CHAPTER-III

Feast, Festivals and Ceremonies
Feasts, festivals and ceremonies were a restive feature of the court culture of the Delhi Sultanate. The norms and aesthetic standards set by the early Sultans for social gatherings and banquets still prevailed and provided a point of cultural reference. The feasts, festivals and ceremonies were celebrated with great gaiety, provided fun and entertainment and strengthened the bonds between the rulers and the ruling aristocracy. However, the rituals and ceremonies celebrated at different occasions legitimated imperial authority and reinforced the hierarchies in the court culture.

A. Feasts and Banquets:

Among various socio-cultural functions hosted by the Sultans and the nobles, feast was a formal dinner attended by the nobles, dignitaries and prominent persons of the state. The feasts and banquets were pompously arranged as a symbol of royal prestige. It further popularized delicacies and set cultural norms, etiquettes and dining manners. Thus, feasts hosted by the Sultans and their nobles on various social, political and religious occasions were of much cultural significance.

Evidences tend to believe that the leading nobles emulated the Sultan in hosting banquets on a grand scale. They spent lavishly on entertaining their guests. Generally the nobles used to invite the dignitaries and other Amirs at their residences for the feast. Some of them even invited the scholars and poets to attend their banquets.1 Grand feasts were organized where a thousand people could eat at the mansions of the nobles.2 Malik Imad-ul-Mulk Rawat-i-Arz hosted a grand feast at his mansion every year and invited almost all the higher officials of the Diwan-i-Arz and presented robes and twenty thousand tankahs to everyone. All the guests including his sub-ordinates, naib aziz-i-mamalik, nagibs, nawisanda (accountant) and other dignitaries were served food at the dining carpet. Varieties of food such as meat of goat, roasted mutton, chicken, roasted pigeon, bread, sweetmeats, varieties of sherbets, fuqqa (a kind of drink made of water, barley and dried grapes, like beer) and betel (tambul)

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were served to the guests. Food was also distributed among the *darveshes*. Customarily, meal was sent to the houses of those officials who could not attend the feast.³

However, nobles and other respected persons used to invite each other at their private feasts. These feasts were usually marked by wine, beauty, music and mirth.⁴ In one of his voyages, Ibn Battuta accompanied the governor of Sind Alaul-Mulk. During the journey meals were served to them with music and songs.⁵ Ibn Battuta, Qazi of Delhi under Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlaq, attended several dinners at the royal court, as well as at the residences of the nobles. Once he was invited by Malik Maqbul, *naib-wazir*, at his home.⁶ Likewise when he visited Amroha he was received by the Shaikh-ul-Islam who hosted a banquet to entertain him in the *khanqah*.⁷ Ibn Battuta’s detailed account of feasts suggests that large kitchens were maintained by the Sultan and nobles and a large amount was spent on the feasts.

Regarding the feast hosted by the nobles, Ibn Battuta gives an eyewitness account. Once he attended a feast hosted by Khudawandzadah Qiwamuddin Malik Maqbul and observed the etiquettes and manners in serving foods to the guests. The varieties of dishes included a thin round cake or bread and the roasted mutton cutting into four or six pieces. Another dish was round dough cakes made with ghee stuffed with a kind of sweet called *sabuniya*. A sweet cake called *khisht* was prepared with flour, sugar and ghee. The other variety of meat cooked with ghee, onions and green ginger was served in large ceramic bowls. Then meat stuffed *samusak*⁸ and *hashimi*, a dish of rice cooked in ghee with chicken was also served. Before the meal, *sherbet* (drink) was served in golden, silver and glass vessels. The Chamberlain then loudly pronounced *bismilah* signaling the guests to start their meal. After meal, barely-water and areca nuts were served in accordance with the customary practice.⁹

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⁴ Barani, *Tarikh*, pp. 243-244.
⁶ Ibid., Vol. III, pp. 742, 747.
⁸ *Samusak* was prepared with hashed meat and cooked with almonds, walnuts, pistachios, onions and spices, put inside a piece of thin bread, then it was fried in ghee. See, Ibn Battuta, *Travels*, Vol. III, pp. 607-608.
It is mentioned that once Hamid Khan, a Syed noble and wazir of Sultan Alauddin Shah, invited Malik Bahlul, the then military commander, and the nobles for a banquet in his own palace. Palace was decorated with colourful carpets. Varieties of fragrant food dishes were served here. After the meal, perfumes and flowers were brought for the guests. In the end, betel leaves wrapped in a pack was served to them.\textsuperscript{10}

