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# THE FALL OF THE FIRST AFGHAN EMPIRE IN INDIA

BY HAMEED-UD-DIN

KINGSTON UPON HULL TRAINING COLLEGE, HULL

The empire of the Lodī Afghans in India (1451–1526) collapsed on account of the ill-adjusted relations between the kings and their powerful nobles. The circumstances in which it was founded had made it clear that the Afghan Amīrs and their followers formed the backbone of the new dynasty<sup>1</sup> and Sultan Buhlūl Shāh Ghāzī<sup>2</sup> (1451–1489) realized it so well that he had accepted for himself the status of *primus inter pares*. However, the continuance of his successors on the throne depended on the strengthening of the monarchy and the Afghan nobles had to be persuaded to adapt themselves to the political environment of India where the tradition of centralized government had been established for centuries. The change was necessary but it had to be carefully effected. Sultan Sikandar Shah (1489–1517) wisely initiated it and his policy represented a compromise between Buhlūl's feudalism and Ibrāhīm's absolutism.

Sultan Ibrāhīm Shāh (1517–1526) was apparently influenced by Turkish conception of kingship as in placing himself above all of his nobles, he rejected any kind of affiliation based on kinship or race<sup>3</sup>. The history of his reign, however, shows that he acted precipitately. He was, no doubt, far removed from Buhlūl in point of time and could not appreciate the urgent need of the moment which had compelled his grand-

1. The major part of the country was held by the Amīrs in fiefs. The Farmūlis were practically masters of half of the Sultanate while the Lodī chiefs held the Punjab, Etawah, Chandwar, Kalpi and Lucknow. The Nuhanīs were established in Bihar and the chief of the Sarwānīs, A'zam Humāyūn, who held Karra, commanded 50,000 horsemen and 700 elephants. Rizqullah Mushtāqī, "Wāqī'āt-i-Mushtāqī" (British Museum), pp. 81, 84, 128.

2. He was the founder of the Lodī Dynasty and was generally known as Buhlūl Lodī. The contemporary poet, Jamalī, however, refers to his new royal title in the rare work "Mathnawī Mihr wa Māh" (Punjab University Library, Lahore), fol. 117 b.

3. R. Bindrabān, "Lubb al-Twārīkh" (India Office Library), fol. 64a, Muhammad Qāsim Firishta, *Tārīkh-i-Firishta* (Bombay, 1831–1832), I, 347.

father to seek the help of the Afghan chiefs by appealing to their clannish sentiment<sup>4</sup>. It was, however, advisable for him to emulate his father, who had gradually taken steps to enforce royal authority and command the allegiance and formal respect of his Amīrs. Had Ibrāhīm also proceeded as cautiously as Sikandar had done<sup>5</sup>, he could have successfully brought about a change in the political outlook of the Afghans. Unfortunately he embarked upon a reckless course which ultimately led to his ruin. It was a mistake to introduce the idea of Divine Right and to feel that he could either dispense with the military support of his nobles or that he could suppress them without remodelling his administration and building up a strong and independent army which could ensure his predominance. The policy of supporting a weaker or neglected group of nobles against the stronger ones was equally dangerous as the former were bound to become restive and uncontrollable when their power grew. It was vain, therefore, to overassert his formal superiority and to subject all nobles to the indignity of a court ceremonial of the Turkish type<sup>6</sup>, quite oblivious of the fact that some of the senior ones among them had memories of Buhlūl's days and would be unwilling in their old age to abandon their clannish ideas and submit to the arbitrary rule of a young king<sup>7</sup>. Ibrāhīm was, however, unmindful of such considerations, without ever realizing that ruthlessness and repression were no substi-

4. When the Sharqīs invaded Delhi in 1452, Buhlūl sent appeals for help to the Afghans of Roh, who came in large numbers and saved the newly founded kingdom from destruction. 'Abbās Sarwānī, "Tuhfa-yi-Akbar Shāhi" (Bodleian Library, Oxford Ous. 78), Fol. 2.

5. Sikandar's kind treatment of his brother, Bārbak, and his uncle, Kālā Pahār, as well as the leniency which he showed to the group of nobles who hatched a plot to replace him by his brother, Fath Khan, contrasted sharply with Ibrāhīm's attitude towards his brother, Jalāl Khan, and the maltreatment of his chief nobles.

6. The nobles who had occupied seats in the courts of Buhlūl and Sikandar were required by Ibrāhīm to keep standing and do obeisance to him. *Firishta*, I, 347.

7. The Afghan writer, Akhund Darweza, has made some pertinent remarks regarding the nature of the Afghans and their aversion to the very idea of submission to a king:

"The Afghans had since ancient times never considered it proper to have a King as their pride and arrogance would not let them bow and prostrate before one of their own kith and kin. Further, if they agreed to call one a King, they feared that they would thereby reduce

tute for tact and conciliation and that a policy of alienating the very men whose support was necessary in the long run to face one of the most significant invasions of Indian History, was fraught with disastrous consequences.

#### OVERTHROW OF LEADING NOBLES

At the commencement of his reign Ibrāhīm had to face the revolt of his brother, Jalāl Khan<sup>8</sup>. Although it was easily suppressed, yet it left a bitter impression on his mind, for the support which Jalāl Khan had received from some of his Amīrs made him suspicious of all of them. He resolved to overthrow the most powerful of the nobles in order to establish his authority over the rest of them. His victory over his brother had increased his prestige and he followed it up by ordering the dismissal and arrest of his minister, Miān Bhuwa, the most outstanding Amīr who had distinguished himself throughout Sikandar's reign as a minister as well as an eminent scholar<sup>9</sup>. The reasons given by some of the writers

themselves to the level of servants. They would rather like all of them to be treated as equals and it was, therefore, that all Afghans were addressed as *Maliks*."

"Tadhkirat al-Abrār wa al-Ashrār" (U. L. Cambridge), fol. 73 a.

8. At the time of Ibrāhīm's accession some of the nobles conferred the crown of Jaunpur upon Jalāl Khan. Ibrāhīm had at first acquiesced in this division of the empire, but later, realizing its dangerous consequences, decided to do away with his brother. Jalāl Khan revolted and won over to his side the Sarwānī chief, A'zam Humāyūn who, however, gave up his cause when the Sultan marched out with an army. Jalāl was prepared to submit on condition of retaining the fief of Kalpi, but Ibrāhīm did not approve of these terms which had been offered to the former by the Sultan's general, Malik Ādam Kākar. In order to save his life, Jalāl Khan fled to Gwalior and thence went to Malwa. Ultimately he entered the territory of Gondwana but was betrayed by the Gonds, who sent him as a prisoner to Ibrāhīm. He was ordered to be taken to Hansi but was killed on the way. Details of the revolt and different versions of the events leading to his death will be found in the following works:

Hasan Khākī, "Muntakhab al-Twārīkh" (Eton College), fol. 79, Muhammad Barārī, "Mujmal-i-Mufasssal" (A. S. B. Calcutta), fol. 180, (Bodleian, Oxford), fol. 144, Muhammad Baqā, "Mir'at-i-Jahān Numā" (India Office Library), fol. 296, 'Abd al-Haq, "Tārīkh-i-Haqqī" (Bodleian, Oxford, Ous. 59), fol. 274, Nūr al-Haq, "Zubdat al-Twārīkh" (U. L. Cambridge), fol. 60. I. O. MS. Fol. 59 a.

9. He was the author of a work on medical science, entitled *Ma'dan al-Shifā-yi-Sikandar Shāhī* (Lucknow, 1889) and was also responsible for the compilation of a work on Indian music and dancing by Sammād al-Kābulī, known as "Lahjāt-i-Sikandar Shāhī wa Lataīf-i-lā Mutanāhī"



for his removal are old age, infirmity and his inability to please the Sultan<sup>10</sup>. But Jamālī, who had been Sikandar's court poet, writes that Ibrāhīm had been alienated from his wise and old minister by the machinations of his tutor, Farīd, who was the leader of a group of mischievous Afghans and whose evil influence was responsible for many of the king's misfortunes<sup>11</sup>. The Sultan transferred some of Miān Bhuwa's judicial duties to the latter's son, but he did not forgive the Miān who was after some time put to death in the prison.

