

***BANDAGAN-I-SALATIN-I-DEHLI :***  
**THE *MAMLUKS* IN THE THIRTEENTH  
AND FOURTEENTH CENTURIES**

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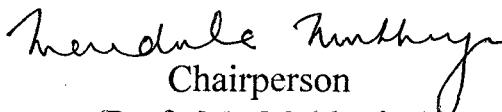


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## CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the Dissertation entitled ***BANDAGAN-I-SALATIN-I-DEHLI : THE MAMLUKS IN THE THIRTEENTH AND FOURTEENTH CENTURIES*** by **Ms. Alka** is in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the Degree of **Master of Philosophy** of this University. This dissertation has not been previously submitted for any other degree of this or any other University and is an original work.

We recommend that this Dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

  
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<b>PREFACE</b>
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While reading an article by David Ayalon, a statement by Ibn Khaldun stuck my attention that, 'The status of slavery is indeed a blessing..... from Divine Providence. They embrace Islam with the determination of true believers, while retaining the nomadic virtues which are undefined by vile nature, unmixed with the faith of trustful pleasures, unmarried by the habits of civilization with their youthful strength unshattered by excess of luxury. The slave-merchants bring them to Egypt in batch after batch, like sand grouse flocking by watering place. The ruler have them paraded, bid against one another to pay the highest prices for them. The purpose of their purchase is not to enslave them but to intensify their zeal and solidarity and strengthen their powers.....'

(Ibn Khaldun, *Ibar*, passage translated by D. Ayalon in 'The Great Yasa of Chingiz Khan : A Re-examination, part , C<sub>1</sub>, *Studia Islamica* , 36, 1972, pp. 118-20)

Can the slave-status be a blessing ? Can a person be enslaved to intensify his zeal and solidarity ? The picture which strikes our mind, when we think about slave, is of a humble, powerless and depressed person, whose every movement is under the control of his owner. The statement of

(ii)

Ibn Khaldun does not corroborate with the established notion of slave-status and slavery. This deviation in the notion of slavery in the Islamic world encouraged me to study the institution of slavery in Muslim world, especially the military slavery.


I take the honour to express gratitude to my supervisor **Prof. K.K. Trivedi** from the core of my heart for his suggestions, guidance and critical remarks, which helped me to write this dissertation. I am extremely thankful to him for examining several drafts of my dissertation with patience.

I pay my regards to my Persian teacher **Dr. Zohra Khatoon** for helping me in the translation of some of the Persian texts.

I am also thankful to my family for all the encouragement and moral support which enabled me to cope up with the stress and helped me to stand erect through all the ups and downs of my life.

I am also thankful to the ICHR for providing me the financial assistance.

Jawaharlal Nehru University,  
Delhi, 19 July, 2004

  
(Ms. ALKA)

## ABBREVIATIONS

1. **Afif,** *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi* of Shams-i-Siraj Afif.
2. **Badaoni,** *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh* of Abdul Qadir Badaoni.
3. **Barani, Tarikh,** *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi* of Ziauddin Barani.
4. **BSOAS** *Bulletin of the School of the Oriental and African Studies.*
5. **Ferishta** *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* of Muhammad Qasim Hindu Shah Ferishta.
6. **Ibn Battuta,** *Rehla* of Ibn Battuta.
7. **IJMES** *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies.*
8. **IHR** *Indian Historical Review.*
9. **Insha-i-Mahru,** *Ain ul-Mulk Mahru, Insha-i-Mahru.*
10. **Isami,** *Abdul Malik Isami, Futuh-us-Salatin.*
11. **JAOS** *Journal of American Oriental Society.*
12. **JIH** *Journal of Indian History.*

13. *Masalik al-Absar*, *Masalik al-Absar fi-mamalik al-Amsar* of Shihab al Din al-Umari.
14. *PIHC* *Proceedings of Indian History Congress.*
15. *Subh al-Asha*, *Subh al-Asha* of Al-Qalqashandi.
16. *Sirhindi*, *Tarikh-i-Mubarakshahi* of Yahya bin Sirhindi.
17. *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, *Tabaqat-i-Akbari* of Nizamuddin Ahmad.
18. *T.N.*, *Tabaqat i-Nasiri* of Minhaj us-Siraj Juzjani.
19. *Taj*, *Taj al-Ma'asir* of Hasan Nizami.

## INTRODUCTION

Slavery has been an integral part of human civilization since the antiquity. In all the pre-modern societies like Chinese, Egyptian, Mesopotamian, Greek, Hebrew, Hittite, Mycenaean, Roman, Athenian, Babylonean, Indian etc. slaves were employed in various sphere for different purposes.<sup>1</sup> They were employed in agricultural-fields, shops, industries, craft-workshops, mines and households. Slaves performed such an important role in the economy of Ancient Roman Empire that its decline in the third century is attributed to decline of slave-system.<sup>2</sup> Roman civilization was based on cities and Roman cities existed largely by virtue of an agricultural surplus produced by slaves. As long as slaves were there, the cities as well as economy flourished; but immediately after the drying up of slave supply to Roman world, economy started tottering down. Countryside could no longer produce surplus to sustain the cities. As a result, the strong flourishing cities of Rome, which were the hub of socio-cultural activities earlier could no longer dominate the world.

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<sup>1</sup> E.M. Burns, P.L. Ralph, R.E. Lerner and S.Meacham, eds., *World Civilizations : Their History and Their Culture*, Volume A, First Indian Publication, Delhi, 1991, for Athens, see pp. 182, 214, 217; for China, see pp. 147, 155, 326, 548; for Egypt, see pp. 41-42, 52, 78; for Mesopotamia, see pp. 52, 56, 63; for Greece, see p. 174; for Hebrew, see p. 86; for Hettite, see p. 97; for Japan, see p. 335; for Mycenea, see p. 105; for Rome, see pp. 258, 259, 263, 266, 406. Also see 'Servitude', in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, n.s., Volume 27, pp. 225-38. Also see 'Slave' and 'Slavery' in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, n.s., Volume 10, pp. 873, 874.

<sup>2</sup> See Ralph and Burns, eds., *World Civilizations*, p. 262.



Not only that, the technological backwardness of Rome also had its roots in slave-system. In the Western countries, agricultural surplus was reproduced by technological recollections, but Roman landlords were indifferent to technological advancement because interest in it was thought to be demeaning. As long as slaves were present to do the work, there was no need of labour saving devices, and attention to any sort of machinery was deemed a sign of slavishness.<sup>1</sup>

While employment of slaves in menial works or at a place where labour was required can be easily anticipated, their employment in armed forces is surprising. Warriors' class in all the societies of world civilization enjoyed a privileged position. The chivalorous soldiers were not only honoured, but entire society used to become responsible towards them. Whether a person of servile status could be entrusted with the security of the society, remained a burning question. In ancient Egypt and Rome slaves were fighters also. A lucrative form of investment for the business classes was ownership of slaves as gladiators, who could be rented to the government or to aspiring politician for the amusement of the people.<sup>2</sup> The examples can be multiplied in context of various centres of human settlements.

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<sup>1</sup> Ralph and Burns, eds., *World Civilizations*, p. 262.

<sup>2</sup> Ralph and Burns, eds., *World Civilizations*, p. 246.

## Slavery in Islamic World :

*Mamluk, Ghulam, Abd, Kayna, Khadim, Banda, Barda*, various terms have been used in Muslim terminology to connote slave. Every category has certain peculiar characteristics associated with it, within a larger category of slaves.<sup>1</sup> Military slavery entered into a new phase in the medieval period when an institution of procuring, training, manumitting and employing the military slaves became a wide-spread practice. Why did military slavery come into vogue? There are several interpretations to explain this. Daniel Pipes has given two causes which made the vacancies for the slaves. Firstly, technological advances such as the introduction of stirrup which made cavalry, who used this device particularly desirable.<sup>2</sup> Most of the slaves were trained to become good mounted soldiers. Another factor, according to Pipes was evolution of an elite more interested in commercial life than in military affairs.<sup>3</sup> At this juncture the defence of the country was needed to be assigned to a group of people who would not nurture selfish ambitions and would be completely faithful to the Sultan. This group of loyalists was found in

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<sup>1</sup> See 'Abd', in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edition, Volume I, pp. 24-34; also see, 'Ghulam', in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edition, Volume II, pp. 1079-1091; also see 'Mamluk', in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edition, Volume VI, pp. 314-331.

<sup>2</sup> Daniel Pipes, *Slave-Soldier and Islam : The Genesis of Military System*, New Haven, 1981, pp. 55-7.

<sup>3</sup> Daniel Pipes, *Slaves-Soldier and Islam*, p. 71.

slaves who were uprooted from their native places and employed at a place where they were just aliens. He further says that the systematic enslavement of the soldiers was neither an Islamic precept nor a Middle Eastern trait, rather it resulted from the non-implementation of Islamic precepts and ideals in public life. Indeed it symbolised the impossibility of attaining Islamic political and military goals. When Muslim peoples perceived that their public order could not correspond to their goals, they withdrew from their own armies, compelling the rulers to look for soldiers elsewhere, which in turn led to the development of military-slavery as a solution.<sup>1</sup> David Ayalon gives another interpretation by saying that by the Abbasid era the Muslim military reflected an organizational pattern more familiar to the pre-Islamic Fertile Crescent than to the Arabia of Muhammad. Arabs now governed former Byzantine and Sassanian lands and used many of their earlier forms of administration. In addition, there were not enough Arabs to control all the land effectively. The most important Muslim innovations at this time was the creation of units of imported military slaves as the primary military force, most famous being Turkish cavalry.<sup>2</sup> According to D. Sourdél, the reason for establishment of the forces of armed slaves was to strengthen the central

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<sup>1</sup> Denial Pipes, *Slave-Soldier and Islam*, pp. xv-xviii.

<sup>2</sup> David Ayalon, 'Aspects of the Muslim Phenomenon', *Der Islam*, 53, 1976, pp. 196-226; also see David Ayalon, 'Preliminary Remarks on the *Mamluk* Military Institution in Islam', in *War, Technology and Society in the Middle East*, edited by V.J. Parry and M.E. Yap, London, 1975, pp. 44-58.

authority of the Abbasid Caliphate by enabling it to rely on forces free from all local attachments.<sup>1</sup>

Whatever could have been the actual reason behind introduction of military slave-system, after coming into existence this system influence the politics of Muslim world in such a way that no other factor could. These slave soldiers, after being promoted were given provincial governorships. These provincial Governors, who more and more often combined military and fiscal functions, for their part maintained their own troops who were completely loyal to them. Thus, certain governors went so far as to seize power for themselves with the help of their personal retainues. Ira Lapidus also examines this factor by saying that this new regiment also created problems. The officers took civilian bureaucrats into their patronage won control of provincial governorship and eventually attempted to control succession to the Caliphate itself.<sup>2</sup> We find several instances when slave-commanders attained authority. For instance Ahmad b. Tulun, who in Egypt achieved a large measure of independence from the central government and managed to establish a short lived dynasty, was the son of a slave bought at Bukhara under al-Mamun.<sup>3</sup> Al-Ikhshid, who was later to repeat his success

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<sup>1</sup> See 'Ghulam', in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edition, Volume II, p. 1080.

<sup>2</sup> Ira Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies*, Cambridge, 1988, p. 127.

<sup>3</sup> See 'Ghulam', in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edition, Volume II, p. 1080.

in the same country was the descendant of a Turk who came to Samarra under al-Mu'tasim.<sup>1</sup>

These local potentates continued with the practice of having their own slave cadre to rely upon. The army of Ibn Tulun included 24,000 Turkish and 42,000 black slaves in addition to the smaller number of free soldiers.<sup>2</sup> Al-Ikhshid also had a slave army and had as minister, as regent for his sons and ultimately as successor, the famous black slave Kafur.<sup>3</sup>

The dynasties all over Islamic world were also greatly influenced by the advantages of slave system. The Saffarids, successors to Tahirid in Khurasan employed Ghulams in large number.<sup>4</sup> Contemporaries of Saffarids in Transoxiana and later in Khurasan were Samanids. They had large number of slaves in their standing army. The geographer Istakhri praises the Samanid slave army for its discipline and boldness in battle. It was from the slave guards of the Samanids that Alptigin the conqueror of Ghazna, and Subuktigin, founder of Ghaznavid dynasty in Afghanistan and northern India arose.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> See 'Ghulam', in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edition, Volume II, p. 1082.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

During the 10th century the use of military slaves spread throughout the Persian world. Daylami dynasties as Ziyarids and Buyids and Arabs like Hamadanids relied on the slave power.<sup>1</sup> The Ghaznavids, themselves of servile origin, built their multi-racial army around the core of slave cadre.<sup>2</sup>

The rulers who were not of slave origin also realised the advantages of having their own personal slave-establishment. The Saljukids, who established themselves in the eastern provinces of Abbasid caliphate, also recruited Turkish *ghilman* (sing. *ghulam*). Their slaves included Greek, Armenian, Indians and even Negroes.<sup>3</sup> In Muslim Spain, the slave element of European origin had also played an important role, both in the army and in the palace service. The freedmen called *fityan* or *ghilman* came to control the main governmental offices and even to found as small local dynasties after the decline of Umayyad state. Both the Ghurid and Khwarzmi relied heavily on slave troops.<sup>4</sup>

The military bases of Safavids state was originally the Kizil-bash tribal divisions. But later under Shah Abbas people from all tribes and nations got

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<sup>1</sup> See 'Ghulam', in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edition, Volume II, p. 1082.

<sup>2</sup> See 'Ghulam', in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edition, Volume II, p. 1083; also see, W.C. Bosworth, *The Ghaznavids : Their Empire in Afghanistan and Eastern Iran, 994-1040*, Edinburgh, 1963, pp. 98-127.

<sup>3</sup> See 'Ghulam', in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edition, Volume II, p. 1083.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

the enrolment. Large number of Georgian, Armenians and Circassians were recruited by Safavids in their service.<sup>1</sup> The Ottoman Sultans also adopted system of employing military slaves in large numbers.<sup>2</sup>

### **Procurement of the slaves in Islamic World :**

For the employment of the slaves in the armies, their race, sex and age were most important factors to be taken care of. Most of the slaves brought over to the lands of Islam at a relatively tender age so that they could be best moulded as a devoted Muslim, as a faithful bondsman of his patron and as an able soldier.

Since the time of Caliphate, the inexhaustible manpower of Inner Asia in the shape of Khazars, and other Turks from the steppes north of the Caucasus, and Turks of Farghanas from land beyond the Oxus and Jaxartes, in addition to people from lower Egypt, Barbers from Thaghris were considered to be best suited for making slaves. The Turks from Kipchak steppes were also favoured. They used to live in very harsh circumstances which made them physically strong. Moreover, for their primitiveness as well as their military ability, faithfulness and loyalty, a combination of qualities

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<sup>1</sup> See 'Ghulam', in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edition, Volume II, p. 1083.

<sup>2</sup> See 'Ghulam', in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edition, Volume II, pp. 1085-7.

which made them highly suitable raw material for fighting force. The competition amongst various Muslim states to capture more and more Turks increased remarkably and this became one of the reasons of shifting the choice of recruitment to non-Turks in their retinues. The reason why *mamluks* of Christian origin came to be employed in the armies of Islamic countries was, the geographical proximity or remoteness of the various Muslim rulers from the sources of *mamluk* supply, and the obvious clash of interest between these rulers in their competition to acquire the best *mamluks*.<sup>1</sup> The fair skinned Turks were also favoured upon the black skinned *habsis* even when they were recruited for military purposes.<sup>2</sup>

### **Means of Procurement :**

The wars of conquest, after the fulgurous expansion of Islam in the first century of the *hijra*, continued throughout the Middle Ages. These wars provided the conqueror with an ceaseless stream of prisoners of both sexes, most of whom were made slaves. Most of the Muslim Sultans launched frequent expeditions on the neighbouring countries to capture as many slaves

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<sup>1</sup> D. Ayalon, 'The Mamluk Novice : On his Youthfulness and on his Original Religion', in *Revue des Etudes Islamiques*, 1986, reprinted in his *Islam and Abode of War : Military Slaves and Islamic Adversaries*, Variorum Collection Studies series, 1994, pp. 1-8.

<sup>2</sup> See, Jere L. Bacharach, 'African Military Slaves in the Medieval Middle East : The Cases of Iraq (869-955) and Egypt (868-1171)', in *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 13, 1981, pp. 471-495.



as possible. The *amirs* personally undertook punitive campaigns into the steppes whenever need arose. In such an expedition, capital of the Qarluq Turks was sacked and an immense booty of slaves and beasts was taken. Khwarazm Shah in the 10th century used to lead an expedition each autumn into the steppes.<sup>1</sup> Ghaznavids also used to plunder the Indian territories to acquire slaves.<sup>2</sup>

The import of slaves through peaceful means went along with forcible methods. Trade was the most popular way of acquiring slaves. The slavers' carvans went into the heart of Africa and Asia to acquire their human merchandise, bought or stolen. The internal schism of the natives and their struggles also facilitated the business of the dealers. Sometimes people themselves sold their relatives and children, for instance in the Kipchak regions. Several factors were responsible for this inhuman act — the general destitution of the population which forced it in certain years to sell their children; the need to sell the children in lieu of taxes to the ruler, the ruler's capturing and selling the children and women of his subjects etc. It was not only due to the circumstantial pressure that those children were sold, the high sum paid for the children constituted an immense incentive. In the third

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<sup>1</sup> W.C. Bosworth, 'The Early Ghaznavids', in *The Cambridge History of Iran: From the Arab Invasions to the Saljuqs*, Volume IV, edited by Fyre, Cambridge, 1975, p. 162.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p. 179.

year of the reign of al-Nasir Muhammad b. Kalawun (1309-40 A.D.) who was exceptionally lavish in buying of *mamluks*, the Mongols competed so fiercely with each other in selling their boys, girls and relatives to the slave merchants that it marred their internal relations.<sup>1</sup> The periodic attacks of Mongols on the Central Asian regions also helped to fill the markets with slaves captured from there.

Not only Africans, Etheopeans, Berbers and Turks were also sold and purchased as slaves. In the early Middle Ages various European elements, above all the 'Slavs' were also taken as slaves. The traffic was carried on by sea as well as by the land. The Red Sea used to provide a way from Africa to Arabia. The Mediterranean, with its appendage the Black sea, offered a route from Europe to Muslim world. Most of the big towns in Central Muslim World in the middle ages had its public slave markets. The one at Samarra, in the 9th century is described as being a vast quadrilateral with internal alleys and one storey houses, containing rooms and shops.

The prices of the slaves differed considerably according to the various categories of the slaves their place of origin, their sex, age, physical conditions and abilities. As a rule whites used to worth more than the blacks. The

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<sup>1</sup> 'Mamluk', in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edition, Volume VI, p. 314; also see D. Ayalon, 'Mamluk', in *Islam and the Abode of War : Military Slaves and Islamic Adversaries*, Varorium Reprints, 1994, p. 3.

ascending order of value among them in the 11th century Spain was Berbers, Catalans, Galicians. At Alexandria, in the 15th century, Tatars and Circasseans were prized above Greeks, Serbs and Albanians.<sup>1</sup>

The most crucial stage in the *mamluk's* life was his education and upbringing and then his manumission. A large corpus of literature is available in Egypt to reconstruct the history of all these stages in the life of a *mamluk*. Scholars like D. Ayalon, have utilized these sources exhaustively to study the structural and organizational aspects of the *mamluk* system. The Sultan's *mamluks* were brought up in a military school situated in the barack (*Tibaq, albaq* sing. *tabaqa*) of Cairo citadel. It would appear that each of those barracks had a special section assigned to the *mamluk* novice.<sup>2</sup>

The education of the *mamluk* novice used to take place into two stages. In the first stage *mamluks* used to study the element of Islam and in the subsequent stage military training was imparted to them. The first stage was very important, for it inculcated in them the conviction that they had been brought out in the light of Islam from the darkness of ignorance. In the second stage *mamluks* were put under the guidance of *mu'allim* to impart military training. The overwhelming dominant role was played by eunuchs in the

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<sup>1</sup> 'Abd', in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edition, Volume I, p. 32.

<sup>2</sup> 'Mamluk', in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edition, Volume VI, p. 318.

military school. The eunuchs in the military schools used to form a pyramidal structure. At the top of which used to be chief eunuch. The simple eunuchs called *Khuddam-al-tibaq* remained at the basis.<sup>1</sup>

In the military school training started with *furusiyya* exercises, which consisting of horse-riding and used of various weapons like bow, arrows, lances etc. There is no evidence to indicate the average length of the period during which the novice had to stay in military school. Each *mamluk* attending the school was manumitted on finishing the period of apprenticeship and later was appointed in the royal service. In Egypt the *mamluk* system was so deep rooted in the political structure that royal princes, who were to succeed the existing Sultans, used to start building their own slaves cadres from their days of prince-hood. So that, by the time they ascend the throne, there would be a well trained cadre of his own *mamluk* which would replace the existing dispensation with the replacement of the Sultan on the throne. While the replacement of the Sultan used to be an instant event, the replacement of the slaves of preceding Sultans by a new groups of *mamluks* was bound to be gradual.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 'Mamluk', in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edition, Volume VI, p. 317-8.

<sup>2</sup> 'Mamluk', in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edition, Volume VI, p. 317-8; also see H.M. Rabie, 'The Training of Mamluk Faris', in *War, Technology and Society*...., pp. 153-63; also see *Faris*, in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edition, Volume II, p. 800.

All the important positions in the nobility were acquired by these slaves who would even start dominating the Sultan. The most important aspect of *mamluk* system was that the *mamluks* remained in power as long as their own master was on the throne and Sultan remained on the throne so long as his own cadre of *mamluks* was strong enough. Even a slightest disruption in the equation could result into distingration of the power structure.<sup>1</sup>

Apart from the central court these slaves served Sultans at various positions in his personal as well as public attendence. They served as bodyguards, remained in his personal attendence from the morning till night, formed part of his procession parties and served him as domestic helpers.

Now few words on the relationship between patron and slaves. As has been stated, the existence of both slaves and Sultan in the our context relied on each other's existence. Thus it was natural for the Sultans and as well as for the *mamluk* to develop a bond. The *mamluks* used to have two bonds or loyalties. First loyalty was towards his patron, which was the very foundation of his own existence and power. The slaves relied on their master

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<sup>1</sup> For details of the institutional aspects of *mamluk* system in Egypt, see P.M. Holt, *The Age of Crusades : The Near East from the Eleventh Century to 1517*, London and New York, 1986, pp. 138-54; also see 'The Military Institution and Innovations in the Late *Mamluk* Period', by Carl F. Petry, in *The Cambridge History of Egypt : Islamic Egypt, 640-1517*, Volume I, edited by Carl F. Petry, Cambridge, 1998. Also see Linda S. Northrup, 'The Bahri *Mamluk* Sultanate, 1250-1390', in *The Cambridge History of Egypt.....*, Volume I, pp. 242-289. Also see D. Ayalon, 'Studies on the Structure of *Mamluk* Army', I and II, in *BSOAS*, 15, 1953, pp. 203-27 and 448-476.

to the extent that their *nisba* was derived from the name of their master. This *nisba* which became their identity mark was going to remain with them throughout their life.<sup>1</sup> The second loyalty or bond was called *khushdassiya* or brotherhood. Slaves of the same Sultan, who used to have '*nisba*' of the same master looked upon each other as sharers of the same purse and sharers of the same plate. This factor made them look upon each other as brothers. Even after manumission, the loyalty of a slave was to remain intact.

