this event: 587 in 118; 588 in 74 and 598 in 27.
TABARHINDA

The next target of Mu'izzuddin was the fortress of Tabarhinda (Bhatinda).\textsuperscript{11} It was occupied and put under the charge of Malik Ziyauddin Tulaki and a force of 12,000 horsemen, selected from the forces of Ghazni and the army stationed in India, was placed at his disposal. He was given the responsibility of holding the fortress of Tabarhinda for eight months—a period during which Mu'izzuddin had planned to come back again to India in order to conquer further areas and consolidate his position in Tabarhinda. Rai Pithora (Prithvi Rai III) realized the great danger involved in allowing Mu'izzuddin time to consolidate his position. His political instinct suggested prompt action and he immediately proceeded towards Tabarhinda, determined to dislodge the Ghurids from their strategic position. Mu'izzuddin instantly turned back and marched to meet Rai Pithora. Mu'izzuddin had probably not anticipated this conflict and was not prepared for a major battle with any Rajput ruler. Also it was not merely Rai Pithora who had come to the battlefield; 'All the Ranas of Hind were along with the Rai of Kolah.'\textsuperscript{12} According to Firishta his army consisted of 'two hundred thousand horsemen and thirty thousand elephants.'\textsuperscript{13} These are impossible figures.

TARAIN

The battle was fought at Tarain.\textsuperscript{14} Firishta consolidates all Persian authorities and thus describes the battle:

'Mu'izzuddin's left and right wings were broken and not many men remained in his centre. At that moment one of the officers of the Sultan submitted: "The amirs of the left and right wings, who

\textsuperscript{11} There is some confusion and controversy about the identification of this place. In some Mss. of the \textit{Tabaqat-i Nasiri} it is given as Tabarhinda (Habibi edition, 398), in others as Sirhind (Nassau Lees edition, 118). Later historians give this place either as Sirhind (\textit{Zubdatut Tawarikh} f. 7b) or Bhatinda (\textit{Firishta}, Vol. I, 57) or as Tabarhindah (\textit{Tarikh-i Mubarak Shahi}, 7; \textit{Muntakhabat Tawarikh}, Vol. I, 49). Dr. Habibullah's preference for Bhatinda is supported by local legends as well as archaeological evidence (\textit{Foundation}, 57). The shortest route from Lahore to Hindustan lay through western Patiala, in which Bhatinda is situated.

\textsuperscript{12} \textit{Tabaqat-i Nasiri}, 118.

\textsuperscript{13} Firishta, Vol. I, 57; Ibn-i Asir, XI, 255.

\textsuperscript{14} The location of this site is the subject of some controversy. Minhaj calls it Tarain (Bib. Indica edition, 118; Habibi edition, I, 399). Nizamuddin (\textit{Tabaqat-i Akbari}, 38) and Firishta (Vol. I, 57) follow Minhaj, but some later historians call it Nara'in. This later reading is obviously due to an inadvertent orthographical mistake in which the two dots of 't' have been reduced into one. Firishta, however, makes a further statement and says that it was also known as 'Tarawari'. This led Elphinstone
have been brought up by your royal family, have broken and fled. The Afghan and the Khalji amirs, who formed the vanguard and always boasted of their manliness and courage, are not to be found on the field of battle. Under these circumstances the best course would be to turn your reins immediately towards Lahore." The Sultan was displeased at this advice. He drew out his sword and led his centre to an attack on the enemy. Friend and foe applauded his courage and dexterity. Khanday Rai's eyes fell on the Sultan and he moved his huge elephant in that direction. The Sultan also flew at Khanday Rai, lance in hand, and struck him so hard on the mouth that many of his teeth fell into his mouth. The Rai, however, displayed great coolness and courage and dealt such a blow on the shoulder of the Sultan that he nearly toppled down from his horse. At that moment a Khalji footman, who happened to observe the Sultan's plight, jumped on to his horse; and seating himself behind the Sultan, caught hold of him, spurred the horse out of the field, and carried him to the flying Ghurid amirs, who by now were twenty Karohe away. The Sultan's presence restored order in the remnants of his army.

Ferishta then quotes an alternative account from the Zainul Ma'asir, in which it is stated that the Sultan fell from his horse but no one recognized him and he lay unnoticed on the battle-field. When a part of the night had passed, a number of his Turkish slaves came to the battle-field to search for him among the slain. The Sultan recognized the voice of his slaves and called out to them. They were overjoyed to find him alive. During the night they carried him on their shoulders by turns. Next morning they reached their camp and placed him in a litter.15

According to Minhajus Siraj: 'A number of amirs, Ghuri youths and other distinguished men noticed the Sultan along with that lion-like Khalji, recognized him, gathered round him, broke their spears to make a litter and a stretcher, and then bore him to their halting to locate the battle-field between Karnal and Thaneswar (History of India, 355). Elphinstone's identification was accepted by Raverty (459, note 7), Vaidya (Downfall of Hindu India, Vol. III, 333) and the Punjab Gazetteer, Vol. I, 318. Cunningham (Reports XIV, 68-69) located Tarain between Bhatinda and Sirsa, and identifies it with a village called Torawana, 27 miles from Bhatinda and 20 miles from Sirsa. Cunningham's opinion has been accepted by Habibullah also (Foundation, 328). This identification fits in with the details given by some early historians, particularly Yahya Sirhindi who says that it was within the 'Khitta Sarsuti' (Tarikh-i Mubarak Shahi, 8). Since we know that Mu'izzuddin had just started on his way towards Ghazni, after capturing Bhatinda, there could not have been any other place except Torawana. But the names of villages change during the centuries.

place.” The account of Zainul Ma’asir is difficult to reconcile with Minhaj whose information deserves greater credence. The story of the Sultan’s lying unnoticed for long in the battle-field lacks contemporary confirmation. Minhaj thus states the circumstances in which the Sultan received his injuries:

“...The Sultan attacked the elephant on which the ruler of Delhi, Govind Rai, was riding and was moving about in front of his ranks. ... He struck his lance at the face of the Rai with such force that two of his teeth fell into his mouth. The Rai threw a javelin at him and severely wounded his arm. The Sultan turned round his charger’s head and retreated. Due to the agony of the wound, he was unable to remain seated on horseback and was about to fall on the ground when a lion-hearted warrior, a Khalji stripling, recognized him, sprang up (on the horse) behind the Sultan and, supporting him in his arms, urged the horse with his voice and brought him out of the field of battle.”

Having defeated Mu’izzuddin the forces of Rai Pithora pushed ahead towards Tabarhinda (Bhatinda). Malik Ziauddin defended the stronghold for 13 months but capitulated later. During this period Mu’izzuddin made preparations for another trial of strength with Rai Pithora.

**MU’IZZUDDIN’S PREPARATIONS**

Minhaj is too curt and brief on the preparations made by Mu’izzuddin to avenge his defeat. Ferishta, however, supplies some details, probably on the basis of some works which are extinct or on the basis of oral tradition. These details, however, fit in neatly with the character and temperament as well as the subsequent achievements of Mu’izzuddin. On his return to Ghur, where he had gone to meet his brother, Mu’izzuddin punished severely his Ghurid, Khalji and Khurasani amirs. He said nothing to the Afghans, probably because the areas inhabited by these tribes were the later acquisition of Mu’izzuddin and expediency demanded a lenient view of the crime with regard to them. Wallets full of grain were tied to the necks of the Ghurid, Khalji and Khurasani amirs and they were paraded through the city. If anybody refused to eat the grain, his head was chopped off. When Mu’izzuddin returned to Ghazni, his capital, he was so overwhelmed with a sense of grief and humiliation that he would neither eat nor drink. He did not go to his wife and

16 Tabaqat-i Nasiri, 119.
17 Ibid., 118-19.
did not change the clothes that he wore next to his skin. Day and night he spent in preparation for a major military action against Rai Pithora. All of a sudden, after a year's preparation, Mu'izzuddin took the road to Hindustan. When he reached Peshawar, an old officer of Ghur mustered courage and asked him about his destination. The Sultan told him about his objective and said that he had not allowed the Ghurid, the Khalji and the Khurasani amirs to enter his presence and was proceeding to India without them, having his trust in God. The old officer pleaded for the disgraced amirs and secured the Sultan's pardon. At Multan he promoted and rewarded such amirs as had been loyal during his absence. Isami says that on the border of Sind 40 Turkish horsemen — brave and warlike — joined his army.

According to the Tājul Ma'āsir, Mu'izzuddin sent Qawamul Mulk Ruknuddin Hamza from Lahore to Rai Pithora in order to demand his submission. The Rai sent back a harsh reply and appealed to all the raids of Hindustan for help. According to Firishta the strength of Rai Pithora's army was 'three hundred thousand Rajput and Afghan horsemen.' But it is difficult to accept this figure which is obviously exaggerated. Minhaj was informed by a trustworthy person, whose name he has given as Mu'inuddin Ushi, that the army of Mu'izzuddin at that time consisted of one hundred and twenty thousand fully equipped soldiers. Mu'izzuddin's army had four veteran war-lords of Ghazni — experienced, determined and dexterous — Kharbak, Kharmil, Ilah, Mukalba. Each had under his command a huge army. Besides them there were—Tajuddin Yalduz, Qubacha and Aibek.

