

**Title: Futuhus Salatin and Tarikh-i- FirujShahi; Two great Works of the Sultanate Period, A critical Study.**

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**Abstract:** *Historiography is such a domain of human knowledge where the Muslims contributed a lot due to their interest in the field. While taking in to account Muslim historiography, there are two prominent schools, the first one is the Arab historiography and the second one is that of the Persian historiography. In India starting from the establishment of the Muslim rule in the beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> century to the fall of the great Mughal Empire the scholars took up the tradition of Persian historiography and contributed a large number of historical documents. The scholars who came from Central Asia and Persia enriched the historical literature in the India soil by writing the histories of the Sulatans and the Badshahs. To achieve fame for themselves, pleasing their patrons, for the edification of their contemporaries and the future generation, for preserving the memory of the achievements of the Muslim rulers, etc were some of the reasons which attracted the writers to write histories. Although from 12<sup>th</sup> to the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century less number of historical books were written in comparison to the books in the fields of religion, philosophy and other subjects, yet they are very much important to deal with the historical events and consequences of that time. In which they were written. “Tarikh-i- Firuj Shahi” of Barani and the “Futuhus Salatin” of Isami are two important contributions in the field of development of Persian historiography in India during the Sultanate Period particularly during the rule of Tughlaq dynasty. In this paper I shall try to bring into light the importance of these two great works which provides us with ample information on the history and other aspects of the Tughlaq period.*

**Key Words:** *Futuhus Salatin, Tarikh-i- Firuj Shahi, history, culture, Sultanate etc.*

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### Introduction:

In India the tradition of historiography was very much absent from ancient times. The “*Rajtarangini*” of Kalhan which deals with the history of Kashmir is the only such example which can be included in the tradition of history writing with the establishment of Muslim rule in India in the beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> century A.D. the process of history writing started. With the Turkish rulers the Muslim scholars paved their way to India and they brought with them the tradition of history writing and the foundation of Persian historiography was laid down in India. Hasan Nijami’s *Tajul Maasir*, Minhaj’s *Tabakat-i- Nasiri*, Fakhr-i- Mudabbir’s *Adabul HARb Wash Shuja*, Ziauddin Barani’s *Tarikh-i- Firuj Shahi* and Isami’s *Futuhus Salatin* are some of the monumental accounts of Indo-Persian historiography. All these valuable books gives us details of socio-political and religious trends of the period in which they were written. This contribution of Muslims in India is rightly remarked by Prof. Dodwell. He said, “the advent of Islam begins a great series of Indian chronicles. The Muslim chronicles are far superior to our own (British) medieval chronicles. They were written for the most part not by monks but by men of affairs, after by contemporaries, who had taken part in the events they recount... the Muslim period is one of the shadows.”<sup>1</sup> Muslim historians wrote the history of India from their own point of view and understanding of the Sultanate period. Peter Hardy opined that, “The period from the beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> century to the middle of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, may, however be described as a colonial period in Indo-Muslim historiography, a period where Muslim historians remained aloof within the ‘Civil Lines’ of Muslim historical writings the modes and manners of Arabic and Persian historians back at home’ in their own records of the adventures among the ‘natives’ of their fellow Indian Muslim political and military chiefs.”<sup>2</sup>

### Importance and significance of Futuhus Salatin of Isami:

Abdul Malik Isami was a 14<sup>th</sup> century historian under the patronage of Ala-ud-Din Bahman Shah, the founder of Bahmani dynasty in the Deccan. His father’s name was Izzul-Din Isami. During the reign of Iltutmish his ancestor Fakhr Malik Isami migrated to India from Baghdad. Due to the transfer of capital from Delhi to Daulatabad, Isami moved to Daulatabad in the year 1327 A.D. Isami decided to migrate to Mecca, but his determination to write a history of Muslim rule in India stopped his to migrate to Mecca. He was inspired by the poet Firdausi and his *Shahnama*, an epic poem outlining the history and mythology of Persia. He was introduced to Ala-ud-Din Bahman Shah, who as a result of rebellion against the Tughlaq’s of Delhi was able to establish the independent Bahmani Sultanate in the Deccan. Isami was successful in receiving the able patronage of the Sultan Bahman Shah and became the earliest panegyrist at the Bahmani court. He started writing the most desired work, the “*Futuhus Salatin*” in the style of the *Shahnama* of Firdausi on December 1349 A.D. and completed composition of 12,000 verses of the book within a very short span of only five months on 14<sup>th</sup> May, 1350 A.D.<sup>3</sup>

The “*Futuhus Salatin*” (Gifts of the Sultans) is a history of Muslim rule in India until 1349 A.D. to 1350 A.D. Isami also called it *Shahnama-i- Hind* (*Shahnama* of India). According to

