Chapter-3

"Literary and Historical Importance of " Khair-ul-Majalis"
Literary and Historical importance of Khair-u'l-Majalis

The vastness and variety of source material for the history of medieval India has been acknowledged on all hands. Apart from political chronicles which constitute the chief source of information for constructing the political works, mystic records—Malfuzat, Maktubat and general treatises—geographical accounts, autobiographies, Tazkiras, manuals of bookkeeping and revenue records, general works on religion, treatises on science, translations from Sanskrit and other languages, etc. The richness of archival material is also beyond calculation. By and large most of the mystics of the medieval period believed in giving a wide birth to the government of the day. After a careful study of the mystic literature one has the feeling that the court life did not constitute the totality of social or intellectual activity of the period. The Khanqahs were also an important centre where people of all sorts—rich and poor, villagers and townsfolk, men and women, Hindus and Muslims—assembled. In fact, if any one place in medieval India represented all types and sections of people, it was the Khanqah of the Sufis this Malfuz literature calls for a systematic and careful study with a view to having a glimpse of the life of the common man during the medieval period. A Malfuz, to be really so, should give a living account of the assemblies of a mystic teacher, nay, even details of his day-to-day life should be reflected in it. If, on the contrary, it creates the dull and placid atmosphere of a scholarly dissertation, wanting in the warmth of human company, it ceases to be a Malfuz.

The extent to which Malfuz literature was considered sacrosanct may be gauged from the fact that people transcribed these works for their spiritual
bliss and benediction. The Malfuzat of the medieval saints have a great value in understanding segment of medieval society.

With the changes that have taken place in the historiographical concepts it has become imperative for a modern historian to tap and utilized as many and as varied sources of information for his study as possible. This is not a fad with modern research methodology but an essential prerequisite for understanding the spirit of an age. The concept of history does not now reel round the pomp and panoply of the court; it seeks to study man relating to his environment, irrespective of any social distinction. The hut and the palace have the same significance in the eyes of a modern historian. For this extended approach of history it is necessary to examine analyses and utilize all types of source material which was earlier considered irrelevant or beyond the purview of historians. Unless human activity in a particular period is surveyed as a whole and from all angles and aspects it is not possible to evaluate and understanding the life of the people or to have an insight into the spirit of an age. The historical method applied to political chronicles is bound to prove absolutely ineffective in dealing with the religious or poetical literature of a period. The critical apparatus required for the study of different types of source material should be clearly understood. A political chronicler connected with the court will, with the essential qualities of a court historian, look at political glory as the be-all and end-all of all human activity and for him the court and the camp exhaust all that is of value for man; a mystic looks upon the world as an iridescent bubble and, ignoring the hurry and bustle of mundane life and political glory, tries to discover the deeper meaning of life.
**Literary Importance:** Though the *Khair-ul-Majalis*, which is a Malfuz literature is primarily a philosophical and didactic literature that delineates upon ethical, spiritual and mystic ideas but the narration of various historical facts in context of their social relevance imparts historical significance to this text. Apart from this, the book written in Persian language also carries immense literary and linguistic importance, which is worth to be analyzed. Moreover, it becomes an obligatory academic duty of a student to Persian studies to analyze the literary and linguistic importance of this text and its contribution to Persian language and literature.

Persian language was introduced in India during the earstotile period of Ghaznavid rule in the united Punjab. Though both Sanskrit and Persian belong to the Indo-Aryan group of languages. And both are considered as sister language. Moreover there are many terms and diction in both the languages which sound monosyllables and have similar meanings. However the difference script and grammar, the gradual in roads of local vernacular both the languages, most importantly adoption of Arabic terminologies in Persian imparted quite distinct identity to both these languages. Therefore, when Persian was introduced the western part of India, people considered it as a new language but, due to it's simplicity and easy grammar it became very popular in India within short span of times. Lahore or the little Ghaza, which was, the center of Turkish political authority in India before the beginning of the 13th century attracted many

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1. Though at Ghazna, the main capital of the Ghaznavid rulers, Arabic writing flourished along with the Persian under Mahmud and Masud, but in secondary Ghaznavid capital, Lahore, Persian held complete study.
Persian scholars, particularly poets from Islamic countries of Iran and central Asia.

The first Persian poet resident -in Lahore and attached to the court of Mas'ud 1 (1030 A.D.-1040 A.D.) was Abdullah Ruzbah. His tradition was continued by Abul Farj Rumi, court poet of the Ghaznavid Ibrahim (1099-1114 A.D.) Mas'ud Saad Salman (1046-1131 A.D.) was a senior contemporary of the latter, who also resided in Lahore and composed many qasidashs to eulogies his patrons. The works of only a few of the early writers of Persian literature in India have survived. Most famous and well known among the surviving Persian literature is the qasidahs (eulogise) of Masud Saad Salman. These qasidas refer to the battles fought against the Hindus, which also reflects his attachment to Lahore. Therefore Aziz Ahmad rightly opines that Masud Saad Salman’s qasidas are the first reflection in Indo-Persian verse, of the cultural history of Muslim-India as emotionally experienced by the Muslim elite.2

After Salman, the composition and writings in Persian runs through the topical verses of Abu Ali Ata bin Yaqub Nakok and Jamaluddin Yusuf Ibn Nasr alkatib, both of them were minor poets at Ghaznavid Lahore. It reflects the megalomania of Alauddin Jahansuz, who sacked and burnt Ghazna. The later poets like Abdul Rauif Itarvi and Abu Bakr Khusrvi record the transfer of power in India from Ghaznavid to the Ghaurids in 1186 A.D. and the expansion of Muslim rule in India.

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However, by and large the Persian literature written in India before the establishment of the Delhi sultanate was derivative in character and adopted the literary forms and imagery which were prevalent in Iran. It was only after the establishment of the Delhi sultanate that volumes of Persian prose and poetry were composed and this language progressed by leaps and bounds. It is a matter of great interest that Persian has been a language of Iran but it was introduced in India by Turkish rulers, who also made it the official language of the state and many Turkish scholars and people of Turkish ethnicity like Amir Khusraw produced volumes of work in this language. In fact before the introduction of Persian language in India, there was a remarkable growth in Persian literature in Iran and some parts of Central Asia from 10th century onwards. Some of the great poets of Persian language such as Firdausi and Saadi, composed their works.

