EIGHTEEN

Climax and Disintegration of the Mughal Empire—I

PROBLEMS OF SUCCESSION

The last years of Shah Jahan's reign were clouded by a bitter war of succession among his sons. There was no clear tradition of succession among the Muslims or the Timurids. The right of nomination by the ruler had been accepted by some of the Muslim political thinkers. But it could not be asserted in India during the Sultanat period. The Timurid tradition of partitioning had not been successful either and was never applied in India.

Hindu traditions were also not very clear in the matter of succession. According to Tulsidas, a contemporary of Akbar, a ruler had the right of giving the *tika* to any one of his sons. But there were many cases among the Rajputs where such a nomination had not been accepted by the other brothers. Thus, Sanga had to wage a bitter struggle with his brothers before he could assert his claim to the *gaddi*.

Towards the end of 1657, Shah Jahan was taken ill at Delhi and for some time, his life was despaired of. But he rallied and gradually recovered his strength under the loving care of Dara. Meanwhile, all kinds of rumours had gained currency. It was said that Shah Jahan had already died, and Dara was concealing the reality to serve his own purposes. After some time, Shah Jahan slowly made his way by boat to Agra. Meanwhile, the princes, Shuja in Bengal, Murad in Gujarat and Aurangzeb in the Deccan, had either been persuaded that these rumours were true, or pretended to believe them, and made preparations for the inevitable war of succession.

Anxious to avert a conflict between his sons, which might spell ruin to the empire,and anticipating his speedy end, Shah Jahan now decided to nominate his eldest son Dara as his successor (*wali-ahd*). He raised Dara's *mansab* from 40,000 *zat* to the unprecedented rank

of 60,000. Dara was given a chair next to the throne, and all the nobles were instructed to obey Dara as their future sovereign. But these actions, far from ensuring a smooth succession as Shah Jahan had hoped, convinced the other princes of Shah Jahan's partiality to Dara. It thus strengthened their resolve of making a bid for the throne.

It is not necessary for us to follow in detail the events leading to the ultimate triumph of Aurangzeb. There were many reasons for Aurangzeb's success. Divided counsel and under-estimation of his opponents by Dara were two of the major factors responsible for Dara's defeat. On hearing of the military preparations of his sons and their decision to march on the capital, Shah Jahan had sent an army to the east led by Dara's son, Sulaiman Shikoh, aided by Mirza Raja Jai Singh, to deal with Shuja who had crowned himself. Another army was sent to Malwa under Raja Jaswant Singh, the ruler of Jodhpur. On his arrival in Malwa, Jaswant found that he was faced with the combined forces of Aurangzeb and Murad. The two princes were intent on a conflict and invited Jaswant to stand aside. Jaswant could have retreated but deeming retreat to be a matter of dishonour, he decided to stand and fight, though the odds were definitely against him. The victory of Aurangzeb at Dharmat (15 April 1658) emboldened his supporters and raised his prestige, while it dispirited Dara and his supporters.

Meanwhile, Dara made a serious mistake. Over-confident of the strength of his position, he had assigned for the eastern campaign some of his best troops. Thus, he denuded the capital, Agra. Led by Sulaiman Shikoh, the army moved to the east and gave a good account of itself. It surprised and defeated Shuja near Banaras (February 1658). It then decided to pursue him into Bihar—as if the issue at Agra had been already decided. After the defeat at Dharmat, express letters were sent to these forces to hurry back to Agra. After patching up a hurried treaty (7 May 1658), Sulaiman Shikoh started his march to Agra from his camp near Monghyr in eastern Bihar. But it was hardly likely that he could return to Agra in time for the conflict with Aurangzeb.

After Dharmat, Dara made frantic efforts to seek allies. He sent repeated letters to Jaswant Singh who had retired to Jodhpur. The rana of Udaipur was also approached. Jaswant Singh moved out tardily to Pushkar near Ajmer. After raising an army with the money

provided by Dara, he waited there for the rana to join him. But the rana had already been won over by Aurangzeb with a promise of a rank of 7000, and the return of the *parganas* seized by Shah Jahan and Dara from him in 1654 following a dispute over the re-fortification of Chittor. Aurangzeb also held out to the rana a promise of religious freedom and 'favours equal to those of Rana Sanga'. Thus, Dara failed to win over even the important Rajput rajas to his side.

The battle of Samugarh (29 May 1658) was basically a battle of good generalship, the two sides being almost equally matched in numbers (about 50,000 to 60,000 on each side). In this field, Dara was no match for Aurangzeb. The Hada Rajputs and the Saiyids of Barha upon whom Dara largely depended could not make up for the weakness of the rest of the hastily recruited army. Aurangzeb's troops were battle hardened and well led.

Aurangzeb had all along pretended that his only object of coming to Agra was to see his ailing father and to release him from the control of the 'heretical' Dara. But the war between Aurangzeb and Dara was not between religious orthodoxy on the one hand, and liberalism on the other. Both Muslim and Hindu nobles were equally divided in their support to the two rivals. We have already seen the attitude of the leading Rajput rajas. In this conflict, as in so many others, the attitude of the nobles depended upon their personal interests and their association with individual princes.

After the defeat and flight of Dara, Shah Jahan was besieged in the fort of Agra. Aurangzeb forced Shah Jahan into surrender by seizing the source of water supply to the fort. Shah Jahan was confined to the female apartments in the fort and strictly supervised though he was not ill-treated. There he lived for eight long years, lovingly nursed by his favourite daughter, Jahanara, who voluntarily chose to live within the fort. She re-emerged into public life after Shah Jahan's death and was accorded great honour by Aurangzeb who restored her to the position of the first lady of the realm. He also raised her annual pension from twelve lakh rupees to seventeen lakhs.

According to the terms of Aurangzeb's agreement with Murad, the kingdom was to be partitioned between the two. But Aurangzeb had no intention of sharing the empire. Hence, he treacherously imprisoned Murad and sent him to the Gwaliyar jail. He was killed two years later.