The Sultan started from Ghazni in 587/1191, reached Tarain in 588/1191-92 and pitched his tent at the same place where he had suffered a serious defeat a year before. According to Firishta, 150 Rajput rais had come to the field with Rai Pithora, determined to crush or be crushed.

**Battle of Tarain**

This time Mu'izzuddin carefully planned his tactics. He left the centre division — the baggage, standard, banners, elephants, etc. — several miles in the rear just to give a wrong impression of his strength to the enemy. This contingent was to act as his reserve force and was to be deployed only when the rest of the army had tried conclusions with the Rajput forces. Leaving this division behind, the

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19 Tabaqat-i Nasiri, 119. Isami gives the number as 130 thousand (78).
21 Tājul Ma'āsir (Ms.).
22 Firishta, I, 58.
rest of Mu‘izzuddin’s army advanced leisurely.\textsuperscript{23} This part of the army, which comprised of light armed and unencumbered horsemen, was divided into four divisions to act against the Indian forces on all the four sides. Having thus divided his army, Mu‘izzuddin issued instructions to 10,000 mounted archers to keep the enemy forces in play on the right, left, front and rear. "When their elephants, horsemen and foot advance to attack," he directed them, "you are to face about and keep the distance of a horse's course in front of them."\textsuperscript{24} His object was to harass the enemy forces in this way and to keep it under the delusion that the entire enemy forces were on the battlefield. This is Minhaj’s account of the disposition of forces by Mu‘izzuddin. Ferishta gives some interesting details of incidents preceding the conflict:

‘Inspired by their first victory with arrogance and pride, they (the rais) sent a haughty letter to the Sultan: “The strength and numbers of our army will be soon known to you, and reinforcements are coming to us from all parts of Hindustan. Be merciful, if not to yourself, at least to the misguided men you have brought hither. If you repent of your venture and go back, we swear by our idols that we will not harass your retreat; otherwise we will attack and crush you tomorrow with more than three hundred thousand horsemen, archers beyond all computation and an army which the field of imagination is not wide enough to contain.” “Your message is wonderfully affectionate and kind,” Mu‘izzuddin replied, “but I have not a free hand in the matter. It is by my brother’s order that I have come here and undertaken the hardships of the campaign. If you will give me sufficient time, I will send some messengers to inform him of your overpowering strength and obtain his permission to conclude peace on the terms that Sirhind, Multan and Sindh belong to me and the rest of Hindustan remains under your sway.”\textsuperscript{25}

It will be too much to put credence in this story mentioned by Ferishta. The Rajput rulers were not so wanting in common sense as to accept such a message at a time when the two armies stood almost face to face. However Ferishta thus continues his narrative:

‘The Rajput leaders thought that the humility of the reply was due to the weakness of the Muslim army and went to sleep. But Mu‘izzuddin spent the night in preparing for battle; and when,

\textsuperscript{23} Minhaj, 119-20.
\textsuperscript{24} Ibd., 120.
\textsuperscript{25} Ferishta, I, 53.
in the morning, the Rajputs came out of their entrenched positions to satisfy the call of nature and wash their hands and faces, he fell upon them with his lines drawn in order. The Hindus were taken aback by the unexpected attack, but somehow or other, they hurriedly took up their arms and came to the field. The Sultan knew the fearless courage of the Hindu forces and had divided his army into four divisions, which came forward to fight the enemy by turns. When the Hindu elephants and horses attacked Mu'izzuddin's army, it fled away; but when the enemy, deceived by the trick, followed in pursuit, it turned back and with the blows of its axes relieved the bodies of the enemy of the weight of their heads. Thus the battle raged from forenoon to afternoon, when Mu'izzuddin put on his helmet and armour, and charged the enemy at the head of twelve thousand men with drawn swords and lances. The blood of brave warriors was mingled with the earth, and in the twinkling of an eye the Hindu lines began to break. At the same time Kharmil and the other amirs attacked the Rajputs on all sides and drove them away from the field.28

The details supplied by Isami about the actual disposition of the armies are more interesting. According to him Govind Rai was the muqaddam of the Rajput forces. He fought in advance of Pithora's army; Pithora fought in the centre. The left wing of Pithora's army was under Bhola, who was the wazir; the right wing was led by Badamsa Rawal. The disposition of Mu'izzuddin's army was as follows: Mu'izzuddin himself led the centre; Kharbak was the leader of the muqaddam or advance-guard. The right wing was controlled by Ilah, while Makalba led the left wing of the army. Kharmil was at the back of the centre. Qutbuddin Aibek looked after the general disposition of the forces and kept close to Mu'izzuddin. The army of Mu'izzuddin which, according to Isami, consisted of one hundred and thirty thousand horsemen, had all soldiers fully equipped with steel-coats and armour. Govind Rai dashed ahead with an army of elephants and attacked Kharbak. Kharbak protected himself by putting a shield against his face and directed his archers to aim at the elephant-drivers. As soon as three or four elephant-drivers were wounded, the whole line of elephants was disturbed and it began to fly away from the field.27 When the elephant line gave way, Kharbak

26 Ibid., 58.
27 According to Yahya Sirhindhi, the planning of Mu'izzuddin was as follows: 'When the elephants and the cavalry of the Hindus would fall upon one of his sections, the rest would make a simultaneous assault upon them from the other three sides.' Tarikh-i Mubarak Shahi, 10.
intensified the pressure. When Mu‘izzuddin saw the enemy ranks in disorder, he ordered a general attack from the right and left and himself led the centre. The Hindu columns gave way and took to flight.28

Mu‘izzuddin’s tactics succeeded and Rai Pithora suffered a heavy defeat. He got down from his elephant, mounted a horse and fled from the field but was caught near Sarsuti. Minhaj says that he was immediately executed,29 but according to Hasan Nizami30 he was taken to Ajmer and was allowed to function for a time. But he was put to death on being found guilty of treason. The fact that he was allowed to rule is supported by numismatic evidence and also by a semi-contemporary Sanskrit account, Viruddhavidhi-Viddhavamsa.31 A few coins of Rai Pithora contain on the obverse the superscription: ‘Sri Muhammad ·Sam’.32 This shows the acceptance of Mu‘izzuddin’s suzerainty by him. Even after the execution of Rai Pithora, the administration of Ajmer was not immediately taken over. Rai Pithora’s son was allowed to rule for some time as a vassal ruler.33

Govind Rai of Delhi was killed on the battle-field. But the same policy, which was followed with reference to Ajmer, was followed in Delhi also. Govind Rai’s successor acknowledged the suzerain authority of Mu‘izzuddin. Hasan Nizami says that the rais and the muqaddams of the area submitted and were allowed to continue when they agreed to pay malguzari and perform mardsim-i khidmati (duties of submission).34 A military station (lashkar-gah) was, however, established at Indpat.35

28 Futuh-us Salatin (Madras edition), 77-78. Though no specific reference to its use at Tarain is available in contemporary records, the karwa was one of the most essential equipments of the Ghurid armies, and its use in the Indian campaigns cannot be ruled out. The karwa was a cover made of raw bullock-hide, stuffed on both sides with wool or cotton. This defensive covering protected the infantry like a wall and no weapon could pierce it. See Minhaj, 56.
29 Minhaj, 120. Isami also makes the same statement.
30 Tajul Ma‘asir (Ms.).
31 I.H.Q., 1940, 587 et seq.
32 Chronicles of the Pathan kings of Delhi, 18, no. 15.
33 Tajul Ma‘asir (Ms. Jaswal Institute, 97). Hasan Nizami gives the following heading to the chapter: ‘Assignment of the “Imarat” of Ajmer to the son of Rai Pithora’.
34 Ibid., 100.
IV. CONQUEST OF NORTHERN INDIA
(1192-1206)

Tarain was a major disaster for the Rajputs. Rajput political prestige, in general, and the Chauhana ascendancy, in particular, suffered a serious setback. The whole Chauhana kingdom now lay at the feet of the invader. As Tarain was a concerted action on the part of a very large number of Rajput princes, its repercussions were also felt on a very extensive scale and demoralization became widespread. Immediately following his success at Tarain, Mu'izzuddin annexed the whole of the Siwalik territory, including Hansi and Sarsuti. Having placed Aibek in charge of Kuhram, Mu'izzuddin returned to Ghazni.

CONSOLIDATION OF TURKISH POWER IN AJMER

As stated earlier, Rai Pithora, the ruler of Ajmer, was not put to death immediately after his defeat at Tarain. He was reinstated at Ajmer. But he did not continue in his loyalty and, when he was found guilty of treason, he was put to death. It appears that even after this Aibek was not prepared to eliminate the family of Prithvi Rai (or Rai Pithora) from the political life of the country. His son was placed in charge of Ajmer on condition of vassalage. The Chauhanas do not appear to have accepted this position. They drove out Prithvi Rai's son and occupied Ajmer.