Mushtaqi mentions a grand feast, completed in three stages, hosted by Masnad-i-Ali Khawwas Khan, a Lodi noble, who also served under Sher Shah Suri. When Khawwas Khan was posted at Bayana, the military commander Ahmad Shah Suri with retinue of nobles and soldiers visited him. On receiving the news of Ahmad Khan’s arrival, Khawwas Khan himself rushed to receive him and took all the nobles to his diwan-khana (private hall). He ordered his vakils (officers) and servants to serve them accordingly. They first brought ewers and jugs of water to wash the hands of the guests and then they were served bread and kabab.\textsuperscript{11} Second time, as appetizer, beef-soup was served to the nobles followed by a roasted dumba, placed before each dignitaries. The roasted meat of castrated goat was placed before other second ranked officials who were few hundred in number. Then in final round, red and yellow soup made of mutton, chicken, partridges and several other birds were served followed by roasted dumbras, castrated goats and roasted chicken, partridges and quails with plain rice, sweet and salted rice. The vegetarian dishes, the pakwan-Hindi\textsuperscript{12} meant for Hindu soldiers and varieties of sweetmeats were served that astonished the guests. The jugs containing about ten or twelve seers of milk were placed with two spoons, each for two guests. In short, the feast continued for two hours. In the end, according to the Indian customs, they were served with betel leaves and perfumes.\textsuperscript{13}

Generally nobles provided food to their companions and soldiers during journey or on military expeditions. Mian Gaddi Farmuli had a number of camels for carrying


\textsuperscript{11} Kababs were brought in huge quantity. Thus the guests started eating under the impression that it was the only dish, but the vakil of Khawwas Khan informed the guests about the main meal.

\textsuperscript{12} The Indian vegetarian dishes has been mentioned by Mushtaqi as Pakwan-i-Hindi consisting of puris (small fried round bread), vegetables, different pulses, suhali, gulhulai, qitehndi, curd curry, baris, bura, pahtari, manguri and mangochki etc. See \textit{Waqiat}, pp. 146-147; Also Siddiqui, ‘Food Dishes’, p. 129.

\textsuperscript{13} Mushtaqi, \textit{Waqiat}, pp. 148-149; Eng. tr. pp. 162-164; See also Abdullah, \textit{Tariikh-i-Daudi}, pp. 161-163.
the food cauldrons and used to distribute dishes to military officers and soldiers. Banquets were also arranged by the Sultans and nobles on arrival of foreign dignitaries. Once Rana Sanga of Chittor hosted a banquet in honour of the rebel nobles of Sultan Ibrahim Lodi at his court and personally served food to the guests. According to the author of *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, Mian Husain Farmuli and other nobles were present at that banquet. Different varieties of dishes were placed on the dining carpet. The Rana Sanga placing a cloth around his neck (in the fashion of an Indian butler) stood before Mian Maruf Farmuli and requested to start meal. Since Maruf Farmuli had never taken food in the Hindu house thus he avoided meal on the pretext of fast. But as a token of friendship he had taken a pinchful of food in his handkerchief.

The nobles, who had their proximity with the Sufi Saints, used to invite them along with their disciples at dinner and also arranged *sama* for their spiritual entertainment. However, a feast was hosted by Qazi Hameeduddin, *Malik-ul-Tujjar*, at Awadh in which he had invited Sufi saints and their disciples.

**B. Festivals:**

Muslim festivals, usually, were celebrated with great enthusiasm during Sultanate period and, that too, by the Delhi Sultans and the nobles. In fact these festivals were the anniversaries of some of the most important events in the early history of Islam. The most important Muslim festivals observed by the Sultans and their nobles were that of *Id al-Fitr*, *Id al-Azha*, *Shab-i-Bar’at* and *Muharram*. There are short epistles or notes on *Shab-i-Styum*, *Shab-i-Qadr* and *Ashura*. Amir Khusrau refers to *Lailat-ul-Miraj* (the night of Prophet Muhammad’s ascent to heaven) when he invited his mystic friends to attend *sama*. Likewise, the old Persian festival of *Nauroz* (the beginning of spring) was also celebrated with great pomp and zeal.