Isami, his sources included anecdotes, legends, and reports by his friends and acquaintances. Unlike several earlier chronicles, the book's language is devoid of "rhetorical artifices and unpleasant exaggeration."<sup>4</sup>

### **Contents of the Futuhus Salatin:**

While Firdausi started the *Shahnama* from the time of Adam and giving detailed account of the ancient Emperors of Persia, he completed the National Epic with description of Sulatan Mahmud of Gajna. In the *Futuhus Salatin*, Isami began his narratives from the time of Sultan Mahmud and ended his description with Alauddin Hasan Bahman Shah who happened to be his patron. In the beginning Isami praised Almighty God and the prophet of Islam. He also describes the qualities of the four Caliphs after Muhammad. We also come across the description of the qualities of great Sufis like, Hasan Basri, Muinuddin Chishti, Abu Hamid Chishti, Qutub Chishti, Fazl Aiyaz, Ishaq Chishti, Bakhtiyar Kaki, Faridul Haq, Khwaja Nizamuddin, Khwaja Burhanuddin and Zainul Haq etc. The historical role of Sufis during the Delhi Sultanate were also incorporated by Isami in his monumental book. Isami dealt with the genealogy of Sultan Alauddin Bahman Shah and the difficulties faced by him. It has been observed that he consulted numerous books to develop his own understanding about the historical aspects of the period and choose to write the book in verse form.

Isami starts *Futuhus Salatin* from the birth of Sultan Mahmud Gajnavi. Death of Subaktagin and coronation of Mahmud Gajnavi, then he describe the attacks of Moizuddin Muhammad Sam on India and getting victory. The siege of Gwalior Fort by Sultan Moizuddin and deputation of Qutbuddin Aibak of his Indian sovereignty as the Sultan of Delhi, the death of Qutbuddin Aibak at Lahore are incorporated by Isami in his book. Iltutmish's coronation to the throne of Delhi and over powering of Tajuddin Yaloz and Nasiruddin Qubacha, the great qualities and interest of Iltutmish in the field of construction and beautification of different buildings are depicted in the *Futuhus Salatin*. The minute details of the discussion between Qazi Saad, Qazi Ibad and Qazi Hameduddin Nagori were also described by Isami. The incidents like arrival of Fakhrul Mulk Isami in Delhi and the appointment as Wazir, Rukunuddin Firuz Shah's appointment as the Sultan of Delhi, arrest of Razia and putting her in the jail, killing of Ruknuddin and becoming of Razia the Sultan of Delhi, Moizuddin Behram Shah's appointment as the Sultan of Delhi and killing of Razia along with her husband etc. are also vividly described by Isami in his *Futuhus Salatin*. Other incidents like Sultan Nasiruddin's coronation to the throne, demand of *Chattr* by Ulugh Khan from Nasiruddin, coronation of Sultan Moizuddin Kaiqubad, murder of him, coronation of Jalaluddin Khilji, assassination of Saiyidi Maula on Jalaluddin Khilji's order, famine in Delhi, development of Kara which ultimately led to the killing of Jalaluddin Khilji, coronation of Sultan Alauddin Khilji, encounters of Alauddin with the Mongols, his conquest of Rathnambore, Dwar Saamudra, his ban of wine and bars, coronation of Sultan Qutbuddin, murder of Qutubuddin by Khusrau Khan, murder of Khusrau Khan by Malok Ghazi, coronation of Sultan Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq Shah, assassination of Sultan Ghiyasuddin at Afghanpur, coronation of Sultan Muhammad Shah, beginning of the tyranny of Sultan, his order of shifting

the people from Delhi to Devgir etc are also described in a lucid manner by Isami in his masterly work.<sup>5</sup>

Murder of *Sipah-Salar* Ajijuddin Isami at Tilpat, the first cause of the devastation of the town of Delhi, narration about Shaikhul Islam Nizamul Haq Wad Din, population of Devgir and introduction of currency at Devgir, description of Shaikh-ash- Shiyukh Zainul HAq, issue of *farman* by Sultan Muhammad to send Delhi's people from Devgir to Delhi, conquest of Muhammad Tughlaq, praising of Sultan Alauddin Bahman Shah, the writers objectives of writing *Futuhus Salatin* and at the end Isami prayed to God for his kind attention such as various aspects of political and socio- cultural life of that period of Isami are vividly pointed out in the *Futuhus Salatin*.<sup>6</sup>