During this phase of growth of Persian literature in Iran and Central Asia, Firdausi's Shahnama and Saadi's Gulistan and Bustan created stir in the Persian world. If on the one hand the former was written with the intention of creating cultural renaissance in the Persian world, the latter delineated upon ethical and moral issues and is considered as one of the best didactic literary master piece. The composers across territorial boundaries of monarchies generated interest for Persian among scholars of other languages. Gradually scholars and poets of other linguistic regions of Perso Central Asia world ventured into Persian language and created literary masterpieces in this language. Moreover, such scholars were patronized by monarchs and princes also due to which they gained quick recognition and fame in contiguous regions of the Persian Empire, especially Central Asia and North Western India.
Soon after the transfer of power from Ghaznaids to the Ghurids, two new factors seem to have deeply affected the course of Persian literature in India; first the stream of refugee elite, fleeing Transoxiana and Khurasan, and secondly the establishment of Muslim military and political centers in the Indian sub continent (in garrison towns of the Delhi Sultanate, like Dipalpur, Ajodhan, Hansi and Sialkot). Muslim intelligentsia flocked not only from abroad, but from its former disrupted center at Lahore, now exposed to Mongol Incursions, distinguished away these regional centers was Multan under Nasiruddin Qubachs between 1210 A.D and 1227 A.D, to who court flocked historian and literary chronicles like Juzjani and Auffi who after his fall joined the sense of Iltutmish in Delhi.

Bahauddin Zakariya, Iraqi perfected his own incomparable style of mystical ghazal, which later, through his friend Sadruddin Konya, may have been one of the formulative influences that shaped the mystical genius of Jalaluddin Rumi.

Conversation of the cultural heritage of Darussalam which almost faced extinction under the Mongol threat is the keynote of literature produced under Iltutmish and his successors in Delhi and marks the political thinking of Fakhr-i-Mudabbar, historigraphical attitude of Juzjani and the critical approach and sense of values and morals in Arufi.

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4 Aziz Ahmad, studies in Islamic Culture in Indian Environment, oxford. New Delhi p-225
5 Ibid
Apart from this the establishment of Delhi sultanate also added a new dimension to Persian language and literature in India. Here Persian language came in contact with local vernaculars and Indian influence began to exert itself on the Persian works produced in India. Such influence is very much evident in the historical and literary compositions of the illustrious Amir Khusraw.

Amir Khusrau was a prolific and versatile writer and is said to have composed half a million verses. Ethnically he was a Turk, but emotionally he was fully attached to Indian culture and the language spoken by its people. He also composed poetry in Hindavi the lingua franca of north India and freely used Hindavi terms, allegory and similes in his Persian works. His compositions include five literary masterpieces, namely Matla-ul-Arlwar, Shirin Khusraw, Laila Majnu, Aina-i-Sikandari and Hasht Bahisht, five diwans (collection of poetical compositions) and many masnavis (long poems). Therefore keeping in view his great literary talent, he has been rightly called Tooti-e-Hind (parrot of India). He is one of these few Indian writers of Persian poetry, whose works have been read and admired beyond their country. His works represents the beginning of a new trend in Indian-based Persian literature the trend of growing familial with Indian literature and influence of Indian literature on Persian writings in India and vice-versa. Another famous poet of Persian who flourished during the Sultanate period in India was Shaikh Najmuddin Hasan popularly known as Hasan Dehlavi. He was one of the courtpoets of Sultan Allauddin Khalji and also a Contemporary and friend of Amir Khusrau. He died in 1327 A.D, just two years after the death of Amir
Khusraw. He also composed beautiful and impeccable \textit{ghazals} in Persian, which earned him the title of \textit{Sadi of Hindustan}.

Therefore we see that Persian was considered to be the universal language of culture and literature during the entire Islamic world of Asian continent with the establishment and consolidation of Delhi Sultanate in India, Persian became a viable literary vehicle for the scholars and poets of this country, during the entire medieval period. Though some scholars and poets of medieval India tried to develop in other vernaculars. But their efforts turned out to be a flash in the pan. Throughout the medieval period Persian remained the medium, which was effectively used to document various official records, narrate historical incidents and facts, to express various ideas as emerging in the society of that period and for various other official purposes related to reading, writing and creative activities. Apart from conventional literary and historiographical works many religions and philosophical works in Persian language were also produced during this period.

A distinctive genre of Persian literature emerged in the form of Malfuzat. The Malfuz literature is basically a Sufi literature which contains conversation or discourses of the leading Sufi masters of the period to a select gathering of Sufi disciples and visitors, which also contained didactic anecdotes and maxims.

The Khair-ul-Majalis is a typical illustration of the Persian language as spoken in India in the fourteenth century A.D. Even where abstruse subjects are discussed, the colloquial touch is easily discernible. The clarity
and lucidity in the style and expression of Khair-ul-Majalis is, in fact, due to the clarity of Shaikh Nasiruddin Chiragh’s thought. He has explained the most abstract ideas in the simplest language. His method of narrating relevant anecdotes on every point, like his master Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya, has made his thought intelligible even to the most ordinary intellects and has considerably enhanced the educative value of their conversations.

The introduction and the supplement are Hamid Qalandar’s own composition and as such have an entirely different style—laboured, involved and full of funs and alliterations. Hamid was proud of this style. Hamid says:

"عذب بدار بخوش درب‌ستان و ماغه و فلک فراموشان حبرت علل‌نی
کم بیت مازا د اسناها و مازا د نازیبیت مثل الکلام و ازفا مِر

فِر سلطان الافلام شریه "

The following lines which he wrote in praise of Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya are a typical example of his laboured style:

" ...... درب‌های شنیدن، دوستی و عروسی که از خودیدن و ترخیص از اثرات
و سوادی صنات و ارآمنی، نظام سلطه و وحید و مرید مراست و نفلق آسان
بِرایت کُر چون برسی از دل‌های حیرت بشت حال فردی است و صنی کر
اپر لوهر سرود بخشت اغلط فرونده، ابراهیمی کُر ادم نفند را مِر

6 Khairul Majalis, p - 84
Such a style was neither acceptable to Shaikh Nasiruddin nor did it suit the purpose of his conversations.

The Khair-ul-Mujalis contains a number of Hindivi words and sentence which are of value in tracing the origin and development of the Urdu language. We come across words like *Doli* (palanquin) and the following Hindivi sentences:

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7 Ibid, p. 6 - 7
8 Ibid, p. 38
9 Ibid, p. 93.
10 Ibid, p. 123.
**Historical**: The birth of such a distinct type of mystic writing, the Malfuz, is one of the most important contributions to Persian language and literature from the fertile soil of Delhi. The term Malfuz derived from a word “Lafz” meaning “word”. Malfuzat—the term that defines Sufi mystic literature—is its plural form and means ‘conversation of saints’. Malfuz writing is arguably the pinnacle of literary achievement in medieval India. Malfuz literature, the recorded discourses of Sufi saints, not only gave an insight into the socio-economic situation of the period, but was crucial to ensuring the continuation of Sufi influence after the 14th century. By the 12th century A.D, Sufism had become a universal aspect of Islamic social life, whose influence had not only spread widely among Muslims, but to a large segment of the population, regardless of religion.