*Id-ul-Fitr* was the main festival which had been celebrated with great rejoicing,
entertainment and exchange of gifts. Contemporary historians furnish a vivid description of the celebration and festivities organized on the occasion of *Id*. It was marked with great pomp and festivity. Amir Khusrau described that on seeing the new moon the people broke the fast and congregated to enjoy festivities. He further referred to the beating of drum, nine times, to announce the happy termination of the fast. Thus the Sultan, the nobles and the courtiers went to *Idgah* (mosque for *Id* prayer) to offer the *dogana* (two *rakat* prayer of *Id*). On this occasion the young and children usually wore garments of fine linen and silken clothes. The *gulabdar* (vessels for rose water) was used for sprinkling perfumes and rose water on the guests. Exchange of gifts and sweet dishes was the common practice. The sixth day *Id* (*Shesh-i-Id*) was also celebrated with preparation of special dish of white fine cakes (*ruqag*) and *halwa-i-shakar pech* (a sweet dish) were prepared on that day.

In the morning of the *Id*, the great nobles accompanied Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlaq in royal procession with their respective insignia. The nobles with their especial detachment hold their trumpets and flags. Nobles like Mubarak Khan, Bahram Khan, Malik Firoz, Wazir of Sultan, Malik Mujir and Malik Qabula followed Sultan respectively with their insignia and troops. Then other nobles like Malik Nukbia, Malik Bughra, Malik Mukhilis and Malik Quitbul-Mulk came with their insignias.

*Id-i-Qurban* (festival of sacrifice), held in commemoration of the Prophet Abraham and his son Ismail, on the 10th of *Zilhijja*. Minhaj mentions that Balban as *nait* to the Sultan Nasiruddin Mahmud offered his *Id-ul-Adha* prayer in the *madrasa* (college) ground at Jallundhar along with his associates. Lodi noble Masnad-i-Ali Azam Humayun Sarwani is reported to have celebrated the *Id* festivals in a lavish manner. Huge amount of money was spent. Almost three thousand animals, including

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cows, lambs and camels, slaughtered on this occasion for the distribution of meat among friends, relatives, beggars, poor and other people.  

Amir Khusrau provides vivid descriptions about all the important Muslim festivals and ceremonies. The first twelve days of Rabi ul-Awwal, especially the twelfth, provided the occasion for holding milad-un-nabi and celebrating the day as the Prophet’s birth. On this occasion poor and indigent persons were fed. It is recorded in Khair-ul-Majalis that during the twelve days of Rabi ul-Awwal almost every nobles were engaged in distribution of foods among the poor as per their positions which marked as a general feast. Khawwas Khan celebrated Milad un-Nabi at Jaunpur and distributed halwa (sweetmeat) and sherbet (sweet drink) prepared with four hundred maunds of refined sugar among the poor and beggars. Few silver tankahs were also given to each and every beggar. Khawwas Khan, a Lodi noble, once arranged a grand feast and feed the nobles and the entire army consisting of thirty to forty thousand sawars, despite of scarcity of food grains in that desolate area where his army was stationed. As per tradition, food dishes included mutton soup and other varieties were served. After food, the guests were served with milk mixed with rice and different types of coagulated milk with different varieties of sweetmeats. Besides, the pakwan (vegetarian dishes) for the Hindu soldiers and officers were served along with many other dishes. No space was left vacant on the dining carpet. As usual betel leaves were distributed at the end.

Likewise a prominent Lodi noble Mian Zainuddin spent huge money on food preparation, continuously for twelve days. Every day he spent 2,000 tankahs on food preparations for people, both the poor and rich. On the first and the last day the expenditure on different kinds of delicious food was doubled. Another noble ‘Masnad-i-Ali’ Azam Humayun Sarwani observed this occasion in the manner he observed the occasion of Id-al-Adha. He was in a habit of acquiring two thousand copies of the Quran every year and distributed them along with money to students.

