

‘Ulamā’ during the Power Shifts in the Delhi Sultanate: A Study of Ilbari Rule¹

Abstract:

This article posits that in the Delhi Sultanate, the Ilbari rulers tried to influence networks of ‘ulamā’ through a continuous process of patronization, reward and punishment. Each sultan was faced with the challenge of controlling preexisting networks of ‘ulamā’ with strong roots in the Sultanate milieu. Rulers responded by superimposing new networks over older ones, and inviting and accommodating foreign ‘ulamā’ to become power-sharers. The new networks were relatively easier to control and generated little reaction if a new ‘ālim was punished. During power-shifts, the ‘ulamā’ never acted as a monolithic group and sided with different segments of umarā’.

Key Words: ‘ulamā’, Ilbari rule, Delhi Sultanate, networks, patronage.

The ‘ulamā’ of the Delhi Sultanate were part of trans-regional and ethnically heterogeneous Muslim educated elite that was highly itinerant yet interconnected and shared a perception of wider-Islamic identity. The thirteenth-century Mongol invasions were ruinous for Muslim polities across Central Asia, Arabia and Persia. They proved in some ways an opportunity, however, for the Delhi Sultanate, which became a refuge that the historian Minhāj us-Sirāj Juzjānī called the ‘asylum of the universe’ for Muslim émigrés.² These individuals of high birth and skill, formerly associated with different courts across the Muslim world, served as the body and mind of the Sultanate administration and power structure as both *umarā’* (nobility) and ‘ulamā’ (Muslim scholars with expertise in Islamic knowledge).³

In addition to their services in the administration, the Sultans needed the ‘ulamā’ to solve theoretical issues central to their legitimacy and offer guidance in how to deal with their non-Muslim subjects.⁴ The religious knowledge of the ‘ulamā’ also provided guidelines to the Muslim populace to formulate their lives according to the *sharī‘a*. The ‘ulamā’ were employed in almost all departments of the Sultanate’s administration: In the departments of justice (*dīwān-i-qaḍā’*) as the chief judge (*qāḍī al-qaḍā’*), in the office of accountability and public morals (*ḥisba*) as market inspectors (*muḥtasib*), for imparting education (*tadrīs*),

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¹ From Ilbari rule I mean the first three dynasties of the Delhi Sultanate that are also called slave dynasty, that are Qutbi dynasty of Qutb al-Dīn Aybeg (r. 602-606/1206–1210), Shamsi dynasty of Shams al-Dīn Iltutmish (r. 606-633/1210-1236) and Ghiyāthi Dynasty of Ghiyāth al-Dīn Balaban (r. 644-664/1266-87).

² Minhāj us-Sirāj Juzjānī, *Ṭabaqāt-i-Nāsirī*, (Persian) trans. M. Abdullah Chughtai (Lahore: Urdu Bazar Lahore, 1952), 77-9; Habib, “Formation of the Sultanate Ruling Class of the Thirteenth Century,” *Medieval India 1: Researches in History of India (1200-1750)*, ed. Irfan Habib, (Delhi; Oxford University Press, 1992), 9-10.

³ For a discussion on symbiotic relationship between ‘ulamā’ and Sultans see Sayyed Sabahuddin Abdul Rahmān, *Hindūstān kay Salāṭīn, ‘ulamā’ aur Mashāyikh ke Ta’alluqat par Ayk Nazar* (Ā‘zamgarh: Ma’ārif Press, 1970), 10-30; for ‘ulamā’ in the early sultanate period see, Sunil Kumar, *The Emergence of the Delhi Sultanate, 1192–1286* (Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2007), 198-237.

⁴ The rulers convened interactive seminars and gatherings where ‘ulamā’ participated in debates called *maḥzar*. For details, see Shams Sirāj ‘Afīf, *Tarīkh Firūz Shāhī* (Hyderabad: Dār al-Taba‘-i Jāmi‘-i Uthmāniya, 1938), 383-4.