The most significant features of Malfuzat is that it deals with subject matter that other historical texts of the same period have omitted. Expert in medieval Indian history, S.A.A Rizvi, comments that “Modern works in Islam in the Indian subcontinent have not made adequate use of Sufi literature in analyzing the political, social and economic history of medieval India”\(^\text{14}\). It is still true today that Sufi literature has been widely ignored, yet the Malfuzat are important and reliable alternatives for revealing the mentality and lives of the masses during the Sultanate era, reflecting the actions and reactions of the common man their food habits, style of dress, money and currency, their dwellings, their festivals, places of worship, the commodities available at the market. We can also gain insight into details such as social class, religious rituals and practices, position of women, education, occupation, recreation, and climate. The scope of the Malfuzat

\(^{14}\) Rizvi, S A A, “The Wonder that Was India”, Vol-II, p-XXXV

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then is not only a depiction of mystical experiences and discourses of the Sufis, but can be used to reconstruct the social life of the ordinary person. As such, we can utilize the Malfuzat to fill the gaps outstanding on life in the Sultanate period, questions which many other historical texts of the period do not answer.

That in spite of these political events that changed the course of history, within and around the Khanqahs there continued an endless process of observation, assimilation and adjustment of diverse element and tendencies, which were giving shape and complexion to the cultural tradition of India. Whilst Alauddin Khalji introduced a market policy of price fixing to boost his economic power, Sufis were studying and interacting with the common people, and as such, Malfuzat depicts a broad composite culture, demonstrating that there was no break in daily activities despite the momentous political events that took place concurrently.

A miracle to most, historians on the other hand will see important information in this parable about certain idiosyncrasies of that period. For followers, the moral of the story was to adhering to humanistic Sufi principles, even at the time of calamity. For historians, it is not the return of twenty tankas that is significant but the mention of famine. Although

15 K.A. Nizami “Some Aspects of Religion and politics in India during the 13th century”, pp-69

16 Satish Chandra’s “Medieval Indian: From Sultanate to Mughal”.

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this story was narrated in A.D. 1311(711 A.H.), there is no mention of famine in or around that period from other sources written at the time. \(^{17}\)

The most severe famine that has been documented, which forced Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlaq to leave Delhi and take shelter in Swargadwari near Kanauj, was much later. \(^{18}\) The famine in this story tells us that there was a scarcity of food grain in Delhi, and with the occurrence of drought, it is possible that the agriculture activities at that time were not enough to provide food to go around.

The *dervish* passing through a cloth market in time of famine is also significant. That he was waiting in a cloth market with some food so that he could share with someone is an example of Sufi principles in practice.

That the market was open and people were visiting the market may indicate that the occurrence of famine was only affecting the common people (another reason why medieval historical sources of the period do not mention the famine). However there was evidently enough business for the market to stay open, perhaps for wealthier people who had surplus money to buy clothes. This shows disparity within the Islamic society of that era, of which the basic principle was so-called egalitarianism.

\(^{17}\) Medieval sources such as Barani’s *Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi*, “Fatwa-i-Jahandari”, and Amir Khusrau’s *Tughlaq Namah*, make no reference to the famine mentioned in *Fawaid-ul­-Fuads*.

\(^{18}\) Majumdar, R.C, Raychaudri, H.C., Datta, K, “An Advance History of India”, and Satish Chandra, Medieval India, p 68
Most kings of the Sultanate period were not in favour of graveyard visit, as it is against Islamic tenets. They considered it to be pagan behaviour, akin to worshipping idols. Sultans Firoz Tuglaq and Sikander Lodhi made a law prohibiting ad_hoc visitations to graveyards. In this history however, the dervish not only visited a graveyard, but also made a ritualistic plea at the foot of grave. For a follower of Islam, asking from anybody except God was considered a heretical practice. Sufis however challenged this rule, a rule which was strongly upheld by the Ulema.

The aforementioned Malih, after he had taken vows of discipleship, offered two cycles of prayers. "what was your intention in offering these two cycles of prayer?" asked the Master. "To expel everything except God," replied Malih. The assemblies were related to the environment in which they took place. The location was Ghazni, an area famous for slave trading at the time. This particular hekayat (story) has three signifiers -the slave, his master and four sons. One thing, which is clear through this story, is that slavery was very much prevalent, and there were no restriction placed on the practice of slavery by the rulers who were generally under the influence of the Ulema. The story is centered on slave who succeeds his master, superseding the master's sons.

The sons' opposition to the succession of Zairak is indicative of the thinking prevalent at that time, and the contradictions, which were rife between practice and codes of conduct. The opposition of the master's sons is a good example of the position of slaves in the society, but more revealingly, from the information gathered in the story, we learn that acquisition of knowledge was not restricted to noble lineage and Khilafatship did not
recognize kinship. In fact, most often the spiritual successors of Sufis were their favourite disciples, and sons were seldom preferred.19 The value of a man was measured not by his lineage, but by his knowledge and virtuous deeds. Zairak, a slave, was nominated because of his virtuous nature.

This next story also regarding slavery during the Sultanate period further highlights not only the prevalence of trade in humans, but also the profitable nature of this business at that time. The Malfuzat however is unique touching on this topic, as it is here that we learn about the Sufi attitude towards the business of trading people, and the unconventional position they took on releasing these people.

It was in the Khanqahs that the humanitarian aspects of Islam, namely equality and brotherhood, were practiced as well as preached as well as preached. Prophet Muhammad preached the importance of unity and humanity, and speaking at Arafat shortly before his death, he emphasized the issue of brotherhood between Arabs and non-Arabs, and the concept of Ummah (one community indivisible). He reiterated that Allah created each individual brethren for one another, regardless of race, religion and caste.20 Islamic Delhi, the seat of the Sultanate Empire, presided by a Muslim king, who was over asserted himself as working for the spread of Islam. Among the residents of Delhi, including wealthy merchants, bureaucrats, and important dignitaries, there was much hypocrisy. In a city built on Islamic

19 Qutbuddin Bakhtiya Kaki, Ganj-i-Shakar, Nizam-ud-Din Auliya, And Nasir-ud-Din Charag-i-Delhi, bore no blood relation with their masre
20 Akbar S. Ahmad, "Discoursing Islam , Vistar Publications, New Delhi, 1990 pp-20
principle of peace, justice and egalitarianism, the following comments were overhead in the Khanqah and subsequently recorded in Malfuzat:

*I have several daughters to marry but without any source of livelihood.*\(^{21}\)

Such stories about society during the Delhi sultanate can be found on the pages of the Malfuzat of the period in Persian. These comments reveal certain crucial social dilemmas, which were neglected by the ruling classes. Many history texts of the period neglect these problems; rather they focus on socio-political and economic events that gloss over the ground realities, employing a hyperbolic tone in appreciating the triumphs and exploits of their kings.

It is Malfuzat that we learn about social problems, unabridged. Regarding the realities of dowry and economics for the common man, the *Khair-ul-Majalis* tells us about a visitor who is distributed because he was so many daughters but nothing to help them get married.