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26 Ibn Battuta, Rehla, p. 143; Rashid, Society and Culture, p. 122.
27 Hamid Qalandar, Khair-ul-Majalis, pp. 252-253; Eng. tr., p. 198; Reference to the Urs is also available to us from Ikhtisan. See Mohammad Bin Sadr Taj Abdus Akhtar Dehlavi, Basatin-ul Urs, Edition and Annotations by Prof. Nazir Ahmad, New Delhi, 2010, p. xx.
28 Mushtaqi, Waqiat, p. 150; Eng. tr. p. 165.
Mian Sulaiman Farmuli had distributed cash among the needy people.\textsuperscript{31}

Following the celebrations of Milad un-Nabi, certain nobles also observed the
death anniversaries of the Sufi saints. A Parwana of the reign of Firoz Shah throws
light on the celebration of Urs of the saints by the nobles. The document state that Ala
Khan, brother of Ali, communicated to the muqta and karkuns of shiq Sandila that
mauza Dahakwa in the administrative jurisprudence of the said shiq, had been
confirmed in the names of Imam Zamamin, Alim al-Din Hamid Muhammad and
Taufiq Nabi as wazifa. The taxes, wyjuhat and awarizat, of the village (mauza)
Dahakwa had been sanctioned for meeting the expenses of the Urs of Hazrat Shaikh
Farid al-Haq.\textsuperscript{32} (See Appendix-C) The Lodi nobles used to spend lavishly on the urs
of their saintly ancestor, Shaikh Muhammad Salman (a non-Afghan Sufi, buried in
Farmul in Afghanistan). Some of them offered faitha (prayers) for his soul and
distributed sweetmeats whenever they had to participate in the battle.\textsuperscript{33}

The nobles as a token of their respect towards the Sufis used to visit their
shrines. Mian Zabaruddin used to visit the shrine of Hazrat Sultan-ul-Mashaikh
Nizamuddin Auliya on every Wednesday and held the sama party on the bank of
Jamuna. He also visited along with his friends to Qadamgah-i-Hazrat Risalat Panah
(the shrine where the foot prints of the Prophet were preserved) on every Thursday.\textsuperscript{34}

Besides the two Ids festival, Shab-i-Bar‘at was also celebrated with great éclat
and enthusiasm. It was considered the day of blessings. The 14\textsuperscript{th} day of the month of
Shaban and the night preceding the 15\textsuperscript{th} is generally called Shab-i-Bar‘at which is
appropriated to the commemoration of the dead ancestors and saintly personages. On
this occasion they made offerings and oblation to the deceased personages. People
send salutations as numerous as the prayers of Shab-i-Barat and good wishes as
numerous as the durud of the Mah-i-Shaban and makes the following submission.
Tonight the moon of the 14\textsuperscript{th} of the month has turned the darkness of the night of
Shab-i-Barat into a light so bright that this night can be considered a replica of the
sun’s diary. It was believed that Divine predestinator bestows what is necessary for
the support of life on the 14\textsuperscript{th} of Shaban, thus the night after it also called Shab-i-

\textsuperscript{31} Mushtaqi, Waqiat, pp. 82, 85.
\textsuperscript{32} Document dated 753 A. H. / 1352 A. D., preserved in National Archives of India, New Delhi, CAD
\textsuperscript{33} Abbas Khan Sarwani, Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi, ed. Imam al-Din, Dacca, 1964, p. 98; Siddiqui,
\textsuperscript{34} Mushtaqi, Waqiat, p. 76.
Bedari or nocturnal vigils. Amir Khusrau in his Ijaz-i-Khusrawi records that “commission or assignment of various kinds occurred on the occasion along with exemptions and immunity”. Thus, he described the 14th night of the month of Shaban as Lail-i-Mubarak Barat and Rozzi-Qismat-i-Mubarak, referred to the observance of manifold prayers and night vigils.35

