

MEDIEVAL STUDIES

ANIL CHANDRA BANERJEE



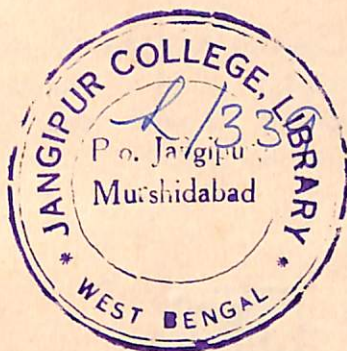
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PREFACE

The articles reprinted in this volume in a collected form were written on different occasions and published in different journals (*Indian Culture*, *Indian Historical Quarterly*, *Journal of Indian History*, *Journal of Bihar Research Society*, *Calcutta Review*), *Proceedings of Indian History Congress* and *D. R. Bhandarkar Volume* (ed. B. C. Law). Some of them were included in my book, *Rajput Studies*, which is now out of print and will not be printed again. Although I have made alterations here and there, mainly with a view to expunging youthful crudities of language and style, the main conclusions have been left unchanged.

* * *

The late Professor Hem Chandra Raichaudhuri kindly revised *Early Indo-Persian Literature and Amir Khusrau* before its publication in the *Calcutta Review* in 1935, gave me some interesting suggestions and asked me to read Mohsin Fani, an author unknown to me at that time. To the late Professor Indubhusan Banerjee I owe my interest in, and my little knowledge of Sikh history. Professor Subimal Chandra Dutt gave me my first lessons on Rajput history and kindly revised *Early History of the Guhilots* which was submitted to him as a tutorial essay in 1931. I have tried to explain some problems of medieval Indian history in the light of their teaching, although I have not accepted their conclusions in all cases.

* * *

Although *Early History of the Guhilots* is primarily concerned with the rise of a minor dynasty in one of the smallest principalities in western India, it seeks to draw our attention to some basic problems of medieval Indian history. If we accept the theory of the non-Indian origin of the Guhilots, we must consider the broader question of socio-religious adjustment which made it possible for the Hindu India of those days to

absorb Central Asian immigrants within its fold. Many years ago Dr. D. R. Bhandarkar tried to explain this process of adjustment in his well known paper on *Foreign Elements in the Hindu Population* (*Indian Antiquary*, 1911). But the subject demands more systematic investigation, for it is closely connected with one of the most important and interesting features of ancient Indian society and religion. The absorption of the Central Asian immigrants of the 5th and 6th centuries was the continuation of an old process; centuries before the coming of the Hunas and the Gurjaras, the Greeks, the Parthians and the Sakas had been similarly Indianised in faith, speech and social organisation. Apparently that tremendous vitality survived till the coming of the Muslims in the 8th century; by the time of Alberuni's visit it had completely exhausted itself. The old caste system, which continued to be wonderfully flexible and receptive till the days of Bappa, became a hard shell as soon as it came into contact with Islam. We do not know whether it was a natural change accelerated by the violent impact of an alien system, or the inevitable transformation of a society determined to protect itself against continuous onslaught from without. In any case, the clue to this significant social revolution (which dominated Indian life throughout the medieval period) may be found in a careful analysis of epigraphic and literary data; the vague generalities which we propose from time to time do not lead us anywhere.

As in the case of *Early History of the Guhilots*, so in the case of *Sidelights on Medieval Mewar and Beginnings of Rathor Rule in Marwar*, the nature and variety of the available sources of information raise interesting problems. To what extent is epigraphic evidence consistent with traditions and scattered references in Persian historical chronicles? Even epigraphic evidence may degenerate into tradition in some cases, for inscriptions composed several centuries after the occurrence of the incidents described are naturally coloured by the ignorance

and prejudice accumulated during the intervening period. The Persian chronicles usually ignore the Rajputs, unless, of course, a stirring victory like the fall of Chitor claims attention and a poet-cum-historian like Amir Khusrau is ready with his pen. Even then, however, he is unusually laconic and does not permit the story to unfold itself in his narrative.

Rana Sanga of Mewar is an attempt at reconstruction; here the theme transcends the parochial limits of conventional Rajput history and merges into the history of India. Khanua was a decisive battle because it contributed materially to the consolidation of Babur's hold on India, although it would be too much to say that Sanga's victory on that fateful day would have established Rajput supremacy in North India. Indeed, the question whether the *Hindupat* really fought for such a big issue still remains undecided; we do not know whether his political vision ever crossed his native hills so far as the creation of something larger and nobler than a clan-State was concerned. In any case his career illustrates the fundamental tragedy of Rajput history. The Rajputs were incapable of creating and maintaining an empire; their political traditions, their peculiar military system and civil administration, could not cross the physical barriers which kept them confined in their homeland.

In *Early Indo-Persian Literature and Amir Khusrau and The Influence of Islamic Traditions on the Sultanate of Delhi* I have discussed two different aspects of a single problem: the effects of the impact of Islam on India. In the sphere of religion and culture, as well as in the political sphere, Islam had to make concessions to the 'crow-faced' Hindus. From this undeniable fact we might draw the conclusion that the decadence of the Hindus in the 12th and 13th centuries has been exaggerated and the strength of their resistance to the infiltration of Islam under-estimated.

Another interesting point which deserves attention in this connection is the capacity of Islam for adjustment on the basis of compromise with alien political, religious and social systems. Despite its universality (which is so often—and not unnaturally—emphasized) Islam assumed local colour in response to local needs. Some examples of this process, so far as the political sphere is concerned, will be found in *The Influence of Islamic Traditions*.

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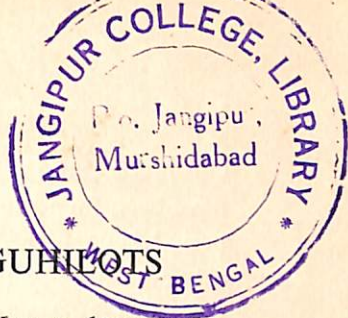
Sikh Militarism offers a new interpretation of the circumstances in which the Sikhs found it necessary to take up arms and gradually to create a new social psychology. I have accepted the current emphasis on the contact with the Mughals as the most important factor in the transformation of Sikhism, although I have tried to show that militarisation was not the result of the persecuted community's natural urge for self-defence and revenge. Unfortunately our sources of information are inadequate and vitally affected by prejudice; we cannot accept unhesitatingly either the pious stories forming the core of Sikh tradition or the casual incursions of Muslim writers into a minor side issue of Imperial history. Naturally our conclusions must be treated as tentative, and our emphasis on religious and political aspects of the problem appears to have been carried too far. I suspect deep-rooted socio-economic forces were at work behind the Sikh drive towards arms, but it is not possible for me to take up detailed investigations.

February 11, 1958

A. C. Banerjee

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EARLY HISTORY OF THE GUHILOTS

Of all the Rajput clans the Guhilots of Mewar deserve the closest attention of the historian of India. Tod rightly observes that 'the Hindu tribes yield unanimous suffrage to the prince of Mewar' as 'the first of the thirty-six royal tribes', and refers to the important fact that the Guhilot principality is almost the only State which outlived eight centuries of foreign domination and in the very lands where it was founded in the eighth century. The glory of the Guhilots consists also in the long-continued and resolute resistance which they offered to the Muslim invaders in spite of numerous reverses. "In fact the heroism of this family and its sustained tenacious effort for the preservation of its independence and its religion are as stable as their fortune and dominion."¹

The reconstruction of the history of the Guhilots is, therefore, an unquestionable necessity, and much remains to be done in this sphere. The purpose of the present writer is to collect the necessary data, to discuss the more important views which have so far been advanced by various scholars, and to make an attempt at preparing a coherent narrative of the early political history of this clan. It is proposed here to deal with the period from the earliest times down to the close of the 13th century—the period of confusion and darkness, as a tolerably definite chronological survey of the political history of the later period may be found even in Tod's work.

The greatest difficulty which confronts a student of the early history of the Guhilots is the paucity of materials. He finds few stones to lean upon and is bewildered when he goes through the almost endless series of speculations indulged in by different scholars. He can gather very little from sources like Persian chronicles which are so valuable for the later period. He is even denied the help of Rajput chronicles, because the

1 C. V. Vaidya, *History of Medieval Hindu India*, Vol. I, pp. 70-71.

chronicles composed in later periods, which were used by Tod, have been found to be absolutely unreliable so far as the early period is concerned. Very few indigenous records of real historical value have yet been discovered. However, the discovery of some inscriptions has thrown a flood of light on this subject, and with their help it is now possible to arrive at certain tentative conclusions. Until fresh materials are discovered a very large portion of the narrative must remain open to question, and necessarily, therefore, no dogmatic assertion can be made.

II

According to Tod, who followed the traditional account recorded in local chronicles, Kanak Sen, a descendant of Rama, the famous Epic hero belonging to the Solar dynasty, 'found his way into Saurashtra from Loh-kote' and established the kingdom of Valabhi in 144 A. D. In Kathiawad his descendants ruled for centuries, until the territory was sacked by invaders described as barbarians from the north (or Scythic), and the last chief, Siladitya, was killed in 524 A.D. His son, Goha, established himself at Edur, where his successors, 'who were styled Gohilote, classically Grahilote, in time softened to Gehlote', continued to rule. Bappa was the son of Nagadit, the eighth prince of the line, who was killed by the Bhils.¹

From the very nature of the sources on which Tod relied it follows that we must be very careful about the value of his account, particularly in connection with his genealogy and chronology. It is apparent that the bardic chronicles composed at a much later date, when the truth about the early days was clouded by mystery and tradition, are likely to give us mere fragmentary legends, not authentic history, concerning this period.

In the first place, it has been established that the Maitraka princes of Valabhi were in no way connected with the legendary Solar race to which Rama belonged. Indeed, they can hardly

¹ Cf. K. D. Erskine, *Rajputana Gazetteer*, Vol. II, 1908, pp. 13-14.

be accepted as of Indian origin, and it has been very plausibly suggested by Dr. D. R. Bhandarkar that they were a foreign tribe allied with, if not a branch of, the Hunas.¹

Secondly, Kanak Sen is an 'entirely mythical'² hero. It is now generally accepted that Bhatarka was the founder of the Maitraka ruling family.³ In the genealogical list of the princes of Valabhi which has been prepared on the basis of epigraphic evidence, there is no mention of Kanak Sen, nor has he been identified with any other ruler in that list.⁴

Thirdly, the dates of the establishment and destruction of the kingdom of Valabhi given by Tod must be rejected. Epigraphic evidence clearly shows that Bhatarka flourished in the last quarter of the fifth century A.D.⁵ Buhler remarks, "The destruction of Valabhi is an event around which there hangs more than one mystery and the question when it happened is one of the most difficult to decide."⁶ It has been ascertained, however, from epigraphic evidence that Siladitya VII, the last ruler of the dynasty, was alive in Gupta Era 447 or 767 A. D. So the destruction of the kingdom may be placed in the last quarter of the eighth century. This chronological assumption is quite in conformity with the theory that the Valabhi dynasty was probably overthrown by an expedition of the Arabs from Sind.⁷

Whether Bappa belonged to the family of the Maitrakas

¹ D. R. Bhandarkar, 'Guhilots,' *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, 1909. Cf. N. Ray, 'The Maitrakas of Valabhi', *Indian Historical Quarterly*, 1928, p. 457.

² Crooke, *Tod's Rajasthan*, Vol. I, *Annals of Mewar*, Chap. I, note.

³ N. Ray, *Indian Historical Quarterly*, 1928, p. 460. Smith, *Early History of India*, 1924, p. 332. C. M. Duff, *Chronology of India*, pp. 36, 67.

⁴ "It has been suggested that the name is a reminiscence of the connexion of.....Kanishka with Gujrat and Kathiawad." (*Bombay Gazetteer*, Vol. I, Part I, p. 101). This suggestion seems to have no historical evidence in its support.

⁵ N. Ray, Smith and Duff, as cited above.

⁶ *Indian Antiquary*, 1872, Vol. I, p. 130.

⁷ Duff, p. 308. Cf. Crooke, *Tod's Rajasthan*, Vol. I, p. 254, note. N. Ray, *Indian Historical Quarterly*, 1928, pp. 466-467.

of Valabhi is an important and controversial question. Mr. C. V. Vaidya believes that "the Guhila family of Nagada in which Bappa was born was...really connected with the Maitraka family of Valabhi".¹ He gives us no authority for this statement, except the implication that local tradition appears to him to be justified by historical parallels. At the same time, however, he seems to have a lurking suspicion that this connection may 'be looked upon as concocted by bards of the eighth and later centuries'.

"The traditional account given by Tod tracing the descent of the Rana's family from Siladitya, the last prince of Valabhi, does not stand the test of modern epigraphic knowledge."² The earliest available epigraph which refers to this traditional account is the Naralai inscription³ of 1541 A.D. This testimony can hardly be accepted in preference to that of earlier inscriptions describing Bappa as a Brahmana. Again, we have already seen that Siladitya VII, the last prince of Valabhi, was alive in 767 A.D. On the other hand, there is an inscription (found at Samoli on the Sirohi border) showing that Sila, a prince of the Guhilot dynasty, lived in V.S. 703 or 645 A.D. Mr. Vaidya admits this when he refers to Sila's inscription of the seventh century.⁴ The Atapura inscription of Saktikumara, the earliest available epigraphic record regarding the genealogy of the Guhilot dynasty, shows that Sila was the great-great-grandson of Guhadatta or Guhila, the founder of the Guhilot dynasty. Guhadatta, therefore, must be carried to the middle of the sixth century, allowing roughly twenty years for each generation. Thus it is not possible to treat him as a descendant of Siladitya VII.

It may be argued, however, that the Guhilot princes may have been descended from another Valabhi prince of an earlier date. Mr. Vaidya does not expressly say so; but it seems that he is somewhat inclined to favour such a hypothesis when

¹ *History of Medieval Hindu India*, Vol. II, p. 338.

² Bhandarkar, 'Guhilots', J.A.S.B., 1909.

³ *Prakrit and Sanskrit Inscriptions of Kathiawar*, p. 141.

⁴ *History of Medieval Hindu India*, Vol. II, p. 78.

he speaks of the 'connection of Bappa's family with the royal family of Valabhi which was *then* ruling'.¹ But there is no evidence to substantiate such an assumption, and we are not justified in pushing a legend so far.

Dr. D. R. Bhandarkar expresses the view that "the Mewar and Valabhi dynasties were somehow connected". He holds that the Guhilots were Nagar Brahmanas, and the Nagar Brahmanas were Maitrakas; and, therefore, the Mewar and Valabhi dynasties belonged to the same foreign tribe.² This theory will be noticed in detail later on. But it is clear that there is no evidence to prove that the Guhilot princes were actually descended from the Valabhi princes.

III

The next controversial question which demands our consideration is—Was Bappa a prince of foreign origin? The orthodox view of the Aryan origin of the Rajputs was revived by Pandit G. H. Ojha and Mr. Vaidya. As they employed several historical arguments in support of their contention, it is necessary to examine them carefully.

Dr. D. R. Bhandarkar holds³ that the Guhilots were originally Nagar Brahmanas, who were of foreign origin. This theory was accepted generally by a majority of scholars.⁴

In the first place, certain verses in the Chitor and Achalesvara inscriptions (1274 and 1285 A.D. respectively)⁵ and the Mamadeva *prasasti* distinctly show that Bappa was a Brahmana.

Secondly, the Chitor inscription calls Bappa a Brahmana

¹ *History of Medieval Hindu India*, Vol. III, p. 338. As we shall notice later on, Mr. Vaidya identifies Bappa with Guhadatta and thinks that Sila, whose date is referred to above, must be an ancestor of Bappa (pp. 342, 78).

² 'Guhilots', J.A.S.B., 1909.

³ 'Guhilots', J.A.S.B., 1909.

⁴ Crooke, *Tod's Rajasthan*, Vol. I, Introduction.

⁵ *Prakrit and Sanskrit Inscriptions of Kathiawar*, pp. 75, 78, 85, 89. The Ekalingaji Inscription of 1489 A.D. describes Bappa as a *dvija*. (*Ibid.*, p. 118)

who had come from Anandapura. The identification of Anandapura with Vadnagar is supported by the Vadnagar *prasasti* of the reign of Kumarapala, the tradition current among Nagar Brahmanas, the Alina charters of 649 and 656 A.D., and many popular stories.¹

Thirdly, the *Ekalinga-mahatmya* composed during the reign of Rana Kumbha says that Guhadatta, the founder of the Guhila race, was a Brahmana belonging to a Brahmana family emigrated from Anandapura.² The same work again tells us that Vijayaditya, the ancestor of Guhadatta, was the ornament of the Nagara race. These facts lend further support to the above argument, and prove that the Guhilots were known as Nagar Brahmanas in Rana Kumbha's reign.

Fourthly, we gather from the *Ekalinga-mahatmya*, the *Rasikapriya* (a commentary by Rana Kumbha on Jayadeva's *Gita-Govindam*) and also from a well known stanza often recited by the Brahmanas of Mewar that the *gotra* of the Guhilots was *Vaijavapa*. Now, 'that *Vaijavapa* was one of the *gotras* amongst the Nagaras as early as the thirteenth century can be proved by epigraphic evidence' including the *prasastis* of Nanaka found at Kodinara in the Amreli division of the former Baroda State. "There can be no reasonable doubt that *Vaijavapas* are meant to be Nagar Brahmanas".

Fifthly, the tradition of the Brahmana origin of the Ranas' family is found in the Atapura inscription of 977 A.D. and the Chatsu inscription of nearly the same period. It is clearly referred to in the Chitor inscription of 1274 A.D. and the Achalesvara inscription of 1285 A.D. The *Ekalinga-mahatmya* says that this tradition comes from 'the ancient poets' and thereby implies that it must have been current long before Rana Kumbha. Again, "this origin was not forgotten by the people even to a late period". Abul Fazi's *Ain-i-Akbari*³ and the *Khyat* of Nainsi

¹ 'Guhilots', J.A.S.B., 1909.

² The verse is quoted in *Prakrit and Sanskrit Inscriptions of Kathiawar*, p. 89.

³ English translation, Jarrett, Vol. II, p. 269. This point has not been noticed by Dr. D. R. Bhandarkar.

(written in the 17th century) refer to this tradition and show that as late as the middle of the 17th century it was alive in the memory of the people. A Persian work called *Tawarikh Malwa*, composed by Munsī Karīm-ud-dīn in the middle of the 19th century, refers to this tradition.

It might seem that these arguments would solve the problem once for all. But there is a very wide difference of opinion on this issue. The theory of the Aryan descent of the Guhilots yet finds favour with some competent historians.

Pandit G. H. Ojha is of opinion that Bappa was a Kshatriya and not a Brahmana and that he was a Solar race Kshatriya.¹ He relies, in the first place, on the disc of sun found on the obverse of a golden coin which he ascribes to Bappa. Secondly, the expression '*Raghuvamsa-kirtipisunah*' in Naravahana's inscription of 971 A.D. is, according to him, a decisive proof that the Guhilots belonged to the Solar race.

These arguments, however, are not conclusive. With regard to the first point, Mr. S. C. Dutt has shown that it is very difficult to accept that particular coin as a genuine one issued by Bappa.² Even if we agree with Pandit Ojha in ascribing the coin to Bappa, it is clear that a mere disc of the sun found in only one coin cannot be accepted as a decisive proof of the Solar descent of the Guhilots.

The second point, however, is more important. We must agree with Mr. Vaidya³ that "Dr. D. R. Bhandarkar⁴ has...omitted to take into consideration the word *Raghuvamsa*". We may even accept his interpretation of Naravahana's inscription and hold with him that "as early as the Naravahana inscription...the (Guhila) *vamsa* was...known as *Raghuvamsa*". But this only shows that in the later part of the tenth century A.D. the Guhilots had begun to advance the claim that they were Kshatriyas of the Solar race.

¹ Cf. Vaidya, *History of Medieval Hindu India*, Vol. II, pp. 332-333.

² *Indian Historical Quarterly*, 1928, p. 797.

³ *History of Medieval Hindu India*, Vol. II, p. 333.

⁴ *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. XXII, p. 167.

Against this we know the fact that the tradition of their Brahmana origin was current during the whole period from 977 A.D. to the middle of the 19th century. Pandit Ojha was not able to disprove the authenticity of the verses relating to this tradition in the Chitor and Achalesvara inscriptions and in the *Ekalinga-mahatmya*. Are we entitled to prefer Naravahana's inscription to all other epigraphic, literary and traditional accounts?

Like Pandit Ojha, Mr. Vaidya tried to assail Dr. D. R. Bhandarkar's arguments, for he was a keen supporter of the theory of the Solar Kshatriya origin of the Guhilots. It is necessary to examine his points in detail.

First, he held that the Chitor and Achalesvara inscriptions must be rejected on the strength of the earlier inscription of Naravahana and the gold coin attributed to Bappa.

Secondly, he did not accept Dr. D. R. Bhandarkar's interpretation of the Chatsu inscription. There he found no implication to the effect that Bhatripatta (a Guhilot prince) was a Brahmana.

Thirdly, he argued that during that period the Brahmanas could marry Kshatriya wives and their children were in that case treated as Kshatriyas. So even if Bappa himself was a Brahmana, that could not make the whole Guhilot family a Brahmana family.

Fourthly, he thought that Anandapura mentioned in the Atapura inscription should be identified with the town of Nagahrida (and not with Vadnagar). So a Brahmana coming from Anandapura need not have been a Nagar Brahmana. The word '*Mahideva*' in the same inscription means (he said) a king and not, as Dr. D. R. Bhandarkar said, a Brahmana.¹

Fifthly, "there is no contemporary evidence to show that Bappa Rawal was a Nagar Brahmin".²

It is not very difficult to meet these arguments. With regard

¹ All these points are elaborated in *History of Medieval Hindu India*, Vol. II, pp. 332-337.

² *History of Medieval Hindu India*, Vol. II, p. 84.

to the first point, we have already seen that Naravahana's inscription does not deserve so much importance as Pandit Ojha and Mr. Vaidya attached to it. The value of the gold coin has also been examined. Secondly, it is true that if we take the Chatsu inscription as an isolated record, we do not find in it any distinct statement regarding the Brahmana origin of the Guhilots. But we have seen that there are other inscriptions which explicitly mention them as Brahmanas, and it is clear that indirect references in the Chatsu inscription should be interpreted in conformity with those statements. Mr. Vaidya's third argument is a novel and interesting one. He did not, however, give us any conclusive evidence to show that the issue of a Brahmana father and a Kshatriya mother was regarded as a Kshatriya. But, even if we concede this point, we must point out that he did not explain how this principle worked with regard to the Guhilot dynasty. Mr. Vaidya's contention harmonizes the two traditions which existed side by side—one about the Brahmana origin and another about the Kshatriya origin; but it is entirely based on supposition. Moreover, if Mr. Vaidya admitted that Bappa was a Brahmana he had also to admit the foreign origin of the Guhilots, because, as we shall see below, his arguments that Bappa was not a *Nagar* Brahmana, and that *Nagar* Brahmanas were not foreigners, do not stand scrutiny. Fourthly, the cumulative effect of the evidence which Dr. D. R. Bhandarkar adduced to justify the identification of Anandapura with Vadnagar is decisive. Even Pandit Ojha agreed with him and held that "Anandapura Brahmana" means *Nagar* Brahmana. The real meaning of the word '*Mahideva*' (that is, Brahmana) is clear from this. Lastly, it is true that "there is no contemporary evidence to show that Bappa Rawal was a Nagar Brahmin". But it is also true that there is no contemporary evidence to show that he was *not* a *Nagar* Brahmana. When we have only later evidence at our disposal, it is better to accept the more persistent tradition. It will be seen that Mr. Vaidya had nothing to say about Dr. Bhandarkar's remark on the *gotra* of the Guhilots.

From all these considerations we are led to the conclusion

that the Guhilots were originally *Nagar* Brahmanas. It is necessary now to see whether they were really foreigners, that is, whether Dr. D. R. Bhandarkar's opinion that "the *Nagar* Brahmanas were Maitrakas who were a foreign race"¹ is correct. Mr. Vaidya said that "nobody will agree with Dr. D. R. Bhandarkar in holding that Mitra is another name of Mihara and therefore, of Mer, the well-known outcast people of Kathiawar."² He considered it unnecessary 'to write a note on this subject refuting the flimsy arguments of Dr. Bhandarkar and show that Nagars are not Mers.' It is true that Dr. Bhandarkar's arguments on this point are not very strong. But his suggestions are plausible, and considering the circumstantial facts and the cumulative effect of the available evidence, we may tentatively adhere to his conclusion.

We may refer in passing to Tod's view on the 'alleged Persian extraction of the Ranas of Mewar'.³ Abul Fazl, the only authority who mentions this point, says that the Rana 'pretends a descent from Noshirwan the Just'.⁴ Tod deems it 'morally impossible that the Ranas should have their lineage from any male branch of the Persian house,' but he 'would not equally assert' that the Ranas may not have been descended from a female branch of the Sassanians. Crooke rightly says, "There is no real evidence of the Persian descent of the Ranas."⁵

IV

We are now concerned with the problem of chronology. The dates of Bappa's birth, accession and abdication must now be considered.

According to Tod, Bappa was born in V.S. 769 (713 A.D.), he occupied Chitor in V.S. 784 (728 A.D.) and abdicated in V.S. 820 (764 A.D.). The domestic annals give the year 191 as

¹ 'Guhilots', J.A.S.B., 1909.

² *History of Medieval Hindu India*, Vol II, p. 84.

³ Tod, Vol. I, *Annals of Mewar*, Chap. III.

⁴ *Ain-i-Akbari*, English translation, Jarrett, Vol. II, p. 268.

⁵ Tod's *Rajasthan*, Vol. I, p. 278, note.

the date of Bappa's birth; and relying on certain Jain annals Tod concluded that this date was counted from the year of the sack of Valabhi. Bappa is said to have been 15 years of age when he ascended the throne of Chitor; so his accession is to be placed in 728 A.D. We have epigraphic evidence to show that the Mori dynasty was reigning in Chitor in V.S. 770 (713 A.D.). Tradition gives V.S. 820 (764 A.D.) as the date of Bappa's abdication.

It is superfluous to add that we must be very cautious about this account. The unreliability of the sources of Tod's information raises a strong suspicion about the historical value of the dates accepted by him. It is absurd to say that Bappa ascended the throne of Chitor at the tender age of 15, for we know that his accession was an usurpation and most probably a violent usurpation. We must, therefore, turn to other traditions, for no epigraphic evidence is available.

Pandit G. H. Ojha was of opinion that Bappa abdicated in 753 A.D. According to him, Bappa could not have ascended the throne of Chitor earlier than 713 A.D., the date of the inscription of Raja Man, the Mori prince of Chitor. So Bappa's life may be held to have extended roughly over the first half of the eighth century. Pandit Ojha placed his birth about 712 A.D. and his accession about 734 A.D.

This view was criticized by Mr. Vaidya.¹ He tried to refute Pandit Ojha's arguments by various details, and finally put forward his own argument—not very convincing—that the dates given by him did not fit in with the tradition that Bappa ruled long and abdicated at old age.

We may now refer to Mr. Vaidya's own views. He held that the traditional date of Bappa's abdication (V.S. 820=763 A.D.) was compatible with Raja Man Mori's inscription dated V.S. 770 (713 A.D.). Bappa's accession is, therefore, to be placed between 713 A.D. and 763 A.D. He thought that the Arab incursion on the Mori kingdom must have taken place sometime before the date of the Navasari grant (739-40

¹ *History of Medieval Hindu India*, Vol. II, pp. 338-342, 75.

A.D.). As Bappa fought on the side of the Mori prince in this engagement, his own accession to the throne of Chitor may be placed about 740 A.D., or even earlier, about 730 A. D. If Bappa was comparatively young at his accession, his birth may be placed about 700 A. D.

According to Dr. Bhandarkar,¹ two *Ekalinga-mahatmyas* composed during the reigns of Rana Kumbha and his son Rana Rayamalla give V. S. 810 as Bappa's date and indicate that "this was the year of his bestowing the royalty on his son and becoming an ascetic." This date (V.S. 810=753 A.D.) for Bappa, he says, 'deserves credence'.

It will be seen, therefore, that there is no substantial difference of opinion among these scholars about Bappa's dates. There is disagreement with regard to the dates of particular events; but it is agreed that Bappa's life may be taken to have roughly covered the first half of the eighth century A. D. This proposition may be taken as a working hypothesis for the reconstruction of the early history of the Guhilots.

V

We now come to discuss the question of Bappa's place in the genealogy of the Guhilots.

The word 'Bappa' requires an explanation. It is clear that it is not a proper name, though Mr. Vaidya takes it to be so.² Tod remarks, "Bappa is not a proper name, it signifies merely a 'child'." Crooke suggests that the word is the old Prakrit form of 'bap' and means 'father'.³ Mr. Vaidya admitted that the word 'originally meant father'. Pandit G. H. Ojha also thought that the term and its variation originally signified 'father' and were later on used in a sense of reverence.⁴

The title 'Rawal' is generally associated with Bappa. There

¹ 'Atpur Inscription of Saktikumara,' *Indian Antiquary*, 1910.
² *History of Medieval Hindu India*, Vol. II, p. 76.

³ Tod's *Rajasthan*, Vol. I, p. 261, note.

⁴ Cf. *Indian Historical Quarterly*, 1928, p. 797.

is a considerable element of difficulty and uncertainty with regard to the true meaning of this term. The Rayasagar inscription of 1676 A. D. gives us the fantastic explanation that it was "formed of the first letters of the words *rajyati-purnatva* (fullness of kingdom), *varatva* (supremacy) and *lakshmimayatva* (opulence)".¹ Dr. Bhandarkar suggests that 'Rawal' means an ascetic of a particular sect and Bappa was called 'Rawal' because he belonged to that sect.² Mr. Vaidya accepted the proposition that 'Bappa sometimes means a Bava or recluse', but held that 'Rawal' means 'a small Rao' or prince.³ Crooke suggests that 'Rawal' comes from the Sanskrit word '*rajakula*' which means royal family—a rather ingenious explanation.⁴ It is a fact that the earlier rulers of Chitor were known as Rawals and the later rulers from Hamir were called Ranas. Abul Fazl remarks, "The chief of the State was formerly called Rawal, but for a long time past has been known as Rana."⁵ The Rayasagar inscription of 1676 A.D. says that Rahapa, son of Karna, "went, by the order of king Karna...to Mandora, conquered Mokulasi and brought him (prisoner)..... to his father. Karna, depriving him of his title of Rana..... transferred it to (his) dear Rahapa"⁶. This inscription is so inaccurate about Samarasimha, who is described as Rahapa's grandfather, that the details it contains can hardly be accepted as authentic. Tod says that Rahup, a Guhilot prince of the early 13th century, defeated the 'Purihar prince of Mundore' who was called 'Rana' and himself assumed that title. But it is well-known that the Mewar family was divided into two branches towards the end of the twelfth century; the one with the title of 'Rawal' ruled at Chitor and the other with the title of 'Rana' ruled at Sesoda.⁷ After Ala-ud-din's capture of

¹ *Prakrit and Sanskrit Inscriptions of Kathiawar*, p. 151.

² *Indian Antiquary*, 1910.

³ *History of Medieval Hindu India*, Vol. II, pp. 72, 76.

⁴ Tod's *Rajasthan*, Vol. I, p. 249, note.

⁵ *Ain-i-Akbari*, English translation, Jarrett, Vol. II, p. 268.

⁶ *Prakrit and Sanskrit Inscriptions of Kathiawar*, p. 154.

⁷ The Rayasagar inscription of 1676 A.D. says that Rahapa was

Chitor the younger branch, the Ranas, became the head of the Guhilot clan. Mr. Vaidya remarks, "The later kings were called Ranas as they came from a minor branch, Rana meaning a subordinate king as in Himalayan states. But the name Rana, being taken by the illustrious kings of Udepur, now bears a higher meaning in Rajputana."¹

Let us now turn to the question of Bappa's place in the genealogy of the Guhilots. We have seen that Bappa is not a proper name; it is only a title of honour. As Dr. Bhandarkar points out, "Bappa does not appear to be the name of a merely legendary or a later Prince".² He is, therefore, to be identified with one of the early Guhilot princes. Who is that prince?

We have four very important inscriptions giving the early genealogy of the Guhilot princes. These are the Atapura inscription (V.S. 1034=977 A.D.), the Chitor inscription (V.S. 1313=1274 A.D.), the Achalesvara inscription (V.S. 1342=1285 A.D.), and the Ranpur inscription (V.S. 1496=1439 A.D.). Of these, the Atapura inscription of 977 A.D. (of a Guhilot prince named Saktikumara) is the earliest and the completest record. It is, therefore, the most authoritative and useful for our purpose. The genealogy of the Guhilots as given in these inscriptions is reproduced below.

Atapura list	Chitor list	Achalesvara list	Ranpur list
1 Guhadatta	Bappa	Bappa	Bappa
2 Bhoja	Guhila	Guhila	Guhila
3 Mahendra (1)	Bhoja	Bhoja	Bhoja
4 Naga	...	...	...
5 Sila	...	...	...
6 Aparajita	Sila	Sila	Sila
7 Mahendra (2)	...	...	...
8 Kalabhoja	...	...	...
9 Khommana (1)	Kalabhoja	Kalabhoja	Kalabhoja
10 Mattata	...	...	...
	Manttata	...	...

called Sisodiya from his former residence at Sisoda. (*Prakrit and Sanskrit inscriptions of Kathiawar*, p. 154)

¹ *History of Medieval Hindu India*, Vol. III, p. 155, note.

² 'Atpur Inscription of Saktikumara', *Indian Antiquary*, 1910.

Atapura list	Chitor list	Achalesvara list	Ranpur list
11 Bhartripatta (1)	Bhartribhata	Bhartribhata	Bhartribhata
12 Simha	Athasimha	Simha	Simha
13 Khommana (2)	...	...	...
14 Mahayaka	Mahayaka	Mahayika	Mahayaka
15 Khommana (3)	Khumana	Khummana	Khummana
16 Bhartripatta (2)	...	...	...
17 Allata	Allata	Allata	Allata
18 Naravahana	Naravahana	Naravahana	Naravahana
19 Salivahana	...	...	...
20 Saktikumara	Saktikumara	Saktikumara	Saktikumara

Naravahana's inscription¹ of 971 A.D. seems to have contained a list of Guhilot princes, but it is so defaced that only the names of Guhila, Bappa and Naravahana can be read. Here Bappa is described as 'the moon among the kings of the Guhila dynasty'. Hence he should be identified with some one among the successors of Guhadatta.

We have already seen that Bappa's life covered the first half of the eighth century A.D. Now, we have a few dates from epigraphic evidence: Sila, V.S. 703 (646 A.D.); Aparajita, V.S. 718 (661 A.D.); Allata, V.S. 1008 and 1010 (951, 953 A. D.); Naravahana, V.S. 1028 (971 A.D.); and Saktikumara, V. S. 1034 (977 A. D.). These are the data on which our attempt at identifying Bappa with any of the princes named in the above lists must be based.