The chief person who organized opposition against the Turkish ascendancy at Ajmer and the adjoining areas was Hari Rai, a brother of Prithvi Rai. He besieged Ranthambhor, which Aibek had placed under Qawamul Mulk. Aibek marched to meet him and Hari Rai, finding circumstances unfavourable, withdrew from Ranthambhor. He gave up his hold on Ajmer also, and Aibek reinstated Prithvi Rai's son.

Aibek had pressed hard on Hari Rai and had forced him to give up his hold over these places, but he was far from being crushed. The situation had not come fully under control when all of a sudden in 589/1193 Mu'izzuddin summoned Aibek to Ghazni. Hari Rai was now left free in the field to muster his resources and try conclusions with the Turks. When Aibek returned to Delhi, he heard about fresh troubles brewing in Ajmer. Hari Rai had again dislodged Prithvi Rai's son and was organizing an attack on Delhi. Jhat Rai was in charge of this contemplated military action. Aibek immediately moved forward
to check his advance. This sudden move from Delhi unnerved Hari Rai and his energetic general Jhat Rai. Jhat Rai took shelter in Ajmer, while Hari Rai put an end to his life by performing jauhar.

Aibek now decided upon the administrative reorganization of the Turkish possessions in Rajputana. Ajmer was placed under a Muslim officer, and Prithvi Rai's son was transferred to Ranthambhhor and put in charge of that fort.

Hardly a few months had passed when another Rajput attempt was made to overthrow the Turkish power at Ajmer. The Rajput tribe of Mhers, which lived in the vicinity of Ajmer, rose in revolt, and the besieged Turkish army of Ajmer found itself under great difficulties in dealing with it. The Mhers had also sought the alliance and help of the Chalukyan army. Aibek immediately rushed to the front but he found the position extremely difficult and withdrew to Ajmer. The Rajput pressure on Ajmer began to increase and Aibek's position became extremely precarious. Timely help from Ghazni at this critical juncture saved the situation and the Rajputs were forced to withdraw.

POST-TARAIN EXPANSION AND PROBLEMS

Soon after the battle of Tarain, in Ramazan 588/September 1192, Jatwan besieged Hansi. Aibek rushed to deal with him and pursued him up to Bagar (western Rajputana) where he gave battle but was defeated and slain. Hansi was garrisoned again.

Aibek then returned to Kuhram, his seat of government, and organized his forces to cross the Jumna in order to establish a military foothold in the upper Doab. Almost all important places, including Meerut, Koil and Baran, were under the Dor Rajputs, who put up a strong defence against the Turkish invasion. Aibek proceeded from Kuhram to Meerut and occupied it in 588/1192.\(^1\) Baran (modern Bulandshahr) was conquered at the same time. The conquest of Meerut and Baran had great strategic and geopolitical significance because from these two vantage points he could organize attacks against the Gahadavala kingdom. Later in 588/1192 Aibek marched to Delhi and occupied it.\(^2\) By now Aibek had formed a sufficiently accurate idea of his own military strength as well as the resources and organization of the powers he had to deal with. Delhi appeared to him so strategically situated as to serve all his needs—both of defence

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1 On page 139 of his Tabaqat-i Nasiri Minhaj gives 587/1191 as the date of the conquest of Meerut while on page 120 he gives 588/1192. The latter seems to be the correct date.

2 Both Tajul Ma’asir and Tabaqat-i Nasiri (120) give 588/1192 as the date of the conquest of Delhi.
and offence. He could keep in better touch with the Ghurid strong-
holds in the Punjab from Delhi and from here also he could launch
his campaigns effectively against the Rajput powers. Initially the
Tomara ruler was retained on the throne, but in 589/1193, when
Aibek discovered that he was involved in some treasonable activities,
he removed him from the throne and occupied Delhi.

In 589/1193 Aibek was summoned to Ghazni by his master. Why
was he called at a time when he was in the midst of his military
activities? Minhaj is silent on the point, but Isami says that some
people had tried to poison the ears of the Sultan against Aibek, and
had tried to create suspicions about his fidelity and loyalty. The
Sultan demonstrated to them the hollowness of their reports by sum-
momting Aibek to Ghazni. This seems highly improbable. Perhaps he
was summoned in order to help the Sultan in the preparation of his
plans for further expansion in the country. Aibek stayed in Ghazni
for about six months.

On his return from Ghazni in 590/1194, Aibek crossed the Jumna
and conquered Koil (Aligarh).

MU'IZZUDDIN'S BANARAS CAMPAIGN

Aibek had hardly completed his work at Koil when Mu'izzuddin
arrived in India with the intention of overthrowing the Gahadavala
power. He made recruitments at Delhi also and then proceeded
towards Kanauj and Banaras with 50,000 horsemen. Aibek and Sipah
Salar Izzuddin Husain bin Kharmil were made leaders of the van of
the army. The battle was fought at Chandwar. There was a tough
fight, but ultimately Mu'izzuddin came out of the struggle with flying
colours. Whatever other immediate advantages Minhaj may have seen
in the victory, he jubilantly records: 'Three hundred and odd
elephants fell into the hands of Mu'izzuddin.' But in fact the victory
was much more significant. Though the whole of the Gahadavala
kingdom could not be brought under control, it provided an oppor-
tunity for establishing military stations at many places, like Banaras
and Asni. There were important centres of the Gahadavalas which
still retained their independence. For instance, Kanauj could not be
annexed till 595/1198-99, and that too, it appears, could not be a
permanent conquest for we find Iltutmish also launching an attack
against Kanauj.

Perhaps Aibek had not fully consolidated his position in Koil,
when he was called upon to join Mu'izzuddin in his campaign against

3 Tajul Ma'asir gives A.H. 590 but Minhaj (120) places it a year earlier, i.e. in 589.
Jai Chand. So, on Mu'izzuddin’s return to Ghazni, Aibek turned towards Koil in order to stabilize his position.

MU'IZZUDDIN'S CAMPAIGN OF 1195-96

In 592/1195-96 Mu'izzuddin again came to India. This time he attacked Bayana, which was under Kumarapala, a Jadon Bhatti Rajput. The ruler avoided a confrontation at Bayana, his capital, but went to Thankar and entrenched himself there. He was, however, compelled to surrender. Thankar and Vijayamandirgarh were occupied and put under Bahauddin Tughril.

Mu'izzuddin next marched towards Gwalior. Sallakhanapala of the Parihara dynasty, however, acknowledged the suzerainty of Mu'izzuddin.

Aibek had to face the Mher rebellion in Ajmer, to which reference has already been made. Having dealt with that situation, he marched towards Anhilwara. He met the forces of Dharavarsha of Abu and Kelhana of Nadol at the site where a few years earlier, Mu'izzuddin had suffered a defeat. Aibek gave the impression to the Chalukyas that he wanted to avoid an open battle, though in it lay his greatest chance of success. The Chalukyas came out and in the battle that ensued ‘superior mobility and shock tactics decided the issue.’

King Bhima II fled from Anhilwara. The city was plundered and, according to Ferishta, a Muslim officer was appointed to consolidate and stabilize the Turkish position in that region. But Anhilwara could not be easily integrated on account of several factors; in particular Rajputana, which could act as a safety valve, was still beyond the sphere of effective Turkish control. Ibn-i Asir says that Aibek decided to placate the country under Hindu rulers. It was in keeping with the general policy of the Turks not to dislodge completely the old ruling families. Epigraphic evidence, however, shows that the Chalukyas forced out the Turks from Anhilwara, which remained in their hands till 1240.

In 594/1197-98 Badaun was conquered by Aibek. It appears that in the meantime the Turkish hold over Banaras had slackened and Aibek had to occupy it again. In 595/1198-99 Chantarwal (? Chandwar) and Kanauj were conquered.

After these operations Aibek turned his attention towards Rajputana. He captured Siroh (? Sirohi) and later, according to Fakhr-i Mudabbir, conquered Malwa in 596/1199-1200. But no other historian refers to the conquest of Malwa by Aibek; it must have been a mere raid.

4 Minhaj, 140, as cited by Habibullah, Foundation, 67.
Aibek then turned his attention towards the Chandellas of Bundelkhand. In 599/1202 Kalinjar, an important military centre of Paramardideva, was attacked. The siege dragged on for some time and then Paramardideva initiated negotiations with Aibek, but before any agreement could be reached, the ruler died. Ajayadeva, the chief minister of Paramardideva, started hostilities again. He had arranged water-supply from a hillside spring and was confident that it would not fail. When the Turks came to know of this, they immediately diverted the water course and cut off the source of supply. Ajayadeva had no alternative but to negotiate for peace. The Chandellas were allowed to evacuate the fortress and they went to the neighbouring stronghold of Ajaigarh. Kalinjar, Mahoba and Khajraho were then 'occupied and grouped into a military division under the command of Hasan Arnal'.