Usually the people, according to his means, sent lamps to the mosques for illumination. Amir Khusrau also wished to burn the lamp of light in his own house and enlighten it with prayers.36 On this occasion of Shab-i-Bar’at four temporary structures (alang) were constructed under the names of alang-i-khass (rescues for the Sutan), alang-i-malik Naib Barbak, alang-i-Malik Ali, and alang-i-Malik Yaqub. On all these structures drums and bands (tabal wa damamah) were beaten, and the entire ground was so well-illuminated that it looked like a bright day with large numbers of earthen lamps (chiraag) and flames (mashal). On the bank of Jamuna, the boats were decorated with lamps which created beautiful reflection on the water. Drums were beaten and bands were played for three nights of the 13th, 14th and 15th Sha’ban. Members of royal family, nobles, officials, commoners and other people gathered to watch the fireworks and lightening at Kaushak-i-Nujul (place of alighting) at Firozabad palace that turned the night into day. Princes, khans and maliks were all present on this festivity. As part of entertainment, boat race had been arranged on Jamuna on this occasion.37 Thus, the festival was celebrated with great pomp and show. However, the festival Shab-i-Barat was celebrated under the influence of the Hindu festival Shiva-ratri, considering this night vigil and fireworks common to both the festivals while Islamic law has not permitted the fireworks.38

The month of Ramzan was the month of fasts which was broken at evening with such kinds of drinks as fiqqa (made of water and barley, and often of grapes) dasta-i-

nan, band sweets named zaliba-i-nabat (jalebi), lozina (a confection of almonds)\textsuperscript{39} and juicy fruits melons and sugar candy.\textsuperscript{40} Food was distributed among the poor at the time of iftar and sahr. Mian Zainuddin distributed the same dishes which he himself ate.\textsuperscript{41} Amir Khusrau comments on the prevailing evils of the society and records that even in the month of Ramzan the gamblers played the game.\textsuperscript{42}

The first ten days of the first Arabic month 
Muharram were held sacred on account of the martyrdom of Hussain, son of Ali and Fatima at Karbala. The ashura was solemnly observed on the tenth day of Muharram by means of a voluntary fast.\textsuperscript{43}

Evidences suggest the distribution of alms and charities among the poor and the destitute beggars.\textsuperscript{44} Ibn Battuta mentions that on the tenth of Muharram, he himself distributed hundred maunds of flour and an equal amount of meat to the poor.\textsuperscript{45} Similarly food was also being distributed to feed the people on the occasion of great festivals such as Id al-Fitr, Id al-Azha, birthday of the Prophet (Milad-un-Nabi), on the day of Ashura (10\textsuperscript{th} of Muharram), and in the night of mid-Sha’ban which consisting of a hundred maunds of flour and another hundred maunds of meat.\textsuperscript{46} Mian Sulaiman Farmuli distributed cash among the deserving people on the days of ashura, death anniversary of the Prophet of Islam and in the month of Rajab.\textsuperscript{47} However, these occasions involved a large amount of expenditure and soon it had become institutionalized.

Besides Islamic festivals, the Iranian festival also finds place in the Sultanate society. Spring festival nauroz was celebrated with great gaiety and mirth. It had a great significance during the medieval period. This was the great festival of the new year’s day of the Persian calendar and had been introduced by emigrants from Central

\textsuperscript{39} Amir Khusrau, Ijaz-i-Khusravi, Eng. tr., Vol. IV, p. 305; Askari, Amir Khusrau, p. 40; Idem, Amir Khusrau Memorial Volume, p. 156. Minhaj also mentions 26\textsuperscript{th} of Ramzan as the Shab-i-Qadr (the night of power), he offered prayers. See Minhaj, Tabqaat, p. 831; In his Khazain-ul-Fitaah Amir Khusrau further mentions that tawawi prayers were offered on Lailat-ul-Qadr for heavenly help. See Amir Khusrau, Khazain-ul-Fitaah, p. 91; Eng. tr., p. 66.

\textsuperscript{40} Barani, Tarikh, pp. 226-227; Lai, Khaliq, p. 50.

\textsuperscript{41} Mushtaqi, Waqiat, p. 72; tr. p. 74.

\textsuperscript{42} Amir Khusrau, Ijaz-i-Khusravi, Eng. tr., Vol. IV, p. 290.