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overseeing charitable endowments and public works (*awqāf*), and in shahna/*kotwal* (police) were under the purview of the '*ulamā*'.⁵ Some authored histories of the Delhi Sultanate, others commanded armies.⁶ Some were also appointed as emissaries because of their reputation of piety, trustworthiness, and negotiation skills.⁷ The '*ulamā*' were commissioned to suggest the scheme of Qur'anic *āyats* (verses) to be engraved onto monuments that would express the sultan's worldview.⁸

In the Delhi Sultanate a quasi-bureaucratization of religious and educational institutions comparable to other contemporary Muslim states was visible. These institutions functioned under the supervision of the '*ulamā*'. Like educational practices elsewhere between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries in the Muslim world, the education of the '*ulamā*' in the Delhi Sultanate was institutionalized within a *madrasa* (college) setting. This education started with *ijāza* (authorization) and graduated through *dastār* (turban) and *sanad* (certificate). Entry into the ranks of the '*ulamā*' involved a process of socialization and networking with other '*ulamā*' that belonged to diverse social backgrounds.⁹ References and recommendations from renowned '*ulamā*' were desirable for recruitment into any position. For the local offices of *khatīb* (the one who delivers the sermon (*khuṭbā*, literally 'narration'), during the Friday and Eid prayers), *imām* (the one who leads prayers in a mosque), *muftī* (a Muslim legal expert who gives rulings on religious matters) and *muḥtasib* (market inspector) one can identify a vertical axis of mobility. However, for higher offices of political importance such as *mutawālī* (supervisor) of an important *madrasa*, *muftī*, *qāḍī* of an important town or city, or the offices of *Ṣadr-i-Jahān* (director of the religious matters, charities, and endowments often acting as deputy sultan) and *Shaykh al-Islām*, social worth and the strength of one's social network were key.¹⁰ In these cases, horizontal and spatial mobility becomes visible. Although these offices were generally non-hereditary, exceptions did exist.

The '*ulamā*' influenced *vox populi* (the opinions or beliefs of the majority) and their *bayāt* (oath of allegiance) during the periods of political

⁵ Muhammad Basheer Ahmad, *The Administration of Justice in Medieval India* (Aligarh: Aligarh Historical Research Institute Aligarh University, 1941), 96-116; U. N. Day, *Administrative System of Delhi Sultanate* (Allahabad: Kitāb Maḥal Allahabad, 1959), 135-151; Wahed Husain B.L., *Administration of Justice During the Muslim Rule in India* (Delhi: Idāra-i-Adabiyāt-I Delhi, 1934), 166-72; I. H. Qureshi, *Administration of the Sultanate of Delhi* (Lahore: S. M. Ashraf, 1942), 157-80.

⁶ The sultanate historians were continuously replicating, reinventing and reinterpreting the Muslim heritage in their works. For details see, Blain H. Auer, *Symbols of Authority in Medieval Islam: History, Religion and Muslim Legitimacy in the Delhi Sultanate* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2012), 5.

⁷ For instance, Shaykh Ḥasan b. Muḥammad Sighānī Lāhurī refused the position of *qāḍī* of Lahore, offered to him by Qutb al-Dīn Aybeg, and served the 'Abbasid Caliph al-Nāṣir who sent a letter to Shams al-Dīn Ilutmish. Later the caliph Mustanṣar Billah made him an emissary for Sultana Rāḍiya.

⁸ Anthony Welch, Alexandra Bain and Hussein Keshani, 'Epigraphs, Scripture and Architecture in the Early Sultanate of Delhi', *Muqarnas*, vol. 19, (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 12-43.

⁹ For education in the medieval Islamic world, see Jonathan Berkey, 'Education', ed. Richard C. Martin, *Encyclopedia of Islam and the Muslim World*, (MacMillan Reference USA, 2004), 205-206. For further examples, see Chistī Shaykh Jamāl al-Dīn Hānswī in Muḥammad Ishāq Bhatti, *Fuḡhā-i-Hind*, vol. 1 (Lahore: Idārah-i-Saḡāfat-i-Islāmiya, 1974), 122-123; Shaykh Abdul Ḥaq Muhaddith Dehlvi, *Akhbar al-Akhyar*, trans. Mawlana Subhan Mahmud and Mawlana Muḥammad Fazil (Karachi, n.d), 67; and Sayid Abd al-Hayy b. Fakhar al-Dīn Ḥasanī, *Nuḡhat al-Khawātir* vol. 2, trans. (Karachi: Anwar Al Haq Qāsmī, n.d), 122.