Ironically, nowhere in the world *mamluk* system could work as it was expected to function. It always carried the forces of disintegration within itself. Slaves after acquiring power no longer remained servile. Power tend to make them hostile and the bonds of two types of loyalties mentioned above could not sustain in the existing circumstances. Factional disputes within the cadre resulted in chaos and instability and sometimes displacement of the Sultan and his dynasty. In spite of being aware of these imbedded dangers of *mamluk* system, most of the Sultans in the Muslim world continued with the *mamluk* system.

The slave system under Delhi Sultanate was very much influenced by this existing structure in the Islamic world. This system was a replica

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<sup>1</sup> See Paul G. Forand, 'The Relation of the Slave and the Client to the Master or Patron in Medieval Islam', in *IJMES*, 2, 1971, pp. 59-66.

of Ghaznavid slave system which was transplanted into Indian subcontinent by the Turks in the 13th century.<sup>1</sup>

### **Slavery in Indian Subcontinent :**

Slavery was not introduced in India by the Delhi Sultans. It had a long history of its existence from pre-Sultanate period. There is dispute among scholars whether there were slaves during the Harappan period or not. On the basis of available evidence, Mackay says that the society was highly stratified. In this social structure there was a wealthy administrative merchant class, a large artisan class and at the bottom were slaves at Mohenjodaro.<sup>2</sup> D.R. Chanana also supports this view.<sup>3</sup> Though due to the lack of literary accounts from this period, no agreement of opinion can be met.<sup>4</sup>

From Rig Vedic period onwards we come on to a firmer stand. These slaves were employed in domestic household. During the later vedic age slaves used to work in the agricultural field which is attested by *Srauta-sutra*. In the Mauryan period, state had the dominating role in the economy. The state

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<sup>1</sup> See Syed Jabir Raza, 'Ghaznavid Origins of the Administrative Institutions of the Delhi Sultanate', in *PIHC*, 1991-2, p. 236.

<sup>2</sup> E. Mackay, *Early Indus Civilization*, London, 1948, p. 39.

<sup>3</sup> D.R. Chanana, *Slavery in Ancient India*, Delhi, 1960, p. 18.

<sup>4</sup> For a detailed treatment of employment of slaves in Ancient India, see Uma Chakravarti, 'Of Dasas and Karmakaras : Servile labour in Ancient India', in *Chains of Servitude : Bondage and Slavery in India*, edited by Utsa Patnaik and M. Dingwaney, Madras, 1985, pp. 35-75.

had the control on the workforce consisting of larger number of slaves as well as free workers. State displayed noticeable enterprise in extending the labour of the *dasas* in the various kinds of enterprises covering agriculture, mining and commercial activities such as weaving and trading in liquor.<sup>1</sup>

Slaves were classified in various categories according to their mode of procurement. According to a Pali text *Vinaya Pitaka*, there were three categories of slaves, those borne in the household of the master; *dasa* who were purchased and slaves captured in war.<sup>2</sup> Kautilya in his *Arthashastra* gives nine categories of slaves.<sup>3</sup> Manu mentioned seven categories of *dasas*.<sup>4</sup> Narada gives account of fifteen types of *dasas*.<sup>5</sup> According to Uma Chakravarti, the increase in the number of categories of slaves over a period of time shows introduction of new forms of servitude. Among these new forms military slavery could not find any fixed-stipulated space. The introduction of military slavery in the Indian subcontinent took place after the establishment of Delhi Sultanate. In the pre-Sultanate period only once slaves were seen to form a part of the fighting force.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See Uma Chakravarti, *Of Dasas and Karmakaras*, p. 51.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p. 38.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, p. 39.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, p. 40.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, p. 41.

<sup>6</sup> Chanana, *Slavery in Ancient India*, pp. 40, 100.



The foregoing discussion has been taken further in this dissertation. Here the intention is not to propound a new theory, but an attempt has been made to study the organizational and institutional aspects of the *mamluk* system, placing it in the context of larger Islamic World. We will study the slave system with special reference to military slaves in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

Ishwari Prasad, Mahdi Husain, Irfan Habib, I.H. Siddiqi and Salim Kidwai have also commented on slaves in their writings on Sultanate period. But the institutional and structural aspects of the slave system have not been picked up by these scholars.<sup>1</sup> K.S. Lal has tried to write on the organizational aspect of slave system in Medieval India, but his primary focus is on the non-military slaves.<sup>2</sup> S.B.P. Nigam has written on the nobility during the Sultanate period, a large group of which consisted of slaves. But his work also lacks focus on the institutional aspects of slave system. Moreover, slaves outside the nobility have not been picked up by him.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See Ishwari Prasad, *History of Qaraunah Turks in India*, Volume I, Allahabad, 1974, p. 302. Also see Mahdi Husain, *Tughluq Dynasty*, Calcutta, 1963, pp. 434-5. Also see Irfan Habib, 'Formation of the Sultanate Ruling Class of the 13th Century', in *Medieval India : Researches in the History of India, 1200-1750, I*, edited by Irfan Habib, Delhi, 1992, pp. 1-21. Also see I.H. Siddiqi, 'Social Mobility in the Delhi Sultanate', in *Medieval India : Researches.....*, pp. 22-48. Also see Salim Kidwai, 'Sultans, Eunuchs and Domestics : New Forms of Bondage in Medieval India', in *Chains of Servitude.....*, pp. 76-96.

<sup>2</sup> K.S. Lal, *The Muslim Slave System in Medieval India*, Delhi, 1994.

<sup>3</sup> S.B.P. Nigam, *Nobility under the Sultans of Delhi, A.D. 1206-1398*, Delhi, 1968.

The first chapter entitled 'PROCUREMENT AND TRAINING OF THE *MAMLUKS* UNDER THE SULTANATE OF DELHI', has been divided into two sections. In the first section we shall study the various means of procurement of the slaves, as used by the Delhi Sultans. In this section we shall also observe the variation in the prices of various categories of slaves and the possible rationale behind it. In the second section, we will examine the strategies of training the *mamluks* in various skills, as they were adopted by the Delhi Sultans.

The second chapter entitled 'DEPLOYMENT OF THE *MAMLUKS* UNDER THE SULTANATE OF DELHI', has been divided into two sections. The first section deals with the deployment of the slaves in the administration and military. It has been further divided into two sections, first dealing with the 'royal slaves', the slaves of the existing Sultan. The second sub-section takes up the slaves who came in the service of Sultan from preceding reigns. In the second major section of this chapter, deployment of non-military slaves has been discussed.

The third chapter entitled 'EUNUCHS UNDER THE SULTANATE OF DELHI', deals with a special category of slaves — Eunuchs. Eunuchs from a conventional point of view, being frail were eligible only for the employment in the ladies quarter. But in the Islamic World, they were given

some bigger responsibilities including administrative and military services. In this chapter we shall observe the deployment of eunuchs in such larger capacities.

The information for writing these chapters has been derived from various contemporary sources. *Taj al-Ma'asir* of Hasan Nizami which deals with the glorious deeds of Sultan Muzzuddin Sam and Qutbuddin Aibak is a very important contemporary source to get into the details of the expeditions taken up by the above mentioned commanders.<sup>1</sup>

*Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, of Minhaj us-Siraj Juzjani written in 1260 A.D. is the most important source to write the history of Delhi Sultanate in thirteenth century. It deals with the various political and military aspects. Juzjani gives biographies of important slaves of Sultan Iltutmish in his 22nd *tabaqa*. The history of slave system in India can not be written without the information furnished by Juzjani in this *tabaqa*.<sup>2</sup>

Amir Khusru wrote several books in the late thirteenth and early

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<sup>1</sup> Hasan Nizami, *Taj al-Ma'asir*, English translation by B. Saroop, Delhi, n.d.; extracts translated in Elliot and Dawson, *History of India as told by its own Historians*, London, 1867, reprinted in Delhi, 1981, Volume III.

<sup>2</sup> Minhaj us-Siraj Juzjani, *Tabaqat i-Nasiri*, English translation by H.G. Raverty as *Tabakat-i-Nasiri : A General History of the Muhammeden Dynasties of Asia, including Hindustan from A.H. 194 (810 AD) to A.H. 658 (1260 AD) and The Irruption of the Infidel Mughals into Islam by Maulana Minhaj ud-Din Abu Umar-i Usman*. 2 volumes, first published in Bibliotheca Indica Series by Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta, 1881, reprinted by Oriental Book Reprint Corporation, Delhi, 1970.

fourteenth centuries. His *Qiran-ul-Sadain*, written in 1289 is a very important source to write the history of successor of Sultan Balban.<sup>1</sup> His *Khazain ul-Futuh*, also known as *Tarikh-i-Alai*, is an ornate prose account of the victories of Alauddin Khalji.<sup>2</sup> His another *masnawi* called *Ashiqa* or *Dewal Rani Khizr Khan* completed in 1316, gives a detailed account of the later years of the life of Sultan Alauddin Khalji and the history of Khaljis after his death.<sup>3</sup> Amir Khusru wrote another *masnawi* called *Nuh Sipih*r. This describes the court of Qutbuddin Mubarak Shah and history of Khaljis after the death of Sultan Alauddin Khalji.<sup>4</sup>

*Futuh-us-Salatin* by Abdul Malik Isami is a history of India. It deals with the history of Delhi Sultanate right from its foundation. It gives account of political and administrative history.<sup>5</sup>

*Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi* by Ziauddin Barani, a history of the Sultans of Delhi from Balban (1260 A.D.) to reign of Sultan Firuz Shah (1357 A.D.)

<sup>1</sup> Extracts translated in *History of India*, by Elliot and Dawson, Volume III, pp. 536-44.

<sup>2</sup> Amir Khusru, *Khazain-ul-Futuh*, translated by Muhammad Habib as *The Campaigns of Alauddin Khalji*, Aligarh, 1933; extracts translated in *History of India*, by Elliot and Dawson, Volume III, pp. 67-92.

<sup>3</sup> Amir Khusru, *Ashiqa*, extracts translated in *History of India*, by Elliot and Dawson, pp. 544-57.

<sup>4</sup> Amir Khusru, *Nuh Sipih*r, extracts translated in *History of India*, by Elliot and Dawson, Volume III, pp. 557-66.

<sup>5</sup> Abdul Malik Isami, *Futuh-us-Salatin*, edited by A.S. Usha, Madras, 1948; English translation by Mahdi Husain, in 3 Volumes, Aligarh, 1966.

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is the most important source to write the history of Delhi Sultanate after the accession of Balban. This text deals with the various political and administrative measures taken by the Sultans of Delhi.<sup>1</sup>

*Sirat-i-Firuzshahi* by an anonymous author was written in 1380-81. This is a biography of Sultan Firuz Shah which gives a vivid account of his campaigns in Eastern India. It also gives a detailed account of the policies of the Sultan.<sup>2</sup>

*Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi* of Shams-i-Siraj Afif, is a biography of Firuz Shah which also deals with the history of his immediate successors. This is the indispensable source for writing history of late fourteenth century. It deals with the administrative measures, political campaigns and policies adopted by Firuz Shah.<sup>3</sup>

*Tarikh-i-Mubarakshahi* of Yahya bin Sirhindi is a history of India from the foundation of Delhi Sultanate. This gives a critical account of the political

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<sup>1</sup> Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, edited by Sir Sayyed Ahmad Khan, Bibliotheca Indica Series, Calcutta, 1865. Extracts translated into Hindi by S.A.A. Rizvi, in *Adi Turk Kalin Bharat*, Aligarh, 1955; also in *Khalji Kalin Bharat*, Aligarh, 1955; also in *Tughlak Kalin Bharat*, in 2 volumes, Aligarh, 1956, 1957; also see English translation by A. Khallaque and A.R. Fuller as *The Reign of Alauddin Khilji*, Calcutta, 1967.

<sup>2</sup> Anonymous, *Sirat-i-Firuzshahi*, manuscript published by Khuda Baksh library, Patna, 1999.

<sup>3</sup> Shams-i-Siraj Afif, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, English translation by R.C. Jauhri, as *Medieval India in Transition : Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi, A First Hand Account*, Delhi, 2001.

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and administrative history of Delhi Sultanate.<sup>1</sup>

*Tabaqat-i-Akbari* of Nizamuddin Ahmad, written in late sixteenth century is also a history of India from the foundation of Delhi Sultanate. It gives detailed information about the political history of Delhi Sultanate.<sup>2</sup>

*Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh* of Abdul Qadir Badaoni, written in late sixteenth century also deals with the political and administrative history of Delhi Sultanate. On the basis of this source we can write about the policies of Sultans of Delhi as they were looked upon by the later contemporaries.<sup>3</sup>

*Tarikh-i-Ferishta* of Ferishta is a very important source to reflect upon the policies of Delhi Sultans. This book was written in seventeenth century and can give us a fair idea about the perception of later contemporaries regarding the Delhi Sultans.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Yahya bin Sirhindi, *Tarikh-i-Mubarakshahi*, edited by M. Hidayat Husain, Bib. Ind., Calcutta, 1931, English translation by H. Beveridge, First Low Price Publication, 1990.

<sup>2</sup> Nizamuddin Ahmad, *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, translated and annotated by Brijendranath De and revised and completed with preface and index by Bainsi Prasad as *A History of India from the Early Musalman Invasions to the Thirty-sixth year of the Reign of Akbar*, first published, 1911, reprinted in Delhi, 1992.

<sup>3</sup> Abdul Qadir Badaoni, *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh*, English translation of volume I by G.S.A. Ranking, Calcutta, 1895.

<sup>4</sup> Muhammad Qasim Hindu Shah Ferishta, *Tarikh-i-Ferishta*, English translation by J. Briggs as *The History of the Rise of Mahommed Power in India till the year AD 1612*, first printed at London, 1829 : reprinted at Calcutta 1908, 1966.

Among the foreigners' accounts we can rely upon *Subh al-Asha* of Al-Qalqashandi and *Masalik al-Absar fi-mamalik al-Amsar* of Al-Umari. They were Arab historians, who wrote their accounts on the basis of hearsay. Despite that their references cannot be neglected while writing the history of fourteenth century because the information furnished by these scholars is of great value in the absence of any other contemporary account in India.<sup>1</sup>

The most important and accurate travellers' account is *Rehla* of Ibn Battuta. He came to India during the reign of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq and wrote the eye witness account. His book furnished information on the day to day happenings in the Sultanate period. For the reconstruction of the history of slave system in India, the information provided by Ibn Battuta is indispensable.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Al-Qalqashandi, *Subh al-Asha*, English translation in *Arab Accounts of India During the Fourteenth Century*, edited by Muhammad Zaki, Delhi, 1981, Shihab al Din al-Umari, *Masalik al-Absar fi-mamalik al-Amsar*, English translation of chapter on India by I.H. Siddiqi and Qazi M. Ahmad as *A Fourteenth Century Arab Account of India under Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq*, Aligarh, 1971; also see in Muhammad Zaki, *Arab Accounts.....*

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Battuta, *Rehla*, English translation by H.A.R. Gibb, *The Travels of Ibn Battuta AD 1325-1354*, Second series, Cambridge and London, 1958-94, in IV volumes. Also see Hindi translation by S.A.A. Rizvi, *Tughlak Kalin Bharat*, volume I, Aligarh, 1956.

**CHAPTER - 1**

**PROCUREMENT  
AND TRAINING OF  
THE *MAMLUKS*  
UNDER THE  
SULTANATE OF  
DELHI.**



The Slave-system stands on two pillars — the regular procurement of the slaves and their proper training. Whenever any of these two pillars shatters, it results in the disintegration of the *mamluk* system. Delhi Sultans, like their other counterparts in Islamic world, were well aware of this fact and that is why could never take liberty with these fundamental aspects. Since slaves in Delhi Sultanate, like in many other Sultanates in Islamic lands, were not engaged in domestic works exclusively, and had become integral part of the administrative structures, the study of the means of their procurement and modes of their training gains immense importance. Though military slaves are going to be dealt in detail, yet non-military slaves will also engage our attention. In the first section of this chapter, we will study about the means of their procurement. In the second section, their training will be taken up as the subject of study.

## I

### **Procurement of the *Mamluks* :**

The most important factor for the proper functioning of the slave-system is the regular supply or availability of the slaves. In the Islamic territories, various methods were used for the procurement of slaves, viz.

slave-trade, capture of the vanquished as war-booty, as tributes and gifts and also as part of the inheritance. Apart from the slave-traders they could be purchased from their owners, be it a noble or the heirs of a deceased master. Before we enter into the discussion pertaining to the sources of obtaining slaves for Delhi Sultans, we can take a pause to do a survey of the numerical strength of the slave-cadres of Delhi Sultans during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

Whereas in the thirteenth century, slaves appear to have been employed on an extensive scale, both for administrative and military purposes, yet the data of actual numerical strength of the slave-cadre under the Delhi Sultans before Alauddin Khalji is not available. He is said to have collected 50,000 slaves.<sup>1</sup> The Arabian scholars, al-Qalqashandi and al-Umari, both write that Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq had 10,000 Turkish slaves and 10,000 eunuchs beside 2,00,000 stirrpped slaves who used to wear weapons and marched with him in front.<sup>2</sup> However, the reliability of these figures is quite meagre because figures given by these sources will take the total numerical

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<sup>1</sup> Shams-Siraj Afif, *Tarikh-i Firuz Shahi*, English translation by R.C. Jauhri, as *Medieval India in transition : Tarikh-i Firuz Shahi*, Delhi, 2001, p.159 (hereinafter Afif).

<sup>2</sup> Al-Qalqashandi, *Subh al- Asha*, English translation in *Arab Accounts of India During the Fourteenth Century*, edited by Muhammad Zaki, Delhi, 1981, p. 100 (hereinafter *Subh al-Asha*). According to al-Umari Muhammad bin Tughluq had 20,000 Turkish slaves. See Shihab al-Din al-Umari, *Masalik al-Absar fi-mamalik al-Amsar*, English translation of chapter on India by I.H. Siddiqi and Qazi M. Ahmad as *Fourteenth Century Arab Account of India under Sultan Muhammad bin Tughuq*, Aligarh, 1971, p.37 (hereinafter *Masalik al-Absar*). Also see in Muhmmad Zaki, *Arab Accounts.....*, p.22

strength of slaves of Muhammad bin Tughluq to 2,20,000, a total not corroborated by other sources. Shams Siraj Afif, writing in late fourteenth century, does not mention such a large contingent of Muhammad bin Tughluq, while at the same time he does not forget to mention the 50,000 slaves of Alauddin Khalji. Secondly, Afif says that Firuz Shah bin Rajab maintained the largest cadre of slaves numbering 1,80,000.<sup>1</sup> Lastly, the most significant aspect of questioning the credibility of the information given by these Arabic scholars is that neither al-Qalqashandi nor al-Umari ever came to India. Since they were relying on hearsay, their information is more prone to speculation.

Apart from the Sultans, the powerful nobles also maintained large cadres of slaves. Imad ul-Mulk *Kotwal-i-Delhi* under Alauddin Khalji, had 200 Turkish and 2000 Hindu slaves.<sup>2</sup> Malik Shah, *Amir-i Mamalik* during the reign of Muhammad bin Tughluq, maintained 4000 royal slaves on behalf of the Sultan in Amroha.<sup>3</sup> Imad ul-Mulk under Firuz Shah bin Rajab owned

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<sup>1</sup> Afif, p. 158.

<sup>2</sup> See Amir Khusru, *Gurra-ul-Kamal* quoted by Wahid Mirza, *The life and works of Amir Khusru*, Calcutta, 1935, p. 81. However, A.M. Husain translated it as '2000 Hindu and Turkish slaves', in his article 'India's 'Al-Beruni' in *Life, Time and works of Amir Khusrau Dehlavi*, *Amir Khusrau Commemorative volume*, Delhi, n.d., pp. 281-7.

<sup>3</sup> Ibn Battuta, *Rehla*, English translation by H.A.R. Gibb, *The Travels of Ibn Battuta AD 1325-1354*, Second series, Cambridge and London, 1958-94, volume III, p. 763. Also see Hindi translation by S.A.A. Rizvi, *Tughlak Kalin Bharat*, Aligarh, 1956, volume I, p. 253.

5000 horsemen and renowned fighters.<sup>1</sup> Beside the given examples, we come across several instances when nobles owned slaves.

Though these figures can not be taken to be very exhaustive, yet these could be considered as pointers to the employment of slaves in large numbers, by the Sultans and the nobility, during the period of our study.

### **SLAVE-TRADE :**

The traffic in slaves was carried on by sea as well as by land. Almeria in Spain, Farama and later Alexanderia in Egypt, Darbard (*Bab al-Abwab*) on the shore of Caspian were very busy markets for slaves from an early date.<sup>2</sup> Samarqand, Khurasan and Ghazni were major trading centres in the interior. Samarqand had been a flourishing slave-market since the time of Abbasid Caliphate. Slaves from Farghana, Khurasan, Shash, Soghdia, Transoxiana and Usrushana as well as Turks of Tughuz Ghuzz confederation were brought here and were dispersed later on.<sup>3</sup>

On the basis of some stray remarks in our primary sources, we can get a fair idea of the trade contacts of Indians with the International slave markets.

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<sup>1</sup> Afif, p. 239

<sup>2</sup> 'Abd' in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition, Volume I, p. 32.

<sup>3</sup> Daniel Pipes, *Slave Soldiers and Islam : The Genesis of Military System*, New Haven, 1981, p. 146.