After losing the battle at Samugarh, Dara had fled to Lahore and was planning to retain control of its surrounding areas. But Aurangzeb soon arrived in the neighbourhood, leading a strong army. Dara's courage failed him. He abandoned Lahore without a fight and fled to Sindh. Thus, he virtually sealed his fate. Although the civil war dragged on for more than two years, its outcome was hardly in doubt. Dara's move from Sindh into Gujarat and then into Ajmer on an invitation from Jaswant Singh, the ruler of Marwar, and the subsequent treachery of the latter are too well known. The battle of Deorai near Ajmer (March 1659) was the last major battle Dara fought against Aurangzeb. Dara might well have escaped into Iran, but he wanted to try his luck again in Afghanistan. On the way, in the Bolan Pass, a treacherous Afghan chief made him a prisoner and handed him over to his dreaded enemy. A panel of jurists decreed that Dara could not be suffered to live 'out of necessity to protect the faith and Holy law, and also for reasons of state (and) as a destroyer of the public peace'. This is typical of the manner in which Aurangzeb used religion as a cloak for his political motives. Two years after Dara's execution, his son, Sulaiman Shikoh, who had sought shelter with the ruler of Garhwal was handed over by him to Aurangzeb on an imminent threat of invasion. He soon suffered the same fate as his father.

Earlier, Aurangzeb had defeated Shuja at Khajwah near Allahabad (December 1658). Further campaigning against him was entrusted to Mir Jumla who steadily exerted pressure till Shuja was hounded out of India into Arakan (April 1660). Soon afterwards, he and his family met a dishonourable death at the hands of the Arakanese on a charge of fomenting rebellion.

The civil war which kept the empire distracted for more than two years showed that neither nomination by the ruler, nor plans of division of the empire were likely to be accepted by the contenders for the throne. Military force became the only arbiter for succession and the civil wars became steadily more destructive. After being seated securely on the throne, Aurangzeb tried to mitigate, to some extent, the effects of the harsh Mughal custom of war unto death between brothers. At the instance of Jahanara Begum, Sipihr Shikoh, son of Dara, was released from prison in 1673, given a *mansab* and married

to a daughter of Aurangzeb. Murad's son, Izzat Bakhsh, was also released, given a *mansab* and married to another daughter of Aurangzeb. Earlier, in 1669, Dara's daughter, Jani Begum, who had been looked after by Jahanara as her own daughter, was married to Aurangzeb's third son, Muhammad Azam. There are many other marriages between Aurangzeb's family and the children and grandchildren of his defeated brothers. Thus, in the third generation, the families of Aurangzeb and his defeated brothers became one.

Aurangzeb's Reign—His Religious Policy

Aurangzeb ruled for almost 50 years. During his long reign, the Mughal empire reached its territorial climax. At its height, it stretched from Kashmir in the north to Jinji in the south, and from the Hindukush in the west to Chittagong in the east. Aurangzeb proved to be a hardworking ruler, and never spared himself or his subordinates in the tasks of government. His letters show the close attention he paid to all affairs of the state. He was a strict disciplinarian who did not spare his own sons. In 1686, he imprisoned prince Muazzam on a charge of intriguing with the ruler of Golconda, and kept him in prison for 12 long years. His other sons also had to face his wrath on various occasions. Such was the awe of Aurangzeb that even late in his life when Muazzam was the Governor of Kabul, he trembled every time he received a letter from his father who was then in south India. Unlike his predecessors, Aurangzeb did not like ostentation. His personal life was marked by simplicity. He had the reputation of being an orthodox, God-fearing Muslim. In course of time, he began to be regarded as a *zinda pir*, or 'a living saint'.

Historians are, however, deeply divided about Aurangzeb's achievements as a ruler. According to some, he reversed Akbar's policy of religious toleration and thus undermined the loyalty of the Hindus to the empire. According to them, this, in turn, led to popular uprisings which sapped the vitality of the empire. His suspicious nature added to his problems so that in the words of Khafi Khan, 'all his enterprises were long drawn out' and ended in failure. Another set of historians think that Aurangzeb has been unjustly maligned, that the Hindus

had become disloyal due to the laxity of Aurangzeb's predecessors, so that Aurangzeb had no option but to adopt harsh methods and to try to rally the Muslims on whose support in the long run the empire had to rest.

A new trend has, however, emerged as shown in the research work on Aurangzeb. In these works, efforts have been made to assess Aurangzeb's political and religious policies in the context of social, economic and institutional developments. There is little doubt about his being orthodox in his beliefs. He was not interested in philosophical debates or in mysticism—though he did occasionally visit Sufi saints for their blessings, and did not debar his sons from dabbling in Sufism. While taking his stand on the Hanafi school of Muslim law which had been traditionally followed in India, Aurangzeb did not hesitate in issuing secular decrees, called *zawabit*. A compendium of his decrees, and government rules and regulations had been collected in a work called *Zawabit-i-Alamgiri*. Theoretically, the *zawabits* supplemented the *sharia*. In practice, however, they sometimes modified the *sharia*, in view of the conditions obtaining in India which were not provided for in the *sharia*.

Thus, apart from being an orthodox Muslim, Aurangzeb was also a ruler. He could hardly forget the political reality that the overwhelming population of India was Hindu, and that they were deeply attached to their faith. Any policy which meant the complete alienation of the Hindus and of the powerful Hindu rajas and zamindars was obviously unworkable.

In analysing Aurangzeb's religious policy, we may take note first of what have been called moral and religious regulations. At the beginning of his reign, he forbade the *kalma* being inscribed on coins—lest a coin be trampled underfoot or be defiled while passing from hand to hand. He discontinued the festival of *Nauroz* as it was considered a Zoroastrian practice favoured by the Safavid rulers of Iran. *Muhtasibs* were appointed in all the provinces. These officials were asked to see that people lived their lives in accordance with the *sharia*. Thus, it was the business of these officials to see that wine and intoxicants such as *bhang* were not consumed in public places. They were also responsible for regulating the houses of ill repute, gambling dens, etc., and for checking weights and measures. In other words,

they were responsible for ensuring that things forbidden by the *sharia* and the *zawabits* (secular decrees) were, as far as possible, not flouted openly. In appointing *muhtasibs*, Aurangzeb emphasised that the state was also responsible for the moral welfare of the citizens, especially the Muslims. But these officials were instructed not to interfere in the private lives of citizens.

Later, in the eleventh year of his reign (1669), Aurangzeb took a number of measures which have been called puritanical. They were designed to show that the emperor was opposed to all practices which were not in accordance with the *sharia*, or which could be considered superstitious. Some measures were of an economic and social nature. Thus, he forbade singing in the court and the official musicians were pensioned off. Instrumental music and *naubat* (the royal band) were, however, continued. Singing also continued to be patronized by the ladies in the haram, and by princes, and individual nobles. It is of some interest to note, as has been mentioned before, that the largest number of Persian works on classical Indian music were written in Aurangzeb's reign, and that Aurangzeb himself was proficient in playing the *veena*. Thus, the jibe of Aurangzeb to the protesting musicians that they should bury the bier of music they were carrying deep under the earth so 'that no echo of it may rise again' was only an angry remark.