In his book Isami condemned Muhammad bin Tughlaq as a great villain and as a *Satan*. He condemned the task of killing Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq by his son Muhammad bin Tughlaq in 1325 A.D. at Afghanpur. The forcible expulsion of the residence of Delhi to Daulatabad by Muhammad bin Tughlaq was also considered as an act of wickedness by Isami in his book. Isami also opined that by introducing token currency by Muhammad bin Tughlaq ruined the morals of the people in general. All these heinous acts of Muhammad bin Tughlaq leads some Qazis to issue fatwa (judgment) against his life. Many of the medieval scholars have consulted Isami's *Futuhus Salatin* without quoting his name. the writer of *Tabakat-i- Akbari*, Nizamuddin Ahmed and *Tarikh-i-Farishhta*, Muhammad Qasim Hindushah Farishta consulted and acknowledged the historical and literary value of the *Futuhus Salatin* of Isami.<sup>7</sup>

### **Importance of the Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi of Barani:**

Barani was born to a Muslim family in 1285 A.D. His family members including his father, uncle and grandfather worked in high government posts under the Sultan of Delhi. His family were natives of Meerut and Bulandsahar. His maternal grand-father was an important officer of Ghiyas ud Din Balban. While his father Muwayyid-ul –Mulk served as a *naib* of Arkalikhan, the son of Jalaluddin Firuz Khilji. His uncle was the Kotwal or police chief of Delhi during the reign of Alaud-Din Khilji. Barani was Muslim political thinker of Delhi Sultanate during Muhammad bin Tughlaq and Firuz Shah's reign. Barani is best known for his monumental work *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi*. This book covers the period from the reign of Ghiyas-ud-Din Balban to the first six years of reign of Firuz Shah Tughlaq.<sup>8</sup>

We have come across the two versions of the tarikh-i- Firuz Shahi. The first version appeared in the fifth year of Firuz Shah Tughlaq's reign and the second one, the revised version appeared in the seventh year of his reign. The introductory portion of both the versions are same. According to Iqtida Hussain Siddiqi, "the introductory part of the book Tarikh-i- Firuz Shahi lifts Barani to the rank of the man of ideas and thinker in the history of Islamic history."<sup>9</sup>

In his book Barani has described the merits and importance of history. According to him history is the treasure house for the learned people. It is linked with *Hadith* (tradition of the prophet of

Islam). To gain knowledge one must study history. History satisfies the Sultans, kingdoms, ministers and the learned people at large. By reading history one can come to know the problems and challenges faced by the prophet, good deeds of the just rulers. Because basically history is based on truths, it teaches its readers to always speak the truth.<sup>10</sup> Barani observed that during his time the scholars hardly had interest in history. He regretted that for him it was difficult to find scholar who could correctly tell him about the reign of Balban. Even the *Ulama and Umara* showed no interest to know about the contributions of their predecessors. The information and analytical dealings of Barani in the *Tarikh-i- Firuz Shahi* proves him as a man of ideal.

Barani criticized the philosopher and condemned them in the second version of his book. Under the influence of these scholars Muhammad bin Tughlaq did not refrain from killing pious and religious Muslims such as *Dervishes, Ulema*, and even Saaiyids.<sup>11</sup> Barani in the second version critically pointed out the Sultans approach to his policy towards people of Low-birth and given a long list of officers who had started their career from the lower rank.<sup>12</sup>

In the second version of the *Tarikh-i- Firuz Shahi*, Barani dedicated eleven chapters to describe the account of the first four years of Sultan Firuz Shah's reign. The sixth chapter deals with the construction of canals by Firuz Shah are significant. According to Barani these canals played an important role in boosting the economic position of the Sultanate. Barani's imprisonment in the Bhatner Fort after the accession of Firuz Shah Tughlaq is also narrated in the second version of the *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi*. Barani also mentioned about the hostilities and enmities inflicted by his ill-wishers, enemies and powerful rivals against him. These people altogether poisoned the ear of the Sultan against him but fortunately the mercy of the Almighty God and the Sultan encouraged him to go ahead with vision of achieving higher recognition.

Barani in his book also describes *Jizya*. He stated that nobody except Imam Abu Hanifa has permission to collect *Jizya*. During the time of Prophet Muhammad, the idol worshipers and the pagans living in Mecca and Madina had to pay *Jizya*. Barani has mentioned that both *Kharaj* and *Jizya* were collected on the basis of income. Barani described the interest of Sultan Muhammad on rational science and fondness towards the men of philosophy. Personally Barani discouraged and was against the *Uloom-i-falsafa* (knowledge of philosophy).

Barani examines the problems of the Sultanate and its disintegration process which lead to the fall of the lineage of Balban. He also criticized the consequences of the succession of incompetent young person like Kaiqubad to the throne of Delhi. Kaiqubad being incompetent effortlessly managed to become the authority of a vast empire and indulged himself in luxury pursuits leaving aside the responsibility towards the affairs of administration of the state.

