

## Tabaqat-i-Nasiri

**Tabaqat-i-Nasiri** a medieval text by Minhaj-i-Siraj. It is an important source book for the reconstruction of the history of foundation of Muslim rule in Bengal. The history of the first fifty years of Muslim rule in Bengal is found only in this text.

Minhaj's family originally belonged to Jurjan, on the northwest frontier of Ghor. He was born in about 1193 AD and his father was a Qazi of the Ghorid sultans. Minhaj came to India at the age of 34 and by that time he was fully educated according to the standard of the time and had some experience of diplomatic mission. He came to the court of Nasiruddin Qubacha at Uchch, who appointed him a Qazi. After Sultan Shamsuddin ILTUTMISH had occupied Multan from the hands of Qubacha, Minhaj moved to Delhi.

At Delhi Minhaj found a favourable atmosphere for his genius to flourish and he occupied the posts of Imam, Qazi, Khatib etc and performed his duties efficiently. He came in close touch with the sultans of Delhi, and occupied various posts like principal of madrasas, imam, khatib, qazi and sadr-i-jahan. While holding the office of Qazi of Delhi in the reign of Sultan Nasiruddin Mahmud he wrote his famous book *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, and dedicated it to the reigning sultan. In 1259 AD in his late sixties, he promises to continue his narratives further if health permitted him, but his hopes were not fulfilled. Either his life soon came to an end, or some portion of his book containing the history later to 1259 AD has not come down to posterity.

*Tabaqat-i-Nasiri* is the only authentic source for the history of Bengal from the conquest of Muhammad BAKHTIYAR KHALJI till 1259 AD, when it comes to an end. In the *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, the author also gives an idea about the development of Muslim society in Bengal. .

## **Ziauddin Barani**

Barani was born to a Muslim family in 1285 in which his father, uncle, and grandfather all worked in high government posts under the Sultan of Delhi. His family was natives of Meerut and Bulandsahar. His maternal grandfather Husam-ud-Din, was an important officer of Ghiyas ud din Balban and his father Muwayyid-ul-Mulk held the post of *naib* of Arkali Khan, the son of Jalaluddin Firuz Khalji. His uncle Qazi Ala-ul-Mulk was the *Kotwal* (police chief) of Delhi during the reign of Ala-ud-Din Khalji. He wrote two pieces dealing with government, religion, and history.

### **Fatwa-i-Jahandari**

The *Fatwa-i-Jahandari* is a work containing the political ideals to be pursued by a Muslim ruler in order to earn religious merit and the gratitude of his subjects. It is written as *nasihat* (advices) for the Muslim kings, is a classical work on statecraft which can be compared with Kautilya's *Arthashastra* and Machiavelli's *Prince*.

The work delves into aspects of religion and government and the meeting of those two, as well as political philosophy. At the same time, the book makes it clear that the kings of the Delhi Sultanate did not hold similar views. Barani rues that they honoured and favoured the Hindus, and had granted them the status of *dhimmi*s (protected persons). The Muslim kings appointed Hindus to high posts, including governorships. Barani further laments that the Muslim kings were pleased with the prosperity of Hindus in their capital Delhi, even when poor Muslims worked for them and begged at their doors.

### **Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi**

The *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi* (Firuz Shah's History) (1357) was an interpretation of the history of the Delhi Sultanate up to the then-present Firuz Shah Tughlaq. This interpretation noted that the sultans who followed the rules of Barani had succeeded in their endeavors while those that did not, or those who had sinned, met the Nemesis. Barani is an unfair narrator and generally considered a very unreliable source.

But, though Barani refers many times to the sources of information, he did not consult his contemporary works. This resulted in the sketchy description of Ala-ud-Din Khalji's wars in Chittor, Ranthambhor and Malwa and the Deccan campaigns of Malik Kafur. The later medieval historians, Nizam-ud-Din Ahmad, Badaoni, Ferishta and Haji-ud-Dabir depended upon the *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi* for their account of history of the period covered in this work. .

## **Ab'ul Hasan Yamīn ud-Dīn Khusrau**

Amir Khusrao (1253 – 1325) was a Sufi musician, poet and scholar from India. He was an iconic figure in the cultural history of the Indian subcontinent. He was a mystic and a spiritual disciple of Nizamuddin Auliya of Delhi, India. He wrote poetry primarily in Persian, but also in Hindavi. Amīr Khusrau was born in 1253 in Patiyali, Kasganj district, in modern-day Uttar Pradesh, India. He grew up in Kesh, a small town near Samarkand in what is now Uzbekistan. When he was a young man, the region was despoiled and ravaged by Genghis Khan's invasion of Central Asia, and much of the population fled to India which was a relatively safe place, they sent representations to the Sultan of distant Delhi seeking refuge which was granted, and the group then travelled to Delhi. After Khusrau's grandfather's death, Khusrau joined the army of Malik Chajju, a nephew of the reigning Sultan, Ghiyas ud-Din Balban. This brought his poetry to the attention of the Assembly of the Royal Court where he was honored.