Aurangzeb discontinued the practice of *jharoka darshan* or showing himself to the public from the balcony since he considered it a superstitious practice and against Islam. Similarly, he forbade the ceremony of weighing the emperor against gold and silver and other articles on his birthdays. This practice which was apparently started during Akbar's reign had become widespread and had become a burden on the smaller nobles. But the weight of social opinion was too much. Aurangzeb had to permit this ceremony for his sons when they recovered from illness. He forbade astrologers to prepare almanacs. But the order was flouted by everybody, including members of the royal family.

Many other regulations of a similar nature, some of a moral character and some to instill a sense of austerity, were issued. The throne room was to be furnished in a cheap and simple style; clerks were to use porcelain ink-stands instead of silver ones; silk clothes

were frowned upon, the gold railings in the *diwan-i-am* were replaced by those of lapis lazuli set on gold. Even the official department of history-writing was discontinued as a measure of economy.

To promote trade among the Muslims who depended almost exclusively on state support, Aurangzeb at first largely exempted Muslim traders from the payment of cess on import of goods. But he soon found that the Muslim traders were abusing it, even passing off the goods of Hindu merchants as their own to cheat the state. So Aurangzeb re-imposed the cess on Muslim traders, but, kept it at half of what was charged from others.

Similarly, he tried to reserve the posts of *peshkars* and *karoris* (petty revenue officials) for Muslims but soon had to modify it in the face of opposition from the nobles and lack of qualified Muslims.

We may now turn our attention to some of the other measures of Aurangzeb which may be called discriminatory and showed a sense of bigotry towards people professing other religions. The most important was Aurangzeb's attitude towards temples, and the levying of *jizyah*.

At the outset of his reign, Aurangzeb reiterated the position of the *shara* regarding temples, synagogues, churches, etc., that 'long standing temple should not be demolished but no new temples allowed to be built.' Further, old places of worship could be repaired 'since buildings cannot last for ever'. This position is clearly spelt out in a number of extant *farmans* he issued to the Brahmans of Banaras, Vrindavan, etc.[1]

Aurangzeb's order regarding temples was not a new one. It reaffirmed the position which had existed during the Sultanat period and which had been reiterated by Shah Jahan early in his reign. In practice, it left wide latitude to the local officials as to the interpretation of the words, 'long standing temples'. The private opinion and sentiment of the ruler in the matter was also bound to weigh with the officials. For example, after the rise of the liberal-minded Dara as Shah Jahan's favourite, few temples had been demolished in pursuance of his order forbidding new temples. Aurangzeb, as

1 The Banaras *farman* is in the National Library, Calcutta, and the Vrindavan *farman* is presently in a temple at Jaipur.

governor of Gujarat, ordered a number of temples in Gujarat to be destroyed. In many cases, it meant disfiguring the images and closing down the temples. At the outset of his reign, Aurangzeb found that images in many of these temples had been restored and idol worship had been resumed. Aurangzeb, therefore, ordered again in 1665 that these temples be destroyed. The famous temple of Somnath which he ordered to be destroyed earlier in his reign was apparently one of the temples mentioned above.

It does not seem that Aurangzeb's order regarding ban on new temples led to a large-scale destruction of temples at the outset of the reign. Later, as Aurangzeb encountered political opposition from a number of quarters, such as the Marathas, Jats, etc., he seems to have adopted a new stance. In case of conflict with local elements, he now considered it legitimate to destroy even long-standing Hindu temples as a measure of punishment and as a warning. Further, he began to look upon temples as centres of spreading subversive ideas, that is, ideas which were not acceptable to the orthodox elements. Thus, he took strict action when he learnt in 1669 that in some of the temples in Thatta, Multan and especially at Banaras, both Hindus and Muslims used to come from great distances to learn from the Brahmans. Aurangzeb issued orders to the governors of all provinces to put down such practices and to destroy the temples where such practices took place. As a result of these orders, a number of temples such as the famous temple of Vishwanath at Banaras and the temple of Keshava Rai at Mathura built by Bir Singh Deo Bundela in the reign of Jahangir were destroyed and mosques erected in their place. The destruction of these temples had a political motive as well. Mustaid Khan author of the *Maasir-i-Alamgiri* says, with reference to the destruction of the temple of Keshava Rai at Mathura, 'On seeing this instance of the strength of the Emperor's faith and the grandeur of his devotion to God, the proud rajas were stifled, and in amazement they stood like images facing the wall.'

It was in this context that many temples built in Orissa during the last ten to twelve years were also destroyed. But it does not seem that there were any orders for the general destruction of temples. Mustaid Khan, who wrote his history of Aurangzeb in the early eighteenth century and who had been closely associated with Aurangzeb, asserts

that the motive of Aurangzeb's orders was to 'establish Islam' and that the Emperor ordered the governors to destroy all temples and to ban public practice of the religion of these misbelievers, that is, the Hindus. If Mustaid Khan's version was correct, it would have meant Aurangzeb going far beyond the position of the *sharia*, for the *sharia* did not ban the non-Muslims from practising their faiths as long as they were loyal to the ruler, etc. Nor have we found any *farmans* to the governors on the lines suggested by Mustaid Khan. However, the situation was different during periods of hostilities. Thus, during 1679–80 when there was a state of war with the Rathors of Marwar and the rana of Udaipur, many temples of old standing were destroyed at Jodhpur and its *parganas*, and at Udaipur.

In his policy toward temples, Aurangzeb may have remained formally within the framework of the *sharia*, but there is little doubt that his stand in the matter was a setback to the policy of broad toleration followed by his predecessors. It led to a climate of opinion that destruction of temples on any excuse would not only be condoned but would be welcomed by the emperor. While we do have instances of grants to Hindu temples and *maths* by Aurangzeb, on the whole, the atmosphere generated by Aurangzeb's policy towards Hindu temples was bound to create disquiet among large sections of Hindus. However, it seems that Aurangzeb's zeal for the destruction of temples abated after 1679, for we do not hear of any large-scale destruction of temples in the south between 1681 and his death in 1707. But a new irritant, the *jizyah* or the poll tax, was introduced in the interval.