Dr. Bhandarkar identifies Bappa with Khommana I and his arguments² may be thus summed up: The date for Aparajita being 661 A.D. and for Allata 953 A.D.³, we have 292 years for 12 generations. Thus we get an average of $24\frac{1}{3}$ years to each generation. The difference between 753 A.D., the date of Bappa, and 661 A.D., the date of Aparajita, is 92 years. Bappa may, therefore, be placed in the fourth generation from Aparajita. So he should be identified with Khommana I.

Pandit G. H. Ojha identified Bappa with Kalabhoja. He

¹ *Prakrit and Sanskrit Inscriptions of Kathiawar*, pp. 70-72.

² *Indian Antiquary*, 1910.

³ Sarnesvar Inscription of Allata, 953 A.D. (*Prakrit and Sanskrit Inscriptions of Kathiawar*, pp. 67-69)

objected to Dr. Bhandarkar's view principally on two grounds : first, traditions in Mewar describe Khommana as Bappa's son ; secondly, Dr. Bhandarkar's average of 25 years for each generation is too high. But Mr. S. Dutt¹ shows that there are conflicting traditions, some even identifying Bappa with Sila. He also says that Dr. Bhandarkar's calculation of 24 years as an average is based upon an accurate examination of the chronology of this period.

Mr. Dutt further gives three good reasons in support of Dr. Bhandarkar's view. In the first place, Bappa having acquired celebrity by his conquest of Chitor, it was natural that later rulers should feel pride in describing themselves as his descendants.² In the Ekalinga inscription of 1489 A.D. the writer describes his theme as 'the greatness of the Khumana Kings'.³ The last king bearing the name Khommana flourished about 600 years before the composition of this epigraph. It is clear, therefore, that if the greatness of Mewar had not been associated with a ruler of that name, our poet would not have utilised the name in designating the dynasty. Again, Tod observes, "At Oodipur, if you make a false step, or even sneeze, you hear the ejaculation of 'Khoman aid you'."⁴ This continuous tradition undoubtedly proves Khommana's importance in the history of the family. Secondly, inscriptions of the 15th century (like the Ranpur inscription of 1439 A. D.) describe the Ranas as the descendants of Bappa, but in earlier inscriptions (like the Hastikundi inscription of 996 A. D. and the Abu inscription of 1285 A. D.) the rulers of Mewar often describe themselves as descendants of Khommana. Thirdly, of the first twenty princes of the dynasty as many as three bore the name of

¹ *Indian Historical Quarterly*, 1928, p. 797.

² This may account for the fact that, while Naravahana's inscription describes Bappa as a member of the Guhila family (and, therefore, as one of Guhila's successors), the Chitor, Achalesvara and Ranpur inscriptions describe Guhila as Bappa's son.

³ *Prakrit and Sanskrit Inscriptions of Kathiawar*, p. 123. Mr. Dutt has not noted this point.

⁴ *Rajasthan, Annals of Mewar*, Chap. IV.

Khommana, and a big historical poem dealing with the exploits of the Guhilots is known as *Khommana Rasa*. We are, therefore, entitled to draw the conclusion that Bappa is really to be identified with Khommana I.

It remains to dispose of the contention of Mr. Vaidya that Bappa is to be identified with Guhadatta, the first name mentioned in the Atapura inscription.¹ His zeal for supporting orthodox bardic traditions appears to have led him to ignore all available epigraphic evidence. We know that Sila and Aparajita, the fifth and sixth descendants of Guhadatta, lived in 646 A. D. and 661 A. D. respectively. So the date of Guhadatta should be placed in the earlier part of the sixth century. How, then, can he be identified with Bappa who, according to Mr. Vaidya himself, was born about 700 A. D. ? He tried to explain this difficulty by saying that "the two kings Sila and Aparajita whose inscriptions of the seventh century have been found must be considered to be Bappa's ancestors", and that these names in the Atapura record refer to 'descendants having the same names'. This assumption has no evidence to support it. Again, if Bappa is identified with Guhadatta, we have twenty generations from him to Saktikumara. Then we get 277 years for 20 generations because Bappa, according to Mr. Vaidya, was born about 700 A. D. and the date of the Atapura inscription of Saktikumara is 977 A. D. This gives us an average of about 14 years for each generation—an absurd estimate. Mr. Vaidya tried to solve this difficulty by saying that "it may be that this line of kings had a specially short average or it may be that the Atapura inscription repeats some kings wrongly or brings together kings of different branches who were contemporaries". Without adducing any concrete example of confusion he questioned the authenticity of the Atapura inscription, which has been confirmed by all inscriptions hitherto discovered. Mr. Vaidya made much of 'tradition'; but what does 'tradition' really mean ? Pandit Ojha admitted that there were several conflicting traditions, some identifying Bappa with Sila and some

¹ *History of Medieval Hindu India*, Vol. II, pp. 78, 86, 342-348.

with Kalabhoja, for example. This clearly shows that no tradition can be treated as decisive historical evidence unless it is corroborated by reliable epigraphic or literary data.

Mr. Vaidya remarked that if Bappa was not identified with Guhadatta, "the memorable exploit of Bappa in founding an independent kingdom of Chitod goes, not to the founder of the family, but to a descendant many degrees below!" His meaning is not quite clear. The supporters of the identification of Bappa with Khommana I believe that 'the memorable exploit of Bappa in founding an independent kingdom of Chitod' does go to Bappa and not to 'a descendant many degrees below'. According to them, the ancestors of Bappa, that is, Khommana I, from Guhadatta down to Kalabhoja, were not rulers of Chitor. The tradition that Bappa was the founder of the family really means that he established the family at Chitor, not that he was the first ruling prince in the family. He is the founder of the family in the sense that he was the founder of the greatness of the family. This is the most natural interpretation of the epithet '*Guhilgotranarendrachandra*' in Naravahana's inscription of 971 A. D. This explanation is supported by the fact that in earlier inscriptions the princes of Mewar describe themselves as descendants of Khommana.

VI

We have already given the genealogy of the Guhilot princes from the earliest times to almost the close of the tenth century A. D. We now proceed to discuss the available data for the reconstruction of an outline of their history during this period.

According to Tod, there is only one central event of importance—the contest with the Muslims; and he gives us an account of this long-continued and fierce struggle.¹ Mr. Vaidya accepted Tod's story and observed, ".....the kings of this line, however diverse their fortune, were, each and all, chivalrous and virtuous, lovers of independence and supporters

¹ *Rajasthan, Annals of Mewar*, Chap. IV.

of their.....faith. Indeed we may say that the sublime character of the hero-god Rama, as a man and a king whom they look upon as their progenitor, still exercises its influence over the princes of this line...In fact...the Guhilot kings of Chitore fought hard-fought battles with foreigners, so much so that the whole country was strewn with flesh and the *meda* (fat) of the evil warriors slain and thus acquired the name Medapata¹ (undoubtedly a poetic fancy suggested by the name Medapata, Prakrita Mewad, but yet proving the terrible battles which the heroic Rajputs and the equally heroic Arabs fought on this soil)".² The paucity of materials prevents us from examining the historical value of these statements. It may be significant that, although the Chitor, Achalesvara and Ranpur inscriptions attribute many victories to Bappa and his successors, there is not a single reference to the Turushkas,³ who are specifically mentioned in some later inscriptions in connection with later rulers of the dynasty.⁴ In any case, it is difficult to agree with Mr. Vaidya in describing Bappa, a petty local ruler, as 'the Charles Martel of India against the rock of whose valour the eastern tide of Arab conquest was dashed to pieces in India'.⁵

Tod recounted some of the strange legends which have gathered round the life and history of Bappa Rawal.⁶ It is natural that local literature and tradition should give us wonderful anecdotes about the achievements of this hero who was, according to all available versions, the founder of the 'regal splendour' and greatness of the Guhilot dynasty. All

¹ "This country which was, in battle, totally submerged in the dripping fat (*medas*) of wicked people by Bappaka.....bears the name of Sri Medapata."—Achalesvara inscription of 1285 A.D. (*Prakrit and Sanskrit Inscriptions of Kathiawar*, pp. 88-89).

² *History of Medieval Hindu India*, Vol. II, pp. 77, 79.

³ The Chitor inscription says that Mattata was victorious over Malwa. The Achalesvara inscription attributes to Kalabhoja victories over Choda and Karnata.

⁴ See, for instance, the Ranpur inscription and the Ekalinga inscription of 1489 A.D. (*Prakrit and Sanskrit Inscriptions of Kathiawar*, pp. 102, 108, 115).

⁵ *History of Medieval Hindu India*, Vol. II, p. 72.

⁶ *Rajasthan*, Vol. I, *Annals of Mewar*, Chap. II, IV.

of them may not deserve to be treated as sober history ; but, as Hume remarks, "poets, though they disfigure the most certain history by their fictions and use strange liberties with truth when they are the sole historians, have commonly some foundation for their wildest exaggeration".

Bappa, we are told, "had his capital at Nagada, about twelve miles to the north of the present city of Udaipur...he ousted Man Singh (of Mori or Maurya clan of Rajputs ruling at Chitor) in 734 and ruled in his stead taking the title of Rawal. Bappa was the real founder of the State, for while his predecessors enjoyed limited possession in the wild region bordering on the Aravallis in the west and south-west, he extended his possessions to the east by seizing Chitor and the neighbouring territory".¹ This appears to be a modest and rational estimate of Bappa Rawal's achievements.

In all probability Bappa's predecessors were petty local princes. In his youth he was a 'prince among Bhils with whom he freely associated and whom he disciplined and engaged in service for his own preferment'. The Navasari (Chaulukya) grant² (739-40 A. D.) tells us that the Arabs had attacked the Maurya, who may be identified with the Mori ruler of Chitor. An inscription of Man, a Mori prince of Chitor, is dated in 713 A. D. The Arab invasion referred to in the above grant probably took place in his reign. We may accept Mr. Vaidya's suggestion that Bappa was a *samanta* (vassal) of that King.³ It is not unlikely that Bappa was the leader of the Mori forces opposed to the Arabs, and he distinguished himself by a victory. This exploit may have given him an important position in the court of the Mori prince. Abul Fazl remarks that "his daring was so conspicuous that he became in favour with the Raja and a trusted minister of State".⁴

The next step was Bappa's accession to the throne of

1 Erskine, *Rajputana Gazetteer*, Vol. IIA, p. 14.

2 *Bombay Gazetteer*, Vol. I, Part I, p. 465.

3 *History of Medieval Hindu India*, Vol. II, p. 73.

4 *Ain-i-Akbari*, English translation, Jarrett, Vol. II. p. 286,

Chitor. How he occupied Chitor we do not know. According to Tod, the *sardars* of Chitor revolted against, and deposed, the Mori prince and placed the crown on Bappa's head. Mr. Vaidya does not believe in this tradition. He thinks that the then Mori prince died childless and Bappa succeeded him at Chitor.¹ Abul Fazl's version is this : "On the death of the Raja, his four nephews disputed the succession, but they eventually decided to resign their pretensions in favour of Bappa and to acknowledge his authority. Bappa, however, declined their offer. It happened one day that the finger of one of these four brothers began to bleed, and he drew with the blood the ceremonial mark of installation on the forehead of Bappa and the others also concurred in accepting his elevation. He then assumed the sovereignty...The ungrateful monarch put the four brothers to death".²

These legends differ materially from epigraphic evidence in one important respect. According to the Achalesvara inscription of 1285 A.D., Bappa satisfied a sage named Harita-rasi by constant attendance and service, and received from him 'the lustre of a Kshatriya' as well as 'regal fortunes'. This story is corroborated by the Ekalinga inscription of 1489 A.D. and the Rayasagar inscription³ of 1676 A.D. It is significant to note in this connection that in early inscriptions Bappa is always associated with Nagahrida ; the earliest available epigraphic evidence of his connection with Chitor is found in the Rayasagar inscription. Nainsi's *Khyat*, composed in the 17th century, seems to imply that the city of Atapur, founded by Allata, became the Guhilot capital from his reign. If Bappa really occupied Chitor, why should his successors leave it and select a new capital with an inferior strategic position ? In the present state of our knowledge it is not possible to arrive at any definite conclusion regarding the establishment of Bappa's rule at Chitor.

1 *History of Medieval Hindu India*, Vol. II, pp. 73-74.

2 *Ain-i-Akbari*, English translation, Jarrett, Vol. II, pp. 268-269.

3 *Prakrit and Sanskrit Inscriptions of Kathiawar*, pp. 89, 124, 152.

Bappa 'had a numerous progeny'¹ and died at a ripe old age, probably after abdicating his throne. Nothing else is definitely known about his political life.

"The close of Bappa's career", says Tod, "is the strangest part of the legend...Advanced in years, he abandoned his children and his country, carried his arms west to Khorasan, and there established himself, and married new wives from among the 'barbarians', by whom he had a numerous offspring". It is impossible to accept this story. Crooke says, "...the whole story is a mere legend, a tale like that of the mysterious disappearance of Romulus and other kings".² It has been suggested that this legend is mixed up with that of Sila of Valabhi, the story of his retreat to Iran representing the latter being carried as a captive to Mansura on the fall of Valabhi.³ Tradition records that in his old age Bappa abdicated in favour of his son and became a Saivite recluse. The Ekalinga inscription of 971 A.D. supports the latter statement.⁴

VII

Whether Bappa and his immediate successors ruled at Chitor we do not really know; but in all probability the early Guhilots were vassals of the Gurjara-Pratiharas during the eighth and ninth centuries A.D.⁵ Dr. R. C. Majumdar says that a Guhilot prince named Harsharaja was a vassal of Bhoja, the great Gurjara-Pratihara Emperor, and fought on several occasions on his behalf.⁶ We do not, however, find

1 The Ekalinga inscription of 1489 A.D. says that he 'married by force of his own power, daughters of many kings.' (*Prakrit and Sanskrit Inscriptions of Kathiawar*, p. 124).

2 Tod's *Rajasthan*, Vol. I, p. 268, note.

3 *Bombay Gazetteer*, Vol. I, Part I, p. 94, note 2.

4 D. R. Bhandarkar, *Journal of the Bombay Branch of Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. XXII.

5 S. Dutt, *Indian Historical Quarterly*, 1928, p. 798.

6 *Gurjara-Pratiharas*.

this name in any of the inscriptions of Mewar which give genealogical information. As Bhoja's reign extended from about 840 to 890 A.D., we may suppose that either Mahayaka or Khommana III was the Guhilot prince here referred to, unless this Harsharaja belonged to a different Guhilot dynasty, of which we have at present no record. The Nilgunda inscription of Amoghavarsha I (866 A.D.)¹ states that the Rashtrakuta monarch conquered the hill fort of Chitrakuta which has been identified with Chitor by Mr. Vaidya and Dr. H. C. Ray (though Mr. R. D. Banerjee identified it with the ancient Chitrakuta referred to in the Ramayana). If we accept Mr. Vaidya's identification, we may trace in this record an indication of the Guhilots' participation in the Gurjara-Rashtrakuta struggle. It was probably Bhatripatta II who shook off the allegiance to the Gurjara-Pratiharas. The Atapura inscription describes him as 'the ornament of the three worlds' and says that he married a princess named Mahalakshmi of the Rashtrakuta dynasty.² It is possible that this matrimonial alliance indicated the reconciliation of the former vassals of the Gurjara-Pratiharas with their hereditary enemies, the Rashtrakutas.

From the tenth century onward the history of the Guhilots is closely connected with that of other Rajput princes in the neighbouring regions. Munja, the Paramara King of Malwa (973-997 A.D.), is believed to have attacked Mewar and ruled there for a time.³ The Guhilots were assisted by the Chaulukyas of Gujarat, and epigraphic evidence shows that matrimonial alliances were concluded between these two dynasties.⁴ The Atapura inscription says that Allata married Hariyadevi, daughter of a Huna prince. From the same source we learn that Naravahana's queen was of the Chahamana family and a daughter of Jejaya. The Chitorgadh inscription tells us that Saktikumara destroyed the enemies of religion, terrible

1 *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. VI, p. 100.

2 *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. III, pp. 30ff.

3 S. Dutt, *Indian Historical Quarterly*, 1928, p. 798.

4 *Annual Report, Rajputana Museum*, 1914.

like *daityas*. This, as Mr. Vaidya suggests,¹ is a plain reference to the Muslims. Saktikumara's known date is 977 A.D., the date of the Atapura inscription. It is not quite unlikely that he joined Jaipal, the Hindu Shahi ruler of the Punjab, against Sabuktigin.²

These facts clearly indicate that the Guhilots were no longer petty local princes in the hilly regions of Rajputana. They had risen in power and prestige and had begun to play a part in the power politics of that age of decadence.

VIII

The next important stage in the history of Mewar is marked by the long resistance offered by its rulers to the imposition of the hegemony of Delhi over Rajputana.

When, after the defeat and death of Prithviraj, the last Chahamana ruler of Delhi and Ajmer, the Turkish Sultanate of Delhi came to be founded, the Sultans began aggressive campaigns against the Rajputs, and this policy was so vitally important that rulers up to the time of Aurangzeb had to continue it. One of the central movements of medieval Indian history is this long struggle between the Muslim rulers of Delhi and the princes of Rajputana. The continuity of the movement was obviously due to the pressure of certain essential and fundamental conflicts of interest between these two groups of rulers; we cannot explain it only by references to the ambition or caprice of individuals. No doubt the Muslim monarchs aimed at the expansion of their territory, and for this purpose conquests were necessary. But this can hardly be a sufficient explanation of their repeated expeditions against

the Rajputs. Rajputana, covered by hills and desert and blessed with too little of fertility, was not a very alluring object to any conqueror. Then, again, there was the conflict of religion. The religious and social ideals and conventions of the '*mlechchhas*' and the 'infidels' were too divergent to be reconciled at that time; the Hindus, particularly the Rajputs, had to defend their gods and temples. But this also is not, by itself, an adequate explanation. Ala-ud-din¹ and particularly Akbar had, to a large extent, eliminated religious considerations from the sphere of practical politics, and yet they had to direct their special attention to Rajputana. It is clear, therefore, that while territorial ambition and religious considerations must have influenced the policy pursued by the Muslim sovereigns of Delhi towards the Rajput princes, there must have been some other, and perhaps more important, reasons which led them to continue practically interminable hostilities against the desert princes.

The orthodox theory that the physical geography of a country exercises much influence upon its historical development has some truth in it. From the military point of view in particular, geography is almost the very foundation of history, because political history is largely concerned with wars, and wars and geography are very closely connected. The expansion of States very often assumes peculiar character owing to geographical considerations. On close analysis it will be found that the root of the conflicts between the Muslim rulers of Delhi and the Rajput princes lay really in the peculiar geographical position of Rajputana and its importance from the military point of view.

1 Amir Khusrau says that Ala-ud-din's aim in sending Malik Kafur to Dvarasamudra and Ma'bar was 'to spread the light of the Muhammadan religion' in 'that distant country', and the poet's eloquent description of the destruction of idols and temples and the slaughter of idolaters may appear to lend some support to this view. But Barani, who was by no means less orthodox than the celebrated poet, does not say that the Sultan was inspired by crusading zeal. Ala-ud-din's real aim seems to have been secular rather than religious.

1 *History of Medieval Hindu India*, Vol III, p. 154.

2 When Sabuktigin captured many towns in Lamaghan, "Jaipal in retaliation organised a league of Hindu rajas against Sabuktigin and marched on Ghazna at the head of a great host which is said to have been swelled to the enormous number of 100,000 cavalry and infantry by the contingents furnished by the rajas of Northern India."—Nazim, *Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna*, p. 30.

A glance at the map will show that if the rulers of Delhi wanted to proceed to western India and the Deccan, they had to march through Rajputana. As the north-western side of the Aravallis was unfit for the march of armies, they had to proceed through the south-eastern portion of Rajputana, within which was situated the territory of the Guhilots. Naturally, when they wanted to extend their power to fertile Gujarat and to the prosperous Deccan, they had to encounter opposition from the Rajputs, particularly the rulers of Mewar, who, it is easy to see, could not allow them to pass through their State unmolested. For another reason also it was necessary for the rulers of Delhi to subjugate the Rajputs before trying to extend their authority over Gujarat and the Deccan; it would have been extremely unsafe to leave in the rear powerful and potentially hostile princes who might attack them when they were engaged in southern campaigns. That we are not reading subtle modern meaning into crude medieval developments is clear from several significant statements in Muslim historical works. Barani says that as early as 1298 A. D. Ala-ud-din kept before him the idea of conquering 'such places as Rantambhor, Chitor, Chanderi, Malwa, Dhar, and Ujjain'. All these places were strategically important for an intending conqueror of the Deccan. Firishta¹ makes it clear that Ala-ud-din was inspired by strategic motives when he personally proceeded to conquer Chitor in 1303 A.D. for facilitating the progress of his army in the Deccan.

In the second place, we should not overlook the fact that Delhi lay within about 300 miles from Chitor, and as Ajmer was included within the Sultanate, the boundaries of the dominions of Delhi and the territories of the Guhilots practically ran side by side. It was not possible for the Muslim rulers of Delhi to tolerate the existence of powerful States along their own borders. Though Mewar was a small State, yet the strong fort of Chitor and the renowned valour of her sons as well as the tradition of the hostility of the Guhilots to the 'mlechchhas'

¹ Cf. *Journal of Indian History*, December, 1929, pp. 369-372.

could not but create serious apprehension in the minds of the Muslim rulers of Delhi.

IX

Three reigns approximately cover the history of Mewar in the 13th century. Jaitrasimha ruled at least from 1213 A.D. to 1256 A.D.; the former date is given in the earliest inscription of his reign,¹ and the latter is available from a manuscript written in his reign.² Then came Tejasimha, whose known records range from 1260 A.D.³ to 1267 A.D.⁴ The reign of his son and successor, Samarasimha, approximately covers the period from 1273 A.D.⁵ to 1301 A.D.⁶

During these three reigns there were several conflicts between the Guhilot princes and the Sultans of Delhi.

We have clear records of two direct struggles during the reign of Jaitrasimha. Our authorities for the history of these struggles are, firstly, the Chirwa inscription of Samarasimha dated 1273 A.D.; secondly, the Abu stone inscription of Samarasimha dated 1285 A.D.⁷; thirdly, a drama entitled *Hammira-mada-mardanam*⁸ composed by Jayasimha Suri which was probably written between 1219 A.D. and 1229 A.D.; and,

¹ Ekalinga stone inscription, dated V.S. 1270. (*Prakrit and Sanskrit Inscriptions of Kathiawar*, p. 96)

² *Paksika-Vritti*. G. H. Ojha, *History of Rajputana* (in Hindi), Vol. II, p. 471.

³ MS. of *Sravaka-pratikramana-sutra-churni*, Peterson, *Report on the Search for Sanskrit Manuscripts*, p. 23.

⁴ Chitor stone inscription, dated V.S. 1324. *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Vol. LV, Part I, pp. 46-47.

⁵ Chirwa stone inscription, dated V.S. 1330. *Vienna Oriental Journal*, 1907, pp. 142-162.

⁶ Chitor stone inscription, dated V.S. 1358. *Rajputana Museum Report*, 1921, p. 1. An inscription of Samarasimha's son and successor, Ratnasimha, is dated V.S. 1359 (c. 1302 A.D.). *Rajputana Museum Report*, 1927, p. 3.

⁷ *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XVI, pp. 345-358.

⁸ Edited by C. D. Dalal in *Gaekwad Oriental Series*.

fourthly, Firishta's history.¹ It will be seen, therefore, that all the sources of our information with the exception of Firishta are contemporary.

The first conflict must have taken place before 1229 A.D., as the drama *Hammira-mada-mardanam* refers to it and 1229 A.D. is the last date that can be assigned to its composition. The third Act of the drama gives the following story : King Viradhavala of Gujarat is anxious to get the news about Hammira² (that is, Amir or Sultan of Delhi) who was to begin hostilities against the Mewar ruler Jayatala (that is, Jaitrasimha) who, priding himself on the strength of his own sword, had not joined him (that is, Viradhavala). Then enters the spy Kamalaka, who relates how the whole of Mewar was burnt by the soldiers of the enemy and how the people were filled with dismay by the entrance of ruthless 'mlechchha' warriors into the capital and how the people through terror preferred to die at their own hands. Kamalaka further says that he, being unable to bear the sight, declared that Viradhavala was coming to save the people ; hearing this the *Turushka* warriors were seized with panic and fled away.

It is clear from this narrative that the Muslim army entered Mewar, devastated a part of the State and even occupied the capital. It is perhaps with reference to this expedition that the Chirwa inscription says : "In the war with the soldiers of the Sultan the city of Nagda³ was destroyed and the governor of that fort was killed in a battle which took place at Untala, a village near Nagda." But the initial advantages of the Muslims did not prove lasting and soon they had to seek safety in flight. Kamalaka no doubt represents the reputation of his own

1 Briggs, Vol. I, p. 238.

2 *Hammira* or *Hamvira* is a corruption of the Arabic word *Amir*. From the time of Muhammad of Ghur to the reign of Balban this epithet in various forms occurs as the regular designation of the Sultans of Delhi in their coins and inscriptions. See Wright, *Catalogue of Coins in the Indian Museum*, Vol. II, pp. 17-33, and H. C. Ray, *Dynastic History of Northern India*, Vol. II, pp. 681-682.

3 Was it the capital of the Guhilots at that time ?

King as the factor that inspired terror in their heart ; but we may be practically sure that this is merely a device of the author to secure his own promotion in royal favour.¹ It was probably Jaitrasimha who opposed the enemies of his principality and defeated them. The Chirwa inscription implies this by saying that even the Sultan could not humble him, and we read in the Abu stone inscription that he was 'the sage Agastya of the ocean-like armies of the *Turushkas*.'

Who was this Sultan of Delhi who fought against Jaitrasimha but failed to humble him ? Our authorities do not give his name. The Chirwa inscription calls him '*Suratrana*' and the *Hammira-mada-mardanam* refers to him as '*Milacchikara*'. The second designation may give us a clue to the name. Pandit Gaurisankar Ojha² pointed out that the term '*Milacchikara*' was probably a Sanskritized form of the word '*Amir-i-shikar*.' We gather from the *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri* that Qutb-ud-din had conferred this title upon Iltutmish.³ Iltutmish was a contemporary of Jaitrasimha and his reign covered the period from 1211 A.D. to 1236 A.D. It is not improbable, therefore, that he was the '*Milacchikara*' who had carried an expedition into Mewar before 1229 A.D. The Muslim writers do not refer to this expedition ; but that seems to be no sufficient justification for disbelieving the contemporary accounts referred to above. The devout Muslim chroniclers might not be unwilling to suppress the story of the defeat of the Sultan at the hands of a petty Rajput prince. Whatever the explanation of the silence of the Muslim historians may be, an *argumentum ex silentio* is unacceptable in the face of contemporary statements to the contrary.

1 "In this account Jayasimha characteristically gives all the credit to Viradhavala, the generous patron of his religion, and does not even mention 'Rai Karan' who, according to the Muslim writers, was the real leader of these campaigns." (H. C. Ray, *Dynastic History of Northern India*, Vol. II, p. 1021).

2 *History of Rajputana* (in Hindi), Vol. II, p. 467. "Dr. Barnett considers the identification as very improbable". (H. C. Ray, *Dynastic History of Northern India*, Vol. II, p. 1021).

3 Raverty, pp. 603-604.

The second incursion of the Muslims into Mewar took place probably about the close of Jaitrasimha's reign. Firishta¹ says, "In 1247, Sultan Nasiruddin Mahmud recalled his brother Jalaluddin from his government of Kanooj to Delhi, but, apprehensive of a design against his life, he fled to the hills of Chitor with all his adherents. The king pursued him; but, finding after eight months that he could not secure him, returned to Delhi." This story is vaguely worded, and does not tell us whether Nasir-ud-din Mahmud came into direct conflict with the Guhilot prince. Firishta's account is not confirmed by any other literary or epigraphic evidence.

Firishta mentions a third struggle. During the reign of Nasir-ud-din Mahmud, on the revolt of Qutlugh Khan, governor of Oudh, the *wazir*, Ulugh Khan, marched against him, but he escaped to Chitor. The *wazir* destroyed the fort, but, being unable to find Qutlugh Khan, returned to Delhi. No other Muslim or Hindu account says anything about it. If the Sultan's army had really destroyed the fort of Chitor, there is no reason why the Muslim writers should be silent over it. It also appears to be somewhat improbable that no Rajput chronicle should mention this alleged destruction of their fort. Why, again, should the Guhilots give shelter to a rebel relative of the Sultan and invite new troubles?

The next ruler of Mewar was Tejasimha. He must have reigned between 1256 A.D., the last known date of Jaitrasimha, and 1273 A.D., the first known date of Samarasimha. Indeed, for Tejasimha we have records ranging from 1260 A.D. to 1267 A.D. No Muslim writer mentions any expedition into Mewar during this period. It is probable, therefore, that there was no struggle between the Guhilots and the Sultans of Delhi during his reign.

During Samarasimha's reign there were two struggles again.

We read in the Abu stone inscription of 1285 A.D. that "the munificent Samara...the leader of kings,...rescued, in an

instant, the submerged land of Gurjara from the ocean-like *Turushkas*". This apparently refers to an expedition of the Muslims against Gujarat in which he acted as the friend and saviour of that country. Here we find an important instance of the geographical and strategical significance of the position of Mewar. This trial of strength must have taken place early in his reign—before 1285 A.D., i.e., during the reign of Ghiyas-ud-din Balban (1266 A.D.-1287 A.D.). Neither Muslim writers nor Gujarat inscriptions or literary works mention any contest with the Muslims in Gujarat during this period; but the testimony of the contemporary inscription cannot be discarded. The ruler of Gujarat at this time was Sarangadeva who reigned from 1275 A.D. to 1295 A.D.

The second clash with the Sultan's army came at the close of Samarasimha's reign. An account of this struggle is given in a Jain manuscript named *Tirthakalpa*, written by Jinaprabha. From the Muslim point of view, however, there is no mention of this incident. The above work informs us that in 1299 A.D. Ala-ud-din Khalji sent his younger brother, Ulugh Khan, against Gujarat. On the way Samarasimha saved Mewar by doing homage to him. Mewar records claim victory for the Rajputs. Here again the geographical and strategical importance of Mewar as covering the route to Gujarat explains the political events. We have an echo of this incident in the Ranpur inscription of 1439 A.D.¹ which tells us that Bhuvanasingha was 'the conqueror of Sri Allavaddina Sultan'. Bhuvanasingha belonged to a junior branch of the ruling family of Mewar and was a contemporary of Samarasimha. It was obviously impossible for him to fight independently with Ala-ud-din's army and win a victory. Probably he fought in the train of his overlord and relative, Samarasimha. This appears to be the only possible explanation of the statement in the inscription whose veracity we have no reason to deny.

We have seen, then, that the 13th century was an era of

¹ Briggs, Vol. I, p. 238.

¹ *Prakrit and Sanskrit Inscriptions of Kathiawar*, p. 115.

almost continuous conflicts between the Sultans of Delhi and the princes of Mewar. The climax was reached in 1303 A.D. when Ala-ud-din occupied the fort of Chitor and placed his son, Khizir Khan, as its governor.

SIDE-LIGHTS ON MEDIEVAL MEWAR

Our information about the different aspects of the history medieval Mewar is admittedly unsatisfactory. Only a few scholars have so far taken active interest in this neglected branch of Indian history, and their attention has been concentrated upon political history. Fortunately some inscriptions¹ contain interesting information relating to administration, social condition and religion in medieval Mewar.

We shall begin with an inscription of Allata (V.S. 1010, A.D. 953) found in the temple of Sarnesvar at Udaipur. It is probable that it was brought to this temple at a later period from some other temple of which no remains are now to be found in the neighbourhood. It describes Allata as '*medinipati*' (Lord of the world)—certainly an inappropriate title for the ruler of a petty State. The following dignitaries are mentioned : *Sandhivigrahika* (Minister of Peace and War), *Amatya* (Minister), *Aksapatala* (Judge ?), *Vandipati* (Superintendent of Gaols), *Gostika* (Guardian ? Custodian ?), *Bhisagadhiraja* (Court Physician ?), *Kayastha* (Scribe). As regards weights and measures we get two terms : *Tula* (a measure of weight of gold and silver, about 145 ounces Troy) ; *Adhaka* (a measure of grain, nearly 7 lbs. 11 ozs. avoirdupois). The inscription makes provision for the maintenance of a temple dedicated to Murari (the temple in which it is now found is dedicated to Siva). This shows that Vaishnavism was not unknown in Mewar even in the tenth century. It is interesting to note that the temple was to be maintained by contributions from different classes of people :

“(The owner of) an elephant should give one *Dramma* ; (the owner of) a horse two pieces of silver ; (the owner of) a horned animal one-fortieth of a *Dramma* ; from the shop of a seller of worn-out clothes and ornaments (?) one *Tula* and one

¹ Published in *Prakrit and Sanskrit Inscriptions of Kathiawar*.

Adhaka. On the eleventh of the bright fortnight, a small pail (of milk) from the shop of confectioners; one bag from the gamblers, and a pala-ful (about $2\frac{1}{2}$ tolas) from every oil mill, and at the end of a month, a silver-piece from the sellers of dressed food (?). The sellers of flowers to present a four-stringed garland every day."

A mutilated inscription of Naravahana (V.S. 1028, 971 A.D.) found in the temple of Natha near Udaipur is interesting from the standpoint of religious history. It refers to the worship of Ekalinga¹ and invokes the blessing of Sankara. The *guru* of the composer of the inscription is described as one 'who was the medicine for the disease of the *syadvad* (Jainism), who always pulled down the theories of free-thinking and who was the thunderbolt to the mountains of pride of the Sugatas (Buddhists).' The statement obviously implies hostility to Jainism² and Buddhism. It may be added that in this inscription Bappa is described as '*kshitipati*' (Lord of the world).

A veiled reference to Saivism is found in a mutilated inscription discovered in the temple of Hastamata (date

1 Siva is the tutelary divinity of the Guhilots; hence, Saivism may be regarded as the original religion of Mewar. The temple of Ekalinga, situated in a defile about six miles north of Udaipur, is the most important shrine of the Saivas in Mewar. The Ranas are the *Dewans*, or vicegerents, of Siva. When they visit the temple they supersede the priest in his duties and perform the necessary ceremonies. This peculiar custom may not be entirely unconnected with the well known tradition that the ancestors of the Ranas were Brahmins. In Tod's days the shrine was generously endowed with 24 large villages from the *Khalsa*, besides plots of land from the chiefs.