Nasir ud-Din Bughra Khan, the second son of Balban, was invited to listen to Khusrau. He was impressed and became Khusrau's patron in 1276. When Balban's eldest son, Khan Muhammad heard about Khusrau he invited him to his court. Later Jalal ud-Din Firuz Khalji appreciated his poetry and invited him to his court. Khusrau was honoured and respected in his court and was given the title "Amir". After Jalal ud-Din Firuz, Ala ud-Din Khalji ascended to the throne of Delhi in 1296. Khusrau wrote about Ala ud-Din's construction works, wars and administrative services. Ala ud-Din Khalji was highly pleased with his work and rewarded him handsomely. In 1310 Khusrau became a disciple of Sufi saint of the Chishti Order, Nizamuddin Auliya. In 1320 Ghiyath al-Din Tughlaq became Sultan and thus began the Tughlaq dynasty. In 1321 Khusrau began to write a historic masnavi named *Tughlaq Nama* (Book of the Tughlaqs) about the reign of Ghiyath al-Din Tughlaq and that of other Tughlaq rulers.

Khusrau died in October 1325, six months after the death of Nizamuddin Auliya. Khusrau's tomb is next to that of his spiritual master in the Nizamuddin Dargah in Delhi.

### Important Works of Amir Khusrao

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*Miftah ul-Futuh* (Key to the Victories), 1290 - Khusrau's second masnavi, in praise of the victories of Jalal ud-Din Firuz Khalji.

*Khaza'in ul-Futuh* (The Treasures of Victories), 1296 - details of Ala ud-Din Khalji's construction works, wars, and administrative services.

*Khamsa-e-Khusrau* (Khamsa of Khusrau), 1298 - a quintet (khamsa) of five masnavis: *Matla ul-Anwar*, *Khusrau-Shirin*, *Laila-Majnun*, *Aina-e-Sikandari* and *Hasht-Bihisht...*

*Nuh Sipihr* (Nine Skies), 1318 - Khusrau's masnavi on the reign of Qutb ud-Din Mubarak Shah Khalji, which includes vivid perceptions of India and its culture.

*Afzal ul-Fawaid* (Greatest of Blessings), 1319 - a work of prose containing the teachings of Nizamuddin Auliya.

*Tughlaq Nama* (Book of the Tughlaqs), 1320 - a historic masnavi of the reign of the Tughlaq dynasty.

*Ashiq* - Khusro pays a glowing tribute to Hindi language and speaks of its rich qualities.<sup>[40]</sup> It is a masnavi that describes the tragedy of Deval Devi. The story has been backed by Isaami.

## **Ibn Battuta**

Ibn Battuta was from a family that produced a number of Muslim judges (qadis). He received the traditional juristic and literary education in his native town of Tangier. In 1325, at the age of 21, he started his travels by undertaking the pilgrimage (hajj) to Mecca. At first his purpose was to fulfill that religious duty and to broaden his education by studying under famous scholars in Egypt, Syria, and the Hejaz (western Arabia). Later hearing of the sultan of Delhi, Muhammad ibn Tughluq (ruled 1325–51), and his fabulous generosity to Muslim scholars, he decided to try his luck at his court.

He arrived at the frontiers of India on the Indus River on September 12, 1333. Ibn Battuta witnessed all the glories and setbacks of the sultan and his rule, fearing daily for his life as he saw many friends fall victim to the suspicious despot. His portrait of Muhammad is an unusually fine piece of psychological insight and mirrors faithfully the author's mixed feelings of terror and sympathy.

Notwithstanding all his precautions, Ibn Battuta at last fell into disgrace, and only good fortune saved his life. Gaining favour again, he was appointed the sultan's envoy to the Chinese emperor in 1342.

He left Delhi without regrets, but his journey was full of other dangers: not far away from Delhi his party was waylaid by Hindu insurgents, and the traveler barely escaped with his life. On the Malabar Coast of southwestern India he became involved in local wars and was finally shipwrecked near Calicut

(now Kozhikode), losing all his property and the gifts for the Chinese emperor. Fearing the wrath of the sultan, Ibn Battuta chose to go to the Maldiv Islands, where he spent nearly two years. Toward the end of 1353 Ibn Battuta returned to Morocco and, at the sultan's request, dictated his reminiscences to a writer, Ibn Juzayy (died 1355), who embellished the simple prose of Ibn Battuta with an ornate style and fragments of poetry. After that he passes from sight. He is reported to have held the office of qadi in a town in Morocco before his death, details of which remain uncertain. It has been suggested that he died in 1368/69 or 1377 and was buried in his native town of Tangier.

## **Rihlah**

His Rihlah, as his book is commonly known, is an important document shedding light on many aspects of the social, cultural, and political history of a great part of the Muslim world. Ibn Battuta described his experiences with a human approach rarely encountered in official historiography. His accounts of his travels in Asia Minor, East and West Africa, the Maldives, and India form a major source for the histories of those areas. On the whole, Ibn Battuta is reliable; only his alleged journey to Bulgaria was proved to be invented, and there are some doubts concerning the East Asian part of his travels. A few grave and several minor discrepancies in the chronology of his travels are due more to lapses in his memory than to intentional fabrication. A number of formerly uncertain points (such as travels in Asia Minor and the visit to Constantinople) have since been cleared away by contemporary research and the discovery of new corroborative sources.

Another interesting aspect of the Rihlah is the gradual revealing of the character of Ibn Battuta himself; in the course of the narrative the reader may learn the opinions and reactions of an average middle-class Muslim of the 14th century. He was deeply rooted in orthodox Islam but, like many of his contemporaries, oscillated between the pursuit of its legislative formalism and an adherence to the mystic path and succeeded in combining both. He did not offer any profound philosophy but accepted life as it came to him, leaving to posterity a true picture of himself and his times.