It is evident from the above comment that the Delhi society of his age was not an ideal one. Though the rulers were Muslims, their guiding principle to rule northern India was led largely by economic and political ambitions. It seems there was no concept of a welfare policy especially for second class citizens. In *Khair-ul-Majalis*, we read that Nasiruddin was disturbed by the fact that the rulers were not following the ideals of the Caliphs. He narrated a story of Umar’s reign and said:

\(^{21}\) "*Khqir-ul-Majalis*" p.37
"...All efforts of the former rulers were directed towards fostering the welfare of the people." 22

As he spoke in the past tense, it can be derived from the above statements that even during his lifetime, the period of Tughlaq, people-oriented policies were lacking and the condition of the layperson left much to be desired.

Medieval expert Satish Chandra, under the heading "Firoz's Tughlaq concept of Benevolence and people's welfare" states that all contemporary writers refer to the general prosperity in Firoz shah's long reign of 40 (lunar years), and the affordability of commodities. 23 Shams Siraj Afif, the biographer of Firoz, says that there was "all round cheapness" in Firoz Shah's reign without any effort on his part. This is direct contrast to the information in the Khair-ul-Majalis.

At the same time that Shams Afif talks about affordability of commodities, the master's Khanqah was visited by people with economic problems. Following are excerpts from the Khair-ul-Majalis which out rightly reject the arguments of prosperity in the Tughlaq period:

"Langer in the time of Atauddin Khalji 24

Even beggars had one or two quilt [Alauddin Khalji's era]." 25

22 "Khair-ul-Majalis" p.139

23 Satish, Chandra, “Medieval India: From Sultanate to the Mughal”, part I, pp 113-115

24 "Khair-ul-Majalis", pp-185
The words “cheapness in those days” indicates that during Nasiruddin’s time (during the reign of Tughlaq), commodities were costly compared to the price of commodities during Alaudin Khalji’s rule. This contradicts Shams Afif’s claim of cheapness of every commodity. As we can see from the excerpts above, Nasiruddin also witnessed a lack of good feast and Langer. And the clue to price hikes in the line “Even a beggar had one or two quilts” which indicates the comparison between the economic condition of the Tughlaq period and its preceding ruling dynasty.

It is likely that according to the court chroniclers, the general prosperity referred to during Firoz Shah’s long reign was exclusive, as Nasiruddin’s comment “what a cheapness in those days” is a strong indicator that life in his period was comparatively hard for the common man. It also implies that food grains were not readily available in the market. It is possible that the hoarding of food grain at this time, which goes against the principle of any welfare policy, was at its height. Here one can draw two conclusions.

Firstly, that what we read in court chronicles of the period is not the full story. The court chronicles were state employees, and there was a tradition of *qasida khwani* (panegyric writing) in the Islamic world implemented to please the running monarch and earn a good living. The court chronicles of Tughlaq were not entirely panegyric writers, but it is likely that they were

25 “Fawad-ul-Fuad”, pp-240
influenced by this tradition. In any case, it was very unlikely to find criticism of a ruling sultan from his salaried writers.

Secondly, 'general prosperity' may mean prosperity for those people in court circle, the elite class. A careful review of the *Khair-ul-Majalis* reveals that Nasiruddin did not live in an affluent period. Complaining about the disappearance of langar, commenting that during Alauddin's reign there was plenty of community kitchen organized on a regular basis, the Tughlaq period was poor from this point of view. Nasiruddin personally faced it, and during the day of his adversity, we know that he was helped by Nathu Patwa who came to him and placed two pieces of bread before him. What did he mean by “good feast in those days could be arranged in 2 to 4 jitals”? Here Nasiruddin possibly complaining about the rise in the price of arranging a good feast.

Nasiruddin’s perception about the age he lived in can also be justified with the survey of literature produced during the Tughlaq period. It is said that literature is a mirror of a society. Professor khalid Ahmad Nizami’s detailed study of literature of the Tughlaq and Khalji periods arrives at the same conclusion as Nasiruddin in *Khair-ul-Majaris*. Nizami says that the Persian literature produced during Tughlaq represents a milieu quite different from that of the Khalji period. The literature produced during the Tughlaq is soaked in pessimism and breathe an atmosphere of the frustration and despair, yet the literature produced during the time of Khalji’s are full of buoyancy, hope and confidence. This variation in the spirit of literature had its roots in the general political atmosphere of the period.

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26 *"Fawad-ul-Fuadd", pp 273*
Here we can also compare conversations of both Nizamuddin and Nasiruddin, who lived in the Khalji and the Tughlaq periods respectively. Two distinctive passages from *Fawaid-ul-faud* and *Khair-ul-Majalis* demonstrate the differences not only between two peers Nizamuddin and Nasiruddin. Hamid Qalandar begins his account of the 18th assembly by saying: "I received the blessing of kissing the feet of the Shaikh. In this city nothing matters to me except the sacred tombs of Shaikh Nizamuddin, and after that, the blessing of meeting with you."27

In the above passages, Sijzi has raised a question relating to a musical gathering and its positive effect on him, whereas Hamid’s issue was one relating to his inability to practice fasting rituals because of a very hot summer. In most circumstances, mention of music in one’s rife comes at a time when one is generally satisfied. It shows a positive Sijzi and his time’s economic condition. Qalandar’s problem on the other hand is very personal.

Even when, as mentioned in Fawaid-ul-Faud, Sijzi started writing the words of his master, he had the feeling of bringing happiness and solace to others through this collection. Qalandar’s personality is quite different. He struggling with a personal problem, and is not well off in his life. In these quotes, both disciples were confessing their frustrations to their respective spiritual guides. There can be seen a difference in the nature of problems, Sijzi remarks that he will not be able to get solace in prayer of any kind but the *Sama*. Qalandar’s personality is different in a sense that he was not

27 *"Khair-ul-Majalis", 18th Assembly*
able to perform rituals giving an excuse of season. He says Delhi is very hot and its air is burning, a poor excuse not expected from a dervish.

It is also interesting to note the responses from the two saints. Nizamuddin turns the discussion away from Sijzi's problem to a generalized depiction of Sama, Nasiruddin on the other hand, dwells on the spiritual in adequacies of Qalandar, concluding that even the accommodation he has made between ascetical and creative impulses is ill founded and unacceptable. Though part of the difference in tone between these two passages should be imputed to the uneven talents of their respective authors, one cannot rule out the profound effect and influence that the socio-economic condition of the periods they represent had on these individuals, and all who attended the Khanqahs. It is true that Sijzi excelled as a poet and Sufi, whilst Hamid Qalandar languished on both counts but the content of the passage still however shows the thinking pattern of both authors.

Nasiruddin was struggling to save, consolidate or follow the institution established by his master. On the pages of the Khair-ul-Majalis there are many stories about problems rooted in poor economic condition. Modifications based on the objections of his opponents. The following describes the situation that Nasiruddin faced which culminated in the institution of the Khanqah being threatened during his Khilafatship, which would have caused a mood of uncertainty and instability during his era, especially amongst the thousands who patronized the many Khanqahas in and around Delhi. During Nasiruddin's time, a religious reform movement

28 Nizami, K.A," In introduction to Khair-ul-Majalis", pp-6
started by Ibn Taimiya, found a place in the Sultanate. Muhammad bin Tughlaq was one of the followers of the Ibn Taimiya movement. Ibn Taimiya (1267-1328) of Egypt was against Khanqah life, and he sent his disciples to preach in India.