2 Tod says that Mewar always afforded refuge to the Jains and some of the Ranas gave them special privileges. (*Annals of Mewar*, Chapter XIX). In spite of their numerical weakness the Jains occupied a very important place in the commercial and political life of Rajputana in Tod's days. He says, "The officers of the State and revenue are chiefly of the Jain laity, as are the majority of the bankers, from Lahore to the ocean. The chief magistrate and assessors of justice, in Oodipur and most of the towns of Rajasthan, are of this sect; and as their voluntary duties are confined to civil cases, they are as competent in these as they are the reverse in criminal cases, from their tenets forbidding the shedding of blood."

unknown) at Udaipur. Here Suchivarman is said to have 'burnt his foes like Siva.'

An inscription found at Chitor (V. S. 1331, 1274 A.D.) begins with homage to Siva and Ganapati. Bhartribhata is described as a devotee of Siva and Naravahana's heart is said to have been 'much pleased with (his) friendship with the lord of Gauri (Siva)'. Although Saivism thus occupies a very prominent place in this inscription, there is an indirect reference to Vaishnavism also. Guhila, we are told, was 'as glorious as Vishnu.'

An inscription (V. S. 1342, 1285 A.D.) found at Achalesvara on Mount Abu begins with salutations to Siva, Ganesa and Hanuman. The reference to Hanuman is very interesting, for it has no parallel in any other inscription found in Mewar. Bhoja is said to have 'worshipped the Lord of Laksmi' (Vishnu) and Samara Simha is compared to the Boar incarnation of Vishnu '(who rescued...the submerged land of Gurjara from the ocean-like Turuskas)'. These references to Siva, Ganesa, Hanuman and Vishnu in the same inscription show that there was little, if any, sectarian animosity in Mewar towards the close of the 13th century.

An inscription (V.S. 1485, 1429 A.D.) found in the temple of Ekalinga near Udaipur begins with salutations to Ganapati, Girija and Achyuta, and 'Bhagavati Bhavani' is described as the source of good fortune. These references to the consort of Siva are specially interesting because no earlier epigraphic reference to the worship of Sakti seems to have been found so far. The inscription tells us that Mokala built a temple of Dwarakadhisa (Krishna). An officer called '*Senani*' (Commander of the Forces) is mentioned in this inscription.

An inscription (V.S. 1494, 1438 A.D.) found at Nagada refers to the construction of a Jain temple at the place. A Jain idol was placed within the temple.

An inscription (V.S. 1496, 1440 A.D.) found at Ranpur in Marwar describes Rana Kumbha as 'a *garuda* in destroying the hoards of the snake-like Mlechchha kings'. His interest in Vaishnavism is clear from the well-known commentary on

Jayadeva's *Gita-Govindam*, called *Rasikapriya*, composed by him. But religion did not colour his political views. This inscription tells us that his favourite was *Samghapati* (leader of a company of pilgrims) Dharanaka, 'the most excellent follower of Jaina', who had repaired and constructed Jain temples. We are told that this pious Jain made pilgrimages 'with the *farman* of the illustrious Ahammada, the Sultan.' There is no doubt that this 'illustrious Sultan' is to be identified with Sultan Ahmad Shah of Gujarat (1411-1441 A.D.). This reference to his religious toleration is specially interesting in view of Vincent Smith's statement that he was 'zealous in fighting the infidels and destroying their temples'.¹

An inscription (V. S. 1545, A.D. 1489) found near Udaipur refers to Ganesa, Siva, Sankara, Mahesvara, Achyuta, Dhurjati, wife of Pasupati, Parvati, Uma and lord of Lakshmi. The frequent mention of Siva (under various names) appears to show that Saivism was the most prominent religion in Mewar even in the days of Rana Kumbha. In this inscription Vaishnavism is less prominent than the worship of Sakti (under various names). In connection with Vaishnavism, it may be noted that in this inscription Rana Laksa Simha is said to have freed the holy *tirtha* Gaya 'where the cruel Saka (kings) had made Kathas, Puranas, and the Smriti doctrines useless'.

An inscription (V.S. 1587, 1531-32 A.D.) found on the Satrunjaya Hills in Kathiawad tells us that in the reign of Rana Ratna Simha one Karma Simha, who was 'the chief and wise among all the merchants', 'bore the great burden of the administration of State'. Whether he was a regular office-bearer or merely a confidential adviser of the Rana, we do not know. He repaired the temple of Adisvara lying within the kingdom of Gujarat during the reign of Bahadur Shah. This shows that Bahadur Shah continued the liberal tradition of Ahmad Shah.

An inscription (V.S. 1654, 1598 A.D.) found at Sadadi in Marwar refers to the construction of a Jain temple in Rana Amar Simha's reign. It mentions a case of 11 wives burning

themselves on the funeral pyre of their husband. This is probably the earliest epigraphic reference to Sati in Mewar. The last known case of Sati in Mewar occurred in 1861, when a concubine of Rana Sarup Singh was persuaded to follow the ancient custom.¹

Two inscriptions of Rana Raj Simha's reign (V.S. 1732, 1676 A.D.), which were really copied down from a book called *Rajaprasasti* composed by a Pandit named Rinachhoda, begin with salutations to Ganesa and Krishna. It is said that at the time of the desolation of Mathura by Aurangzib, Raj Simha brought to Mewar the sacred image of Krishna, which had been worshipped in that city for centuries, and placed it at Nathdwara, 22 miles north-east of Udaipur. Tod says that the endowments for Krishna far exceeded in value those assigned to Ekalinga.



¹ Oxford History of India, p. 268.

¹ Erskine, *Rajputana Gazetteer*, Vol. IIA, pp. 26-27.

BEGINNINGS OF RATHOR RULE IN MARWAR

The chronicles of Marwar are unanimous in tracing the descent of the Rathor rulers of Marwar and Bikaner from the Gahadavalas of Kanauj. I do not propose to join the controversy¹ on the historical value of this tradition. It is, however, significant that all available facts relating to the Rathors of Marwar are quite consistent with the bardic point of view. An unpublished inscription² of Rai Singh of Bikaner, dated V. S. 1645, describes Siha, the founder of the Rathor family of Marwar, as the great-grandson of Jayachchandra, the famous Gahadavala ruler of Kanauj. The *Ain-i-Akbari*³ describes Siha as a nephew of Jayachchandra. An inscription⁴ dated V. S. 1686 found in the temple of Ranchhodji at Nagor in Mallani in the former Jodhpur State describes Siha as Surja-vamsi and Kanojiya-Rathoda. Tod describes Siha in different places as Jayachchandra's nephew, son and grandson. Tod's contradictory statements about Siha's relationship with Jayachchandra are probably due to the confused versions he found in different chronicles. For instance, we find in some chronicles⁵ that Siha came to Marwar in 1139 A.D.—a date which is quite inconsistent with the traditional relationship between Siha and Jayachchandra. As the latter was killed in the battle of Chandwar in 1194 A.D. his descendant could not have come to Marwar in 1139 A.D. The Bithu inscription⁶

conclusively proves that Siha died in V. S. 1330 or 1273 A.D. Thus it is clear that the bardic tradition about his arrival in Marwar in 1139 A.D. deserves no credence.

The Bithu inscription says nothing about the relationship between Siha and Jayachchandra. But it contains some statements which may be said to confirm the bardic tradition. In the first place, this inscription describes Siha as a son of Seta, i.e., Sitaram, whom all Rathor chronicles describe as Siha's father. Secondly, while Siha is called simply *Rathoda*, i.e., Rathor, Seta is called *Kumara*, i.e., prince. It is probable that Siha was never a reigning prince, but his father was the son of a reigning prince. If this interpretation is correct, it may be surmised that Seta was the son of Jayachchandra. This surmise is quite consistent with two known dates—Jayachchandra's death in 1194 A.D. and Siha's death in 1273 A.D. Pandit Ramkaran presumes that Sitaram was the grandson of Jayachchandra, but this is hardly consistent with the available chronology. In any case, there is no difficulty in taking Siha as a descendant of Jayachchandra.

Our information about the fortunes of the Gahadavalas after the battle of Chandwar is scanty and unreliable. According to Pandit Ramkaran, they continued to rule at Khod (Shamshabad) till it was occupied by Iltutmish. Then they moved towards Mahui via Modha, and built a fort there on the river Kali. From this place also they were driven away by the Muslims. This story is accepted by Pandit Ramkaran and Pandit Reu. We know from Muslim sources that Iltutmish had to fight against the Rajputs in the Ganges-Jamuna region, but details about Jayachchandra's successors are not available.¹

According to bardic tradition quoted by Tod and Reu, Siha came to Marwar in 1212 A.D. We are told that he was going on a pilgrimage to Dwaraka; a different tradition tells us that his aim was 'to carve his fortunes in fresh fields'. However, on his way he helped the Brahmins of Bhinmal against some Muslim invaders. He continued his journey to Dwaraka, halted

¹ Habibullah, *Foundation of Muslim Rule in India*, pp. 102-103.

¹ See: (1) Pandit Ramkaran, "History of the Rathors", *Sir Asutosh Mookherjee Silver Jubilee Volumes* (Calcutta University), Vol. III, *Orientalia*, Part 2, pp. 259-261. (2) Pandit Bisheshwar Nath Reu, *Glories of Marwar and The Glorious Rathors*, pp. ix-x, 34, 38-47.

² Quoted by Pandit Ramkaran, p. 266.

³ Blochmann and Jarrett, Vol. II, p. 191.

⁴ Referred to by D. R. Bhandarkar, *Indian Antiquary*, July, 1911, pp. 181-183.

⁵ Referred to by D. R. Bhandarkar, *Indian Antiquary*, July, 1911.

⁶ Edited by D. R. Bhandarkar, *Indian Antiquary*, July, 1911.

at Anhilwada on the return journey and came back to Marwar, where he helped the Brahmins of Pali against marauding aboriginal tribes like the Menas and the Mers. Pali was then an important commercial centre. It was inhabited by the Pallival Brahmins and its ruler was a Brahmin chief. Siha settled at Pali, and some years later died fighting against the Muslims in defence of this city.¹

Dr. Bhandarkar has given us a *Pallivala-chhand* collected from the manuscripts of the *dadhi* of a Pallival family in Kuli in Shergarh in the former Jodhpur State. We gather from this *chhand* several important facts about Siha. We are told that he became minister of the Brahmin ruler of Pali in V.S. 1292 or 1235 A. D. This date is not inconsistent with the bardic tradition that he came to Marwar in 1212 A.D., for the intervening period may have been covered by his operations at Bhinmal, pilgrimage to Dwaraka, halt at Anhilwada, and operations against the aboriginal tribes near Pali. However, the *chhand* tells us that after 26 years, i.e., in 1261 A. D., Nasir-ud-din, Sultan of Delhi, invaded Pali. The Brahmins fought for 12 years and then opened the city-gate in V.S. 1330, or 1273 A. D. With them fell many Rajputs, among whom was Siha, with his 5,000 Rathors. Although this *chhand* is not very old, its authenticity is established by an old *doha* quoted at its end. That *doha* tells us that in V. S. 1330 a fearful battle took place, as a result of which the Pallival Brahmins left Pali and went towards the west. Moreover, the Bithu inscription indirectly confirms the date of the disaster—V. S. 1330. Muslim sources do not help us in verifying the story of Nasir-ud-din's attack on Pali, but there is nothing improbable in it, for we have references to Ghiyas-ud-din Balban's operations against the Rajputs during Nasir-ud-din's reign². Abul Fazl's story³ that Siha was killed in a battle at Shamshabad deserves no credence, for it is contradicted by tradition and epigraphic evidence alike. Nor can we accept Tod's story that Siha

¹ Ramkaran, p. 269.

² Habibullah, *Foundation of Muslim Rule in India*, pp. 145-148.

³ Blochmann and Jarrett, Vol. II, p. 271.

occupied Pali by killing the Brahmins¹, a story contradicted by the *chhand* referred to above. Moreover, had he made himself master of a rich city like Pali, the Bithu inscription would hardly have called him simply *Rathoda*.

We may conclude, therefore, that Siha died in 1273 A. D. without being able to establish a Rathor principality in Marwar. It was his son Asthan who captured Khed after killing the Gohil chief of that principality with the support of the latter's minister. Later on he killed the Bhil chieftain of Idar and put that principality in charge of his brother Sonag. Aj, the third son of Siha, captured Okhamandal near Dwaraka. According to Pandit Ramkaran, Asthan died in V. S. 1348. Pandit Reu says that he met his death at Pali while repulsing the attack of an army of Sultan Jalal-ud-din Khalji.

Dhuhad, the eldest son of Asthan², is said to have occupied 140 villages. A struggle against the Parihars of Mandor cost him his life. The date of his death is uncertain, but an unpublished and undeciphered inscription found at Tirsingharin³ in the Pachbhadra *pargana* gives us a date for him—V. S. 1366.

With regard to the successors of Asthan the chronicles of Bikaner do not agree with those of Marwar. According to the former, Asthan was succeeded by his eldest son Dhandhala, who was succeeded, in turn, by his sons Nabhala and Udala, and his grandson Asala; Dhuhad was the second son of Asthan, and he occupied his father's principality after Asala.⁴ We need not enter into the details of the controversy regarding the alleged seniority of the ruling house of Bikaner. It may be noted, however, that the date given in the Tirsingharin inscription for Dhuhad hardly leaves sufficient time for four reigns intervening between Asthan and Dhuhad. Between Siha's death in V. S. 1330 and Dhuhad's reign (V. S. 1366) we

¹ See Reu, *Glories of Marwar*, pp. 34-36.

² Bhandarkar (*Indian Antiquary*, December, 1911, p. 301) wrongly describes Dhuhad as the grandson of Asthan.

³ Bhandarkar, *Indian Antiquary*, December, 1911.

⁴ J. A. S. B., 1919, pp. 38 ff.

have to place Dhandhala, Nabhala, Udala and Asala. If we take V. S. 1366 as the date of Dhuhad's death, for which, however, we have no direct evidence, we have to squeeze five reigns within 36 years. Without solving this chronological difficulty it is hardly possible to accept the Bikaner version of Rathor succession.

In any case, there is no doubt that Asthan was the real founder of Rathor rule in Marwar. Siha died as the loyal minister of the Brahmin ruler of Pali, but he left for his son political influence and, probably, wealth, which the latter utilised in occupying Khed and Idar. This small Rathor principality was raised to the dignity of a kingdom by Chunda in the 15th century.

RANA SANGA OF MEWAR

Rana Sanga of Mewar played such an important part as a champion of Hinduism against Islam¹ that the local history of Mewar during his reign may be considered as a very significant chapter in the general history of India. His career as an antagonist of Babur naturally occupies a prominent place in all works dealing with the history of India in the 16th century. Har Bilas Sarda's biography of the Rana and Ojha's monumental Hindi work on the history of Rajputana contain an elaborate account of Sanga's eventful life. There are, however, problems upon which the final word yet remains to be said.

I

EARLY YEARS

So far as the history of the early years of Rana Sanga's life is concerned our principal authorities are Nainsi and Tod. Nainsi's account, being earlier in date and more logical in character, deserves preference.

According to Nainsi, the first four sons of Rana Rai Mal in order of seniority were—Prithviraj, Jai Mal, Jai Singh and Sanga.² That Prithviraj was the eldest son is clearly established by the designation '*Mahakumara*' given to him in a contem-

1 In Rajputana he is still described as *Hindupat* (chief of the Hindus). See Sarda's *Maharana Sanga*. In Babur's *Memoirs* (cf. pp. 550, 558, 561 etc., in Beveridge's translation) he is described as a 'pagan' fighting against 'Islam-guarded soldiers'.

2 Sarda disagrees with Nainsi's statement; he says that Sanga was the third son, and he does not include Jassa in his list of Rai Mal's 14 sons. (See pp. 12-13). He gives us no authority in support of his rejection of Nainsi's statement. Ojha (*History of Rajputana*, Vol. I, p. 658) agrees with him. But he says elsewhere (p. 655) that Rai Mal recognised Jai Singh as his heir-apparent.

porary inscription.¹ We may, therefore, reject Tod's statement that Sanga was the eldest son and heir-apparent.²

It is admitted on all hands that 'fraternal affection' between Prithviraj and Sanga 'was discarded for deadly hate, and their feuds and dissensions were a source of constant alarms'. There are two difficulties about the generally accepted account of these 'feuds and dissensions'. In the first place, the principle of hereditary succession was so well-established³ that it seems difficult to understand why Sanga and Jai Mal ventured to dispute the claim of Prithviraj. Prithviraj was an able prince, 'the Rolando of his age'⁴; it was certainly idle for the younger brothers to expect that either Rai Mal or the *sardars* would pass him over in favour of either of them.⁵ Again, Sanga's chance of ascending the throne was still more remote than that of Jai Mal, for two candidates (Jai Mal and Jai Singh) stood between him and Prithviraj. Jai Mal was an active candidate, bold enough⁶ to demand the recognition of the *sardars* if Prithviraj died or was put aside. After Jai Mal

1 A Collection of Prakrit and Sanskrit Inscriptions, published by the Bhavanagar Archaeological Department, p. 141.

2 For Tod's account of Sanga's career, see Crooke's edition, Vol. I, pp. 340-359.

3 Sarda (p. 14) says that every one of the brothers of Prithviraj 'considered himself qualified by descent and personal bravery' for the throne. But on p. 146 Sarda himself refers to two Rajput princes—Chunda of Mewar and Ajaji of Halvad in Kathiawad—who had relinquished their right as eldest sons to their ancestral thrones. These instances, and others too numerous to be mentioned here, clearly prove that the principle of hereditary succession was definitely accepted in Rajputana. The principle was abandoned only under exceptional circumstances.

4 Tod's description.

5 Sarda (p. 14) recognises the fact that Jai Mal 'was conscious that with Prithviraj as his elder brother there was little chance of his obtaining the throne'. The inscription of 1503-4 A.D. shows that Prithviraj was already recognised as heir-apparent by Rai Mal, and there is nothing to show that the *sardars* dissented from this decision.

6 The incident of Tara Bai shows that Jai Mal was a young man of doubtful moral character, but there is nothing on record to show that he lacked the quality of courage, the first requisite of a Rajput ruler.

there was Jai Singh. He might have been addicted to pleasure and sport, as Nainsi says; but no one could anticipate in Rai Mal's lifetime that he would be passed over by the *sardars* in favour of Sanga.¹ Later on Sanga proved himself to be a cautious man,² and it is difficult for us to believe that he devoted himself to the pursuit of so distant an object as the possession of the throne was in his case.

Secondly, are we justified in accepting as historically true³ the *Nahra Mugro* incident related by Tod? He says, "...Sanga observed that, though heir to 'the ten thousand towns' of Mewar, he would waive his claims, and trust them.....to the omen which should be given by the priestess or Charuni Devi at Nahra Mugro.....they (i. e., Prithviraj, Jai Mal, Sanga and their uncle Suraj Mal)⁴ repaired to her abode. Prithviraj and Jaimal entered first, and seated themselves on a pallet; Sanga followed and took possession of the panther-hide of the prophetess; his uncle, Surajmal, with one knee resting thereon. Scarcely had Prithviraj disclosed their errand, when the sybil pointed to the panther-hide as the decisive omen of sovereignty to Sanga, with a portion to his uncle.....Prithviraj drew his sword and would have falsified the omen, had not Surajmal stepped in and received the blow destined for Sanga..... Surajmal and Prithviraj were exhausted with wounds, and

1 So far as Sanga's case is concerned, our argument is not much weakened if we follow Sarda and Ojha in denying the existence of Jai Singh.

2 Tod says that Sanga's 'courage was tempered by reflection'.

3 See S. C. Dutt, 'New Light on the Early History of Rana Sanga', *D. R. Bhandarkar Volume*, ed. B. C. Law.

4 Sarda (p. 14) says that Suraj Mal 'was of the same age' with the three brothers. Under normal circumstances an uncle is older than his nephew. That Suraj Mal's case was not an exceptional one, may be presumed from two facts recorded by Tod.

Suraj Mal addressed Prithviraj as 'child'. He could hardly have used such an expression had he not been considerably older than his nephew. Secondly, on one occasion he said to Prithviraj, "If I am killed, it matters not; my children are Rajpoots, they will run the country to find support". (This incident is noted by Sarda on p. 39.) This statement seems to imply that Suraj Mal's sons were old enough at that time to 'run the country'.

Sanga fled with five sword-cuts and an arrow in his eye, which destroyed the sight for ever".¹

There are certain incongruous elements in this story. It is based on the supposition that Sanga was the eldest brother and, therefore, the rightful heir to the throne—a supposition which it is not easy to accept in view of what we have said above. If anybody could 'waive his claims and trust them..... to the omen', it was Prithviraj. If he really agreed to have his fate decided by the judgement of heaven, why did he try to falsify the omen as soon as the judgement went against him?

As a matter of fact, the real clue to the troubles of Rai Mal's reign will be found in the ambition of Suraj Mal. He was a son of Kshema Singh and thus a grandson of Rana Mokul. Tod says that it was he 'who had fomented these quarrels'² between Prithviraj and Sanga, and that he was 'resolved not to belie the prophetess if a crown lay in his path'. Are we to assume, as Tod does, that the ambition to seize the crown of Mewar took possession of Suraj Mal's mind after the *Nahra Mugro* incident? In that case we cannot explain why he fomented quarrels among the princes. We are probably entitled to assume that Suraj Mal's ambition was of earlier origin, and that he purposely fomented quarrels among the princes in order to create dissensions within Mewar. That he was the author of a deeply laid conspiracy against Rai Mal may be clearly inferred from certain facts noted by the chroniclers. In the first place, we are told by Nainsi that during Kumbha's reign Kshema Singh (Suraj Mal's father) revolted, established his authority over the south-eastern corner

1 Ojha (pp. 643-644, 647) gives a slightly different version.

2 Ojha (p. 643) rejects the statement of Tod, supported by the *Virvinod*, that Suraj Mal was associated with the quarrels of the princes, and says that it was Sarangadeva who played the part of mediator. He admits that Suraj Mal was the enemy of the royal family; he says that Sarangadeva joined Suraj Mal later on because he (Sarangadeva) was expelled from his *jagir* by Prithviraj. This view is inconsistent with the tradition recorded by Tod and accepted by Sarda (p. 14) and the *Virvinod*. Moreover, it fails to explain the cause of Sanga's exile.

of Mewar, and tried to make himself an independent ruler. His plan did not succeed at that time, but it was in all probability inherited by Suraj Mal.¹ He was possibly trying to make it a success even before the closing years of Rai Mal's reign. Secondly, that Suraj Mal had other accomplices within the royal family is proved by his alliance with Sarangadeva, another descendant of Rana Lakha. Thirdly, Suraj Mal did not hesitate even to invoke the assistance of the Muslims against his own clan. Tod says that he 'repaired to Mozuffir, the Sultan of Malwa'. We know that Malwa had no Sultan of this name, but we are told by Firishta² that in 1503 A. D. Sultan Nasir-din Khalji of Malwa 'proceeded towards Chittoor, where having received a large present in money from the Rana... he returned to Mando'. From Tod's account, supported by an inscription of 1503-4 A. D.,³ it would appear that the Muslims occupied a part of Mewar⁴ and that Suraj Mal (with his ally, Sarangadeva) was actively fighting against the Rana's troops. Fourthly, Suraj Mal's persistent hostility to the ruling branch of the family is proved by the fact that he 'finally abandoned Mewar' and his grandson Bika founded the principality later known as Deolia Pratapgarh.⁵

We must review Sanga's early career against the background of Suraj Mal's treachery. It is quite probable that Suraj Mal wanted to utilise him against his elder brothers, and there is little doubt that Sanga allowed himself to be associated with the conspiracy. Probably he was ambitious enough to aspire after

1 Sarda's view (p. 14) that Suraj Mal's treachery to the crown was caused merely by 'the limitations which naturally circumscribe the activities of scions of a younger branch of a royal family', is hardly an adequate explanation of his conduct.

2 Briggs, Vol. IV, p. 243. Firishta does not refer to Suraj Mal or any other Hindu ally of the Sultan in this expedition.

3 *Prakrit and Sanskrit Inscriptions of Kathiawar*.

4 An inscription of 1489 A.D. (*Prakrit and Sanskrit Inscriptions of Kathiawar*, pp. 117-133) contains numerous references to Rai Mal's struggle with the Muslims.

5 This is Nainsi's version of the story. Tod says that Suraj Mal himself founded Deolia Pratapgarh.

the throne, and, knowing that from the point of view of legitimacy he had no chance of being called upon to rule, he tried to fulfil his ambition by unfilial treachery. Such an explanation is not inconsistent with his character as we know it. Ambition is the key-note of Sanga's career.

The exact circumstances which compelled Sanga to live as an exile for some years¹ cannot be determined. If we do not accept the *Nahra Mugro* incident as historical, we cannot ascribe Sanga's flight to it. Tod says that Sanga was aware of Prithviraj's 'implacable enmity'. He seems also to imply that this was the real cause of Sanga's flight. We also know that Jai Mal was not well-disposed towards Sanga (for Tod tells us that it was Jai Mal who tried to capture Sanga after the *Nahra Mugro* incident). If the 'implacable enmity' of these two brothers was alone responsible for Sanga's flight, why did he not return to Mewar after Jai Mal's death and before Prithviraj's recall?² The fact that Sanga was not recalled before his father was about to die, seems to imply that he was guilty of some offence against Rai Mal. This explanation is not inconsistent with Prithviraj's 'implacable enmity' towards him, for the legitimate heir to the throne could not allow a younger brother to deprive him of his patrimony³. Sanga's close association with Suraj Mal shows that Sanga was guilty of treachery towards his father.

1 Firishta places Nasir-ud-din's invasion in 1503 A.D. Tod's version makes it clear that Sanga fled sometime before this incident. Sanga did not return till 1509 A.D., when Rai Mal was in his death bed. So Sanga must have been an exile for at least six years.

2 The same argument applies against Sarda's suggestion (p. 16) that Sanga fled because he was 'unwilling to attack the heir-apparent to the throne'.

3 This explanation makes it somewhat difficult to account for Prithviraj's banishment. Tod, labouring under the delusion that Sanga was the eldest son, says that Rai Mal was angry because Prithviraj was about to deprive him of his heir by killing Sanga at *Nahra Mugro*. But Jai Mal was also implicated in the affair, and the father's wrath did not fall upon him. Again, it is strange to note that when the intending murderer was banished by the angry father, the victim fled of his own accord and did not venture to return to Mewar till the father was in his death bed. May we assume that Prithviraj-

During the period of his exile Sanga naturally lived the life of an adventurer. We are told that after the *Nahra Mugro* incident 'Sanga fled with five sword-cuts and an arrow in his eye, which destroyed the sight for ever'. He took shelter in the sanctuary of Chaturbhuj, where his life was saved from Jai Mal's attack by a Rathor named Bida. He 'had recourse to many expedients to avoid discovery' and was compelled to pass his days among goatherds and peasants. Then he went to Ajmer and took service with Karam Chand, the Paramar chief of Srinagar. His identity was accidentally revealed (here we are told the traditional story of a serpent rearing its crest over the head of the sleeping exile); the Paramar chief 'gave Sanga a daughter to wife, and protection' which he needed so much.

Meanwhile events in Mewar had been moving rapidly. Prithviraj had been banished; Jai Mal had been killed by Rao Surtan in defence of his daughter's honour; Prithviraj had been recalled; the attack of the Muslims of Malwa had been repulsed; Suraj Mal had been compelled to leave Mewar. Time, however, had not softened Prithviraj's heart in favour of Sanga. He was preparing for an expedition against Karam Chand of Srinagar, Sanga's protector and father-in-law¹, when his attention was diverted to Sirohi by a letter from his sister Ananda Bai. He went to Sirohi and humiliated his brother-in-law Jag Mal, who retaliated by poisoning him².

like Sanga, lent his ears to Suraj Mal, and that the old Rana had reasons to suspect that his heir-apparent intended to supplant him? Such an analysis of Prithviraj's motive is not inconsistent with his character. Most of the achievements attributed by Tod to this 'Rolando of his age' owed their success to treachery. He treacherously killed the Mina chief in whose service he had enlisted himself and his band. He treacherously murdered Sarangadeva. He treacherously killed Lalla Khan, the Afghan chief of Toda. He attacked his brother-in-law, Jag Mal of Sirohi, when the latter was asleep at night. We may not be very far from the truth in assuming that Prithviraj, like another heir-apparent of Mewar (Ude Hattaro), was anxious to occupy the throne by murdering his father.

1 Sarda, p. 42.

2 Tod, Sarda, pp. 42-44. Ojha, *History of Sirohi*, p. 205.

After Prithviraj's tragic death Jai Singh, the third son of Rana Rai Mal, became the heir-apparent. Nainsi says that Jai Singh was given to pleasure and sport, and the *sardars* passed him over and placed Sanga on the throne. There is nothing improbable in this story. Mewar, constantly threatened by the Muslim Sultans of Malwa and Gujarat, required a strong ruler. Sanga was probably about 26 years old in 1509 A.D.¹ and his career must have revealed his qualities. That he had fled from Mewar presumably as a traitor was, from the political point of view, no disqualification in the judgement of the *sardars*. Sanga might have been afraid of Prithviraj, but he had no reason to be afraid of a worthless prince like Jai Singh. If the crown went to Jai Singh, Sanga might revive the policy of Suraj Mal and try to seize it with the assistance of his Muslim neighbours. We may conclude, therefore, that these weighty reasons of State led to the recall of Sanga during the last illness of Rai Mal as well as to his elevation to the throne after the old Rana's death.

II

GUJARAT AND MALWA

The peculiar geographical position of Mewar involved her rulers in a long-continued struggle with the Muslim Sultans of Gujarat and Malwa. Mewar was bounded on three sides by the Muslim kingdoms of Delhi, Gujarat and Malwa. So long as the Sultanate of Delhi was strong and aggressive, the rulers of Mewar were forced to recognise their own weakness, and to thank their stars if they succeeded in preserving their independence against the all-conquering Turks. The recovery of Chitor by Rana Hamir was followed by the disruption of the Sultanate, but the rise of the independent Muslim kingdoms of Gujarat and Malwa in the beginning of the 15th century created new problems for his descendants. If Delhi was no

¹ Nainsi says that Sanga was born in 1483.

longer strong enough to threaten Mewar, she was likely to be assailed by these two new kingdoms. Mewar offered to them a natural field for expansion, and their rulers were not slow to take advantage of any weakness which the Guhilots might betray. On the other hand, the vigorous rulers of Mewar were no longer content to play a subsidiary part. Conscious of their own strength, men like Kumbha and Sanga were determined to extend the boundaries of their petty ancestral State at the cost of Gujarat and Malwa. When both sides are bent upon aggression, excuses are not difficult to find.

Rana Sanga's first venture in the sphere of foreign policy was significant. Sultan Mahmud Khalji of Malwa owed his throne largely to the loyal and able support of a Rajput chief named Medini Rai¹, who naturally enjoyed a unique ascendancy in his court. The exclusion of the Muslim nobles from power excited their jealousy, and they resorted to various expedients in order to destroy the all-powerful Hindu minister. At last the Sultan himself came to suspect Medini Rai without adequate reasons and secretly left his capital for Gujarat. He was cordially received by Sultan Muzaffar Shah of Gujarat, who started in 1517 A.D. to restore his fugitive ally on the throne of Mandu. Medini Rai knew that he was not strong enough to oppose the Gujarat army with success. So he reinforced the garrison of Mandu and then went to Chitor in the hope of securing assistance from Rana Sanga. The Rana responded to his appeal², and arrived with a large force within a few miles of Ujjain. Meanwhile Mandu had fallen³ before the attack of the Gujarat troops and Muzaffar Shah had begun to march against Sanga. On hearing of his approach Sanga retreated

¹ The incident is described by Firishta (Briggs, Vol. IV, pp. 84-86, 245-261) and in the *Mirat-i-Sikandari* (Bayley, *Local Muhammadan Dynasties, Gujarat*, pp. 247-262).

² According to the *Mirat-i-Sikandari*, the Rana agreed 'to advance as far as Sarangpur, but said that afterwards he would act as circumstances should require'. (Bayley, p. 257).

³ In 1518 A.D. according to the *Mirat-i-Sikandari* (Bayley, p. 258), but in 1519 A.D. according to Firishta (Briggs, Vol. IV, p. 261).

to Chitor. The Gujarat army gave up the pursuit and returned home. Sanga prevented Medini Rai from committing suicide and continued to treat him as a 'greatly trusted friend'.¹ The grateful Rajput chief rendered valuable help to his patron in his wars with Bahadur Shah of Gujarat and Babur.

It is not unlikely that Sanga's policy in this crisis was determined by his desire to revive Hindu ascendancy in Central India. The allegations heaped upon Medini Rai by the Muslim historians do not survive scrutiny; but even a cursory glance at the story of his amazing life makes it clear that he was determined to rule Malwa in the interest of the Hindus.² He did not 'usurp the crown' because, if he did so, 'the Kings of Gujarat, of Khandesh, and of the Deccan, uniting, would very soon reduce Malwa to their subjection'.³ He was satisfied with power unadorned by the crown, because he was wise enough to understand that the Muslim neighbours of Malwa would not allow him to establish a Hindu dynasty at Mandu. That he considered himself as the champion of Hindu interests in Malwa is further proved by his appeal to Rana Sanga. We are told that he 'represented' to Rana Sanga 'that in Hindustan, among the Hindus, there was no man greater than he, and that if he did not assist his own race, who else was to do so?'⁴ Sanga was already respected as the best man to 'assist his own race,' and he did not disappoint his suitor. His failure in the enterprise may be ascribed to the difficulties with which he was confronted. Probably he found the combined forces of Gujarat and Malwa too strong for him. He may also have been swayed by the fear which had prevented Medini Rai from usurping the crown of Malwa. If he placed Medini Rai on the throne of Mandu, the Sultans of Gujarat, of Khandesh and of the Deccan might enter into a grand alliance against

1 Beveridge, *Babur's Memoirs*, Section III, p. 593.
 2 Firishta says that "excepting the personal servants of the King, amounting to about two hundred, the whole of the offices of government were filled with Rajpoots." (Briggs, Vol. IV, p. 257).
 3 Briggs, Vol. IV, p. 258.
 4 Bayley, p. 257.

the 'infidel'.¹ Such an alliance Mewar was not in a position to resist. So Sanga considered it wise to retreat,² reserving for a more favourable occasion his plan of striking a decisive blow in favour of the Hindus.