\textsuperscript{43} Minhaj mentions Ashura without any detail. See Tabqaat, p. 845. The occasion was regarded holy on historical grounds and the fast was said to have been observed by Meccans of olden times. See Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam, pp. 47-48; Askari, Amir Khusrau, pp. 40-41; Hameed-ud-Din, ‘Indian Culture’, p. 33.

\textsuperscript{44} Amir Khusrau, Ijaz-i-Khusravi, Vol. IV, p. 328; Eng. tr. p. 307; Askari, Amir Khusrau, p. 41.

\textsuperscript{45} Ibn Battuta, Rehla, pp. 142-143; Rashid, Society and Culture, p. 121.

\textsuperscript{46} Ibn Battuta, Rehla, pp. 142-143; Ibn Battuta, Travels, Vol. III, pp. 761.

\textsuperscript{47} Mushtaqi, Waqiat, p. 82; Eng. tr. p. 86.
Asia at the very beginning of their conquest of North India. According to Badaoni, it fell on the first farwardin (first month of the Persian year). Amir Khusrau describes the celebration of nauroz in rose garden in his verbose style. He refers to the beauty of the season, fresh flowers, music, songs, wine and the celebration with friends and relatives.

To celebrate nauroz pavilion was constructed and Khans, Maliks, nobles and officials participated in the festival. Poets and singers adorned the festivals with their art and skill. However, it was the most gorgeous and spectacular of all the festivals which lasted for nine days. The religious minded nobles also celebrated it with great zeal by hosting a grand feast and arranging gawwali (religious or sufi songs sung by expert male singers). Shaikh Ghuran, a high ranked noble of Sultan Sikandar Lodi, once arranged a festive assembly for the celebration of spring (Majlis-i-Jashn-i-Bahar) on a grand scale which seems to have lasted for several days. Feast and entertainment was arranged for friends and guests. When singers and musicians failed to create an ecstatic effect upon the guests, Shaikh Ghuran himself started singing a pathetic song in a melodious voice which had its effects.

Celebrations of nauroz provided the nobility and the ruling elites the occasions for merrymaking and also to display their generosity and munificence. Relevant information reveals that the tradition set by the nobles and the princes of the fourteenth century Delhi Sultanate had been enriched by the introduction of the new ideas that certainly added to the luster and grandeur of occasion. These celebrations, lasting for days, had great fascination for the elites.

C. Ceremonies:

Birth of a male child was welcomed with festivities and presents. Mahru congratulated the noble on the birth of a son to him by writing a letter. In another letter he promised, his son Imad ud-din to send him a robe for the newly born

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48 Siddiqui, Delhi Sultanate, p. 65.
51 Luniya, op. cit., p. 201; Rashid, Society and Culture, p. 124.
52 Mushafi, Waqiat, pp. 110-111; Eng. tr. p. 119; Siddiqui, Delhi Sultanate, p. 65.
grandson Nizam ud-din Mahru. Astrolgers were asked to prepare horoscopes and make prediction about the future of the child.

The happiest social ceremony was that of marriage, at which the high as well as the low rank nobles spent lavishly. The wedding functions held by the members of the ruling elite class and the nobles were always lavish. Even a second ranked officer performed the marriage ceremony of his children on a grand scale. The marriage ceremony of Qutbuddin Aibek and daughter of Malik Tajuddin Yalduz, governor of Kirman, was celebrated with great splendor. Malik Aitmar Turk is mentioned to have spent more than one lac jitals on the marriage of his daughter. In the marriage ceremony of Prince Shadi Khan with the daughter of Alp Khan, the governors of every province were invited to attend the function at the Capital.