The Taimiya movement found a supporter in Tughlaq who was keen to bind the Sufis to the state chariot to increase their political power, something which the Chishtis in particular looked upon as a serious in their own affairs. Because of this there were major tensions between Nasiruddin and Muhammad bin Tughlaq, which were exacerbated by previous tensions between Tughlaq’s predecessors Ghayasuddin Tughlaq, who was unsuccessful in obtaining Nizamuddin’s support. Ibn Taimiya’s ambitious protégé, Imam Abdul Aziz Ardbeli, visited the court of the Muhammad bin Thughlaq, who was so deeply impressed by Adbeli’s oration that he kissed his feet.29

Nasiruddin lived in Delhi during both regimes and experienced the economic structure from both periods from the point of view of the common man. In one assembly he compared the price of goods between the two periods of Alauddin Khalji and Firoz Shah Tughlaq. He says that goods during Khalji’s were very cheap30 then explained his argument with these statistics.

29 Quoted by K.A.Nizami from Alberuni’s Rehla in “On History and. Historians of Medieval India”

30 “Khair-ul-Majalis” pp-185 & 240
The price\textsuperscript{31} of these following commodities have been mentioned during the period of Alauddin Khalji.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commodities</th>
<th>Alauddin Khalji</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wheat</td>
<td>7$^{1/2}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barely</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paddy</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pulses</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lentils</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugar (white)</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugar (soft)</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheep (mutton)</td>
<td>10-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghai (clarified butter)</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

His reference to these “minor things” in details shows his concern about the common people and their hardships. If there was over all prosperity, as purported by Afif and Barani, it is unlikely he would have addressed these issues in detail.

Alauddin Khalji has been projected as an imperialist and ambitious king by contemporary writers like Barani and Afif. They have depicted Alauddin as a “godless” king. The *Khair-ul-Majalis* describes Khalji in quite a contrasting manner. The so-called imperialist and cruel monarch, who abandoned Jalaluddin Khalji’s theory of benevolence and humanitarian’s,\textsuperscript{32} is depicted as a very popular king. The *Khair-ul-Majalis* asserts that the people of Delhi

\textsuperscript{31} K.M. Ashraf, *Life and condition of the people of Hindustan*, Delhi, 1970, p. 160

\textsuperscript{32} Chandra, Satish, “Medieval India From Sultanate to Mughals” pp-76
had a very high opinion of Alauddin Khalji, particularly due to his social welfare initiatives, which no contemporary historian tells us, and which created a place for him in the hearts of people. Nasiruddin says that after Khalji’s death, people would visit his grave and tie threads on it in order to get their prayers granted by God. Nasiruddin himself, had deep respect for the Sultan and used to add ‘Rahamat-ullah alaihe’ (May the blessing of God be on him) with his name. There are two opinions about the market policy of Alauddin Khalji. One led by historians like Ziauddin Barani who asserts that it was instituted because Khalji wished to recruit a large army to check the Mongol’s aggression and expand his empire, and that the market reforms were part of Khalji’s general policy to impoverish the Hindus so that they would cease to harbour thoughts of rebellion.

The other opinion can be derived from the Maafuzat. In fact the Khair-ul-Majalis provides a range of reasons for the implementation of Khalji’s market policy. Those discussing marketing policy within the Khanqah would have viewed Barani’s ‘impoverished Hindu’s justification as illogical. Nasiruddin’s account exemplifies this. The following piece of information was gathered from a close novel of Khalji, Qazi Hamiduddin Malik-ut-Tujjar. Nasiruddin and Hamiduddin were gathered in Awadh for dinner, and Hamiduddin relayed his conversation with Khalji. This excerpt is based on the discussion that Hamiduddin had with Khalji regarding the Sultan’s policies and his subjects:

33 “Khair-ul-Majalis”, pp-241
34 “Fawad-ul-Fuad” pp-241
35 Satish Chandra “Medieval India from Sultanate to Mughals” pp-81
36 “Fawad-ul-Fuad” pp.-81-82
“... The Sultan said: listen! For some time my mind in exercised over a problem. I say to myself: o thou! God has placed thee over so many people, something should be done for the benefit of all mankind. I asked myself as to what should I do: If I distribute all the treasures that I have and even if these are multiplied ten times and are given to the people, it will not suffice for all people; If I distribute land-villages and, Vilayats-it will not rich all, I was brooding over this problem as what to do for the benefit of all people. This moment an idea has come to my mind. I mention it to you. I told to myself that I should reduce the price of grain, which would-benefit all people. And how the price of corn can be brought down? I will issue an order that all those naiks who bring to the city from all sides be summoned some of them brings ten thousand bull loads and some twenty thousand. I will summon them and give those robes and silver from treasury and will give them the expenses of their houses and ask them to bring corn and sell at the price that I fix. So he gave orders accordingly. Corn came from all sides. Within a few days its price comes down to seven jitals a mound...37. In a society of inequality, corruption flows. It seems during the life sermons on living and time of Nasiruddin corruption was common. This is articulated in the Khair-ul-Majalis. Nasiruddin was in pains to witness corruption and gave much such honest and dignified life:

“Livelihood should be earned through strictly honest means.”38

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37 “Khair-ul-Majalis”, pp-241
38 Ibid, pp.19.
Nasiruddin's sermons on corruption were relevant to his preaching on violence. In a corrupt and discriminative society, violence is inevitable. Both saints showed a concern about violence in society, and their comments about staying calm and suppressing anger indicated that many people visited the saints with violence and anger-related problems. Interestingly, this conversation points towards an environmental condition of fourteenth century Delhi, and its comparison with the suburban area of the military cant.

**Conflict with Muhammad bin Tughluq:** Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq (1325-1351 A.D.) had very bitter and strained relations with Shaikh Nasir-u’d-Din Mahmud. This bitterness was due to a conflict of ideals.

The Muslim mystics of the early middle ages, particularly those belonging to the Chishti Silsilah, had cut themselves off completely from kings, politics and government service. This attitude was based on several considerations.

First, they believed that government service distracted them from the single-minded pursuit of their ideal – 'living for the Lord alone'. Gnosis (ma’rifat) was beyond the reach of one who spent his time in *shughl*.

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39 The attitude of early Indo-Muslim Mystics towards the State has been discussed by me in a series of articles in Islamic Culture, October, 1948-January 1950

40 Shaikh Al-Hujwairi cites this sentence of Shibli (The poor man does not rest content with anything except Good – Kashf-u’l-Mahjub Eng. Tr. P. 25); for a very pathetic story of a mystic trying to live for the Lord alone, see Text, p. 278.

41 Sijar-u’l-Auliya, p. 363. Amir Khurd quotes the following couplet of Baba Farid:
days when government service was a service of religion were dead and done. Now it was the service of class-interests and hence acceptance of government service amounted to signing one's own spiritual death-warrant.

