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## LIFE AND CONTRIBUTION OF MALIK KAFUR: LEADING NOBLE OF ALAUDDIN KHALJI.

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The rise of Khaljis to power in 1290 brought important changes in the political structure of Delhi Sultanate which had its explicit impact on the composition of the ruling elite of the state and sought support from Turkish as well as Indians to occupy the throne.<sup>1</sup> They did not give precedence to lineage in the army and did not make it a criterion for the appointment.

One of the leading nobles of Alauddin Khalji's period was undoubtedly the slave named Malik Kafur whom Barani has put under the third category of nobles who brought destination of the Alai government.<sup>2</sup> However, contemporary chroniclers like Barani and Amir Khusrau have not mentioned his early life and career, but Isami has traced him as of Mathura descent<sup>3</sup> who spent his young age as a slave of a wealthy merchant of Khambayat, Gujarat.<sup>4</sup> He was a Hindu convert in the service of Khawaja of Khambayat.<sup>5</sup> However, Barani has mentioned that during the third year of Alauddin's reign, he nominated his two generals namely Nusrat Khan and Ulugh Khan for the expedition of Gujarat.<sup>6</sup> They ransacked the entire territories of Gujarat and brought much valuable treasures, which included elephants, women and daughters who fell into the hands of Muslim army.<sup>7</sup> Nusrat Khan went to Khambayat, forcibly took large sums of money, gems and other valuables from the merchants and also forcibly took Malik Kafur Hazardinari.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Siddiqui, *Authority and Kingship*, p.96.

<sup>2</sup> Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi*, p. 206.

<sup>3</sup> Simon Digby, "Malik Kafur" in Evan Donzel; B Lewis; Charles Pellat (eds.) *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, ended Vol.4, Brill.pub., p.419

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p.419

<sup>5</sup> Herman Kulka; Dietmer Rothermand, *A History of India*, 1998, p.160.

<sup>6</sup> Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi*, p.154.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p.154.

<sup>8</sup> Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi*, p.154, Elliot and Dowson, Vol. III, p.163, K.S. Lal, *History of Khaljis*, p.86, see also K.S. Ayanger, *South India and Her Mohammedan Invaders*, p.84; Manekshah Sorah Shah, *A History of Gujarat; Including a Survey of its Chief Architectural Monuments and Inscriptions*, Vol.1, Longman, Green and Co.1938, p.13

During the entire period of his services in Khalji regime, Malik Kafur received many honours and titles, despite being a rich slave. Though Barani has vehemently criticised him throughout in his *Tarikh*, he had many disagreements against him and used words like imperfect nature, infamous, corrupt and ungrateful fellow.<sup>9</sup> However, contrary to Barani, Amir Khusrau made laudatory tunes to describe Malik Naib during the reign of Alauddin Khalji.<sup>10</sup> He has been titled as Kafur which means camphor.<sup>11</sup> During Mabar expedition, Amir Khusrau says that the preceding Sultans never reached the distant land when he sent his general, Malik *Naib Barbak*, to the distant land of Mabar, and used the title of Izz uddullah for him.<sup>12</sup> Amir Khusrau referred him as Sah-Kash, the winner of the three campaigns against South.<sup>13</sup> He got the title of *Hazardinari* because he was purchased by an Arab merchant for thousand *dinars*.<sup>14</sup> Similarly, Ibn Battuta has referred him as *al-Alfi*, the Arabic equivalent of *Hazardinari*, in reference to the price paid for him.<sup>15</sup> Similarly, during the Arangal expedition, Amir Khusrau treated him as wise as Buzurchmehr.<sup>16</sup>

There is no evidence of his early appointment during the reign of Alauddin Khalji.<sup>17</sup> Although both Barani and Isami have mentioned his position and post subsequently. We have reference that he held the post of *Akhurbeg*.<sup>18</sup> Barani has mentioned the township of Rapri as his *Iqta*.<sup>19</sup> After the death of Sultan Alauddin, he played an important role in King Making. He summoned all *Maliks* and *Amirs* and placed Malik Shahabuddin, a minor boy of six years old, in place of Khazir Khan, the heir apparent on the throne.<sup>20</sup> According to Barani, he himself took the affairs of the state without any help from others.<sup>21</sup> During this short period, he changed the structure of the rules and regulations made by Alauddin. Thus, he acted in many capacities from slave to King maker throughout his career under the Khalji's.