The next important Amīr who suffered degradation was A'zam Humāyūn, chief of the Sarwānī clan. After temporarily deserting the Sultan during Jalāl Khan's revolt, he had rejoined the royal standard together with his son, Faṭḥ Khan. Ibrāhīm had honourably received him back and restored to him the fief of Karra. It appears that the Sultan was not, in fact, reconciled and had forgiven A'zam Humāyūn solely in order to win him over from Jalāl Khan. There is, however, no denying the fact that if A'zam Humāyūn, with his equipment of 50,000 horses and 700 elephants had pulled his full weight on Jalāl's side, the issue might not have been so easily decided in favour of Ibrāhīm. His timely return to the king led to the collapse of the revolt and Ibrāhīm ought to have been conscious of the debt which he owed to his old Amīr who had reunited with him in all sincerity as was shown by his subsequent loyalty.

Ibrāhīm had, on the other hand, only postponed the punishment of

(Tagore Library, University of Lucknow). Besides, he patronised numerous scholars some of whom came from Persia and Transoxiana. "Tārīkh-i-Mushtāqī" (British Museum), fol. 32 b.

10. According to Muhammad Kabīr, the Sultan was offended at Miān Bhuwa's reluctance to pay a large sum of money out of the treasury to the son of Raja Mān of Gwalior. "Afsānā-yi-Shāhān" (British Museum), fol. 45 b.

11. "Where are you, O Solomon of the age, so that I may appeal to you against the vandalism of the demons."

The above verse which Jamālī wrote as an elegy on Sīkandar, was distorted by Farīd, who held that the word "demons" referred to Ibrāhīm, whereas the poet had used it in respect of Farīd and his followers. "Siyar al-Ārifīn" (Lahore), fol. 43-44. OCM, IX, 46.

Nūr al-Haq states that Farīd belonged to a family of the theologians of Delhi. He was appointed Sadral Sudūr and his influence over the king was resented by the nobles, who complained that he created illwill between them and Ibrāhīm. "Zubdat al-Twārīkh", fol. 61 b.

the Sarwani chief and accordingly when A'zam Humāyūn had nearly completed the gigantic task of reducing Gwalior<sup>12</sup>, he suddenly recalled the latter and his son, Faṭḥ Khan, to the court. A'zam Humāyūn responded loyally and instead of entertaining any thoughts of rebellion, he prepared to leave for Agra. His followers dissuaded him from this course as they were sure that he would meet the fate of other Amīrs who had already been imprisoned or killed. They asked him to declare his independence as he possessed a strong army and the 'ulama also agreed that such a step would be justified in self defence<sup>13</sup>. A'zam Humāyūn, however, did not change his mind even though he received reports during his journey to Agra that the Sultan had put to death some of the important nobles. On reaching Agra he was arrested and taken to prison on a contemptible pony. Even at that late stage some of his friends wanted to carry him off to safety, but he declined their offer and expressed his devotion to the King in the most sentimental words ever used by an Afghan Amīr<sup>14</sup>. He further told the King that his son, Islām Khan, might organise a rebellion and should be checked before he had time to muster a large force. He requested for himself only the facilities to say his prayers. Such was the man, writes Mushtāqī, whom Ibrāhīm put in prison where he afterwards died<sup>15</sup>. Ahmad Yādgār adds that the Sultan thereby pulled out the roots of his kingdom with his own hands<sup>16</sup>.

12. Jalāl Khan's flight to Gwalior had led to Ibrāhīm's attack on that strong Rajput state. The royal army was led by A'zam Humāyūn Sarwānī, who laid siege to the fort. During the operations the redoubtable Raja Mān Singh died and his son, Vikramadittya, who could not put up effective resistance, was nearly overcome when A'zam Humāyūn was relieved of his command. Vikramadittya, however, submitted soon after and was given the fief of Shamsabad. He remained steadfast in his loyalty to Ibrāhīm and died fighting for him at Panipat in 1526. A. S. Beveridge, *The Babur-nama in English* (London, 1922), p. 477.

13. "Wāqī'āt-i-Mushtāqī", p. 82.

14. "My life is now pledged to his (Ibrāhīm's) service and it matters not whether I live or die. How fortunate it is that I have done him no harm. He knows best what he ought to do." "Mushtāqī", p. 82.

Muhammad Kabīr adds: "Ibrāhīm's face will remain blackened till the day of judgement." "Afsāna-yi-Shāhān", fol. 45 b.

15. "Mushtāqī", p. 82.

16. Ahmad Yadgar, *Tārikhi-Shāhī* (Calcutta, 1939), p. 86.

## ISLĀM KHAN'S REVOLT

The incarceration of A'zam Humāyūn Sarwānī and Faṭḥ Khan, as was feared, led to serious repercussions. Islām Khan Sarwānī who took possession of his father's equipment, revolted at Karra, and was joined by two other important chiefs, A'zam Humāyūn Lodī and Sa'īd Khan, both of whom had suddenly abandoned the royal army at Gwalior and returned to their fiefs in Lucknow. Fortunately for the Sultan, Gwalior fell soon after and he was able to dispatch large forces accompanied by several Amīrs to deal with the outbreak at Karra. As soon as they approached the town of Bangarmau, near Qanauj, Iqbāl Khan, a deputy of A'zam Humāyūn Lodī, who had been lying in ambush, attacked the royal troops with his contingent of 5,000 soldiers and dispersed them with great loss.

The situation became serious and Ibrāhīm was disturbed by the news of the reverse which his army had suffered at the hands of a small force. He sent dispatches full of reproach to his Amīrs asking them to subdue the rebels otherwise they would all be dealt with as traitors. He also sent a strong reinforcement under some other Amīrs. The rebels on their side had mustered a force of 40,000 fully equipped soldiers and 500 elephants. An armed clash of this kind between the Sultan and his nobles was suicidal and foreseeing its ruinous effects, a Muslim saint<sup>17</sup> intervened and pleaded with the rebels to cease hostilities. They agreed to leave the kingdom if the Sultan was willing to release A'zam Humāyūn Sarwānī.

Ibrāhīm, however, refused to accept any compromise and ordered Daryā Khan Nūhānī, Governor of Bihar, Nasīr Khan Nūhānī of Ghāzīpur and Shaikh Muhammad Farmūlī of Bharaich to march forth with all their

17. The saint's name given in Nizamal-Din's *Tabaqāt-i-Akbarī* (Calcutta, 1927) and *Firishta* is Shaikh Rājū Bukhārī who cannot, however, be identified as Shaikh Sadr al-Dīn Rājū Qattāl Bukhārī as the latter died in 1423 and the reference to him in *Shahī*, p. 77, N. 1, is, therefore, incorrect. Nor should he be taken for Shāh Rājū Qattāl who is mentioned in Khāksār-i-Sabz-zwārī's "Swānih" (A.S.B. Calcutta) and who died still earlier in 1331. The only possible name which can be considered is that of Shaikh Yūsuf Qattāl, who died at Delhi in 1527. 'Abd al-Haq, *Akhhār al-Akhyār* (Delhi, 1891), p. 219. The common suffix Qattāl suggests a similarity which might have led some writers to confuse their names.

forces and help the royal army in suppressing the rebellion. There appeared to be no chance of a reconciliation and in the ensuing clash about 10,000 Afghans lost their lives. Islām Khan's army was routed and he was killed while Sa'id Khan, together with other rebels, was arrested.

#### MIĀN HUSAIN FARMŪLĪ'S MURDER

The Sultan was, however, not any wiser after Islām Khan's revolt and pursued even more relentlessly the policy which had given rise to it. He began to distrust the very nobles who had supported him against Islām Khan and put to death many of those who had already been imprisoned. The greatest indignation was, however, roused by the foul manner in which Miān Husain Farmūlī's murder was arranged.

After the conquest of Gwalior, Ibrāhīm had sent Miān Husain and some other Amīrs on an expedition against Rana Sanga. However, when the army was approaching Mewar, he sent orders for the arrest of Miān Husain who evaded it and went over to Rana Sanga, thereby causing the defeat of the Afghan army<sup>18</sup>. Later, realizing that he ought not to strengthen the Rajputs against the Afghans, Husain reunited with Sultan Ibrāhīm, who apparently received him with open arms and appointed him to the fief of Chanderi<sup>19</sup> so that he could continue the war against Rana Sanga. Having promised to let bygones be bygones, the Sultan secretly began to devise plans for getting rid of Miān Husain. He hired an agent at Chanderi, one Shaikh Farīd of Daryābād, to whom, according to contemporary evidence, he offered 700 gold coins together with an assignment of

18. "Waqi'āt-i-Mushtāqī", p. 118. See also the writer's article on "The Lodi Sultans and the Rajput States" in the *J.I.H.*, 39/ii, 317-319.