Qutbuddin Aibak was brought from Turkistan to Nishapur and was sold to Muizzuddin Sam.<sup>1</sup> After being sold by his brothers, Iltutmish was taken to Bukhara, and after that to Ghazni. Later on he was purchased by Qutubuddin Aibak at Delhi.<sup>2</sup> Tajuddin Arsalan Khan Sanjar-i-Chast was brought from Adan (Anglicised Aden) & sold to Shamsuddin Iltutmish.<sup>3</sup> Ulugh Khan Balban was brought from Turkistan to Baghdad and from there to the court of Iltutmish in Delhi.<sup>4</sup> Out of the twenty-five slaves of Iltutmish, who were called 'Shamsis', only one Hindu Khan was from Mathura in India, rest of them were brought from outside the subcontinent.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Minhaj us-Siraj Juzjani, *Tabaqat i-Nasiri*, English translation by H.G. Raverty as *Tabakat-i-Nasiri: A General History of the Muhammeden Dynasties of Asia, including Hindustan from A.H. 194 (810 AD) to A.H. 658 (1260 AD) and The Irruption of the Infidel Mughals into Islam by Maulana Minhaj ud-Din Abu Umar-i Usman*. 2 volumes first published in Bibliotheca Indica Series by Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta, 1881, reprinted by Oriental Book Reprint Corporation, Delhi, 1970, p. 513 (hereinafter *T.N.*). Yahya bin Sirhindi, *Tarikh-i-Mubarakshahi*, edited by Hidayat Husain, Bibliotheca Indica, Calcutta, 1931, English translation by H. Beveridge, First Low Price Publication, Delhi 1990, p. 14 (hereinafter Sirhindi). Muhammad Qasim Hindu Shah Ferishta, *Tarikh-i-Ferishta*, English translation by J. Briggs as *The History of the Rise of Mahommed Power in India till the year AD 1612*, first printed at London, 1829 : reprinted at Calcutta 1908, 1966, pp. 106-107). Also see Abdul Qadir Badaoni, *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh*, English translation of Volume I by GSA Ranking, Calcutta, 1895, pp. 88-89. (hereinafter Badaoni).

<sup>2</sup> *T.N.*, I, pp. 599-603; Sirhindi, p. 16; Ferishta, I, p. 116.

<sup>3</sup> *T.N.*, II, p. 766.

<sup>4</sup> *T.N.*, II, pp. 799-801; Ferishta, I, p. 137.

<sup>5</sup> *T.N.*, II, pp. 723, 725, 727, 729, 731, 736, 742, 744, 746, 748, 752, 754, 757-58, 759, 761, 766, 775-7, 787, 788-90, 791, 795-6, 799-80. Also see Gavin Hambly, 'Who were the *Chihilgani*, the forty slaves of Sultan Shams al-Din Iltutmish of Delhi', *Iran*, 10, 1972, pp. 57-60. He reaches to the conclusion that these twenty-five slaves were the special slaves of Iltutmish, who have been called as *Bandagan-i-Khass* and *Chihilgani* by Zia Barani in his *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*. Sunil Kumar challenges Hambly in his article 'When slaves were Nobles : The Shamsi *Bandagan* in the Early Delhi Sultanate', *Studies in Histroy*, 10, 1, n.s., 1994, pp. 23-52. He says Juzjani has given biographies of these *Shamsis* whom he was personally beholder, and all of these were not special or *khass* slaves. Further more he says that inclusion of Balban in the list of *Chihilgani* by Barani is also a mistake, see pp. 48-51.

In the fourteenth century, slave trade through sea route continued to flourish. Gujarat and Bengal were the important centres of slave trade. At Cambay in Gujarat, many merchants settled down who had their establishments in countries ranging from Central Asia to Egypt.<sup>1</sup> The wide spread distribution of *Habshis* in Indian subcontinent, as was noticed by Ibn Battuta, proves that Delhi Sultans were maintaining the trade relations with the merchants who used to deal in African or Abyssinian slaves.<sup>2</sup>

We come across names of various merchants who were involved in international slave trade. These are Khwajah Ali, the Bastabadi,<sup>3</sup> Ikhtiyaruddin-i-Chust Qaba,<sup>4</sup> Fakruddin, the Safahani,<sup>5</sup> Khwajah Jamaluddin-i-Nadiman,<sup>6</sup> Ikhtiyar-ul-Mulk, Rasiduddin Abu Bakr, the *Habsh*,<sup>7</sup> Khwajah Jamaluddin of Basrah,<sup>8</sup> Ahmad and Yasin, sons of Malik Shahu<sup>9</sup> along with others.

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Battuta, tr., Gibb, III, pp. 730, 733.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Battuta, tr., Gibb, II, pp. 224, 229, 236, 260.

<sup>3</sup> *T.N.*, II, p. 723.

<sup>4</sup> *T.N.*, II, pp. 731

<sup>5</sup> *T.N.*, II, p. 744.

<sup>6</sup> *T.N.*, II, p. 754.

<sup>7</sup> *T.N.*, II, pp. 795-6.

<sup>8</sup> *T.N.*, II, pp. 800-801; Ferishta, I, p. 137.

<sup>9</sup> Ain ul-Mulk Mahru, *Insha-i-Mahru*, edited by S.A. Rashid, Lahore, 1965, pp. 212-213. (hereinafter *Insha-i-Mahru*).

Not always did the Sultans depend on the merchants to purchase the slaves brought by them in India. They also used to take initiative by sending their trustworthy nobles to the Asian markets to purchase slaves. Iltutmish sent one of his nobles to buy *mamluks* for him at Samarqand, Bukhara and Tirmiz. He brought 100 *mamluks* for the Sultan.<sup>1</sup> Later on Ain ul-Mulk Mahru was given 50,000 *tankas* by the Sultan to purchase slaves.<sup>2</sup> Kamal Junaidi, the *wazir* of Shamsuddin Iltutmish purchased Turkish slaves to present to the Sultan.<sup>3</sup> Sultan Firuz Shah had asked his *muqtas* to send the selected slaves to the royal court. They were to be paid for these slaves after due calculation otherwise this amount could be adjusted against the revenue from them.<sup>4</sup>

It will be misleading to say that traffic in slaves was always one way. Instead Indians were also taken as slaves from the time to Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni who had Indian slaves in his armies.<sup>5</sup> Raj Jaipal was also captured by him and sold in the market of Ghazni.<sup>6</sup> The Sufi sources of fourteenth century

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<sup>1</sup> Ibn Battuta, tr., Gibb, III, pp. 633-4.

<sup>2</sup> *Insha-i-Mahru*, ed., Rashid, pp. 198-9; Also see Hindi Translation by S.A.A. Rizvi in *Tughlak Kalin Bharat*, II, Aligarh, 1957, pp. 397, 399.

<sup>3</sup> Abdul Malik Isami, *Futuh-us-Salatin*, edited by A.S. Usha, Madras, 1948; English Translation by Mahdi Husain, Aligarh, 1966, Volume II, p. 238, (hereinafter Isami).

<sup>4</sup> Afif, p. 157.

<sup>5</sup> Nizam ul-Mulk Tusi, *Siyasatnama*, English Translation by H. Darke as, *The Book of Government or Rules for Kings : The Siyar ul-Mulk or Siyasatnama of Nizam ul-Mulk*, Persian Heritage Foundation, first published in 1960, reprints 1978, 2002, p. 100.

<sup>6</sup> Isami, I, p. 82.

also attest this that Indian slaves were exported to Khurasan, Multan and Ghazni.<sup>1</sup>

Along with the international markets, many local slave-markets had sprung up in the Indian subcontinent. Minhaj mentions '*nakhkhas*' which signifies a place where horses, camels, cattle, birds, and slaves were purchased and sold.<sup>2</sup> By 1325, Delhi had developed two (old and new) *nakhkhas*.<sup>3</sup> Besides these, several other centres for the sale of slaves had come up which were probably not authorized. One such *bazaar* was inside the Palam gate, near the house of Khwaja Banda Nawas Gesu Daraz from where a certain merchant used to carry on his business.<sup>4</sup>

It seems that slaves trade in later half of fourteenth century was on downward slop which is clear from lamentation of Barani that slaves from Central Asia were almost unobtainable.<sup>5</sup> We do not come across any reference in

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<sup>1</sup> *Insha-i-Mahru*, p. 213; Also see Irfan Habib, 'Slavery in Delhi Sultnate, 13th & 14th centuries : Evidences from Sufi sources', in *IHR*, 1989, pp. 250-51.

<sup>2</sup> *T.N.*, I, p. 567.

<sup>3</sup> Amir Khusru, *Ejaz-i-Khusravi*, IV, p. 85, quoted by H.K. Naqvi in *Agricultural Industrial and Urban Dynamism, under the Sultans of Delhi, 1206-1535*, Delhi, 1986, pp. 153-54.

<sup>4</sup> Zia Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, edited by Sir Sayyed Ahmad Khan, Bib. Ind. Series, 1865, p. 312. (hereinafter Barani, *Tarikh*).

<sup>5</sup> Barani, *Tarikh*, ed., Khan, p. 314.



the contemporary sources stating the brisk trade being taking place between India and Central Asia in slaves. Firuz Shah had to entrust the responsibility of collecting slaves to his *muqtas*.<sup>1</sup> Yusuf Gada, in the last decade of fourteenth century, wrote a didactic treatise called '*Tuhfa-i-Nasaih*' and advised his son not to trade in slaves.<sup>2</sup> All these references attest that slave-trade was not as brisk as it was in thirteenth and <sup>early</sup> fourteenth centuries.

### War Captives :

The raids on the non-Muslim territories had been another very important source of supply of slaves for the Muslim rulers. Throughout Abbasid Caliphate, the Caliphs received large number of captives sent by victorious commanders as *khums*, which was 1/5th of the spoils due to the ruler,<sup>3</sup> which formed their major source of slave-supply. Ghaznavids also used to raid Indian subcontinent and procured slaves which were considered a great economic asset.<sup>4</sup> In the Indian subcontinent also, Delhi Sultans acquired large number of slaves in the raids

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<sup>1</sup> Afif, pp. 156-58.

<sup>2</sup> Translation of fragments by Simon Digby, '*The Tuhfa-i-Nasaih of Yusuf Gada : An Ethical Treatise in verse from the Late 14th century Delhi Sultanate*; in *Moral Conduct and Authority*, edited by Barbara D. Metcalf, Berkeley, 1948, pp. 116-117.

<sup>3</sup> Daniel Pipes, *Slave Soldiers and Islam...*, p. 141.

<sup>4</sup> W.C. Bosworth, 'The Early Ghaznavids', in *The Cambridge History of Iran*, p. 179.

made on Hindu territories as well as by subjugating Mongols who used to create problems on the north-western frontiers. On the basis of information available in contemporary accounts, an attempt has been made to present place of capture and the number of war captives in a tabular form.

**(a) Indian Captives :**

Year (A.D.)	Sultan	Place	No. of Captives	Source
1192	Muhammad Gori	Ajmer	—	Ferishta, p. 100
1195	Qutbuddin Aibak	Nahrwala	20,000	<i>Taj</i> <sup>1</sup> in E&D III, p. 231; Ferishta, p. 111
1202	Qutbuddin Aibak	Kalinjar	50,000	<i>Taj</i> in E&D III, p. 231
1204	Qutbuddin Aibak	Koh-i-Jud	—	<i>T.N.</i> , I, p. 483-4
1226	Iltutmish	Mandor	—	<i>T.N.</i> , I, p. 611
1231	Iltutmish	Gwalior, Malwa Chanderi, Narnul	—	<i>T.N.</i> , p. 620-1
1233	Iltutmish	Ujjain	—	Isami, II, p. 243
1251	Balban	Awadh	—	<i>T.N.</i> , I, 680
1253	Balban	Ranthambore Bundi, Chittor	—	<i>T.N.</i> , I, 683

<sup>1</sup> Hasain Nizami, *Taj-ul-Ma'asir*, Translated in *History of India as told by its on Historians*, edited by H. Elliot & W. Dowson; London 1867; Reprinted in Delhi 1981, in Volume III.

Year (A.D.)	Sultan	Place	No. of Captives	Source
1259	Balban	Haryana	—	<i>T.N.</i> , I, 691
—	Balban	Koh Payah	250	<i>T.N.</i> , II, 853
—	Balban	Koh Payah	—	<i>T.N.</i> , II, 715
1267	Balban	Twice against Kampil, Patiali, Bhojpur	—	Badaoni, I, p. 185
—	Jalaluddin Khalji	Ranthambore	—	Barani, <i>Tarikh</i> , ed., Khan, p. 210
1291	Jalaluddin Khalji	Malwa	—	Barani, <i>Tarikh</i> , ed., Khan, pp. 222-3
1296	Alauddin Khalji	Devagiri	—	Barani, <i>Tarikh</i> , ed., Khan, p. 223 Isami, II, p. 402
1299	Alauddin Khalji	Gujarat	—	Barani, <i>Tarikh</i> , ed. Khan, pp. 251-2 Ferishta, I, p. 184
1299	Alauddin Khalji	Somnath	20,000	Wassaf, E&D, III, <sup>1</sup> p. 448

<sup>1</sup> Abdullah Wassaf, *Tazyiyat-ul-Amsar wa Tajriyat-ul-Asar*, English translation in E&D, III.

Year (A.D.)	Sultan	Place	No. of Captives	Source
1303	Alauddin Khalji	Chittor	30,000	<i>Khazain-ul-Futuh</i> <sup>1</sup> tr. M. Habib, p. 49
1342	Muhammad bin Tughluq	Lahore	300	Ibn Battuta, tr. Gibb, III, p., 332
—	Muhammad bin Tughluq	Daulatabad	—	Isami, III, p. 822
—	Muhammad bin Tughluq	Indian kings	—	Ibn Battuta, tr. Gibb, III, pp. 667-8
—	Firuzshah	Jajnagar	—	Afif, p. 109

**(b) Mongol Captives :**

Year (A.D.)	Sultan	Place	No. of Captives	Source
—	Kaikubad	Lahore	—	Ferishta, I, p. 153 <i>Qiran</i> , E&D, III, pp. 526-27 <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Amir Khusru, *Khazain-ul-Futuh*, English translation by Mohammad Habib as *The Campaigns of Alauddin Khalji*, Aligarh, 1933.

<sup>2</sup> Amir Khusru, *Qiran-us-Sadain*, English translation in E&D, III.

Year (A.D.)	Sultan	Place	No. of Captives	Source
—	Alauddin Khalji	Shiwalik	4000	Barani, <i>Tarikh</i> , Hindi translation in <i>Khalji Kalin Bharat</i> , <sup>1</sup> pp. 88-9
—	Alauddin Khalji	Gujarat	18,000	Isami, II, p. 464
1296	Alauddin Khalji	—	—	<i>Khazain-ul-Futuh</i> , in E&D, III, p. 72
—	Alauddin Khalji	—	10,000	Isami, II, pp. 480-1
1299	Alauddin Khalji	—	2,000	Ferishta, I, p. 185
1305	Alauddin Khalji	—	8,000	Ferishta, I, p. 206

### Slaves as Gifts :

It had become a common practice that slaves were presented to the Sultan as gifts by the nobles, *muqtas* and by the people who visited the royal court for the first time. Malik Tajuddin al-Kawlami, the Governor of Cambay presented slaves along with other merchandise to Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Barani, *Tarikh*, Hindi translation by S.A.A. Rizvi, in *Khalji Kalin Bharat*, Aligarh, 1955.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Battuta, tr. Gibb, III, p. 734.

Ibn Battuta purchased slaves at Sindh to present to the Sultan.<sup>1</sup> Exchange of slaves was a common practice among Sultans. Chinese emperor sent slaves of both sexes while asking the permission to build a temple at Samhal, near mountain called Qarajil (Himalaya) from Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq. Muhammad Tughluq also reciprocated by sending slaves, though he denied to grant this permission.<sup>2</sup> During the reign of Firuz Shah, all the *muqtas* had to attend the royal court at least once a year. At this time they used to present gifts to the Sultan, consisting of slaves as a major item.<sup>3</sup>

### **Slaves as a part of the Inheritance :**

The commodification of the slaves was a very important aspect of the patron-slave relationship. Since slaves were considered as an article, they could be possessed like other objects, they used to pass from one generation to the succeeding one as a part of the family inheritance. We find numerous instances where the slave of a Sultan is mentioned among the slaves of the succeeding Sultans. Another very significant feature of aspects of the master-slave relationship was that sons of the slaves automatically became property of their master

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<sup>1</sup> Ibn Battuta, tr. Gibb, p. 596; Also see Hindi translation by Rizvi in *Tughlak Kalin Bharat*, I, p. 159.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Battuta, English translation in *Selection from travels of Ibn Battuta*, Reutledge, 1983, p. 214.

<sup>3</sup> Afif, p. 157.

immediately after their birth. Barani has used the term *mawlazadagan* for such slaves in the reign of Sultan Ghiyasuddin Balban.<sup>1</sup>

Apart from the above mentioned factors, many other factors also affected the slave-supply. Sometimes a certain temporary phenomenon could also facilitate the procurement of slaves. One such factor was raids of Mongols on Central Asian steppes. Mongols used to capture Turks from these regions and then to sell them in the markets. Delhi Sultanate also benefitted from these sales. Balban, his brother Khisli Khan and his cousin Sher Khan were sold in the market by the Mongols.<sup>2</sup>

Now, it is important for us to look into some of the major questions pertaining to the system of procurement of the slaves. It will be high misleading to say that only children of poor families were sold in the markets or that only non-Muslims were enslaved. Children of ruling class were also sold as slaves, which becomes quite apparent if we look at the background of some of the slaves. For instance, father of Shamsuddin Iltutmish Ilam Khan was the chief of a tribe.<sup>3</sup> Balban, his brother Khisli Khan and cousin Sher Khan were from a

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<sup>1</sup> Barani, *Tarikh*, Hindi translation by Rizvi in *Tughlak Kalin Bharat*, I, p. 206.

<sup>2</sup> *T.N.*, II, pp. 791, 795-6, 799; Ferishta, I, p. 137.

<sup>3</sup> *T.N.*, I, p. 599; Isami, I, pp. 170-2; Ferishta, I, p. 116; Sirhindi, p. 16.

ruling family of Ilbari Turks.<sup>1</sup> Malik Tajuddin Arsalan Khan, a slave of Iltutmish was son of a Khwarazmi *Amir* in the territory of Sham (Syria) and Misr (Egypt).<sup>2</sup>

It is important for us to keep our minds open towards the fact that Muslims were not immune to slavery. Whenever any place was raided its inhabitants were captured indiscriminately, some of them might have been Muslims. Malik Badruddin Surkar-i Rumi, slave of Iltutmish was son of a Muslim.<sup>3</sup> During the Gujarat Campaign in 1298-99 A.D., when neo-Muslim soldiers mutinied against commander of Alauddin Khalji, he ordered that wives and childrens of mutineers should be seized and sold.<sup>4</sup> These people were obviously Muslims. In an anecdote cited in *Khairul Majalis*, when the *muqta* sacked Ajodhan (modern Pakpattan, Punjab in Pakistan) its inhabitants were made captives. Ajodhan was the abode of famous Chisti Shaikh Farid (d. 1265 A.D.) and many of its inhabitants must have been Muslims.<sup>5</sup> Later in 1321 A.D. when Khusru Khan ascended the throne, he ordered that wives and children of the faithfuls of the previous reign (who were Muslims obviously) should be sold

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<sup>1</sup> *T.N.*, II, pp. 791, 795-6, 799; *Ferishta*, I, p. 137.

<sup>2</sup> *T.N.*, II, p. 787.

<sup>3</sup> *T.N.*, II, p. 757.

<sup>4</sup> Barani, *Tarikh*, English translation by A. Khallaque and A.R. Fuller as *The Reign of Alauddin Khalji*, Calcutta, 1967, p. 25.

<sup>5</sup> Passage cited by Irfan Habib in 'Slavery in Delhi Sultanate....', p. 248.



as slaves.<sup>1</sup> Amir Khusru informs us that during his march against Bhojpur Jalaluddin Khalji ordered large scale massacre of the Hindus. The Muslims who were Hindi (country-born) had their lives spared but were distributed among the commanders as slaves.<sup>2</sup>

### **Racial Factors in Slave System :**

The race of the slaves was the most important factor in their acquisition. Turks were favoured as slaves since the time of Caliphs due to their physical strength, bravery, formidability, obedience and service.<sup>3</sup> The term '*Turk*' came to be associated with the 'slave' to such an extent that Barani uses this term interchangeably.<sup>4</sup> The most significant change or shift that started taking place in thirteenth century and reached its culmination in the fourteenth century was dilution of Turkish dominance in the slave system. From the thirteenth century itself Indian were recruited as slave, but in the fourteenth century their number increased remarkably. Alauddin Khalji and Muhammad bin Tughluq had many

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<sup>1</sup> Ferishta, I, p. 227.

<sup>2</sup> Amir Khusru, *Ghurrat-ul-Kamal*, in E&D, Volume III, p. 539.

<sup>3</sup> Daniel Pipes, *Slave Soldiers and Islam....*, p. 205; W. Mirza, *life and Works of Amir Khusru....*, p. 11; *Amir Khusrau Comemorative Volume....*, p. 4.

<sup>4</sup> Peter Jackson, *Delhi Sultanate : Political and Military History*, Cambridge, 1999, See, Appendix, I, p. 326.

Indians in their dispensations.<sup>1</sup> The 1,80,000 slaves of Firuz Shah were obviously of Indians origin, who were supplied by his *muqtas*.

### **Prices of the Slaves :**

Sultan being the highest authority in the state must have had the first prerogative to select the slaves. All the slaves, whether military or non-military must have been brought in the royal court by the merchants; before displaying them in the markets. Military slaves being of no utility for the common man were certainly brought in the court of the Sultan or the nobles and were purchased after a great negotiation. Military slaves being the real strength of the state were purchased after a close scrutiny. Neither Barani, nor Ferishta or Ibn Battuta give price list of the military slaves, because there was no fixed price of these slaves. Their prices used to vary according to their potentials. A deserving candidate with good physique and primary training in horse riding, archery and military skills could fetch unexpectedly high prices for his master. Iltutmush and another slave named Aibak were purchased by Qutbuddin Aibak for 1,00,000

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<sup>1</sup> During the reign of Alauddin Khalji many Indians were in the nobility. It has been regretted by Barani. Irfan Habib interpretes it as 'plebianization of nobility'. See Irfan Habib, 'Barani's Theory of the History of the Delhi Sultanate', *IHR*, 7, 1980, pp. 99-115. Also see I.H. Siddiqi, 'The Nobility under the Khalji Sultans', in *Islamic Culutre*, 37, 1963, pp. 52-66. For the study of nobility under Muhammad bin Tughluq, see M. Athar Ali, 'Nobility under Muhammad bin Tughluq', *PIHC*, 42, 1981, pp. 197-202.

*jitals*.<sup>1</sup> Malik Kamaruddin Kiran-i-Tamur Khan us Sultani was purchased by Iltutmish for 50,000 Sultani *dirhams*.<sup>2</sup> Alauddin Khalji paid 1000 *dinar* for Malik Kafur.

Though the military capacity of such slaves was always the primary consideration, their physical beauty was also a significant factor for military slaves. Our contemporary historians like Juzjani, Barani, Ibn Battuta and others never disregard the physical features of the slaves while narrating the history. But able commanders with remarkable fighting potentials, though ugly could also win the favour of the Sultan. For instance, Qutbuddin Aibak, the most favoured slave of Muizzuddin Sam who succeeded his master in India as ruler, was a very ugly slave.

The prices of non-military slaves depended on several factors like races, age, sex, physical beauty and expertise in fine and commercial arts. While less skilled slaves with no remarkable quality were available for 10-20 *tankas*, prices of some rose to 20,000 *tankas*. The personal attitude of the Sultan was equally important in bringing the prices of the slaves up and down. While during the reigns of pleasure loving Sultans like Kaikubad and Mubarak Khalji, the prices

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<sup>1</sup> *T.N.*, II, p. 742.