In 1519 A.D. Muzaffar Shah returned to Gujarat, leaving 3,000 cavalry to be stationed at Mandu. Mahmud Khalji now decided to wrest from the Rajputs those forts which they still occupied.³ Chanderi and Gagraun were in the possession of Medini Rai's troops, and Bhilsa, Raisin and Sarangapur were held by another Rajput chief named Silhadi. Mahmud Khalji marched to Gagraun. Rana Sanga came to meet him with 'a powerful army' and 'a great battle was fought.' The Muslims were defeated and Mahmud Khalji became a prisoner in the hands of the Rana. The chivalrous Rana 'caused him to be brought into his own tent, dressed his wounds, attended him in person, and showed him every mark of attention; and after his recovery, he furnished him with an escort of one thousand Rajput horse, and sent him to Mandu, where he re-assumed the reins of Government'.⁴ According to the *Mirat-i-Sikandari*, the Rana's 'tenderness' was inspired by his 'fear of the Muhammadan Sultans whose dominions bordered on Mandu, such as Ibrahim Lodi, Padshah of Delhi, Sultan Muzaffar of Gujrat, and others.' This explanation of the Rana's motive is not unreasonable, although it extols his cautiousness at the cost of his chivalry. Mewar was not strong enough to absorb

1 The ruler of Berar was 'on friendly terms' with Mahmud Khalji. (Briggs, Vol. IV, p. 249). Sultan Sikandar Lodi had sent a force of 12,000 cavalry to help the Muslim nobles of Malwa against Medini Rai. (Briggs, Vol. IV, p. 253).

2 It must be remembered that after the fall of Mandu and the death of 19,000 Rajputs in its defence, it was almost hopeless for Sanga to expect any assistance from the Hindus of Malwa. (See Briggs, Vol. IV, p. 261, and Bayley, p. 258).

3 Briggs, Vol. IV, pp. 262-263. Bayley, pp. 263-264

4 It seems that the Sultan's son was kept as a hostage at Chitor. (Bayley, p. 275). Babur says that the Sultan was made to surrender 'a famous crown-cap and golden belt.' (Beveridge, p. 613).

Malwa and face the combined opposition of her Muslim neighbours.

Sanga came into direct conflict with Gujarat in connection with the affairs of Idar,¹ a small Rajput principality situated on the borders of Gujarat. On the death of Suraj Mal, the *gadi* of Idar was inherited by his minor son Rai Mal, who was, however, within a short time deposed by his uncle Bhim (Suraj Mal's younger brother). Rai Mal took shelter at Chitor. Later on Bhim died and his son Bhar Mal became the ruler of Idar. Rai Mal grew up to manhood and recovered his ancestral State with Rana Sanga's help² in or about 1514 A.D. Bhar Mal appealed for assistance to Sultan Muzaffar Shah of Gujarat. Bhim seems to have been a vassal of the Sultan³; the latter was, therefore, interested in maintaining his son on the throne of Idar. He ordered Nizam-ul-Mulk to drive Rai Mal out of Idar and re-establish Bhar Mal. The Gujarat army at first succeeded in driving Rai Mal to the hills, but in 1517 A.D. Rai Mal re-occupied his territory with the Rana's assistance. Meanwhile Nizam-ul-Mulk had been recalled and Nasrat-ul-Mulk placed at the head of the Gujarat army. He failed to achieve any lasting success against Rai Mal. So he was removed, and Mubariz-ul-Mulk was nominated to the office vacated by him. Local officers were not well-disposed to Mubariz-ul-Mulk; they 'set themselves to watch for an opportunity of ruining' him. Mubariz-ul-Mulk seems to have been a rash and boastful man. Unable to tolerate the taunt of a wandering minstrel, he tied up a dog at the door of his *darbar* and said that if Rana Sanga did not come to fight, he would be treated like the dog. On hearing the news the Rana marched to Idar. Mubariz-ul-Mulk appealed to Muzaffar Shah for reinforcement, but his enemies at court

¹ Bayley, pp. 252-253, 264-270. Briggs, Vol. IV, pp. 82-84, 87-90.
² According to the *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, Rai Mal was Sanga's son-in-law.
³ Muzaffar Shah 'said that Bhim had taken possession of Idar with his sanction.' (Bayley, p. 252). Firishta (Briggs, Vol. IV, pp. 81-82) says that Bhim was defeated by Muzaffar Shah's troops and saved himself by paying money.

concealed his letter till it was too late. Mubariz-ul-Mulk was persuaded by his associates to take shelter at Ahmednagar. The Rana captured Idar and approached Ahmednagar. The Muslims were severely defeated; Mubariz-ul-Mulk, seriously wounded, took shelter in the town of Barni. "The Rana took the town of Ahmednagar, sacked it, and carried away captive all the inhabitants." His officers requested him to plunder Ahmedabad, but the Rana did not consider himself strong enough to undertake such an enterprise. He advanced to Vadnagar and intended to plunder it, but the Brahmin inhabitants of the town requested him to spare it and he agreed. Then he proceeded to Visalnagar and plundered it. Some time later the Rana left Gujarat and made a triumphal entry in Chitor. He had succeeded in establishing his protegee in Idar and his plundering raid must have made his name a terror to the people of Gujarat.

Next winter (1520 A.D.) Muzaffar Shah proceeded to take revenge on the Rana.¹ His arrangements left nothing to be desired. Many prominent *amirs* came to Ahmedabad. "The allowances for the whole army were increased from ten to twenty per cent, a year's pay was issued from the treasury, so that every man might provide himself with what was requisite for the campaign." The command was entrusted to Malik Aiaz, who promised to 'bring back the Rana alive in chains, or scatter his life to the wind of death.' The Muslims invested the fort of Mandisor (1521 A.D.). The Rana came with a large army; but, finding that it was impossible to save the fort, he requested Malik Aiaz to conclude peace, 'promising henceforth to do nothing inconsistent with submission and obedience'.² In the Muslim camp counsels were divided. Day by day the Rana's strength increased; all neighbouring chiefs came to his

¹ Bayley, pp. 271-275. Briggs, Vol. IV, pp. 90-95.

² Firishta says that Sanga 'consented to acknowledge fealty to the crown of Gujarat,' but certain 'extravagant conditions' were connected with this overture. It is difficult to believe that Sanga really intended to become a vassal of his Muslim enemy.

support.¹ But Sultan Mahmud Khalji of Malwa joined the Gujarat army. At last Malik Aiaz concluded peace² with the Rana without informing Muzaffar Shah. Mahmud Khalji also came to terms with him, 'on condition that the Rana gave up the Sultan's son, whom he held a prisoner, and made a suitable present'. Malik Aiaz returned to Ahmedabad and was coldly received by Muzaffar Shah 'who gave out that, after the rains, he would himself renew the campaign.' In 1521 A.D.³ "he commenced his intended expedition against the Rana and marched to Ahmednagar. There the son of the Rana brought to him the elephants and tribute agreed upon, so the expedition was given up." The Rana's son was in all probability the leader of a mission of good will, and 'the elephants and tribute' were hardly anything more than presents.

Bahadur Khan,⁴ the second son of Sultan Muzaffar Shah, was ambitious enough to covet the throne. Not satisfied with the *jagir* which his father had assigned to him, he left Gujarat and claimed the hospitality of his father's enemy, Rana Sanga (1525 A. D.). Some time ago Bahadur Khan had expressed his desire 'to wrest the fort of Chitor out of the hands of infidels,⁵ and to make it over to the Musulmans, in retribution for what the accursed Rana had done at Ahmednagar, when he slew so many Musulmans and carried their women away captive.' This sentiment, however, did not prevent him from accepting the 'accursed' infidel's salt. We are told that the Rana 'showed him all possible attention' and the Rana's mother regarded him as her 'son'. The prince's rashness⁶ made Mewar too hot for him, and he went to Mewat.

Sultan Muzaffar Shah was succeeded in 1526 A. D. by his

eldest son, Sikandar Shah. His younger brother, Latif Khan, 'raised a considerable force.....and appeared only to wait for an opportunity of declaring his pretensions to the throne.' Sikandar Shah sent Shirza Khan to oppose him; 'but hearing that the prince, Latif, had gone to Chitor, the troops were directed to march in that direction, where they sustained a complete defeat.'¹ Whether this defeat was inflicted by Rana Sanga or by Latif Khan's troops, we do not know. Chand Khan and Ibrahim Khan, younger brothers of Latif Khan, seem to have taken shelter at Chitor.² When, after Sikandar Shah's assassination, Bahadur Khan came to occupy the throne of Gujarat, he passed through Chitor, where he was met by Chand Khan and Ibrahim Khan.

It seems that Sanga was determined to place Bahadur Khan on the throne of Gujarat. He refused to come to terms with the Gujarati nobles who were trying to oppose Bahadur Khan.³ At his instance Udi Singh, the ruler of Dungarpur, helped Bahadur Khan,⁴ and intercepted the letter for help which the Gujarati nobles had sent to Babur.⁵ Apparently Bahadur Shah had many reasons to be grateful to Sanga for the valuable assistance rendered by him during the most critical period of his career.

1 This is Firishta's version. (Briggs, Vol. IV, pp. 89-90). According to the *Mirat-i-Sikandari*, Latif Khan received the support of the Raja of Munka. (Bayley, p. 308). The *Tabaqat-i-Akbari* calls him the Raja of the jungles of Chitor. Latif Khan might have been assisted by a hill chief. Under the circumstances it is difficult to accept Sarda's statement (p. 93) that Rana Sanga sent a *sardar* to drive Shirza Khan out of Mewar.

2 Bayley, p. 318.

3 Bayley, p. 318.

4 Bayley, p. 326.

5 Briggs, Vol. IV, p. 102.

1 Silhadi, the Rajput chief of Raisin, was won over by Medini Rai.

2 For an explanation of his motive, see Bayley's note on p. 273. Firishta says that Malik Aiaz foresaw that 'no co-operation could take place between him and the other Gujarat officers.'

3 This is Firishta's date. Bayley gives 1523 A.D.

4 Bayley, pp. 277-278, 304-306. Briggs, Vol. IV, p. 96.

5 He succeeded in realising his ambition after Sanga's death.

6 See an incident described in Bayley, pp. 305-306.

III

IBRAHIM LODI

After his accession to the throne of Delhi in 1517 A.D. Sultan Ibrahim Lodi had succeeded in alienating the sympathy of his nobles. Troubles were going on in Delhi, and Sanga decided to take advantage of the Sultan's difficulties. He attacked the fort of Chanderi,¹ which occupied a strategic position to the east of Mewar. This fort originally belonged to the Sultans of Malwa. After Mahmud Khalji's accession one of his rival brothers named Muhammad Shah "laid hands on Chanderi and put it under Sultan Sikandar Lodi's protection, who, in his turn, took Muhammad Shah's side and sent him large forces. Muhammad Shah survived Sultan Sikandar and died in Sultan Ibrahim's time, leaving a very young son called Ahmad Shah whom Sultan Ibrahim drove out and replaced by a man of his own."² Sanga succeeded in capturing the fort. The fort was given to Medini Rai, 'the greatly trusted pagan', who began to guard it with 4,000 or 5,000 soldiers. This incident must have happened between Sultan Muzaffar Shah's capture of Mandu in 1518 A. D. or 1519 A. D.³ and Sultan Mahmud Khalji's attempt to recover Chanderi in 1519 A. D., unless we assume that Chanderi was seized by Sanga some time before Medini Rai came under his protection. In any case, Chanderi could not have fallen to Sanga's troops before 1517 A. D., the year of Ibrahim Lodi's accession.⁴

It may be presumed that Sanga had something to do with Sultan Ibrahim Lodi's troubles with his nobles, for otherwise it is difficult to explain the Sultan's determination to crush him. Some time after the Chanderi incident the Sultan sent against

¹ Briggs, Vol. IV, p. 102. Bayley, p. 326.
² Beveridge, p. 593.

³ Bayley gives 1518 A.D., but Firishta gives 1519 A.D.

⁴ Sarda (p. 62) says that Sanga captured Chanderi after his victory over Mian Makhan.

him a large army under the command of Mian Makhan,¹ with whom were associated three other generals—Mian Husain Khan Zar Bakhsh, Mian Khan Khanan Farmuli and Mian Maruf—men who 'could have instructed even Rustam in the art of war'. The Rana advanced to meet the Muslims. Before the battle Mian Husain Khan left the Sultan's army and joined the Rana. Sanga succeeded in inflicting a complete defeat on Mian Makhan. After the victory Mian Husain and Mian Maruf fell suddenly upon the Rajput camp and captured a few elephants and horses.² But the Rana's victory was decisive. His troops pursued the Muslims 'as far as Biyana and so alarmed the Sultan that he advanced from Agra to the river.'

We are told by Tod that in two battles Sanga was 'opposed by Ibrahim Lodi in person, at Bakrole and Ghatolli, in which last battle the imperial forces were defeated with great slaughter, leaving a prisoner of the blood royal to grace the triumph of Chitor'. In the absence of any other detail, it is impossible to verify the truth of this statement.³ Muslim writers do not refer to Ibrahim Lodi's coming in person or to the capture of any 'prisoner of the blood royal' by Rana Sanga.

¹ Elliot and Dowson, Vol. V, pp. 16-20.

² This story, narrated in the *Tarikh-i-Salatin-i-Afghana*, is rejected by Sarda (p. 62) on four grounds: (i) The *Tarikh-i-Daudi* and *Wakiat Mushtaki* do not record it. (ii) Mian Husain and Mian Maruf had only a small following. (iii) Sanga obtained a large part of Malwa and tracts up to Biyana. (iv) Ibrahim Lodi had Mian Husain assassinated soon after this battle. It may be remarked that (1) *argumentum ex silencio* is hardly a safe guide for historians; (2) the general attempted a surprise attack; (3) Sanga, not being defeated by the surprise attack, could easily follow up his victory over Mian Makhan; (4) Mian Husain's desertion of Mian Makhan deserved this punishment.

³ Sarda (p. 56) refers to a battle between Sanga and the Sultan's troops near Khatoli (Tod's Ghatolli?). "In this battle, the Maharana lost his left arm by a sword cut, and an arrow made him lame for life."

IV BABUR

On the eve of his fatal contest with Babur, Rana Sanga occupied a really unique position. Among the Hindu princes of India Babur places him next only to the ruler of Vijaynagar.¹ We also read in Babur's Memoirs² that "not one of all the exalted sovereigns of this wide realm, such as the Sultan of Delhi, the Sultan of Gujrat and the Sultan of Mandu, could cope with this evil-dispositioned one, without the help of other pagans; one and all they cajoled him and temporized with him." This estimate of the Rana's power and influence is not exaggerated. We have seen that he had twice defeated the troops of Sultan Ibrahim Lodi of Delhi and snatched away from his hands important places like Chanderi and Biyana. He had defeated the Gujarati troops more than once and plundered a large portion of Gujarat with impunity. He had helped Bahadur Shah to occupy the throne of Gujarat. So far as Malwa is concerned, Sanga's victories were still more brilliant and fruitful. He had captured Sultan Mahmud Khalji and retained his son as a hostage. Babur says³ that "in the downfall from power of the Mandu Sultans, he became possessed of many of their dependencies such as Rantanbur, Sarangpur, Bhilsa and Chandiri." Within Rajputana Sanga's ascendancy was complete. His vassals ruled over Idar and Dungarpur. Tod says, "The princes of Marwar and Ambar did him homage, and the Raos of Gwalior, Ajmer, Sikri, Raisin, Kalpee, Chanderi, Boondi, Gagrun, Rampura and Abu served him as tributaries or held of him in chief."⁴

¹ Beveridge, p. 483.

² Beveridge, pp. 561-562.

³ Beveridge, p. 483.

⁴ It is difficult to verify this statement, but Babur's list of Hindu chiefs killed at Khanua includes Chandrabhan Chauhan, Bhupat Rao of Chanderi, Manik Chauhan, Dilpat Rao, Gangu Singh, Karm Singh and Daukusi, each of whom was 'a splendid and magnificent chieftain.' (Beveridge, p. 573).

Such a ruler was eminently fit for restoring Hindu supremacy in Northern India. The moment was appropriate; the Sultanate of Delhi was tottering to its fall. Nor did Sanga lack in the patience and determination which are essential for success in such a dazzling but difficult enterprise. Since his accession he had been deliberately trying to strengthen his position by weakening his formidable neighbours, the Muslim rulers of Malwa and Gujarat. He had succeeded in a trial of strength with Ibrahim Lodi himself. He had invited Babur to occupy Delhi, so that he himself might easily 'move on Agra'.¹ After the battle of Panipat Sanga felt that the moment, for which he had been waiting so long, had come at last. The Sultan of Malwa had been humbled; Sultan Bahadur Shah of Gujarat almost owed his throne to his support; Ibrahim Lodi was dead; Babur, the new-comer, was threatened by numerous Afghan chiefs in Eastern and Northern India, and his position was still further weakened by the anxiety of his lieutenants to leave India.² Sanga boldly decided to strike now.

Sanga had promised to 'move on Agra' if Babur came to Delhi from Kabul, but he gave no sign of moving even after the capture of Delhi and Agra by the Mughals.³ We may assume that Sanga did not intend to help Babur in occupying the throne left vacant by Ibrahim Lodi.⁴ So while advancing towards Babur's head-quarters he at the same time strengthened himself by securing the alliance of the discontented Afghan chiefs.⁵ He captured Kandar, a fort in Rajputana, from the hands of a Muslim chief named Hasan, who appealed in vain for assistance to Babur.

Reports about Sanga's 'hostile and mischievous attitude' began to reach Babur. Hasan Khan Mewati joined the Rana,

¹ Beveridge, p. 529.

² For Babur's difficulties after Panipat, see Beveridge, pp. 523-525.

³ Beveridge, pp. 529-530, 550-557.

⁴ Cf. Rushbrook Williams, *An Empire-Builder of the Sixteenth Century*, p. 141.

⁵ They wanted to place Mahmud Lodi, a brother of Ibrahim Lodi, on the imperial throne with the Rana's assistance.

although Babur had tried to conciliate him by releasing his son who had fallen into his hands in the fight with Ibrahim Lodi. Babur left Agra 'for the Holy War' on February 11, 1527, and encamped at Fatehpur Sikri. Sanga captured Biyana and came 'near and nearer' the Mughal army. Babur's army 'shewed signs of want of heart.' On February 25 Babur renounced wine. Then he made his nobles and soldiers take an oath that no one would 'think of turning his face from this foe, or withdraw from this deadly encounter so long as life is not rent from his body.' Here we have the most effective testimony to the strength and reputation of the Rana.

Tod says that some time before the battle of Khanua Babur tried to conclude peace with Sanga. "The negotiation had reached this point, that on condition of Babur being left Delhi and its dependencies, the Peela-Khal at Biyana should be the boundary of their respective dominions, and even an annual tribute was offered to the Rana." Neither Babur himself nor any Muslim chronicler refers to this story, but in view of Babur's desperate position it cannot be rejected as altogether improbable.¹ Whether Babur really wanted to keep his promise, if he made it at all, is very doubtful. In all probability he wanted to gain time, so that he might attack the Rana when circumstances were more favourable to him. The Rana acted wisely in rejecting the proposal. If he was really fighting for the imperial throne, not for a fort or a province², he could not conclude an enduring peace with the man who wanted to keep Delhi for himself.

On the eve of the battle the number of soldiers at the Rana's

1 Rushbrook Williams (p. 156) says that Tod's story has 'no stamp of truth upon' it, but gives no reason for this remark.

2 Sarda (p. 138) remarks that Silhadi, who is said to have conducted the negotiations, was displeased because Sanga rejected the proposal 'though the Maharana had been offered more than what he had started from Chitor to fight for.' What did the Rana start from Chitor to fight for—a slice of territory, or the crown of Delhi? Sarda himself observes in another place (Foreword to his book) that Sanga wanted 'to contest the crown of India'.

disposal was, according to Babur, more than two lakhs.¹ Tod says that Sanga was usually followed into the field by 'eighty thousand horse, seven Rajas of the highest rank, nine Raos, and one hundred and four chieftains bearing the titles of Rawul and Rawut, with five hundred war elephants.'² So far as the numerical strength of Babur's army is concerned, the translator of his *Memoirs* remarks,³ "Babur's army, all told, was 12,000 when he crossed the Indus from Kabul; it will have had accretions from his own officers in the Punjab and some also from other quarters, and will have had losses at Panipat; his reliable kernel of fighting strength cannot but have been numerically insignificant, compared with the Rajput host".

After numerous skirmishes the final battle⁴ took place at Khanua, a dependency of Biyana, on March 17, 1527. The Rajputs were defeated. Many Hindu chiefs were killed. "Many fell dead on the field of battle; others, desisting from fighting, fled to the desert of exile and became the food of crows and kites. Mounds were made of the bodies of the slain, pillars of their heads."⁵ After the victory Babur gave up the 'plan' of 'moving into the pagan's country.....because of the little water and much heat on the road.'⁶

It is necessary to analyse the causes which led to Sanga's defeat in the battle of Khanua. Tod gives two reasons—the treachery of Silhadi and Sanga's inactivity before the final battle. The story of Silhadi's treachery is extremely doubtful.⁷ Neither

1 Beveridge, p. 562.

2 This estimate seems to have been accepted by Smith. See *Oxford History of India*, p. 323.

3 Beveridge, p. 547. Rushbrook Williams (pp. 152-153) says that 'in effectives the Rajput chieftain outnumbered his antagonist by seven or eight to one.' See also Ojha's estimate, pp. 686-688.

4 For a description of the battle, see Beveridge, pp. 563-573, and Rushbrook Williams, pp. 149-156.

5 Beveridge, pp. 572-573.

6 Beveridge, p. 577.

7 See Beveridge, *Asiatic Review*, November, 1915; Rushbrook Williams, p. 156. Sarda (p. 145) accepts the story,

Babur nor any other Muslim writer refers to it. Moreover, instead of rewarding Silhadi for his alleged treachery to Sanga, Babur wanted to attack him soon after the battle of Khanua.¹ Finally, after Sanga's death Silhadi allied himself with his son and successor, Ratan Singh, against Sultan Mahmud Khalji of Malwa. These facts, together with a statement of Babur's secretary that Bhupat, a son of Silhadi, died for Sanga at Khanua,² make it difficult for us to accept Tod's view about the part played by Silhadi in the battle of Khanua. So far as Tod's charge about Sanga's inactivity before the battle³ is concerned, there seems to be a confusion between the preliminary skirmishes (in which Sanga's army came out successful) and the final engagement. Babur's narrative makes it clear that Sanga did not give him any respite *during the final engagement*.

Sarda⁴ says that the battle was lost by the Rajputs because 'an arrow struck with such force on the forehead of the Maharana' that he lost his consciousness and had to be removed from the battle-field. Raj Rana Ajjaji, 'who held the first rank among the nobles of Mewar,' occupied the royal seat on Sanga's elephant, but he failed to prevent the rumour from spreading like wildfire. The bond of unity in the Rajput army was broken, and defeat naturally followed. This story, though supported by one stray couplet quoted by Sarda, is not mentioned by Tod (who says that the Rana was wounded), nor is it supported by any Muslim writer.

Sanga's weakness really sprang from different reasons. Babur clearly says that he was the leader of a 'rabble-rout'.⁵ His supremacy over Rajputana wounded the clan sentiment of the average Rajput. The Rathors, the Chauhans and the

Kachchhawahas could not whole-heartedly accept the hegemony of a chief who belonged to a different clan. As Babur says, ".....the rajas and rais of high degree, who obeyed him in this battle, and the governors and commanders who were amongst his followers in this conflict, had not obeyed him in any earlier fight or, out of regard to their own dignity, been friendly with him."¹ Sanga was trying to impose on the Rajputs a new type of unity which went against the traditional politico-social organisation of the race. Nor could the '*Hindupat*' have expected whole-hearted loyalty and assistance from his new-found Afghan allies. Everything separated them—religion, tradition, ultimate object (for while Sanga's victory would have established Hindu ascendancy in Northern India, the Afghans aimed at placing a Lodi prince on the throne of Delhi); they were united only by a common emergency—the necessity of driving Babur out of India. Such an unnatural combination could hardly be effective against a group of men whose future in an unknown country depended upon cohesion and desperate courage.

Another factor—purely military—contributed to Babur's success. There is no doubt that, as a general leading his men to a definite goal through definite means, Babur was far more able and far-sighted than his rival. Apart from this, they were fighting according to different principles of warfare. While Babur relied on artillery and mobility, Sanga depended on cavalry. Tod says that Babur's artillery made dreadful havoc in the close ranks of the Rajput cavalry. Babur's experience of war outside India enabled him to strike a decisive blow against an antiquated system which prevailed in conservative India. As Tod says in another connection, "The use of artillery was now (i.e., in the reign of Vikramjit) becoming general, and the Moslems soon perceived the necessity of foot for their protection: but prejudice operated longer upon the Rajput, who still curses 'those vile guns', which render of comparatively little value the lance of many a gallant soldier."²

1 Beveridge, pp. 561-562.

1 Beveridge, p. 598. Babur's plan did not mature.

2 Beveridge, p. 573.

3 This charge is supported by Ojha (p. 691) and Sarda (pp. 138-139).

4 See pp. 146-150.

5 Beveridge, p. 561.

6 Beveridge, pp. 561-562.

V LAST DAYS

After the battle of Khanua "Sanga retreated towards the hills of Mewar, having announced his fixed determination never to re-enter Chitor but with victory." His enemy gave up, for the time being at least, the 'plan' of 'moving into the pagan's country', but he tried to weaken the Rana by subjugating his Rajput vassals. A few months after the battle of Khanua Babur started against Chanderi, which was still in the possession of Medini Rai.¹ The fort occupied an important strategic position. Babur stormed and captured it on January 29, 1528. After the occupation of Chanderi Babur intended 'to move against Raising, Bhilsan, and Sarangpur, pagan lands dependent on the pagan Salah-ud-din, and these taken, to move on Rana Sanga in Chitur'. But the news of troubles in the east compelled him to change his plan; Chitor was saved.² Sanga seems to have advanced as far as Irej in order to attack the Mughals; but some of his ministers, unwilling to continue the apparently hopeless struggle against Babur, administered poison to him.³ Sanga died in March or April, 1528.⁴

Sanga left Mewar weaker than he had found her. Externally, Babur's strength was increasing day by day, Bahadur Shah was consolidating his position, and Mahmud Khalji was thinking of a war of revenge. Internally, the undue favour shown by Sanga to his favourite wife Karameti and her son Vikramjit⁵ created dissensions within the royal family. The dazzling military and political successes of the great Rana evaporated even before his death.

1 Beveridge, pp. 589-597, 483.

2 Beveridge, p. 598.

3 The story of poison, though not mentioned by Babur, is supported by Abul Fazl.

4 Ojha (p. 697) gives January 30, 1528.

5 The Rana gave the important fort of Ranthambhor to Vikramjit. On his accession to the throne Ratan Singh, the eldest of Sanga's sons, claimed it. Karameti and her son sought and received Babur's assistance. (See Nainsi. Beveridge, pp. 612-613.)

Rana Sanga's failure to unite the different clans against the Mughal invader explains why the martial Rajputs could not play a larger and more fruitful part in Indian history. Not to speak of the Marathas, the Rajputs failed to do even what the Sikhs did. They could not extend their political authority beyond their mountains and deserts. Had any Rajput prince succeeded in creating a compact kingdom comprising the whole of Rajputana it might have stood as a strong barrier against the expansion of the Turkish Empire over practically the whole of Northern India and the Deccan. But the valiant Rajputs were so parochial in outlook and so indifferent to cataclysmic political changes around them that they did not stir out of their secluded forts even after the conquest of Gujarat by Ala-ud-din Khalji. When enterprising Muslim chieftains divided India among themselves in the 15th century the heroes of Mewar exhausted their strength in fruitless contests with the rulers of Malwa and Gujarat. When the Mughals came the Kachchhah-wahas and the Rathors surrendered practically without fighting, and Mewar's long struggle under Udai Singh, Pratap Singh and Amar Singh remained an isolated disturbance from the standpoint of Delhi. In the 18th century the inheritance of the Great Mughals fell to the Marathas, to the Sikhs, to Muslim adventurers like Nizam-ul-Mulk and the Nawabs of Bengal and Oudh. The Rajputs spent themselves in civil wars and clan rivalries.

The history of the Rajputs is thus a tragic story of lost opportunities. They could not rise above the parochialism on which the clan system was based. They could not think of India as a whole. They could not place themselves in the wide perspective of history. Deeply rooted in the past, stagnant in ideas as well as in methods, they lost those glittering prizes which history offers to rulers and peoples who can plunge boldly into the unknown in pursuit of great visions¹.

1 See the present writer's *The Rajput States and the East India Company*, pp. 414-419.

EARLY INDO-PERSIAN LITERATURE AND AMIR KHUSRAU

I

During the six centuries of Muslim supremacy in India, this country contributed two important elements to the growth of civilisation, namely, Indo-Muslim art and Indo-Persian literature. The Muslim rulers of India were sometimes illiterate, sometimes half-educated; most of them cared more than anything else for the wild joy of hunting and the frenzied glory of war. They devastated fertile plains and burnt rich cities; they blinded their relatives and crushed their enemies under the feet of elephants. This aspect of their character is undoubtedly crude and shocking; but it stands in strange and almost incoherent contrast to the remarkable fact that these very rulers were, with few exceptions, lovers of beauty, both in marble and in verse.¹ They built beautiful structures in which they could offer their prayers. They loved to live in exquisite palaces and to construct glorious tombs in which their mortal remains could be deposited. They wanted their victories in love and war to be sung by the best writers of their age, and during the intervals of their arduous work and drinking bouts they loved to hear sweet Persian lyrics and Urdu *ghazals*. It is difficult for us to penetrate into the gloomy and mysterious atmosphere of that half-forgotten age, and to appreciate the furious ecstasy of life which these strange men enjoyed so much. From the historian's point of view,

¹ Compare, for instance, the remarks of Sir John Marshall in *The Cambridge History of India* (Vol. III, pp. 569-570): "That they (i.e., the Muslim conquerors of India) were brutal fighters, without any of the chivalry, for example, of the Rajputs, and that they were capable of acts of savagery and gross intemperance, may be conceded. But these.....did not preclude them.....from participating in the prevalent culture and arts of Islam.....though Ala-ud-din slaughtered thousands of Mongols in cold blood at Delhi, he was the author of buildings of unexampled grace and nobility."

we must be grateful to them for the splendid heritage of art and literature which they have left for us.

Scholars and amateurs alike have long since interested themselves in Indo-Muslim art; and though much more work must be done before we shall be in a position to appreciate the full significance and value of this absorbing branch of the cultural history of India, yet the importance of the subject has already been recognised. Unfortunately the same remark cannot be applied to the case of Indo-Persian literature. A recognised authority on the subject assures us that "Persian literature produced in India has not, as a rule, the real Persian flavour,....which belongs to the indigenous product."¹ This attitude being almost universal, the true worth of Indo-Persian literature has not yet been properly appreciated. I am not a competent judge of the literary value of Persian works produced by Indian writers. But it is probably not incorrect to say that some at least of the very large number of Persian poets who lived and wrote in India during the long period of Muslim rule produced works of real beauty and left a deep impress upon Persian literature in its Indian environment. Writers on the history of Persian literature have hitherto done scant justice to this subject by treating it merely as a branch of Islamic literary culture. But the subject is important enough to demand separate and independent treatment. It ought to be studied not as an offshoot of Persian genius thrown by the caprice of historical evolution into an alien land, but as an original product with an individuality all its own. Indo-Persian literature can be properly understood and appreciated only with reference to the peculiarities of the land of its birth as well as the history of the age in which it grew, just as American literature can be explained only on the hypothesis that it is a genuine product conditioned by the social and economic environment amidst which it has developed.

My present purpose, however, is not to deal with the literary value of the works of the Indo-Muslim poets, but to invite

¹ Browne, *Persian Literature under the Tartar Dominion*, p. 107.

attention to their significance from the historical point of view. For the reconstruction of the history of India during the long period of Muslim supremacy it is imperatively necessary to utilise the historical and poetical works written by court-poets and contemporary observers. In India literature has often flourished under the fostering care and patronage of kings and courtiers. The chief care of the poets was to immortalise the names and achievements of their patrons. This remark applies generally to the Sanskrit poets of old, to the bards of medieval Rajputana, as well as to the court-poets of the Muslim rulers of India. Every historian knows that it is wrong to regard these high-sounding panegyrics as altogether worthless. In some cases at least they are of great historical importance. Not unoften do they describe in detail, or refer to, previous or contemporary historical incidents. Though the stories as narrated by them are often exaggerated, or even falsified, yet in most cases we can check their veracity by referring to other sources of information. On the whole, the poetical versions of the 'superhuman exploits' of the kings and courtiers of that age are very often of real value for supplementing the historical data necessary to reconstruct the history of the medieval period.

From a broader point of view, the historical value of the works of the Indo-Muslim writers is perhaps greater still, because they present to us the picture of an age which played so vital a part in the long history of this country, an age which, unfortunately, lack of adequate historical materials prevents us from interpreting correctly. The days of Akbar and Aurangzib seem to belong to the present, but how much do we know about the life of the average man when the Great Mughals dominated over the whole of India? How much, indeed, do we know about the social and economic problems with which leaders of state and of society in that age had to deal? If such is the case with the history of a period so near, what can we say of remote Sind which succumbed to the Arabs in the 8th century, of the political and economic reaction to the invasions and rule of the Ghaznavids in north-western India, of the great train of revolutionary changes which transformed the

religious complexion of the population of Bengal, and of the establishment of Turkish supremacy in the far-off Deccan?

Historical works, legends, inscriptions, coins, monuments—all these give us naked records of political events, of battles and victories, of great men and great political and military achievements. We construct an almanac of facts, and mistake it for history. We scarcely know anything definite about the mutual reaction of the ancient religion of the land and the intruding creed; about the great social transformation by which the descendants of Aryans, Dravidians, Mongolians, Sakas and Huns came to live side by side, in economic stability and religious understanding, with Arabs, Turks and Afghans; about the complex process of readjustment in all aspects of life which must have been necessitated by the overthrow of one orthodoxy by another. We do not know how, and through how many halting stages, the conqueror and the conquered came to form the one nation which we see to-day. And unless we know these facts, unless we catch the spirit which conditioned these tremendous upheavals, we cannot explain the history of our country during the six long centuries of Muslim supremacy, and we cannot understand how the living present emerged from the shadowy past.

The poetical works of the Indo-Muslim writers may give us a glimpse into the life of the age in which they were written. It would be vain, of course, to expect from them direct and complete details about the religious, social and economic forces operating in those days. Poets then loved to deal mostly with the unprincipled quarrels of the great, and to them history was nothing but an entertaining combination of hero-worship and romance. Nevertheless, they had to keep the country in the background and to give incidental references to the environment in which they themselves as well as their heroes and heroines moved. It is only by a painful process of collecting apparently trivial details, of registering vague impressions and of reconciling the scanty data with our previous knowledge of the political history of the age, that we can arrive at necessarily incomplete, but very valuable, conclusions about the life which our ancestors

were living at that time. The process which would be useful in this sphere of study is not unlike that by which the Homeric epics have been utilised for purposes of historical reconstruction. In Europe medieval songs and ballads have been systematically exploited for writing social and economic history. In our own country scholars have surveyed the entire range of Sanskrit and Pali literature in order to supplement archaeological and numismatic data. Similar attention should now be directed to Indo-Persian literature.