Secondly, as Iman Ghazzali puts it: “In our times, the whole or almost the whole of the income of the Sultans is from prohibited sources. The permitted income is only Sadaqat, Fay, and Ghanimah and these have to existence in these days. Only the Jazia remains but it is realized through such cruel means that it does not continue to be permitted”. Consequently, all services paid from these sources of income were illegal.

Thirdly, all Muslim political organizations, from the fall of the Khilafat-i-Rashida to the rise of the Sultanate, were essentially secular organizations and had nothing to do with religion or religious ideals. The entire court-life and the governmental organization breathed an atmosphere so alien to the true spirit of Islam that it was impossible to serve the state without detriment to one's spiritual personality. Under these circumstances, as Imam Ghazzali argues, “the other alternative is that a man should keep aloof from kings so that he may not come face to face with them and this alone is feasible for there is safety in it. It is obligatory (on a mystic) to have the conviction that their cruelty deserves to be condemned. One should neither desire their continuance not praise them nor enquire about their affairs, not keep contact with their associates”.

Fourthly, if a mystic associated himself with the governing class, he isolated himself from the main sphere of his activity – the masses. He ceased to be one of them and became part of bureaucratic machinery. In

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42 Ihya-u'l'Ulum, Chapter IV.
view of all these facts the Chishti saints firmly advised their disciples: "If you desire to attain the position of great saints do not pay attention to the princes".

True to these traditions of the Chishti Silsilah, Shaikh Nasir-u'd-Din Mahmud also believed in keeping away from the kings and their courts.

This attitude of Shaikh Nasir-u'd-Din came into clash with some of the cherished theories of Muhammad bin Tughlug. The Tughluq Sultan had declared state and religion to be twins. He fiercely combated the theory that Muslim saints and divines should remains aloof from the state. Throughout his reign he strove to make them a part of his administrative machinery and use their influence in mobilizing public opinion in favour of his various projects. The Chishti mystics, of whom Shaikh Nasir-u'd-Din was the most prominent, thought that the Sultan was not within his rights in interfering in a sphere which had hitherto been sacrosanct. The Sultan construed this as an act of disobedience and treason. He flared up when he found the mystics adamant in their determination. Naturally a conflict ensured. It is indeed strange that Muhammad bin Tughluq who had been in close touch from his early years with Shaikh Nizam-u'd Din Auliya and had been the murid of a Saint like Shaikh 'Ala-u'd-Din of Ajodhan, suddenly developed such an aggressive attitude and made a claim which, he must have known, the

43 Siyar-u'l-Auliya, p. 196.

44 He was the grandson of Baha Farid of Pakpattan. He was so seclusion-loving that he never stepped out of his Khan, except for Friday prayers. His continuous fasts prayers, vigils and penitence shave been praised by Amir Khusrau, Mir Khurd, Barani and others. His fame had traveled up to Aleandria. For biographical notices, see Siyar-u'l-Auliya, pp. 193-196; Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi Barani, p. 347; Sirat-i-Firus Shahi
great mystics could not admit. He allowed his idealism to blind him to all realities and he thoughtlessly embittered his relations with Shaikh Nasir-u’d-Din who, following the tradition of his great master, earnestly desired to eschew politics and pass his life attending to the problems of the spiritually starved people.

Mir Khrud has given the following account of Shaikh Nasir-u’d-Din’s first meeting with the Sultan: In those days when Sultan Muhammad (bin) Tughluq sent the people to Deogir and was (also) anxious to conquer Turkistan and Khurasan and to overthrow the descendants of Chengiz Khan, he summoned all the elite and grandees of Delhi and her neighborhood. A big tent (*bargah*) was pitched and a pupil was placed on which the Sultan was to sit in order to exhort people to carry *jihad* against the *Kuffar* (Mongols). So, on that day he summoned Maulana Fahr-u’d-Din, Maulana Shams-u’d-Din. Yahya and Shaikh Nasir-u’d-Din Mahmud. Shaikh Qutb-u’d-Din Dabir who was one of the sincere and devoted disciples of the Sultan-u’l-Mashaikh ..... and was the pupil of Maulana Fakhr-u’l-Millat-wa’d-Din Zarradi, wanted to conduct him (to the presence of the Sultan) before others entered in. But the Maulana, who was reluctant in meeting the Sultan, said several times: ‘I see my head rolling (in dust) before the palace (*sarai*) of this fellow (Sultan), I will not treat him gently and he will not spare me alive! “However, when the Maulana approached to meet the Sultan, Shaikh Qutb-u’d-Din Dabir carried his shoes behind him and keeping them in his armpit stood there (in the court) like servants. The Sultan saw all this but did not utter anything at that time. He (the Sultan) began talking with Maulana Fakhr-u’d-Din and said: ‘I want to overthrow the descendant of Chengiz Khan. You should co-operate with me in this
work'. The Maulana replied: 'Insha-Allah (God-willing)'. The Sultan said: 'This term indicates indecision'. 'This is used for work to be done in future', replied the Maulana. The Sultan writhed in fury on hearing this reply of the Maulana and said: 'Give me some advice to that I may act upon it'. The Maulana replied: 'Get rid of this anger'. 'Which anger?' asked the Sultan? The Maulana replied: 'Beastly anger'. The Sultan got infuriated at this reply and signs of fury and anger became visible on his face. "But he said nothing and ordered the mid-day meal to be served. The Maulana and the Sultan began to partake of the food in the same dish. Maulana Fakhr-u'Din Zarradi was so deeply annoyed at this that the Sultan also realized that he did not like taking food with him, and in order to add to his feelings of resentment, the Sultan kept on severing the meat from the bones and passing it on to the Maulana who (on his part) ate very little and very reluctantly. The meal being over, Maulana Shama-u'd-Din Yahya and Shaikh Naisr-u'd-Din Mahmud were brought before (the Sultan).

"There are two reports about this matter. One version says that when these saints arrived (at the court) Maulana Fakhr-u’d-Din gave to Maulana Shams-u’d-Din a place higher than his own. Maulana Nasir-u’d-Din Mahmud sat next, and below him sat Maulana Fakhru-u’d-Din. The second version is that on one side Maulana Shams-u’d-Din Yahya and Maulana Nasir-u’d-Din took their seats and on the other side Maulana Fakhr-u’d-Din Zarradi. The first version is correct because it is given by Shaikh Qutb-u’d-Din Dabir who was (himself) present in that meeting. At the time of their departure robes and bags of silver were brought for this saint. Every one of them took the robe and the bag is his hand and left after paying proper compliments; but, before the bag of silver (coins) and the robber
could be given to Maulana Fakhr-u’d-Din, Shaikh Qutb-u’d-Din took in his own hands the robe and the bag ...."45

This meeting ended, as Mir Khurd’s account shows, in an atmosphere of unpleasantness. Shaikh Nasir-u’d-Din, however, does not seem to have been directly involved in the acrimonious discussion which took place between the Sultan and Shaikh Fakhr-u’d-Din Zarradi.