19. The Sultan also flattered Miān Husain by calling him uncle, sent him gifts and robes and praised him in a proclamation issued on that occasion. Husain was also allowed to choose a fief in Bihar or Sambhal but he preferred to remain at Chanderi on account of its proximity to Mewar. His reconciliation with Ibrāhīm had already led to the immediate withdrawal of Rajput forces from the borders of the Sultanate. 'Abdullah, "Tārīkh-i-Dā'ūdī" (SOAS Library), pp. 77-78, "Mushtāqī", p. 124, *Shahī*, p. 83.

ten villages as a reward for assassinating the Farmūlī Amīr<sup>20</sup>. Shaikh Farīd collected about 12,000 Shaikhzādahs to help him in carrying out his design and fixed a midnight time for the murder. An elderly Shaikhzādah, Khwāja Ahmad, who had not been taken into confidence, but somehow came to know of the plot, tried to persuade Farīd's followers to desist from such a foolish act as in his view Miān Husain was by far the ablest man who had come as Governor to Chanderi after Shir Khan<sup>21</sup>. By killing him, said Khwāja Ahmad, they would bring about their own destruction. They refused, however, to listen to his advice and according to a pre-arranged plan attacked Miān Husain at his residence. Miān Husain was an exceptionally brave swordsman and the assailants being afraid of going near him, killed him by throwing stones at him. In his dying message which he sent to Ibrāhīm through his agent, Hasan 'Alī Khurāsānī, he accused the Sultan of breaking faith and harbouring evil designs against him. In that age of credulity when Behlūl's rise to power was attributed to a saint's blessings<sup>22</sup>, the fall of his dynasty was also superstitiously believed to have been caused by a saint's indignation at Ibrāhīm's perfidy<sup>23</sup>.

#### CIVIL WAR

Ibrāhīm was apparently delighted at the success of the plot which had rid him of the powerful Farmūlī Amīr, but he failed to realize that the removal of the man who could keep the Rajputs at bay would only

20. "Mushtāqī", p. 125. The gold coin referred to in the text was called a Muhr, which in 1793 was valued at sixteen rupees in Calcutta.

21. Shir Khan was the Governor of Chanderi on behalf of Ghiāth al Dīn Khaljī of Malwa. He had driven back Buhlūl when in 1486 the latter attacked Alhanpur, a suburb of Ranthambor. Muhammad Sharīf Wuqū'ī, "Majāmī' al-Akhbār" (India Office Library), fol. 341 b, "Zubdat al-Twārīkh" (John Rylands Library, Manchester), fol. 199.

22. Early in his youth Buhlūl carried on trade in horses. During the course of a journey connected with it, he chanced to meet at Samana a saint who predicted his elevation to kingship. Ni'matullah, "Tārīkh-i-Khān Jahānī ..." (India Office), fol. 76 a. "Mushtāqī", MS. p. 4.

23. This saint's name was Shaikh Muhammad Musalmān (believed to be the ancestor-saint of the Farmūlīs) who wished to avenge Miān Husain's murder by destroying the Shaikhzādahs of Chanderi as well as Sultan Ibrāhīm. "Mushtāqī", p. 128, "Dā'ūdī", p. 80.



weaken his kingdom as was soon proved by the loss of Chanderi<sup>24</sup>. The news of the Sultan's cruelties alarmed the nobles, many of whom retired to their fiefs and were reluctant to come to the court. Khwāja Ismā'il Jilwānī, an old Amīr, who held his fief near the western borders of the Sultanate, repeatedly ignored royal summonses and when at last he was persuaded by the king's emissaries to visit the capital, he stayed there for a very short time and ultimately fled towards Bandhu<sup>25</sup>.

In the eastern parts of the Sultanate some of the senior nobles including Khan-i-Jahān Lodī, Sayyid Khan Lodī and Ma'rūf Farmūlī decided to throw off their allegiance to Ibrāhīm and began to organize their forces. They rallied round Daryā Khan Nūhānī, Governor of Bihar, whom Ibrāhīm appeared anxious to degrade although it was largely through his help that the Sultan had gained victory over Islām Khan. Daryā Khan, however, died before he could openly rise in revolt. He was succeeded by his son, Bahār Khan<sup>26</sup>, who assumed the leadership of the disaffected nobles and styled himself Sultan Muhammad. The whole of the country from Bihar to Sambhal came under his sway and he had the Khutba read in his name<sup>27</sup>. The strength of the combined army which he commanded was a hundred thousand men and the revolt which he led was, therefore, much more formidable than that of Islām Khan.

24. After Miān Husain's death, Rana Sanga, taking advantage of the chaos that prevailed at Chanderi, attacked it with 100,000 soldiers and after defeating the Shaikhzādahs, annexed it to Mewar. *Babur Nama*, p. 593.

25. "Afsāna-yi-Shāhān", fols. 47-49.

Bandhu or Bandhugarh was the capital of the Baghela kingdom of Bhatgorha. Abu'l Fadl, *Ā'in-i-Akbarī* (Calcutta, 1872), p. 423, *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, VI, 358-359, *J. Bihar and Orissa Research Society*, XVI, 6. J. I. H. 39/ii, 324.

26. In the *Tabaqat*, *Firishta*, *Ā'in-i-Akbarī* and Badauni's *Muntakhah al-Twārikh* (Calcutta, 1868) his name is mentioned as Bahādur Khan, while *Shāhī* gives it as Shahbāz Khan. However, earlier works such as "Mushtāqī", *Bābur Nama* and "Tuhfa-yi-Akbar Shāhī" have described him as Bahār Khan. The fact that the "Twārikh-i-Daulat-i-Shir Shāhī" has retained Bahadur Khan, shows that the Persian letter *dāl* was either added or omitted by the copyists of some works.

27. *Tabaqāt*, I, 351, "Dā'ūdī", p. 81. According to Hasan 'Alī Khan, he had also adopted the title of Sardār-i-Hind (Lord of India). See "Twārikh-i-Daulat-i-Shir Shahī", Persian text of a portion of Ch. II, published in the *Med. Ind. Qrtly.*, I/i, 8, 10.



Ibrāhīm dispatched an army under Firūz Khan, Miān Mustafa Farmūli and Shaikh Bāyazīd to pacify his eastern dominions. Mustafa attacked Ghazipur and expelled its governor, Nasīr Khan Nuhānī, who went to Bihar and joined Sultan Muhammad whose position had been further strengthened by the adhesion of Faṭḥ Khan, son of A‘zam Humāyūn Sarwānī<sup>28</sup>, who commanded 10,000 horses, Shir Khan Sūr and Muhammad Khan of Chaund.

The royal army then advanced towards the frontiers of Bihar and encamped along the bank of the river Son. Learning, however, that the enemy had crossed the river, they went in pursuit and arrived at Kānpurah where they encountered the forces of Nasīr Khan and Faṭḥ Khan. They divided themselves into two groups led by Bāyazīd and Firūz Khan to oppose Faṭḥ Khan and Nasīr Khan respectively. Bāyazīd forestalled Faṭḥ Khan by crossing a channel and put him to flight, allowing his army thereafter to devastate Kānpurah. Firūz Khan, on the other hand, did not do very well and his army was easily dispersed by Nasīr Khan whose force comprised only 300 mounted men. Bāyazīd, on hearing of his companion's discomfiture advanced to attack Nasīr Khan but after three unsuccessful attempts turned away leaving the issue undecided. When, after a short interval, Bāyazīd was able to re-group his forces at Bhojpur<sup>28a</sup> along the Ganges, the decisive battle of Panipat had already been fought and had sealed the fate of the Lodīs.

The rising in Bihar proved fatal to Ibrāhīm's cause, as it took place at a time when the avalanche of Mughal conquest was about to sweep over the Indian plains. Whereas the news of the Sultan's distractions had quickened the invader's advance, the deployment of his armies in the east had greatly weakened his own resistance against the latter<sup>29</sup>. As ill

28. He had been released from captivity by Ibrāhīm at Miān Husain Farmūli's intercession. "Mushtāqī", p. 122. JIH, 39/ii, 320.

28a. In the Shahabad district, on the right bank of the Ganges. Kānpurah is also in the same district and is located near Arrah.

29. Bābur remarks that the strength of Ibrāhīm's army had been reduced to one fifth on account of the latter's campaigns in the eastern part of the Sultanate. *Bābur Nama*, p. 480.

luck would have it, instead of re-organizing his forces in the north western part of his kingdom and ensuring the loyalty of his Amīrs in that region, Ibrāhīm tried to vanquish the last of his strong nobles, Daulat Khan Lodī, Governor of the Punjab, and in consequence not only lost his own throne, but also put an end to the rule of his dynasty.