¹⁰ For instance, Badr al-Dīn Ishāq aka Shaykh Ishāq Bukhārī taught in *madrasa-i Mu'izziya* for a long time.

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transition that took place regularly in the Delhi Sultanate. The effectiveness of an 'ālim (plural: 'ulamā') as an opinion maker depended upon his reputation for piety, his lineage, and his social worth. Most of the 'ulamā' claimed non-Indian origin, and some traced their descent from the family of the Holy Prophet. Some 'ulamā' travelled extensively. Travel served two key purposes: providing opportunity for further education and allowing an 'ālim to build scholarship through networking. Personal piety was an identity marker; theoretically the people of the Delhi Sultanate recognized two categories of 'ulamā', the 'ulamā'-i haqq (the scholars of truth), and 'ulamā'-i sū (scholars seeking worldly gains).¹¹ In practice, at times these categories could overlap. Many 'ulamā' pursued government appointments and gained reputations as 'ulamā'-i sū. Sultans tried their best to befriend the 'ulamā'-i haqq and sometimes developed matrimonial alliances with them. At the same time, sultans often distrusted the influential 'ulamā', but avoided open confrontation with them. The punishment or execution of a popular 'ālim was an unusual incident. Instead, to neutralize the influence of existing 'ulamā', sultans relied on more subtle methods such as recruitment of new émigrés.

Role during Transfers of Power

In nearly three hundred years of the history of the Delhi Sultanate (602-932/1206-1526), power transitioned between seven dynasties. The power structure was perpetually volatile. In the absence of any law of succession, the *umarā'* were potential kingmakers. Politics in the Delhi Sultanate was a continuous struggle between sultans and their *umarā'* to overpower each other. The *umarā'* were ethnically heterogeneous and came from diverse religious backgrounds. The 'ulamā' were an integral part of the Sultanate, distinguished from the rest of the *umarā'* by their religious knowledge and reputation for godliness. The 'ulamā' did not function as a clique. Their role during succession struggles was that of power brokers who joined hands with other members of the nobility to enthrone or empower their own candidate.¹²

For the sultans, controlling the 'ulamā' was a challenge because, compared with other sections of the nobility, they carried visible social clout and were capable of creating opinions for or against a ruler. So influential were the 'ulamā' under the Shansabānī dynasty of Ghaur (565-611/1170s-1215) that Sultan Mu'izz al-Dīn Muḥammad Shihāb al-Dīn Ghauri (r. 567- 599/1172 -1203) and his brother Sultan Ghiyath al-Dīn Muḥammad (r. 599-558/1163 - 1203), who earlier belonged to the Karamiyah tradition prevalent in Ghaur, converted to the Ḥanafī and the Shāfi'ī *madhhabs* respectively under the influence of the 'ulamā' in the new lands they conquered. This riled the disempowered Karamiyah 'ulamā' of Ghaur, who wrote satirical poems as an expression of their unhappiness.¹³

The earliest two Ilbari Turkish rulers, Qutb al-Dīn Aybeg (r. 602-606/1206-1210) and Shams al-Dīn Iltutmish (r. 606-633/1210-1236), were trained

¹¹ K. A. Nizami, *Religion and Politics in India during the Thirteenth Century* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 150-72.

¹² For details see introduction and conclusion, Fouzia Farooq Ahmed, *Muslim Rule in Medieval India: Power and Religion in the Delhi Sultanate* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2016); for the nobility under Iltutmish see, S. B. P. Nigam, *Nobility under the Sultans of Delhi A.D. 1206-1398* (Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1968), 42, 104, 116, 191, 192.

¹³ See chapter on Ghauris, Iqtidar Husain Siddiqi, *Authority and Kingship Under the Sultans of Delhi: Thirteenth-fourteenth Centuries* (Manohar Publishers & Distributors, 2006).