On the occasion of the marriage the nikah ceremony was solemnized first. Among the rites jahwa (the meeting of the bride and the bridegroom in the presence of the relatives and showing the face of one to the other through mirror) and scattering and throwing money and flowers called rukhsati. There are frequent references not only in Ifaz-i-Khusravi but also in Dewal Rani Khizer Khan, Futuh-us-Salatin, Rehla and in Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi to some of the marriage rites and ceremonies, ornamentations by the bride, bride’s dresser, takht-i-arusi (bridal throne) and hajla (the bridal bed with mirror and ornament). A graphic account of the marriage ceremony of an Arab noble Amir Saifuddin Gaddah with the sister of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlaq has been given by Ibn Battuta. The ceremony was held at the red palace popularly known as Kushak-i-Lal. Ibn Battuta referred to some Indian customs followed in wedding, such as applying of henna on the hands and feet of bride and bridegroom, bridegroom’s procession, their false struggle to enter the bride’s house, betel given by bride to bridegroom and finally scattering of gold dinars over the guests etc. Women guests also applied floral patterns of the henna on their

56 Isami, Futuh-us-Salatin, p. 151.
57 Ferishta, Tarih, p. 62; Eng. tr., Vol. 1, p. 110.
58 Sijzi, Fawaid-ul-Fu‘ad, p. 134; Siddiqui, Delhi Sultanate, p. 65.
60 Askari, Amir Khusrav, p. 35.
hands on the wedding ceremonies. Ibn Battuta records festivities and extravagance of this marriage in detail. Malik Fathullah, *shawanawis* (in charge of arrangement for feast), was appointed by the Sultan as over all in charge. During these days of festivity principal *amirs* and distinguished foreigners were present night and day. Two nights before the wedding procession, ladies (of Sultan’s palace) reached Red Palace and surrounded the bridegroom Amir Saiifuddin and installed him on a cushion. Then, they applied henna on his hands and feet and all the ladies stood behind him sung and danced. At the wedding palace, principal companions of Amir Gaddah remained with him. Sultan classified the nobles into two groups, one as members of Amir Gaddah’s party and the other as the bridal party. After henna ceremony, bridal party reached before the gate of the palace where bride would unveil herself to bridegroom, and bridegroom. As an entertainment ritual, a mock fight had made with bridal party. In case of defeat, they had to pay thousands of *dinars* to the bride’s party. On wedding day a ceremonial robe of blue silk embroidered with jewels and turban, was brought to Amir Saifuddin Gaddah. Amir Khusrau mentions *mahr* (money paid to the bride at the time of marriage) given to bride.

On wedding evening, bride and bridegroom were installed on a high pulpit in the audience hall. Bride was dressed in decorated brocade hangings covered with precious jewels. She extended betel to bridegroom. Then gold *dinars* were thrown as *nisar*. Following the Indian custom, drums, bugles and pipes were sounded outside the palace gate while female musicians were singing inside. On *rukhsati*, the bridegroom mounted on horse while bride sat in a palanquin and *dinars* were thrown upon them. As per prevailing custom, wherever this marriage procession crossed the house of an *amir* or noble of rank, he came out to salute them and scattered over them gold and silver coins. On very next day, robes and gold and silver coins were sent by bride to all of the companions of bridegroom. A horse with decorated saddle and bridle and a purse of silver coins were presented to them all by the Sultan. Malik Fathullah, the in charge of this ceremony also presented silk robes and purses to the

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66 Amir was without his relatives, so these ladies acted as his relative on the order of Sultan.
ladies and musicians. Thus, women were the dominating element during the marriage ceremony. They took part in all ceremonies during the marriage, sing songs and also rode on horseback in the bridal procession. Rich presents were offered by friends and relatives to the married couple.

Ibn Battuta records the marriage of two daughters of the wazir Khwaja Jahan Ahmad Ayaz (Turk by race) with the two sons of Khudawand Zadah Qiwamuddin (Iranian immigrant to the court) arranged by Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlaq. In the absence of wazir, the Sultan with his royal retinue reached the residence of the wazir and attended the ceremony and acted as guardian on behalf of the wazir. Grand Qazi read the statement of the dowry. Thus, Sultan handed over all the things specified in the dowry agreement to the qazi. Then rests of the ceremonies were solemnized by the high ranked nobles because wazir Khwaja Jahan himself was not present.

Festivities during the marriage ceremony of the son of Shaikh Ghuran, a non-Afghan noble of Sultan Ibrahim Lodi, lasted for several days. Mushtaqi records the generosity of the nobles that on the occasion of marriage ceremony of his son, Shaikh Ghuran paid seventy thousand tankahs to the singers. At the time of rukhsati, he distributed one hundred and fifty horses, four elephants and twenty ass-loads of cloth including silk fabric among the people. However, it is evident that the marriage ceremonies were solemnized on different Islamic, Iranian and Indian customs and traditions which shed light on the composite culture of the Sultanate society.