We have already explained the background of the *jizyah* and its introduction in India by the Arab and Turkish rulers. According to the *sharia*, in a Muslim state, the payment of *jizyah* was obligatory (*wajib*) for the non-Muslims. Akbar had abolished it for reasons that we have noted. However, a section of orthodox theologians had been agitating for the revival of *jizyah*, so that the superior position of Islam, including that of the theologians, could be made manifest to all. We are told that after accession to the throne, Aurangzeb contemplated revival of the *jizyah* on a number of occasions but did not do so for fear of political opposition. Ultimately, in 1679, in the twenty-second year of his reign, he finally re-imposed it. There has been a considerable discussion among historians regarding Aurangzeb's

motives for the step. Let us first see what it was not. It was *not* meant to be an economic pressure for forcing the Hindus to convert to Islam for its incidence was light—women, children, the disabled and the indigent, that is those whose income was less than the means of subsistence were exempted, as were those in government service. Nor, in fact, did any significant section of Hindus change their religion in earlier times due to this tax. Secondly, it was not a means of meeting a difficult financial situation. Although the income from *jizyah* is said to have been considerable, Aurangzeb had sacrificed a considerable sum of money by giving up a large number of cesses called *abwabs* which were not sanctioned by the *sharia* and were hence considered illegal. However, the money from *jizyah* did not go to the royal treasury, but was ear-marked for use by the theological classes. The re-imposition of *jizyah* was, in fact, both political and ideological in nature. It was meant to rally the Muslims for the defence of the state against the Marathas and the Rajputs who were up in arms, and possibly against the Muslim states of the Deccan, especially Golconda which was in alliance with the infidel Marathas. Moreover, *jizyah* was to be collected by honest, God-fearing Muslims, who were especially appointed for the purpose, and its proceeds were reserved for the *ulama*. It was thus a big bribe for the theologians among whom there was a lot of unemployment. But the disadvantages out-weighed the possible advantages of the step. It was bitterly resented by the Hindus who considered it as a mark of discrimination. Its mode of collection also had some negative features. The payee was required to pay it personally and sometimes he suffered humiliation at the hands of the theologians in the process. Since in the rural areas *jizyah* was collected along with the land revenue, well-to-do Hindus in the cities were affected more by these practices. We, therefore, hear of a number of occasions when Hindu traders shut their shops and observed *hartal* against the measure. Also, there was a lot of corruption, and in a number of instances, the *amin* or collector of *jizyah* was killed. But Aurangzeb was unrelenting, and was reluctant to grant exemption for payment of *jizyah* to the peasants, even when remission in land revenue had to be given on account of natural calamities. Finally, he had to suspend *jizyah* in 1705 'for the duration of the war in the south' (for which no end was in sight). This could hardly influence his

negotiations with the Marathas. Gradually *jizyah* fell into disuse all over the country. It was formally abolished in 1712 by Aurangzeb's successors.

Some modern writers are of the opinion that Aurangzeb's measures were designed to convert India from a *dar-ul-harb*, or a land of infidels, into *dar-ul-Islam*, or a land inhabited by Muslims. But this has no basis, in fact, a state in which the laws of Islam prevailed and where the ruler was a Muslim is *dar-ul-Islam*. In such a state, the Hindus who submitted to the Muslim ruler, and agreed to pay *jizyah* were *zimmis* or protected people according to the *sharia*. Hence, the state in India had been considered a *dar-ul-Islam* since the advent of the Turks. Even when Mahadji Sindhia, the Maratha general, occupied Delhi in 1772, and the Mughal emperor became a puppet in his hands, the theologians decreed that the state remained a *dar-ul-Islam* since the laws of Islam were allowed to prevail and the throne was occupied by a Muslim. Although Aurangzeb considered it legitimate to encourage conversion to Islam, evidence of systematic or large-scale attempts at forced conversion is lacking.[1] Nor were Hindu nobles discriminated against. A recent study has shown that the number of Hindus in the nobility during the second half of Aurangzeb's reign steadily increased, till the Hindus including Marathas formed about one-third of the nobility as against one-fourth under Shah Jahan. On one occasion, Aurangzeb wrote on petition in which a post was claimed on religious grounds 'what connection and what right have wordly affairs with religion? And what right have matters of religion to enter into bigotry? For you is your religion, for me is mine. If this rule (suggested by you) were established it would be my duty to extirpate all (Hindu) rajas and their followers.'

Thus, Aurangzeb's attempt was not so much to change the nature of the state, but to re-assert its fundamentally Islamic character. Aurangzeb's religious beliefs cannot be considered the basis of his political policies. While as an orthodox Muslim he was desirous of upholding the strict letter of the law, as a ruler he was keen to

1 The conversion of large sections of the population to Islam in Kashmir had taken place apparently during the fourteenth-fifteenth centuries, as has been noted in an earlier chapter.

strengthen and expand the empire. Hence, he did not want to lose the support of the Hindus to the extent possible. However, his religious ideas and beliefs on the one hand, and his political or public policies on the other, clashed with each other on many occasions so that Aurangzeb was faced with difficult choices. Sometimes this led him to adopt contradictory policies which harmed the empire.

Political Developments—North India

During the war of succession, many local zamindars and rajas had withheld revenue, or started plundering the neighbouring areas including Mughal territories and royal highways. After seating himself on the throne formally, Aurangzeb embarked upon an era of strong rule. In some cases, such as the northeast and the Deccan, the imperial frontier was advanced. However, in general, Aurangzeb did not embark upon a forward policy. His first attempt immediately after his succession was to re-assert imperial authority and prestige. This included recovery of areas which had been lost during the war of succession and to which the Mughals felt they had legal claim. To begin with, Aurangzeb was more concerned with consolidation than conquest and annexation. Thus, he sent an army to Bikaner to enforce obedience to the Mughal emperor, but made no effort to annex it. But in another case, such as Palamau in Bihar, the ruler who was accused of disloyalty was dispossessed, and the bulk of his state annexed. The rebel Bundela chief, Champat Rai, who had been an ally of Aurangzeb at first but had taken to a life of plunder, was relentlessly hunted down. But Bundela lands were not annexed.