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by *qādīs* outside India as elite military slaves.¹⁴ After they became rulers, both sultans patronized the '*ulamā*' and made them an integral part of the newly founded Delhi Sultanate polity. The rival Qipchaq Turkish sultan of Sindh, Nāṣir al-Dīn Qabācha (r. 599-625/1203-1228), provided asylum to a sizable number of '*ulamā*' refugees fleeing Mongol campaigns. They served as administrators and advisors. Depending on the political leanings of the '*ulamā*', some received patronage while others earned the wrath of the sultan and were either killed or took refuge with Iltutmish. Qabācha's chief *qādī*, Sharf al-Dīn Isfahānī, and the influential Suhrawardī Sufi-'*ālim* Bahā' al-Dīn Zakariyyā of Multan (565-660/1170-1262), secretly sided with Qabācha's arch-rival, Iltutmish. They exchanged letters inviting him to attack and conquer their employer's territory.¹⁵ These letters were intercepted by Qabācha, who consequently beheaded the *qādī* while Bahā' al-Dīn Zakariyyā because of his popularity got away with a warning. In the early days of the Delhi Sultanate, the '*ulamā*' assumed for themselves the role of regulating moral authority. At the enthronement of Shams al-Dīn Iltutmish in 602/1206, a group of '*ulamā*' under the leadership of *qādī* Wajīh al-Dīn, the *qādī al-qadā'* of the previous ruler Quṭb al-Dīn Aybeg, challenged his eligibility to rule, citing an interpretation of Islamic law that a slave could not be a sultan.¹⁶ Iltutmish convinced them by producing a decade-old manumission letter as evidence.

Sultan Iltutmish not only patronized the '*ulamā*' but also became a part of multiple networks by cultivating personal friendships and matrimonial alliances. Because of his close association with members of the '*ulamā*', he earned the reputation of 'mystic prince'.¹⁷ He also married his daughter Faṭḥ Sultana to a Sayyid '*ālim* from Bukhara called Qawām al-Dīn Maḥmūd b. Shaykh Muḥammad b. Aḥmed Madanī.¹⁸ Iltutmish also made use of divisions amongst the '*ulamā*'. The sultan appointed a jurist and religious '*ālim* who held a bad reputation among both the '*ulamā*' and the wider population, Najm al-Dīn Sughrā, as *Shaykh al-Islām*. A conspiracy to discredit the Sufi scholar Jalāl al-Dīn Ṭabrizī from Khorasan who was the sultan's guest in Delhi, an affair which resulted in Sughrā's dismissal, best explains the tensions and rivalries between the '*ulamā*'. Najm al-Dīn Sughrā accused Jalāl al-Dīn Ṭabrizī of adultery. To investigate the matter, the sultan called for a grand trial arbitrated by '*ulamā*' and Sufis across India. Najm al-Dīn Sughrā was also on bad terms with the Suhrawardī Sufi-'*ālim* Bahā' al-Dīn

¹⁴ For a discussion on Ilbaris (Ölberli) as a subgroup of Qipchaq tribe see, Peter Jackson, *The Delhi Sultanate: A Political and Military History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 57, 63. Bhatti, *Fughā-i-Hind*, 17, 18, 25 and 26.

¹⁵ For Bahā' al-Dīn Zakariyyā of Multan see, Ali Rehman, *Tadhkira-i 'Ulamā'-i Hind* (Persian) (Lucknow: Naval Kishore Press, 1914), 32; It is important to mention that Sufis and '*Ulamā*' were overlapping categories in the Delhi Sultanate. For a more nuanced discussion see, Adeela Ghazanfar, "Sufi Literature as a Source of Social History: A Case Study of 14th Century Text, Siyar Al-Awliyā'." (PhD thesis, Quaid-i-Azam University, 2019), 131-2.

¹⁶ Hasanī, *Nuzhat al-Khawātir*, vol.1, 239; Bhatti, *Fughā-i-Hind*, 176.

¹⁷ Irfan Habib, "Formation of the Sultanate ruling class of the thirteenth century," in *Medieval India 1: Researches in the History of India* (Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1992), 9. The author quotes a paragraph from *Juzjānī, Ṭabaqāt-i-Nāṣirī*, 'They were, however, defeated; and Iltutmish, the "mystic prince", ordered all of them beheaded'. In the reign of Iltutmish, many renowned '*ulamā*' including *qādī* Fakhr al-Aymā, *qādī* Shaykh Hamīd al-Dīn Nāḡurī, Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn Abu-al Mūwaid and Shaykh Nūr al-Dīn Mubārak Ghaznavī settled in Delhi. S. M. Ikram, *Āb-i-Kausar* (Lahore: Idārāh-i-Saḡāfat-i-Islāmiya, 2018 (28th Edition), 108.