What was Shaikh Nasir-u’d-Din’s attitude toward the exodus of Muslim scholars and divines to Daulataba as demanded by the Tughluq Sultan? Our medieval records do not supply any information on this point; but Shaikh Nasir-u’d-Din does not seem to have quitted Delhi which his master, Shaikh Nizam-u’d-Din’s refusal to go to Daulatabad which enraged the Sultan and made him definitely hostile towards him. It was on this account that the Sultan began to harass the Shaikh. What these harassments actually were? Contemporary writers have given no details. Sayyid Muhammad Gesu Daraz of Gulbarga, one of the most outstanding disciples of Shaikh Nasir-u’d-Din, did not narrate its details before his audience because it was too painful for him. Muhammad Bihamid Khani writers: 46 (As Muhammad bin Tughluq was a tyrannical and oppressive king, he inflicted injuries on the saint in different ways, by his words and acts. The religious minded Saint never heaved a sigh of pain and never prayed to God for the destruction of the foundation of his power. For a very long time he bore (patiently) that severe distress).

45 Siyar-u’l-Auliya, p. 27-273.
46 Tarikh-i-Muhammadi, Rotograph of MS in the British Museum, f. 149 b
Shaikh ‘Abdul Haqq Muhaddith Dehlavi has expressed his surprise at the insolence of the Sultan in annoying a saint of Shaikh Nasir-u’Din’s eminence and sanctity. He says that the Sultan used to take him forcibly on his journeys. Once the Sultan sent some food to him in gold and silver dishes. The idea was that if the Shaikh partook food it would give him a chance to ask him as to why did he do an illegal thing. If he refused to accept, he could be tortured for an act of disobedience. The Shaikh disappointed the Sultan by taking out food from the dishes and placing it on his hand and then eating it. Shaikh ‘Abdul Haqq also informs us that Shaikh bore all these troubles in difference to his master’s instructions.

Maulana ‘Abdul Wahis (ob. 1017 A.H./1608 A.D.) write that the Sultan, who had assigned different duties (khidmat) to many saints, allotted some work to Shaikh Nasir-u’d-Din also. The Shaikh hesitated to accept the service and humbly apologized. The Sultan, however, flared up in fury and punished the Shaikh for his refusal. He writes: He offered (them) to make holes in his collar bones and tie them with strong ropes. He told them to tie these ropes at some height and keep him hanging.

At last the saint submitted and agreed to perform the duty of clothing the Sultan.

Firishtah says: Having developed an attitude of aversion towards the dervishes, he (Muhammad bin Tughlaq) ordered them to serve him like servants. One of you should serve betel to me, the other should tie(my) turban. In short, he assigned duties to many saints and entrusted

47 Akhbar-u’l-Akhyar, p. 81.
48 Saba-Sanabil, p.64
49 Tariikh-i-Firishtah, vol.11,p.399
Shaikh nasiruddin Avadhi known as Chiragh-i-Delhi, with the duty of clothing him. The Shaikh did not accept these matters took a serious turn. The Sultan gave a blow on his nape and imprisoned him. Afterwards the Shaikh thought of the advice of his Pir, Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya. Willy nilly he accepted that service and got rid of prison.

No contemporary or even semi-contemporary authority has referred to this incident which, in all probability, is a later fabrication. Maulana 'Abdur Rahman Chishti and Muhammad Bulaq Chishti have definitely rejected this account "bazaar gossip" (مذهبی کتاب کئو تنازع خواہ ہے). The accounts of Maulana Abdul Wahid and Firishtah are, no doubt, exaggerated and bared on rumors which the found floating down the stream of time, but the fact cannot be defined that the persecution to which the Shaikh was subjected was very severe and was widely resented in the contemporary mystic circles. When Shaikh Burahn-u'Din Gharib heard about the insolent behaviour of the Sultan towards Shaikh Nasir-u'd-Din, he wept bitterly and said: "Khwand Maulana Mahmud is gentle and forgiving. If he so wishes the earth would swallow him (the Sultan), his entire army, people, horses and elephants and would not belch (yet remain unsatisfied)" Maulana Burhan-u'd-Din wrote a letter to him, sympathizing with him in his misfortune and praising his patience and forbearance. At the top of this letter was a quatrain:51 (So long as some calamity does not visit the lovers, the fame of their love does not reach

50 Mir'at-u'l-Asrar (MS); Matlub-u't-Talibin (MS).
51 Jawami-ul-Kilam, p-420
the beloved. Go and behold the heads of brave me fixed on turrets; on the other hand even a thorn does not prick the feet of the coward.)

It is said that the Shaikh refused to curse Muhammad bin Tughluq and wrote back to his friends that it was easier for him to undergo persecutions and tortures rather than to wish ill to anybody.52

Did Muhammad bin Tughluq really assign duties of personal service to the saints? The problem deserves careful consideration. In fact the source of this misunderstanding may be traced to a wrong interpretation of a statement of Ibn Battutah. Who says:53 (when Sultan Muhammad ascended the throne he intended to employ the Shaikh Shihabuddin in some capacity, as it was his habit to employ the jurists, sufis and men of probity contending that the Muslim rulers—may the peace of God be on them—had employed only men of learning and probity)

An analysis of this statement of Ibn Battutah in the light of the information supplied by Mir Khurd in his Siyar-u’l-Auliya inevitably leads to the conclusion that the duties assigned to the saints and divine were missionary and administrative in character. First, the Sultan’s contention that the pious Caliphs likewise employed only men of learning and probity is significant. They had employed religious men not for personal service but for administrative and missionary work. Secondly, Mir, Khurd refers to nine54 saints who were ordered by the Sultan to accept government

52 Tarikh-i-Muhammad, Muhammad Bihamid Khani (Rotograph, f. 149b).
53 Rihlah, vol.11, p.54
54 Sayyid Qutb-u’din Husain Kirmani
services under him. The nature of their work was clearly indicated in some cases. He asked Maulana Fakhr-u'd-Din Zarradi to co-operate with him in his schemes to crush the Mongols;\textsuperscript{55} he exhorted Shaikh-Shams-u'd-Din Yahya to go to Kashmir and propagate Islam; he told Sayyaid Kamla-u'd-Din that he wanted to take his advice in state matters (\textit{Umur Mumlakat}). The Sultan conferred the title of \textit{Shaikh-u'l-Islam} on Khwaja Karim-u'd-Din Samarqandi and sent him to Satgaon. In connection with the refusal Sayyid Qutb-u'Din Husain Kirmani to accept government service, Mir Khan says that the Sultan asked the mystics to give up their mystic dress\textsuperscript{56} and accept the life of \textit{shughl}. Shaikh Muizz u'd-Din son of Shaikh 'Ala-u'd-Din was appointed \textit{Shaikh-u'l-Islam-i-Mumlakat-i-Hindustan}\textsuperscript{19} His son was also give this title after his death.