On the matter of problems of succession, Barani observed that, "the king should not have many children because only one becomes the Sultan. Considering the other brothers as danger, they would be killed or deported to far off places. Even the sons –in-Law considers themselves very powerful. So the king with many sons and daughters is himself responsible for their killing."<sup>13</sup>

About the *Ulema* Barani opined, “*Ulama* were of two categories, *Ulama-i-akhirat* and *Ulamai-duniya*. *Ulama –i-akhirat* are those *Ulama*, from whose heart God takes away the love for worldly interests and protects them from all worldly problems. *Ulama-i-duniya* are those who are involved in worldly affairs. They interpret *Sharia* according to the will and desire of the rulers.”<sup>14</sup>

On the matter of efficiency of Building Department during that time most of the contemporary accounts are silent. But Barani mentions that there were seventy thousand masons in the department. It took only two or three days to complete a *Haveli* and about a span of two weeks it successfully constructed one fort. The extension of *Quwwatul Islam* mosque at Delhi, construction of *Alai Darwaza*, *Alai Madrassa* and *Alai Minar* are some of the examples of Alauddin Khilji’s architectural achievements are vividly described by Barani in his *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi*.

Barani mentions about some of the scholars of the 14th century and commented that Delhi became like Baghdad, Egypt, Constantinople and *Baitul Muqaddas* of the era where scholars from around the world came and settled. Alauddin used to bestow lavish rewards to those scholars and constructed a huge Madrassa behind the *Quwwatul Islam* Mosque known as Madrassa-i- Alai.

As regards to the description of the reign of Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq (1320 A.D- 1325 A.D.), both the version of the *Tarikh-i- Firuz Shahi* carries same information. But in the second version Barani also dealt with the accident of Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq in the Tughlaqabad Fort. Barani narrated that a small mason was constructed in the Fort to welcome Ghiyasuddin on his return from Bengal. But unfortunately the roof fell down and he was crushed to death.<sup>15</sup> Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq’s policies towards the *Ulema* and *Mashaikh* are also discussed by Barani. He used to bestow gifts to them according to their status. We also learn from Barani that Shaikh NASiruddin Chiragh Delhi played an active role in the process of accession to the throne of Firuz Shah Tughlaq and about the good relationship of Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq with Shaikh Sharfuddin Bu Ali Qalandar Panipati.<sup>16</sup>

While describing Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlaq Barani opined that the nobles and the *Ulema* could not regulate the contradictory qualities of the Sultan. Although Barani avoids criticizing Muhammad bin Tughlaq’s attitudes to the low-born people in the first version, but in the second version he criticized the Sultan’s policy in this regard as he degraded many officers of low-born from their ranks.

The contribution of Firuz Shah and his lavish grants to the *Ulema*, *Mashaikh*, *Muftis* and others have been described by Barani in his *Tarikh*. The Madrasas and the Khanqahs received ample attention from the Sultan. Firuz Shah constructed a huge Madrasa on the bank of Hauz Khas. Firuz Shah revived the policies of the earlier Sultans and he began to offer grants to Shaikh Fariduddin, Shaikh Jamaluddin, Shaikh BAhauddin and others. Travelers used to come and stay



in the Khanqahs as all the expenses were borne by the state. The beautiful monuments and Mosques constructed by Firuz Shah are described by Barani.

Barani described the regard and respect of Firuz Shah towards the *Ahl-i- Bayt* (family members of the holy prophet). Firuz Shah appointed the Saiyids in very important offices of the Sultanate. Saiyids were appointed as *Amir-i-Shikar* by Firuz Shah as he himself was fond of hunting birds and animals which was considered to be prerogatives of a king. Barani mentions that although killing of birds and animals for the sake of pleasure was not at all allowed in Islam, he along with Firuz Shah legalized that pastime activity of the kings.<sup>17</sup>

### Conclusion:

From the above discussion it may be concluded that both the books *Futuhus Salatin* of Isami and *Tarikh-i- Firuz Shahi* of Barani are considered to be the two masterpieces written under the aegis of the Sultans of Delhi. Both books provide us with valuable information of those days in which they were written. Isami in his book highly criticized Muhammad bin Tughlaq and praised his patron Bahman Shah as a rightful Caliph. Muhammad bin Tughlaq's act of shifting his capital from Delhi to Daulatabad and the sufferings of the people are considered as unfortunate situation which was the result of God's punishment towards the corrupt Muslim. His book is regarded as one of the valuable source of the political history and social life of the people of India of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Likewise Barani had rightly remarked that the Delhi Sultans from Ghiyas al- Din Balban to Firuz Shah Tughlaq, who had followed his guidelines for the good Islamic ruler had prospered, while those who had deviated from those precepts had failed drastically.

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