MALIK BAHAUDDIN TUGHRI

Among the Mu'izzzi slaves who played an important part in the Churid conquest of northern India, the name of Malik Bahauddin Tughril al-Mu'izzzi al-Sultani deserves particular mention. According to Raverty he was 'one of the greatest, most amiable and most accomplished of Sultan Mu'izzuddin's mameluks'. He was admitted into the slave-household of Mu'izzuddin during the early part of his reign. By sheer dint of merit he rose in the esteem of the Sultan. When the fortress of Thankar was conquered, it was made over to him. He administered it with great efficiency and took steps to develop it. In fact he was responsible for giving a forward pull to the urbanization programme of the Turks in India. He encouraged considerable Muslim settlements in that region. Minhaj writes: 'From different parts of Hindustan and Khurasan merchants and men of repute had joined him, and to the whole of them he was in the habit of presenting houses and goods which used to become their property, so that, on this account, they would dwell near him.'

Finding Thankar inconvenient and uncongenial to his men, he founded the city of Sultan-kot, in the territory of Bayana, and made it his headquarters. This new headquarters was used by him as a base of operations for campaigns against Gwalior. When Mu'izzuddin retired from the fort of Gwalior without conquering it, he left the unfinished task to Bahauddin. He turned to the difficult job assigned to him by his master in great earnestness, and systematically planned his scheme of conquest of this area. He erected a new fort near the

5 Tajul Mu'asir, f. 185b; Fakhr-i Mudabbir, 25.
6 Tabaqat-i Nasiri, 544, f.n. 4.
7 Ibid., 145.
fort of Gwalior; it was intended to provide shelter to his army at night. After a year he besieged the fort of Gwalior. The defenders of the fort, on being reduced to straits, sent emissaries to Aibek and delivered the fort to him in 1200. This led to an estrangement between Bahauddin Tughril and Aibek. Probably there was no love lost between the two, because the rulers of Gwalior could not have thought of approaching Aibek with a proposition likely to create a conflict, if they had not known of some ill-will between them. According to Ferishta both officers prepared to fight but Tughril’s death at this time solved Aibek’s problem. Minhaj, however, pays eloquent tribute to Tughril’s personal qualities and achievements. ‘He left many public works as his memorials in the region of Bayana’, remarks Minhaj.

MUHAMMAD BAKHTIYAR KHALJI

The conquest of the eastern region was the work of Muhammad Bakhtiyar Khalji, whose personality and achievements have assumed an almost legendary colour in the history of medieval India.

Malik Izzuddin Muhammad Bakhtiyar Khalji originally belonged to Garmsir. He came to Ghazni in search of employment. The head of the diwan-i arz found him ‘humble and unprepossessing’ and fixed a paltry amount as his salary. Bakhtiyar declined this appointment and left for Hindustan, which offered better prospects for young talent. But at Delhi also he was rejected by the head of army department on account of his ugly features. Thus rejected at Ghazni and Delhi, he proceeded towards Badaun, eager to find an honourable career for himself and determined to make his mark on the history of the times. Sipah Salar Hizabruddin Hasan Adib, the muqta of Badaun, took him into his service. This was, it appears from Minhaj’s account, the first employment of Bakhtiyar Khalji. According to Isami, Bakhtiyar’s first employment was under Jaisingha of Jitur; this lacks contemporary confirmation and is improbable, though in some earlier

8 Tarikh-i Fakhruddin Mubarak Shah, 24. Raverty—perhaps under the impression that such a situation could not have arisen during the life-time of Mu’izzuddin—holds that this surrender took place just before or immediately after the death of Mu’izzuddin. But, as has been explained later, both Aibek and Tughril were functioning in India as independent officers of Mu’izzuddin and under the circumstances such a conflict was not improbable.
9 Minhaj, 145.
10 Ferishta, i, 64.
11 Tabaqat-i Nasiri, 145.
12 Ibid., 146-47.
13 Probably Jaitrasingha of the Guhelot tribe is meant. He was at that time the ruler of Nagda, about 70 miles west of Chitor.
campaigns we find Afghan mercenaries fighting with the Rajput forces.14

Bakhtiyar did not belong to an obscure family. His uncle, Muhammad bin Mahmud, had fought against Prithvi Rai at the second battle of Tarain. Perhaps it was his performance there which attracted the attention of Ali Nagauri, who later became the muqta of Nagaur. He took him in his service, and when the iqta of Nagaur was entrusted to him, he honoured Muhammad bin Mahmud also and assigned to him the iqta of Kashmandi.15 Besides, he also conferred a kettle-drum and a banner on him as a mark of distinction. When Muhammad died, this iqta was assigned to Bakhtiyar. Little is known about Bakhtiyar’s work as the muqta of Kashmandi, where he does not seem to have stayed long enough. He then went to Awadh and met Malik Husamuddin Aghul Bek, commander of the Banaras and Awadh divisions. Impressed by his gallantry, Aghul conferred upon him the iqtas of Bhagwat and Bhiuli.16 This provided him with a base for operations against the neighbouring areas.

Bakhtiyar supplanted the petty Gahadavala chiefs of this tract and made incursions into the territory of Maner and Bihar. The booty that he acquired in these raids—in the form of arms, horses and other materials—provided him with the necessary resources to extend the scope and frequency of his incursions in that region. Soon his reputation spread far and wide, and many Khaljis began to pour in to join his service. Aibek also heard about his ability and achievements and honoured him.17 Having thus established his reputation, he led an army to Bihar and ravaged that region. ‘He had no siege-train for capturing strong Hindu forts; nor was it his policy to provoke any widespread commotion in the country. His object was to secure the maximum of booty with the minimum of risk and bloodshed. So he confined himself to scouring the open country, undefended by the field army of any organized state.’18

In 641/1243 Minhaj met at Lakhnauti one Samsamuddin, who had been in the service of Bakhtiyar, and from him he gathered his information about Bakhtiyar’s exploits in Bihar and Bengal and the tragic circumstances of his death. Bakhtiyar, it was reported to Minhaj, had

15 Minhaj, 146.
16 The printed text of *Tabaqat-i Nasiri* (147) has ‘Silhat and Sihli’. Raverty has correctly identified these places with Bhiuli and Bhagwat. Bhiuli is the north-eastern pargana of Chunar tehsil; it touches the pargana of Bhagwat on the west. Both these parganas are in the south-eastern corner of the modern Mirzapur district.
17 Ibid., 147.
attacked Bihar ‘suddenly’ and with only two hundred horsemen in defensive armour. He threw himself into the postern gate of the place and captured the fortress. ‘The greater number of the inhabitants of that place’, writes Minhaj,

‘were Brahmans, and all of them had shaved heads. They were all slain. There was a large stock of books there. When these books came under the observation of the Musalmans, they summoned a number of Hindus who might give them information regarding the purport of those books; but all the (literate) Hindus had been killed. On becoming acquainted (with the contents of those books), it was found that the whole of that fortress and city was a college, and in Hindivi tongue, they call a college vihar.’

Minhaj, or perhaps the invaders themselves, mistook the Buddhist monks for Brahmans. According to Taranath, a 15th century Tibetan chronicler, Bakhtiyar also captured at this time the monastery-towns of Vikramasila and Nalanda and erected a fortress on the site of Uddandapur. A Buddhist tradition tells us that in A.D. 1200 the famous scholar-saint, Sakya Sribhadra of Kashmir, visited Uddandapur and the Vikramasila monastery but found them in ruins.

After this victory Bakhtiyar came to Aibek with great booty and gifts. Hasan Nizami says that he waited on Aibek on 8 Rajab 599/23 March 1203 at Badaun, soon after the latter’s successful Kalinjar campaign and presented ‘twenty mountain-high, blood-drinking, dragon-faced elephants . . . . and many kinds of jewels and money in cash.’ Aibek honoured Bakhtiyar for his achievements. This excited the jealousy of other Turkish military leaders. On one occasion his enemies even forced a combat upon him with an elephant. With one blow of his mace on the trunk, Bakhtiyar forced the elephant out of the arena. Aibek was so pleased with his courage and bravery that he not only honoured him but asked the amirs also to make presents to him. Bakhtiyar thereafter left for Bihar.