Ibn Battutah also refers to a saint Shaikh Shihab-u'd-Din who, in the beginning, refused to accept any service under the Sultan and was punished for refusal, but later, when he consented to perform service he was appointed head of the \textit{diwan-i-mustakhraj}, "the department for the realization of revenue arrears".

Thus, it is clear that the Sultan's intention was to employ these saints missionary and administrative work. This policy was in direct conflict with Chishti attitude toward \textit{shughl}. As the supreme head of the Chishti Silsilah in India; Shaikh Nasir-u'd-Din tried to maintain the traditions of his \textit{Silsilah}. A conflict with the Sultan, consequently, became inevitable.

\textsuperscript{55} \textit{Siyar-u'l-Auliya}, p. 278.

\textsuperscript{56} \textit{Siyar-u'l-Auliya}, p. 197.
In 1349 A.D. Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq proceeded to Thatta from Gujrat in pursuit of Taghi. In the course of his journey, he fell ill at Gondal. He, however, continued large scale preparations for a final reckoning with Taghi. During his stay at Gondal He summoned from Delhi some leading scholars, 'Ulema, Mashaikh, nobles and their harems.\textsuperscript{57} Shaikh Nasir-u'd-Din was one of those saints who were called to Gondal.\textsuperscript{58}

Why did the Sultan call Shaikh Nasir-u'd-Din to Gondal along with so many other scholars? Hagiologists reveal only this much that the Sultan was angry with him. Barani keeps silent on this point. Badaoni, however, says that Shaikh Nasir-u'd-Din has installed Firuz on the throne during the absence of Muhammad bin Tughluq. The Sultan heard about this development during his stay at Gondal, and issued orders for the arrest of Firuz and Shaikh Nasir-u'd-Din. When these prisoners reached the suburbs of Thatta, the Sultan issued orders for their execution. Before his orders could be carried out, the Sultan breathed his last. Badaoni's account is not corroborated by any contemporary or semi-contemporary authority and may, therefore, be dismissed as baseless.

After the Sultan's death, people asked Shaikh Nasir-u'd-Din: "The Sultan persecuted you so much; what was the reason?" (The saint replied:\textsuperscript{59} it was a matter between me and my God, the Glorious and the Most High. They settled it like this.)

\textsuperscript{57} Tarih-i-Firuz Shahi, Barani, p. 523.
\textsuperscript{58} Siyar-u'l-Aulia, p. 246. Mir Khurd writes
\textsuperscript{59} Siyar-ul-Auliya, p-246
**Relationship with Firuz Tughlaq:** The death of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq plunged the entire camp into confusion and a feeling of despair seized the leaders of the army and created panic in the hearts of the rank and file. At this critical juncture Shaik Nasir-u'd-Din Mahmud and some other leading men waited upon Firuz and requested him to ascend the throne.\(^6^0\) The Shaikh's presence at the coronation ceremony should not give rise to any misunderstanding about his attitude towards political powers. It did not mean that he was to participate in the political affairs of the Empire. Far from that. A reign of terror had just ended and the Shaikh breathed a sigh of relief. Now the peaceful atmosphere of the *Khanqah* was not to be disturbed by the couriers from the Sultan. The Shaikh sent message to Firuz asking him whether he would rule over the people with justice and equity or he should pray to God for another king. Firuz promised to behave justly and the Shaikh sent him thirty nine dates indicative of the period he was to occupy the throne. Shaikh Nasir-u’Din was never again seen in the court of the camp. He desired a free *Khanqah*-life; that being ensured after a loss struggle with the state, he retired to his hospice.

Firuz Shah had deep faith in the mystics of his day.\(^6^1\) Besides, he wanted to make amends for the unwise policy of his predecessor. He must have, therefore tried to establish cordial relations with Shaikh Nasir-ud-Din also. But, the Shaikh does not seem to have, in any way, gone out of his way in reciprocation his feelings. One day Firuz Shah himself came to the *Khanqah* to see the Shaikh. The saint was having

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\(^6^0\) Khair-u;l-Majalis, p. 535.

\(^6^1\) Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi, pp. 558-560; Futuhat-i-Firuz Shahi, p. 21.
his mid-day nap; and Maulana Zain-u'd-Din have gone out. The Sultan was standing in the courtyard of the Khanqah that began to rain. Soon afterwards, Maulana Zain-u'd-Din arrived and informed the Shaikh about the royal visitor. The Shaikh woke up, but instead of going out to receive the Sultan, performed ablutions and began to offer prayers. The Sultan, who was waiting outside, got annoyed and turning towards Tattar Khan said: "We are not kings. They (pointing to the saint) are real kings." When the Shaikh came out of his room, a carpet (shatranji) was spread on which the Sultan sat for a while and then left, annoyed and displeased.62

The Khair-u'l-Majalis contains a very strong condemnation of the age of Firuz Shah. The Shaikh never refers to him by name, but his mind is never free from a feeling of contrast with the 'Alai period. He frequently refers to the peace and plenty of the reign of 'Ala-u'd-Din Khalji and then sadly contrasts the same with the conditions prevailing in the early years of Firuz Shah. Professor Mohammad Habib correctly remarks: "A person who spoke so fearlessly could hardly have been in touch with the Sultan and the bureaucracy."63

age of Firuz Shah Tughluq is generally depicted as an age of influence and plenty for the masses. The Khair-u'l-Majalis however leaves a different impression upon the mind of the reader. It appears that economicress was very acute during the early years of Firuz Shah's reign. The ikh contrast the conditions prevailing during the reign of Firuz Shah

Jawami-ul-Kilam, p.219
Islamic Culture, XX / 2, April 1946
with those of the time of Ala-u’d-Din Khalji,64 when even a beggar had one or two quilts, and then remarks: "What a cheapness it was in those days"? One maund of wheat could be had for 7 jitals; equal quantity of sugar for a half a dirham, ordinary sugar was available at the rate of one jital65 a maund.66 Cloth and other articles were also cheap. A quilt could be prepared for a few tankas. A good feast could be arranged in two or four tankas.67 There were a number of langars (free kitchen) in Delhi like the langar of Malik Yar Parran, where food was freely distributed. Then referring to his own times (the reign of Firuz Shah). The Shaikh has stated facts as he saw them. It is for the historians to find out economic reasons for this. In another Majlis he remarks about the 'Alai' age68 (What a cheapness it was in those days?) implying definitely that at the time of his conversations that cheapness was a tale of the past.

The following two incidents are also significant:

(1) A man comes to the Shaikh and complains about his straitened circumstances and the hard times (لا جایی). He informs the Shaikh that his only source of income is the one third of the earnings of his slaves. He also narrates the story of a person who had succeeded in getting an employment on the recommendation of Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya.

(2) The Shaikh narrates the story of a wali who had worked so efficiently for the prosperity and welfare of the people during the time of the Caliph Umar that no fallow land could be found in his territory. The Shaikh remained silent for a while after giving his account.