#### CRISIS IN THE PUNJAB

The hold of the Lodī Sultans on the north western part of their kingdom had not been strong and although Buhlūl had risen to power from the Punjab, yet he was never able to use its resources in his wars against the Sharqīs. On the contrary he had to suppress its governor, Tatār Khan Yūsuf Khail<sup>30</sup>, and entrust the government of Lahore to the Sarwānīs. Under Sikandar, Sa'īd Khan Sarwānī who visited the Sultan at Sambhal in 1502, was also suspected of treason and was banished from the kingdom. Thereafter, Lahore was restored to Tatār Khan's son, Daulat Khan, who continued to hold it until Ibrāhīm resolved to overthrow him.

Daulat Khan was a very pious man and was noted for his courage, bravery and generosity<sup>31</sup>. His relations with the Sultan had been fairly normal, but Ibrāhīm never called upon him to render help in any of the royal campaigns. However, on hearing of the alarming reports of the suppression of other powerful nobles, he felt concerned about his own safety and sent a letter to Ibrāhīm advising the latter not to undermine the unity of the Afghans whom Buhlūl and Sikander had taken pains to bind together and who formed the backbone of the kingdom. Ibrāhīm was embittered by this note and he summoned its didactive author to his court. Daulat Khan, fearing the consequences of going to Agra in person, sent his son, Dilāwar Khan and excused himself on grounds of illness.

30. Tātār Khan had revolted during the latter part of Buhlūl's reign but was subdued by Prince Nizām Khan, later Sultan Sikandar. "Mushtāqī", pp. 19-20.

31. He scrupulously observed the tenets of Islam and had banned drinking, eating of pork, gambling and adultery throughout his territories. "Mushtāqī", p. 65. The emperor Jahāngīr also testifies to the excellent qualities of his character. *Tuzak-i-Jahāngīrī* (Aligarh, 1863-1864), p. 42.

His absence, however, further enraged the Sultan, who told his son that if he did not arrive shortly, he would be punished for disobedience. Dilāwar Khan was also shown the ghastly sight of some nobles "enclosed within walls", exhibiting the fate of those who had dared to defy the Sultan's authority<sup>32</sup>. He would have himself also been arrested had he not managed to escape in good time and return to his father. His account of the king's cruelty and malevolence convinced Daulat Khan that it was no longer possible for him to continue his allegiance to Ibrāhīm. The situation in the Punjab did not, however, encourage him to organize the kind of revolt which Sultan Muhammad had done in Bihar and in desperation, therefore, he turned to Bābur for help. He sent Dilāwar Khan<sup>33</sup> to Kabul to find out if the Mughal King was agreeable to lend him support. Another messenger, Ahmad Khan, carried gifts of preserved mangoes and betel leaves which Bābur had eagerly wished for<sup>34</sup>. The latter received both the messengers honourably and after hearing an account of the state of affairs that prevailed throughout the Afghan empire, sent them back with robes of honour and horses without, however, committing himself in any way with regard to the proposal for help.

Instances of seeking foreign help were not lacking in the history of the Sultanate during the past hundred years. Buhlūl had asked help from Mahmūd Khaljī of Malwa<sup>35</sup> and subsequently some of the dependent chieftains of Malwa had sought the help of the Lodīs and had actually transferred allegiance to them<sup>36</sup>. Under the Sayyids, an insignificant rebel

32. *Shāhī*, p. 87. See also Hodivala, *S.I.H.*, II, 191-192.

33. Nizām al-Dīn and A.B. Nihāwandī have stated that Daulat Khan personally went to Kabul and died on his way back. They, however, contradict their own account by subsequently relating that he capitulated to Bābur at Milwat. *Tabaqāt*, I, 351, II, 8-9, *Ma'āthir-i-Rahīmī* (Calcutta, 1924), I, 487, 496.

Dilawar Khan's name is mentioned in "Tuhfa-yi-Akbar Shāhī", *Tuzaki-Jahāngīrī*, *Badāunī*, *Shāhī* and many other authorities.

34. *Shāhī*, p. 90.

35. See contemporary account of Shihābi-Hakīm, "Ma'āhir-i-Mahmūd Shāhī" (University Library, Tübingen, Germany), fol. 262a.

36. As in the case of Chanderi and Nagaur during Sikandar's reign. "Hasan Khākī", fol. 142. *Tabaqāt*, I, 331.

like Pūlād, when driven to extremity, had asked Shaikh 'Alī, the Mughal deputy governor of Kabul to support him against Sultan Mubārak Shah<sup>37</sup>. Daulat Khan's request to Bābur, therefore, was not without a parallel. His territory lay between Delhi and Kabul and he could play the Afghan and the Mughal monarchs against each other. It is, however, wrong to suppose that he wanted Bābur to occupy Delhi and Agra, for he had an Afghan candidate in view to replace Ibrāhīm<sup>38</sup>. His only anxiety was to secure himself against Ibrāhīm's oppression and to retain his hold over the Punjab, either as an independent ruler or by making some arrangement with Bābur.

Unfortunately for Daulat Khan, Bābur was not prepared to extend his help merely to save the former from Ibrāhīm's tyranny. He regarded a large part of the Punjab as his rightful Turkish heritage<sup>39</sup> and would not be satisfied with any arrangement short of its annexation to his kingdom. He might assign a smaller fief to Daulat Khan, but his real object was the occupation of the Punjab and not the conquest of Delhi which he undertook only after discovering that he could not hold the Punjab without capturing the capital of the Sultanate.

This clash of motives between him and Bābur upset Daulat Khan's subsequent plans and his career ended in a tragedy. Fear of destruction at Ibrāhīm's hands had, however, made him oblivious of this aspect of his political strategy at the time when he first approached Bābur and without pausing to think over the consequences of his action, he decided to revolt against his Lodī master in expectation of help from Kabul. Ibrāhīm deputed an army under Bahār Khan Lodī<sup>40</sup>, which drove out Daulat

37. Yahya Sirhindi, *Tārīkh-i-Mubārak Shāhī* (Calcutta, 1931), p. 217, Faidullah ibn Zain al-'Ābidīn, "Tārīkh-i-Sadr-i-Jahān" (Bib. Nat. Paris), fol. 172 a. See also the writer's account of Mubārak Shah's reign in the *History and Culture of the Indian People*, vol. VI, *The Delhi Sultanate*, ed. R. C. Majumdar (Bombay, 1960), pp. 129-130.

38. This new candidate was Ibrāhīm's uncle, 'Ālam Khan, whom the dissatisfied nobles invited from Gujerat. See below.

39. *Bābur Nama*, pp. 380-383.

40. To be distinguished from Bahār Khan Nūhānī, who had revolted in Bihar and had assumed the title of Sultan Muhammad. Beveridge has mixed them up. See *B. N.*, 459, N. 3.

Khan but was defeated by Bābur who had by then advanced up to Lahore<sup>41</sup>. Daulat Khan, who had fled towards Multan<sup>42</sup>, regained his power after Bābur's return to Kabul and when Ibrāhīm sent another army against him, he met them near Sirhind and succeeded in gaining over their general together with a part of the royal army.

The civil war now reached a point where Ibrāhīm could not rely on the armies which were sent to quell the risings of his Amīrs. His throne was being shaken on every side by faction-fighting, distrust and open rebellion, but he did not still wake up to the necessity of conciliating his nobles and re-uniting them against the formidable threat of Mughal invasion.

#### ‘ĀLAM KHAN

Buhlūl's son, ‘Ālam Khan<sup>43</sup>, had aspired to the throne of Delhi after his father's death, but Sikandar won him over and confirmed him in the possession of Etawah. Later on he went away to Gujerat<sup>44</sup> and bided his time at Muzaffar Shah's court until the discontent of the nobles against Ibrāhīm grew so strong that some of them invited him to return and take over the kingdom from his nephew<sup>45</sup>. He therefore arrived in the Pun-

41. A separate account of Bābur's various expeditions against the Punjab is given below.

42. Khāfī Khan, *Muntakhab al-Lubāb* (Calcutta, 1869), I, 47, *Firishta*, I, 325. Erskine, *History of India* (London, 1854), I, 418, states that Daulat Khan took shelter with the Balūch tribes, who already occupied the banks of the Ghara. It is, however, more likely that he sought asylum with Jām Bāyazīd whom he had recently helped against Mahmūd Langāh II of Multan and had secured for him an autonomous territory around Shorkot, north of the Ravi. "Hasan Khāki", fol. 158b. See also the writer's article on "Multan in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries" in the *J.I.H.*, 40/1.