¹⁸ Bhatti, *Fughā-i-Hind*, 162-3.

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Zakariyyā of Multan, who was the main judge of the trial.¹⁹ The trial concluded with the exoneration of Jalāl al-Dīn and deposition of Sughrā. Bahā' al-Dīn Zakariyyā was consequently appointed as *Shaykh al-Islām*.²⁰ Sultan Iltutmish neutralized all dissent through purge and patronization in such a way that the 'ulamā' could not object to the sultan's decision of nominating his daughter Raḍiyā (r. 634-638/1236-40) as heir instead of his sons.

The three decades long post- Iltutmish interregnum (633-664/1236-1266) witnessed fighting among rival factions of *umarā'* who were stronger than the deceased sultan's progeny. Different groups of 'ulamā' aligned with rival factions of the *umarā'*. The 'ulamā' also used their influence over the sultans to settle scores with fellow 'ulamā' and other powerful groups. Sultan Mu'izz al-Dīn Bahrām Shāh (r. 633-638/1236-1240) was under the influence of a Turkish *dervish* (Sufi mendicant) Ayyūb because of which he got the *qāḍī* Shams al-Dīn Marharwī trampled under an elephant's foot.²¹ Similarly, the 'ulamā' were also plotting conspiracies against the sultans, for example a notable 'ālim and the *qāḍī* of Delhi Jalāl al-Dīn Kāshānī was dismissed from office in 637/1239 because Sultan Bahrām feared that the *qāḍī* wanted him deposed.²² The latter then moved to Awadh and assumed the position of *qāḍī*. Two years later, when 'Alā' al-Dīn Mas'ūd (r. 638-644/1240-1246) assumed power, he invited *qāḍī* Jalāl al-Dīn to Delhi and later sent him to Lakhnawātī as an emissary.²³ The *Shaykh al-Islām* of Bahrām Shāh's regime, Muḥammad b. Aḥmed Madanī, was sent to negotiate with the rebel *umarā'* and administrators in Delhi when they deposed the sultan. These negotiations, however, were unsuccessful. The next ruler, Nāṣir al-Dīn Maḥmud (r. 644-664/1246-1266) deposed Madanī from the office of *Shaykh al-Islām*.²⁴ There were some 'ulamā' who survived shifts of power. For example, the famous historian Minhāj us-Sirāj Juzjānī (b. 589/1193), the *mudarris* of *madrasa -i Mu'izziya*, continuously served under the successors of Iltutmish.²⁵ Furthermore, 'Alā' al-Dīn Mas'ūd's *qāḍī-i mumālik* (chief judge of the military) Shaykh Muḥammad Shūqūr Qānī (r. 639/1241) continued his position under the next regime. However, due to some political allegations he was dismissed from the post and exiled to Badaun, where he was killed by order of the then powerful *amīr ḥājib* (in charge of ceremonies and royal protocol) 'Imād al-Dīn Rayhān in 642/1244.²⁶ Similarly, another *qāḍī*, Shams al-Dīn Bahraichī, was accused of treason and the sultan deposed him from his office. The *qāḍī* was exiled and was sent to Bahraich.²⁷

The Ilbari Turkish sultan Ghiyāth al-Dīn Balaban (r. 644-664/1266-87) was known for having changed the composition of the *umarā'* of his predecessor Shams al-Dīn Iltutmish with his policies of blood, iron, poison, and dagger.²⁸ A

¹⁹ Nizami, *Religion and Politics*, 150-72.

²⁰ Bhatti, *Fuḡhā-i-Hind*, 171-4.

²¹ Bhatti, 150.

²² Bhatti, 129 .

²³ Bhatti, 129, 148.

²⁴ Bhatti, 162-3.

²⁵ Iqtidar Husain Siddiqi, *Indo-Persian Historiography Up To The Thirteenth Century*, (Primus Books 2010), 94.

²⁶ Bhatti, 165.

²⁷ Bhatti, 151.

²⁸ Mohammad Habib, *Some Aspects of the Foundation of the Delhi Sultanate*. Dr. K.M. Ashraf Memorial Lecture (Delhi, Ashraf Memorial Committee, 1966), 20.