In order to bring the southern part of India under control, Sultan Alauddin sent Malik Kafur in 709/1309 along with other nobles and *Amirs* towards Deogir.<sup>22</sup> Malik Kafur plundered and ransacked Deogir and brought it under control and from that day, Ram Deo continued to be loyal, and sent regular tributes to Delhi.<sup>23</sup> Due to the influence of Malik Kafur, Ram Deo directed his people to be obedient as the people of Delhi.<sup>24</sup> Similarly, in 711/1311, Kakatiya kingdom, along with its capital at Warangal, was brought under control.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi*, p.206.

<sup>10</sup> Amir Khusrau *Khazain-ul-Futuh*, p. XVII.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p.32.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 80.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p.52, 57.fn.,4

<sup>14</sup> Shanti Ali Sadiq, *The African Dispersal in Deccan: From Medieval to Modern Times*, Orient Black swan 1996, p.35; Romila Thapar, *A History of India*, Penguin Books, 1990, p. 342.

<sup>15</sup> Jackson, Peter, *The Delhi Sultanate*, pp.175-77.

<sup>16</sup> Amir Khusrau, *Khazain-ul-Futuh*, p. 56, fn., 2.

<sup>17</sup> Jackson, Peter, *The Delhi Sultanate*, p. 172.

<sup>18</sup> Amir Khusrau, *Khazain-ul-Futuh*, p. 28; Jackson, Peter, *The Delhi Sultanate*, p.175; Iqtadar Alam Khan, *Historical Dictionary of Medieval India*, Scarecrow, 2008, p.28.

<sup>19</sup> Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi* p. 201; Jackson, Peter, *The Delhi Sultanate*, p. 175; K.S Lal, *History of Khaljis*, p.220.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p.229.; Abraham Early, *The Age of Wrath: A History of Delhi Sultanate*, Penguin Books, 2015, pp.177-78; Banarsi Prasad Saxena, p.425

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p.229.

<sup>22</sup> Amir Khusrau, *Khazain-ul-Futuh*, p. 115; Banarsi Prasad Saxena, p. 401.

<sup>23</sup> Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi*, p.200.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p.200.

<sup>25</sup> Amir Khusrau, *Khazain-ul-Futuh*, p. 127; Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi*, p.200.

In 1311, Kafur also besieged Dwarsumudra, the Hoysala capital, whose King Ballala surrendered his wealth and agreed to pay an annual tribute to the Delhi Sultanate.<sup>26</sup> It was on account of his integrity and strength that the prestige and power of Sultanate were left in Deccan till the death of Sultan.<sup>27</sup> During the Southern campaign, Malik Kafur brought much stability to the Sultanate. K. S. Lal has quoted Vassaf that brilliant achievements of Malik Kafur in Deccan eclipsed the victories of Mahmud Ghazni in Hindustan.<sup>28</sup> Malik Kafur not only proved to be a great military general but also an efficient administrator as well. During his governorship of Deogir for two years until he was summoned to Delhi, the territory was administered with compassion and competence.<sup>29</sup>

Sultan Alauddin had much attraction towards Malik Kafur. According to Amir Khusrau, after the success of Arangal, when he brought much spoils, and he was the object of unprecedented royal favours.<sup>30</sup> Barani says that the Sultan promoted him above all friends and helpers and Kafur held the highest place in his esteem.<sup>31</sup> Modern scholars like Ruth Vanita and Saleem Kidwai believe that Alauddin and Kafur were in a homosexual relationship.<sup>32</sup> However, Banarsi Prasad Saxena has refuted the view of the above historians. He believes that their closeness was not sexual.<sup>33</sup> During the last four or five years of his reign, Alauddin was infatuated with Malik Naib. There was no element of homosexuality in Alauddin's character. Apart from the fact that since Malik Kafur, unlike other officers, had no family or followers, the Sultan had great trust in him. Similarly, Abraham Early has argued that Alauddin preferred Kafur because his advice always proved appropriate and fit for the occasion.<sup>34</sup>

Malik Kafur developed cordial relations with Khawaja Haji, *Diwan-i-Arz-i Mamalik* and was accompanied by him against Deogir.<sup>35</sup> He remained under his guidance and consultation during the said campaign.<sup>36</sup> He also developed good relations with Kamaluddin Gurg, whom he sent to Gujarat to suppress the rebellion after the killing of Alp Khan by Malik Kafur.<sup>37</sup> However, a deep animosity developed between Alp Khan who was the father-in-law of Khazir Khan and Malik Kafur got him killed.<sup>38</sup>

Besides being a military general, he is credited with the architectural contribution during his tenure. We have some references, both literary as well as non-literary sources, which suggest his contribution to the architecture. The Persian inscription dated 1320. A.D. during the reign of Qutbuddin Mubarak Khalji records the construction of a mosque by the order of Malik Kafur. Similarly, the earliest known epigraph of the town of Rapri dated 1312 A.D. refers the construction of an *Idgah* under the governorship and administration

<sup>26</sup> Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi*, p.202.; *Khazain-ul-Futuh*, pp.117-18.