<sup>2</sup> *T.N.*, I, pp. 602-3.

of the slaves boys and slave-girls, specialists in fine arts, reached the peak,<sup>1</sup> during the reigns of politically ambitious Sultans like Balban and Alauddin Khalji their prices fell down to the bottom.

The wide variations in the prices of such slaves was due to the skills they were experts of. While a domestic slaves, having no training of any art, was available at the minimal sum of 20 *tankas*, another slave-girl expert of wooving, flirting, dancing, singing, reciting verses, playing chess and lance and trained in the court etiquettes could be purchased for higher prices.<sup>2</sup> The knowledge of Arabic and Persian languages also increased their prices due to the flourishing Turko-Persian cultural tradition. The new ruling elites in India, who were the chief patrons of these slaves, always favoured the slaves who were familiar with their languages and culture.<sup>3</sup> The prices of such slave girls rose up 20,000 *tankas* in fourteenth century.<sup>4</sup> Barani has given following price list for the non-military

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<sup>1</sup> Barani, *Tarikh*, Hindi translation by Rizvi in *Adi Turk Kalin Bharat*, p. 232; Ferishta, I, p. 156; also see Barani, *Tarikh*, Hindi translation by Rizvi in *Khalji Kalin Bharat*, p. 127.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Battuta, *Rehla*, Hindi translation by Rizvi in *Tughlak Kalin Bharat*, I, p. 238; Also see *Masalik al-Absar*, tr. Siddiqi and Ahmad, pp. 51-52. Also see *Masalik al-Absar*, tr. Zaki, pp. 38-9.

<sup>3</sup> See Madhu Trivedi, 'Tradition and Transition : The Performing Arts in Medieval North India', *The Medieval History Journal*, 2, 1, 1999, pp. 73-110. She says that the sharp decline in the status of *ganikas* after the establishment of Delhi Sultanate was due to the fact that the new patrons had no knowledge and understanding of the Sanskrit language or literary tradition.

<sup>4</sup> Ibn Battuta, *Rehla*, Hindi translation in *Tughlak Kalin Bharat*, I, by Rizvi, p. 238. *Masalik al-Absar*, tr. Siddiqi and Ahmad, pp. 51-52, also see *Masalik al-Absar*, tr. Zaki, pp. 38-9.

slaves during the reign of Sultan Alauddin Khalji.<sup>1</sup>

	Category	Price
1.	Working girl	5-12 <i>tankas</i>
2.	<i>Kanizak-i Kinari</i>	20-30 or 40 <i>tankas</i>
3.	<i>Imrad</i>	20-30 <i>tankas</i>
4.	<i>Gilman-i Karkardah</i>	10-15 <i>tankas</i>
5.	<i>Gulam Bachagan-i naukari</i>	7-8 <i>tankas</i> .

Among the slaves for domestic purposes *kanizaks* from India, Rume (European), China, Tatar (Mongol) were considered good.<sup>2</sup> Slave girls from India and Yaman were considered unrivalled and used to fetch good prices.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Barani, *Tarikh*, tr. Fuller, p. 119; also see Hindi Translation in *Khalji Kalin Bharat*, p. 84; also see Ferishta, I, p. 204. Ferishta gives three categories of slaves and their prices, viz.,

First Class — 100-200 *tankas*,

Second Class — 20-40 *tankas*.

Third Class — 5-10 *tankas*.

<sup>2</sup> Amir Khusru, *Ejaj-i Khusravi*, I, 167, quoted by Naqvi, *Agricultural, Industrial and urban Dynamism.....*, pp. 153, 155.

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

## II

### Training of the *Mamluks* :

The second pillar on which the slave-system stood was the proper training of the slaves so that they could be converted into useful subordinates. After investing large sums in purchasing slaves, it was natural for the Sultans to be extremely prudent about the proper training of slaves, both military and non-military. Though it was preferred that slaves with some primary training could be purchased but after that it was important to brush up their skills so that they could become eligible to serve the royalty. This section will give deal with the training of military as well as non-military slaves. In the first sub-section, we will concentrate on the training of military slaves.

The training of the military-slaves was of great consideration for the Sultans since the backbone of the state was the military strength. In the context of larger Islamic World, Ibn Khaldun reflects upon the training of slaves, “(After the purchase of slaves).... the rulers lodge them in the royal chambers, and give them a careful upbringing, including the study of the *Quran* and other subjects of instruction, until they become proficient in these things. Then they train them in the use of bows and sword, in riding in the hippodromes, in fighting with the lances until they become tough and seasoned soldiers... When the rulers are

convinced that they are prepared to defend them and to die for them, they multiply their pay and augment their fief and impose upon them the duties of perfecting themselves in the use of the weapons, and in horsemanship as well as of increasing the number of men of their own race (in the ruler's service) for the same purpose. Then they appoint them to high offices of state, and even Sultans are chosen from them who direct the affairs of the Muslims...."<sup>1</sup>

This is certain that slave were imparted training in the military skill in ascending order from lighter to tougher exercises through practical experience. In Egypt the military training of *mamluk faris*<sup>2</sup> took place in *tibaq* (singular *tabaqa*) the name given to the barack of Cairo citadel which housed the military school. They were housed in groups and put under a *Mu'allim* (i.e., teacher, trainer). The *furusiyya* exercises comprised equitation, lance games, archery and fencing. More advanced training of *faris* took place in hippodromes (*maydan*, plural *mayadin*) which was the cavalry training proper i.e. coaching in teamwork.<sup>3</sup> Coming to Indian subcontinent, our sources are lacking in providing information regarding the schedule and the mode of training. There are some

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<sup>1</sup> Ibn Khaldun, *Kitab al-ibar wa diwan al-Mubtada wa'l-Khabar*, passage translated by D. Aylon in 'The Great Yasar of Chirgiz Khan : A Reexamination' part C, *Studia Islamica*, 36, 1972, pp. 118-20; also see D. Aylon 'Ibn Khaldun's View on the Mamluk Phenomenon', originally in *JSAI*, II, 1980, reprinted in his *Outsiders in the Land of Islam*, Varorium reprint....., pp. 340-49.

<sup>2</sup> *Faris*, literary means rider on horse-back, for different connotations, associated with *faris*, see '*Faris*', in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Vol. III, p. 800.

<sup>3</sup> For details see H.M. Rabie, 'The Training of Mamluk Faris', in *War Technolgy and Society in Middle East*, edited by V.J. Parry and M.E. Yapp, London, 1975, pp. 153-63.

stray remarks on the basis of which we can attempt to build a framework of military training provided to slaves during thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

The slaves used to receive their initial lessons from their first masters who captured or purchased them. After some training in horse riding, use of weapons, fine arts, religion and languages, they were brought before the Sultans. It was their factor which raised the prices of some slaves exceptionally high and made this business profitable for the slave traders. For instance, Qutbuddin Aibak received his initial training in archery, horse riding and languages in the house of his first master Fakhruddin-Abdul Aziz-i-Kufi.<sup>1</sup> In the reign of Firuz Shah *muqtas* used to bring chosen slaves in the court and after explaining their achievements in various skills they had acquired, they were sold to the Sultan.<sup>2</sup> After that the further refinement of their skills remained the responsibility of their royal patron. During the reign of Firuz Shah, an exclusive office *Diwan-i-Bandagan*, separate from *Diwan-i-Wizarat* was formed. This department was responsible for the recruitment, training and maintenance of the *mamluks* and to look after the expenses on their administration.<sup>3</sup>

We do not find any reference in contemporary accounts regarding the formal training of the slaves in *tibaqs*. But we come across several other

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<sup>1</sup> *T.N.*, I, p. 513.

<sup>2</sup> Afif, p. 157.

<sup>3</sup> Afif, p. 158.



techniques like *shikar*, *chaughan*, racing and expeditions against contumacious elements which could keep the soldiers under practice. Since the royal slaves of Delhi Sultans were appointed in *Hashm-i-Qulb*, apparently these tactics used by the Sultans could give them great amount of military training.

### **Horse Riding :**

Horse riding was the primary lesson given to the slaves in early age. Slaves who were going to form the cavalry were required to master the art of controlling the horses. Qutbuddin Aibak used to ride from his palace for race quite frequently.<sup>1</sup> Khisli Khan, brother of Balban was an expert horse rider.<sup>2</sup> Malik Tajuddin Sanjar-i Kurek Khan was reknowned horserider.<sup>3</sup> Muhammad Tughluq was also a peerless rider.<sup>4</sup>

### **Shikar :**

*Shikar*, apart from being a fun, could provide a good means of exercise for the soldiers, *paiks*, archers, horse-riders who used to take part in the hunt. Delhi Sultans used this tactic to train their military. Qutbuddin Aibak used to ride from his palace to hunt quite often.<sup>5</sup> Iltutmish was also fond of it. The Sultan

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<sup>1</sup> Isami, II, p. 213.

<sup>2</sup> Barani, *Tarikh*, Hindi translation by Rizvi in *Adi Turk Kalin Bharat*, p. 202.

<sup>3</sup> *T.N.*, II, p. 756.

<sup>4</sup> Barani, *Tarikh*, Hindi translation by Rizvi in *Tughlak Kalin Bharat*, I, p. 33.

<sup>5</sup> Isami, II, p. 213.

who is well known for his obsession for hunting is Ghiyasuddin Balban. He had ordered that *hawalias* (vicinity of Delhi), the hunting fields and *maidans* within 10 to 20 *kurohs* round the capital should be preserved for royal-hunt. During the winters he would go everyday from *Kushk-i-lal* (Ruby palace) to Rewari or even further for hunt. In his confidants, he had 1000 old slaves including *paiks* and archers, who used to accompany him during the hunt.<sup>1</sup> Halaku Khan, grandson of Chingiz Khan when came to know about his fondness for hunt, said, "Balban is a sagacious Sultan. He shows to people that he goes for hunting but through this riding exercise he keeps his *Khans*, *Maliks* and *Hashm-i-Hashia* (army of the capital) in training..... Horses can be kept active (this way) so that during the severe fight they do not show laziness and carelessness. When soldiers and horses are kept active, then enemy can never overcome them in the battlefield.<sup>2</sup> Ferishta also says that Balban used to go for hunt at least twice a week to keep his army under practice.<sup>3</sup> Kaikubad and Mubarak Shah Khalji used to go on hunting expeditions.<sup>4</sup> Jalaluddin Khalji also had this passion for hunting.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Barani, *Tarikh*, Hindi translation by Rizvi in *Adi Turk Kalin Bharat*, p. 162; Also see Khwajah Nizamaddun Ahmad, *Tabaqat-i Akbari*, Translated and annotated by Brajendranath De and Revised and completed with preface and Index by Bainsi Prasad as *A History of India from the Early Musalman, invasions to the Thirty-sixth year of the Reign of Akbar*, first published, 1911, reproduced in Delhi, 1992, (herein after *Tabaqat-i Akbari*), I, p. 99.

<sup>2</sup> Barani, *Tarikh*, Hindi Translation in *Adi Turk Kalin Bharat*, by Rizvi, pp. 162-3; Also see *Tabaqat-i Akbari*, I, p. 99.

<sup>3</sup> Ferishta, I, p. 141.

<sup>4</sup> K.A. Nizami, *Royalty in Medieval India*, Delhi, 1997, p. 73; Amir Khusru, *Nuh Sipihir*, English translation in E&D, III, p. 565.

<sup>5</sup> Isami, II, pp. 387-90.

Muhammad bin Tughluq is praised by Barani for his interest in hunting.<sup>1</sup> Al-Umari gives a detailed account of the hunting-party of Muhammad bin Tughluq.<sup>2</sup>

It can not be without any significance that during their extremely important campaigns we can find Sultanate armies hunting in the woods. While his march against rebels of Abri Kaithun Giasuddin Balban hunted in that area.<sup>3</sup> Alauddin Khalji, during his march towards Ranthambore halted at a place for few days where he used to go to neighbouring *kamargah* for hunt.<sup>4</sup> Before his march towards Chittor also, he encamped outside Delhi and hunted for a month.<sup>5</sup> These hunting expeditions just before the military expeditions were a kind of warm-up exercises.

Firuz Shah in fourteenth century was so enthusiastically involved in hunt that Barani claims to be able to write volumes on his hunting expeditions.<sup>6</sup> The hunt-circle of Firuz Shah, as described by Afif can give us a fair idea that it could have been a very good way of training the soldiers in encircling the enemy in the battlefield. "In the hunt circle he used to keep his army horsemen, footsoldiers,

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<sup>1</sup> Barani, *Tarikh*, Hindi translation by Rizvi in *Tughlak Kalin Bharat*, I, p. 33.

<sup>2</sup> *Masalik al-Absar*, tr. Siddiqi and Ahmad, p. 44; also see *Masalik al-Absar*, tr. Zaki, p. 26.

<sup>3</sup> Isami, II, pp. 388-9.

<sup>4</sup> *Tabaqat-i Akbari*, I, p. 163; *Kamargah* is hunting circle formed for kings and great men to enjoy the chase therein.

<sup>5</sup> Isami, II, pp. 452-3.

<sup>6</sup> Barani, *Tarikh*, abridged treatment in 'Barani's History of Tughluqs, II,' by M. Haq, in *Journal of Pakistan History Society*, 1961, p. 163.

and slaves. During hunt he stayed on a raised spot (high ground). The horsemen were commended to go down the hunting circle. Malik Naib Barbak led the horsemen towards the hunting circle from one direction, while Imad ul-Mulk led the horse-men from other direction. Behind these armies the royal standard for the hunt were stationed. Each housemen was separately permitted to advance. The hunting lines were drawn from all the troops and behind them marched the chiefs of respective contingents. When all horsemen had been so deployed, and both the standards had gone so far away as ten kos, the principal (selected) slaves were directed to fall in the line. The selected slave contingent had one standard after every hundred slaves, they too advance for the game. After the *Amirs*, the horses from the stables were realised towards the hunting circle and the functionaries of the royal stables also followed. After the two hunting standards had occupied their respective position, fire was put on to cause heavy smoke, indicating that the hunting ring (encirclement) had been completed.....”<sup>1</sup>

What could have been the better way for the army to be trained in encirclement?

The above discussion should make it clear that hunting expeditions were not the pleasure trips exclusively, instead a deep rooted strategy was imbedded in them.

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<sup>1</sup> Afif, pp. 183-4.

### Chaghan :

Another device for the military training of the slaves was game of polo or *Chaghan*. Polo was considered to be both a sport and a form of cavalry training because it enabled the player to learn how to control himself and his horse in different situations. The game was in great vogue during the Samarids, Ghaznavids, Saljuqs, and Safavid periods. Shah Abbas I had a passion for polo. He played it himself and often entertained his guests with a game by cavalymen.<sup>1</sup> Large number of Iranians took training in equitation and played polo for the purpose of acquiring skills needed in mounted warfare. The significance of the game of polo realised by Fakhr-i-Muddabir in twelfth century. His book *Adab wa harb wa't Shuja'at*, written in 'Advice' genre contains detailed advice with illustrations on good and bad points in a horse, ways of training a horse, proper style of polo-playing and types of polo fields, battle procedures, javelin throwing on horseback and appropriate means of controlling a lance charge or a sword combat.<sup>2</sup> The game was played by two teams and a great amount of alertness and energy was required in it. The rider had to exercise control on the movement of horse. He had to make his grip on the horse with his legs since he had to hold the rein by one hand and polo stick by another. In this way polo was a very good exercise for the soldiers. The soldiers in *Hashm-i-Qulb* including slaves certainly

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<sup>1</sup> 'Asb', in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, Volume II, p. 734.

<sup>2</sup> Fakhr-i-Muddabir, *Adab wa harb* quoted in 'Asb', in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, Volume II, pp. 731-2.

benefitted from these exercises. Qutbuiddin Aibak used to play it. He died while playing polo in 1210 A.D.<sup>1</sup> Princes and sons of nobles were also trained through polo. The Isami writes that sons of Sultan Nasiruddin Mahmud used to play polo with sons of Balban.<sup>2</sup> Balban's brother Alauddin Khisli Khan had no peer in playing polo.<sup>3</sup> Kaikubad had received regular instruction from his teachers in polo.<sup>4</sup> During the time of warfare also soldiers were asked to play polo as a warm-up exercise. The Commander-in-Chief of the army of Alauddin Khalji, who himself was very fond of this game asked his soldiers to play polo during the campaign against Arangal.<sup>5</sup> Amir Khusru in the 8th sphere of *Nuh Siphir* talks about the interest of Mubarak Shah in this game.<sup>6</sup>

Jalaluddin Khalji used to sit in the palace cupola and watch *chaughan* being played in the second courtyard. Muhammad Tughluq was also expert in *Chaughan*.<sup>7</sup> All these remarks make it apparent that *Chaughan* was recognised as one way of training in equitation by the rulers. The slaves in *Hashm-i Qulb*,

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<sup>1</sup> Hasain Nizami, *Taj ul-Ma'asir*, Translated by B. Saroop, Delhi n.d. p. 283.

<sup>2</sup> Isami, II, pp. 287-8.

<sup>3</sup> Barani, *Tarikh*, Hindi Translation in *Adi Turk Kalin Bharat* by Rizvi, p. 202.

<sup>4</sup> Nizami, *Royalty in Medieval India.....*, p. 75.

<sup>5</sup> *Khazain ul-Futuh*, tr. M. Habib, p. 65.

<sup>6</sup> Amir Khusro, *Nuh Siphir*, E&D, III, p. 565.

<sup>7</sup> Barani, *Tarikh*, Hindi translation by Rizvi in *Tughlak Kalin Bharat*, I, p. 33.

could easily receive their training through *Chaughan*. It can be said that *Chaughan* was considered an important exercise for mounted slaves.

### **Campaigns against Refractory Elements :**

Regular expeditions against refractory elements in the neighbouring areas kept the Sultanate armies in practice, so that they could remain prepared for the bigger expeditions. Our sources give a vivid account of the expeditions carried out by the Sultans. In most of these expeditions *Hashm-i-Qulb* was sent consisting of military slaves along with other soldiers. During the reign of Balban we find them engaged against Mewatis towards the western part of the Capital.<sup>1</sup> During his expeditions against rebels of Kampil (modern Farrukhabad district), Patiali (modern Eta district), Bhojpur and Katehar, *Hashm-i-Qulb* was sent.<sup>2</sup> This should be looked up in the light of the fact that Balban never sent his armies towards Daccan to annex new areas. He concentrated on consolidation rather than expansion. Through these expeditions he tried to kill two birds with a single shot. These expeditions not only eliminated the rebellious tribals, who sometimes gave shelter to the conspirators, but also kept the soldiers active. Jaluluddin Khalji also took these expeditions against miscreants.<sup>3</sup> Alauddin Khalji too led his armies towards Abri and Kaithun for this purpose.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *T.N.*, I, p. 715.

<sup>2</sup> *T.N.*, II, pp. 850-51; also see Barani, *Tarikh*, Hindi translation in *Adi Turk Kalin Bharat* by Rizvi, pp. 164-5. Also see *Tabaqat-i Akbari*, I, p. 100.

<sup>3</sup> Isami, II, pp. 387-88.

<sup>4</sup> Isami, II, pp. 390-91.

Apart from the above mentioned means of training the slave-soldiers, their actual deployment in the army was the real exercise. The practical experience in the battlefield also trained the soldiers, including slaves in military skills.

### **Equipments for Training the Slave- Soldiers :**

To keep the army well equipped war material, animals and weapons were adequately managed by the state. Slaves were provided these equipments by the Sultan. In this section, we will see which war animals and weapons were used by slave-soldiers.

It has been argued that success of Sultanate armies was due to its well maintained, large sized cavalry. Since the conditions in Indian subcontinent were not very conducive for the physical fitness of the horses, their regular supply was maintained through trade. The Delhi Sultan imported horses from Central Asia<sup>1</sup> and West Asia.<sup>2</sup> The thorough bred Arabian horses were imported from Bahrain, Yaman and Iraq.<sup>3</sup> Horses were also brought from the region known as 'the high land region,' *Mulk-i-bala*, in Afghanistan.<sup>4</sup> The breed of their

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<sup>1</sup> Barani, *Tarikh*, Hindi translation by Rizvi in *Adi Turk Kalin Bharat*, p. 161; also see *Masalik al-Absar*, tr. Siddiqi and Ahmad, p. 35.

<sup>2</sup> Barani, *Tarikh*, ed. Khan, p. 313; also see *Masalik al-Absar*, tr. Siddiqi and Ahmad, p. 35.

<sup>3</sup> *Masalik al-Absar*, tr. Siddiqi and Ahmad, p. 35; also see *Masalik al-Absar*, tr. Zaki, p. 17; also see *Subh al-Asha*, tr. Zaki, p. 84.

<sup>4</sup> See 'Asb', *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, II, pp. 736-37.



horses was known as *Tatari*. Trade took place both through sea, via. Gujarat<sup>1</sup> and through land routes where Multan and Lahore were the halting places.<sup>2</sup> Among the breeds suitable for horses there were Arab horses classified as *atiq* (born an Arab father & Arab mother), and *Hajin* (born or Arab father by a non-Arab mother), Kurdish horses, Turkish horses also called *Kuhi* or *dagi*, *Gili* (from Gilan), Khurasani, Turkamani or Turkmani horses.<sup>3</sup>

Among the indigenous horses those from Jud were very famous. Good Indian horses were available at Siwalik, Selam, Samana, Bhatinda, Bhatnir, Khokhar, Chitwan, and Mandaharan.<sup>4</sup> In the cattle market of Kar battan or Kar pattar or Karar pattar in the territory of lakhnauti which was under the authority of *Mihtar* (chief or lord), about 1500 horses were sold everyday. All the Tanghana horses which reached Lakhnauti were brought from here.<sup>5</sup>

Barani exaggerates while giving figures for the horses in the stable of Alauddin Khalji as 70,000.<sup>6</sup> He further gives unbelievably high figures of 3,70,000 horses mustered by Muhammad bin Tughluq during the Khur<sup>as</sup>an

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<sup>1</sup> Marco Polo, *The Travels of Marco Polo*, edited and translated by H. Yule and H. Cordier, London, 1903, Vol. I, pp. 83-85.

<sup>2</sup> *Insha-i-Mahru*, ed. Rashid, p. 213.

<sup>3</sup> See 'Asb', *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, II, p. 736.

<sup>4</sup> Barani, *Tarikh*, Hindi translation by Rizvi in *Adi Turk Kalin Bharat*, p. 161.

<sup>5</sup> *T.N.*, I, pp. 567-8.