II

For long five centuries, from the 8th to the 12th, Islam tried to capture control over the destinies of India, and for the next six centuries it remained the master of the country. When the Marathas and the British shook its political power to its foundations and ultimately destroyed it, Islam had already transplanted itself securely in Indian soil, and millions of its devotees had merged into the great Indian nation. For a thousand years, in a thousand ways, Islam had been influencing Hindu religion and culture, and the complex civilisation which faced the Westerners in the last quarter of the 18th century was a curious, but homogeneous, combination of the innumerable forces which had been struggling for supremacy ever since the fall of Raja Dahir of Sind.

For the literary historian the Arab conquest and occupation of Sind is an episode of minor importance. The Arabs scarcely concerned themselves with anything more than the collection of taxes and the suppression of rebellions. The only other subject which occasionally engaged their attention was the spread of Islam. The four centuries of Arab rule in that outer fringe of the country did not produce any remarkable artistic or literary monument. Like the Roman occupation of Britain, the Arab occupation of Sind is interesting historically, but it is hardly important from a long-range point of view.

It was when the Ghaznavids established themselves in north-

western India in the 11th century that the country for the first time really became a part, both politically and culturally, of the great Islamic world which extended from the frontiers of France to those of China. The Hindu culture of that age, which by a strange combination of orthodoxy and adaptability had succeeded in assimilating the civilised Greeks and the barbarous Sakas and Huns, now came face to face against a virile and composite culture backed by the enormous military strength of the Turks. Islam was too strange and too strong to be submerged beneath the old faith which had already lost its ancient ardour and toleration, and was in many respects tending towards ritualistic rigidity. On the other hand, Hinduism, with all its narrowness, had too much vitality to be crushed like the decaying faiths and institutions of Western Asia and Africa. The inevitable result was that the rivals came to an understanding through halting phases of antagonism, and in this long process created what we call Indo-Muslim culture.

For our present purpose it will suffice to point out that the beginnings of Indo-Persian literature are to be traced to the period of Ghaznavid rule in the Punjab. In an age when society as well as culture revolved round the brilliance of the court, Lahore as a centre of political authority necessarily attracted both ambitious nobles and rising poets. There was constant intercourse between Afghanistan, Persia, Transoxiana and Khorasan on one side and the Punjab on the other. Although our records are scanty, it may be presumed that many gifted men migrated from those countries to the newly conquered land and laid the foundations of a vigorous culture.

III

It is unfortunate that very few of the works of the earlier writers of Indo-Persian poetry have been preserved, for they were probably interesting historically and even from the literary critic's point of view. We come across brief extracts from their writings in some historical and biographical works and naturally

they are of very little importance as sources of information. Though this destructive process must have been hastened by the long period of time which has elapsed since the poets had done their work as well as by the incidental disadvantages of an age which knew not the art of printing, yet it is perhaps not too much to hope that a careful search may still bring to light some at least of the literary works which we now regard as altogether lost.

But perhaps the most important reason why the works of the earlier writers have been forgotten and ultimately lost is the great fame enjoyed by Amir Khusrau. In a very literal sense he eclipsed all his predecessors and most of his successors. Badaoni¹ clearly says that "after the appearance of the cavalcade of the King of poets, the poetry of his predecessors became bedimmed like stars at the rise of the sun". Sir Wolseley Haig describes Amir Khusrau as one of "the few Indian-born writers of Persian verse whose works have been read and admired beyond their own country."² But among the less important stars there must have been at least some whose works deserve mention. The works of Amir Khusrau's contemporary, Amir Hasan, known as Hasan-i-Dihlavi, were much appreciated. Historians of the early Sultanate of Delhi, specially Barani and Firishta, have given us the names of numerous poets. It is clear, therefore, that Amir Khusrau, the accomplished artist, was not a pioneer in the field of Indo-Persian literature. He inherited a tradition and gave it new scope and colour.

Amir Khusrau was undoubtedly of Turkish origin. His father, Amir Saif-ud-din Mahmud, came to India, found employment under Iltutmish, and settled at Patiyali, a small town in the Etah district, U. P., where Amir Khusrau was born, probably in 1253 A. D. On his father's premature death he was placed under the guardianship of his maternal grandfather, Imad-ul-mulk, who was a prominent noble in Balban's court.

It was during the strong and vigorous regime of Balban that

¹ Text, p. 70

² *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. III, p. 135.

Amir Khusrau made his debut as a courtier and poet. The Sultan himself was a patron of letters, and his example was enthusiastically followed by a brilliant group of nobles who adorned his court. Amir Khusrau started his career as a protegee of Ala-ud-din Kishli Khan, the chief Chamberlain, and a nephew of Balban. But within a short time he was compelled by circumstances to transfer his allegiance to Balban's younger son, Bughra Khan, then governor of the strong fortress of Samana. The poet accompanied his patron when the latter went with Balban to suppress the rebellion of Tughril in Bengal; but he was unwilling to live in 'a marsh-ridden province', so far from his relatives and friends, and returned to Delhi.

In Delhi Amir Khusrau attracted the attention of Balban's eldest son, Muhammad, who was then governor of Multan. For three years he lived at Multan with his patron. It was during this period that he rose into prominence as a poet and his fame travelled even to far-off Persia, where Sa'di, then in his extreme old age, was the recognised master of Persian literature. Tradition tells us that Prince Muhammad, than whom there was no more enthusiastic devotee of scholarship and poetry in India in his age, invited Sa'di to come over to India and to adorn his court at Multan. The great poet, however, refused, on grounds of health, to leave his beloved Shiraz; but he sent the Indian Prince a copy of a selection of his verses in his own handwriting, and expressed his great appreciation of the genius of Amir Khusrau. When Muhammad lost his life in a battle with the Mughals,¹ Amir Khusrau was captured as a prisoner, but we do not know how he managed to get free.

During the early part of the reign of Kaiqubad, Amir Khusrau's patron was Hatim Khan, governor of Oudh. But after a short stay with him he returned to Delhi and joined the Royal court.

On the accession of Jalal-ud-din Khalji, Amir Khusrau was

¹ Amir Khusrau describes the tragic campaign in a beautiful elegy, *Wast-ul-Haya'*.

finally recognised as the poet-laureate. Being a poet himself, the old Sultan was better able than his predecessors to appreciate his genius. The poet was honoured with special rank and robes. "Each night," says Barani, "Amir Khusrau brought new *ghazals* to the assembly of the King."¹

It is a sad commentary on Amir Khusrau's sense of loyalty as a man to state that he was among the first to congratulate Ala-ud-din Khalji on his treacherous murder of his uncle and benefactor. But we may do well to remember that he lived in an age when success justified everything, and that the slightest hesitation to recognise the *de facto* master of the situation was incompatible with personal safety. Be that as it may, Amir Khusrau hailed Ala-ud-din as a hero who had 'advanced to the throne with sword in one hand and gold in the other, crowning heads with the latter and severing them with the former.'² Such an accommodating writer naturally continued to occupy his position as the poet-laureate. He accompanied the Sultan during his victorious expedition to Chitor, and, if Badaoni is to be believed, he went also with Malik Kafur during the latter's last expedition to the Deccan.

Ala-ud-din's reign of twenty years constitutes the most important period in Amir Khusrau's literary career, and, therefore, a great epoch in the history of Indo-Persian literature. In his maturity the poet attained a standard in expression as well as in technique as had never been attained by any of his predecessors in India. He himself claims that his renown had spread from one city to another and, like the sun, had seized both the East and the West.³

Unlike his uncle, Ala-ud-din himself was not an accomplished scholar and poet, but he was not less enthusiastic in extending his patronage to the literary men of his time. Amir Khusrau declares that every stone in Delhi which one would turn would disclose 'a pearl of poetry' and that from every yard of earth

which one might dig 'a fountain of ideas' would spring forth.¹ Barani says, "The most wonderful thing which people saw in Ala-ud-din's reign was the multitude of great men of all nationalities, masters of every science and experts in every art. The capital of Delhi, by the presence of these unrivalled men of great talents, had become the envy of Baghdad, the rival of Constantinople."²

About this time Amir Khusrau became a disciple of Nizam-ud-din Auliya, one of the greatest saints of the Chishtiya sect, usually known by the title of *Sultan-ul-Auliya*. This great man seems to have exercised a tremendous influence on the men and women of his day. Barani says, "To the elite, as well as to the multitude, to the rich, the poor, the nobles, the paupers, the scholars, the ignorant, the gentle, the rough, the citizens, the peasants, the warriors, the freemen and the slaves he gave the four-cornered cap, '*miswak*' of purification, with his blessings ... Sultan Ala-ud-din himself, with all his family, had great faith in the Sheikh..."³ As a disciple of the saint Amir Khusrau most probably became a full-fledged Sufi⁴, but whether his intense religious fervour affected his growing poetical genius we do not know.

The intrigues and disasters which followed Ala-ud-din's death led to an unfortunate break in Amir Khusrau's position in the court as well as in his literary activities. But he was again invited to the court by Mubarak Khalji. Requested by his new patron to write the history of his reign, he composed the beautiful *masnavi*, *Nuh Sipahr* (or *The Nine Skies*).

On the downfall of the Khalji dynasty Ghiyas-ud-din Tughlaq ascended the throne of Delhi, and Amir Khusrau, with characteristically courtier-like tact, hailed him as the 'defender

1. Barani, Text, p. 200.

2. *Khazain-ul-Futuh*.

3. *Bakiya-i-Nakiya*.

1. *Wast-ul-Hayat*.

2. Text, p. 341.

3. Text, p. 343.

4. The Sheikh is reported to have said about the poet, "I hope on the Day of Judgement to be expunged of all blame by the fire that burns in the heart of this Turk". (Yusuf Husain, *Glimpses of Medieval Indian Culture*, p. 119).

of Islam.' The new Sultan must have been very gracious and liberal in his patronage to our poet, for Firishta tells us that¹ he was 'more prosperous in his reign than he had been before.' Amir Khusrau died in 1325 A.D.

It is altogether impossible to do justice to Amir Khusrau's varied and eventful career in a running sketch of a few hundred words; but I have tried to point out the boundaries within which the poet directed his activities in the course of a life extending over three quarters of a century. Since his attainment of manhood he had lived through the reigns of six Sultans, having been intimately connected with their courts, and having enjoyed the confidence and friendship of some of the greatest nobles of the age. The longest period of his life he passed in Delhi, and he had the privilege of being initiated into the political and social mysteries which necessarily centred in the capital. But his personal experience about the distant provinces of the Sultanate was not negligible. He lived for three years at Multan, and he must have taken an active interest in the affairs of that frontier province which his patron governed. Having been born in the district of Etah, he returned to Oudh for a short time with his patron Hatim Khan. He accompanied Bughra Khan to Samana and then to Bengal, and thus had the opportunity of surveying for himself the conditions prevailing in the easternmost province of the Sultanate of Delhi. He was an eye-witness of Ala-ud-din Khalji's attack on Chitor. And finally, Badaoni tells us that he accompanied Malik Kafur to the Deccan.

IV

There are very few literary men in medieval Indian history who can lay claim to the wide personal knowledge of men and events during a period extending over half a century which it was the privilege of Amir Khusrau to possess. Though he wisely confined his activities to the sphere in which his genius shone with unrivalled brilliance, and never aspired after

¹ Lucknow Text, Vol. I, p. 132.

any direct participation in political affairs, yet his unique experience must have made him an acute observer of events. This consideration enhances the value of his testimony with regard to the history of his times, because in dealing with an age from which little contemporary evidence has survived, the best material we can hope to seize is the version of an intelligent observer, who had access to all court intrigues and himself lived in intimate contact with some of the principal personages who controlled the destinies of the country. Of course we must not forget that Amir Khusrau was a court-poet and as such he must have looked at events through official eyes, and that his dependence upon his Royal patrons necessarily coloured his independent judgement and most probably even interfered with strictly accurate narration of facts. But it would be unreasonable to dismiss light-heartedly the materials which Amir Khusrau's works offer us. Trained scholars have extracted valuable information from Sanskrit poetical works and inscriptions, in which even petty chieftains have been represented by their admiring court-poets as world-conquering heroes. By exercising due caution and keeping an open mind, we shall be able to utilise to the fullest extent the evidence supplied by the greatest of Indo-Muslim court-poets.

Apart from the direct literary and historical value of Amir Khusrau's works, there is another aspect of their importance which, so far as I know, has not yet attracted the attention it deserves. I mean the indications which they offer as regards the mutual relations of the conquerors and the conquered. The significance of this subject can hardly be over-estimated. It is essentially a mistaken view of Indian history during the time of the Turkish and Afghan Sultans to interpret it in terms of victory and defeat. What historians generally do is to give us a list of the expeditions led by each Sultan, adding short comments on their success or failure. We seem to proceed through the annals of a hardly civilised country which is in process of being absorbed by a mighty power. We know very little about the indigenous rulers (in Rajputana, for example) who stubbornly resisted the intruding conquerors, and

we are given no explanations for their successes and failures. We know very little about the life of the great nobles who, in those days of weak central government and difficult communications, actually controlled the destinies of millions of people of alien faith. We receive no answer to the question how these nobles treated their heathen subjects and how they themselves regarded their own position in this strange country. Sometimes we hear of wholesale massacres and destruction of temples; sometimes, again, we hear of a system of mere military occupation which left the work of day-to-day administration of the country to petty Hindu chiefs and zamindars. This strange and incoherent attitude towards our national history is the inevitable result of the exclusive reliance so far placed by historians upon orthodox Muslim chroniclers, to whom the subjugation of the idolators by the followers of the true faith appeared to be a mere episode in the great epic of the holy war for the fulfilment of the purpose of God.

The central theme of Indian history during the long period of Muslim supremacy may be stated as follows: How did the Hindus and the Muslims, alien to each other in every aspect of their religious and social life, arrive at a mutual understanding and a tolerant re-adjustment of their contradictory ideals? How could the high-caste Hindus adopt Persian dress, make themselves masters of Persian literature, and modify their orthodox ways of living in a thousand ways of which traces may be discovered even to this day, without sacrificing their faith in the gods and the rituals which they had inherited from their forefathers? How could the proud Rajput Princes and Chiefs offer their sisters and daughters in marriage to the Mughal Emperors, clinging all the

1 Compare Sir John Marshall's comment in *The Cambridge History of India* (Vol. III, p. 568): "Seldom in the history of mankind has the spectacle been witnessed of two civilisations, so vast and so strongly developed, yet so radically dissimilar as the Muhammadan and the Hindu, meeting and mingling together. The very contrasts which existed between them, the wide divergences in their culture and their religions, make the history of their impact peculiarly instructive....."

while to the religion which their ancestors had embraced with great ardour soon after their settlement in this country? How are we to explain the strange but harmonious mingling of Hindu and Muslim principles and ideals of art which culminated in Indo-Muslim architecture and Rajput painting? Why did the Muslim rulers entrust so large a share of the administration of the country to the care of the infidels? How can we account for the fact that in Bengal Muslim poets wrote vernacular verses on Hindu religious stories and Muslim rulers helped actively in laying the foundations of Bengali literature by extending their patronage to Hindu writers? How did Kabir and Nanak succeed in evolving strange types of faith which aimed at reconciling the Puranas with the Qur'an, and how did a Muslim win a respected position in Bengal as a Vaishnava saint under the name of Haridas?

It is unnecessary to multiply instances. The problem is there, and it is the business of the historian to find out the solution. The historian who deals with this period of Indian history is in some respects in the same position with the historian of medieval England. The latter is to explain how Saxon and Norman elements coalesced, under the continued strain of incoming Continental forces, to produce the England of the Tudors. Similarly, the former must understand how Hindu and Islamic cultures reacted upon one another and through long centuries of agony and conflict, in some cases intensified by the constant flow of new Islamic blood and thought from the other side of the Hindu-Kush, finally gave to India the religious and social colour with which the Europeans had to deal in the 18th and 19th centuries.

The answer to the questions which I have suggested above will hardly be found in the pages of the Muslim historians who, with a few exceptions like Alberuni and Mohsin Fani, are too much concerned about the ebb and flow of holy war to notice anything else. Unfortunately the materials upon which our answer must be based have in many cases been lost. But I believe that a thorough study of the available literary works of the period, accompanied by a detailed scrutiny of

the monuments of Indo-Muslim art, would offer really valuable suggestions, and that patient researches into local legends in all parts of India and Pakistan would disclose additional, and not less useful, information.

V

For the present I am concerned only with Indo-Persian literature. I have already explained the principles which should be applied to Amir Khusrau's historical poems in order to weigh the evidence contained in them. In general, those principles apply to historical writings of other poets as well. But even in purely literary works,—that is, works not dealing with any historical incident—we often find interesting glimpses into the political, economic, religious and social conditions of the periods in which they were written. From one point of view it may even be said that the direct and indirect inferences gathered from such works are more accurate and valuable than the facts recorded in professedly historical poems, inasmuch as the authors of the latter almost always colour the materials with their individual prejudices, whereas the writers of the former very rarely attempt a conscious remodelling of the data to which they incidentally refer. For the historian of religious, social and economic evolution these scattered references are more useful than the deliberately manipulated information gathered from official annals and even non-official historical works.

I may illustrate this point by referring to some of the works of Amir Khusrau himself. Take, for instance, his third *Divan—Ghurrat-ul-Kamal*. In this work the poet gives us a very interesting discussion on the types and merits of poetry in general, and incidentally dwells upon the beauties of the language and poetry of India. Now, Amir Khusrau is here obviously free from any political prejudice, and what he states may be safely accepted as his honest opinion. Thus we learn something about the development of language and the science of rhetoric in that age—a sidelight into the cultural history of India which cannot be

expected in any professedly historical work dealing with kings, nobles and their victories.

Perhaps the most important of Amir Khusrau's works from this point of view is *Nuh Sipahr*. As I have already said, this work was written at the request of Mubarak Khalji to celebrate the victories of his reign. But one of the nine parts of the poem consists entirely of a very interesting description of the cultural, religious and social condition of India in the days of the poet. He maintains that this country is far superior to Khorasan, and he is obviously very proud of the land of his birth.¹ He says that the Indians are very proficient in all branches of philosophy and learning, that learning is widespread among them, and that while foreign scholars very often come to India to study here, the people of the country are so advanced that they never feel the need of going to other countries for the purpose of adding to their knowledge. This enthusiastic testimony of an accomplished member of the conquering race, whose judgement in this matter was obviously free from political considerations or personal prejudices, stands in striking contrast with the curses usually associated by the Muslim historians with the name of their infidel neighbours. Amir Khusrau here supplies a corrective to the prevailing theory of Hindu stagnation during the early years of Turkish rule in India. He clearly shows that the intellectual life of the conquered race was very vigorous in his days; and if we attach to his statement the seriousness which it deserves, and search for the works which Hindu genius produced during this age, it is quite possible that we shall be able to discover materials which would necessitate the addition of a new and by no means inglorious chapter to the cultural history of the country. Incidentally, we shall see that the history of India during the time of the Slave and Khalji Sultans is much more complex as well as interesting than a mere record of the subjugation of decadent Hindu principalities by Muslim heroes.

Let us consider, again, Amir Khusrau's views on religion. In the above-mentioned work he dwells at some length upon

1 See Yusuf Husain, *Glimpses of Medieval Indian Culture*, pp. 119-124.

the respective religious beliefs and rituals of the Hindus and the Muslims. He detects certain similarities between the views of the two communities. Both of them, for instance, believe in the eternity of God as well as in His all-powerfulness. Naturally enough Amir Khusrau does not approve what appears to be the usual Hindu practice of worshipping stones, beasts, plants, and the like ; but he understands the fundamental Hindu idea that these objects merely typify the power and majesty of God. How different from the orthodox Muslim point of view ! We clearly see that the best minds of the conquering race were just beginning to understand the strange people of the land of their adoption, and that the first steps were laid of that tolerance and conciliation, comradeship and sympathy, which were to unite the followers of the two faiths in a common way of life in the not very distant future.

And yet it would be incorrect to over-emphasise these early traces of liberalism. Time was the essential element in the building of a nation in the medieval period, and hardly a century had elapsed since the establishment of the Slave Sultanate in Delhi. In his own way Amir Khusrau was a man of wide views and tolerance, comparatively free from racial, religious and social prejudices. But lack of evidence prevents us from ascertaining how far he represented his age in this respect. We may surmise that some of the wiser Muslims of the period were beginning to accept India as their own country and to reject the idea of looking down upon her as a mere conquered province in the vast world of Islam. It may be that political necessity, if not natural broadness of outlook, was beginning to convince them that it was better to let the Hindus live than to try to extirpate them. But at the same time the vast mass of the Muslims, as well as a large number of their political and religious leaders, must have been steeped in the spirit of hatred and violence which runs through the pages of the Muslim historians of the age. On this point Amir Khusrau himself supplies us with some interesting evidence. Sometimes even he clearly betrays his contempt for the 'crow-faced' and cow-dung-worshipping Hindus. He triumphantly describes the

destruction of their temples, and advises the political authorities not to allow them too much power and opportunity. When we contemplate that a man of his outlook and temperament could on some occasions at least indulge in prejudices like these, we clearly see that the day when the two communities would reach a working understanding about each other's position was far off indeed.

VI

There is reason to believe that some of the works of Amir Khusrau have been lost, or at any rate, have not yet been traced. We may not accept the legend which ascribes to our poet the composition of as many as 99 works ; but numerous references to his productions, scattered over contemporary and later historical and poetical writings, seem to convince us that some of the works written by him have not survived.¹

The historical *masnavis* composed by Amir Khusrau are obviously of the greatest importance for our present purpose. *Qiran-us-Sa'dain* (or *The Conjunction of the Two Auspicious Stars*), written at the request of Kaiqubad, has for its main theme the quarrel and reconciliation between Bughra Khan and Kaiqubad. As the poet himself enjoyed the patronage of both the father and the son, and was himself an observer of the incident which he describes, we have very little reason to doubt the authenticity of his statements.

Miftah-ul-Futuh, a portion of the *Ghurrat-ul-Kamal* (or *The Key to Success*), deals with the earlier successes of Jalal-ud-din Firuz Khalji.

The central theme of *Ashiq* is the romantic love, destined to a tragic end, of Khizr Khan, the eldest son of Ala-ud-din

¹ Nawab Ishaq Khan made an extensive search in India and thoroughly studied the catalogues of European libraries. His industry was partly rewarded, but he was not able to trace more than 45 works ascribed to Amir Khusrau. A list of these works will be found in his *Prolegomena to the Collected Works of Khusrau* (Delhi, 1917).

Khalji, and Devala Devi, the beautiful daughter of Karan Rai, the last Baghela king of Gujarat. The poet begins with the conquest of India by the Muslims and proceeds to give us a detailed account of Ala-ud-din's victories in peace and war—his successful campaigns against the Mongols, his expeditions to the Deccan, his triumph in Gujarat, his regulations which introduced peace and prosperity in the country. This poem, apart from its literary value as an excellent elegy on love, is perhaps the most important of Amir Khusrau's works from the historical point of view¹. Here we have a contemporary account of the reign of Ala-ud-din Khalji, written by a shrewd observer who personally knew all the principal actors in the drama.

Nuh Sipahr (or *The Nine Skies*), as I have already said, was written at the request of Mubarak Khalji to celebrate the glory of his reign. Incidentally the poet throws much light on the social and religious conditions prevalent in his age.

We learn from several reliable authorities that Amir Khusrau wrote a historical poem, known as *Tughlaq Nama*, in which he dealt with the reign of his last patron, Ghiyas-ud-din Tughlaq. But no trace of this work has hitherto been discovered.

Among Amir Khusrau's prose works, *Tarikh-i-Alai* or *Khazain-ul-Futuh* is a short but very valuable history of the reign of Ala-ud-din Khalji. The poet's general accuracy is beyond doubt, although no modern historian can accept in full his estimate of the character and achievements of his great patron. The poet gives us many interesting details, and if we can follow the very difficult language in which the work is written, it will prove to be a veritable mine of information.²

Finally, in his five *Divans*—*Tuhfat-us-Sighar*, *Wast-ul-Hayat*, *Ghurrat-ul-Kamal*, *Bakiya-i-Nakiya*, and *Nihayat-ul-Kamal*—the poet often refers to incidents in his own career, and many of the poems are in praise of his numerous patrons.

1 The story of Devala Devi, as narrated by Khusrau, appears to contain some elements of fiction. See A. K. Majumdar, *Chaulukyas of Gujarat*, pp. 194-196.

2 Prof. Habib has published an excellent translation—*Campaigns of Ala-ud-din Khalji*.

VII

This very brief sketch of the works of Amir Khusrau from the historical point of view is intended to show that no historian of medieval India can overlook the importance of Indo-Persian literature as a principal source of information. This fact was recognised long ago by Elliot, who gave us a glimpse into this rich but very obscure field. But Elliot undertook a task which demands more time and energy than any one man can give; moreover, his scholarship was limited and he worked in an age when principles of historical investigation were not clearly grasped. Again, the short extracts which he translated and the brief analysis of the contents which he made are insufficient for the purposes of a scholar who aims at grasping the spirit of a writer as much as at utilising the concrete data which he deals with. It is necessary, therefore, to go beyond Elliot, to go, indeed, to the fountain itself.

I have tried to emphasise the fact that Indo-Persian literature deserves our critical attention both from the literary as well as the historical point of view, that it is as interesting as a branch of our cultural heritage as it is important as a source of information for the reconstruction of political history. It may not be altogether out of place to mention that a student of the growth and development of Indian vernacular languages will find much to learn from this subject. Just as Muslim architects utilised Hindu ideas and Hindu workmanship, just as Muslim administrators modified orthodox Islamic principles of government and finance by accepting Hindu principles and institutions, so also Muslim writers were unconsciously influenced by Hindu techniques of literature as well as by words of Hindu origin. Amir Khusrau himself is known to have written some works in Hindi, and among his successors were many Muslim writers of poetical works in Indian vernaculars. Almost every work in Indo-Persian literature contains a large number of words of Indian origin, and thousands of Persian words became naturalised in every Indian vernacular language. This

mingling of Persian, Arabic and Turkish words and ideas with languages and concepts of Sanskrit origin is extremely interesting from the philological point of view, and this co-ordination of unknowns resulted in the origin of the beautiful Urdu language. That language in itself symbolised the reconciliation of the hitherto irreconcilable and mutually hostile types of civilisation represented by Hinduism and Islam.

Thus Indo-Persian literature, analysed from different points of view, clearly establishes its claim to rank as an intrinsically important subject. It is to be regretted that neither students of literature nor historical investigators have so far made any really serious attempt to study it. The life and works of Amir Khusrau have been critically studied¹; but no comprehensive review of Indo-Persian literature as a whole is available. Again, those few scholars who have dealt with the history of the Turkish Sultans of Delhi have usually confined their attention to professedly historical works, without trying to make the fullest use of other works in the manner indicated above. It may be hoped that the new generation of historical investigators will boldly venture beyond the beaten track and give to the medieval period of our national history that unity and completion which it so sadly lacks.

THE INFLUENCE OF ISLAMIC TRADITIONS ON THE SULTANATE OF DELHI

I

THE CONTINUITY OF ISLAMIC TRADITIONS

When the city-state of Rome transformed itself into a world-empire by absorbing within its orbit the entire Mediterranean world, the political institutions and legal ideas of the eternal city spread to all the countries ruled by or allied with it. In the same way, the political system and legal ideas of the Anglo-Saxons spread in varying degrees to all the countries dominated by them. The case of Islam was similar in many respects. The establishment of Muslim rule in different countries of Asia, Africa and Europe was followed by the introduction of Islamic political, legal and military systems in those portions of the globe. This analogy between Islam on the one hand and Rome and England on the other, however, should not be pushed too far. Rome established a centralised system of government: in all parts of her vast empire the will of the Senate, and, later on, of the Emperor, was supreme. England has always allowed varying degrees of local autonomy to the territories colonised by her adventurous sons, for in local autonomy lies the peculiar strength of her institutions; even in conquered territories the 'man on the spot' enjoyed comparative freedom from interference by the 'Home' Government. On the whole, however, even until a very recent period she exercised from London a general control over the more important political issues arising within her empire. In the case of Islam, on the other hand, this type of centralisation, though often recognised in theory, was seldom, if ever, realised in practice. The theory that the entire Islamic world was under the direct religious and political authority of the Khalifah persisted up to the last, in spite of the fact that the declining power of the Abbasids and the rise of the so-called 'Minor Dynasties' constituted unmistakable evidence of the steadily

¹ By Dr. Syed Wahid Mirza of Lucknow University.

growing spirit of disruption. The crumbling political structure of Islam was covering the East with magnificent ruins, and the day was not far off when imposing monuments would be raised by new converts out of these apparently decaying materials. But this lack of centralised administrative control did not prevent Islamic political and legal theories and practices from taking root in the countries subordinated to the politically triumphant banner of the Prophet's religion. All Islamic States, whether in Asia, in Africa, or in Europe, whether ruled by Arabs, Persians or Turks, were based on the same pattern: everywhere it was the spirit of the Qu'ran that ruled. This generalisation must be interpreted from the broadest point of view, for the doctrines of the believers undoubtedly changed their colour, sometimes quite radically, in the course of their long journeys across the world. Time as well as environment made their influence felt; new problems arose, and led to the discovery of new solutions and the application of new remedies. On the whole, however, we are justified in saying that the political structure of an Islamic State in any part of the world can be best understood when it is interpreted with reference to the early history and political theories of Islam.

The Islamic State in India was an autonomous and distinct part of the vast world over which the spirit of the Prophet ruled. The Arab State of Sind and the Turkish State of Delhi were based on the same pattern so far as their ideals and methods of government were concerned, but there was an important difference between the two. When Mu'izz-ud-din Muhammad *ibn* Sam carried the banner of Islam into the heart of India and finally established it as the dominant political power in the land of the Hindus, a new age was ushered in in the history of this country. The accession of Qutb-ud-din Aibak as the independent Sultan of Delhi on his master's assassination in 1206 A.D. has been conventionally regarded as the starting point of the so-called Muslim period of Indian history. The importance of that year lies in the fact that it witnessed the establishment of an independent Islamic State in this country. The Arab rulers of Sind were, practically at first

and nominally afterwards, merely provincial governors under the Khalifahs who ruled over the entire Islamic world¹. Mahmud of Ghazni formally recognised the authority of the Khalifah²; moreover, the heart of the dominions of the Yamini dynasty really lay outside the borders of India. But the first Slave Sultan of Delhi ruled exclusively as an Indian prince, without any allegiance or interest outside India. And when, long afterwards, Babur and his descendants exercised their authority over Afghanistan, they acted as Indian Emperors dominating the natural frontiers of their country.

The Turkish Sultanate of Delhi was, therefore, for all practical purposes, an independent political structure. It would be a mistake, however, to think that it had nothing to do with the world of Islam outside India. If the Sultans of Delhi paid nothing but ceremonial allegiance to the impotent Khalifahs who held their courts in Baghdad and in Egypt, they certainly obeyed the principles and traditions of the religion which they professed. The continuity of Islamic traditions is one of the governing facts of medieval Indian history. There were rulers like Ala-ud-din Khalji and Muhammad *ibn* Tughluq whose allegiance to Islamic laws was elastic enough to allow them to introduce innovations repulsive to orthodox believers. There were rulers like Firuz Shah and Sikandar Lodi who tried to govern as closely as possible according to the orthodox Islamic laws and principles of statecraft. The difference in their attitude towards Islamic theology and law was, however, one of degree, not of kind. No Sultan of Delhi was prepared to initiate a politico-religious

1 Sind became free from the control of the Khalifah in or about 871 A.D. when, during the reign of Mu'tamid, Ya'qub *ibn* Laith became the governor of the eastern provinces. (See Syed Ameer Ali, *A Short History of the Saracens*, pp. 292-293; Muir, *The Caliphate*, pp. 544-547.) For the historian of India the Arab conquest and occupation of Sind is an episode of minor importance. See *ante*, p. 72.

2 "Mahmud, the first Muslim ruler to assume the title of Sultan, received a robe of honour from the Caliph with the title of 'Aminul-millat' and 'Yaminud-doulah. He now stood . . . in direct subordination to the Caliph . . . ". Habib, *Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni*, p. 21.

revolution or to divorce religion from secular affairs. The reasons are not far to seek. To the medieval man innovations inconsistent with dogmas enunciated by scriptures and preached by holy men were anathema. In this respect the traditions and teachings of Islam were specially antagonistic to heresy. Again, the necessity of consolidating their co-religionists combined with traditions and personal conviction in urging upon the Muslim rulers of India the desirability of accepting the principles of Islamic law as the basis of the State which they created and maintained by military force. It was not possible for them to do anything else or to take a leap into the dark, for they lived in an age which was fanatically orthodox. Streams of Arabians, Africans, Persians and Turks poured into India after she had been forced to enter into the orbit of the Islamic world. Learned divines came to expound the law, to guide the rulers along the path laid down for all ages by the Prophet, and to call the faithful to arms against the heretics. Military adventurers came and established themselves as rulers of the country; how could they go against that religion in the name of which they had collected followers and won victories? Poets and historians came and enjoyed royal favour; it was their business to remind the Muslims of their intimate association with, and emotional allegiance to, the wider Islamic world that lay outside this land of the heretics. Merchants came to enrich themselves by establishing close commercial contact between India and Western Asia. Under the circumstances, how could India isolate herself? How could her Muslim rulers forget the past and try to create a new type of polity? India naturally became, and remained for about six centuries, a member of the Islamic commonwealth of nations. It is necessary, therefore, to refer to the early history and political traditions of Islam in order to explain the fundamental character of the State created by the Turkish Sultans of Delhi.

II

MONARCHICAL IDEAS IN ANCIENT ARABIA

Our information regarding the so-called '*Days of Ignorance*' (so the pre-Islamic age in Arabia is called) is very meagre indeed.¹ The principal source of our knowledge of ancient Arabian history are the Qu'ran and the traditions recorded by the chroniclers of the 8th and succeeding centuries of the Christian era. Epigraphic evidence in some cases verifies, but hardly adds to, the inadequate statements made by writers like Ibn Ishaq, Tabari and Ibn Khaldun. So far as the external relations of the primitive Arabs are concerned, some details may be gathered from Egyptian, Assyrian and Sassanian sources.²

It is very difficult to present a correct picture of the primitive institutions of the pre-Islamic Arabs. The Bedouins or "the dwellers of the desert" enjoyed liberty and equality in the greatest measure. "Although absolute equality is not to be found even in the desert, it is there more nearly attained than anywhere else." The tribal feeling was very strong. The tribe usually chose a chief who acted as its leader, but he was obliged at every turn to consult the tribal council which was composed of the heads of the families.³ It is clear that the tribal organisations of the Bedouins cannot be regarded as States in the modern sense of the term. On the other hand, the 'settled inhabitants, who were generally called "the people of the towns," created some monarchical States, although some of them seem to have

1 The history of pre-Islamic Arabia, says a distinguished writer, is "a subject still, to a certain extent, full of controversial points, doubts, uncertainties, even apparently insoluble mysteries". J. Hell, *The Arab Civilisation*, translated by S. Khuda Buksh (Foreword, p. viii).
19-25, 30-52, 205.