43. He has been wrongly described as Sikandar's son in "Majāmi' al-Akhbār", fol. 344b, and *Khāfī Khan*, I, 48. The *Bābur Nama*, "Tārīkh i-Haqqī" and many other authorities have stated that he was Buhlūl's son and Ibrāhīm's uncle.

44. The precise date of his departure is not known, but it took place sometime towards the end of Sikandar's reign. Sikandar bin Muhammad Manjhū, "Mīr'at-i-Sikandrī", Tr. H. C. Bayley, *Gujrat* (London, 1886), p. 277.

45. The invitation was sent some time between 1521 and 1524. Hājji al-Dabīr, *Zafar al-Wālih bi Muzaffar wa Ālih* (An Arabic History of Gujrat), ed. E. D. Ross (London, 1921-1928), p. 120, "Zubdat al-Twārīkh", fol. 61b.



jab, where Daulat Khan and other Afghan Amīrs supported his claim and styled him Sultan 'Alā al-Dīn. When he began to acquire strength, Ibrāhīm sent an army which defeated him<sup>46</sup> and he was compelled to fly for safety to Kabul, where he induced Bābur to invade Hindustan. At about the same time Daulat Khan's son, Dilāwar Khan, also arrived at Kabul, but Bābur appeared to be more inclined to help 'Ālam Khan than Daulat Khan as he might thereby succeed in replacing Ibrāhīm by a feebler and more supple king, who might easily acquiesce in his occupation of the Punjab.

After his attack on Lahore in 1524, Bābur had entrusted Dipalpur to 'Ālam Khan, but he could not retain it against Daulat Khan's pressure and went again to Kabul to ask for further assistance. Bābur agreed to help him in attacking Delhi on the understanding that if the latter were successful in overthrowing Ibrāhīm, Bābur would annex the territories of Lahore. Accordingly the Mughal commanders in the Punjab were instructed to co-operate with 'Ālam Khan<sup>47</sup>, but after his arrival at Lahore, he was won over by Daulat Khan, who wished to exploit him for his own ends. Bābur's officers thereupon refused to help him, and 'Ālam Khan advanced towards Delhi accompanied by Daulat Khan's two sons, Dilāwar Khan and Hājji Khan. On his way he was joined by other disaffected Amīrs such as Ismā'il Jilwānī, Malik Biban and Shaikhzādah Sulaiman Farmūlī. His army totalled about 40,000 men, but the lack of Mughal support had weakened it, for a purely Afghan army going to fight a kindred force was liable to give way to treacherous overtures.

'Ālam Khan immediately laid siege to Delhi, but on Ibrāhīm's approach with a force of 80,000 men, he abandoned it and took up a position at a short distance to give battle to his rival. He expected desertions

46. Untitled General history to 1592-1593, fol. 505b (India Office, MS Etbe, 120). This work is rare but is defective at the beginning and the end and hence it is difficult to trace the author or the title. A careful study of the contents, however, shows that the account is valuable and the work should rank among the important general histories of Akbar's time.

47. *Bābur Nama*, p. 455. Bābur had also sent some of his men with 'Ālam Khan to escort him, but their number is not mentioned. The statement of the "Majāmi al-Akhbār", fol. 344b, that the latter brought 10,000 soldiers from Kabul, appears to be an exaggeration.



from the opposite camp and since this was not likely to happen in day time, he preferred a nocturnal advance to cover a gap of about twelve miles that separated the two camps. Indecision, however, prevailed as to the actual movement of the troops and two attempts to march forth proved abortive. On the third occasion, his men did go forward when only one watch of the night remained, but they merely indulged in burning the enemy tents and huts with the purpose of spreading alarm. Some of Ibrāhīm's Amīrs crossed over to 'Ālam Khan, but likewise a part of the latter's army deserted to Ibrāhīm.

Throughout the night, Ibrāhīm stood calmly on a height and watched everything. At dawn when he discovered that a group of 'Ālam Khan's men were engaged in plundering, he suddenly attacked them with a small force and drove them away. The surprise attack created panic among the rest of 'Ālam Khan's army, which broke up and scattered in all directions. 'Ālam Khan fled into the Doab, but recrossing the Jamna near Panipat, turned towards Lahore. When he was passing through Sirhind together with Hājji Khan and Dilāwar Khan, he heard of Bābur's advance into the Punjab and the fall of Milwat<sup>48</sup>. After many vicissitudes, he waited once more upon his Mughal patron and again professed friendship.

'Ālam Khan's attack on Delhi marked the climax of the civil war which Ibrāhīm's recklessness had provoked. The Afghan forces which were engaged in mutual destruction near Delhi should have been united against the foreign invader whose interests were best served by the suicidal clash among his opponents. Ibrāhīm's passion for absolutism, Daulat Khan's desire for mastery over the Punjab and 'Ālam Khan's bid for an elusive throne, all proved impossible of attainment in face of the Mughal warrior's stern resolution to force his way to Delhi. In actual effect, 'Ālam Khan rendered Bābur's task easier by blunting Ibrāhīm's sword on the eve of the decisive battle of Panipat.

48. Also known as Malot, a fort in the Siwaliks which Tātār Khan Yusuf Khail, Governor of the Punjab, had built in Buhlūl's time. Ahmad bin Bahbal, "Ma'dan-i-Akhabār-i-Ahmadī" (India Office Library), fol. 34b. 'Abbās Sarwānī, "Tuhfa-yi-Akbar Shahī" (Indian National Archives, New Delhi) MSp. 82.

## PRELIMINARIES OF MUGHAL CONQUEST

Zahīr al-Dīn Muhammad, surnamed Bābur<sup>49</sup>, who was born on February 14, 1483, was descended, through his father ‘Umar Shaikh, from Timūr and, through his mother Qutluq Nigār, from Chingiz Khan, thus combining in himself the characteristic courage and hardihood of the Turks as well as the Mongols. He was raised to the throne of Farghana at the early age of eleven and the story of his venturesome career has won the admiration of all writers.

After contending with numerous vicissitudes of fortune, the remarkable youth succeeded in conquering Kabul in October 1504, an event which marked a decisive change in the future course of his life. Henceforth he turned his thoughts towards India, for, not only had he come physically close to the Indian border, but the need for supplies also compelled him to advance towards the east. He had an army of 20 000 men and as Kabul alone could not support it, he resolved to invade Hindustan<sup>50</sup>. Early in January 1505, he rode through the Khyber along the road to Attock, but had to return after overrunning Kohat and Bannu where he seized much booty. In September 1507, he marched again up to Jallalabad, but returned once more because of difficulties at home which engaged his attention for the next twelve years.

The plan of conquering Indian territory was not, however, abandoned and before embarking upon his final invasion in 1525, Bābur made a number of preliminary attacks on the Punjab, the acquisition of which was his real object, although the course of events subsequently compelled him to advance towards Delhi. In 1519 he marched out with a force of 2000 men and after storming and pillaging Bajaur, he crossed the Indus on February 17, 1519 and occupied the town of

49. A Turkish word meaning a tiger.

50. Mirza Haidar Dughlāt, “Tārīkh-i-Rashīdī” (C. C. L. Cambridge), fol. 108a. Bābur himself also says that “ever since we came into Kabul, it had been in my mind to move on Hindustan”. *Bābur Nama*, p. 377.

Bhira<sup>51</sup>. This expedition marked the real beginning of Bābur's Indian career. He regarded the districts along the Jhelum and the Chinab as his rightful heritage, for, having "once been held by the Turks", he wrote, "I pictured them as my own and was resolved to get them into my hands, whether peacefully or by force"<sup>52</sup>. The ease with which he had captured Bhira and the surrounding districts prompted him further to dispatch an envoy, Mulla Murshid<sup>53</sup>, to Ibrāhīm's court demanding formal recognition of his claims to these territories<sup>54</sup>. The envoy was, however, detained by Daulat Khan through whose territory he had to pass and was not allowed to proceed to Agra.

However, soon after Bābur's return to Kabul, the Afghans, aided by the local population, expelled his nominee, Hindu Beg, and reoccupied the whole territory in April 1519. He organized a punitive raid in September of the same year but had come only up to Peshawar<sup>55</sup> when the news of the revolt in Badakhshan recalled him. Next year he attacked the Punjab with better preparations and advanced as far as Sialkot, but before he could reach Lahore, he had to return once more on account of the attack on his territories by Shah Beg Arghūn of Qandahar.