Bakhtiyar now stood on the Sena frontier. The fame of his bravery and courage reached the ears of Rai Lakhmania of Nadia. According to Minhaj, the Rai had been on the throne for eighty years, and had made an extremely favourable impression by his justice and generosity on the minds of the people. It is said that some astrologers represented

19 Minhaj, 148.
20 Indian Antiquary, IV, 386-67.
22 Tajul Ma’asir (Ms).
23 According to the author of the Riazus Salatin, he consolidated his position in Bihar by establishing military outposts and by introducing military arrangements.
to the Rai that it was foretold in their old books that the country would fall into the hands of the Turks. The astrologers advised the Rai to leave the territory in order to escape the ‘molestation of the Turks’. When the Rai enquired about any signs or symbols of the person who would subdue his country, they replied: ‘The indication of him is that, when he stands upright on his two feet, and lets down his two hands, his hands will reach beyond the point of his knees and will touch the calves of his legs.’ Reliable persons were despatched by the Rai to make investigations about this matter and they found these characteristics in Bakhtiyar. Thereupon most of the Brahmins and inhabitants of that place left and went to Sankanat, the cities and towns of Bang, and towards Kamrup. But Rai Lakhmania was not in favour of abandoning his capital and so he stayed on. But he also came under the devastating influence of superstition. Epigraphic evidence shows that in 1203 he had performed a great sacrifice, called Aindri Mahasanti, to propitiate the gods for help in averting the impending catastrophe.24

The next year Bakhtiyar pressed on from Bihar and suddenly appeared before the city of Nadia. According to Minhaj not more than 18 horsemen could keep pace with Bakhtiyar; the main army followed slowly. On reaching the gate of the city of Nadia, Bakhtiyar did not molest anybody but proceeded onwards ‘in such manner that the people of the place imagined that mayhap his party were merchants and had brought horses for sale.’ When he reached the entrance of the palace of the Rai, he drew his sword and started an onslaught. The Rai was then at his meal. By the time he came to know of this development, Bakhtiyar had already dashed forward through the gateway. The Rai fled barefoot by the back-door; ‘the whole of his treasures, his wives and (other) females, his domestics and servants, and his particular attendants were seized; the Musalmans captured a number of elephants, and such a vast booty fell to their lot that it cannot be recorded.’25 Soon afterwards the main body of Bakhtiyar’s army joined him and it was only then that the city of Nadia and the area around it was occupied. The palace was occupied by a stratagem and the city, then panicky and demoralized, was brought under control by a show of force. Rai Lakhmania fled away towards the country of ‘Sankanat and the towns of Bang and Kamrup’. He ruled from Sonargaon for some years over the small remnants of his vast kingdom.

Bakhtiyar did not want permanent occupation of Nadia as he considered the place unfit for being the seat of his government. He

25 Tabaqat-i Nasiri, 151.
selected Lakhnauti, which was nearer to his base in Bihar, for this purpose. Both political and geopolitical considerations determined his choice of Lakhnauti. He soon realized that occupation and control of Nadia, which was in lower Bengal, was bound to be a difficult task and a severe strain on his limited military resources. That Bakhtiyar was correct in his assessment of the situation is confirmed by the fact that Nadia continued under Hindu control for many decades. Bakhtiyar consolidated his position culturally and militarily in the occupied portion of northern Bengal. A number of masjids, madrasas and khanqahs were founded in those parts and military stations were established at Lakanor (Nagar in Birbhum district) and Deokot, and the Khutba was recited in the name of Mu'izzuddin.

Thereafter Bakhtiyar applied his time and energy to investigating about the life and conditions of the people and 'the mountain tracts of Turkistan and Tibet to the eastwards of Lakhnauti'. His motives in undertaking the Tibet campaign have been an enigma. It is surprising that he ignored the Hindu principalities that lay within the easy reach of his arms. When all facts are taken into consideration—the spirit of the Khalji adventurer, his movements, etc.—it appears that he was probably anxious to discover a new route—a short cut—to Turkistan. By thus establishing contact with Turkish lands, he could ensure the uninterrupted supply of men and material for further campaigns and the expansion of his territory in Bengal. Further, an ambitious and adventurous man like Bakhtiyar could even think of the possibility of establishing a kingdom independent of the control of Delhi.

It appears that Bakhtiyar had made very thorough preparations for this campaign. He had established contact with some tribes also which could be helpful in the realization of his objectives. Minhaj writes:

'In the different parts of those mountains which lie between Tibet and the country of Lakhnauti are three races of people, one called the Kunch, the second the Mej (Meg) and the third the Tiharu; and all have Turkish countenances. They have a different idiom too, between the languages of Hind and Turkish. One of the chiefs of the tribes of Kunch and Mej, whom they were wont to call Ali, the Mej, fell into the hands of Muhammad Bakhtiyar Khalji, and at his hand also the former became a Musalman.'

It was this man who agreed to conduct Bakhtiyar into those hills and act as his guide. He took him to Burdhan (kot). 26 'A river, Begmati, 27

26 A city said to have been founded by Shah Gurshasp of Iran during his legendary wanderings in the east.
27 This was Old Tista as Blochmann has suggested.
flowed in front of that place and when it entered the country of Hindustan it was called, in Hindui dialect, Samund (Ocean). Up this river Ali Mej carried the army of Bakhtiyar for ten days, till he reached a place where there was a bridge of hewn stone, consisting of more than twenty arches. When the army had crossed the bridge, Bakhtiyar installed there at the head of the bridge two of his amirs—one of them was a Turkish slave-officer and the other a Khalji—with troops to guard the bridge till his return. When the Rai of Kamrup came to know of this campaign, he sent a message to Bakhtiyar asking him to defer the campaign to the next year, when he offered to help him in the conquest of that area. Bakhtiyar did not accept his advice and pushed ahead towards the mountains of Tibet.

For fifteen days the army of Bakhtiyar kept on passing through the difficult defiles and passes of the Himalayas. On the sixteenth day the army reached the open country of Tibet. The area was well-populated and well under cultivation. Ultimately the army reached a strong fort and started ravaging the area. The people of the fort as well as the adjoining areas assembled to give battle, which started at daybreak and continued till sunset. Many Muslim soldiers fell on the field. ‘All the defensive arms of that host’, writes Minhaj, ‘were of pieces of the spear-bamboo, namely, their cuirasses and body-armour, shields and helmets, which were all slips of it, crudely fastened and stitched, overlapping (each other); and all the people were Turks, archers, and (furnished with) long bows.’

At night the Muslim soldiers interrogated the prisoners, who informed them that at a distance of five leagues there was a city known as Karbattan; there were about 50,000 valiant Turkish horsemen and archers there, and they were expected to arrive next morning.

Minhaj’s enquiries about Karbattan during his stay at Lakhnauti brought to him the following information:

1) Karbattan had walls of hewn stone.
2) Its inhabitants were Brahmans and Nunis.
3) The city was under a Mīhtar.
4) In the cattle market of that city about 1,500 horses were sold every day and all the horses which reached Lakhnauti came from that city.

When Bakhtiyar discovered the nature of the tract and found his soldiers exhausted and worn out by the march, he consulted his amirs. They advised retreat and suggested an invasion next year with better preparation. Minhaj thus records the fate of the retreating army of Bakhtiyar:

28 It was in all probability Kumrikotah in Bhutan.
'When they retreated, not a blade of grass or a stick of firewood was to be found throughout the whole route. The inhabitants had burnt it all, and those who lived in the defiles and passes had moved off from the line of route. During these fifteen days the cattle and the horses did not get a sir of food or a blade of grass. The soldiers had to kill their horses and eat them till they came out from the mountains into the country of Kamrup and reached the head of that bridge. They found two arches of the bridge destroyed. The reason was that enmity had arisen between the two amirs (who were left to guard the bridge) and, in their discord, they had neglected to watch the bridge and protect the road, and had gone off. The Hindus of the Kamrup country came and destroyed the bridge.'

When Bakhtiyar reached the bridge, he found to his great misfortune that there were no means of crossing the river and no boats were available. Under the circumstances he had to halt at some place and construct some boats. He found an idol temple in the vicinity and sought shelter in it. He devised means for obtaining wood and rope for the construction of rafts and crossing the river. When the Rai of Kamrup came to know of these reverses he issued commands to the Hindus of the country, so that they came pouring in crowds, and round about the idol temple they began planting spiked bamboos in the ground, and weaving them together, so that it (their work) was appearing like unto walls.

Bakhtiyar was quick to decide upon the course of action to be followed. He made a rush to break the fence and reached the open plain. On reaching the river-bank he halted with his army. Suddenly some soldiers urged their horses into the river. The water was fordable for a short distance only. As the soldiers rode further, it became impossible to swim and many soldiers got drowned. The Hindus followed them and occupied the bank of the river. When Bakhtiyar's soldiers reached the mid-stream, they all perished. Bakhtiyar and nearly one hundred of his horsemen succeeded with great difficulty in crossing the river.