<sup>27</sup> K. S. Lal, *History of Khaljis*, p.217.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p.219.

<sup>29</sup> Shanti, Sadiq Ali, *The African Dispersal in Deccan*, p. 38.

<sup>30</sup> Amir Khusrau, *Khazain-ul-Futuh*, p.118.; Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi*, p. 202.

<sup>31</sup> Shanti, Ali Sadiq, *The African Dispersal in Deccan*, p.35.

<sup>32</sup> R. Vanita, S. Kidwai, *Same Sex Love in India*, Springs, see published place, 2000, p. 132; Nilanjan Sarkar, *Forbidden Privileges and History Writing in Medieval India*.

<sup>33</sup> Banarsi, Prasad, Saxena, p. 421.

<sup>34</sup> Abraham Early, *The Age of Wrath; A History of the Delhi Sultanate*, Penguin Books, 2015, p.178.

<sup>35</sup> Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi*, p.199.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 200.

<sup>37</sup> Iqtadar Alam Khan, *Historical Dictionary of Medieval India*, p.85.

<sup>38</sup> Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi*, p. 227.

(*Naubat-i-ayalat*) of the servant of his Majesty (*Khudai-gani*) Kafur Sultani, the Royal Slave.<sup>39</sup> Malik Kafur, along with Khawaji, built a mosque of store and plaster in the Sit Band Ranwaisar which lies in Caranatic, and the mosque is known as Majidi Alai.<sup>40</sup>

About the death of Malik Kafur, Barani writes:

“About five days after the death of Sultan Alauddin they i.e., Payakas removed the ignoble Malik Naib and avenged the blinding of Khazir Khan and Shadi Khan. When the night in which Malik Naib was killed and the morning dawned and the Maliks, *Amirs*, dignitaries and holders of various offices arrived at palace and found that ignoble wretch killed and thrown into dust. They offered thanksgiving to Almighty and congratulated each other.<sup>41</sup> The *Payak's* openly said that they killed Malik Naib and put Sultan Qutbuddin on the throne<sup>42</sup> for the tomb of Malik Kafur.

By the end of 14<sup>th</sup> century Alauddin Khalji conquered almost the whole of North India and the greed for gold and lust for power prompted the Sultan to invade Southern Kingdom<sup>43</sup>. When Malik Kafur plundered and ransacked Deogir, he brought wealth from the treasury and 17 elephants along with much booty to the capital Delhi.<sup>44</sup> Similarly, from the conquest of Mabar and Dhursumudra, Barani says, “The old men of Delhi were unanimous in saying that so much booty, elephants and gold that was brought from the conquest of Mabar and Dhursumudra had never been brought to Delhi before in any age and at any time. No book of history has also recorded that in any age so much gold and elephants have ever reached Delhi.”<sup>45</sup> Amir Khusrau has mentioned that Malik Kafur presented a lot of wealth which included twelve elephants, twenty elephants, twenty thousand horse, ninety-six thousand, *mans* of gold, equivalent to about ten Karores of *Tankas*, and caskets of pearls and jewels beyond all computations.<sup>46</sup>

During the Arrangal expedition, Barani has mentioned a lot of wealth taken from Ludra Deo. In the words of Barani, Malik Kafur took possession of the treasures that had accumulated over the years, besides 100 elephants, 7000 horses, and other precious items from Ludra Deo.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>39</sup> EIM, 1917-18, P.30; Archaeology Survey Report (ASR), Vol. IV, 1871-72. Another undated inscription mentions the construction of Jami' masjid at Rapri. Cf. EIM, 1917-18, pp. 36-37.

<sup>40</sup> Amir Khusrau, *Khazain-ul-Futuh*, p.119.

<sup>41</sup> Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi*, p. 232.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 232.

<sup>43</sup> K. S. Lal, *History of Khaljis*, p.180.

<sup>44</sup> Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi*, p. 199-200.; K. S Lal, *History of Khaljis*, p.192.

<sup>45</sup> Amir Khusrau, *Khazain-ul-Futuh*, p.117.

<sup>46</sup> Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi*, p. 120.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 202.; Krishna Aiyangar, *South India and her Mohammedan Invaders*, p.87.;