For the next four years Bābur was occupied with affairs at home. During this period he received appeals for help from the Lodī chiefs, Daulat Khan and 'Ālam Khan, and his response was well in accord with his own plans. As noticed earlier, he marched to Lahore in 1524 and occupied it after defeating an army which Ibrāhīm had sent under Bahār Khan Lodī. After a few days he captured Dilpalpur<sup>56</sup> where Daulat Khan Lodī

51. In the present Shahpur district of West of Pakistan. At the time of Bābur's attack it was held by Daulat Khan's eldest son, 'Alī Khan.

52. *Bābur Nama*, pp. 380-382.

53. He was a learned man and was well versed in the language of the Afghans. Muhammad 'Alī al-Husainī, "Mir'at al-Safā" (India Office Library), fol. 126 a.

54. Bābur had wished it to be understood that if Ibrāhīm conceded his demand, he would not attack any further territories of India. India Office MS Ethe 120, fol. 423 b.

55. Khāfī Khan says that he went up to Sirhind, but this is not confirmed by Bābur's own account. *Muntakhab al-Lubāb*, I, 46.

56. The date of the event, circa January 22, 1524, is obtained from a chronogram in Abu'l Fadl's *Akbar Nama* (Calcutta, 1886), I, 110.

waited upon him, hoping to be restored to Lahore. Bābur, however, assigned to him only the fiefs of Jullundar and Sultanpur<sup>57</sup>. This was a great disappointment to Daulat Khan whose further attempt to divert Bābur's forces by advising him to send a part of his army to disperse an assemblage of Jilwānī Afghans near Multan<sup>58</sup> also failed. Dilāwar Khan, secretly conveyed the information about his father's intentions to Bābur who arrested both Daulat Khan and his other son, Ghāzī Khan. On being released after some time, they withdrew into the eastern hills. Bābur thereupon bestowed the fief of Sultanpur on Dilāwar Khan, entrusted Dipalpur to 'Ālam Khan, and after appointing his own officers at Lahore, Sialkot and Kalanaur<sup>59</sup>, returned to Kabul. He intended to proceed further to Sirhind, but in view of the situation in the Punjab created by Daulat Khan's hostility, he abandoned the idea<sup>60</sup>.

After Bābur's return, both Daulat Khan and Ghāzī Khan emerged from their retreat and recovered Sultanpur as well as Dipalpur by arresting Dilāwar Khan and expelling 'Ālam Khan. A force of 5000 men which they sent to Sialkot was defeated by the Mughal garrison of Lahore which had moved forward to check their advance. They were successful, however, in recapturing Kalanaur and were concentrating their forces on the banks of the Ravi when news arrived that Bābur had crossed the Indus again.

#### BĀBUR'S TRIUMPH

Bābur launched his final invasion of India on November 27, 1525 with an army calculated at 12,000 including retainers, traders and servants<sup>61</sup>. On his arrival at the river Kabul, he heard of Daulat Khan's movements

57. Situated close to Kapurthala, it was believed to have been founded by Daulat Khan Lodī during Sikandar's reign. Local traditions further associate with it the name of Yusuf Khan who was Governor of that area. *Bābur Nama*, p. 461, N. 3, *JASB*, 1869, p. 89.

58. The name of the place given in *Firishta*, I, 375 and *Khāfī Khan*, I, 47, is Tihara.

59. In the present Gurdaspur district of East Punjab.

60. He might have also received news of the advance of Uzbegs towards Balkh which took him next year across the Hindu kush.

61. *Bābur Nama*, p. 480, "Rashīdī", fol. 221, "Mujmal i-Mufassal" (Bodleian), fol. 32a.

and the massing of Afghan troops near Lahore. He therefore hastened to Sialkot and after regaining its possession, had marched further only a few miles up to Pasrur, when Daulat Khan's army, on hearing of his rapid advance, broke up in fear and scattered, even though they had numbered about 40,000 men<sup>62</sup>. This enabled Bābur to recover Kalanaur and proceed to Milwat in pursuit of the fugitive Afghan leaders who were hiding in the fort there. Daulat Khan capitulated<sup>63</sup> and was sent as a prisoner to the Bhira fort, but he died on the way at Sultanpur. Ghāzī Khan, however, fled and could not be chased<sup>64</sup>, but Dilāwar Khan, who had throughout remained faithful to Bābur, rejoined him at Milwat<sup>65</sup>. A few miles further down near a village called Pehlur, 'Ālam Khan also arrived in a miserable state. Bābur received him honourably and allowed him to accompany the Mughal army to Panipat<sup>66</sup>.

With the liquidation of Afghan resistance in the Punjab, Bābur realized his dream of recovering what he called his ancestral heritage. It was, however, impossible to preserve it without extending his control over Delhi. The failure of the plan to replace Ibrāhīm by the pretender 'Ālam Khan and the treacherous duplicity of Daulat Khan had convinced him of the futility of entering into alliance with the Afghan chiefs. He decided that he must carry out his conquests single handed and that the Afghans must be made to submit. The moment appeared to be favour-

62. "Zubdat al-Twārīkh", fol. 63 a.

63. He was made to bow before Bābur and take off his two proud swords which he had girt round his waist to show his determination to fight against the Mughals. "Ma'dan i-Akhbār-i-Ahmadī", fol. 35 b, *Bābur Nama*, pp. 453, 459.

64. Probably he found his way to Delhi to join Ibrāhīm.

65. As noticed above, he was arrested by Daulat Khan for having disclosed the latter's plans to Bābur, but was later released to enable him to join 'Ālam Khan's forces in their attack on Delhi. Bābur granted him the title of Khān i-Khānān and he was present with him at Panipat as well as at Kanua. After the former's death, he continued to serve under Humāyūn and was taken prisoner during the latter's war against Shir Khan. Having refused to serve the Sur king, he ended his days in prison. *Tuzak-i-Jahāngīrī*, p. 42, *Bābur Nama*, p. 457.

66. He fought for Bābur at Panipat as well as at Kanua and was afterwards sent to Badakhshan, from where he escaped and once more went to Gujerat. He was put to death in 1543 by Sultan Mahmūd III. *Zafar al-Wāliḥ*, p. 326, "Mir' at i-Sikandrī", tr. pp. 276-277. See plate II for his tomb at Tejara in Alwar district.