The tribes of Kunch and Mej heard about the disaster that had

29 Tabaqat-i Nasiri, 154-55.
30 'Bakhtiyar's route on this expedition', remarks Dr. Habibullah, 'and the incidental details have long been a matter of controversy. While Bardhankuti (Bardhankot) still bears the name, the river Begmati has been difficult to identify. The identification of the stone bridge with the Silhako, discovered over the Barnali flowing into the Brahmaputra, however, furnished a broad indication of the route. The recent discovery of a Sanskrit inscription opposite Gauhati, recording the destruction of a Turushka force in March 1208, has conclusively settled the question.' Foundation (2nd ed.), 76.
befallen the forces of Bakhtiyar. They made up their mind to extend
a helping hand to him; particularly Ali Mej’s kinsmen received
Bakhtiyar and rendered him all possible help in reaching Deokot. But
the catastrophe ruined Bakhtiyar’s fame and career. As he rode out
men and women raised lamentations and hurled invectives at him.
Bakhtiyar was so deeply smitten with grief that he even gave up
riding on horse back. During this adversity he used to say that per-
haps some calamity had befallen the Sultan-i Ghazi (Mu‘izzuddin) so
that fortune had deserted him. It was true, for it was just about this
time that Mu‘izzuddin was assassinated at Damyak. The disaster
broke the warrior’s nerves and he fell seriously ill. On hearing of this
calamity one of his amirs, Ali Mardan, came to Deokot. Bakhtiyar was
confined to his bed at the time and nobody had seen him for the past
three days. Ali Mardan reached his bed, drew the sheet from his face
and thrust a dagger into his breast.

LAST INDIAN CAMPAIGN OF MU‘IZZUDDIN
AND HIS ASSASSINATION

Mu‘izzuddin’s defeat at Andkhud, which has been described
already, seriously damaged his reputation. Recalcitrant elements
became active in all parts of his empire and rumours of his death
were circulated in order to create confusion in his realms. According
to Hasan Nizami, one of his army officers, Aibak Bek, abandoned him
on the battle-field of Andkhud and rushed to Multan, where he killed
the governor and established his independent authority.\(^{31}\) Minhaj
refers to the desertion of Husain Kharmil.\(^{32}\) According to the Tarikh-i
Guzida, whose statement is not confirmed by any earlier authority but
has been copied by Firishta, one of the officers of Mu‘izzuddin,
Iladgiz, had even seized Ghazni at this time.\(^{33}\)

Rumours of this disaster had repercussions in India also. Bakan
and Sarka, two Khokar chiefs, who lived in the region through which
the Lahore-Ghazni route passed, created disturbances in the whole
region and planned to capture Lahore. Their activities cut off the line
of communications between Lahore and Ghazni. Realizing the magni-
tude of the problem, Mu‘izzuddin himself marched to India in order
to deal with the Khokars. The Khokars fought bravely but were
defeated and crushed. Mu‘izzuddin settled the affairs of Lahore and
then, permitting Aibek to go to Delhi, started for Ghazni. While on
his way to Ghazni, Mu‘izzuddin halted on the Indus at a place known

\(^{31}\) Ta'jul Ma‘ası̇r, f. 178b as cited by Habibullah.
\(^{32}\) Minhaj, 122.
\(^{33}\) Tarikh-i Guzida, I, 411-12.
as Danyak and pitched his tent on a cool, grassy plot on the bank of the river. While he was offering his evening prayers, some assassins34 surreptitiously entered the tent and killed him on 3 Sha'ban 602/15 March 1206 and turned the victorious army into a funeral procession.

34 Different opinions have been expressed about the identity of the assassins. Tabaqat-i Nasiri (123-24) has Fidai Mulahidah; Juwayni (II, 59) gives Fidaiyon; Ibn-i Asir (XII, 82) has Khokars; Zahabi (Duwal II, 81) gives Isma'lis. Ibn-i Asir says that when the assassins were caught, two of them were found to be circumcised. Since both the Khokars and the Isma'lis were hostile to Mu'izzuddin, it is just possible that they conspired together for this murder. For identification of the place, see K. A. Rashid, Historical Dissertations, Pakistan Historical Society, Publication No. 30, 54-58.
V. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TURKISH CONQUEST

MU‘IZZUDDIN’S CHARACTER AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Different assessments have been made of the character and achievements of Sultan Mu‘izzuddin Muhammad bin Sam. In fact, his military career is often viewed with an almost unconscious attitude of comparison with that of Sultan Mahmud. That he was no comparison to the great Ghaznavid conqueror as a military leader can hardly be denied; his achievements in the broader perspective of Central Asian history seem less impressive. But this ‘hero of three stupendous defeats—Andkhud, Tarain and Anhilwara’, as Professor Habib calls him, has to his credit the establishment of one of the greatest empires of the middle ages, and in this he definitely rises above Mahmud of Ghazni. No doubt the weakness of the Indian social system, which found expression in the political and economic life of the people, had facilitated the conquest of northern India, but the contribution of Mu‘izzuddin to the establishment of Turkish rule in India cannot be overemphasized. Only a military leader of great vision and tact could organize military campaigns over an area stretching from the Oxus to the Jumna, and only a careful, cautious and bold planning could hold this structure intact. The conquest of northern India was not an easy walk-over. It was stoutly resisted by the Rajput governing classes. Mu‘izzuddin met all the challenges of the situation with perseverance and courage, and though most of the time he was away in his homeland, his eyes were fixed on the movements of his armies in India.

Our authorities tell us practically nothing of Mu‘izzuddin as an administrator. But keeping in mind the general political and cultural climate of the period as well as the resources available to him, we may safely draw certain conclusions. Mu‘izzuddin had no means of establishing a direct administration over the conquered areas. Apart from everything else, language alone would have been an insuperable difficulty. Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni had attempted no annexation beyond the Ravi, and so the area conquered by Mu‘izzuddin was without any tradition of Muslim administration. But he was helped by one very significant situation. During the century and a half that followed Mahmud’s military exploits in India, some Muslim settlements had appeared in northern India. A small bi-lingual minority of these Musalmans must have been available to Mu‘izzuddin while planning his administrative arrangements, but it was so small in number that it could hardly have sufficed for the purpose of the central, provincial
and district administrations. How to provide the administrative personnel needed to control an extensive area stretching from the Punjab to Bengal? Ghur could not give to Mu'izzuddin the men of talent he required and so he had to depend for higher commands on slaves carefully trained in the arts of war and administration. He had, however, the vision to see that a direct administration of the conquered territories in India was impossible, but if he only liquidated the top-most rais and left the rural areas and small towns in the hands of ranas and rawats, so that the change of the government was not felt by the masses, then his government could last. A necessary corollary of this situation was that the Ghurids could only control the larger towns of military and strategic importance and the great trade-routes. Besides, Mu'izzuddin realized that any alliance of the great rais would be too much for him; so he fought in a way that prevented their combination. He was content with a partial conquest of many regions and did not drive matters to extremes.

The two striking features of Mu'izzuddin's character were his dogged tenacity of purpose and his grim political realism. Twice he was defeated in India—at Anhilwara and at Tarain—but no defeat could dampen his spirits. A general of smaller stature and inferior mettle would have succumbed to these defeats. But Mu'izzuddin refused to take any reversal as final. He reorganized his forces and came again, determined to achieve the objective he had set before himself. He analyzed the causes of his defeats dispassionately and changed his policies as time and circumstances demanded. His thrust into the country from Rajputana proving abortive, he did not hesitate to change his plan. He did not plunge into political uncertainties, but proceeded cautiously and carefully, consolidating his power and taking all factors into consideration. At a time when he had to deal with many hostile powers nearer home, he never ignored the problems of his Indian possessions. When he was chastizing the Khokars in India, preparations were afoot in Ghazni for a campaign in Trans-Oxiana and a bridge was being constructed over the Oxus and a castle, half of which was under water, had already been built on the bank of this river. In fact his military strategy and planning covered an extensive area from the Ganges to the Hari Rud.

Mu'izzuddin's contribution to the cultural development of Ghur was not negligible. In fact it was he and his brother, Chiyasuddin, who brought about a transformation in the culture-pattern of Ghur. He provided facilities to scholars, like Maulana Fakhruddin Razi, to spread

1 Ibn-i Asr XII, 138, as cited by Barthold, 352.
2 Juwayni, II, 59.
religious education in those backward areas and helped in the emergence of Ghur as a centre of culture and learning. He made some noteworthy contribution in the sphere of architectural traditions also. U. Scrotto ascribes a unique type of glazed tile found at Ghazni to the period of Mu'izzuddin.3

Mu'izzuddin's conquest of northern India was only the thin end of the wedge. He was naturally unable to foresee that within fourteen years of his death the inhabitants of his homeland would be massacred by the Mongols, that independent Muslim Asian powers would disappear, and that Delhi would emerge as the sole authority that could challenge the Mongols. Simultaneously with all this a movement of tremendous impact—the organization of mystic orders (silsilahs)—was passing through its embryonic stages and was to sweep all Muslim lands immediately following the devastation of the Mongols. Persian mystic poetry was born in Ghazni and Herat under the later Ghaznavids, but it became a powerful vehicle for the expression of esoteric ideas and cosmic emotions with Shaikh Fariduddin Attar of Naishapur (ob. 627/1230). Not very far from Firuz Koh was the city of Chisht, in Hari Rud valley, which was destined to be the cradle of a mystic silsilah after its name. When Mu'izzuddin was busy planning the conquest of India, some of the most outstanding cities of his homeland—Ghazni, Herat, Jam, Chisht and Aush—were brooding over mystic ideas and preparing for a moral and spiritual rejuvenation of Muslim society.