<sup>6</sup> Barani, *Tarikh*, Hindi translation by Rizvi in *Khalji Kalin Bharat*, p. 53.

expedition.<sup>1</sup> Firuz Shah is said to have five stables for horses.<sup>2</sup>

Beside trade, horses were acquired in large numbers as booty from the Indian kingdoms,<sup>3</sup> and as gifts.<sup>4</sup> Apart from horses, elephants and camels formed a very important part of the army. Elephants were also acquired through various means like booty<sup>5</sup> and gifts.<sup>6</sup>

Our sources provide information about the use of several weapons, but it is impossible to know how and in which steps the slaves were trained to use them. We come across several instances when these weapons were used with great desecrity which shows that a great amount of practice was done by the soldiers including slaves to acquire that skill. Among the weapons bow and arrows were used for engaging in cobat from distance, and lance, short spears,

<sup>1</sup> Barani, *Tarikh*, ed. Khan, p. 477; Ferishta, I, p. 238

<sup>2</sup> Afif, pp. 181, 192-3.

<sup>3</sup> *T.N.*, II, pp. 828, 853; Taj, tr. Saroop, p. 132. Ferishta, I, p. 214; Isami, I, pp. 152-3; Isami, II, p. 480; Barani, *Tarikh*, Hindi translation by Rizvi in *Adi Turk Kalin Bharat*, pp. 159, 166; Barani, *Tarikh*, Hindi translation by Rizvi in *Khalji Kalin Bharat*, pp. 88, 93, 96; also see Barani, *Tarikh*, tr. Fuller, p. 141; *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, pp. 101, 178-79; *Khazain ul-Futuh*, tr. in E&D, III, pp. 71, 91-92; Badaoni, I, p. 265.

<sup>4</sup> Amir Khusru, *Nuh Sipihir*, Hindi translation by Rizvi in *Khalji Kalin Bharat*, p. 178; Barani, *Tarikh*, Hindi translation by Rizvi in *Tughlak Kalin Bharat*, I, p. 186; Barani, *Tarikh*, Hindi translation by Rizvi in *Tughlak Kalin Bharat*, II, p. 45; Ibn Battuta, tr. Gibb, III, p. 663; Badaoni, I, p. 265.

<sup>5</sup> Barani, *Tarikh*, ed. Khan, pp. 223, 228, 326, 449, 450, 451, 593-4; *Khazain ul-Futuh*, tr. Habib, pp. 28, 138, 153, 156, 160; Taj, in E&D, III, p. 233; Afif, pp. 86, 87.

<sup>6</sup> Barani, *Tarikh*, ed. Khan, pp. 53, 334, 398; *Khazain ul-Futuh*, tr. Habib, p. 120; Sirhindi, p. 128; Afif, pp. 104-5, 107.

swords, mace or lasso for a hand-to-hand fight. There were several varieties of some weapons like bow, which was of several types : Chachi (named after Chach of Shash — the modern Tashkand), Ghazni & Lahori, Mountain bow (wholly of horn, with no wood in construction), and Indian bows (*Kaman-i-Hindvi*). Swords were also available in varieties : Chini, Rumi, Khazari, Rumi-Furangi, Yamani, Shahi, Alai, Hindi and Kashmiri.<sup>1</sup> A few instances recorded in our sources show that some slave had mastered the art of using these weapons. Qutbu din Aibak was so excelled in archery that he could pierce the eye of Raja Jai Chand in a battle.<sup>2</sup> No game could escape the arrow of Malik Tazuddin Sanjar.<sup>3</sup> Alauddin Khisli Khan had no competitor in archery.<sup>4</sup>

Delhi Sultans took great care to regulate the supplies of these weapons that is why weapons were made in the royal *karkhanas*. Firuz Shah Tughluq had one such *karkhana*.<sup>5</sup>

Various machines like *Irada*, *Manjaniqs* and *Maghribis* were used in

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<sup>1</sup> Fakhr-i-Muddarbir in *Adab wa-Harb* gives along list of various types of weapons. For the translation of his passage see Simon Digby, *War-Horse, Elephants : The Problem of Military Supplies in Delhi Sultanate*, London and Karachi, 1971, pp. 16-18; also see part *Taj*, tr. Saroop, pp. 57, 58-9, 155, 162-3.

<sup>2</sup> *T.N.*, I, p. 513; also see *Taj*, tr. Saroop, p. 155.

<sup>3</sup> *T.N.*, II, p. 756.

<sup>4</sup> Barani, *Tarikh*, Hindi translation by Rizvi in *Adi Turk Kalin Bharat*, p. 202.

<sup>5</sup> Afif, pp. 159-60.

Sultanate period.<sup>1</sup> These machines were effectively used by Sultanate armies in campaigns against Tilang, Ranthambore, Mandu, Siwana and Gujarat, Arangal, Nagarkot and Lakhnauti.<sup>2</sup> Apart from these *Sirat-i-Firuzshahi* (compiled in 1381 A.D.) gives a list of the machines available in the *karkhana* of Firuz Shah. These were *Faraqha Falakiun*, (sling made of rope for throwing stones); *Bandiqa* (Venetian cross bow for throwing stone-balls); *Kaman guruha* (large mounted cross bow), *Harf-i-Qilk* (arrow with inverted harp points), *Julahiqa* (balls of stones thrown by ballists) and *Zand-i-atash* (incendiary fire-steel).<sup>3</sup> We can take it for granted that machines were under the state monopoly and thus some of the slaves in the *Hashm-i-Qulb* were trained in using them. It can be assumed without hesitation that common soldier did not have any occasion to make such machines. Moreover technique and great amount of money was required to make these machines. Only Sultan had the resources to pick up such projects.

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<sup>1</sup> See Fakhr-i-Muddarbir, *Adab wa-Harb*, Hindi translation by Rizvi in *Adi Turk Kalin Bharat*, p. 270; These machines were stone throwing devices. In a manjaniq the central piece, it seems was a large wooden beam moving upon a pivot, the strongest men of the army were made to pull outside of the beam so that otherside moved forward to hit the stone like a cricket ball. The stone were encircled into a round or oblong shape of the size of a football on the average. Muhammad Habib, in tr. of *Khazain ul-Futuh*, f.n. 1, p. 40.

<sup>2</sup> *Khazain ul-Futuh*, tr. Habib, pp. 40, 48, 54, 65; also see Amir Khusru, *Ashiqqa*, translated in E&D, III, p. 549; Barani, *Tarikh*, Hindi translation by Rizvi in *Khalji Kalin Bharat*, pp. 20-21. Afif, pp. 103, 119.

<sup>3</sup> Anonymous, *Sirat-i-Firuzshahi*, Patna : Khuda Baksh Library Publication, 1999, p. 324.

### **Administrative Training of the Slaves :**

We do not come across any reference in our sources which shows that any well structured programme of educating slaves in the administration could evolve during this time. Their first orientation with the political sphere took place during the tenure of their service on lower posts viz., *khasadar*, *jamadar*, *dawatdar*, *chashinigir* etc. Major part of it was acquired by the new aspirants through seeking practical experience from those already in administration. Final stage of this training was the actual deployment of the slaves, when they were left free to cope up with the situation. Of course the guiding sticks of the Sultan and their superiors restricted them to go haywhere.<sup>1</sup>

### **Training of Non-Military Slaves :**

Immediately after being captured the training of the slaves started with prosletization and primary education in religion was imparted to them. They were expected to receive formal education in Islam at least to pay *namaz*, if nothing more than that. Whether slaves were sent to *madarsas* is not known, but we come across several instances where slaves were experts in *fiqh*, calligraphy, languages, reciting verses, dance, music and other crafts. Qutbuddin Aibak

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<sup>1</sup> For a detailed survey of the training of Royal princes and Nobility see S.B.M. Nigam, 'Administrative Training of the nobility under the Sultans of Delhi (1206-1398 A.D.)', *Islamic Culture*, 1967, pp. 87-91.

learnt Persian and Arabic in the house of his first master Fakhruddin Abdul Aziz in Nishapur.<sup>1</sup> Al-Umari says that during the reign of Muhammad bin Tughluq, slaves took great interest in *fiqh* (Muslim Jurisprudence) and majority of them followed Hanafite school.<sup>2</sup> From among the 1,80,000 slaves of Sultan Firuz Shah some were trained in reading *Quran* or memorizing it, while others engaged in religious education and reading and writing.<sup>3</sup> Slaves were trained to manufacturer goods for the use of royal families. They were taught to weave,<sup>4</sup> make weapons<sup>5</sup>, make jewellery, cook, distil wine, make scents and perfumes and make light and candles.<sup>6</sup> Slaves were also trained in architectural works so that the large scale construction projects of the Sultans could be successfully meted with. Barani says that 70,000 slaves of Sultan Alauddin Khalji were engaged in architectural activities.<sup>7</sup> Though the figure seems to be highly exaggerated since Afif says that Alauddin Khalji owned 50,000 slaves in all, including his military, personal bodyguards and other slaves for domestic help. Slaves who were to remain in the personal attendance of Sultans were trained in the etiquettes of the court and royal processions. Firuz Shah had 40,000 such

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<sup>1</sup> *T.N.*, I, p. 513; Sirhindi, p. 14; Ferishta, I, p. 107.

<sup>2</sup> *Masalik al-Absar*, tr. Sirhindi and Ahmad, p. 37.

<sup>3</sup> Afif, p. 158.

<sup>4</sup> *Masalik al-Absar*, tr. Siddiqi and Ahmad, p. 39.

<sup>5</sup> *Masalik al-Absar*, tr. Siddiqi and Ahmad, p. 35; also see *Subh al-Asha*, tr. Zaki, p. 84.

<sup>6</sup> Afif, p. 159.

<sup>7</sup> Barani, *Tarikh*, ed. Khan, p. 341.

slaves who were trained to stand on positions in the court and processions, to increase the grandeur of the court.<sup>1</sup>

A large group of slave-boys and girls were trained in fine-arts to entertain the Sultan and elites. Slaves were taught to play on musical instruments, dance and sing from their early age. We can make a list of the musical instruments, the musicians including slaves were trained to use : *Chang, duff, Nay* (flute), *Rubab, Tambur, Barbat, Shahnayi, Surray, Miskal, Nawalak, Duhl-i Ghazi, Babgak* and *Paikan*.<sup>2</sup> In the court of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq there were 1000 slaves who were employed to train the new slave-singers.<sup>3</sup> Slaves were trained in composing verses in Arabic, Persian and Hindi.<sup>4</sup>

Beautiful and graceful slave-girls and boys were trained in singing, reciting *ghazals*, mimickry, playing chess and *chauser*. They were educated in the intricacies of wooing, flirting and seducing. During their adolscent years they were drilled in horse-riding, *chaughan* and lance throwing.<sup>5</sup> Al-Umari also

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<sup>1</sup> Afif, p. 158.

<sup>2</sup> *Taj*, tr. Saroop, pp. 131-3; also see *Amir Khusru Commemorative Volume*, pp. 245, 256-8

<sup>3</sup> *Masalik al-Absar*, tr. Siddiqi and Ahmad, p. 4.

<sup>4</sup> *Subh al-Asha*, tr. Zaki, p. 101; *Masalik al-Absar*, tr. Siddiqi and Ahmad, p. 4; For detailed treatment of the training of performing artists in the Medieval India; see Madhu Trivedi, 'Tradition and Transition', pp. 73-110.

<sup>5</sup> Barani, *Tarikh*, Hindi translation by Rizvi in *Adi Turk Kalin Bharat*, p. 232; Ferishta, I, p. 156.

attests that slave girls who could recite *Quran* and poetry, play *chauser* and those who were expert in wooving to the extent of capturing the heart of their master in twinkling of an eye, were greatly adored.<sup>1</sup>

Foregoing discussion should make it clear that the training of slaves, both military and non-military was of great concern for the Sultans. Great amounts of money were spent on the grooming of these slaves. In the next chapter we will discuss the next stage of the life of slaves, when after years of training they were deployed in various capacities.

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<sup>1</sup> *Masalik al-Absar*, tr. Siddiqi and Ahmad, pp. 51-2; also see *Masalik al-Absar*, tr. Zaki, pp. 38-9.



**CHAPTER - 2****DEPLOYMENT OF  
THE *MAMULKS*  
UNDER THE  
SULTANATE OF  
DELHI.**

After procurement and training the deployment of slaves was of great significance both for the Sultans and slaves. It is the actual employment of the slaves which carries the logical explanation why slaves were given preference over free. Since the dedication and devotion of the slaves towards their masters was unquestionable, Delhi Sultans like their other counterparts in larger Islamic World tried to open maximum venues for their personal slave. But we should never forget that free men never seized to enjoy power. In this chapter we are going to study about the placement of slaves both in military and non-military spheres. The first section deals with the employment of slaves in the administration and military. The categorization has been done for the clarification of the major questions which had become integral part of slave-system. The second section deals with the employment of non-military slaves.

## I

The *mamluks* who constituted the backbone of administration and armies of Sultanate can be divided into two categories in the context of their deployment :

1. **The Royal Mamluks** : These were the slaves of the reigning Sultan who held administrative posts in the centre and provinces,

were deployed in the military, espionage system and postal services. These can further be categorized into two groups :

(a) Slaves procured and deployed by the reigning Sultan himself, and

(b) *Mamluks* who passed into service of the reigning Sultan from that of former Sultans.

## 2. The *Mamluks* of the *Amirs* and *Mawlazadagan* :

After the death of slave *Amirs* their slave could be taken into service by the Sultans. We come across several instances when slaves of slaves were employed in the service of Sultan. Apart from these above mentioned groups we come across a group of royal servants who were not *mamluks* in the true sense. These were sons of the slaves called *mawlazadagan*. Alongwith this it has to be kept in mind that slaves could never ever enjoy the monopoly which their counterparts in Egypt and Syria did. Free notables and armymen always shared power with the slaves.

Before switching over the various posts occupied by slaves in central Government and royal household it is important to have an overview of the avenues available for these placements. Next to the Sultan, the chief executive

office belonged to the *Wazir*,<sup>1</sup> one of the four departmental heads, the “four pillars of state”. The other three very important departments were *Diwan-i-Arz*, army department headed by *Ariz-i-Mamalik*,<sup>2</sup> *Diwan-i Ashraf* or *Diwan-i-Insha* (chancellery)<sup>3</sup> and *Diwan-i-Rasalat*.<sup>4</sup> Beside these principal departments, there were other dignitaries in the royal household. These included *Wakil-i-Dar*,<sup>5</sup> *Amir-i-Hajib*,<sup>6</sup> *Naqibs*,<sup>7</sup> *Jandars*,<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> His department was called *Diwan-i-Wizarat*. He mainly dealt with finance. He exercised a supervisory authority over other ministers. He did not have any judicial functions but as the chief minister, his supervisory jurisdiction would include the organization and command of the army also. As the finance minister he controlled the military pay office. As the Sultan's chief counsellor, he had access to him all the times. See I.H. Qureshi, *The Administration of Sultanate of Delhi*, Lahore, 1942, reprinted at Delhi, 1971, p. 84; also see A.B.M. Habibullah, *The Foundation of Muslim Rule in India*, first edition, Allahbad, 1945, third edition, Allahbad, 1971, pp. 195-96.

<sup>2</sup> He kept the *iqtadar*'s (military assignee) muster roll, recruited new troops, looked after equipments and efficiency of the fighting forces. See Habibullah, p. 197; Qureshi, p. 85.

<sup>3</sup> Its function was to draft royal proclamations, and despatches and to communicate with the local executive officers. See Habibullah, p. 197.

<sup>4</sup> Its functions are not outlined but the term *rasalat* suggests foreign and diplomatic correspondence. It could have been a kind of foreign office in close touch with ambassadors and envoys sent to and received from foreign potentates. See Habibullah, p. 197.

<sup>5</sup> He was controller of entire royal household. He arranged payment of emoluments and salaries to the palace staff. All royal orders relating to royal household were communicated through him. The royal kitchen, *sharabkhana*, stable and even royal children were under his care. See Habibullah, p. 200; Qureshi, p. 59, Nizami, *Royalty in Medieval India*, p. 44.

<sup>6</sup> Master of ceremonies at court, escorted the nobles and high officials before the king. All petitions were presented through him or his assistants. They were often entrusted with commands of military expeditions and also acted as Sultan's aides de-camp. Habibullah, p. 199; Qureshi, pp. 61-2; Nizami, p. 49.

<sup>7</sup> *Naqibs* or ushers proclaimed orders to the soldiers and the public. They ran in front of royal procession announcing the presence of the Sultan. Their chief was *naqib ul-nuqaba*. He and his assistants delivered the formal enlogies on occasion of feasts and celebrations. See Qureshi, pp. 62-3; Nizami, p. 44.

<sup>8</sup> *Jandars* were bodyguards of Sultan. Their officer was *Sar-i Jandar*. Ferishta says that *Jandars* were *جند*... which means slaves, but such can not be true for Sultan Muizzuddin Sam was *jandar* of his brother Ghiyasuddin. The *Jandars* were generally slaves, as most trustworthy, no doubt. *T.N.*, I, fn. on p. 603; Nizami, p. 44; Qureshi, p. 63; Habibullah, p. 200; also see K.M. Ashraf, *Life and Conditions of the People of Hindustan*, Karanchi, 1920, first published in India in Delhi, 2000, p. 64.

*Barid-i-Mamalik*,<sup>1</sup> *Amir-i-Bahr*,<sup>2</sup> *Shahnah*,<sup>3</sup> *Khazin*,<sup>4</sup> *Amir-i-Akhur*,<sup>5</sup> *Shahnah-i-Pilan*,<sup>6</sup> *Amir-i-Shikar*,<sup>7</sup> *Mushrif-i-Mamalik*,<sup>8</sup> *Mustawfi-i-Mamalik*.<sup>9</sup>

Some minor officers also served in the Royal household. The list of these servants is as follows : *Kitabdar*,<sup>10</sup> *Mushafdar*,<sup>11</sup> *Khasadar*,<sup>12</sup> *Chashanigir*,<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Farid-i-Mamalik* was chief news writer of the kingdom under whom were numerous *barids*, posted in towns, *bazzars*, and in almost every inhabited locality. They reported every important incident to the chief, who communicated it to the Sultan. See Habibullah, p. 198.

<sup>2</sup> The department of inland shipping and waterways. See Habibullah, p. 199; Ashraf, p. 64.

<sup>3</sup> Superintendent, incharge of armory (*zarrard-khana*). See Habibullah, p. 199.

<sup>4</sup> Treasurer. See Habibullah, p.199; Qureshi, p. 65.

<sup>5</sup> Master of horses. See Habibullah, p. 201; Ashraf, p. 64.

<sup>6</sup> Superintendent of Elephants. See Habibullah, p. 201; Ashraf, p. 64.

<sup>7</sup> Incharge of kings hunting establishment, he had a number of subordinates to look after different hunting animals and birds. See Habibullah, p. 201.

<sup>8</sup> He was accountant general. His duty was to enter up the accounts received from the provinces and various departments. In Firuz Shah's reign *Mushrif-i-Mamalik* dealt with income only. See Qureshi, p. 84; Habibullah, p. 196.

<sup>9</sup> He was auditor general. His duty was to audit the accounts received from provinces and the various departments. In Firuz Shah's reign he dealt with expenditure. See Qureshi, p. 84; Habibullah, p. 196.

<sup>10</sup> Librarian. See Nizami, p. 45.

<sup>11</sup> Keeper of the royal copy of Quran. See Nazami, p. 45.

<sup>12</sup> Superintendent of royal kitchen. See Nazami, p. 45. According to Qureshi *Khasadar* was incharge of the monarch's personal arms and armer, See p. 65.

<sup>13</sup> Officer who tested the kings food before serving it. See Nazami, p. 45; Qureshi, p. 65; Ashraf, p. 64.

*Sharabdar*,<sup>1</sup> *Saqi-i-Khass*,<sup>2</sup> *Farrash*,<sup>3</sup> *Tashtdar*,<sup>4</sup> *Mash'aldar*,<sup>5</sup> *Dawatdar* and *Sar-Dawatdar*,<sup>6</sup> *Bahladar*,<sup>7</sup> *Sar-Chatrdar*,<sup>8</sup> *Amir-i-Tuzuk*,<sup>9</sup> *Shahna-i Bargha*,<sup>10</sup> *Musalladar*,<sup>11</sup> *Muhrdar*,<sup>12</sup> *Chaoosh*,<sup>13</sup> *Abdar*,<sup>14</sup> *Kalid-dar-i-Kaushak*,<sup>15</sup> *Aghachi*,<sup>16</sup> *Dabir-i-Sara*<sup>17</sup> and *Qurbeg*.<sup>18</sup>

## **THE ROYAL MAMLUKS :**

After the enthronment the most challenging task before the Sultans was how to surround himself by most loyal and devoted subordinates? This

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<sup>1</sup> Incharge of the supply of water to the royal household. See Nizami, p. 45; Qureshi, p. 65.

<sup>2</sup> Chief cup-bearer who served water to the Sultan. See Nizami, p. 45; Ashraf; p. 64.

<sup>3</sup> Spreader of carpets, footman, office-boy. See Nizami, p. 45; Qureshi, p. 65.

<sup>4</sup> Ever bearer. See Nizami, p. 45; Qureshi, p. 65; Ashraf; p. 64.

<sup>5</sup> Torch-bearer, link boy. See Nizami, p. 45; Qureshi, p. 65.

<sup>6</sup> One wearing hunting gloves in one's belt. See Nizami, p. 45; Qureshi, p. 65.

<sup>7</sup> Head of the holder of royal parasol. See Nizami, p. 45; Qureshi, p. 65.

<sup>8</sup> Master of ceremonies. See Nizami, p. 45; Qureshi, p. 65.

<sup>9</sup> Night patrol of the palace. See Nizami, p. 45; Qureshi, p. 65.

<sup>10</sup> Keeper of the prayer mats. See Nizami, p. 45; Qureshi, p. 65.

<sup>11</sup> Keeper of the seals. See Nizami, p. 45; Qureshi, p. 65.

<sup>12</sup> Superintendent of the royal elephants. See Nizami, p. 45; Qureshi, p. 65.

<sup>13</sup> A herald or a sergent. See Nizami, p. 45; Qureshi, p. 65.

<sup>14</sup> One who was responsible for serving the water.

<sup>15</sup> Keeper of the keys of the palace. See Nizami, p. 45; Qureshi, p. 65.

<sup>16</sup> A servant whose duty was to keep water cool. See Nizami, p. 45; Qureshi, p. 65.

<sup>17</sup> Registrar of palace. See Nizami, p. 45; Qureshi, p. 65.