Funerary ceremony also deserves to be mentioned. On the death of Sultan Balban when his bier was brought out of the Kushak-i-Lal, Khans, Maliks and all other courtiers walked behind. When the bier was brought to the burial ground at Darul-Aman, Malik Fakhruddin (the kotwal), torn his clothes and throw dust on his head. They distributed food for the peace of the soul of deceased Sultan. The grandees of the state in far flung areas also observed the mourning. Bughra Khan,

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75 Barani, *Tarikh*, pp. 122-123. Malik Fakhruddin Kotwal delivered funeral oration as Sultan's coffin was being lowered into the grave. Habibullah, *op. cit.*, pp. 148-149, 150.
muqti of Lakhnauti tore his garment on receiving the news of Balban’s death. Then he sat in seclusion and mourned for a week beating his head.\textsuperscript{76} When Imad-ul-Mulk, the Muster Master of Sultan Balban died, Hindu Rais joined mourning ceremonies with bare heads.\textsuperscript{77} On death news of Imadul-Mulk, Qadr Khan threw his cap on the ground, tore his shirt right across and cried bitterly shedding tears profusely. Then he went into seclusion and set in mourning for three days and nights.\textsuperscript{78} According to Khair-ul-Majalis on the death of a Khalji noble Alp Arslan, an old man put his head in the prostration and then prayed for his departed soul.\textsuperscript{79}

*Insha-i-Mahru* contains two important documents which shed light on the fact that the condolence on the death of Sultan and noble was offered by writing letters to other nobles and used to visit the houses of the deceased.\textsuperscript{80} If a noble was on an expedition and his relative died then the other noble used to visit his camp to express his condolence.\textsuperscript{81} Sometimes they conveyed their condolences to the family of deceased by sending their delegates.\textsuperscript{82}

Regarding the funeral ceremony of his daughter, Ibn Battuta refers that it was customary to visit the grave of the dead person after the burial of the third day. On that occasion, the grave was covered with the carpets and silk cloths on all the sides and various types of flowers (jasmine, gul-shabah, white flowers) were spread over it. Besides these flowers, branches of orange and lemon trees with fruits were set up. The people recited *Quran* and offered prayers for the peace of the departed soul. After the recitation, julep was brought by the servants as a drink and finally betel was served to the guests.\textsuperscript{83}

Thus the feasts, festivals and ceremonies were important features of the sociocultural life of the nobles of Delhi Sultans as well as a restive feature of the court.

\textsuperscript{77} Amir Khusrau, *Kulliyat-i-Khusrau*, p. 48.
\textsuperscript{78} Isami, *Funuh-us-Salatin*, pp. 245-246; Eng. tr., Vol. II, p. 415.
\textsuperscript{79} Hamid Qalandar, *Khair-ul-Majalis*, p. 140; Eng. tr., p. 102.
\textsuperscript{81} Mushtaqi, *Waqiat*, p. 154.
\textsuperscript{82} It is mentioned that when Sultan Husain Sharqi’s mother, Bibi Raji died at Etawah in 1478 A.D. Sultan Bahhol conveyed his condolences to him through Qutb Khan Lodi and Kalyan Mal. In the same year Husain visited Badaun to offer condolences on the death of Sultan Alauddin. See Habib & Nizami, *Comprehensive History*, Vol. V, p. 681.
culture of the period. These occasions were lavish and a huge amount was spent on them. Numerous kinds of rich dishes were served in a prescribed manner. Some kind of drink was offered before and after the meal with betel leaves. The dishes were served according to the ranks and the positions of the invited guests. Thus these events were celebrated with great gaiety and were sources of fun and entertainment for the ruling classes. At the same time, they also served to strengthen the bonds between the rulers and the ruling aristocracy, bringing them together through display and entertainment. Thus, the rituals and ceremonies legitimated imperial authority and reinforced the hierarchies in the court culture.