Northeast and East India

We have mentioned in an earlier chapter the rise of the Ahom power in Assam valley and their conflict with the rulers of Kamata (Kamrup) on the one hand and with the Afghan rulers of Bengal on the other. The kingdom of Kamata declined by the end of the fifteenth century and was replaced by the kingdom of Kuch (Cooch Bihar) which dominated north Bengal and western Assam, and which continued

the policy of conflict with the Ahoms. However, internal disputes led to the division of the kingdom in the early seventeenth century and to the entry of the Mughals in Assam at the instance of the Kuch ruler. The Mughals defeated the split-away kingdom and in 1612 occupied the western Assam valley up to the Bar Nadi with the help of Kuch armies. The Kuch ruler became a Mughal vassal. Thus, the Mughals came into contact with the Ahoms who ruled eastern Assam across the Bar Nadi. After a long war with the Ahoms who had harboured a prince of the defeated dynasty, a treaty was made with them at last in 1638 which fixed the Bar Nadi as the boundary between them and the Mughals. Thus Guwahati came under Mughal control.

There was a long-drawn out war between the Mughals and the Ahoms during the reign of Aurangzeb. The war began with the attempt of the Ahom rulers to expel the Mughals from Guwahati and the neighbouring area and thus complete their control over Assam. Mir Jumla, who had been appointed the governor of Bengal by Aurangzeb, wanted to make his mark by bringing Cooch Bihar and the entire Assam under Mughal rule. He first assaulted Cooch Bihar which had repudiated Mughal suzerainty and annexed the entire kingdom to the Mughal empire. He next invaded the Ahom kingdom. Mir Jumla occupied the Ahom capital, Garhgaon, and held it for six months. Next, he penetrated up to the limit of the Ahom kingdom, finally forcing the Ahom king to make a humiliating treaty (1663). The raja had to send his daughter to the Mughal haram, pay a larger war indemnity and an annual tribute of 20 elephants. The Mughal boundary was extended from the Bar Nadi to the Bharali river.

Mir Jumla died soon after his brilliant victory. However, the advantages of a forward move in Assam were doubtful since the area was not rich and was surrounded by warlike tribes, such as the Nagas, living in the mountains. It was found that the back of Ahom power had not been broken, and that it was beyond Mughal power to enforce the treaty. In 1667, the Ahoms renewed the contest. They not only recovered the areas ceded to the Mughals, but also occupied Guwahati. Earlier, the Mughals had also been expelled from Cooch Bihar. Thus, all the gains of Mir Jumla were rapidly lost. A long, desultory warfare with the Ahoms lasting a decade and a half followed. For a long period the command of the Mughal forces were with Raja Ram Singh, the

ruler of Amber. But he hardly had the resources for the task. Finally, the Mughals had to give up even Guwahati, and to fix a boundary west of it.

The events in Assam showed the limits of Mughal power in far-flung areas, and also the skill and determination of the Ahoms who avoided pitched battles and adopted a mode of guerrilla warfare. Similar tactics were to be adopted with similar success by the opponents of the Mughals in other areas. However, the shock of the Mughal invasion and the subsequent warfare undermined the strength of the Ahom monarchy and led to the decline and disintegration of the Ahom empire.

The Mughals had more success elsewhere. Shaista Khan, who succeeded Mir Jumla as the governor of Bengal after his setback at the hands of Shivaji, proved to be a good administrator and an able general. He modified Mir Jumlas forward policy. First, he patched up an agreement with the ruler of Cooch Bihar. Next, he gave his attention to the problem of south Bengal, where the Magh (Arakanese) pirates, had been terrorizing the area up to Dacca from their headquarters at Chittagong. The land up to Dacca had become desolate and trade and industry had suffered a setback. Shaista Khan built up a navy to meet the Arakanese pirates and captured the island of Sondip as a base of operations against Chittagong. Next, he won the Firingis to his side by inducements of money and favours. The Arakan navy near Chittagong was routed and many of their ships captured. Chittagong was next assaulted and captured early in 1666. The destruction of the Arakanese navy opened the seas to free commerce. This was no minor factor in the rapid growth of Bengal's foreign trade during the period and the expansion of cultivation in east Bengal.

In Orissa, the rebellion of the Pathans was put down and Balasore reopened to commerce.

Popular Revolts and Movements for Regional Independence: Jats, Afghans and Sikhs

Within the empire, Aurangzeb had to deal with a number of difficult political problems, such as the problems of the Marathas in the

Deccan, the Jats and Rajputs in north India, and that of the Afghans and Sikhs in the northwest. Some of these problems were not new, and had to be faced by Aurangzeb's predecessors. But they assumed a different character under Aurangzeb. The nature of these movements also varied. In the case of the Rajputs, it was basically a problem of succession. In the case of the Marathas, it was a question of local independence. The clash with the Jats had a peasant-agrarian background. The only movement in which religion played a powerful role was the Sikh movement. Both the Jat and the Sikh movements ultimately culminated in setting up independent regional states. The struggle of the Afghans was tribal in character, but there also the sentiment of setting up a separate Afghan state was at work. Thus, economic and social factors, as well as the sentiment of regional independence which continued to be strong were major factors in shaping these movements. Religion also played an undoubted role.

It has sometimes been argued that all these movements, excluding the Afghan one, represented a Hindu reaction against Aurangzeb's narrow religious policies. In a country where the overwhelming section of the people consisted of Hindus, any movement which came into conflict with the predominantly Muslim central government could be dubbed a challenge to Islam. Likewise, the leaders of these 'rebel' movements could use religious slogans or symbols to broaden their appeal. Hence, religion must be seen as part of societal and political movements.

Jats and Satnamis

The first section to come into conflict with the Mughal government were the Jats of the Agra-Delhi region living on both sides of the river Yamuna. The Jats were mostly peasant cultivators, only a few of them being zamindars. With a strong sense of brotherhood and justice, the Jats had often come into conflict with the government and taken to rebellion, taking advantage of their difficult terrain. Thus, conflict with the Jats of the area had taken place during the reigns of Jahangir and Shah Jahan over collection of land revenue. Since the imperial road to the Deccan and the western seaports passed through the Jat area, the Mughal government had taken a serious view of these rebellions and taken stern measures.

In 1669, the Jats of the Mathura region broke out in rebellion under the leadership of a local zamindar, Gokla. The rebellion spread rapidly among the peasants of the area, and Aurangzeb decided to march in person from Delhi to quell it. Although the Jat levies had swelled to 20,000, they were no match for the organised imperial army. In a stiff battle the Jats were defeated. Gokla was captured and executed.