2 O' Leary, *Arabia Before Muhammad*, pp. 80-81.
S. Smith, *Babylonian Historical Texts*, pp. 83-84.
Cambridge Ancient History, Vol. III, pp. 83-84.
Cambridge Medieval History, Vol. II, p. 28.

D. G. Hogarth, *Arabia*, pp. 8-9.

3 Dozy, *Spanish Islam*, Chapter I.

preferred oligarchical or even tribal organisations. The monarchs were called *Tubbas* and *Mundars*. They were advised, like the tribal chiefs, by councils of elders. There is no doubt that they enjoyed substantial powers and ruled as autocrats. In them the supreme power was vested, and their acts were not subject to any other authority, nor could their will be over-ridden.¹

With these traditions behind him the Prophet created the Islamic State towards the first quarter of the seventh century A. D. Of this State he himself was the sovereign as well as the supreme religious teacher. It was indeed an extremely difficult task to unite the numerous Arabian tribes into a harmonious, partly centralised, efficient and effective political unit. Their inherent love of unrestrained freedom, embodied in their intense individualism and reluctance to submit to any external authority, made them averse to think in terms of large corporate organisations. This psychological factor produced, and was in its turn strengthened by, the confused traditions of century-long anarchy and separatism. Their process of thought, their very method of looking at things, had to be modified and diverted into a widely different channel, and the past, with all its memories and triumphs,—sanctified by all the mysteries of passing ages and the blessings of the elders—had to be obliterated, before a single Arabian national State could be created on the shifting sand of the peninsula.² This was the task which an obscure exile took upon himself; and by the time of his death the foundations not only of a national State but of a vast empire embracing the East as well as the West, had been well and truly laid.

It has been pointed out that Muhammad thought of Islam as a *nation* rather than as a *religion*.³ "Let there be in you a nation summoning unto the good," says the Qu'ran. The Prophet's legislation 'followed an end similar to that ascribed to Lycurgus, viz., to create a military State.'⁴ Lecky observes that the

1 Wahed Hussain, *Theory of Sovereignty in Islam*, p. 21.

2 Compare the remarks of Ameer Ali, *The Spirit of Islam*, pp. 290-291.

3 D. S. Margoliouth, *Mohammedanism*, p. 75.

4 D. S. Margoliouth, *Mohammedanism*, p. 76.

enthusiasm by which Islam conquered the world was mainly a military enthusiasm. "Its history, therefore, exhibits nothing of the processes of gradual absorption, persuasion, compromise, and assimilation, that are exhibited in the dealings of Christianity with the barbarians."¹ It is enough for our present purpose to note that the aim of the Prophet was to create an Arab *national* State. This State was to obliterate all tribal distinctions and to tolerate no division of nationalities. It has been said that "the theory of the Platonic Republic, according to which the members of the community should share pains and pleasures to the same extent as the members of one body, is attributed to the Prophet."² Be that as it may, the equality of all true believers was most probably laid down as a cardinal doctrine³; for even the Prophet's own family enjoyed no privileges, and the position of the slaves was improved by encouragement to manumission by the Qu'ran.⁴ On the whole, the State founded by the Prophet was "a communistic-democratic system of politics founded upon the basis of theocracy, one of the most remarkable phenomena of history."⁵

The national, military State created by the Prophet came, even within his life-time, to include among its subjects many people who differed from the Arabs in race as well as in religion. He tried to conciliate these foreign elements by granting 'charters in which religious freedom, liberty of conscience, freedom of speech and association, security of life and property,

1 *History of the Rise and Influence of Rationalism*, Vol. I, p. 223. It is interesting to compare this statement with the history of the Muslim conquest of India.

2 Margoliouth, *Mohammedanism*, p. 75.

3 "Creeds sever the Semites, and on the smallest points. But they are also the strongest bonds; and when Mohammed cut himself off from his people, he founded a new community in which slaves and freedmen might be united by the new ideas. The link was creed and not blood." S. A. Cook, *Cambridge Ancient History*, Vol. I, p. 211.

4 Margoliouth, *Mohammedanism*, pp. 79, 80, 87-89. For the attitude of the Prophet towards slavery, see Ameer Ali, *The Spirit of Islam*, pp. 262-267. Compare the position of the slaves under the Sultans of Delhi.

5 Von Kremer, *Culture Under the Caliphs*.

were fully guaranteed.¹ But the problem of conciliating and absorbing foreign elements became almost insoluble when, after his death, the Islamic empire embraced large portions of Asia, Africa and Europe. The simple theories which he had enunciated were no longer sufficient to explain and control the ever-widening structure of a rapidly expanding heterogeneous empire, nor could the primitive administrative machinery created by him and his immediate successors cope with the difficulties of the ever-changing situation. Hence arose many schools of political thinkers who tried to explain, interpret and expand the doctrines laid down by him. Those who openly ventured to introduce novelties were necessarily few. Most of the theologians and political philosophers tried to bring the Prophet's sayings into line with the political developments of their own ages by offering strained interpretations. They felt that changes were necessary, but orthodoxy led them to believe that nothing could be added to what the Prophet had said or done.

III

MONARCHY IN ISLAMIC POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

The Arab mind has never distinguished religion from politics; consequently, from the earliest times royal power has been allied with priestly functions. A distinguished writer, speaking on the fundamental characteristics of the Semites, says: "Authority is based upon religious rather than upon political ideas The head of a militant sect will rule a State, and politics will constantly take a religious form The ruler stands in the closest relationship to the gods, and to the people he is as the god, or the god's visible representative Such special individuals are intermediaries between gods and men."² No student of Islamic political theories and institutions need be told that these words accurately sum up the fundamental principle lying behind them.

1 W. Hussain, *Theory of Sovereignty in Islam*, p. 95.

2 S. A. Cook, *Cambridge Ancient History*, Vol. I, pp. 211-212.

The close connection between Monarchy and Divinity as embodied in the wellknown theory of Divine Right was a natural stage in the evolution of the Arab polity. Speaking on Persian reactions on early Muslim civilisation, a modern writer says: "In their eager fascination, they (i.e., the Muslims) did not stop to pick and choose from Persian ideas, they adopted them wholesale in every sphere of life Of all these ideas the most significant was the theory of divine right of the Persian Kings. From the centre of Baghdad these ideas spread to Ghazni, as to other parts of the Muslim world, and made their way from there into the Indian plains."¹ But he tells us that "Islam could not easily be reconciled to the divinity of a person on which the whole theory of despotism rested." We can easily see, however, that the natural successors of those "intermediaries between gods and men," who acted as political leaders in pre-Islamic Arabia, were the Khalifahs, "the shadows of God upon earth." If the Arabs really borrowed the theory of Divine Right from the conquered but more civilised Persians, they merely imported a doctrine which was in itself quite congenial to their own temperament and consistent with the old tribal traditions.

The theory of Divine Origin of Monarchy is quite familiar to Muslim political philosophers. To them the Khalifah is the vicegerent of God and the sovereign is the shadow of God upon the earth. As a Muslim writer observes, "Though the Caliphate has altogether been abolished after the Great War in 1918, and some of the important Muslim States have set up popular forms of government on the basis of democracy, yet the credulous classes are sticking to the old theory with religious obstinacy."² During the Middle Ages men were more credulous and considered the theory of Divine Right as a part of religious dogma. The *ulama* confirmed them in their fond belief by referring to chapters and verses of the

1 Kunwar Muhammad Ashraf, *Life and Conditions of the People of Hindustan*, *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Letters, Vol. I, 1935, No. 2, pp. 127-128.

2 W. Hussain, *Theory of Sovereignty in Islam*, pp. 26-27.

Qu'ran.¹ Their teaching was crystallised into a dogma which it was heresy for any Muslim to disavow. Every Friday the faithful followers of the Prophet recited: "The Sultan is the Shadow of God: whoever respects him God will respect him, and whoever thinks ill of him, God will degrade him." The same sentiment was echoed by the Muslim subjects (including the Islamised Hindus) of the Turkish rulers of India. For them the occupant of the throne of Delhi was "the shadow of God upon earth, to whose refuge we are to fly when oppressed by injury from the unforeseen occurrences of life,"² the God-given leader of the faithful in their *jihad* against the 'unclean' infidels. The Sultan was for all practical purposes regarded as occupying the same position as the Khalifah himself,³ although the spiritual supremacy of the direct successor of the Prophet was universally recognised. When Abul Fazl said that "obedience to Kings is a kind of divine worship," he correctly expressed the point of view of his co-religionists.

A modern writer⁴ has analysed the theory of Divine Right and resolved it into four component elements: (1) Monarchy is a divinely ordained institution. (2) Hereditary right is indefeasible. (3) Kings are accountable to God alone. (4) Non-resistance and Passive Obedience are enjoined by God. If we analyse the Islamic theory of Divine Right from this point of view, it will be found that the conception of Muslim political thinkers closely approximated the Western view on the subject. The Muslims were quite prepared to agree that Monarchy was a divinely ordained institution; we have seen

1 See, for instance, Sura 6, verse 162, Sura 10, verse 14, and Sura 24, verse 55.

2 *Akhlaq-i-Jalali*, translated by Thompson, pp. 377-378.

3 Some of the Turkish Sultans and Mughal Emperors claimed even to be regarded as the 'Khalifah of his age'. For instances, see *Epigraphia Indo-Moslemica*, 1919-20 and 1927-28, *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, 1873, and *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. II. For the theory underlying this claim, see Sir J. N. Sarkar, *Studies in Mughal India*, pp. 310-312.

4 Figgis, *The Divine Right of Kings*, pp. 5-6. Compare MacIlwain, *Political Works of James I*, Introduction, pp. 34, 37.

that even Qu'ranic texts can be cited in favour of this doctrine. But the principle of hereditary succession, except in so far as it suited the needs of the moment or could be justified by the superior ability of the person in question, was never an active force in a Muslim State.¹ It is needless to refer to instances, for they will be found on almost every page in any work dealing with the history of Islam in and outside India.² Might was right, and the support of the army or of the nobility was far more important than any abstract principle. Indeed, the merits of the hereditary principle were so much disparaged by the Muslims that even political theorists do not attach any importance to it. Every student of medieval Indian history knows how disastrous a result was produced on the fortunes of the Muslim rulers of India by the non-recognition of this principle.³

Again, the doctrine that Kings are accountable to God alone was not explicitly recognised by Muslim political thinkers, although to the mass of the faithful it was but an essential corollary of the Divine Origin of Monarchy. There is no doubt that no independent Muslim ruler was bound by law or custom to consider himself responsible to any other human being or any assembly of human beings.⁴ He was irresponsible, except in so far as he seriously took into account his responsibility to the ruler of the universe. Finally, the doctrine of passive obedience was recognised by later Muslim writers and respected by the faithful so long as a ruler was strong enough to crush any rebellion. It is vain to refer to the

1 "The Arabs had been accustomed to acknowledge no other authority than that of the ephemeral tribal chief whom they elected and deposed at will. Rarely, indeed, did the headship of an Arab tribe remain longer than four generations in one family. Foreign to the Arabs was the idea of an hereditary kingship." Von Kremer, *Culturgeschichte des Orients*, translated by S. Khuda Buksh, *Journal of the Moslem Institute*, January-March, 1907.

2 Of the fourteen rulers of the Ommeyyade dynasty, only four had their sons as successors.

3 Compare the wars of succession during the Mughal period.

4 We are not speaking of the first four Khalifahs who owed their throne to the willing suffrage of the faithful.

theoretical right of the faithful to depose an unworthy ruler¹ or to point out that "History records instances" in which that right was actually exercised.² A modern Muslim writer³ refuses to 'countenance' the theory of Divine Right if its exponents "mean to support the claim of unscrupulous and designing persons to the throne under the garb of religion, and justify their tyranny and wicked acts on the plea of the divine sanctity attached to their persons as God's vice-regent on the earth." But History records countless instances in which the professedly orthodox guardians of Islam followed the procedure which he abhors.

In this connection it may be worth while making a passing reference to the theory which conferred upon the faithful the right to elect the Khalifah. The very word '*Khalifah*' means a representative. During the time of the first four Khalifahs the Khilafat was based on the elective principle. Speaking of the first two representatives of the Prophet, a distinguished writer⁴ says, "Surrounded by no royal luxuries or court pageantry, they lived like other men of the tribe, and laid no special claim to any marks of honour. Every free-born Arab considered himself on a level of perfect equality with them. They ruled an unbounded kingdom and governed a very turbulent people like the Arabs, who, from time immemorial, had been unaccustomed to discipline and authority. This they did by virtue of the religious consecration with which they were invested as the high-priest of Islam." The principle that the consent of the community

1 Hussain, *Theory of Sovereignty in Islam*, p. 178.

2 Ali, the fourth Khalifah, was deposed. (See Ameer Ali, *A Short History of the Saracens*, pp. 51-52.). It should be noticed, however, that even in this instance the deposition was not loyally accepted by the faithful, for we are told that "the parties separated, vowing undying vengeance". Of course Muawiyah's treachery was the immediate cause of this terrible vow; but the instance reveals the total inability of the Arabs to work any subtle constitutional system reconciling the rights of the King with those of the people.

3 Hussain, *Theory of Sovereignty in Islam*, p. 41.

4 Von Kremer, *Culturgeschichte des Orients*, translated by S. Khuda Buksh, *Journal of the Moslem Institute*, January-March, 1907.

was the only source of sovereignty was widely recognised. The right of electing the Khalifah belonged to the entire community. Sometimes, however, the election sank into a mere formality, and the divergence between theory and practice became more and more acute after the assassination of Ali, the fourth Khalifah. The elaborate speculations of later Muslim jurists regarding the importance of the principle of election and various details connected with it are no more important to the students of Islamic history than the lingering traces of Republicanism during the age of Augustus are to the students of Roman history.

So far as the case of the Muslim rulers of India is concerned, military force proved to be a more potent source of sovereignty than the doctrines of the *ulama*. Theoretical speculations had very little influence on the rough Turkish soldiers who made themselves masters of India. They conquered the country by force, they maintained their authority by force, and they lost their position when they failed to command adequate force. All their followers—soldiers, poets and *ulama* alike—understood the situation thoroughly well, and never cared or dared to investigate into the legal claims of their *de facto* master. When Ala-ud-din Khalji treacherously murdered his uncle and occupied the throne to which he had not a shadow of claim either by divine or by human law, not only the "unthinking rabble," but the best minds of the day—the great poet, Amir Khusrau, for instance¹—bowed down before the realities of the situation. And while we shed our tears for the old Sultan who was so basely struck by one whom he loved so much, it is necessary to remember that he himself had assassinated his master to seize the throne.

1 Khazain-ul-Futuh. See ante, p. 76.

IV

TURKISH RULERS OF INDIA AND THE KHILAFAT

We have referred above to the continuity of Islam. Nowhere does this continuity appear more clearly—we may almost say, fantastically—as in the half-hearted loyalty of the Turkish rulers of India to the traditions of the Khilafat.

By the 13th century the theory that the entire Islamic world was united under the religious and political authority of the Khalifah had been transformed into an unreal but convenient legal fiction; and a large majority of the faithful had transferred their allegiance to, and begun to read the *Khutbah*¹ in the name of Muslim princes who occupied an independent position. There were historical and geographical reasons which led to this disintegration of the Islamic world, but into those details it is unnecessary for our present purpose to enter. The fall of the Ommeyyades in 750 A.D. was the precursor of the fate which was to fall upon the Khilafat. As Muir remarks, "While the Umeiyad Caliphate, from first to last, was co-ordinate with the limits of Islam, this is no longer true of the Abbasid.....Islam was.....broken up into many fragments, not necessarily in any way dependent on the Caliphate, each with its separate history."² Spain became independent. Powerful autonomous kingdoms arose in Africa. The growth of a number of independent 'Minor Dynasties' in Iraq, Persia and Turkestan in the 10th century destroyed the power of Baghdad in the East. Finally, Hulagu, a grandson of Jengiz Khan, took Baghdad, and put the Khalifah to death in 1258 A.D. "The Caliphate, long in hopeless decrepitude, had now disappeared, and there remained no possibility of its revival. But a shadow survived

1 "According to the best authorities, the name of the reigning Khalifah ought to be recited in the *Khutbah*; and the fact that it is not so recited in independent Muhammadan kingdoms, but the name of the Sultan or Amir is substituted for the Khalifah, has its significance". Hughes, *Dictionary of Islam*, p. 277. *Khutbah* means the sermon delivered on Fridays at the time of *zuhr* (or meridian prayer).

2 *The Caliphate*, p. 432.

in Egypt,—a race of mock-Caliphs, having the name without the substance; a mere spectre as it were."¹ The uncle of the last Khalifah of Baghdad went to Egypt, and was recognised by the Memluk Sultans as a spiritual potentate. The succession of such Egyptian Khalifahs was maintained unbroken in the same line, until the last of them resigned his rights into the hands of Suleiman II, the Ottoman Sultan of Constantinople, towards the close of the first quarter of the 16th century.²

Tradition, especially if it is intertwined with religion, dies hard. The Khalifahs lost political power, but they did not forfeit their spiritual prestige. No true believer could ever forget that it was to the successor of the Prophet that his allegiance was due. "He was the fountain-head of all political authority; kings and tribal chiefs were in theory subordinate to him, and his sanction alone could provide a legal basis for their power. The maddest of political adventurers would think many times before he directly defied the Caliph's authority".³ This is why the Memluk Sultans of Egypt had considered it necessary to consecrate their authority with the sanction of the titular chief of the Islamic world⁴ and this is why the ruler of the all-conquering Ottoman Turks resorted to a legal fiction of doubtful validity in order to assume the position of the Khalifah.⁵

When Mahmud of Ghazni put an end to the Samanid dynasty and asserted his independence,⁶ his position was recognised by the then Abbasid Khalifah of Baghdad. We are informed by Utbi, who was Mahmud's secretary, that the Khalifah "sent a *khila'at*, such as never before had been heard

1 Muir, *The Caliphate*, p. 593.

2 Muir, *The Caliphate*, p. 596. Cf. Hughes, *Dictionary of Islam*, p. 264, and Arnold, *The Caliphate*, pp. 142-158.

3 Habib, *Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni*, pp. 3-4.

4 See the diploma of investiture granted by Khalifah Mustansir to Baybars, the fourth Memluk Sultan. Arnold, *The Caliphate*, pp. 92-94.

5 For a discussion of the claim of the Ottomans to that position see Muir, p. 596; Arnold, pp. 129-158, 163-183; and Hughes, pp. 264-266.

6 Firishta, Briggs, Vol. I, pp. 34-36.

of.....and entitled Mahmud Yaminuddaulah Aminu-l-millat, the friend of the *Amir-l-mumnin*.”¹ The author of the *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri* tells us that Mahmud “was the first among the sovereigns of Islam, who was styled Sultan by the court of the Khalifahs of Baghdad.”² Whether Mahmud himself desired to consecrate and strengthen his own authority by securing a diploma from the successor of the Prophet,³ or whether the declining Abbasid dynasty considered it prudent to take advantage of the situation in order to remind the world that the prestige of the Khalifah was not a legend of the past, is not clear. The entire proceedings are, however, interesting from a legal and historical point of view, although the solemnity attached to them did not in any sense correspond to realities.

The precedent set by the mighty conqueror was followed by several Sultans of Delhi. In 1229 A.D. the Khalifah Al-Mustansir of the Abbasid dynasty sent Iltutmish a robe of honour and recognised his position as Sultan of India.⁴ In his inscriptions he calls himself ‘Helper of the Prince of the Faithful’ and on his later coins the name of the Khalifah occurs frequently.⁵ The name of Al-Musta’sim, the last Abbasid Khalifah of Baghdad, is mentioned on the coins of Ala-ud-din Masud, Nasir-ud-din Mahmud, Balban, Kaiqubad, and Jalal-ud-din Khalji.⁶ One inscription refers to Nasir-ud-din as ‘supporter of the Prince of the Faithful.’ The same epithet is bestowed on Balban in more than one epigraph. On his coins Ala-ud-din Khalji described himself as ‘the right hand of the Khilafat, the helper of the Prince of

1 Elliot and Dowson, Vol. II, p. 24.

2 Raverty, pp. 75-76.

3 Sir Wolseley Haig says that Mahmud “sought formal recognition of his sovereignty from the Caliph”. *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. III, p. 12.

4 *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, Raverty, p. 616.

5 *Epigraphia Indo-Moslemica*, 1911-12.

6 This Khalifah, as we have said already, was killed by the Mongol chief Hulagu in 1258 A.D., but the Sultans of Delhi continued to appeal to his name till the close of the 13th century,

the Faithful’.¹ The same epithets are given to him in contemporary inscriptions.²

Muhammad *ibn* Tughluq who, in Sir Wolseley Haig’s words, “scandalised the orthodox by deliberately preferring human reason to divine revelation as a guide in mundane matters, and by openly avowing his preference,”³ appealed to the Khalifah to bestow his sanction on his regal right. Barani, the contemporary historian, and an intimate protege of the Sultan, has left for us an interesting account of the whole episode.⁴ It occurred to the Sultan’s mind that “no king or prince could exercise regal power without confirmation by the Khalifah of the race of Abbas, and that every king who had reigned, or should hereafter reign without such confirmation, had been or would be overpowered.” In 1343 A.D. the Khalifah Al-Mustafi sent his envoy Haji Sa’id Sarsari to the court of the Sultan of Delhi. On his arrival the Sultan “walked before him barefooted.” He also ordered that “in mentioning the names of the Kings in the *Khutbah*, they should be declared to have reigned under the authority and confirmation” of the Abbasid Khalifah. “The names of those kings who had not received such confirmation were to be removed from the *Khutbah*, and the kings were to be declared superseded.” The Sultan’s father—Ghiyas-ud-din—was one of those who shared this fate. A letter acknowledging the Sultan’s subordination to the Khalifah was sent to Egypt, and a diploma was procured. “He had his own name and style removed from his coin,” said Barani, “and that of the Khalifah substituted; and his flatteries of the Khalifah were so fulsome that they cannot be reduced to writing.” Some time later there came to Muhammad *ibn* Tughluq’s court from Transoxiana, where he had been living under the protection of the Mughals, a descendant of the Khalifah Al-Mustansir of Baghdad. “His descent being verified, he was received with extravagant honours

1 Wright, *Catalogue of Coins in the Indian Museum*, Vol. II, pp. 36, 38.

2 *Epigraphia Indo-Moslemica*, 1917-18.

3 *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. III, p. 137.

4 *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi*, Elliot and Dowson, Vol. III, pp. 249-250.

and became a pensioner upon Muhammad's boundless liberality. Besides enormous gifts in money, he received as a residence and private estate, almost as a petty principality, Siri, the city of Alaud-din Khalji He was but a well-born beggar. He was known at court as *Makhdumzada* ("descendant of our lord").¹

The relation of Firuz Shah with the Khalifah may be best expressed in his own words: "The greatest and best of honours that I obtained through God's mercy was, that by my obedience and piety, and friendliness and submission to the Khalifah, the representative of the holy Prophet, my authority was confirmed; for it is by his sanction that the power of kings is assured, and no king is secure until he has submitted himself to the Khalifah, and has received a confirmation from the sacred throne. A diploma was sent to me fully confirming my authority as Deputy of the *Khilafat*, and the leader of the faithful was graciously pleased to honour me with the title of 'Sayyid-us-Salatin'. He also bestowed upon me robes, a banner, a ring, and a foot-print as badges of honour and distinction".² While Firuz was writing these words, the Khalifah was "a mere phantom vanishing into the shadowy pageantry of attendants on Memluk kings of Egypt".³

What, then, is the explanation of the historic role thus played by the Khalifahs for so many centuries? Why did Muslim rulers of far-off countries look to them as the one and indivisible source of sovereignty, even when they had become mere sacerdotal advisers to the local rulers of Egypt? The explanation offered by Sir Thomas Arnold is this: "What was an unfortunate Muslim monarch to do, who felt that his title was insecure? He knew that it was only his sword that had set him on the throne, that his own dynasty might at any time be displaced, as he had himself displaced the dynasty that had preceded him, while his legal advisers and religious guides told him that the only legitimate source of authority was the Khalifah, the Imam, and he realized that all his devout

1 Sir Wolseley Haig's article in *J. R. A. S.*, July, 1922, pp. 351-352.

2 *Fatuhāt-i-Firuz Shahi*, Elliot and Dowson, Vol. III, p. 387.

3 Muir, *The Caliphate*, pp. 432-433.

Muslim subjects shared their opinion".¹ So he went on invoking the name of the shadowy head of the Islamic world in support of his own *de facto* authority, and "this was sufficient for the satisfaction of tender consciences".

In spite of the ceremonial allegiance which the Sultans of Delhi from time to time paid to the Khalifahs they were independent rulers to all intents and purposes. From the time when the death of Mu'izz-ud-din Muhammad *ibn* Sam left Qutb-ud-din free to issue coins in his own name, the Sultanate of Delhi had never in theory or in practice sunk to the position of vassalage under any internal or external authority.²

In this connection we may refer to the views of a modern writer³ who holds that many Islamic States—the State ruled over by the Sultans of Delhi being one of them—"federated to the Caliphate by voluntary allegiance". He recognises, however, that, "In all those cases, the local autonomy, independence, and sovereignty were left untouched". Every student of Political Science knows that no unit within a federation can retain its sovereignty. A federation of fully sovereign States is no federation at all; it is more or less an impotent league of nations. It is inaccurate and useless to describe the Khilafat as a federation, for those Muslim rulers who paid ceremonial allegiance to the Khalifahs did by no means surrender an iota of their sovereignty. The Khilafat in the age of its decadence was in no sense a political unit. It was a religious unit, and as such it attracted the religious loyalty of men in an age when religion reigned supreme on the human mind. There is no doubt that it was religion, not political loyalty, which induced Firuz Shah to consider the Khalifah's foot-print as a 'badge of honour and distinction'.⁴

It will be clear from the above observations that it is altogether impossible to discover in any intelligible principle the source

1 *The Caliphate*, pp. 87-88.

2 Khizr Khan is said to have acted as a vassal of Timur. Firishta, Briggs, Vol. I, p. 508.

3 Hussain, *Theory of Sovereignty in Islam*, pp. 81-84.

4 *Fatuhāt-i-Firuz Shahi*, Elliot and Dowson, Vol. III, p. 387.

of the power which the Sultans of Delhi enjoyed for three centuries. They did not owe their position to the Khalifahs, the nominal rulers of the Islamic world, although some of them did invoke their authority in their support.¹ Nor did they owe their sovereignty to the will of the people. At the first instance, their sole right to rule this country was that of military conquest. But they failed to evolve any workable law of succession, or any tolerable method to secure dynastic continuity. Sons did not always succeed their fathers. The nomination of the dying ruler was unceremoniously set aside by the over-mighty nobles, but even the nobles did not have the decisive voice in selecting the ruler. The principle—if it is a principle at all—to which candidates appealed was that of force ; and nothing but might was right.

¹ It may be pointed out that the Khalifahs had no right to confer on any one the sovereignty of India, for no Khalifah had ever conquered this country,

SIKH MILITARISM

I

GURU HARGOBIND

According to Sikh tradition, Guru Hargobind's birth was due to the kindly intercession of Bhai Budha, an old Sikh of Guru Nanak's time. Entertained by Guru Arjan's wife, Bhai Budha said, "As thou hast given me food to my heart's content, so shalt thou have a son to thy heart's content. He shall be very handsome and brave, possess spiritual and temporal power, become a mighty hunter, ride on royal steeds, wear two swords, be puissant in battle, and trample on the Mughals."¹ Probably this prophecy about the character and achievements of Hargobind was put into the mouth of Bhai Budha by a later chronicler². It is almost certain that a Guru engaged in hunting and fighting was not likely to capture the imagination of a saintly Sikh steeped in Guru Nanak's tradition. Indeed, we are told that, when Bhai Budha saw young Hargobind in military dress, he mildly remonstrated with him. The Guru replied, "...it is in fulfilment of thy blessing I wear two swords as emblems of spiritual and temporal authority. In the Guru's house religion and worldly enjoyment shall be combined—the cauldron to supply the poor and needy and the scimitar to smite oppressors"³. Another anecdote recorded by Macauliffe shows that this ideal of combining religion and worldly enjoyment did not appeal to many Sikhs younger and less religious-minded than Bhai Budha. After Hargobind's accession some *masands* represented to the Guru's mother : "...The Guru girdeth on his arms, but for *faqirs* to lord it over men is a course that involveth peril. The preceding five Gurus never handled arms. If Jahangir hear of our Guru's doings he will be angry ; and where

¹ Macauliffe, *The Sikh Religion*, Vol. III, pp. 29-36.
² I. Banerjee, *Evolution of the Khalsa*, Vol. I, p. 200.
³ Macauliffe, Vol. IV, p. 4.

shall we hide ourselves?" Although the Guru's mother reminded the *masands* of Bhai Budha's prophecy and showed a courageous face, she had her own misgivings. We are told that she addressed her son as follows: "My son, we have no treasure, no state revenue, no landed property, no army. If thou walk in the way of thy father and grand-father, thou shalt be happy". The Guru replied that God was his guardian.¹

What strikes us as very strange and almost inexplicable is that a boy, who was only eleven years of age,² should have pursued so novel a policy in the face of such general opposition. At the time of his installation ceremony he declared, "My *seli*³ shall be a sword-belt, and I shall wear my turban with a royal aigrette". He then sent for his arms, and arrayed himself in martial style, so that his splendour shone like the sun.⁴ Where did the boy find his inspiration? Just before his death Guru Arjan had observed to the Sikhs assembled near him on the bank of the Ravi, ".....Go to my son the holy Har Gobind, and give him from me ample consolation...Let him sit fully armed on his throne, and maintain an army to the best of his ability...Let him....in all respects, except the wearing of arms hereby enjoined, adopt the practices of the preceding Gurus...."⁵ It is very doubtful whether these words fell from the dying Guru's lips at that critical moment. When Hargobind replied to the remonstrances of Bhai Budha and his mother, he told them that he was fulfilling Bhai Budha's prophecy; he did not even refer to his father's last testament. When his mother remonstrated with the *masands*, she also referred to Bhai Budha's prophecy, but not to her husband's command. When she remonstrated with her son, she asked him to 'walk in the way of thy father and grand-father'.⁶ She would not have uttered these words if

1 Macauliffe, Vol. IV, p. 3.
 2 Hargobind was born in 1595, and Arjan lost his life in 1606.
 3 A woollen cord worn as a necklace or twisted round the head by the former Gurus.
 4 Macauliffe, Vol. IV, p. 2.
 5 Macauliffe, Vol. III, p. 99.
 6 Macauliffe, Vol. IV, pp. 3-4.

she had been aware of Guru Arjan's last desire. It appears, therefore, that Bhai Budha's prophecy and Guru Arjan's command belong to the same class, both being put into the chronicles by later writers anxious to explain the sudden transition to militarism.

The transition to militarism was certainly sudden. Trumpp says that Arjan was 'the first Guru who meddled with politics', and this view has been accepted by some modern writers.¹ Although Mohsin Fani may be quoted in favour of this theory,² it is not acceptable to the modern Sikhs, who argue that the Gurus maintained a praiseworthy balance between asceticism and prosperity.³ The author of *Evolution of the Khalsa* has tried to reconcile history and tradition by observing that, although "the Sikh might not as yet have been conscious of his political destiny and the motive force behind the movement might still have been purely religious", yet "looked at from the point of view of the established state the new community was already reaching a position when it could no longer be treated with indifference."⁴

If we accept Dr. I. Banerjee's conclusion, it follows that till the last days of Guru Arjan the motive force behind Sikhism was purely religious. Cunningham seems to hold the same view, for he observes, "Arjoon became famous among pious devotees, and his biographers dwell on the numbers of saints and holy men who were edified by his instructions."⁵ We are thus compelled to conclude that militarism originated after Guru Arjan's death, and if we are to believe the Sikh chronicles, it originated *immediately after* that tragedy, and the originator was a boy eleven years of age, who quietly set aside the legitimate misgivings of all around him, including his mother and the saint

1 *Adi Granth*, Introduction, p. lxxx.
 Narang, *Transformation of Sikhism*, p. 76.
 Latif, *History of the Punjab*, p. 253.
 2 *Dabistan*, Eng. trans., Vol. II, p. 270.
 3 *The Gurdwara Reform Movement and the Sikh Awakening*, p. 18.
 4 Vol. I, p. 265.
 5 *History of the Sikhs*, Chap. III.

to whose kindly intercession his birth was due, and sat fully armed on his throne. He did not take time to think over the problem; he sat fully armed on the throne as soon as he heard the news of his father's death. It is not easy to accept this conclusion. The Sikh chronicles have either suppressed some incidents in Guru Arjan's career, or given us a garbled version of the early career of Hargobind.

It is not quite unlikely that we should come across germs of militarism in the later years of Arjan's life. Although no direct evidence in favour of this surmise appears to be available, there is some amount of indirect evidence which deserves scrutiny. When Hargobind sat fully armed on his throne he undoubtedly set a new ideal before the Sikhs, an ideal that ran counter to the Sikh tradition established by Guru Nanak and closely followed by his four successors. Strangely enough, the mild opposition which came from the *masands* as well as from Ganga, the Guru's mother, was based, not on tradition, but on expediency. They were not surprised to find the young Guru violating the old tradition; they merely referred to the military and financial weakness of the Sikhs in comparison with the strength of the Mughal empire. No doubt the *masands* said, "The preceding five Gurus never handled arms"; but this statement is immediately followed by the words, "If Jahangir hear of our Guru's doings he will be angry; and where shall we hide ourselves?" Apparently the *masands* did not seriously consider militarisation as incompatible with their faith; they objected to it because Jahangir was too strong an antagonist. The Guru's mother took the same position, for she said, "My son, we have no treasure, no state revenue, no landed property, no army".

Apparently the Sikhs of 1606 were not entirely unfamiliar with militarism. No one but Guru Arjan could have turned their attention in that direction. We do not suggest that the fifth Guru actually collected troops or took part in bloody contests; but he certainly gave the Sikhs a new organization and possibly a new orientation of outlook. He was the *Sachcha Padshah*, his seat a *takht* or throne, and the assembly of his followers a

darbar or court. These terms may have been used in the time of the earlier Gurus,¹ but in Guru Arjan's time they probably assumed a new significance. The Sikh chronicles contain indirect references to this slow and almost imperceptible, but none the less real and revolutionary, transformation. Prithia's jealous wife observed to her husband about Arjan, "The Emperor and kings bow before him. Wealth ever cometh to him". Chandu Shah's agents were astonished at the Guru's regal state and retinue.² Mohsin Fani heard from the Sikhs that the Guru 'was in former times the Raja called Janak and united the dignity of a king to that of a saint'.³ Dr. Banerjee rightly observes, "... apart from its spiritual aspects the Guruship was also becoming a symbol of material power . . . the Sikhs had begun to regard their Guru not only as a spiritual but also as a temporal ruler".⁴ Even modern Sikhs seem to accept this position when they praise the Gurus for *Raj Yog* or balance between asceticism and prosperity.⁵ *Raj Yog* certainly implies *Raj*.