<sup>18</sup> He was responsible for Sultan's arms. See Nizami, p. 45; Qureshi, p. 65.

could be done by eliminating the existing dispensation of slaves with a new one. But a sudden and drastic change was neither possible nor practical. The existing slaves who had attained powerful positions could never get ready to vacate the seats for the newcomers. Furthermore how could the existing slaves in power numbering thousands, be replaced? We know that Razia, Nasiruddin Mahmud Shah, Ghiyasuddin Balban, Muhammad bin Tughluq and Firuz Shah had their own contingents of slaves even before becoming Sultans. But their own personal groups could not have been large enough to displace and replace the in-service slaves. Thus this transfer of power could be executed only with great care and in gradual steps. It is because of this reason that while on the one hand we can see a slave serving many Sultans one after another, on the other hand we also come across elimination of slaves of preceding reigns on large scale. Alauddin Masud Shah after his accession in 1241 A.D. ordered the execution of many of *amirs*, who were both slaves and free.<sup>1</sup> Balban got many *Shamsi Khans* and *Maliks* killed on one pretext or another.<sup>2</sup> Muizzuddin Kaikubad had also ordered murder of many of the *Ghiyasi* (slaves of Ghiyasuddin Balban) slaves who had attained prominence, including Malik Shahak, *amir* of Multan and Malik Tuzuki, *muqta* of Baran

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<sup>1</sup> *T.N.*, I, pp. 659, 668-9; Sirhindi, pp. 31-2; Isami, III, p. 265; Ferishta, I, p. 128.

<sup>2</sup> Barani, *Tarikh*, Hindi translation by Rizvi in *Adi Turk Kalin Bharat*, p. 157; Ferishta, I, p. 138.

as well as *Ariz-i-Mamalik*.<sup>1</sup> Kaikubad also ordered that the *Ghiyasi mawlazadagan* who used to visit senior *maliks* and Neo Muslims (Mongols) and who were their relatives should be imprisoned and sent to distant places.<sup>2</sup> This task of exterminating the *Ghiyasi* slaves was consummated during the reign of Jalaluddin Khalji. In the last decade of thirteenth century, we find many of the *Ghiyasi* nobles and *amirs*, who had become poor due to the change in the dynasty.<sup>3</sup> Alauddin Khalji started with the existing dispensation alongwith his own appointments, but later on realised the danger of relying upon other's servants. Only three of the *Jalali* nobles could survive till the end of *Alai* era.<sup>4</sup> Firuz Shah also realised this danger of slave system and he massacred many of the slaves of Muhammad bin Tughluq.<sup>5</sup> Muhammad Shah who ascended throne in 1389 A.D., ordered *Firuzi* slaves to leave city within three days, otherwise they were to be killed. In fact many of these slaves were killed when this order was put into action.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Barani, *Tarikh*, Hindi translation by Rizvi in *Adi Turk Kalin Bharat*, p. 127; *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, I, p. 126.

<sup>2</sup> Barani, *Tarikh*, Hindi translation by Rizvi in *Adi Turk Kalin Bharat*, p. 217.

<sup>3</sup> Barani, *Tarikh*, Hindi translation by Rizvi in *Khalji Kalin Bharat*, pp. 46-7.

<sup>4</sup> Barani, *Tarikh*, Hindi translation by Rizvi in *Khalji Kalin Bharat*, p. 46-7; also see Barani, *Tarikh*, tr. Fuller, pp. 16, 22; *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, I, p. 156.

<sup>5</sup> See I.H. Siddiqi, 'Barani Account of Sultans of Delhi in First Version of *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*', in *Preso Arabic sources of Information on the Life and Condition in the Sultanate of Delhi*, Delhi, 1992, pp. 160-61.

<sup>6</sup> *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, I, p. 268.



The elimination of the old officers from the various positions in the royal household just mentioned and their replacement by new ones were the two sides of the same coin. All the Sultans tried to fill these vacancies with their own trustworthy servants, most of whom were slaves.

After deployment of a slave at a lower position, he was promoted in steps till he attained the seniority to become a *muqta*.<sup>1</sup> The long duration of service in the royal household was a very important phase in life of slaves. All the slaves were not appointed as *muqtas*, instead only those who could ensure their master of their fidelity during their early years of service, were entrusted with the governorship of a province. This was equally important for the Sultans as it could minimize the possibilities of rebellions.

Most of the slaves spent their early years in proximity of their master, before they could be assigned some bigger responsibilities. The career profile of many slaves shows that they started with some minor posts. Qutbuddin Aibak served in many capacities before he was appointed as *Amir-i-Akhur* by Muizzuddin Sam.<sup>2</sup> Shamsuddin Iltutmish was *Sar-i-Jandar* of Qutbuddin Aibak, who after rising from one position to another became *Amir-i-Shikar*.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This stepwise promotion of slaves was suggested by Nizam-ul-Mulk Tusi in his *Siyasatnama*, see tr. by Darke, *The Book of Government*.... pp. 103-5.

<sup>2</sup> *T.N.*, I, pp. 514-16; Badaoni, I, p. 70; Ferishta, I, p. 100.

<sup>3</sup> *T.N.*, I, pp. 603-4; Badaoni, I, pp. 89-90.

Nasiruddin Aytegin, a slave of Iltutmish was *Sar-i-Jandar* before becoming a *muqta*.<sup>1</sup> Malik Saifuddin Aibak-i-Uchch was *Sar-i-Jandar* of Iltutmish.<sup>2</sup> Saifuddin Aibak-i-Yaghtut was appointed *Amir-i-Majalis* by Iltutmish.<sup>3</sup> Izzuddin Tugh ril-i-Tughan Khan was made *Saqi-i-Khass* by Iltutmish. After that he served his master as *Sar-Dawatdar*, *Chasnigir* and as *Amir-i-Akhur*.<sup>4</sup> Timur Khan-i Qiran was *naib Amir-i-Akhur*, who was promoted as *Amir-i-Akhur* later under Iltutmish.<sup>5</sup> Hindu Khan served Iltutmish as *Yuzban* (keeper of hunting leopards), *Mashaldar*, and *Tashtdar*, for a considerable time.<sup>6</sup> Ikhtiyaruddin Qaraqash, Khan-i Aytegin served Iltutmish as personal cup bearer for a long time.<sup>7</sup> Malik Altuniah, slave of Iltutmish was given *Sharabdari*, he became *Sar-Chatrdar* later on.<sup>8</sup> Ikhtiyaruddin Aytegin was appointed as *Sar-i-Jandar*.<sup>9</sup> Malik Badruddin Sunkar-i Rumi was made *Tashtdar*. After sometime he became *Bahlahdar*, then *Shahnah* of *Zarrad Khanah* of Budaun, then *naib Amir-i-Akhur* and subsequently *Amir-i-Akhur*.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *T.N.*, II, p. 728.

<sup>2</sup> *T.N.*, II, pp. 729-30.

<sup>3</sup> *T.N.*, II, p. 731.

<sup>4</sup> *T.N.*, II, p. 736.

<sup>5</sup> *T.N.*, II, pp. 742-3.

<sup>6</sup> *T.N.*, II, pp. 744-6.

<sup>7</sup> *T.N.*, II, p. 746.

<sup>8</sup> *T.N.*, II, p. 748.

<sup>9</sup> *T.N.*, II, p. 750.

<sup>10</sup> *T.N.*, II, p. 752.

Tajuddin Sanjar-i Qabaqulaq became *Jamadar* in the beginning. After some time he was made *Shahnah*.<sup>1</sup> Malik Saifuddin Akat Khan Aibak-i Khitai was purchased by Iltutmish in the beginning of his reign and was made *Sar-Jandar*.<sup>2</sup> Ikhtiyaruddin Yuzbeg-i Tughril Khan was appointed as *Chashnigir*.<sup>3</sup> Tajuddin Arsalan Khan Sanjar-i Chast was *Jamadar* under Iltutmish.<sup>4</sup> Izzuddin Balban-i Kashlu Khan-us-Sultani was cup bearer at the outset, who became *Sharabdar* later.<sup>5</sup> Khisli Khan-i Aibak served Iltutmish in his own presence chamber for long.<sup>6</sup> There are various traditions about the deployment of Ghiyasuddin Balban in the lifetime of Iltutmish. Juzjani being the contemporary can be most trustworthy, who says that he was honoured with an office before the throne. He was made Sultan's *Khasahdar*.<sup>7</sup> All of these *Shamsi* slaves attained great honour and influence in their lives. The foregoing discussion of the apprenticeship of the slaves can be taken further, but our contemporary

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<sup>1</sup> *T.N.*, II, p. 754.

<sup>2</sup> *T.N.*, II, p. 757-8.

<sup>3</sup> *T.N.*, II, p. 761.

<sup>4</sup> *T.N.*, II, p. 766.

<sup>5</sup> *T.N.*, II, p. 779.

<sup>6</sup> *T.N.*, II, pp. 797-8.

<sup>7</sup> *T.N.*, II, pp. 801-2; Ibn Battuta in fourteenth century writes that Balban was appointed as water carrier, and later on he was promoted as the commander of water carriers. tr. Gibb, pp. 633-5; Isami says that he was assigned to the stable. Afterwards he was removed from the menial works and was made chief huntsman. Isami, I, p. 239. Ferishta says he was employed first as Superintendent of Falconary. Ferishta, I, p. 137.

historians in the fourteenth century do not furnish such detailed biographies of the slaves as Juzjani has done. As a result we cannot calculate the tenure of slaves as royal servants before becoming *amir*.

The avenues of rising up to *Wizarat* were always open for the slaves. It is interesting to note that during the two hundred years of thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, several times *Wizarat* was held by a slave. Imaduddin Rayhan; Ghiyasuddin Balban; Malik Kafur; Malik Khusru Khan; Peera Mali, Khan-i-Jalan Maqbud all were slaves who were appointed as *Wazirs*.<sup>1</sup> Another very influential position in the administration was *Naib-ul-Mulk* (Regent) which was as powerful as *Wazir*. Many slaves like Ikhiyaruddin Aytegin, Malik Shahin, Ghiyasuddin Balban, Malik Kafur and Ahmad Ayaz held this post.<sup>2</sup> Naib used to enjoy all the legislative and executive powers and thus acted as uncrowned Sultan. Besides this, slaves remained an integral part of the nobility throughout thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

In the central court slaves acted as counsellors also. In the thirteenth century Fakruddin Mubarak Shah, the head *Farrash* of Sultan Muizzuddin

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<sup>1</sup> *T.N.*, II, pp. 694, 802, 805, 827; Barani, *Tarikh*, Hindi translation by Rizvi in *Tughlak Kalin Bharat*, I, p. 68; Ibn Battuta, tr. Gibb, III, p. 642; Sirhindi, pp. 32, 82-3; *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, I, pp. 89-231.

<sup>2</sup> *T.N.*, II, 805, Barani, *Tarikh*, Hindi translation by Rizvi in *Adi Turk Kalin Bharat*, p. 142; Sirhindi, p. 26; *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, I, pp. 194, 242.

Bahram Shah (1240-2 A.D.) acted as his advisor.<sup>1</sup> A number of Abyssinian had gained access to presence of Sultan Alauddin Masud Shah. (1242-46 A.D.), who used to advise him on administrative measures.<sup>2</sup> Sultan Alauddin Khalji had 50,000 slaves which included his counsellors and advisors.<sup>3</sup> Malik-ul-umara, Shikarbak Dihlan-i Sultan, a slave of Firuz Shah enjoyed such a great influence that people obtain pardon from Sultan through his mediation.<sup>4</sup> Malik Bhashir Sultani, slave of Firuz Shah was so much honoured by Sultan that which ever application was brought by him in the royal presence, was bound to be sanctioned.<sup>5</sup>

Another outlet for the slaves was *iqtas*. Only trustworthy and tested slaves were posted in provinces and specially in distant provinces. Most of the times, we find Princes and members of royal family serving in the frontier provinces. Slaves could also be promoted by assigning bigger *iqtas* one after another. Shamsuddin Iltutmish was given Gwalior, then town of Baran and at last Budaun as his *iqtas*.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *T.N.*, II, pp. 747, 761-2; Sirhindi, p. 30.

<sup>2</sup> *T.N.*, I, pp. 659, 668-9; Sirhindi, pp. 31-2.

<sup>3</sup> Afif, p. 159.

<sup>4</sup> Barani, *Tarikh*, Hindi translation by Rizvi in *Tughlak Kalin Bharat*, II, p. 37.

<sup>5</sup> Barani, *Tarikh*, Hindi translation by Rizvi in *Tughlak Kalin Bharat*, II, pp. 36-37.

<sup>6</sup> *T.N.*, I, pp. 603-4; Badaoni, pp. 89-90.

Under Iltutmish the territory Multan, a frontier province was assigned to his slave Kabir Khan-i-Ayaz. Later he was called to capital and Palwal was assigned to him.<sup>1</sup> Nasiruddin Aytemur was given Lahore. Later on he was given territories of Siwalik country.<sup>2</sup> Malik Saifuddin Aibak-i-Uchch was given Nasmil by Iltutmish. Later Baran, Sunam and Uchch along with its fortress were given to him one after another.<sup>3</sup> Malik Saifuddin Aibak-i-Yughantut was given Sursuti.<sup>4</sup> Izzuddin Tughril-i Tughan Khan was assigned Budaun, later on he was sent to Bihar and than Lakhnauti.<sup>5</sup> Ikhtiyaruddin Qaraqash, Khan-i Aytegin was given Barahun and Darangawan.<sup>6</sup> Ikhtiyaruddin Aytegin was given Mashoorpur. After some time Kujah and Nahdana were entrusted to him.<sup>7</sup> Izzuddin Balban-i-Kashlu Khan-us-Sultani, was given Barlamun (or Barhamum) and after that Baran.<sup>8</sup> Malik Nusratuddin Taisi was *muqta* of Jhind (Jind) Barwalah and Hansi. Later on Iltutmish entrusted with governorship of Bhiarah, Sultan Kot and territory of Gwalior. The contingency of Kannauj, Mahir (or Muhar) and Mahalun were also placed under him.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *T.N.*, II, p. 725.

<sup>2</sup> *T.N.*, II, p. 728.

<sup>3</sup> *T.N.*, II, pp. 729-30.

<sup>4</sup> *T.N.*, II, p. 731.

<sup>5</sup> *T.N.*, II, p. 736.

<sup>6</sup> *T.N.*, II, p. 746.

<sup>7</sup> *T.N.*, II, p. 750.

<sup>8</sup> *T.N.*, II, p. 779.

<sup>9</sup> *T.N.*, II, pp. 732-33.

Tajuddin Sanjar-i Gujlak Khan was given Multan, then Kuhram and after that Tabrahindah. At last preserved territory of Uchch along with its dependencies was given to him.<sup>1</sup>

The successors of Iltutmish continued with the practice of assigning *iqtas* to the slaves. Since none of them could remain in power for long, it was not feasible for them to replace the existing slave cadre of their predecessors with their own. That is why we find *Shamsi* slaves serving the successors of their master. The most significant phenomenon of this era was the promotion of junior *Shamsi* slaves to higher positions. We can take a pause here since this question will be treated subsequently in detail.

Ghiyasuddin Balban also assigned *iqtas* to his personal slaves. After finishing cutting down the jungles and extirpating the Mewatis, he made over the town and villages in the Doab to powerful jagirdars. His slave Mudeyraj (long haired) Abtigin who was called Amir Khan was *muqta* of Awadh.<sup>2</sup> His another slave held the strategic frontier province of Lakhnawti.<sup>3</sup>

Our information about the assignments made to slaves during the Khalji period is very meagre. Though he controlled a larger territory than

<sup>1</sup> *T.N.*, II, pp. 723-24.

<sup>2</sup> Barani, *Tarikh Hindi* translation by Rizvi in *Adi Turk Kalin Bharat*, p. 170.

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

his predecessors yet our contemporary historians do not provide us ample information about disbursement of *iqtas*. His slave Malik Nanak, who was *akhurbeg*, held *muqta* of Samana and Surnam.<sup>1</sup> The slave-system under the successors of Alauddin Khalji was largely the continuation of what had been established by him. This is a subject matter of a subsequent section of this chapter.

Muhammad bin Tughluq had divided his empire into four *shaqqqs* which were put under control of a *shaqqdar*.<sup>2</sup> Two of these *shaqqqs* (provinces) were entrusted to his most obedient slaves, Malik Kabir and Ahmad Ayaz.<sup>3</sup> Amir ul-Umara of Sindh was Sartez, a slave of Muhammad bin Tughluq who was also his *Ariz-i-Mamalik*.<sup>4</sup> The commandant of Alapur (Alabur) was Badr, an Abyssinian slave of Muhammad bin Tughluq.<sup>5</sup>

Al-Umari in *Masalik al-Absar* gives list of 23 provinces in the empire of Muhammad bin Tughluq. These are : Delhi, Deogir, Multan, Kahram (Kuhran), Samana, Babastan (Semistan), Ulajja (Uch), Hasi (Hansi), Sasuri

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<sup>1</sup> *Khazain-ul-Futuh*, tr. Habib, pp. 38-39; Isami, pp. 479-81.

<sup>2</sup> *Masalik-al-Absar*, tr. Siddiqi and Ahmad, p. 40; also see *Masalik-al-Absar*, tr. Zaki p. 25; also see *Subh al-Asha*, pp. 100-1.

<sup>3</sup> Afif, p. 51.

<sup>4</sup> Ibn Battuta, Hindi translation by Rizvi in *Tughlak Kalin Bharat*, I, p. 157.

<sup>5</sup> Ibn Battuta, Hindi translation by Rizvi in *Tughlak Kalin Bharat*, I, p. 266; also see Ibn Battuta, *Selections*, p. 224.



(Sirsa), Ma'bar, Tiling (Telangana), Gujarat, Budaun, Awadh (Oudh), Qannauj, Lakhnauti, Bihar, Karrah, Malwah, Lahawar (Lahore), Kalanaut, Jajnagar, Talanj and Duarsamand.<sup>1</sup> How many of these provinces were assigned to slaves is not possible to be estimated. Yet the references in contemporary accounts, which say that people from baser stock like Aziz Khambdar, his brother Firuz Hujjam, Manka Dabbakh, Masud Khambhar, Ladda *Mali*, Shaikh Babu, Nayak, the weaver, Peera *Mali*, were given high positions and big *iqtas*,<sup>2</sup> compel us to think that many of the provinces mentioned above were assigned to them. Kishan Bajran Indri was given Awadh.<sup>3</sup> Gujarat was given to Muqbil, a slave of his slave Ayaz.<sup>4</sup> *Wizarat* of Devagir was assigned to Imad-ul-Mulk Sarir-i Sultani.<sup>5</sup> Firuz Shah's *wazir* Imad-ul-Mulk Bashir was *muqta* of Rewari (Rapsi).<sup>6</sup> Firuz Shah assigned *iqtas* to slaves who were enrolled in the army, in various parts of empire like Multan, Dipalpur, Hissar-Firuza, Samana and Gujarat.<sup>7</sup> The successors of Firuz Shah acted largely as puppets in the hands of *Firuzi* slaves. Thus they had to continue with the existing dispensation, which will be discussed later on.

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<sup>1</sup> *Masalik al-Absar*, tr. Zaki, pp. 11-12; also see *Masalik al-Absar* tr. Siddiqi and Ahmad, pp. 36-37; These provinces were consisted of 12 hundred cities.

<sup>2</sup> Barani, *Tarikh*, Hindi translation by Rizvi in *Tughlak Kalin Bharat*, I, pp, 27, 68; *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, I, pp. 231-2; Ferishta, I, p. 251.

<sup>3</sup> Barani, *Tarikh*, Hindi translation by Rizvi in *Tughlak Kalin Bharat*, I, p. 68.

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

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

<sup>6</sup> Afif, p. 241.

<sup>7</sup> Afif, pp. 158, 159.

Another important place of deployment of the slaves was in the Army. It is not possible to estimate the actual numerical strength of the sultanate army, and what was the percentage of slaves in that total number. On the basis of description given in our sources we can only assume that the army in the battlefield was divided into four wings — Central wing or *Hashm-i-Qulb*, Right Wing, Left Wing and Rear Wing or Reserve Wing. These wings were put under the command of most reliable commanders who could be Royal princes or senior slaves.<sup>1</sup> This is for sure that most of the slave of the Sultan were employed in *Hashm-i-Qulb* (standing army in the capital). The hierarchy in the army was — *Khan; Malik; Amir; Isfahala; Sepoy*.<sup>2</sup>

The deputation of slaves as military commanders was a very significant aspect of the slave-system in India from the time of Qutbuddin Aibak. Following is a list of slave-commanders in Sultanate army :

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<sup>1</sup> For detailed treatment of the set up of army in the battle field and its composition, see S. Sabahuddin, 'Conduct of Strategy and Tactics of War during the Muslim Rule in India', *Islamic Culture*, April, 1946, pp. 154-164; July, 1946, pp. 291-296; October, 1946, pp. 345-352; January, 1947, pp. 7-15; April, 1947, pp. 123-134. Also see K.S. Lal, 'The Striking Power of the Army of the Sultanate', *JIH*, 55, 1977, part-3, pp. 85-110. Also see Habibullah, '*The Foundation of Muslim Rule*', pp. 217-224.

<sup>2</sup> See *Masalik al-Absar*, tr. Siddiqi and Ahmad, pp. 37-8; also see *Masalik al-Absar*, tr. Zaki, p. 23. Hierarchy of officers given by Barani is — *Khan; Malik; Amir; Sipahsalar, Sarkhel* and *Sawar*; see *Tarikh*, Hindi translation by Rizvi in *Tughlak Kalin Bharat*, I, p. 1.

Year	Commander	Against	Source
—	Iltutmish	Khokhars	Isami, I, pp. 170-2
—	Iltutmish	Ujjain	Isami, II, p. 243
—	Balban	Raziya and Altuniyah	Badaoni, I, p. 121
1236	Qutlugh Khan	—	<i>Tabaqat-i-Akbari</i> , I, p. 76
1241	Nizam ul-Mulk	Mongols	Sirhindi., p. 29
1246	Balban	Jud hills and Nandanah	<i>Tabaqat-i-Akbari</i> , I, p. 86
1247	Balban	Doab and Karah	<i>Tabaqat-i-Akbari</i> , I, p. 86
1252-3	Qutlugh Khan	North Western Frontier	<i>T.N.</i> , II, p. 701; <i>T.N.</i> , II, 710
1279-80	Amin Khan	Lakhnauti	Barani, <i>Tarikh, Adi Turk</i> <i>Kalin Bharat</i> , pp. 182-3
	Malik Naib	Turkskhans	Amir Khusru, <i>Ashiq</i> E&D, III, pp. 548, 612
	Mailk Naib		Isami, II, p. 479

Year	Commander	Against	Source
	Malik Nanak	Mongols	Isami, II, p. 479
—	Malik Kafur	Against Mongols at Amroha	Badaoni, I, p. 251
1305	Malik Kafur	Mongols	<i>Khazain-ul-Futuh</i> , tr. M. Habib, p. 26
1306-7	Malik Kafur	Deogir	<i>Khazain-ul-Futuh</i> , p. 64 tr. M. Habib, p. 64; Barani, <i>Tarikh</i> , ed. Khan, p. 326
1309	Malik Kafur	Tilang	Isami, II, p. 465; <i>Khazain-ul-Futuh</i> , tr. Habib, p. 120; Barani, <i>Tarikh</i> , ed. Khan, p. 333; Badaoni, I, p. 265
1309	Malik Kafur	Arangal	Badaoni, I, p. 265

1311	Malik Kafur	Mabar	<i>Khazain-ul-Futuh</i> , tr. M. Habib, pp. 122-4, 127;
1317-18	Khusru Khan	Deogir	Isami, II, pp. 569-72; Sirhindi, p. 85
1318	Khusru Khan	Molupolli	Sirhindi, p. 85
1318	Khusru Khan	Mabar	Isami, II, p. 569.