However, the movement was not completely crushed and discontent continued to simmer. Meanwhile, in 1672, there was another armed conflict between the peasants and the Mughal state at Narnaul, not far from Mathura. This time the conflict was with a religious body called Satnamis. The Satnamis were mostly peasants, artisans and low caste people, called 'goldsmiths, carpenters, sweepers, tanners and other ignoble beings' by a contemporary writer. They did not observe distinctions of caste and rank or between Hindus and Muslims, and followed a strict code of conduct. Starting from a clash with a local official, it soon assumed the character of an open rebellion. Again, the emperor had to march in person to crush it. It is interesting to note that the local Hindu zamindars, many of whom were Rajputs, sided with the Mughals in this conflict.

In 1685, there was a second uprising of the Jats under the leadership of Rajaram. The Jats were better organised this time and adopted the methods of guerrilla warfare, combining it with plunder. Aurangzeb approached Raja Bishan Singh, the Kachhwaha ruler to crush the uprising. Bishan Singh was appointed *faujdar* of Mathura and the entire area was granted to him in *zamindari*. Conflict between the Jats and the Rajputs over *zamindari* rights complicated the issue, most of the primary zamindars, that is the cultivating peasants who owned the land being Jats, and the intermediary zamindars, that is those who collected the land revenue being Rajputs. The Jats put up stiff resistance, but by 1691, Rajaram and his successor, Churaman, were compelled to submit. However, unrest among the Jat peasants continued and their plundering activities made the Delhi-Agra road unsafe for travellers. Later, in the eighteenth century, taking advantage of Mughal civil wars and weakness in the central government, Churaman was able to carve out a separate Jat principality in the area and to oust the Rajput zamindars. Thus, what apparently started as a peasants' uprising, changed its character, and culminated in a state in which Jat chiefs formed the ruling class.

The Afghans

Aurangzeb came into conflict with the Afghans also. Conflict with the hardy Afghan tribesmen who lived in the mountain region between the Punjab and Kabul was not new. Akbar had to fight against the Afghans and, in the process, lost the life of his close friend and confidant, Raja Birbal. Conflict with the Afghan tribesmen had taken place during the reign of Shah Jahan also. These conflicts were partly economic and partly political and religious. With little means of livelihood in the rugged mountains, the Afghans had no option but to prey on the caravans or to enrol in the Mughal armies. Their fierce love of freedom made service in the Mughal armies difficult. The Mughals generally kept them content by paying them subsidies. But growth of population or the rise of an ambitious leader could lead to a breach of this tacit agreement.

During the reign of Aurangzeb, we see a new stirring among the Pathans. In 1667, Bhagu, the leader of the Yusufazai tribe, proclaimed as king a person named Muhammad Shah who claimed descent from an ancient royal lineage, and proclaimed himself his *wazir*. It would appear that among the Afghans, as among the Jats, the ambition of setting up a separate state of their own had begun to stir. A religious revivalist movement called the Raushanai, which emphasised a strict ethical life and devotion to a chosen *pir* had provided an intellectual and moral background to the movement.

Gradually, Bhagu's movement spread till his followers started ravaging and plundering the Hazara, Attock and Peshawar districts and brought the traffic in the Khyber to a standstill. To clear the Khyber and crush the uprising, Aurangzeb deputed the chief bakhshi, Amir Khan. A Rajput contingent was posted with him. After a series of hard-fought battles, the Afghan resistance was broken. But to watch over them, in 1671, Maharaja Jaswant Singh, the ruler of Marwar, was appointed as *thanedar* of Jamrud.

There was a second Afghan uprising in 1672. The leader of the opposition this time was the Afridi leader, Akmal Khan, who proclaimed himself king and read *khutba* and struck *sikka* in his name. He declared war against the Mughals and summoned all the Afghans to join him. According to a contemporary writer, with a following 'more numerous than ants and locusts', they closed the Khyber Pass.

Moving forward to clear the Pass, Amir Khan advanced too far and suffered a disastrous defeat in the narrow defile. Amir Khan managed to escape with his life, but 10,000 men perished, and cash and goods worth two crores were looted by the Afghans. This defeat brought other tribesmen into the fray including Khushhal Khan Khattak, a sworn enemy of Aurangzeb in whose hands he had suffered imprisonment for some time.

In 1674, another Mughal noble Shujaat Khan, suffered a disastrous rout in the Khyber. But he was rescued by a heroic band of Rathors sent by Jaswant Singh. At last, in the middle of 1674, Aurangzeb himself went to Peshawar and remained in the neighbourhood till the end of 1675. By force and diplomacy, the Afghan united front was broken, and peace was slowly restored.

The Afghan uprising shows that sentiments of resistance to the Mughal rule and the urge for regional freeedom were not confined to sections of Hindus, such as Jats, Marathas, etc. Also, the Afghan uprising helped to relax Mughal pressure on Shivaji during a crucial period. It also made difficult, if not impossible, a forward policy by the Mughals in the Deccan till 1676 by which time Shivaji had crowned himself and entered into an alliance with Bijapur and Golconda.

The Sikhs

Although there had been some clashes between the Sikh guru and the Mughals under Shah Jahan, there was no clash between the Sikhs and Aurangzeb till 1675. In fact, conscious of the growing importance of the Sikhs, Aurangzeb had tried to engage Ram Rai, the elder son of Guru Har Rai, at the court. However, Guru Har Rai was displeased with Ram Rai, and nominated as his successor a younger son, Har Kishan, who was only six years old at the time. Har Kishan died soon after, and was succeeded in 1664 by Guru Tegh Bahadur. Ram Rai put forward his claims to the *gaddi* both before the accession of Guru Har Kishan, and after his death. Aurangzeb did not interfere and gave a grant of land at Dehra Dun to Ram Rai to build his gurudwara there. But most of the time Ram Rai remained at Delhi, and continued to intrigue against the guru, and to try and poison the mind of the emperor against him. After his succession, Guru Tegh Bahadur had

come to Delhi, but to escape the intrigues of Ram Rai he journeyed to Bihar, and served with Raja Ram Singh of Amber in Assam till 1671. However, in 1675, Guru Tegh Bahadur was brought to Delhi from his head-quarters with five of his followers. Various accusations were made against him, and he was asked to recant his faith which he refused. As a punishment, he was beheaded.