Guru Arjan was a remarkably pious man, and he may not have been fully conscious of this slowly developing tendency towards temporal greatness.⁶ But it was natural and inevitable. Sikhism is a religion of householders; it has never favoured asceticism. So long as the number of the Sikhs was small, and each of them had the opportunity of coming into personal contact with the Gurus, the lesson taught by Nanak was a living reality to the community as a whole. The Sikh then

1 *The Gurdwara Reform Movement and the Sikh Awakening*, p. 20.

2 Macauliffe, Vol. III, pp. 28, 72.

3 *Dabistan*, Eng. trans., Vol. II, p. 268.

4 *Evolution of the Khalsa*, Vol. I, p. 263.

5 *The Gurdwara Reform Movement and the Sikh Awakening*, p. 19.

6 The author of the *Panth Prakash* gives us a significant popular tradition: "It is said that the power and pelf of the world kept, as it were, at a distance of twelve miles from Nanak and six miles from Angad. It knocked at the door of Amar Das and fell at the feet of Guru Ram Das, while in Arjun's time it got admission into the house." "The fable very beautifully describes the gradual growth of the social and political power of the Sikhs." (Narang, *Transformation of Sikhism*, p. 76, note 1).

lived a life of devotion and service. When the number of the Sikhs increased,¹ there was a natural lowering of the standard. Many converts entering into the fold must have been temperamentally incapable of absorbing the lessons taught by the Gurus. The distance between the Guru and the disciples must have widened due to the increase in the number of the latter, and this factor probably contributed something to the weakening of religious zeal in the Sikh community. A typical illustration may be found in the quick degeneration of the *masands*. They were strictly forbidden to appropriate for their own maintenance any portion of the offerings collected by them, and they were expected to earn their living by engaging themselves in some sort of remunerative occupation. Macauliffe says that by the time of Hargobind's accession they had become very corrupt and dishonest.² If corruption had affected even the direct agents of Guru Arjan so soon after the introduction of the *masand* system, we may easily believe that corruption, in the shape of greed for money and lust for power, had taken hold of many ordinary Sikhs by that time.

The ground was thus prepared for a new development: the Sikhs were ready, perhaps anxious, to make the spiritual dominion of their *Sachcha Padshah* a temporal reality. The acquisition of military strength was the primary necessity. There is no evidence to show that Guru Arjan had felt the urge to militarise the *Panth*. There is enough evidence to show that his son took the first step in that direction. Two important questions, however, must be answered before we can assess the value of Hargobind's contribution to the growth of the *Panth*. The first question is: Did he aim at the seizure of political power, or

1 Mohsin Fani says, "the number of these sectaries increased everywhere, so that in the time of Guru Arjunmal it became very considerable, and at last there was no place in any country where Sikhs were not to be found." (*Dabistan*, Eng. trans., Vol. II, p. 270). In his *War*, XI, 14-31, Bhai Gurdas gives a list of the more important *Sangats* which includes Lahore, Kabul, Kashmir, Delhi, Agra and Dacca. The *masand* system introduced by Guru Arjan was intended to mould these distant centres of the faith into a closely knit system.

2 Vol. IV, p. 3.

merely at defending his disciples against Mughal persecution? The second question is: At what stage of his career did he 'sit fully armed on his throne'?

We propose to take up the second question before we discuss the first. In a very interesting article published in the *Indian Antiquary*¹ Dr. I. Banerjee deals with some aspects of the career of Guru Hargobind. He concludes that Hargobind was imprisoned by Jahangir about 1607 and released in 1619. If we accept Macauliffe's view² that the Guru's son Ani Rai was born in 1618, we must conclude that the Guru was released before 1619. It is clear, however, that whatever the date of release may be, he was imprisoned about 1607, for Dr. Banerjee shows that the delay in his marriage with Nanaki was due to the fact that "after his accession Hargobind had very little time to think of his marriage".

The imprisonment, according to Mohsin Fani, was due to the following reasons: "He had many difficulties to contend with; one of them was that he adopted the style of a soldier, and wore a sword contrary to the custom of his father, maintained a retinue, and began to follow the chase. The emperor, in order to extort from him the balance of the fine which had been imposed on Arjan Mal, sent him to Gwalior"³. Mohsin Fani obviously places militarisation *before* imprisonment. If we are right in assuming that Hargobind was imprisoned in 1607, we must recognise that Mohsin Fani agrees with the Sikh chroniclers in saying that Hargobind 'adopted the style of a soldier, and wore a sword' immediately after his accession. We are thus compelled to revert to the old difficulty. How could a boy of eleven or twelve initiate such a revolution 'contrary to the custom of his father'?

Mohsin Fani appears to have been a personal friend of Guru Hargobind; it is, therefore, difficult to reject his testimony

1 Vol. LV, 1926, pp. 45-50, 66-71, 101-102. See also *Evolution of the Khalsa*, Vol. II.

2 Vol. IV, p. 67.

3 Macauliffe, Vol. IV, pp. 21-22. Troyer's translation (*Dabistan*, Vol. II, p. 274) is wrong.

on the Guru's career. But Cunningham characterises him as 'a garrulous and somewhat credulous Mahomedan'. We must remember that his book was written some years after Hargobind's death, i.e., nearly half a century after the beginning of the Guru's imprisonment. Is it very unreasonable to suppose that in his old age Mohsin Fani's memory played him false, that he transferred later episodes of Hargobind's career to his early life?

A close study of Mohsin Fani's passage quoted above shows that there is *no necessary connection* between the two sentences. We may very well read them separately and say that the Guru's imprisonment was due solely to the Emperor's desire (which, again, may very well have been due to the malicious instigation of Chandu Shah, as the Sikh chroniclers say) to realise the balance of the fine previously imposed upon Guru Arjan. We may agree with Dr. Banerjee when he says, "The object of the emperor seems to have been to keep the young Guru as a hostage to ensure the orderliness of his followers and possibly also to realise the fine imposed on his father". There is no evidence to show that the Sikhs had become disorderly in 1607, but the Emperor may have apprehended troubles after Arjan's death. It is unnecessary to assume that nothing but the sudden militarisation of the Sikhs in 1606 could cause uneasiness in the Emperor's mind.

According to the chronological scheme prepared by Dr. I. Banerjee, Hargobind entered into the service of Jahangir in 1619 or 1620, i.e., immediately or soon after his release, and continued in his employ till the latter's death in 1627. Mohsin Fani says, the Guru served the Imperial Government in the humble capacity of a Faujdar's assistant¹. Some Sikh chronicles,² however, claim that the Guru was appointed a sort of supervisor over the Punjab officials with a command of 700 horse, 1000 foot and 7 guns, as a reward for his services against Raja Tarachand of Nalgarh, whom he had subdued and brought to

1 *Dabistan*, Eng. trans., Vol. II, p. 274.

2 *Panth Prakash*, p. 107. *Itihas Guru Khalsa*, p. 128.

the Emperor. Dr. I. Banerjee shows convincing reasons for rejecting the Sikh version of the Guru's official position, but he observes that the Guru may have been put in charge of a minor command and sent against one of the rebellious Hill Rajas in the Kangra region. For such a command previous military experience was not in those days an essential pre-requisite. It is not unlikely that Hargobind's success in this enterprise secured for him not only his appointment as a Faujdar's assistant, but also some military rank. He may not have received charge of 700 horse, 1000 foot and 7 guns: he may have been allowed to raise some troops and keep them under his control. It is probable that the collection of troops by the Guru¹ should be referred to this stage of his career. He had tasted the wild joy of war in imperial campaigns against the Hill Rajas. He was a young man of 25 or so. He was surrounded by disciples anxious to win temporal prizes which had not been coveted by the early Sikhs. It was not quite unnatural for the young Guru to take a plunge into the unknown.

This assumption gives us a reasonable explanation of Hargobind's struggle against Shah Jahan. If we believe that he assumed the style of a soldier in 1606, we must admit that his military ardour remained cool and ineffective for more than eight years, i.e., from his release in 1619 to Jahangir's death in 1627. The period may even be longer than eight years, for we do not know the date of his first encounter with Shah Jahan's troops. Nay, more; we must admit that he accepted service under the Mughal Government, and rendered loyal service to the man who had killed his father and kept him in confinement for twelve years. Dr. I. Banerjee says, "His service under the Government served him as a cloak and he began to increase his military resources". This explanation attributes to the Guru a deliberate design, but it is hardly consistent with the statement of Bhai Gurdas that "the present Guru leadeth a roving life":

1 See Macauliffe, Vol. IV, pp. 4, 5, 52, 76, and *Dabistan*, Eng. trans., Vol. II, p. 277.

"People say the former Gurus used to sit in the temple ; the present Guru remaineth not in one place.

The former Emperors used to visit the former Gurus ; the present Guru was sent into the fortress by the Emperor.

In former times the Guru's darbar could contain the sect ; the present guru leadeth a roving life and feareth nobody.

The former Gurus, sitting on their thrones, used to console the Sikhs ; the present Guru keepeth dogs and hunteth.

The former Gurus used to compose hymns, listen to them, and sing them ; the present Guru composeth not hymns, nor listeneth to them, nor singeth them.

He keepeth not his Sikh followers with him, but taketh enemies of his faith and wicked persons as his guides and familiars".¹

This picture of Hargobind drawn by a saintly Sikh is hardly that of a shrewd and secretive statesman collecting troops under the cloak of his official position. He was more probably a bold adventurer, intoxicated with the wild joy of battle and chase, and more fond of enterprising and rough 'enemies of his faith and wicked persons' than of mild, hymn-singing Sikhs.

The causes of Hargobind's troubles with the Mughals—the abduction of Kaulan, the seizure of the coveted horse, and the quarrel about a bird—do not reveal any deep-seated design on the Guru's part. The Guru's military exploits, as narrated in the Sikh chronicles,² leave the impression that they relate to the career of a somewhat careless and exuberant adventurer, not to that of a capable political and military leader who prepares his plan of campaign before rushing out to the foray. It may also be of some significance that his adventures³ ended with the battle of Kartarpur which is said to have been fought in 1634. The Guru was then about forty years of age ; the period of irresponsible enthusiasm was over.

¹ Pauri composed by Bhai Gurdas (Macauliffe, Vol. IV, pp. 76-77).

² Macauliffe, Vol. IV, pp. 38-48, 82-93, 179-186, 190-193, 198-212, 263.

³ Except, perhaps, the expedition to Nanakmata (which Macauliffe, however, places before Hargobind's first open breach with the Mughals) and the doubtful alliance with Raja Tarachand against the Nawab of Rupar.

If our readers accept the view which we have tried to explain above, the answer to our second question, viz., Hargobind's motive, will not be far to seek. He did not seek to avenge his father's death. He served the Emperor who had killed his father, and when he raised his arms against his successor, trifles like the possession of a hunted bird supplied the motive. It should also be noted that during the last eleven years (1634-1645) of his life he made no attempt to fight against the Mughals. It is difficult to explain his silence during this long period if we picture him as a man crying for revenge. He was not too old for fighting ; he was not troubled by any difficulty within the Sikh church (like Prithia's rivalry with Arjan). Nor is it permissible to suppose that his aim was to defend his disciples against Mughal persecution. Jahangir persecuted the Gurus, but he left the Sikh community alone. Hargobind himself was a victim of his persecution, but the adoption of a conciliatory attitude by the Guru after his release, and the continuation of that attitude up to at least Jahangir's death, prove quite conclusively that militarisation of the Panth was not required by the necessity of self-defence. There was no persecution during that period, and no dread of persecution as long as the Guru remained in Jahangir's service. Moreover, an experienced man like Hargobind, who had opportunities of coming into contact with the Emperor and his vast military organisation, must have realised the impossibility of defending himself and his community if the Emperor really wanted to crush them. This point is applicable with greater force against the presumption that the Guru wanted to seize political power and created a military force for that purpose.

Must we say, then, that Hargobind's adoption of the style of a soldier was nothing more than an aimless venture ? In a sense it was so. As a young member of Jahangir's retinue he came into close contact with the Mughal army, and the exciting prospect of a soldierly life allured him. He found a favourable atmosphere within the Sikh community, many members of which, as we have explained above, were gradually taking greater interest in wealth and power than in the salvation-giving

hymns. These Sikhs—call them the degenerated Sikhs of the new school if you will—were reinforced by many adventurers, including Pathans like Painsa Khan, who found in the Guru's prestige and influence a covetable rallying point. Trumpp says, "As the Guru's expeditions were nearly always directed against the Muhammadans and the extortionate provincial authorities, we need not wonder that his popularity fast increased with the ill-treated Hindu rural population; every fugitive or oppressed man took refuge in his camp, where he was sure to be welcomed without being much troubled about religion, and the charms of a vagrant life and the hope of booty attracted numbers of warlike Jats, who willingly acknowledged him as their Guru, the more so as he allowed his followers to eat all kinds of flesh, that of the cow excepted"¹. This description of Hargobind's system explains the censure which the old-fashioned Sikhs passed upon him through the mouth of Bhai Gurdas, an eminent representative of the spiritualism which was being gradually eroded by the flowing stream of Time. As Guru Har Rai once said, "the vessel which Baba Nanak had constructed for the salvation of the world had almost foundered."²

II

SUCCESSORS OF HARGOBIND

Guru Har Rai succeeded his grandfather, Guru Hargobind, in 1645 and held the *takht* till his death in 1661. As he was born in 1631, he was just a young boy at the time of his accession, and he was only thirty years old at the time of his death. Macauliffe says, "He was very attentive to his devotions and ablutions.....The Guru employed every device that sleep might not overcome him, and prevent his matutinal devotions which were the object of his earnest solicitude. Although many rich men came to visit him, he made no distinction between rich and poor, and centred his hopes only in God. His food was

1 *Adi Granth*, Introduction, p. lxxxiv.
2 Macauliffe, Vol. V, p. 151.

very simple. He desired not dainty dishes, and thanked God for all His mercies."¹ This aspect of Har Rai's character was much exaggerated by later Sikh chroniclers. The *Panth Prakash* gives us the following story: "It is said that while walking one day in his garden his cloak came in contact with a number of flowers and dashed them to the ground. The Guru was so touched with the incident that ever after he carried his cloak carefully in his hand when walking in his garden."² Macauliffe, however, says on the basis of reliable Sikh records, "In the afternoon the Guru used often to gird on his sword, equip himself with his bow and arrows, mount his horse, and proceed to the chase."³ A man who loves hunting is hardly likely to be 'touched' at the sight of flowers dashed to the ground by his cloak.

Dr. Narang tells us that when Dara was being pursued in the Punjab by Aurangzeb's troops (1658), he asked Guru Har Rai for help. "The Guru sent out a detachment of his men who contested the passage of the Bias with Aurangzeb's troops, and prevented them from crossing the river until Dara had reached a place of comparative safety."⁴ No authority has been quoted for this statement. The Sikh chronicles utilised by Macauliffe inform us that the Guru's part in the War of Succession among Shah Jahan's sons was limited to some vague words of encouragement addressed to Dara. On a previous occasion the Guru had cured Dara of a serious disease. Moreover, the prince's favourite priest, Mian Mir, had been loud in the Guru's praise. So Dara remembered the Guru during his wanderings in the Punjab and wrote a letter asking for his assistance. In reply, the Guru asked him to remain satisfied with the spiritual empire which he had obtained, and added, probably for his consolation, "Aurangzeb, who is unmindful of God, may obtain worldly empire, but shall suffer without respite in hell-fire." Dara then proceeded to Kiratpur in the hope of obtaining the Guru's assistance, but found him absent. The prince then sent him a

1 Vol. IV, pp. 275-276.
2 Narang, *Transformation of Sikhism*, p. 114.
3 Vol. IV, pp. 276-277.
4 *Transformation of Sikhism*, p. 115.

second letter which reached him in Khadur. The result was that the Guru and the prince had an interview on the right bank of the Bias. The Guru solved some of the prince's theological doubts and difficulties, complimented him on his spiritual knowledge, gave him instruction in the Sikh religion, and added, "Go to Lahore, fortify thy position, fight when necessary, and obtain victory. God assisteth those who assist themselves." Dara then requested the Guru to grant him faith in God, and took his leave. Before departing for Lahore he requested the Guru to impede as much as possible the progress of the pursuing army sent by Aurangzeb. Macauliffe does not refer to the measures taken by the Guru, if any, in compliance with this request. Irvine says that Har Rai 'joined the standard of Dara', but he does not explicitly tell us whether the Guru really gave the prince any military assistance.¹ Sarkar says, ".....Dara Shukoh had paid him visits of respect in the course of his general devotion to *sadhus*, and the Guru had blessed the prince when a fugitive in the Punjab after the battle of Samugarh."²

There is no doubt that soon after this meeting between the prince and the Guru, Aurangzeb summoned the latter to answer for his conduct. The Sikh version of the story is confused and not free from miracles, but it seems pretty clear that the Guru sent his eldest son Ram Rai to Delhi to make excuses on his behalf. The causes that led the Emperor to summon the Guru are thus expressed by Macauliffe: ".....complaints were made to Aurangzeb against the Guru. The Guru, it was said, had met Dara Shikoh, blessed him, and assisted him in opposing the Emperor; and it was also reported that he was preaching a religion distinct from Islam, and performing miracles in evidence of his divine mission. The Emperor was accordingly advised to send for him and convert him to Islam unless he could clearly establish his religious pretensions by the performance of miracles at the royal court. When the Guru was once converted, hundreds of thousands of Hindus would follow his example."³

1 *Later Mughals*, Vol. I, p. 77.

2 *History of Aurangzeb*, Vol. III, p. 353.

3 Macauliffe, Vol. IV, pp. 304-307.

The statement that the Guru had assisted Dara against the Emperor is obviously not an admission of the Guru's guilt on the part of the Sikh writers. It is merely one of the complaints submitted to Aurangzeb by a person or persons not named in the Sikh chronicles.¹ So far as the alleged religious motive of the Emperor is concerned, it is probable that the tradition preserved by the Sikhs is a correct one. Persecution began very early in Aurangzeb's reign. A charter granted to a priest of Banaras in the first year of his reign states that his religion forbade him to allow the building of new temples. An order issued early in his reign called upon all local officers in Orissa to pull down all temples, including even clay huts, built during the last ten or twelve years, and to allow no old temple to be repaired.² It is not improbable, therefore, that soon after his accession Aurangzeb should have turned his attention to the Sikh Guru, who had already offended him politically by blessing his rival. The Sikh records furnish us with an important piece of confirmatory evidence. When Ram Rai reached Delhi a meeting of Muslim priests was held by the Emperor's order for the purpose of interrogating him on the subject of the Gurus' hymns. Ram Rai escaped the Emperor's wrath by altering a line in one of Guru Nanak's hymns.³ This story raises an important question: Why should Ram Rai be interrogated, not on the subject of his father's assistance to Dara, but on the interpretation of a hymn offensive to Muslim sentiments? Neither Dr. Narang nor Sir J. N. Sarkar has noticed the religious aspect of the Emperor's policy towards Guru Har Rai.

Aurangzeb did not consider the Guru's offence serious enough to deserve punishment. This is another argument in favour of the view that Har Rai's sympathy for Dara did not extend to

1 It seems that Dr. Narang accepted this allegation as true, read it in conjunction with Dara's request that the Guru might impede the progress of the pursuing army sent by Aurangzeb, and came to the conclusion quoted above.

2 Sarkar, *History of Aurangzeb*, Vol. III, p. 301.

3 Macauliffe, Vol. IV, pp. 308-309.

military assistance. The Emperor, however, adopted a good precaution. Ram Rai was detained in Delhi, probably as a security for his father's good behaviour. It is likely that Aurangzeb intended to exercise some sort of control over the Sikhs. Mohsin Fani says that the Sikhs 'had already become accustomed to a form of self-government within the empire.' Aurangzeb must have been aware of this—as governor of Multan and Sind during the years 1648-1652 he had some opportunity of coming into contact with the Sikhs—and a suspicious autocrat like him must have been anxious to bring this state within the state under his own authority. The Guru might have suspected the Emperor's real motive. His reply to the Emperor's letter asking him to appear in Delhi 'without delay' is significant. He wrote, "I have no business with thee that thou shouldst have summoned me. I am not a king who payeth thee tribute....."¹ When Ram Rai came to Delhi and altered a line in one of Guru Nanak's hymns, the Emperor 'conferred a mark of favour' on him. The foolish young man was so much elated that "he gave himself airs as if he had been already appointed governor of a Province."² The shrewd Emperor was probably glad to find in him a pliant tool. He was the Guru's eldest son and heir-apparent.³ If he succumbed to the influence of the Mughal court, the Emperor might easily keep the turbulent Sikhs under control through him. Macauliffe says, "The Guru then passing in review the whole of Ram Rai's conduct since his arrival in Delhi, his treachery to his faith, unnecessary exhibition of miracles, and his long absence, decided that he was not fit for the Guruship."⁴ It seems that in the

1 Macauliffe, Vol. IV, p. 305.

2 Macauliffe, Vol. IV, pp. 309, 310. Compare Ram Rai's statement: "This powerful Emperor hath so appreciated me that he hath given me much wealth." (Macauliffe, Vol. IV, p. 315.)

3 Primogeniture was then the principle governing the succession in the Guru's family. Macauliffe (Vol. IV, p. 275) tells us that Hargobind selected Har Rai as his successor, 'wishing as far as possible to observe the custom of primogeniture'.

4 Macauliffe, Vol. IV, p. 310.

words 'his long absence' we have a covert allusion to Ram Rai's submission to imperial influence.

Whether Guru Har Rai really saw through the Emperor's game may be uncertain, but the latter's policy after Ram Rai's disinheritance leaves no room for doubt that Aurangzeb was trying to bring the Sikh community under his effective control. The Emperor allowed Ram Rai to go to Kiratpur to endeavour to induce his father to reverse his decision regarding him. Why should the Emperor allow the hostage to go? The obvious interpretation is that he wanted to utilise the hostage as his tool. The Emperor's attitude was widely known. When Ram Rai arrived at Lahore after his father's refusal to see him at Kiratpur, he was well received there. Macauliffe says, "Apart from being the eldest son of the Guru and a reputed thaumaturge, he was also supported by the Sikhs through policy, for it was believed that he possessed the confidence of the Emperor. On this account men who had previously not been Sikhs, now became his disciples and espoused his cause." Ram Rai himself gave wide publicity to his relations with the Emperor. When he requested his uncle Dhir Mal to intercede for him with the Guru, he observed, "I am.....on very good terms with the Emperor Aurangzeb, and I shall certainly complain to him." When the Guru heard this he observed, "After full consideration I have arrived at the conclusion that Ram Rai was blinded by the love of self when he so far forgot himself as to alter a word in a hymn of Guru Nanak to please the Emperor. What was done in the beginning will also be done now."¹

The Emperor had obviously succeeded in creating dissensions within the Sikh community. His proceedings during the pontificate of Har Krishan are the logical continuation of the policy explained above. Ram Rai was at the Emperor's court in Delhi when his younger brother was appointed to the Guruship at Kiratpur. He proclaimed himself Guru, with the connivance, if not at the instigation, of the Emperor,² and sent his

1 Macauliffe, Vol. IV, pp. 311-313.

2 Compare the statement of *masand* Gurdas. (Macauliffe, Vol. IV, p. 316).

masands to collect the offerings of the faithful. "The *masands* became proud and rebellious, and kept the greater part of the offerings for themselves." Ram Rai then laid his case before the Emperor. His address to Aurangzeb is very significant: ".....This misfortune hath befallen me on account of my obedience to thee. My father was opposed to thee on that account, and at his death ordered my younger brother never to be reconciled to thee and never to look upon thy face."¹ There is no exaggeration in these words. Before sending Ram Rai to Delhi Guru Har Rai had observed, ".....I have registered a vow that I will never look at the wicked Emperor Aurangzeb."² In response to Ram Rai's prayer the Emperor summoned Har Krishan to Delhi.³

At this stage the Sikh chroniclers have put a very interesting soliloquy at the Emperor's mouth, and we make no apology for quoting it in full: "I want to convert all the Hindus to Islam, but I apprehend failure in the Punjab, for there the people greatly reverence the Guru, and, if they rise against me, I shall have great difficulty in effecting my design. I have already several times considered how I can induce the Guru to accept the Muhammadan faith. It was on that account I summoned Guru Har Rai. He sent his son to me, and I have him now in my power. There is yet another brother, of whose resistance to my designs I am equally apprehensive; but if I succeed in bringing him here, I may bribe him into acquiescence. If he obstinately resist, I will set both brothers at variance, and they shall die by mutual slaughter. In this way my faith will quickly spread in the Punjab.....The Sikhs will never suspect that I have put both brothers to death. I shall kill the snake without breaking my stick."⁴ This is the Sikh interpretation of the Emperor's policy, and it fits quite well, not only with his character, but also with those incidents of Sikh history which we have narrated above.

1 Macauliffe, Vol. IV, pp. 315-317.

2 Macauliffe, Vol. IV, p. 307.

3 Macauliffe, Vol. IV, pp. 318-322.

4 Macauliffe, Vol. IV, pp. 317-318.

Har Krishan came to Delhi, relying probably on Raja Jai Singh's patronage, but he died before the Emperor could get an interview with him. His successor, Teg Bahadur, wandered through Northern India for about four years (1664-1668) and joined Raja Ram Singh at Patna in 1668. According to the Sikh chronicles, the Guru's roving life was intended 'to avoid annoyance from his relations'; it seems, however, that Dhir Mal and Ram Rai were intriguing against him in the imperial court.¹ We do not know whether Aurangzeb took any step against Teg Bahadur. Probably the Emperor was satisfied that the Sikhs would be sufficiently weakened by internal dissensions. Indeed, he had nothing to fear from a Guru who was compelled to wander from the Punjab to Bihar. Moreover, the Cooch Behar and Assam expeditions (1661-1670), the conquest of Chittagong (1666), the Afghan war on the north-western frontier (1667-1676), the Jat rebellion (1669), the Satnami rebellion (1672) and the expeditions against Shivaji, Bijapur and Golkonda (1660-1680) kept the Emperor fully occupied.

Ram Singh was appointed to recover the imperial prestige in Assam in December, 1667. He reached Rangamati² in February, 1669. As Teg Bahadur met him on his way at Patna, we must conclude that the Guru joined him sometime in 1668.³ This meeting could not have been accidental. Ram Singh might have been interested in the Sikhs when his father acted as Har Krishan's guardian in Delhi.⁴ He retreated from Assam in

1 Macauliffe, Vol. IV, pp. 320, 322-328, 338.

2 Situated on the bend of the Brahmaputra towards the Karatoya.

3 Sarkar, *History of Aurangzeb*, Vol. III, pp. 212-213.

According to the Sikh tradition Ram Singh's invitation to the Guru came before Gobind Singh's birth. (Macauliffe, Vol. IV, p. 348). Irvine (*Later Mughals*, Vol. I, p. 78) says, "At Patna, during his absence, his son Govind was born". The absence was, of course, due to the Guru's march to Assam. This is quite impossible. Guru Gobind was born in 1666, while Teg Bahadur could not have joined Ram Singh before 1668. Irvine relied on Macauliffe (Vol. IV, p. 357).

4. Macauliffe says that Ram Singh's principal queen, whose father's family were Sikhs, interested the prince in Teg Bahadur. (Vol. IV, p. 351).

March, 1671, remained for some years at Rangamati, and reached the imperial court in June, 1676. Macauliffe says that the Guru accompanied Ram Singh from Assam to Patna.¹ There are two insuperable difficulties in accepting this statement. Ram Singh left Assam in March, 1671, and waited at Rangamati till the early part of the year 1676. Even if we suppose that the Guru remained with him at Rangamati during these five years (a supposition which finds no support in the Sikh chronicles) and accompanied him up to Patna during his return journey to the imperial court (which he reached in June, 1676), we cannot explain Teg Bahadur's execution in 1675. And we must remember Macauliffe's statement that the Guru returned to the Punjab 'after protracted residence at Patna.'² It may be assumed that Teg Bahadur left Ram Singh's camp about the time of the latter's retreat from Assam (March, 1671) and returned to Patna. 'After a protracted residence' there he returned to the Punjab.

At this stage it is necessary for us to revert to Guru Har Rai's career. Dr. Narang observes that his pontificate was an era of peace and suggests three causes which, in his opinion, made peace natural at that time. "The Sikhs", he says, "had just passed through a stormy career, and it was natural that a pause should ensue." He forgets that the 'stormy' part of Hargobind's career had covered a period of seven years at the most (1627-1634), and that it had ended about eleven years before Har Rai's accession. The effects of the 'stormy career' must have exhausted themselves by that time. Secondly, Dr. Narang gives us the story of the dashed flowers quoted above and comments, "A man who was moved by the destruction of a flower.....was not fit to lead armies against the Mughals." We have already pointed out the absurdity of this story. Thirdly, Dr. Narang says, "The temptation to arms offered by the mild rule of Jahangir and Shahjahan was removed by the iron hand of Aurungzeb..."³ If the 'mild rule' of Jahangir really offered any

1 Macauliffe, Vol. IV, pp. 359-360.

2 Macauliffe, Vol. IV, p. 361.

3 *Transformation of Sikhism*, pp. 114-115.

'temptation to arms', that temptation was surely too weak even for a 'stormy' Guru like Hargobind, who did not fight against the Mughals as long as Jahangir was alive. The first thirteen years of the pontificate of Har Rai fell within the 'mild rule' of Shah Jahan; yet the Guru resisted 'the temptation to arms'. As a matter of fact, Shah Jahan's rule was hardly mild on the non-Muslims. He ordered the demolition of the newly built temples in his empire, totally prohibited the erection of new temples and the repairing of the old ones, made systematic efforts to convert the Hindus both by persuasion and by force, dismissed Hindus from his service on account of their religious convictions, and imposed taxes on Hindu pilgrims. The 'iron hand' of Aurangzeb introduced only one innovation, viz., the reimposition of the *Zizya*, and that came many years after Har Rai's death.

Har Rai was too young at the time of his accession to appear as a military leader, and, whatever the reason may be, he did not revert to militarism even when he attained maturity. Macauliffe says, "He maintained two hundred mounted soldiers. These he kept by his grandfather Guru Hargobind's advice as a precautionary measure."¹ We do not know what this 'precautionary measure' was directed against; Macauliffe does not refer to any military exploit. It may be that Hargobind did not like the extinction of the military tradition—if tradition we may call it—established by himself. Or he may have apprehended that Shah Jahan's persecuting zeal would not leave the Sikhs in peace. From what we know of Har Rai's character it may be presumed that he was temperamentally incapable of emulating his grandfather's example. It seems that Shah Jahan took no notice of the Sikhs during his pontificate, although Macauliffe incidentally says that the Emperor was hostile to the Guru.²

1 Macauliffe, Vol. IV, p. 277.

2 Macauliffe, Vol. IV, p. 278.

III

GURU TEG BAHADUR

Our authorities give conflicting accounts of Teg Bahadur's character. The Sikhs describe him as a mild worshipper of God. When he was five years of age, he used to indulge in trains of thought, during which he would speak to no one. When Makkhan Shah went to discover the Guru at Bakala, he heard that Teg Bahadur 'dwelt there in silence and retirement; but had no ambition to undertake the onerous duties of the position', i.e., Guruship. He was often found absorbed in contemplation. "He felt no pleasure in access of wealth, nor grief at its departure,...but was happy in the contemplation of God's goodness"¹. His hymns, says Trumpp, 'bear the stamp of a rather melancholy and world-renouncing character'². According to the *Siyar-ul-mutakherin*, however, he was taken prisoner on account of his predatory proceedings and executed as a rebel against the Mughal Government. This book was written in 1783³—more than a century after Teg Bahadur's death—by a Muslim historian who lived far away from the Punjab⁴. It is, however, supported by a Persian work written by Timur Shah Abdali about 1783⁵. In the absence of any reference to Teg Bahadur in the contemporary Persian histories we may take the statements of Ghulam Husain and Timur Shah as an indication that Muslim tradition was unanimous in regarding the Guru in the light more of a military adventurer than of a spiritual leader.

Our next task is to determine the period of Teg Bahadur's military activity. Cunningham says that he was 'summoned to Delhi as a pretender to power and as a disturber of the peace' before the Assam expedition; at that time he owed his escape

1 Macauliffe, Vol. IV, pp. 331-334.

2 *Adi Granth*, Introduction, p. lxxxviii.

3 Elliot and Dowson, Vol. VIII, p. 196.

4 But Ghulam Husain lived at Patna, a place closely connected with Teg Bahadur's life.

5 *Indian Historical Quarterly*, March, 1942.

to the intercession of Ram Singh. He adds that *after* his return from Assam, Teg Bahadur "followed the example of his father with unequal footsteps, and, choosing for his haunts the wastes between Hansee and the Sutlej, he subsisted himself and his disciples by plunder....."¹. There is no reason to question the authenticity of the Sikh tradition that Ram Singh met Teg Bahadur at Patna². We may, therefore, reject Cunningham's statement that Ram Singh saved the Guru in Delhi. We have reasons to think that the Guru joined Ram Singh at Patna sometime in 1668. As Guru Gobind was born at Patna in January, 1666,³ Teg Bahadur must have come there before that time. If he was really summoned to Delhi for what Cunningham describes as 'his own suspicious proceedings', that incident must have occurred during the period 1664-1665. After his accession he must have spent some time in collecting troops and organising them. The machinery of the Imperial Government must have taken some time in moving against him. If the Sikh chronicles are to be believed, the Guru visited many places *before* the Assam expedition—Amritsar, Walla, Hazara, Durga, Kiratpur, Anandpur, Mulowal, Handiaya, Dhilwan, Khiwa, Bhikki, Maur, Maisarkhana, Talwandi Sabo, Kot Dharmwala, Dhamdhan, Tekpur, Barna, Kurkhetar (Thaneswar), Bani Badrpur, Kara Manak, Agra, Itawa, Priyag, Benares, Sarasrawan, Gaya, Patna⁴. It is difficult to believe that within a period of less than two years the Guru could have collected troops, plundered the people, stood his trial in Delhi, and visited so many places lying all over Northern India, from the Punjab to Bihar. Moreover, the Guru was so much troubled by his kinsmen during this period that it was probably quite impossible for him to collect troops and create some sort of organization for plunder. We may conclude, therefore, that

1 *History of the Sikhs*, Chap. III.

2 Macauliffe, Vol. IV, pp. 348-352.

3 Macauliffe, Vol. IV, p. 358.

4 Macauliffe, Vol. IV, pp. 336-347.

the alleged plundering activities of the Guru began *after* the Assam expedition.