Slaves were most favoured as bodyguards. Iltutmish had many slaves who started their service term as *Jandars*, as has been discussed in preceding pages. Balban had appointed Sistani *pahalwans* as his guards who used to stand on his right and left sides in the ceremonies. Amir Ali and Malik Bakbak, two of his slave were his *Sar-i-Jandars*.<sup>1</sup> Bodyguards were not only appointed in the royal court but they accompanied Sultans wherever he went. Alauddin Khalji was saved by his Hindu slaves when his nephew Akat Khan tried to kill him.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Barani, *Tarikh*, Hindi translation by Rizvi in *Adi Turk Kalin Bharat*, p. 206; *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, I, p. 94.

<sup>2</sup> Barani, *Tarikh*, Hindi translation by Rizvi in *Khalji Kalin Bharat*, p. 60; also see Barani, *Tarikh*, tr. Fuller, pp. 55-6; *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, I, p. 164.

It was very important for Sultans to keep themselves informed of all the developments in their empire as a precautionary step against rebellions and conspiracies. For this purpose an active espionage system was organised by the Sultans. Being most trusted, slaves were the primary choices to be appointed as spies. Alauddin Khalji had appointed *munhiyan* (informers) in such a great number that he knew about all the good and bad things that the men did. People could not utter a syllable without his knowledge and whatever happened in the houses of the *amirs* and the *maliks*, was in his knowledge. These spies were present in the markets also to keep the Sultan informed of forgery.<sup>1</sup> Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq also had a department of intelligence. Al-Umari gives a wide picture of the intelligence network and their grades. Some of them were posted in army while others kept watch on public. Whenever the spy used to come to know of something which should be reported to the Sultan, he conveyed the information to his immediate superior and the later, to his superior. In this way the information used to pass to the highest one who would convey it to the Sultan. This system of despatching reports from far off provinces (*bilads*) was managed by *Dak Chaukis*, placed near each other resembling those in Egypt and Syria.<sup>2</sup> Sultan used to set alongside every *amir*, great or small a *mamluk* of his to spy upon

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<sup>1</sup> Barani, *Tarikh*, tr. Fuller, pp. 71-2; *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, I, p. 168.

<sup>2</sup> *Masalik al-Absar*, tr. Siddiqi and Ahmad, p. 57; also see *Masalik al-Absar*, tr. Zaki, pp. 45-6.

him and keep him informed of everything. He also placed slave-girl in their houses, who acted as spies for him upon his *amirs*, as well as women sweepers, who could come into house without asking permission. The slave-girls passed on that information to those women and the sweepers in turn passed that to the 'head' of the intelligence who then informed the Sultan about it.<sup>1</sup> Slaves could also be appointed to keep check on the movements of suspicious elements. Sultan Muhammad appointed four of his slaves beside Ibn Battuta during their march towards Ma'abar (Coromandel) because he had visited Shaikh Shihabuddin in his cave against the wish of the Sultan.<sup>2</sup>

### Slaves of the Predecessors :

Besides the royal *mamluks* the slaves of immediate predecessor and of other former Sultans, continued to serve the contemporary Sultan. As has been mentioned earlier that many of the junior slaves of Iltutmish reached higher positions under his successors. Malik Izzuddin Kabir Khan Ayaz a slave of Muizzuddin Sam served Iltutmish and his successors in every degree.<sup>3</sup> Malik Hindu Khan, a *Shamsi* was given Uchch under Raziya and later on Jalandhar was conferred upon him by Muizzuddin Bahram Shah.<sup>4</sup> Malik

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<sup>1</sup> *Masalik al-Absar*, tr. Siddiqi and Ahmad, p. 57; also see *Masalik al-Absar*, tr. Zaki, pp. 45-6.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Battuta, *Selection*, p. 212.

<sup>3</sup> *T.N.*, II, pp. 726, 730.

<sup>4</sup> *T.N.*, II, p. 746.

Altuniya a junior *Shamsi* was given his first land assignment Baran during the rule of Raziya. Later on he was transferred to Tabarhindah.<sup>1</sup> Saifuddin But Khan Aibak, *Sar-Jandar* of Iltutmish continued to be *Sar-Jandar* of Alauddin Masud Shah and Kuhram and Samana wer given as *iqtas*. Afterwards he got Baran and Nasiruddin Mahmud made him *Wakil-i-dar*.<sup>2</sup> Malik Tajuddin Sanjar-i Tez Khan, a *Shamsi* became *Amir-i-Akhur* during the reign of Muizzudin Bahram Shah. Nasiruddin Mahmud Shah made him *Naib Amir-i-Hajib*, and Jhanjhanah was made his *iqta*.<sup>3</sup> Ikhtiyaruddin Yuzbaki Tughril Khan got the office of *Amir-i-Majalis* during the reign of Ruknuddin Firuz Shah. Subsequently Shahnai (superintendency) of elephants was assigned to him. Raziya made him *Amir-i-Akhur* and Sultan Alauddin Masud Shah gave him Tabarhindah as *iqta*. After sometime Qannauj was assigned to him. Later on he got Awadh and subsequently Lakhnauti.<sup>4</sup> Tajuddin Arsalan Khan, *Jamadar* of Iltutmish became *Chashnigir* during the reign of Firuz Shah. Raziya gave him Balaram as *iqta*. Nasiruddin Mahmud Shah transferred him to Byanah. After sometime he was made *Wakil-i-dar*. Later on he served as *muqta* of Tabarhindah, Awadh and Karahat different points of times.<sup>5</sup> Malik

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<sup>1</sup> *T.N.*, pp. 746-8.

<sup>2</sup> *T.N.*, pp. 757-58.

<sup>3</sup> *T.N.*, pp. 759-60.

<sup>4</sup> *T.N.*, p. 761.

<sup>5</sup> *T.N.*, pp. 766-69.



Izzuddin Balban-i Kashlu Khan, a *Shamsi* was honoured under Ruknuddin Firuz Shah and Raziya and Bahram Shah. Alauddin Masud Shah assigned Nagaur to him. He was transferred to Multan later.<sup>1</sup> Malik Nusrat Khan Badruddin Sunkar-i Sufi, served successors of Iltutmish in every degree.<sup>2</sup> Malik Saifuddin Aibak became *Shahin-ul-Hashm* (Marshall of the retinue). Sultan Muizzudin Bahram Shah made him *Amir-i-Dad* of Karah, and under Alauddin Masud Shah made him *Amir-i-Dad* of Delhi. Nasiruddin Mahmud assigned him *iqta* of Palwal and Kamah with bench of the justiceship. After sometime he was transferred to Baran and subsequently to Kasrak. But later on he was again transferred to Baran.<sup>3</sup> Malik Kishli Khan Aibak, was appointed as *Sar-i-Jandar* by Raziya. Sultan Muizzuddin Bahram Shah retained him on that position. Sultan Alauddin Masud Shah he was entrusted him with the office of *Amir-i-Hajib* and *iqta* of Nagaur was assigned to him. After sometime he was transferred to Kara.<sup>4</sup> Saifuddin Aibak, became lord Chamberlain and chief master of ceremonies. He was given *iqta* of Karah in 1253-54 A.D.<sup>5</sup> Ghiyasuddin Balban started his career at a very low position under Iltutmish. Under Raziya he became *Khasadar* and later on got the office of *Amir-i-Shikar*. In 1254-5 A.D. Balban was made *Amir-i-Hajib*. Nasiruddin

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<sup>1</sup> *T.N.*, II, pp. 779-80; Ferishta, I, p. 127.

<sup>2</sup> *T.N.*, II, pp. 752-53; 787.

<sup>3</sup> *T.N.*, pp. 791-92.

<sup>4</sup> *T.N.*, pp. 797-99.

<sup>5</sup> *T.N.*, I, p. 692; *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, I, p. 89.

Mahmud raised him to the dignity and eminent position of *Khan*. In 1249-50 A.D. he was entrusted with *Wizarat* and title of Ulugh Khan was conferred on him.<sup>1</sup> Balban appointed Malik Imad ul-Mulk Rawat i-Arz, Adil Khan, Tamur Khan, Fakhruddin *Kotwal*, all the slaves of Iltutmish and his successors, in his administration.<sup>2</sup> Malik Aytemur Kachchan and Malik Aytemur Surkha and other slaves of Balban remained in service of his successors.<sup>3</sup> Malik Ikhtiyaruddin *Ghiyasi* served Jalaluddin Khalji as *Naib Vakildar*.<sup>4</sup> Malik Dinar, a slave of Alauddin Khalji was appointed as *wali* of Gujarat by Qutbuddin Mubarak Shah.<sup>5</sup> Khan-i Jahan Maqbul and some other slave of Muhammad bin Tughluq were appointed by Firuz Shah.<sup>6</sup> During the reign of Abu Bakr Shah bin Zafar Khan bin Firuz Khan two prominent slaves of Firuz Shah Malik Bahri and Malik Shahin were given the offices of *Wazir* and Imad ul-Mul respectively.<sup>7</sup> Muhammad Shah who ascended the throne in 1389 A.D. gave title of Islam Khan to Mubashir Chap, a slave of Firuz Shah and appointed him as *Wazir*.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *T.N.*, II, pp. 806-9, 820; *Ferishta*, I, pp. 127, 129; *Badaoni*, I, pp. 126-27; *Sirhindi*, p. 32; *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, I, p. 85.

<sup>2</sup> Barani, *Tarikh*, Hindi translation by Rizvi in *Adi Turk Kalin Bharat*, pp. 49-50; 203-4.

<sup>3</sup> Barani, *Tarikh*, Hindi translation by Rizvi in *Adi Kalin Bharat*, p. 241.

<sup>4</sup> *Sirhindi*, p. 58.

<sup>5</sup> Barani, *Tarikh*, Hindi translation by Rizvi in *Khalji Kalin Bharat*, p. 241.

<sup>6</sup> Afif, p. 221.

<sup>7</sup> Muhammad Bihamad Khani, *Tarikh-i-Muhammadi*, English translation of portion dealing with the account of Sultan Firuz Shah and his successors and other minor Kingdoms (from A.H. 752/A.D. 1351-A.H. 842/A.D. 1438), with Preface and notes by Muhammad Zaki, Aligarh, 1972, p. 29.

<sup>8</sup> *Badaoni*, I, p. 344, *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, I, p. 267.

### Slaves of the *Amirs* and *Mawladagan* :

Apart from the royal slaves, *muqtas* in the provinces were also responsible for the maintainance of their contingents which they used to supply at the time of emergency. *Muqtas* also maintained their slaves in these contingents. But it is impossible to calculate the ratio of slaves-to-free as our sources are completely silent on this aspect. Only a few stray remarks enable us to say that slaves of the deceased nobles also served the Sultan. Alauddin Khalji was served by Haji Mawla slave of his slave Fakhruddin *Kotwal-i-Dehli*.<sup>1</sup> Maqbul was slave of Ahmad Ayaz, the *wazir* of Muhammad bin Tughluq. He serve Muhammad Tughluq and Firuz Shan later on.<sup>2</sup>

Apart from the above mentioned broader categories of slaves, sons of the slaves were also recruited by the Sultans. Malik Alauddin Khisli Khan, son of Khisli Khan, a slave of Iltutmish was appointed *Barbak* on the place of his father and *iqta* of Kol was given to him by Balban.<sup>3</sup> When Imad ul-Mulk, Bashir Sultani a slave of Firuz Shah died his post and title were given to his son Malik Ishaq.<sup>4</sup> In 1370 A.D. Khan-i Jahan, the *wazir* of Firuz Shah expired, and his son Juna Shah obtained the title of his father.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Barani, *Tarikh*, tr. Fuller, pp. 62-3; Ferishta, I, p. 193.

<sup>2</sup> Afif, pp. 21-22.

<sup>3</sup> Barani, *Tarikh*, Hindi translation by Rizvi in *Adi Turk Kalin Bharat*, p. 202.

<sup>4</sup> Afif. p. 243.

<sup>5</sup> Badaoni, I, p. 333.

## Promotions :

Nizam ul-Mulk Tusi in his *Siyasatnama* suggest that slaves should be promoted from step-to-step, over a period of time and should become an *amir* when he is above 35 years of age.<sup>1</sup> To what extent this theory is applicable in Indian context is difficult to examine. What we can be certain about is that slaves were given faster promotion. Moreover, it is also apparent that there was no uniform criteria of promotion. It is very difficult to assume whether a certain post was open for freshers only. While on the one hand we can find a novice been appointed a *Jandar*, on the other hand we can find slaves being given that office after a couple of years in the royal service. While Shamsuddin Iltutmish, Nasirudin Aytigin, Saifuddin Aibak-i Uchch served as *Sar-i-Jandar* before being allotted their *iqtas*;<sup>2</sup> Izzuddin Tughril-i Tughan Khan had to go through a long journey. He served as *Saqi-i-Khass*, *Sar-dawatdar*, *Chasnigir* and as *Amir-i-Akhur* before getting his *iqta*.<sup>3</sup> Similarly Hindu Khan served as *Yuzban*, *Masaldar*, *Tashtdar*; and treasurer before receiving his *iqta*.<sup>4</sup> Why some of the slaves were entrusted with governance more promptly as compared to their other counter-parts is very important to understand. Though our contemporary historians do not comment

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<sup>1</sup> Nizam ul-Mulk Tusi, *Siyasatnama*, tr. Darke, pp. 103-5.

<sup>2</sup> *T.N.*, I, pp. 603-4, *T.N.*, II, p. 728; Badaoni, pp. 89-90.

<sup>3</sup> *T.N.*, II, p. 736.

<sup>4</sup> *T.N.*, II, p. 740..

on this aspect directly, yet we can assume on our own, that the slaves who could get their master convinced of their loyalty during their first appointments were promoted as *muqtas* after sometime; while others had to go through examination for a longer time. Moreover the favour of Sultan towards his slave on personal level was certainly a significant point behind his furtherance. Malik Kafur and Khursu Khan attained *wizarat* after serving their masters for a very short tenure. Since they are subjects of a subsequent chapter, we can take a pause here.

### **Emoluments and Remunerations :**

The two well known ways of the payment of the salaries during the medieval period were — through cash and land assignments. The salary of the soldiers and nobles, (in cash) was fixed by the Sultan. Instead of being paid monthly, they were given a lump-sum amount annually or half yearly.<sup>1</sup> It is very difficult to say how slaves were paid after their appointments at various positions. On the basis of figures given by our contemporary historians for the payment of soldiers, we can only assume that slaves were also paid the same amounts.

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<sup>1</sup> Barani, *Tarikh*, Hindi translation by Rizvi in *Khalji Kalin Bharat*, p. 45; also see Barani, *Tarikh*, English translation by Fuller, p. 18.

Alauddin Khalji decided 234 *tankas* for *Murattab* and 78 *tankas* for the *Du aspah* soldiers of his regular army. In two groups the former were required to have two horses with their corresponding equipments and the latter had to maintain one horse with its casual gear.<sup>1</sup> The whole army was associated with the Sultan. *Diwan* had to pay even for the soldiers (including free and slave soldiers) in the services of *Khans* and *Maliks*. The revenue officer of Muhammad bin Tughluq, Ibn al-Sharabisli's allowance along with his slaves' stipend amounted to 36,00,000 *dinars* a year.<sup>2</sup> The salaries stipulated for army in the reign of Muhammad bin Tughluq were as follows : The *Khans* were allotted 2,00,000 *tankas* for their personal use. *Maliks* were given 60,000 *tankas* to 50,000 *tankas*. *Amirs* were assigned 40 to 30,000 *tankas*. *Isfahala* received about 20,000 *tankas*. The soldiers' pay ranged from 10,000 to 1000 *tankas*. The Turkish slaves in personal attendance of the Sultan were given 5000 to 1000 *tankas*. In addition to this, they were supplied food, dress and fodder for their horses free of any charge.<sup>3</sup> Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq had four *Shaqqdars* who were assigned 40 to 20,000 *tankas*.<sup>4</sup> All

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<sup>1</sup> Barani, *Tarikh*, tr. Fuller, pp. 101-2. According to Ferishta there were three classes of horsemen. The First Class got 234 *tankas*, Second Class got 156 *tankas* and Third Class got, 88 *tankas* annually; I, p. 205.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Battuta, tr. Gibb, Volume III, p. 765; Silver *dinar* was of the standard weight of 175 grains.

<sup>3</sup> *Masalik al-Absar*, tr. Siddiqi and Ahmad, pp. 37-8; also see *Masalik al-Absar*, tr. Zaki, pp. 21-2; also see *Subh-al-Asha*, p. 104.

<sup>4</sup> *Masalik al-Absar*, tr. Siddiqi and Ahmad, p. 40; also see *Masalik al-Absar*, tr. Zaki, p. 25.

of these *Shaqqdars* had at least 300 scribes each in their services. The lowest amount paid to these scribes was 10,000 *tankas*. The highest payment could be of estates and villages.<sup>1</sup>

It is well known that the nobles were assigned *iqtas* in the Sultanate. Beside them soldiers were also given land-assignment since the time of Iltutmish himself. He had given villages to his soldiers in his *Hashm-i-Qulb*, in the vicinity of Delhi, most of whom were slaves.<sup>2</sup> Balban also gave fertile and prosperous lands to his soldiers in *Hashm-i-Qulb*.<sup>3</sup> Alauddin Khalji did away with this practice and included all the land assignments of soldiers into *khalisa*. Muhammad bin Tughluq also adhered to this practice started by Alauddin Khalji. During his reign, only *Khans*, *Maliks*, *Amirs* and *Isfahalas* were given *iqtas*; soldiers received cash.<sup>4</sup>

Firuz Shah introduced two great changes in the practice of his predecessors. He not only started giving *iqtas* to soldiers but also made them hereditary.<sup>5</sup> During his reign large numbers of soldiers including slaves and free had *iqtas*.

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<sup>1</sup> *Masalik al-Absar*, tr. Siddiqi and Ahmad, p. 40; also see *Masalik al-Absar*, tr. Zaki, p. 25.

<sup>2</sup> Barani, *Tarikh*, tr. by Rizvi in *Adi Turk Kalin Bharat*, p. 167.

<sup>3</sup> Barani, *Tarikh*, tr. by Rizvi in *Adi Turk Kalin Bharat*, p. 144.

<sup>4</sup> *Masalik al-Absar*, tr. Siddiqi and Ahmad, p. 40; also see *Masalik al-Absar*, tr. Zaki, p. 25.

<sup>5</sup> Afif, pp. 73, 171.

## Deployment of Non-Military Slaves :

The most important place where non-military slaves were deployed was *karkhana* of the Sultans. The goods used in royal household were produced here and most of the craftsmen and artisans were slaves. Muhammad bin Tughluq had slaves in the *karkhanas* who would make swords, spears, coats-of-mail and other kinds of weapons. Further goldsmith and weavers also worked in his *karkhanas*. There were at least 4000 silk workers.<sup>1</sup> The departments of *kharkhanas* during the reign of Firuz Shah were divided into two categories-*ratibi* (dealing with perishable goods) and *ghair ratibi* (dealing with non-perishable goods).<sup>2</sup> In the *ratibi* departments were — *Abdar Khana* (to look after water supply), *Shamadar Khana* (to look after lights), *Itradarkhana* (to keep scents and odours), *Paigah* (to deal with horses their up-keep and breeding), *Pilkhana* (to look after elephants), and *Sutur* (to look after other animals). In the *Ghair-ratibi* departments were *Jamadar Khanah*, *Tashtdar Khana*, *Alam Khana*, *Kitab Khana*, *Ghariyal Khana* (to regulate time and gong), *Farrash Khana*, *Rikab Khana* (to look after Saddlery and harness), *Zarrad Khana* and *Silah Khana*. All of these *karkhanas* were manned by the slaves.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Masalik al-Absar*, tr. Siddiqi and Ahmad, p. 39; also see *Subh al-Asha*, tr. Zaki, p. 84.

<sup>2</sup> Afif, p. 159.

<sup>3</sup> Afif, pp. 158-9.



Firuz Shah used to spend 1,60,000 *tankas* every month on the maintainance of these thirty-six *karkhanas*. Each *karkhana* was under the charge of *khans* of high rank and renowned *amirs*. Wardrobe store was under Malik Ali and Malik Ismail who were also his bodyguards of the right wing.<sup>1</sup> Elephant stable was under Malik Shahin Sultani.<sup>2</sup> Jewllery store was under *Sultan-us-Sharq* namely Khwaja Jahan Sarwar Sultani.<sup>3</sup> The camel stable was under the charge of Malik Dilshad who was known as *Dilshad Shahna-i-Nafr*.<sup>4</sup> All these peoples were his slaves. Sultan Alauddin Khalji employed a large slaves in construction of buildings.<sup>5</sup>

The employment of slaves as musicians, dancers and as concubines and prostitutes is widely known. Ruknuddin Firuz Shah son of Iltutmish had numerous slave girls who used to sing and dance for him.<sup>6</sup> Kaikubad is famous for his obsession for slave girls who entertained him day and night.<sup>7</sup> Imad ul-Mulk, the maternal-uncle of poet Amir Khusru, always had 50 to 60 slaves in his assemblies for singing and supplying fresh betel-leaf alone.<sup>8</sup> Jalaluddin

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<sup>1</sup> Afif, p. 191.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Afif, p. 192.

<sup>4</sup> Afif, p. 193.

<sup>5</sup> Barani, *Tarikh*, ed. Khan, p. 341.

<sup>6</sup> *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, I, p. 73.

<sup>7</sup> Ferishta, I, p. 156.

<sup>8</sup> Wahid Mirza, *Life and Works of Amir Khusru...*, p. 31.

Khalji had numerous musicians in his *Majlis-i-Aysh*. Many slaves with attractive personalities used to serve wine to the attendants. The dancers Nusrat Bibi and Mehr Afroz were there for the entertainment of the Sultan.<sup>1</sup>

Muhammad bin Tughluq had 200 musicians and 1000 poets of fine taste. There were 1000 slave musicians to train other musicians.<sup>2</sup> These slave dancers and musicians also performed in the royal ceremonies like marriages, as many of them were noticed by Ibn Battuta.<sup>3</sup> Most of the great nobles and *Amirs* also had numerous slave-girls as concubines. Tatar Khan used to keep his concubines with him even during the campaigns.<sup>4</sup> Khan-i Jahan Maqbul had 2000 slave-girls from Rome and China.<sup>5</sup>

The foregoing discussion makes it clear that slaves were present in the Sultanate in various capacities. They were not employed for the menial works, but the privillages reserved for the elites were also given to them.