Various reasons have been put forward to account for Aurangzeb's action. According to a poetic work of Guru Goving Singh, the son and successor of Guru Tegh Bahadur, he gave up his life in defence of Hindu faith following his meeting with some Brahmans of Kashmir who had sought his support. However, we do not have any details of this meeting. According to a separate and later tradition, the guru was protesting against the oppression of the Governor of Kashmir, Sher Afgan, and large scale forcible conversion of Hindus there. However, the Mughal Governor of Kashmir till 1671 was Saif Khan. He is famous as a builder of bridges. He was a liberal and broad-minded person who had appointed a Hindu to advise his on matters of administration. His successor after 1671 was Iftekhar Khan. He was anti-Shia, but there are no references of his persecution of Hindus. In fact, this is not mentioned in any of the local histories of Kashmir, including one written by Narayan Kaul in 1710.

There is another tradition that the guru was beheaded because some of the enemies and rivals of Guru Tegh Bahadur, such as Ram Rai, had suggested to Aurangzeb that he should ask the guru to show a miracle to prove his claim of divine powers, and that action could be taken against him if he failed to do so. But this does not appear likely. Aurangzeb had been out of Delhi from the beginning of 1675 to March 1676, in pursuit of action against the Afghan rebels. Hence, he could not have called the guru to Delhi at the suggestion of Ram Rai.

An explanation has been put forward by later Persian sources which appear to be a defence of the official action. It has been said that the guru who had a large following moved about the Punjab, in association with one Hafiz Adam, who was a follower of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, extorting money by force from the villagers. It is further said that the local *waqia navis*, or intelligence reporter, told the emperor that if action was not taken against the guru, it could lead to disturbances, and even to a rebellion.

We do not know the sources of the Persian account. It mentions Hafiz Adam as an associate of the guru, but Hafiz Adam had died much earlier. Also, the execution of the guru is placed at Lahore, not Delhi. An account does, however, say that the guru was executed at the orders of the emperor.

It would appear that for Aurangzeb, the beheading of the guru was primarily a law and order question. However, according to another Persian source, whenever any peasants came into conflict with the local revenue collector, *jagirdar* or zamindar, they resorted to the guru who looked after them. Thus, far from extorting money by force from the peasants, as alleged, the guru was emerging as a champion against injustice and oppression.

An atmosphere of heightened religious tensions had been brought about in large measure by Aurangzeb's emphasis on the *sharia*, his destruction of newly built temples, and even of some temples of old standing at Mathura, Varanasi, etc., as punishment for local rebellions, or complaints by the *qazis* of opening their doors and teachings to Muslims also. In such a situation, any conflict with a distinguished religious leader was bound to have larger repurcussions.

Whatever the reasons, Aurangzeb's action was unjustified from any point of view and betrayed a narrow approach. The execution of Guru Tegh Bahadur forced the Sikhs to go back to the Punjab hills. It also led to the Sikh movement gradually turning into a military brotherhood. A major contribution in this sphere was made by Guru Govind Singh. He showed considerable organizational ability and founded the military brotherhood or the *khalsa* in 1699. Before this, Guru Govind Singh had made his headquarters at Makhowwal or Anandpur in the foothills of the Punjab. At first, the local Hindu hill rajas had tried to use the guru and his followers in their internecine quarrels. But soon the guru became too powerful and a series of clashes took place between the hill rajas and the guru, who generally triumphed. The organization of the *khalsa* further strengthened the hands of the guru in this conflict. However, an open breach between the guru and the hill rajas took place only in 1704, when the combined forces of a number of hill rajas attacked the guru at Anandpur. The rajas had again to retreat and they pressed the Mughal government to intervene against the guru on their behalf.

The struggle which followed was thus not primarily a religious struggle. It was partly an offshoot of local rivalries among the Hindu hill rajas and the Sikhs, and partly an outcome of the Sikh movement as it had developed. Aurangzeb was concerned with the growing power of the guru and had earlier asked the Mughal *faujdar* 'to admonish the guru'. He now wrote to the governor of Lahore and the *faujdar* of Sirhind, Wazir Khan, to aid the hill rajas in their conflict with Guru Govind Singh. The Mughal forces assaulted Anandpur but the Sikhs fought bravely and beat off all assaults. The Mughals and their allies now invested the fort closely. When starvation began inside the fort, the guru was forced to open the gate, apparently on a promise of safe conduct by Wazir Khan. But when the forces of the guru were crossing a swollen stream, Wazir Khan's forces suddenly attacked. Two of the guru's sons were captured, and on their refusal to embrace Islam, were beheaded at Sirhind. The guru lost two of his remaining sons in another battle. After this, the guru retired to Talwandi and was generally not disturbed.

It is doubtful whether the dastardly action of Wazir Khan against the sons of the guru was carried out at the instance of Aurangzeb. Aurangzeb, it seems, was not keen to destroy the guru and wrote to the governor of Lahore 'to conciliate the guru'. When the guru wrote to Aurangzeb in the Deccan, apprising him of the events, Aurangzeb invited him to meet him. Towards the end of 1706, the guru set out for the Deccan and was on the way when Aurangzeb died. According to some, he had hoped to persuade Aurangzeb to restore Anandpur to him.

Although Guru Govind Singh was not able to withstand Mughal might for long, or to establish a separate Sikh state, he created a tradition and also forged a weapon for its realization later on. It also showed how an egalitarian religious movement could, under certain circumstances, turn into a political and militaristic movement, and subtly move towards regional independence.

Relations with the Rajputs—Breach with Marwar and Mewar

We have seen how Jahangir settled in 1613 the long drawn out conflict with Mewar. Jahangir continued Akbar's policy of giving favours to

the leading Rajput rajas and of entering into matrimonial relations with them. Shah Jahan maintained the alliance with the Rajputs. During his reign, Rajput contingents served with distinction in such far-flung areas as the Deccan, Balkh in Central Asia, and Qandhar. However, no Rajput raja was appointed governor of a province, and no further matrimonial relations were made with the leading Rajput rajas—though Shah Jahan himself was the son of a Rathor princess.[1] Perhaps, alliance with the Rajputs having been consolidated, it was felt that matrimonial relations with the leading rajas were no longer necessary. However, Shah Jahan accorded high honour to the heads of the two leading Rajputs houses, Jodhpur and Amber. Raja Jaswant Singh, the ruler of Marwar, was high in Shah Jahan's favour. Both he and Jai Singh held the ranks of 7000/7000 at the time of Aurangzeb's accession.