MO TIVES OF THE CAMPAIGNS

Very often religious motives are read into the campaigns of the Ghurids. A careful analysis of all available data militates against any such interpretation. The soldiers were Musalmans, no doubt, but they were not the representatives of Islam. Besides, while on occasions religious sentiments may have motivated their actions, they were largely inspired by political objectives. The Ghurids spread their tentacles in India in the same way as they had sought an extension of their power in Persia and Central Asia. They fought the Hindus and the Muslims alike. In all probability the Ghurid armies, like those of the Khwarazmians, were made up of mercenaries. The poet, Sa'di, made it clear that the lashkari (professional soldier) fought for the wages he got; he did not fight for king, country or religion. The conduct of Mu'izzuddin, as well as of the early Turkish rulers of Delhi, amply bears out this view. Qutbuddin Aibek employed Hindu cavalry,4 and appointed Hindu

3 East and West, N. S. Vol. XIII/4, Rome 1962 article on 'Islamic glazed tiles with moulded decoration from Ghazni', 263-87.
4 Tarikh-i Fakhruddin Mubarak Shah, 33.
officers. While describing Aibek’s conquest and settlement of Asni in 1193, Hasan Nizami refers to his posting of ranas in every side for the administration of the people and the country.\(^5\) In Delhi and Ajmer no abrupt changes were made in the administration. Political sagacity, and not religious fanaticism and fervour, guided their steps. According to Ibn-i Asir, even Anhilwara was restored to the Hindu rulers.\(^6\)

The Ghurid successes were not followed by any vindictive measures inspired by religious zeal or fanaticism. They handled the situation in the light of expediency and entered into a series of compromises without any religious partiality or prejudice. After the conquest of Ajmer, Muʿizzuddin did not take over the administration but entrusted it to Prithvi Rai’s son on condition of vassalage. When Delhi was conquered, Khanday Rai’s successor was allowed to rule over the territory. When the Chauhanas troubled Prithvi Rai’s son, Aibek decided on direct annexation, but compensated the prince by placing him in charge of Ranthambhor.

The following account of Muʿizzuddin’s last Indian campaign by Ata Malik Juwayni throws considerable light on the objectives of the Sultan in undertaking his Indian campaigns:

‘Although peace had been concluded between the two sultans (i.e. Khwarazm Shah and Shihabuddin), yet Sultan Shihabuddin, in order to retrieve his previous defeat, was raising an army and collecting arms under the pretext of ghazwa (or holy war)\(^7\) till in a.h. 602 he undertook his Indian expedition, so that he might fully equip his army; for his activities in Khurasan during the last few years had cost him almost everything he had, and his troops were in a very wretched condition. When he reached India, one victory that God granted him was sufficient to repair his finances and set right the affairs of his army.’\(^8\)

**CAUSES OF TURKISH SUCCESS**

Of the three contemporary chroniclers—Hasan Nizami, Minhajus Siraj and Fakhr-i Mudabbir—the first two say nothing about the causes of Turkish successes in India though they have described the campaigns. It is strange that for them neither strategy nor tactics nor any other military explanation had any relevance. ‘Almighty God gave the victory to Islam’, or ‘Bl.:im Deo had numerous forces and many

\(^5\) *Tejul Maʾṣir*, f. 125b, as cited in Habibullah, 252 (first edition).

\(^6\) *Al-Kamal fit-tawarikh* XII, 79. A Chalukyan inscription (E I, Vol. I, 22, 338-39; II, 439) however boastfully records the expulsion of the Turks from that area.

\(^7\) The object of this ‘holy war’ were to be the Qara Khitai Turks, who had defeated Muʿizzuddin at Andkbud.

elephants and when a battle took place, the army of Islam was defeated and put to rout—such remarks can hardly be of any value. Hasan Nizami’s statements are equally conventional and unhelpful. Fakhr-i Mudabbir’s account of Turkish conquests is in the same strain but his Adabul Harb is of some help in this respect. His detailed account of the horse as the chief instrument of war and his condemnation of feudal levies reveal the strength of the Turkish and the weakness of the Indian armies from a purely military point of view. Apart from this, there is hardly any contemporary assessment of the causes of Turkish success. In fact no medieval historian ever attempted an explanation of this question.

British historians, who tried to put the history of medieval India in some perspective, have attempted to explain the success of Muslims in the 13th century. Elphinstone wrote: ‘As his (Mu‘izzuddin’s) army was drawn from all the warlike provinces between the Indus and the Oxus, and was accustomed to contend with the Seljuks (?) and the northern hordes of Tatars (?), we should not expect it to meet much resistance from a people naturally gentle and inoffensive, broken into small states and forced into war without any hopes of gain or aggrandizement.’ But this would leave the conquest of the Muslim regions by the Mongols in 1218-20, without even a battle, unexplained. Besides, Elphinstone ignores the fact that the Rajputs with whom the Turks had to contend were not, in the least, wanting in bravery, martial spirit and courage.

Sir Jadunath Sarkar’s analysis of the causes of Muslim success is as follows:

‘Islam gave to its followers (as H. A. L. Fisher has pointed out) three characteristic virtues which no other religion has inspired so successfully, and which imparted to natural soldiers like the Arabs, Berbers, Pathans and Turks, a wonderful military efficiency. These were: First, complete equality and social solidarity, as regards legal status and religious privileges. Thus all distinctions of caste and race were swept away and the sect was knit together like the members of one vast family of brothers. Secondly, fatalism, springing from an absolute reliance on God and the belief that what Allah wills must triumph over every human effort. This bred contempt of death in fighting. Thirdly, freedom from drunkenness. Wine drinking is a sin according to the Quran and a crime punishable by the state in Muslim countries. On the other hand, wine drinking was the ruin of the Rajputs, Marathas, and other Hindu soldiers, and made them incapable of far-sighted military planning,

9 History of India, 361.
conducting surprises, and even guarding their own camps with proper precaution.\footnote{Military History of India, 28.}

Various theories have been advanced and various explanations have been attempted to explain the Turkish conquest of northern India. The assertion that the Indians were defeated on account of their pacifism and hatred of war is not supported by historical facts. War was a Rajput ‘profession’ and the history of India in the 11th and the 12th centuries is one long story of internecine struggles, wars, conflicts and contests.

It would be equally unhistorical to seek an explanation of this Turkish success in the religious zeal of the Musalmans. The religious zeal of the early Arab conquerors was no longer an inspiring motive in the lives of these people. In fact many of the Turkish tribes, who came to India during this period, were not fully converted to Islam, while many of their leaders had only a very superficial knowledge of the faith. This, however, does not eliminate the possibility of religious sentiments, in however crude form they might have been, being aroused when the Turks came face to face with a people and institutions having polytheistic and idolatrous forms. But this could only have been a mere ‘passing mood’ and not a ‘permanent objective’ or inspiring motive of their campaigns.

The real cause of the defeat of the Indians lay in their social system and the invidious caste distinctions, which rendered the whole military organization rickety and weak. Caste taboos and discriminations killed all sense of unity—social or political. Even religion was the monopoly of a particular section, and the majority of the Indian people were never allowed a glimpse of the inside of a high-caste Indian temple. Thus for the bulk of the Indian people there was hardly anything which could evoke patriotic responses in them when face to face with the Ghurid invader. They watched with sullen indifference the fate of the Indian governing classes. The towns, consequently, fell like ripe fruits. Only the forts put up some resistance, but they became helpless when the enemy controlled the countryside. Had the Indian governing classes succeeded in enlisting the support of the masses for their defence plans, these forts and fortresses would have served as a fortified base of a very dynamic character by linking up all their striking force to a single state-centre. But under the existing social circumstances, these forts became a futile defence and could not protect even their own areas.

The caste system played havoc with the military efficiency of the Rajput states. Since fighting was the profession of a group, recruitment
was confined to particular tribes or castes. The bulk of the population was excluded from military training. The idea of physical pollution (chut) made division of labour amongst the soldiers impossible and the same person had to perform all sorts of work—from fighting to fetching of water.

From the purely military point of view the Indian armies had not kept themselves abreast of the developments that had taken place in the art of warfare in Central Asia. Apart from the fact that the feudal levies, from which the Indian forces were built up in the 12th century, made large Indian armies heterogeneous in character and divided in loyalties, there were basic differences in the principles on which the Indian and Turkish forces were organized, maintained and fought in the battle-field.

Mobility was the key-note of Turkish military organization at this time. It was the *age of the horse*, and a well-equipped cavalry with tremendous mobility was the great need of the time. Indian military strategy gave greater importance to weight than to mobility. The Rajputs believed in *crushing* rather than moving rapidly and striking. Huge and unwieldy phalanxes of armies headed by elephants with gorgeous trappings were bound to be signally beaten when face to face with a swift and easy moving cavalry, which could attack the flanks and the rear of the enemy forces.