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<sup>1</sup> Barani, *Tarikh*, Hindi translation by Rizvi in *Khalji Kalin Bharat*, p. 19.

<sup>2</sup> *Masalik al-Absar*, tr. Siddiqi and Ahmad, p. 4; *Subh al-Asha*, tr. Zaki, p. 101.

<sup>3</sup> Ibn Battuta, tr. Gibb, III, p. 668; also see Hindi rranslation by Rizvi in *Tughlak Kalin Bharat*, I, p. 201.

<sup>4</sup> Afif, pp. 220-21.

<sup>5</sup> Afif, p. 223.

**CHAPTER - 3**

**EUNUCHS  
UNDER THE  
SULTANATE OF  
DELHI.**

The eunuch institution was not invented by the Muslims. The system was already in vogue before the inception of Islam and continued to exist beyond Islamic civilization. Yet, certain peculiar characteristics emerged in this system under Islam which made it distinct from the systems prevalent in rest of the world. Two factors which gave the eunuch institution this distinguished shape were : the *Haram* and Slave-system.

### Eunuchs in *Haram* :

Polygamy and concubinage on the one hand and strict seclusion of Muslims women on the other, created the vacancies for the creatures like eunuchs who were castrated men (*Khisyān*), thus sexually neutral. In a world where male domination over women was taken as virtual display of muscularity and male-ego found tremendous satisfaction in monopolizing the women-folk; it was obvious that *haram* became synonymous of an individual's honour. A rigid boundary between interior and exterior was drawn, especially in the courts of rulers and homes of well-to-do individuals. Even the movement of the male children into the interior was put under strict restriction. Thus the inner quarter of the house came to be denoted a sanctuary like quality and sanctuary was put under surveillance of the eunuchs. The eunuchs were the guardian of the *hurma*, the sacred honour of their patron, who

prevented all the outside encroachment on the *haram*. The patron could feel relieved by entrusting them with this duty due to their emasculation.

Delhi Sultans used to appoint eunuchs guards to *haram*, though meagre references to *haram* in contemporary literature handicaps us from reflecting upon their numerical strength. Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq is said to possess ten thousand eunuchs.<sup>1</sup>

Eunuchs used to guard the *haram* of Sultans. Sultan Alauddin Khalji had Malik Dinar *Harami*, as the guard of his *haram*. He successfully restrained Akat Khan from entering the *haram* of Sultan.<sup>2</sup> Ibn Battuta gives a vivid picture, how secrecy of the royal *haram* was maintained by the eunuchs. When he went to pay homage to *Makhdum-i-Jahan*, along with *wazir*, the clerks at the gate enlisted their names and the presents offered by them. Then a camp of eunuchs came out, the chief of whom talked to the *wazir* in private. They went back inside the palace, then came and again spoke to the *wazir*, and again went back. After that only, the guests were served food.<sup>3</sup>

Eunuchs were not only guardians of women within the peripheries

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<sup>1</sup> *Masalik al-Absar*, tr. Siddiqi and Ahmad, p. 37; also see *Subh al-Asha*, tr. Zaki, p. 100.

<sup>2</sup> Barani, *Tarikh*, Hindi translation by Rizvi in *Tughlak Kalin Bharat*, I, p. 60; also see *Tarikh*, English translation by Fuller, p. 57; *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, I, p. 164; *Ferishta*, I, p. 191.

<sup>3</sup> Ibn Battuta, tr. Gibb, III, p. 736.

of *haram*, but they also looked after them outside. The *dola* of the royal ladies was carried by the eunuchs.<sup>1</sup> Even the women who wanted to meet the royal ladies were also carried in *dolas* by the eunuchs.<sup>2</sup> Eunuchs were sent to receive the women among the royal guests. When Qazi of Tirmiz Khudawandzada Qiwanuddin came to Delhi during the reign of Muhammad bin Tughluq, three eunuchs were sent to welcome his wife.<sup>3</sup>

### **Eunuchs in slave Institution :**

Eunuchs within the Islamic lands differed from eunuchs in non-Islamic lands on two grounds. Whereas, eunuchs in Muslim world, with a few exceptions, were part of slave institution, in rest of the world they were not necessarily slaves. Secondly, whereas eunuchs in Muslim civilisation were foreigners who were brought from non-Islamic territories, in rest of the part of the world they were not necessarily foreigners. As a Muslim could not be enslaved, similarly he could not be castrated. Thus slaves as well as eunuchs, were always with very few exceptions, were outsiders in Islamic world.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibn Battuta, tr. Gibb, III, p. 740; also see Hindi translation by Rizvi in *Tughlak Kalin Bharat*, I, pp. 237-38.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Battuta, tr. Gibb, III, p. 740; also see Hindi translation by Rizvi in *Tughlak Kalin Bharat*, I, pp. 237-38.

<sup>3</sup> Ibn Battuta, Hindi translation by Rizvi in *Tughlak Kalin Bharat*, I, p. 166.

Eunuchs in India were brought from other Asiatic countries through sea routes. Marco Polo attests the flourishing trade of eunuchs at Bengal, from where traders used to purchase them and sell them in the interiors of the country.<sup>1</sup> *Habshi* eunuchs were also brought here. Malik Sarwar who founded Sharqi dynasty of Jaunpur was a *Habshi* eunuch.<sup>2</sup> Indians were also captured during the military expeditions and were castrated. Imaduddin Rayhan was a Hindu who was castrated in the first half of thirteenth century.<sup>3</sup> Malik Kafur, who attained *Wizarat* under Sultan. Alauddin Khalji was captured from Gujarat in 1299 A.D.<sup>4</sup> Hasan, who later on received title of Khusru Khan was a Hindu from Gujarat. Mubarak Shah took him from *Malik Shadi*, the *Naib Khass-hajib Alai*, who had brought him.<sup>5</sup> Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq had 10,000 eunuchs.<sup>6</sup> Ibn Battuta says that Ghiyasuddin Tughluq was very annoyed with his son due to extravagant expenditure or purchase of slaves which might have included some of these eunuchs also.

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<sup>1</sup> Gavin Hambly, 'Eunuchs in Mughal Bengal', *JAOS*, 1974, p. 126.

<sup>2</sup> 'Habshi', in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, IV, p. 498.

<sup>3</sup> *T.N.*, II, p. 829.

<sup>4</sup> Barani, *Tarikh*, tr. Fuller, pp. 232-3; also see Hindi translation by Rizvi in *Khalji Kalin Bharat*, p. 47; Ferishta, I, p. 184.

<sup>5</sup> Barani, *Tarikh*, Hindi translation by Rizvi in *Khalji Kalin Bharat*, p. 125; *Tabaqat-i-Akbar*, p. 192. According to Sirhindi, Khusru Khan was a slave of Alauddin Khalji who was captured alongwith his brother and incorporated with the body of Sultan's personal slaves, p. 86; also see Badaoni, I, p. 274.

<sup>6</sup> *Masalik al-Absar*, tr. Zaki, p. 22; *Subh al-Asha*, tr. Zaki, p. 100.

Just like other *mamluks*, eunuchs were also deployed in various domains. The political ascendancy of a number of eunuchs during the Sultanate period provides interesting details about their roles. They were present in the central court, in *iqtas*, in armies, in espionage system as well as in embassy. Imaduddin Rayhan was made *Wakil-i-dar* in 1253 A.D. He attained great influence during his tenure till 1254-5 A.D.<sup>1</sup> After the revolt of Shahin, Alauddin installed Kafur in his place at Siri. Sultan also entitled him Malik Naib, since his counsel was always appropriate and fit to occasion.<sup>2</sup> He was given *wizarat*<sup>3</sup> later and after the death of Alauddin Khalji he became regent in 1316 A.D.<sup>4</sup> Sultan Mubarak Shah Khalji gave special promotions to Hasan, who came to be known as Khusru Khan. He was given *iqta* of Malik Shadi after the death of latter.<sup>5</sup> Later on Malik Naib's *iqta* was assigned to him along with the *wizarat* of the empire.<sup>6</sup> After assassination of Sultan, Khusru Khan sat on throne assuming the title of Nasiruddin in 1321 A.D.<sup>7</sup> Malik Sarwar a *Habshi* eunuch who was *shahna* of Delhi earlier was made

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<sup>1</sup> *T.N.*, II, pp. 827-8; *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, I, p. 85.

<sup>2</sup> Isami, II, p. 457.

<sup>3</sup> Barani, *Tarikh*, Hindi translation by Rizvi in *Khalji Kalin Bharat*, p. 117.

<sup>4</sup> Sirhindi, p. 81.

<sup>5</sup> *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, I, p. 192.

<sup>6</sup> Barani, *Tarikh*, Translation in *Khalji Kalin Bharat*, p. 125; *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, I, p. 192; Ferishta, I, p. 221.

<sup>7</sup> Ferishta, I, p. 227; Badaoni, I, p. 290.



*wazir* and title of *Khwaja Jahan* was conferred upon him by Muhammad Shah in 1390 A.D.<sup>1</sup> He remained *wazir* under Mahmud Shah bin Muhammad Shah. In 1393 A.D. title of *Sultan-us-Sharq* was bestowed upon him and he was transferred from Kannauj to Bihar.<sup>2</sup> He ruled there independently, though he did not attain the title of Sultan. Yet he is known as founder of Sharqi dynasty of Jaunpur because it was he who virtually became independent of the control of Delhi. His adopted son, an Abyssinian slave himself, made the kingship hereditary there.

In spite of being physically frail, eunuchs were not disqualified for leading the armies and fighting like chivalrous soldiers. Rayhan, Malik Kafur, Malik Khusru Khan, Malik Sarwar, all were good fighters. Malik Kafur led Sultanate armies in Deccan to Deogir, Arangal, Artakal, Daur Samundar and Ma'abar and Warangal.<sup>3</sup> He fought against invading Mongols and held rank of *barbeg*. Sultan Mubarak Shah appointed Khusru Khan and leader of army in Ma'abar in 1318 A.D.<sup>4</sup> Patan was also overcome by him.<sup>5</sup> Sultan

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<sup>1</sup> Sirhindi, pp. 146, 147, 152-3; Bihamad Khani, p. 30.

<sup>2</sup> *Tabaqat-i-Akbar*, I, pp. 272-3; Badaoni, I, pp. 348-9.

<sup>3</sup> Barani, *Tarikh*, tr. Fuller, pp. 133, 134, 137, 140; *Khazain-ul-Futuh*, tr. Habib, pp. 62-3; also see translation in E&D, III, pp. 77, 90; *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, I, pp. 181, 182, 184; Ferishta, pp. 208, 212-3.

<sup>4</sup> Barani, *Tarikh*, Hindi translation by Rizvi in *Khalji Kalin Bharat*, p. 130; Ferishta, I, p. 222.

<sup>5</sup> Isami, I, p. 570.

Muhammad bin Tughluq sent Suhail, an eunuch to suppress to rebellion of Ain ul-Mulk Multani.<sup>1</sup> In 1394 A.D. Malik Sarwar Khwaja Jahan was sent to East with an army and 20 elephants, to clear the eastern land of rebellions Hindus.<sup>2</sup>

Eunuchs were employed as personal guards of the Sultan. Sultan Qutbuddin Mubarak Shah Khalji had eunuchs as his night-guards, who used to guard him while sleeping on the roof of the palace in hot season.<sup>3</sup> Eunuchs could also be assigned the *Kotwali* of the fortresses. In 1245-46 A.D. when Mangutah, a Mongol leader attacked Sind, the fortress of that place was under Kotwali of Mukhlisuddin, an eunuch of Malik Tajuddin Abu Bakr bin Malik Izzuddin Kabir Khan.<sup>4</sup>

Muhammad bin Tughluq appointed his eunuch Kafur, who was also his cup bearer as the head of the ambassadors he sent to the court of Chinese king. After the death of Kafur in the way, another eunuch Sunbul was sent to replace him.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ibn Battuta, tr. Gibb, III, p. 725.

<sup>2</sup> Sirhindi, pp. 156-57.

<sup>3</sup> Ibn Battuta, tr. Gibb, III, p. 647.

<sup>4</sup> *T.N.*, II, pp. 809-10.

<sup>5</sup> Ibn Battuta, Hindi translation by Rizvi in *Tughlak Kalin Bharat*, I, p. 258; also see Ibn Battuta, *Selections*..... pp., 214-15, 223.

In the royal household also eunuch served Sultans in various capacities. Eunuchs were appointed as cup bearers, keepers of war-drobe and in the dressing-room.<sup>1</sup>

The close proximity of eunuchs to their masters could result into infatuation.<sup>2</sup> The sexual intimacy of eunuchs with their patron enabled them to captivate the masters and it helped them to get frequent promotions. Malik Kafur who was captured in 1299 A.D. became so powerful within five years that he was made chief of the armies and *wizarat* was conferred upon him, and all the nobles were directed to pay homage to him, as to a sovereign.<sup>3</sup> After becoming Sultan, Qutbuddin Mubarak Shah conferred *Wizarat* on Khusru Khan within a year and left all the affairs of the empire in his hands.

The eunuchs could act as uncrowned kings also. Imaduddin Rahyan in 1253 A.D. made some new appointments without consulting the Sultan.<sup>4</sup> Malik Kafur became the foremost councillor of Sultan Alauddin Khalji.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ibn Battuta, Hindi translation by Rizvi in *Tughlak Kalin Bharat*, I, p. 258; also see Ibn Battuta, *Selections.....* pp., 214-15, 223, 258.

<sup>2</sup> Barani, *Tarikh*, Hindi translation by Rizvi in *Khalji Kalin Bharat*, p. p. 725; Badaoni, p. 286; *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, p. 192; Isami, II, p. 560.

<sup>3</sup> Barani, *Tarikh*, Hindi translation by Rizvi in *Khalji Kalin Bharat*, p. 117; Ferishta, I, p. 208.

<sup>4</sup> *T.N.*, II, pp. 827-28.

<sup>5</sup> *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, I, p. 189.

When the Sultan Alauddin Khalji was ill the reins of the empire were in his hands. He did not hesitate to conspire against Prince Khizr Khan who could have succeeded Alauddin after his death.<sup>1</sup>

This is irony of history that the slave-system which came into existence for the sake of loyalty and devotion could never function in its classical form in any part of the world. The slaves were favoured upon free due to their socially dead status. The slaves were supposed to have only one loyalty towards their master, and only one bondage with their patron. But the loyalty of slaves could disintegrate and bondage could have multiple poles because slaves after gaining influence started having their own base, they could marry, had children and social connections. In this scenario eunuchs were thought to be the people who qualified to be true slaves. Unable to produce progeny, they had only one loyalty and single bondage. But eunuchs also proved to be equally dangerous and ambitious. Imaduddin Rayhan, Malik Kafur, Khusru Khan and Malik Sarwar all of them entertained their personal interests and left no opportunity unexploited. Whereas Rayhan and Malik Kafur acted as uncrowned kings. Malik Sarwar founded a new dynasty without attaining the title of Sultan. Khusru Khan moved a step ahead and declared himself Sultan, made read *Khutba* read in his name and attained title of Sultan Nasiruddin.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Tabaqat-i-Akhari*, I, pp. 198-99.

<sup>2</sup> *Ferishta*, I, p. 227.

Malik Kafur and Khusru Khan tried to secure the authority for themselves and that is why did not hesitate in executing their own patrons. Kafur poisoned his ailing master,<sup>1</sup> and sent Sunbul another eunuch to blind Khizr Khan thus destroyed his eligibility for kingship.<sup>2</sup> Afterwards he made an infant son of Alauddin Sultan and appointed himself as his regent.<sup>3</sup> Other two sons of Alauddin Shadi Khan and Abu Bakr Khan were also blinded.<sup>4</sup> Khusru Khan also confined with his brother, uncle and other people of his tribe and assassinated Sultan Qutbuddin Mubarak Shah in his own palace.<sup>5</sup> After killing his master Khusru Khan obtained kingship and put out eyes of the offsprings of the Sultan, viz. Abu Bakr Khan, Ali Khan and Bahadur Khan.<sup>6</sup>

The attack on *haram* of the preceding Sultans, espousing of their wives and taking other ladies into their own *haram* carried symbolic victories. The exploitation of the honour signified the death, the over-powerment of one era over another. In spite of being eunuchs, Malik Kafur married third

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<sup>1</sup> *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, p. 190.

<sup>2</sup> Amir Khusru, *Ashiqqa*, tr. in E&D, III, p. 555; Ferishta, I, p. 219.

<sup>3</sup> *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, p. 190; Ferishta, p. 219; Sirhindi, p. 81.

<sup>4</sup> Ibn Battuta, tr. Gibb, III, p. 643.

<sup>5</sup> Barani, *Tarikh*, Hindi translation by Rizvi in *Khalji Kalin Bharat*, pp. 130-31; Sirhindi, p. 84; *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, I, p. 203; Badaoni, I, pp. 287-9.

<sup>6</sup> Isami, II, pp. 577-8; *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, I, p. 204; Badaoni, I, pp. 289-90.

wife of Alauddin Khalji.<sup>1</sup> Khusru Khan also married chief wife of Qutbuddin Mabarak Shah.<sup>2</sup>

The domination of eunuchs was neither welcomed nor tolerated by the nobles who associated power with masculinity. A person who was sexless, frail and considered to be desolated could not be accepted as ruler or guardian of masculine, strong and chivalrous people. That is why, immediately after emergence of the eunuchs to power we witness manipulations taking place in the sphere of nobles. Rayhan was overthrown within a year of his empowerment, as a result of conspiracy done by all the *maliks* and nobles who accepted Balban as their chief.<sup>3</sup> Malik Kafur was assassinated after few weeks of his attainment of regency.<sup>4</sup> Khusru Khan was overthrown as a result of joint venture of Tughluqs and other *Alai* nobles. Malik Sarwar in Jaunpur had adopted a son who attained the title of Sultan. He himself never defied the authority of Delhi thus we do not find any such treatment being given to him. Moreover, he accomplished power on the periphery rather than within the core of the empire *i.e.*, the capital. This factor might have saved him from the acrimony of the nobles.

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<sup>1</sup> Ferishta, I, p. 219.

<sup>2</sup> *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, I, p. 205; Ferishta, I, p. 227; also see Translation E&D, III, p. 545.

<sup>3</sup> *T.N.*, II, pp. 830-3.

<sup>4</sup> Barani, *Tarikh*, Hindi translation by Rizvi in *Khalji Kalin Bharat*, p. 121; Amir Khusru, *Ashiqqa*, tr. in E&D, III, p. 555; Ibn Battuta, tr. Gibb, III, p. 643; *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, I, p. 191; Isami, III, p. 530; Ferishta, I, p. 220.

## CONCLUSION

Slavery has been defined as 'a human condition in which a person is owned by another. A slave is considered in law as property, chattel and is deprived of virtually, all rights and freedoms'.<sup>1</sup> This definition is partially applicable, when it comes to Islamic World.

Certain features in the Islamic slave-institution in the middle ages diluted the stigmatic connotation associated with slavery. One such feature was growth of military slavery. Now, the privileges of the elites of the society came to be conferred on the slaves, and the dividing line between the privileged, influential class of noble origin on the one hand and the people of servile status on other the started fading.

In the Islamic lands, when the rulers started relying upon their slaves instead of the people of noble origin it became essential for them to chalk out a well-planned strategy pertaining to procurement, training, and deployment of the slaves. Various means were adopted by the rulers to ensure the regular supply of the slaves into their territories viz., trade, war-booty, tributes, and gifts etc. Unfortunately none of these means, could be a permanent source of slave-supply, yet many of the Sultans in the Islamic world could collect large number of slaves.

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<sup>1</sup> 'Slavery' in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 10, p.874.

After the collection of the slaves, their training was most important factor in making them really useful subordinates, otherwise these military slaves would not have been different from the ordinary slaves who used to do the household chores. The key foundation of the *mamluk* system was that these substitutes of the free-soldiers who could nurture their personal ambitions and become dangerous for the royal authority. In this *mamluk* was found a brave soldier as well as a faithful servant. Thus, it was natural for the Sultans to fall back on this slave institution, which could ensure them a peaceful reign, supported by loyal assistants *viz.* slaves.

In the Central Islamic territories, military schools were established by the sultans where slaves had to live in barracks. *Mu'allims* were appointed to teach them. All sorts of military training including horse-riding, archery, lance throwing etc. was imparted to the slaves. A very significant role was played by the eunuchs in the training of the royal slaves in Egypt. They acted as the supervisors of the barracks and took great care of the discipline in the barracks.

After the completion of the apprenticeship in the schools, when the slaves were brought before the Sultan, he used to manumit them in groups and after that they were employed in the royal service. It is interesting to see that even after being manumitted, when these slaves were on the same



footing with free people they preferred to serve the Sultan. Not a single incident has been recorded by the contemporary scholars to show that ever did any of the slaves, opted to leave his master and to pursue some other career options. Being trained in the military skilled, they were only eligible to serve in the fighting forces which was maintained only by the Sultans. Thus, it was not of any advantage for them to leave their master. Moreover, after investing huge amounts on the procurement and the training of the slaves, it was obvious that the Sultan would give preference to his own slaves over all other people. In this situation, only a fool could think of leaving the royal service.

Another very significant feature of the *mamluk* institution was that the existence of both the slaves and the ruler, depended on each other's existence. The Sultan could enjoy power as long as he had the support of his slaves, similarly slaves could remain in authority till their own master was on the throne. It is due to this factor, that immediately after the death of the Sultan, civil war had become genuine. Over a period of time, it had become a custom that the royal Princes, being aware that they would become Sultan, had started building their own corps of slaves during their Princehood. After the death of the Sultan when these princes used to ascend the throne, they would try to replace the dispensation of their father with their

own. In this situation bloody encounters and annihilation of the in service slaves became an inevitable outcome. Sometimes when slaves were more powerful than the new Sultan, they could dominate and become king makers. History does not lack such instances. This embedded danger of the slave system was realized by most of the Sultans all over world, still they continued with this system which carried the forces disintegration within itself.

Delhi Sultans adopted this system from Ghaznavids and implemented it in the Indian subcontinent. The procurement, training and deployment of the slaves was also done on the pattern as it used to take place in Central Islamic lands. Though our sources lack in providing information to compare Indian slave system with that of Egypt or Ghaznavid slave system, yet we can study the slave system in India on the basis of stray remarks provided in our sources.

The Slave system in India had its own features which were not seen in Central Islamic lands. For instance, the ruler in India were of free origin, only Iltutmish and Balban being the exception. Even they were manumitted before their enthronement. While in Egypt, manumission took place immediately, after the training, in India we do not find any such norm. There were slaves who were deployed in royal service for years and had got *iqtas* but yet not manumitted. Moreover, in India, free-men never disappear from the scene

throughout the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, they shared power with the slaves in the nobility.

In spite of all these deviations from the Central Islamic pattern of slave system. Indian slave system during the medieval period forms a part of the institution, which was established throughout Islamic world.



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