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close study of Balaban's dealings with the *umarā* reveals that the sultan tried to modify the networks of *'ulamā* in the Delhi Sultanate by inserting himself within them.²⁹ According to historian Ḍiya al-Dīn Baranī, Balaban was very particular about giving audience only to people of high birth. However, the sultan's understanding of high birth was neither ethnic nor economic. For instance, the sultan avoided meeting with a rich trader (*ra'īs*) whom he considered lowborn.³⁰ However, the sultan tried his utmost to befriend *'ulamā* of all class backgrounds. Ascetic *'ulamā* like Mawlānā Kamāl al-Dīn Zāhid and Shaykh Muḥammad b. Aḥmad Mārikī Dihlawī were offered the position of the sultan's *imām*, however they categorically refused this offer.³¹ Balaban had cordial relations with *'ulamā* like Mawlānā Burhān al-Dīn Bazār and Shaykh abu Bakr Yūsuf b. Ḥusayn Suqrānī who taught in Delhi.³² Notable *'ulamā* of his time like Shaykh Burhān al-Dīn Balkhī, *qāḍī* Rukn al-Dīn Sāmānwī, Mawlānā Sadīd al-Dīn Dihlawī and Mawlānā Sharf al-Dīn Walwājī were also close to the sultan.³³ The sultan welcomed foreign *'ulamā* such as Shaykh Muḥammad b. Aḥmed Madanī, originally from Baghdad. He proved very influential in Balaban's reign.³⁴

Balaban had developed matrimonial ties with the popular Sufi- *'ālim* Bābā Farīd, to whom he married his daughter Bībī Bazīra.³⁵ Bābā Farīd was a scholar and Sufi who had great connections amongst Sufis, *'ulamā* and political actors, most notable amongst them was Bahā' al-Dīn Zakariyyā of Multan. It was a common perception that Balaban never declined the recommendation of Bābā Farīd.³⁶ With his blood, iron and poison and dagger policy, Balaban effectively fractured the power of the *'ulamā* as well. Appointments and dismissals were a frequent occurrence under his regime, for example, Mawlānā Fakhr al-Dīn Nāqilī was designated *ṣadr* during Balaban's reign, but then was dismissed and later under Jalāl al-Dīn Khaljī (r. 689-695/1290-1296) he was again raised to the *ṣadārat* and again dismissed.³⁷ Balaban's son, Prince Muḥammad, also patronized *'ulamā* and *udabā'* (literati), including Amīr Khusraw (c. 651-725/1253-1325) and Ḥasan 'Alā Sijzī (726-727/1254-1357).³⁸ So weak the *'ulamā* had become in this period that when Balaban's successor and grandson Sultan Mu'izz al-Dīn Kayqubād (r. 685-689/1287-1290) did not offer prayers or observe fast during Ramaḍān, the *'ulamā* were unable to condemn him openly.³⁹

²⁹ Zafar Iṣlāhī, *Salāṭīn-i-Delhi aur Shar'iyat-i-Islamia* (Aligarh: Educational Book House, 2002), 69.

³⁰ Ḍiya al-Dīn Baranī, *Tarikh-i-Firūz Shāhī*, (reprint). (Persian), ed. Sir Syed Ahmad Khān (Aligarh: Sar Sayyid Akaidmī, 2005), 33-4.

³¹ Nizami, *Religion and Politics*, 150-72; Bhatti, *Fuḡhā-i-Hind*, 161.

³² Baranī, *Tarikh -i-Firūz Shāhī*, (Persian), 111; Bhatti, *Fuḡhā-i-Hind*, 176-7; For more on the life of Balaban, see Abul Qāsim Farishtah, *Tarikh-i-Farishah* trans. Maulvī Fidā 'Alī (Urdu) vol. 1 (Hyderabad: 1926), 70-1.

³³ Bhatti, *Fuḡhā-i-Hind*, 126, 139, 168.

³⁴ Bhatti, 162-3; The most significant work produced in Balaban's era was *al-Fatawa al-Ghiyasia* which was compiled by Shaikh Dawūd b Yusuf al-Khatīb Ishāq Bhatti, *Barray Saghūr mein Ilm Fiqh* (New Delhi: al-Balagh Publications, 2012), 52-62.