This element of mobility was totally absent from Indian armies. Sir Jadunath Sarkar remarks: 'The arms and horses of these trans-border invaders gave them indisputable military superiority over the Indians. Their provisions, also, were carried by fast trotting camels, which required no fodder for themselves but fed on the roots and leaves of the wayside, while the Banjara pack-oxen of the Hindu commissariat were slow and burdensome.'

After mobility, as R. C. Smail has pointed out, the second tactical characteristic of the Turks was their archery. They used the bow from the saddle and while moving. This gave them an added advantage over the heavy and slow moving Rajput armies.

**Impact of the Turkish Conquest**

The Ghurid conquest of northern India, gradually but inevitably, led to some very vital changes in the political, economic and social life of the country. It paved the way for the liquidation of the multi-state system which had become a feature of Indian political life during the 11th and the 12th centuries. The political ideal of the early

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11 Ibid., 26.
12 Crusading Warfare, A contribution to Medieval Military History, 80-81.
Turkish sultans was a centralized political organization controlled by a monarch with unlimited powers. Feudalism with its two basic concepts—localism in administration and legal immunity of the feudal lord—did not fit in with the spirit of the new polity, and effective steps were, therefore, taken for its liquidation. The institution of the iqtas was employed as an instrument for breaking the feudal traditions of the various areas and for linking up the far-flung parts of the empire to one centre.

For centuries past the rais of India had been fighting each other almost every winter. Apart from the glory of killing and the joy of being killed, the only rational justification for this constant ‘waste of wealth and loss of blood’ could be the administrative unification of the country. But no Indian ruler had been able to give any administrative unity to northern India after the days of Harsha. And now a group of foreigners had accomplished in a generation what an Indian ruler should have realized five or six centuries earlier. They had in the very heart of northern India—and in a region not to be commended for its climate—given the country a capital consecrated by a tower. They had also given the country the skeleton of an all-India administration by bringing the chief cities and the great routes under the control of the government of Delhi. The great advantage of the Ghurids and Turks lay in the fact that (unlike the great rais whom they had displaced) they were acquainted with the fundamental conditions of an imperial (or large-scale) administration. The conception of an all-India service for the higher officers of the king and their appointments, postings, transfers, promotions and dismissals by him ‘in his discretion’, but after careful consideration and consultation with his high officers, would not have been possible for Prithvi Rai III with reference to his subordinate rais.

With the rise of a centralized monarchy in northern India there was a marked change in the political horizon. The political outlook became broader and the areas of isolation began to shrink. Sir Jadunath Sarkar remarks:

‘The intimate contact between India and the outer Asiatic world, which had been established in the early Buddhist age, was lost when the new Hindu society was reorganized and set in rigidity like a concrete structure about the eighth century A.D., with the result that India again became self-centred and isolated from the moving world beyond her natural barriers. This touch with the rest of Asia and the nearest parts of Africa was restored by the Muslim conquest at the end of the 12th century...’

13 India through the Ages, 43.
Another important aspect of the Turkish conquest of northern India was, what Professor Habib calls, the 'urban revolution'.\textsuperscript{14} The old 'caste cities' of the Rajput period were thrown open to all types of people—high and low, workers and artisans, Hindus and Muslims, Chandalas and Brahmins. The Turkish government refused to recognize caste as the basis of social demarcation or as the principle of civic life. The working classes, labourers, artisans and the non-caste people and the unprivileged classes readily joined hands with the new government in building the new cities. In fact, the main strength of the early Turkish sultans lay in these cities, which placed the entire surplus of their working classes at the disposal of the government.

Militarily the impact of the Turkish occupation may be traced in the change of the character and composition of the Indian armies and the methods of their recruitment and maintenance. Fighting ceased to be the monopoly of any one caste or group and recruitment was thrown open to all properly trained soldiers, who could stand the strain of war. Thus Indian armies came into existence in which martial talent was drawn from all sources irrespective of caste, creed or colour. The practice of feudal levies was rejected in favour of strong standing armies, centrally recruited, centrally paid and centrally administered. Similarly, in the sphere of tactics the Turks were quick to bring India militarily on a par with Central Asian powers. The \textit{paiks} (foot-soldiers) were replaced by the \textit{sawaran-i muqatala} (mounted fighting-men), and mobility and striking force rather than heaviness and crushing strength came to be regarded as the basis of military organization.\textsuperscript{15} In fact, only these reorganized Indian forces could successfully check the Mongol inroads into the country.

With the restoration of contact with the outside world and the emergence of new 'working class' cities, trade received a new impetus. Uniformity of the legal system, the tariff regulations and the currency widened the merchant’s world and facilitated movement from one place to another.

Another very important sphere in which the impact of the Turkish conquest was felt was the language of the administration. During the Rajput period the dialects and languages used for administrative and other purposes varied from area to area. The introduction of Persian at the higher level of administration throughout the Ghurid possessions in India introduced uniformity in the language of administration. Conscious of this aspect of Turkish contribution, Amir Khusrau remarks:

\textsuperscript{14} Introduction to Elliot and Dowson’s \textit{History of India}, Vol. II.
\textsuperscript{15} See also Nizami, \textit{Some Aspects of Religion and Politics}, 86-87.
Impact of the Turkish Conquest

But the Persian speech (guftar) is uniform in Hindustan from the banks of the river Sind to the shores of the sea. Such a great language is our medium of expression... and this Persian of ours is the original Persian (dari). The Indian dialects differ at every hundred karohs, but the Persian language is the same over an area of over four thousand farsangs... Here is the Persian language in which pronunciation of words is in complete agreement with their orthography.16

In an earlier chapter reference has been made to the existence of Muslim settlements in India on the eve of the Turkish invasions. What was the attitude of the Turkish conquerors towards these Muslim settlements, and of the latter towards them? Our authorities are quite silent about the question. Amir Khusrau, however, gives us some idea of the attitude of the Muslims of the Deccan. When the army of Alauddin Khalji under Malik Kafur attacked the territory of Rai Vera Pandya, the Musalmans who were in his service fought the invader, but when the Rai decided to disappear, his Muslim soldiers had to submit.17 Nothing is known about the Muslims of the north. Had they either fought against the conquerors or helped them, the fact would have been recorded. Now since the Indian Muslims, taken as a whole, were not in the service of the Indian rai, the silence of our authorities about them seems to indicate two facts—that they took no part in the struggle on either side and that they were not considered eligible for any office of note. The only exception to this rule under the early Turkish sultans was Imaduddin Raihan and his brief career and fall is an evidence of the contempt with which the Turkish slave-officers regarded persons from 'the tribes of Hindustan'. Still the Delhi sultanat could not do without their services. Among the groups from which the soldiers and horsemen were recruited, the 'Hindustanis' are definitely noted, and this term must have included the Indian Muslims.

We cannot also ignore the language problem. All the 'state languages' of northern India at present are the product of the middle ages; in the time of Iltutmish the spoken, but unwritten, language of the people changed after every three or four districts. Turkish was too immature: Arabic was little known. The Hindus of the whole of India could only understand each other by writing in Sanskrit. The government of Delhi had no alternative but to use Persian as its official language. But the local languages of India were only known to those who had acquired them as their mother-tongue or by long residence in the region. They had no trained teachers, dictionary or grammar. It

16 Dibacha Dhow-i Ghurratul Kamal, (Qaisari Press, Delhi), 33.
17 M. Habib, Translation of Khusrau's Khazatul Futaah, 90.
is inconceivable how the government of the early Turkish sultans could have operated all over northern India without employing the Indian Muslims as interpreters on a very large scale. To begin with, they were the only bi-lingual group available.18

An over-all view of the Indian situation in the 12th century leads one to the inevitable conclusion that it was the caste system and the idea of physical pollution which had held back the progress of the country and had created social anarchy and political heterogeneity in northern India. The Turkish conquest gave a rude shock to this system and very naturally enlisted the support of those elements which had suffered under the former social order. The continuance of Turkish rule in India for a long period and the almost continuous expansion of its sphere of political influence is inexplicable except in terms of the acceptance and acquiescence of the Turkish rule by the Indian people. Had the Indian masses resisted the establishment of their rule, the Ghurids would not have been able to retain even an inch of Indian territory.

18 After the Delhi sultanat had been stabilized, conditions became different. Prof. Habib hazards the following guess on the basis of his observation of Indians in Persia. 'Knowledge of conversational Persian is not hard to acquire for a north Indian. Persian verbs differ from those of the Indian languages, but a small percentage of nouns is the same, and the construction of sentences is similar. An illiterate north Indian (whether Hindu or Muslim), if taken to Persia and compelled to shift for himself in a purely Persian environment, can learn to express himself in Persian in six to eight weeks. A Hindu in Alauddin Khalji's Delhi could have learnt to speak Persian almost effortlessly in five or six months.' (Political Theory of the Delhi Sultanate, 129-30).