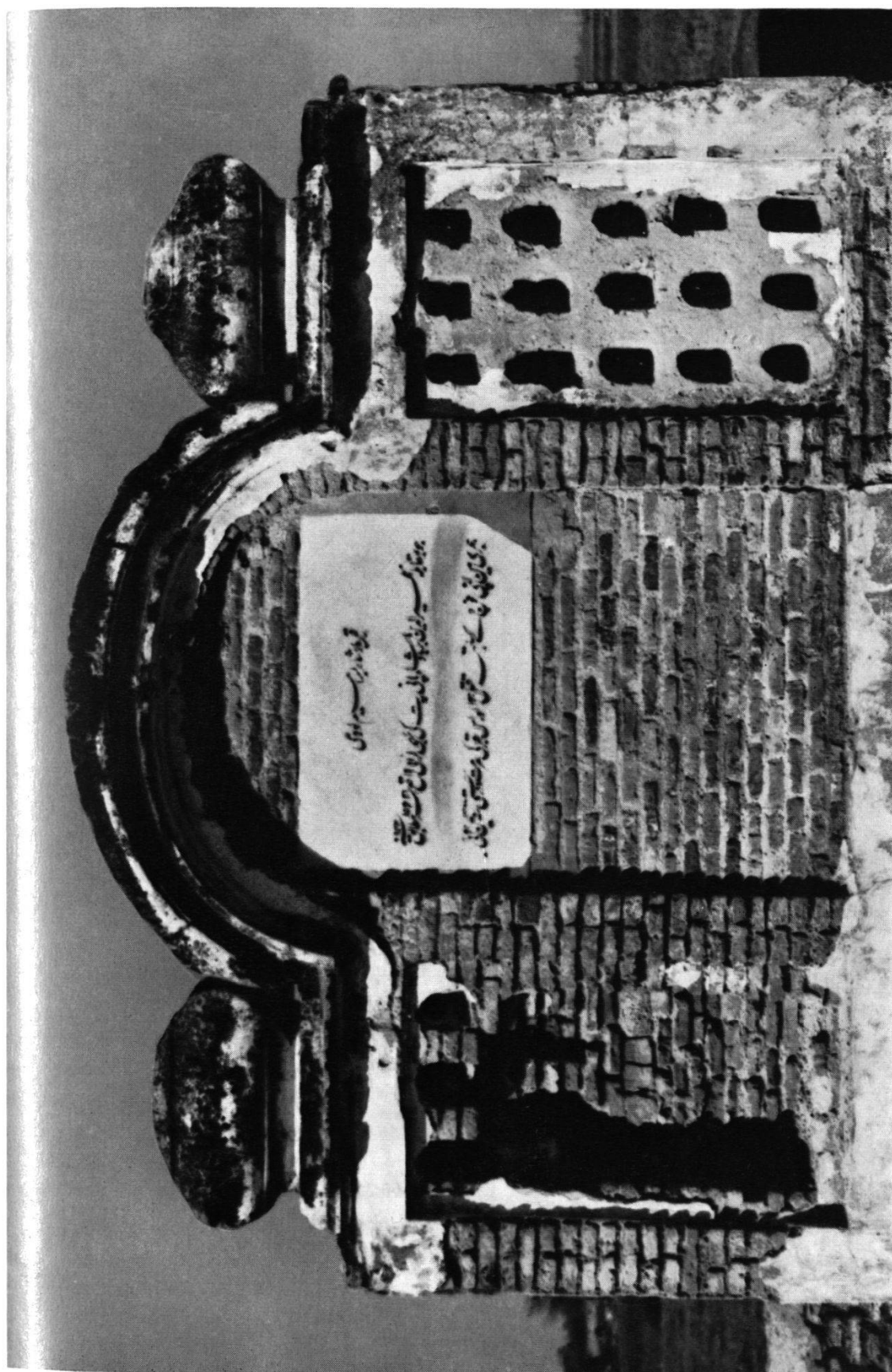


Plate 1. Inscribed marble slab on the back head of the grave of Ibrahim Lodi.





Plate 2. Mausoleum of 'Alā al-Dīn 'Ālam Shab Lodī at Tejara (Alwar).  
(By courtesy: Department of Archaeology, Government of India.)

able and he pressed on with all available forces towards Delhi by way of Rupar and Sirhind.

Sultan Ibrāhīm also advanced by slow marches and news of his movements was regularly reaching Bābur. A contingent from Hisar Firuza under its governor, Hamīd Khan, which was on its way to join the Sultan, was routed by Prince Humāyūn. Likewise another advance force of about 7000 men, sent under Dā'ūd Khan Lodī and Hātim Khan Lodī was defeated by a Mughal force which pursued them up to Ibrāhīm's camp. Marching along Shahabad and Sarsawa<sup>67</sup>, Bābur finally took up his position on the historic field of Panipat at a convenient distance from the Jamna.

Conscious of inferiority in numbers<sup>68</sup>, Bābur concentrated on tactics which could secure "an effective combination between his highly trained cavalry and his new fire arms"<sup>69</sup>. His right was protected by the town of Panipat which was situated close by, while his left was rendered secure by ditches and fallen trees. To shield his musketeers and artillerymen and to strengthen his weak front against an onrush of the enemy's multitudinous force, he erected a long barrier of 700 carts, tied together by twisted raw hide. Between every two carts were shelters from behind which the matchlockmen could fire<sup>70</sup>. It was "a stratagem of aggression rather than of defence", observes Rushbrook-Williams, as "it was intended to hold the enemy along an extended front so that his flanks might be open to attack"<sup>71</sup>. Fortunately for Bābur, the plan worked exactly as he had intended.

67. In the Saharanpur district of U. P.

68. Mirzā 'Alā al-Daulah Qazwīnī in his "Nafāis al-Ma'āthir" (British Museum), fol. 25 b, estimates the strength of Bābur's army at Panipat as 10,000 men. Rushbrook-Williams, however, thinks that the number of effectives could not exceed 8,000. *An empire builder of the sixteenth century* (Allahabad, 1918), p. 132. Gulbadan's estimate of the effectives is 6000 or 7000. See *Humāyūn Nāmah* (Lucknow, C. 1929) p. 13.

Some of the authorities mention the original number of 12,000 men that Bābur had with him at the time of leaving Kabul. *Akbar Nāma*, tr. H. Beveridge (Calcutta, 1907), I, 245, *Firishta*, I, 380, "Mir'at al-Safā", fol. 26 a, Naqsh 'Alī, "Bāgh-i-Ma'ānī" (British Museum), fol. 118 b. A still higher figure of 15,000 is, however, mentioned in *Tabaqāt*, II, 10.

69. *Empire builder*, p. 128.

70. Six or seven dustbags were used for the purpose. "Ma'dan-i-Akhhār-i-Ahmadī", fol. 38.

71. *Empire builder*, p. 134.

Ibrāhīm's army, which was estimated at 100,000 men and 1,000 elephants<sup>72</sup>, lay to the south of Panipat across the road to Delhi. No engagement took place for a week, until Bābur, tired of delay, sent a body of about 5,000 strong to surprise the enemy with a nocturnal attack and to draw them out of their camp. The men, however, lost their way in the darkness and appeared before their opponents at dawn. They were in a critical situation, but while the Afghans were busy with preparations for a general attack, they successfully withdrew. Ibrāhīm having thus been provoked into action, moved forward with all his force on April 20, 1526 and engaged himself in a fierce battle from early morning till mid day. The Mughal army had been arranged in the traditional manner of right wing, centre, left wing and vanguard, but the centre was further strengthened by supporting sub-units at its right and left, while at the farthest points of the two wings, turning parties known as *tulghuma*, had been posted. The Afghans rushed on the Mughal right wing but were dismayed at having to confine their operations on a cramped front wherein they had little room for making proper use of their weight and strength. Their numbers ill served them and with the pressure of the rear ranks their disorder grew. Meanwhile Bābur, taking advantage of their confusion and vacillation, ordered his flanking parties to go round to the enemy's rear and launch a furious attack from there. He detached more troops from the centre and the reserve to support his heavily engaged wings while his artillery men and musketeers were already raining death on the crowded front ranks of the Afghans who were jammed together in a thick mass, unable to advance or retreat<sup>73</sup>. They

72. "Rashīdī", fol. 221a, "Ma'dan-i-Akhabār-i-Ahmadi", fol. 37, "Zubdat al-Twārikh", fol. 65b, *Bābur Nama*, pp. 463, 470.

Qazwīnī mentions double the number of men while Rushbrook-Williams remarks that the effectives could have been only about 40,000. "Nafāis al-Ma'āthir", fol. 25b, *Empire builder*, p. 132.

73. *Empire builder*, p. 137. See also a review of the battle in *Niamatullah's History of the Afghans, Makhzan-i-Afghānī*, tr. N. Roy (Santiniketan, 1958), pp. 203-209. Roy has, however, tried to idolize Ibrāhīm in spite of the latter's failure as a general as well as a monarch, as explained below in the text.

were defeated with terrible slaughter and Ibrāhīm lay dead among a pile of corpses<sup>74</sup>. Bābur's careful combination of cavalry and artillery won the day, and the victory marked a decisive stage in his conquest of Hindustan<sup>75</sup> which was ultimately confirmed by the defeat of the Rajputs at Kanua in March 1527.

#### THE END OF THE LODIS

The battle of Panipat was an event of great political significance in the history of India, for it put an end to the rule of the Lodī Afghans and brought in a new foreign conqueror whose successors occupied the throne of Delhi for about three centuries.

The Afghan defeat in 1526 might be ascribed to Ibrāhīm's outmoded and medieval methods of warfare which did not avail against Bābur's superior tactics and his powerful artillery. The Afghan army, being poorly disciplined, was not capable of readjusting itself to changed situations such as the one they faced at Panipat and consequently their vast numbers and their elephants did not prove a reliable source of strength. They were further handicapped by the paucity of experienced generals whereas their opponents could count on a number of veterans. Besides, Bābur was himself a born leader and an experienced strategist, while his adversary lacked the qualities of a general. Ibrāhīm, though personally brave, was an inexperienced youth, careless and uncalculating in his movements<sup>76</sup>. He had made no arrangements for intelligence, whereas

74. Bābur calculated the number of dead between 15,000 and 16,000, although he heard from the people that it could be even 50,000. Ibrāhīm's severed head was brought to him by one Tāhir Tibrī. *Bābur Nama*, p. 475.