³⁵ Bhatti, *Fuḡhā-i-Hind*, 168. For a disagreement on this view see, Muhammad Aslam, *Kiya Sultān Balban kī koi Baytī Bābā Farīd al-Dīn Ganj-Shakar say Mansūb thī? in Tārikhī Maqālāt* (Lahore: Nadwat al-Musanifin, 1970), 9-31.

³⁶ Bhatti, *Fuḡhā-i-Hind*, 168.

³⁷ Bhatti, 263.

³⁸ Ḥasanī, *Nuzhat al-Khawātir*, vol.2: 215, 218.

³⁹ Nizami, *Religion and Politics*, 150-72.

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The case of the early sultanate historian Minhāj us-Sirāj Juzjānī, author of *Ṭabaqāt-i Nāsirī* (658/1260), reflects a classic example of successful horizontal and vertical professional mobility, the social worth of the *‘ālim*, and his connections in the corridors of power. Minhāj received his early education from his father, *qāḍī* Sirāj al-Dīn Muḥammad. b Uthman of Juzjān, a renowned *‘ālim* who was based in Lahore before later being appointed as *qāḍī al-qāḍā’* of Bamyan. After his father's death, Minhāj travelled extensively and studied with the most celebrated *‘ulamā’* of his time. He soon earned a scholarly reputation and joined Sultan Nāṣir al-Dīn Qabācha's court in 623/1226, where he not only became a teacher at the *madrasa -i Fīrūziya* but was also appointed as the *qāḍī-i lashkar* (judge of the army). One year later when Iltutmish besieged the fort of Uch, Minhāj changed his loyalty and joined the ranks of Iltutmish. In 629/1232, he was entrusted with the departments of *qāḍā’*, *khīṭābat*, *imāmat* and *hiṣba* of the city of Gwalior. He not only continued assuming these positions for the next five years but Iltutmish's successor Raḍiyya (r. 634-638/1236-40) gave him additional responsibility of supervising the *awqāf* of *madrasa -i Naṣriyya*. In 640/1242, Bahrām Shāh appointed him *qāḍī-i mumālīk* but three months later he was deposed from office by the next sultan, ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Mas’ūd Shāh. Soon thereafter he left Delhi and after visiting Badaun, Awadh, and Kara, he reached Lakhnawātī. The officer in charge of Lakhnawātī, ‘Izz al-Dīn Ṭoghril, treated him with great respect and he stayed there for two years. Minhāj returned to Delhi in 643/1245 after political conditions had favorably changed and Nāṣir al-Dīn Maḥmūd (r. 644-664/1246-66) had ascended the throne. Minhāj's patron Balaban, who was the *amīr hājib* at that time, recommended him for the post of *qāḍī* of Gwalior. In 645/1247, he authored a poem titled the *Nāṣir nāma* about the campaigns of Sultan Nāṣir. As a result, in 649/1251 he was endowed with a village in Hansi and was appointed as the *qāḍī-i mumālīk* of Delhi for the second time. Two years later he was deposed from the position once again only to be appointed as *qāḍī-i mumālīk* for the third time in 653/1255.⁴⁰ Minhāj authored a comprehensive history of Muslim dynasties titled the *Ṭabaqāt-i Nāsirī*, which covered the first sixteen years of Nāṣir al-Dīn's reign. Mysteriously, it does not cover the last years of Nāṣir al-Dīn's life and transition of power from Nāṣir al-Dīn to Minhāj's patron Balaban, in spite of the fact that Minhāj was there as a witness.

To conclude with, the Ilbari sultans attempted to control the networks of *‘ulamā’* with a constant strategy of punishment, patronization and incentives. Nonetheless, each sultan encountered resistance from already powerful *‘ulamā’* that had established strong connections in the sultanate polity. The Ilbari rulers superimposed new networks over older ones. They welcomed foreign *‘ulamā’* to and gave them offices because new elements were easier to control. If a new *‘ālim* was persecuted by a ruler it generated less social reaction. Lastly, the *‘ulamā’* were generally divided and did not act as a monolithic group.

⁴⁰ Bhatti, *Fuḡhā-i-Hind*, 155-7.