What were the causes that led Teg Bahadur to join Ram Singh at Patna? We know that, like Har Rai, Teg Bahadur was a hunter¹. Naturally he was a good horseman. When Ram Singh arrived at Patna at the head of a large Imperial army, a homeless wanderer like Teg Bahadur—one who had the blood of the adventurer Hargobind in his veins—was naturally attracted towards him. We may refuse to believe the stories of the Sikh chroniclers, who tell us that Ram Singh at first sent an envoy to the Guru, then personally saw him and 'sought the protection of his holy feet' and even 'received initiation as a Sikh'². Nor need we believe with the orthodox Sikhs that the Guru agreed to accompany the Rajput prince solely because "he would have an excellent opportunity of preaching to his Sikhs and extending the Sikh religion throughout the countries traversed"³. It may be suggested that Ram Singh might have become interested in the Sikhs when his father acted as Har Krishan's guardian in Delhi.

What part did the Guru play in the expedition? Sir Jadunath Sarkar says that he 'fought in the Mughal ranks'. He does not tell us whether he derives this information from the Persian histories, which, according to him, are silent about Teg Bahadur⁴. Macauliffe gives us a long story⁵, which makes the Guru the *de facto* leader of the expedition. The Guru and the Raja went to Rangamati, where the former's spiritual power rendered ineffective all the incantations, spells and tricks of the King of Assam. Then 'the goddess Devi' informed the King's mother in a vision that it was useless to oppose the Guru. The dowager queen communicated this order of the goddess to her son. The King of Kamrup

1 Macauliffe, Vol. IV, p. 343.

2 Macauliffe, Vol. IV, pp. 348-352.

3 Macauliffe, Vol. IV, p. 352.

4 *History of Aurangzib*, Vol. III, p. 354.

5 Vol. III, pp. 354-360.

then proceeded to the Guru's tent 'to pray for pardon and protection'. Peace was then concluded at the intercession of the Guru. At Dhubri in Assam a mound was raised in memory of Guru Nanak who had visited the place.

At least two statements in this narrative deserve to be accepted as true. The Persian histories tell us that Rangamati was Ram Singh's base of operations. Naturally the Guru went there. That he visited Dhubri seems to be proved by the fact that remains of an old *sangat* founded by him at that place still exist. But it is difficult to believe that Teg Bahadur accompanied the expedition as a spiritual leader and peace-maker. It is clear that the Sikh version of the expedition is too much simplified. We are told that Teg Bahadur was informed of the birth of his son at Rangamati *after* the conclusion of peace. Not more than ten months must, therefore, have elapsed since his departure from Patna. We are also told that the Guru and Ram Singh set out for Patna after the arrival of the news of Guru Gobind's birth, and that, while the Guru remained at Patna with his family, Ram Singh left that city 'after a few days' rest and spiritual comfort' and went to Delhi to report his success to the Emperor. This narrative is quite incompatible with the detailed description of the expedition which we find in the Persian histories. It may be pointed out that Ram Singh passed through Patna in 1668, retreated from Assam to Rangamati in 1671, waited there for about five years, and reached Delhi in 1676. Again, the Sikh chroniclers are incorrect in representing the Raja of Assam as the defeated party anxious for peace. According to Sir J. N. Sarkar, whose account is based on the Persian histories and the Ahom *Buranjis*, Ram Singh begged for peace in 1670, but in vain; in 1671 he retired to Rangamati, 'foiled in his purpose and heartily sick of the war'¹. The Guru, therefore, had no opportunity to act as a peace-maker. So many inaccuracies in the Sikh version of the war, coupled

1 *History of Aurangzib*, Vol. III, pp. 215-216. Gait (*History of Assam*, pp. 149-150) supports this view.

with the improbability of the proposition that the Guru accompanied a military expedition for the purpose of 'preaching to his Sikhs and extending the Sikh religion throughout the countries traversed',¹ lend some colour to Sir J. N. Sarkar's view that Teg Bahadur really 'fought in the Mughal ranks'.

If our readers accept this view, they will find it easy to explain why Teg Bahadur became a military adventurer after his return from Assam. He had discovered a new interest in life—the love of martial exploits. He had familiarised himself with the methods of plunder, which were no secret to the Mughal troops in those days. He had acquired useful military experience in a large-scale campaign. As we have suggested above, he probably left Ram Singh's camp about the time of the latter's retreat from Assam (March, 1671) and returned to his family at Patna. 'After a protracted residence' there, which probably covered not more than a year,² he returned to the Punjab. He left his family behind; he was probably afraid to implicate them directly in his uncertain future. He told his mother that his intention was to give instructions to the Sikhs in the Punjab and to lead them to the right way³. Strangely enough, the Sikh chronicles do not give us any detailed account of his activities in the Punjab. We are merely told that he visited Ropar (in the Ambala district), Kiratpur and Anandpur; we are then brought directly to the story of his death.⁴ May we assume that this somewhat strange silence of the Sikh chronicles

1 There is no evidence to show that Teg Bahadur preached in Assam or 'extended the Sikh religion throughout the countries traversed'. It is significant that there is no *sangat* or *Gurdwara* in Assam except at Dhubri—and Dhubri owed its importance, in the eyes of the Sikhs, to Guru Nanak's visit.

2 When the Guru informed his mother that he was going to the Punjab, she said that "he had been long absent in the Kamrup country, had only now returned, and it was too soon to leave her again". (Macauliffe, Vol. IV, p. 361).

3 Macauliffe, Vol. IV, p. 361.

4 Macauliffe, Vol. IV, pp. 363-364.

has something to do with the charges levelled against Teg Bahadur by Ghulam Husain and Timur Shah?¹

As in the case of Hargobind, so in the case of Teg Bahadur, militarism appears to have been an accident rather than a logical offshoot of the Sikh religion or a historical necessity for the Sikh community. It appears to have arisen, in both cases, out of the accidental association of the Guru with the Mughals. Apart from other indications pointing to the same conclusion, we should note that there is an interval of more than 37 years between the battle of Kiratpur, Hargobind's last military exploit, and Teg Bahadur's military activities in the Punjab after his return from the Assam expedition. If we assume any logical connection between the military activities of the two Gurus, we cannot offer any satisfactory explanation of the long lull of the intermediate period.

No detailed information is available about the military activities of Teg Bahadur, apart from the few references we have already quoted. Timur Shah makes a confusion between Teg Bahadur and his son and although he refers to Teg Bahadur's conflict with the Mughal Government, he makes the Guru die peacefully, not at the hand of the executioner. The following extract from his *Hakikat-i-Bina Wa Uurj-i-Firkah-i-Sikhan*² relates to Teg Bahadur's quarrel with the Mughals:

"When the news of many people assembling (around Teg Bahadur), reached the holy ears,³ orders were issued to the effect: 'If, as previously, like the poor *Nanankpanthi faqirs*, you live peacefully in corner, no harm will befall you. On the contrary, alms, suitable for your maintenance in the style of

1 An incident narrated by Macauliffe (Vol. IV, pp. 343-344) shows that the Sikhs were fully aware of the repugnance excited in the Hindu community by spiritual teachers interested in hunting and fighting. During his journey to Patna Teg Bahadur was refused reception by an eminent saint on the ground that he had shot some animals. Of course, the Guru's supernatural power finally converted the saint to Sikhism.

2 Translation by Dr. I. Banerjee in *Indian Historical Quarterly*, March, 1942.

3 Aurangzib.

faqirs, would be given to you from the State treasury, just as in the case of other prayer-offering groups... But the horses and arms, and the equipment of your retinue that you have gathered in your places of worship, must be removed'. Accordingly, the Faujdar of Sarhind intimated this order (to Tegh Bahadur). Before the proud and virile disciples who had assembled there, Tegh Bahadur said defiantly, 'We are *faqirs*; what God has given us, why should we return? We are living in our own shelters, why should you harm us?' On this point arose a great contention, which ended in war and Tegh Bahadur was driven out of that place by force. Tegh Bahadur took up his residence in the jungly country between Shahjahanabad and Lahore and passed his days in anxiety".

We now come to the question of Teg Bahadur's death. According to Macauliffe¹ this was due to the Guru's encouragement to the Hindus of Kashmir when Aurangzib tried to convert them to Islam. The Kashmiri Pandits, whom the Mughal Viceroy gave six months' time to consider whether they should embrace Islam or die for their religion, were supernaturally informed that no one but Guru Teg Bahadur would be able to protect their honour and their faith. They saw the Guru at Anandpur and 'implored him to preserve the honour of their faith in whatever way he deemed most expedient'. The Guru advised them to make the following representation to the Emperor: "First make him (*i.e.*, Teg Bahadur) Mussalman and then all the people, including ourselves, will of our own accord adopt the faith". The Emperor then ordered the Guru to be summoned to his presence. The Guru started for the capital. His delay in the journey created a suspicion in the mind of the Emperor, who 'despatched orders all over his empire to find and arrest him'. There are clear indications in Sikh records to show that the Guru was travelling incognito, presumably to avoid arrest. His identity was betrayed by an accident at Agra², where he was arrested. He was then taken

¹ Vol. IV, pp. 368-387.

² If the Guru was really going from Anandpur to Delhi in obedience to the imperial order, why should he be found at Agra? This is an additional evidence to show that he was trying to escape.

to Delhi, imprisoned and offered Islam or death. To his executioner the Guru said: "The Sikh religion is dearer to me than life, and I cannot renounce it even under the pressure of immediate and certain death". His head was cut off when he bowed to God at the conclusion of his devotions.

There is no evidence to dispute the Guru's connection with the Kashmir movement against conversion, but it can hardly be taken as the sole cause of the Guru's execution. His military activities, referred to by Ghulam Husain and Timur Shah, may have excited the displeasure of the Emperor and provided a sufficient excuse for punishment. Whether Teg Bahadur was really driven by the Mughal troops to take up his residence in the jungly country between Shahjahanabad and Lahore, we do not know; but the Emperor's order for his arrest, and the Guru's attempt to avoid arrest, seem to offer indirect confirmation to Timur Shah's statement. That Aurangzib was determined to adopt severe measures against the Sikhs, is clear from the following statement of Khafi Khan: "Aurangzib ordered the temples of the Sikhs to be destroyed and the Guru's agents (*masands*) for collecting the tithes and presents of the faithful to be expelled from the cities"¹. It is strange that, in course of their repeated references to Aurangzib's bigotry, the Sikh chroniclers do not mention this direct assault on their religion. Probably their silence on this point is a counterpart of their silence on Guru Teg Bahadur's military activities.

Whatever may have been the real cause of Aurangzib's displeasure with Teg Bahadur, there is no reason to believe that the Guru really wanted to 'free the earth from the burden of the Muhammadans'². Had he been a *national* leader of some importance, the Muslim historians would not have remained absolutely silent about him. In this case a negative argument is almost decisive. The Persian histories are full of Shivaji's exploits; why should they refuse even to mention Teg Bahadur's death? Guru Arjan's death was considered important enough to find a place in Jahangir's own memoirs, but the careers of

¹ Quoted by Sarkar, *History of Aurangzib*, Vol. III, p. 354.

² Macauliffe, Vol. IV, p. 372.

Hargobind and Teg Bahadur are passed over in silence even by the official and non-official historians. The Satnami rebellion and the risings of the Jat peasants in Aurangzib's reign are described in detail ; why so much indifference to the Sikhs ?

IV

GURU GOBIND SINGH

Guru Gobind was in his tenth year at the time of his father's tragic death. In the *Bachitra Natak* (vii) he merely says that his father departed to the other world when he arrived at the age to perform his religious duties. But the Sikh chroniclers describe in some detail the great military interest which he is said to have developed from his childhood¹. The stories need not be taken as literally true, but it is not quite improbable that the son of a warrior who had just returned from an expedition should share his father's interest in arms. Indeed, Macauliffe says, "His father (i.e., Teg Bahadur) used to...tell him that though the practice (of shooting) was meritorious, the time for putting it into effect had not yet arrived."

When Gobind received his father's last message he said, "We will abide in Anandpur and destroy the Turks." His mother upon this cautioned silence lest some agent of the Emperor should hear his words. The heroic boy replied that that was not a time for silence and concealment². After his father's death he 'continued with even more diligence than before to prepare himself for his great mission'³. The preparation consisted in the collection of arms, practice of archery, martial exercises, musket-shooting, hunting, collection of troops, construction of a big drum, etc.⁴

Dr. I. Banerjee has given us a very interesting account of

¹ Macauliffe, Vol. IV, pp. 360-361, 363-364.

² Macauliffe, Vol. IV, p. 383.

³ Macauliffe, Vol. V, p. 1.

⁴ Macauliffe, Vol. V, pp. 1, 3-5.

Guru Gobind's early adventures.¹ He says, "At the time of his father's death the Guru was a mere boy and as yet his resources were slender and scanty. The mighty Mughal Government had declared itself the open enemy of his faith and the first result of that open breach had been the execution of his father. It is also very probable that the Raja, in whose territories the Guru resided, also raised difficulties about his continuance there as it might involve him in troubles with the Government, and the Guru thought it better to leave the place and retire further into the hills. There he lived in seclusion for several years but suddenly quarrel broke out with Fateh Shah of Srinagar. The Guru won the battle that followed but still perhaps he did not think it convenient to remain there any longer. In the meantime circumstances had changed in Kahlur. Bhim Chand was now meditating rebellion against the Government or had perhaps actually rebelled. At this crisis he was only too glad to welcome the Guru back to his territories. The Guru, in his turn, readily consented, and coming to Kahlur founded the village of Anandpur, which henceforward became the centre of his activities". It is clear from this account that up to the time of the battle of Nadaun the Guru was acting on the defensive. Instead of destroying the Turks, he remained in concealment.

Why did the Guru join Raja Bhim Chand in the latter's quarrel with the Mughal Government ? In the *Bachitra Natak* (vii. 38) he says, "...Miyan Khan went to Jammu and sent Alif Khan to Nadaun. Immediately quarrel broke out with Bhim Chand. The Raja called me to assist him in the struggle, and I joined his side". The Guru did not merely give him military assistance ; he personally took part in the fighting. He says, "Then this insignificant creature took up his gun and aimed at one of the Rajas. The Raja reeled and fell back upon the ground, so unerringly was the shot directed, but even then the angry chief thundered. I drew out four and discharged all of

¹ *Indian Historical Quarterly*, 1925 : "The Early Adventures of Guru Gobind Singh." The subject was dealt with in greater detail in Vol. II of Dr. I. Banerjee's *Evolution of the Khalsa*.

them. Then again I took three others and discharged them with my left hand (though) whether they struck anybody or not I do not know. Then the Almighty God hastened the end of the fight and the enemy were driven out into the river".¹ No indication is, however, given of the causes that led to the Guru's alliance with Bhim Chand.

The alliance did not long survive the battle, for the Guru plundered the village of Alsun (situated within Bhim Chand's territory) on his way to Anandpur.² We do not know what caused this breach. After this the Guru became the target of the Mughal officers. Here again we are quite in the dark about the cause. Dr. I. Banerjee suggests that the Hill Rajas made their terms with the Mughals, leaving the Guru in the lurch. This is a very reasonable explanation. He also suggests that the expeditions of Miyan Khan, Dilawar Khan's son, Hussain Khan and Jujhar Singh form 'so many links in a single chain,' and that, when the news of their defeats reached Aurangzib in the Deccan, "he became very angry and sent one of his own sons to the Punjab to set the matter right." It is important to note that Sir J. N. Sarkar's chapter on 'Disorders in Northern India' during Aurangzib's long sojourn in the Deccan³ does not contain a single reference to these successive expeditions against the Hill Rajas of the Punjab, although some details about petty rebellions (e.g., Gangaram Nagar's rebellion in Bihar) have been included there. It seems that the importance attached to the Hill Rajas and their ally, Guru Gobind, in the Sikh chronicles is much exaggerated, for the Persian histories are silent on the matter. Shah Alam governed the Punjab for about three years (July 1696—May 1699).⁴ There is no evidence, apart from the Guru's statement in the *Bachitra Natak*, to show that the Shahzada⁵

1 *Bachitra Natak*, ix. 17-19. I have used Dr. I. Banerjee's translation of the passages quoted in his article.
2 Macauliffe, Vol. V, pp. 54-55.
3 *History of Aurangzib*, Vol. V, Chap. LIX.
4 Irvine, *Later Mughals*, Vol. I, p. 4.
5 Macauliffe (Vol. V, p. 59) identifies the Shahzada mentioned in the *Bachitra Natak* with Shah Alam. There is no difficulty in accepting this identification.

was specially commissioned by Aurangzib to crush the Hill Rajas and the Sikhs, although it is quite probable that during his tenure of this important viceroyalty the prince took military measures for the restoration of peace and obedience within his province.

Was Guru Gobind inspired with the mission of destroying the Mughal Empire? We accept Dr. I. Banerjee's conclusion that the *Bachitra Natak* was composed immediately before the creation of the *Khalsa*, and after the conclusion of the military activities referred to above¹. The Guru's views on the Mughal Empire are thus stated in that work:—

"The successors of both Baba Nanak and Babar
Were created by God Himself.
Recognize the former as a spiritual
And the latter as a temporal King.
Babar's successors shall seize and plunder those
Who deliver not the Guru's money."²

In these lines we almost have an echo of the famous dictum: "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's." Instead of aiming at the destruction of the Mughal Empire the Guru recognises in it a creation of God, legitimises it in the eyes of his followers by calling upon them to acknowledge the temporal authority of Babar's successors, and even invokes its assistance for the punishment of those 'who deliver not the Guru's money'. It is clear, therefore, that resistance to the Mughals was not the Guru's motive in contracting an alliance with the Hill Rajas. Nor are we justified in saying that the creation of the *Khalsa* was due to the Guru's anti-Mughal feelings.

Did Guru Gobind develop anti-Mughal feelings after the creation of the *Khalsa*? In spite of the cruel execution of his two sons by the *Faujdar* of Sarhind,³ he joined Bahadur Shah in the war of succession that followed Aurangzib's death.⁴

1 "The *Bachitra Natak*," *Indian Historical Quarterly*, 1925.
2 Macauliffe, Vol. V, p. 305.
3 Macauliffe, Vol. V, pp. 194-198.
4 We need not accept the statement of Warid that the Guru offered to make his 'submission to Aurangzib and even promised to embrace Islam.'

accepted some rank in the Mughal army, and fought for his patron in the battle of Jajau.¹ We may reject the Sikh stories conferring upon him a *mansab* of 5,000 and attributing Bahadur Shah's victory at Jajau to his marvellous feats,² but there is no reason to doubt that he was really an officer in the Mughal army in 1707-1708. He accompanied the Emperor to the Deccan and died there.³ On these points Sikh tradition is in substantial agreement with the statements of the Muslim historians.

An explanation must now be discovered of the Guru's long hostility with the Mughal commanders. In his article on the early adventures of Guru Gobind Singh Dr. I. Banerjee observes, "...during the pre-Khalsa period...the Guru's object seems to have been to enter gradually into the fraternity of the Hill Rajas and establish himself as one of their equals." To us it seems that this statement offers a very satisfactory clue to Guru Gobind's whole career. If we scrutinise the history of his relations with the Mughal officers, we confront the Hill Rajas almost at every step.

We have already seen that Raja Bhim Chand first drew him into a contest with the Mughals. We have also seen that after the battle of Nadaun the Hill Rajas made terms with the Mughals, leaving the Guru a prey to Mughal vengeance. Macauliffe says, "When it became known that the Sikhs had taken

(See Irvine's *Later Mughals*, Vol. I, pp. 88-89). It is probable that Warid's statement is somehow connected with the Guru's letter to Aurangzib, known as the *Zafarnama*. (Macauliffe, Vol. V, pp. 179, 201-206).

1 Irvine, *Later Mughals*, Vol. I, pp. 89-90.

2 These Sikh stories are referred to by Irvine (*Later Mughals*, Vol. I, p. 89), but I do not find them in Macauliffe (Vol. V, p. 230).

3 Macauliffe, Vol. V, pp. 235-245. Irvine, *Later Mughals*, Vol. I, pp. 90-91, Buti Shah says that the Guru went to the Deccan because he was dejected and probably wanted a change. He does not tell us why the place selected for change should lie on the route of Bahadur Shah's march. Malcolm says that 'the insatiable thirst of revenge which he had cherished through life against the murderers of his father and the oppressors of his sect,' reinforced by the massacre of his children, would not have allowed him to become a servant of the Mughals. Irvine shows that he did become a servant of the Mughals.

supplies forcibly at Alsun, some of the hill chiefs feared that the Guru would some day seize their territories also."¹ Probably these Hill Chiefs had something to do with Dilawar Khan's expeditions against the Guru. Macauliffe says, "...the faithless Raja Bhim Chand broke his treaty with the Guru, and threw in his lot with the enemies. Bhim Chand, following the example of Raja Kripal of Kangra, paid tribute to Husain,² and in company with other traitorous chiefs proceeded with him to sack and destroy Anandpur."³ The Guru assisted Raja Gopal of Guler in his fight against Husain.⁴

After the creation of the *Khalsa* the Hindus naturally became angry with the Guru; the abolition of the caste system was too much for them.⁵ Some Hill Rajas, including Raja Ajmer Chand, the successor of the late Raja Bhim Chand, came to visit the Guru, but they 'took their departure without accepting the Guru's proposal to substitute his *Khalsa* for existing Indian religious system'.⁶ One day, as the Guru was on a hunting excursion, two Hill Chiefs, Balia Chand and Alim Chand, tried to surprise and capture him. When they failed, says Macauliffe, "the hill chiefs thought it highly dangerous to allow the Sikhs to increase in power and number. They remarked that the Sikhs were to-day in thousands, but in a short time they would be in millions, therefore immediate measures ought to be taken for their repression...The hill chiefs therefore thought it desirable to complain to the Delhi government against the Sikhs." The 'viceroy of Delhi' heard their complaint and submitted it to Aurangzib, who was then in the Deccan. It was decided that an army would be sent to assist the Hill Rajas against the Guru, if they paid the expenses, but not otherwise. They accordingly sent the necessary funds. Din Beg

1 Macauliffe, Vol. V, p. 55.

2 Dilawar Khan's officer.

3 Macauliffe, Vol. V, p. 56.

4 Macauliffe, Vol. V, pp. 57-58.

5 Macauliffe, Vol. V, pp. 97-98.

6 Macauliffe, Vol. V, pp. 99-101.

and Painsda Khan were then sent 'to resist the Guru's encroachments on the rights of the hill chiefs'. At Ropar the Imperial troops were joined by the Hill Chiefs (including Ajmer Chand) at the head of their contingents. In the battle that followed Painsda Khan was killed and Din Beg was severely wounded.¹

The Hill Rajas then organised a confederacy under the leadership of Ajmer Chand and Bhup Chand, Raja of Handur. The allied troops 'fell upon Anandpur like a flight of locusts', but they were repulsed by the brave Sikhs. Ajmer Chand then renewed his complaint to the Mughal Government; as a result, Wazir Khan, the *Faujdar* of Sarhind, was directed to expel the Guru from Anandpur. The Hill Rajas co-operated with Wazir Khan, but they failed to defeat the Guru. A truce followed. Ajmer Chand, however, sent a Brahmin to spy on the Guru's proceedings, bribed a Muslim general named Alif Khan to fight against the Guru, organised a new confederacy which failed to crush the Guru, and sent an envoy to the Emperor, asking for protection. The Emperor sent Saiyad Khan to reduce the Guru to submission. This worthy general 'had long been a secret friend of the Guru'; so he 'turned aside from the battle', which was, however, won by his soldiers under the leadership of Ramzan Khan. Anandpur was plundered by the Mughals.²

Raja Ajmer Chand now proceeded to the Deccan to lay the petition of the allied Hill Rajas before the Emperor. The Emperor ordered a large army to be sent against the Guru. Wazir Khan of Sarhind, who assumed the command, received the whole-hearted co-operation of the Hill Rajas. After a long siege the Guru was compelled to evacuate Anandpur. The allied forces continued to harass his retreat. Two sons of the Guru fell in an encounter with the Mughals, while two others were betrayed to Wazir Khan by a Brahmin. Then followed the tragedy of their death. The Guru continued his retreat, but Wazir Khan's army was in hot pursuit.

1 Macauliffe, Vol. V, pp. 120-122, 124-126.

2 Macauliffe, Vol. V, pp. 126-142, 144-145, 153-156, 162-164.

The dangerous sojourn came to an end only with Aurangzib's death.¹

All the details given above may not be true, but the entire narrative is obviously based on a single idea—the implacable hostility of the Hill Rajas to the Guru. The Mughals came as a subsidiary force; the ferocity of the Imperial officers increased as a result of their repeated failures and culminated in the execution of the Guru's innocent sons. It is a struggle primarily between the Guru and the Hill Rajas.² Nor is the cause of this long struggle far to seek. From the political and military points of view the Guru was an upstart; how could the Hill Rajas tolerate him? Religious animosity embittered political rivalry, specially after the creation of the *Khalsa*. It is well-known that the hill tract was a stronghold of Hinduism.

Guru Gobind Singh's 'mission', therefore, was the acquisition of political power, similar to that enjoyed by the Hill Rajas. For this purpose militarism was a necessity. At first he tried to enter into the fraternity of the Hill Rajas as a friend.³ Then

1 Macauliffe, Vol. V, pp. 165-229.

2 When Guru Gobind sent Banda to the Punjab, he ordered him to go to the hills and search for the Hill Rajas who had so often and so cruelly persecuted the Guru and mete out to them the same justice as to the Mughal enemies of the *Khalsa*. (Macauliffe, Vol. V, p. 239). To Aurangzib the Guru wrote :—

"I am the destroyer of the turbulent hillmen,
Since they are idolaters and I am a breaker of idols."

(Macauliffe, Vol. V, p. 68).

3 It may be suggested that the famous Debi puja episode, which has been differently interpreted by different writers, probably lends some support to this view. The Guru may have intended 'to win over the popular sympathy and confidence of the populace,' specially in the hill tracts, 'as the chosen favourite of their Deity.' "The Guru cherished the sword as an object of worship and some of his finest verses (in the *Bachitra Natak*) are those he employed to invoke its aid." (Narang, *Transformation of Sikhism*, pp. 148-149). Guru Gobind's interest in the hill tracts is also clear from the situation of the forts constructed by him. Cunningham says that he wanted 'to establish a virtual principality amid mountain fastnesses to serve as the basis of his operations against the Mughal government.' (*History of the Sikhs*, Chap. III).

circumstances made him an enemy of the Hill Rajas as well as the Mughals. After a long struggle he realised that even the *Khalsa* was not equal to the task of fighting simultaneously with these two parties. So he changed his policy and reconciled himself with the Mughals. Aurangzib's death probably provided a good opportunity; the old Emperor—his father's murderer—was too orthodox and too prejudiced to be converted to friendship. Guru Gobind joined Bahadur Shah at a psychological moment, when nobody knew whether he would succeed in the impending contest, and fought for him in the critical battle of Jajau. It may be presumed that after the consolidation of his patron's position the Guru would have tried to obtain from him some rank and position in the Punjab. But death came too soon for the realisation of this ambition.

The story that Guru Gobind's mission was to avenge his father's death and to destroy the Mughal Empire has found acceptance with modern writers. Cunningham says that he became 'the irreconcilable foe of the Mahometan name', 'conceived the noble idea of moulding the vanquished Hindoos into a new and aspiring people', and "in the heart of a powerful empire set himself to the task of subverting it."¹ Dr. Narang speaks of avenging Teg Bahadur's death and striking a blow at the power of Aurangzib.² Sir J. N. Sarkar says that Gobind was 'not the person to leave his father's death unavenged', and that he 'began a policy of open hostility to Islam'.³ We have tried to show that this interpretation of the Guru's career cannot be reconciled with the principal events of his life. The only act of the Guru's life which was inspired by the spirit of revenge was the despatch of Banda to the Punjab for the punishment of Wazir Khan of Sarhind who was responsible for the cruel death of his minor sons. When Guru Gobind joined Bahadur Shah, he "promised him not only assistance but sovereignty, if he

agreed to a request he was about to make...Bahadur Shah was pleased to accept these vague conditions...". After the battle of Jajau the Guru requested the Emperor to deliver Wazir Khan to him. Bahadur Shah felt that if he surrendered a powerful officer to the Guru, a popular rebellion and a mutiny of his Muslim troops would be the result. So he requested the Guru to wait for a year until his rule was more firmly established, and then he would consider his request. Impatient of delay, the Guru sent Banda to the Punjab, with 'instructions to cut off Wazir Khan's head with his own hands, and not entrust this pious duty to any subordinate'. It is clear that Banda was not commissioned to begin a general war against the Mughal Government; his hostility was to be directed against a single officer who had cruelly injured the Guru. After the plunder of Sarhind and the punishment of Wazir Khan, Mata Sundari, one of Guru Gobind's wives, wrote a letter to Banda "to the effect that he had now accomplished the mission imposed on him by the Guru, namely, to bring the Governor of Sarhind to justice, and it was time for him to arrest his career of carnage and spoliation. Banda said that as Mata Sundari was only a woman she was not competent to give him advice or orders."¹

The creation of the *Khalsa* was intended to give the Sikhs greater unity and a definite military ideal of life. Unity was certainly needed. In the first place, different sects had grown up within Sikhism—the Udasis, the Minas, the Dhir-malias, the Ram Raias, etc.² Secondly, the *masands* had become corrupt,³ and their avarice was responsible for the slackening of the Guru's control over the Sikh organization. Thirdly, the Sikhs were gradually becoming Hinduised in their manners and customs. In the Keshgarh assembly the Guru laid down important principles for the removal of these obstacles to unity within the Sikh organization. Hence-

1 *History of the Sikhs*, Chap. III.

2 *Transformation of Sikhism*, p. 150.

3 *History of Aurangzib*, Vol. III, pp. 355, 359.

1 Macauliffe, Vol. V, pp. 230, 234-235, 238-239, 250.

2 For a contrary view, see Teja Singh's *Sikhism*, Chap. VI.

3 Macauliffe, Vol. IV, pp. 3, 316; Vol. V, pp. 84-89.

forth the Sikhs must not have any social or matrimonial relations with the descendants or followers of Prithi Chand, Dhir Mal and Ram Rai. Thus the recalcitrant sects were cut off from the Sikh community. Secondly, the Sikhs were similarly ordered not to have any social or matrimonial relations with the *masands*, 'who had fallen away from tenets and principles of Guru Nanak'. The Guru had already abolished the *masand* system and ordered that the Sikhs should themselves present their offerings to the Guru. Thirdly, all Hindu manners and customs were eradicated from the Sikh community. The Sikhs were to consider their previous castes erased, and deem themselves all brothers of one family. They were freely to intermarry among themselves. They must not worship idols, cemeteries or cremation grounds.¹

The establishment of internal unity was an essential preliminary to the inauguration of a definitely military ideal of life. The *pahul* ceremony symbolised this remarkable transformation of Sikhism. In the Keshgarh assembly the Guru said, "Since the time of Baba Nanak *charanpahul* hath been customary. Men drank the water in which the Gurus had washed their feet, a custom which led to great humility; but the Khalsa can now only be maintained as a nation by bravery and skill in arms. Therefore I now institute the custom of baptism by water stirred with a dagger, and change my followers from Sikhs to Singhs or lions."² The task of the new brotherhood was to punish the tyrants.³ Of this process of complete militarisation the worship of the sword was a necessary corollary. God was described by the Guru as *Sarbloh* (All-steel), *Mahanloh* (Great-steel). *Asidhuj*, *Asiketu* and *Kharagketu* (having the sword on His banner), and *Asipani* (sword in hand).⁴

A military organization demands unity of leadership. The Guruship provided that unity. Instead of strengthening the Guruship, Gobind abolished it altogether. "He invested his

sect with the dignity of Gurudom,"¹ thereby dissolving the great unifying principle which had held the Sikhs together for two centuries. Behind this strange measure there must have been some very convincing reasons; otherwise so shrewd and capable a leader like Guru Gobind would not have set aside the most fundamental institution in Sikhism. Dr. Narang says, "He did not appoint any successor, not only because his own sons were all dead, but because he perhaps anticipated the abuse of the office if it fell into unworthy hands".² There is no doubt, however, that the Guruship was really abolished in 1699, when the Guru's sons were alive. In the Keshgarh assembly the Guru received baptism in the hands of his five tried Sikhs. When they were astonished at the Guru's proposal, he said, "...The Khalsa is the Guru and the Guru is the Khalsa. There is no difference between you and me. As Guru Nanak seated Guru Angad on the throne, so have I made you also a Guru".³ In the hour of his final defeat at Chamkaur the Guru entrusted the Guruship to the five Sikhs who alone remained of the army. He said, "I shall ever be among five Sikhs".⁴ There is no reason to think that Guru Gobind 'anticipated the abuse of the office if it fell into unworthy hands'. His sons were courageous, and courage was the primary quality required of the *Khalsa*. It seems that the abolition of the Guruship has a logical connection with the Guru's war against sectarianism within the Sikh community. The sects owed their origin to the disappointed candidates for the *takht*. It was not enough to boycott the existing sects; the origin of new sects must be prevented. The abolition of the Guruship was, therefore, the only remedy.

Teja Singh remarks, "If we read Sikh history aright, the Sikh community would appear as an organized unit, to have undergone a course of discipline in the hands of ten Gurus, until its character was fully developed and the Guru merged his

1 Macauliffe, Vol. V, pp. 86, 95-96.

2 Macauliffe, Vol. V, p. 93.

3 Macauliffe, Vol. V, p. 228.

4 Macauliffe, Vol. V, p. 261.

1 Macauliffe, Vol. V, p. 96.

2 *Transformation of Sikhism*, p. 169.

3 Macauliffe, Vol. V, p. 96.

4 Macauliffe, Vol. V, p. 189.

personality in the body of the nation thus reached".¹ The writer assumes for the Sikhs a course of uninterrupted and continuous development through a process of systematic and logical training, and overlooks the difficulty that this simplification of history is confronted by inconvenient facts almost at every step. We must admit, however, that the abolition of the Guruship was not an unnatural and unforeseen development: Had it been so, the Guru must have encountered serious opposition from at least a section of the Sikhs. It is significant that even in the sixteenth century the individual Sikh had come to be regarded as 'a philosopher's stone...capable of communicating holiness to others'.² We read: "He had saved himself and his family, and he shall save twenty-one generations, yea, the whole world".³ Bhai Gurdas says, ".....where there are two Sikhs, there is a company of saints; where there are five Sikhs there is God".⁴ Guru Hargobind identified the Guru with the Sikh when he said, "Deem the Sikh who comes to you with the Guru's name on his lips as your Guru".⁵ As we go through these extracts we feel that we are not far off from the Keshgarh assembly.

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¹ *Sikhism*, p. 28. The author has elaborated his argument in *Growth of Responsibility in Sikhism*.

² *Evolution of the Khalsa*, Vol. I, p. 245.

³ Macauliffe, Vol. II, p. 292.

⁴ Macauliffe, Vol. IV, p. 243.

⁵ Macauliffe, Vol. IV, p. 219.

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