It is stated in *Shāhī*, p. 98, that Bābur had Ibrāhīm's body identified through Dilāwar Khan and arranged an honourable burial. "Tārīkh-i-Khān Jahānī", fol. 128a, adds that Ibrāhīm's tomb lay to the west of Panipat along the road to Lahore and was visited by many people. See plate I.

75. An attempt made by Ibrāhīm's mother to poison Bābur through some Indian cooks also failed as Bābur vomited out the poisoned food. "Mujmal-i-Mufasssal" (Bod.), fols. 32-34, *Bābur Nama*, p. 541. According to Gulbadan, however, the effect of the poison persisted till Bābur's fatal illness in December, 1530. See *Humāyūn Nāmah*, pp. 30-31.

76. *Bābur Nama*, p. 470.

the Mughals received regular news of his preparations<sup>77</sup> sufficiently in advance to enable them to make counter-arrangements. He did not know anything of the enemy's tactical manoeuvres, the disposition of their forces and even of an intended attack by five thousand armed Mughal soldiers who raided his camp at day-break on April 19, 1526. It was their appearance early in the morning that stirred his vast army out of their stupor, although the provocative attacks which small Mughal bodies of men had made every day during the preceding week and had caused some casualties, had been ignored. Had the Afghan army or even their vanguard been in a state of readiness on April 19, and had Ibrāhīm, like Bābur, employed efficient scouts to bring him advance information of the nocturnal Mughal attack, particularly when the enemy had lost their way, he could have scored an easy victory by destroying that wandering detached force which comprised about half of Bābur's men. The rest of the enemy force would have either fled or could have been defeated in a straight fight. Even if this inaction were excused, the ill-planned offensive which Ibrāhīm launched on April 20, 1526, was undertaken without regard to the enemy's strategic arrangements which could be rendered ineffective either by somehow compelling the latter to move forward or by an enveloping movement of his own. He could have dashed forth at the outset without waiting for a week to prevent the enemy from entrenching themselves. If on the other hand he chose to camp at a distance of about 12 miles from the invaders, he should have, by some device, incited them to leave their position of vantage rather than move out of his own camp, for delay was not so harmful to him as it was to Bābur. But the most fortunate of the preliminaries, according to Abu'l Fadl, which the heavens arranged for Bābur, was Ibrāhīm's advance to give battle<sup>78</sup>.

However thoughtless Ibrāhīm's action in launching a direct attack was, he ultimately appears to have fallen short of success by a lack of a

77. Bābur's spies would enter Ibrāhīm's camp and collect all information. "Zubdat al-Twārikh", fol. 64b.

78. *Akbar Nama*, tr. I, 242.



few thousand more men who could have turned the day against Bābur<sup>79</sup>. He should not have been content with only 100,000 soldiers at that crucial time, when he already knew of Bābur's success in the Punjab and the latter's determination to conquer Delhi. To preserve his throne as well as his own life, he should have raised the largest army he could procure and should also have arranged for maximum reinforcements. If retreat from Panipat were inevitable, he should have prepared a second line of defence at Delhi and a third one further down at Agra, for, at both of these places he had the protection of forts.

In Bābur's view, Ibrāhīm, in proportion to his territory, could have mustered an army of 500,000 strong<sup>80</sup>. If rebellions in his kingdom had necessitated the deployment of a part of it elsewhere, he could have made up the deficiency by recruiting a sufficient number of hired retainers, but that could only have been done if he were willing to disgorge his hoarded treasure. Unfortunately, his ruling passion was avarice which proved as dangerous as the enemy on the battlefield. Even though he had in his hands the treasure of two forebears, and if he had wished, he could have doubled or trebled his strength, yet he would neither satisfy his brave troops nor part with his treasures<sup>81</sup>. It is impossible to believe that he had under-rated Bābur's strength, but he was, perhaps, over-confident of his own and his recent victory over 'Ālam Khan might also have given him undue grounds for optimism.

The basic factor, however, which was responsible for the overthrow of the Lodīs, was the open rift between the nobility and Ibrāhīm, who made it unbridgeable as the time passed. His policy of crushing down the Amīrs, however necessary from his own point of view, was ill-timed

79. *Empire builder*, p. 132.

80. *Bābur Nama*, p. 470.

81. The Afghan treasure in the Agra palace which Bābur examined on May 12, 1526, exceeded all calculations. It was generously distributed among his followers in India while large sums were sent home to be given to the people over there. Offerings were also sent to the holy places at Mecca, Medina, Samarqand and Khurasan and according to Mirza Haidar, "all the world from Rum to Khitāi benefited". "Rashīdī", fol. 221a, *Bābur Nama*, p. 523. See also *Humāyūn Nāmāh*, p. 13.



and showed a lack of vision in as much as he failed to realize its implications at a time when his kingdom was threatened by invasion from two quarters. The powerful Rajput confederacy, led by Rana Sanga, was ready to seize the earliest opportunity of putting an end to the Sultanate, while Bābur, even before Ibrāhīm's accession to the throne, had set his eyes on that part of the Indian territory which he regarded as his Turkish heritage<sup>82</sup>. When he crossed the Indus for the first time in 1519, he had provided himself with a store of artillery and had employed an Ottoman expert, Ustad 'Alī Qulī, as his master of ordnance<sup>83</sup>. A few years later he obtained the services of another Turkish technician, Mustafa, who controlled the corps of musketeers at Panipat. Ibrāhīm ought to have taken note of Bābur's preparations and instead of wasting his time in his experiments with absolutism, he should have done everything possible to unite his Afghan followers and should have further taken steps to train his armies, procure equipment that could match Bābur's and build strong defences along the Indus and the borders of Mewar. On the contrary, his actions resulted in strengthening his enemies since his hostility towards his prominent nobles compelled them, in the interest of their own safety, to seek alliance both with Rana Sanga as well as Bābur. It was Ibrāhīm's crowning act of folly that he failed to draw a lesson from the events of his war against Mewar during the course of which some of his nobles had deserted him in favour of his Rajput enemy. Miān Husain Farmūlī could not only have saved Chanderī, but would have also recovered for the Sultan some more Rajput strongholds. His brutal murder shook the kingdom to its foundations<sup>84</sup>. On the one hand, Chanderī was lost and

82. "From that date 910 A.H. (A.D. 1504) at which the country of Kabul was conquered, down to now, 932 A.H. (A.D. 1526)", writes Bābur, "(my) desire for Hindustan has been constant." At Kabul he had also received an invitation from Rana Sanga to invade the Delhi Sultanate which shows that Ibrāhīm's two foreign enemies were ready to join hands to bring about his fall. *Bābur Nama*, pp. 478, 529.

83. The first demonstration of his newly acquired artillery was made at the time of his attack on Bajaur. *Bābur Nama*, p. 383.

84. All the authorities are critical of Ibrāhīm's conduct and some of them attribute his cruel deeds to his unbalanced state of mind. Muhammad Kabīr remarks that the Sultan killed

on the other, the rest of the important nobles began to prepare for a serious rebellion. The civil war which followed was bound to help the enemy. Ibrāhīm paid heavily for his inability to understand the nature of Afghan hegemony and the imperative need of preserving the Afghan soldiers who alone could be relied upon in a conflict against non-Muslims or non-Afghan Muslims. He had wasted the lives of thousands of Afghans in his domestic squabbles and it was their loss which ultimately weakened his resistance to the Mughal invader. After the fall of the Punjab, he is said to have sent a conciliatory message to Daulat Khan, who, in his reply, recounted the tale of the Sultan's cruelties and concluded with the words: "I have not brought the Mughals, but your unworthy actions have<sup>85</sup>." This admonition epitomizes the tragedy of Ibrāhīm's career.

his prominent nobles under the influence of excessive drinking. "Afsāna-yi-Shāhān", fols. 52 a, 65 a, "Mushtāqī", p. 118, *Shāhī*, p. 84, "Tārīkh-i-Khān Jahānī", fol. 128 a. Hasan 'Alī Khan has narrated the story of the Royal Staff-bearer, Sayyid Nasīr Khan, whose daughter was forcibly taken by Sultan Ibrāhīm as a wife. In order to wreak vengeance on the Sultan, he approached Bābur, and agreed to return to Ibrāhīm's court as a spy of the Mughals. "T. Daulat-i-Shir Shahī", text, p. 7. According to *Mir'at-i-Sikandarī* (tr. Bayley, pp. 278, 279, 321) the nobles would have preferred even a Guyrat prince to Ibrāhīm.

85. *Shāhī*, pp. 92-93.