Aurangzeb attached great value to the alliance with the Rajputs. He tried to secure the active support of the maharana of Mewar and raised his *mansab* from 5000/5000 to 6000/6000. Although Jaswant Singh had fought against him at Dharmat and defected from his side during the campaign against Shuja, and invited Dara to his dominions, Aurangzeb pardoned him and restored him to his previous *mansab*. He was also appointed to important commands, including the governorship of Gujarat. Jai Singh remained the close friend and confidant of Aurangzeb till his death in 1667.

Jaswant Singh who had been deputed to look after the affairs of the Afghans in the northwest died towards the end of 1678. The maharaja had no surviving male issue and hence the question of succession to the *gaddi* immediately arose. There was a longstanding Mughal tradition that in case of a disputed succession, the state was brought under Mughal administration (*khalisa*) to ensure law and order, and then handed over to the chosen successor. Thus, in 1650, when there was a dispute about succession in Jaisalmer, Shah Jahan first took the state under *khalisa* and then sent Jaswant Singh at the

1 Tradition persists in naming Jodha Bai as the mother of Jahangir. But the only marriage of a Rathor princess we know of was the marriage in 1585 of the daughter of Mota Raja Udai Singh with Salim (Jahangir). She was the mother of Shah Jahan.

head of an army to install the candidate chosen by the emperor. There was another reason also for bringing Marwar under the *khalisa*. The Maharaja, like most Mughal nobles, had large sums of money due to the state which he had not been able to pay back. Many Rajputs, whom Jaswant Singh had annoyed, or whose territories had been granted to him in *jagir* by the emperor, were eager to use the absence of a ruler on the *gaddi* of Jodhpur to create disturbances.

Anticipating resistance from the Rathors, Aurangzeb had allotted two *parganas* in Marwar for the maintenance of the family and supporters of Jaswant Singh. He also assembled a strong army and marched to Ajmer to enforce his orders. Rani Hadi, the chief queen of Jaswant Singh, who had been objecting to handing over charge of Jodhpur to the Mughals, since it was the *watan* (homeland) of the Rathors, had no option but to submit. A diligent search was now made for any hidden treasures that Jaswant Singh might have possessed. Mughal officials were posted all over Marwar. Large numbers of temples, including old temples, were demolished or bricked up.

Thus, the Mughals behaved as conquerors and treated Marwar as hostile territory. It is difficult to find a justification for this. However, Aurangzeb had no intention of retaining control of the territory of Marwar on account of its strategic importance in linking Delhi with the Gujarat seaports, as has been asserted by the modern historian Jadunath Sarkar. Two sons were born at Lahore to two ranis of Jaswant Singh after his death. Their claim to the *gaddi* was strongly canvassed. However, before returning to Delhi, Aurangzeb decided to award the *tika* of Jodhpur to Inder Singh, the grandson of Jaswant Singh's elder brother, Amar Singh, in return for a succession fee of thirty-six lakhs of rupees. Perhaps, Aurangzeb was moved by the argument that Shah Jahan had done a great injustice in passing over the claims of Amar Singh, in giving the *tika* to his younger brother, Jaswant Singh. He may also have wanted to avoid a minority administration in Marwar.

According to some modern historians, Aurangzeb offered Jodhpur to Ajit Singh, the posthumous son of Jaswant Singh, on condition of his becoming a Muslim. There is no such suggestion in contemporary sources. According to a contemporary Rajasthani work, *Hukumat-ri-Bahi*, Aurangzeb offered a *mansab* to Ajit Singh when he was presented at the court in Agra and declared that the two *parganas* in

Marwar, Sojat and Jaitaran, would continue as his *jagir*. Thus, Aurangzeb was virtually contemplating a division of the state of Marwar between the two branches of the family.

The Rathor sardars led by Durgadas, rejected this proffered compromise which they felt would be against the best interests of the state. Angered at the rejection of his offer by the sardars, Aurangzeb ordered that the princes and their mothers be put in confinement at the fort of Nurgarh. This alarmed the Rathor sardars who, after a valiant fight, made their escape from Agra along with one of the princes, and crowned him as Ajit Singh at Jodhpur amidst great rejoicing.

Aurangzeb might have gracefully accepted the fact that Inder Singh had no following among the Rathors. He set aside Inder Singh for 'incompetence' but adopted a stern, unbending attitude towards Ajit Singh, declaring him to be a 'pretender'. Strong forces were summoned from all parts of the empire and, once again, Aurangzeb marched to Ajmer. The Rathor resistance was crushed and Jodhpur occupied. Durgadas fled with Ajit Singh to Mewar where the rana sent him to a secret hide-out.

It was at this stage that Mewar entered the war on the side of Ajit Singh. Rana Raj Singh who at one stage had supported Aurangzeb had been gradually alienated. He had sent a force of 5000 men under one of his leading men to Jodhpur to back up the claim of Rani Hadi. Apparently, he was deeply opposed to Mughal interference in the internal affairs of the Rajputs, such as questions of succession. Apart from this, he nursed a grievance at Mughal efforts to detach from Mewar the states to its south and west, Dungarpur, Banswara, etc., which had been at one time tribute-paying, dependent rulers under Mewar. But the immediate cause was his unease at the Mughal military occupation of Marwar, and Aurangzeb's rejection of Ajit Singh's claim of succession.

Aurangzeb struck the first blow. In November 1679 he attacked Mewar. A strong Mughal detachment reached Udaipur and even raided the camp of the rana who had retreated deep into the hills to conduct a harassing warfare against the Mughals. The war soon reached a stalement. The Mughals could neither penetrate the hills, nor deal with the guerrilla tactics of the Rajputs. The war now became

highly unpopular, Aurangzeb's admonitions and warnings to his commanders having little effect. At last, the eldest son of Aurangzeb, prince Akbar, tried to take advantage of this situation by turning his arms against his father. In alliance with the Rathor chief, Durgadas, he marched on Ajmer (January 1681) where Aurangzeb was helpless, all his best troops being engaged elsewhere. But prince Akbar delayed, and Aurangzeb was able to stir up dissensions in his camp by false letters. Prince Akbar had to flee to Maharashtra and Aurangzeb heaved a sigh of relief.

The campaign of Mewar now became secondary for Aurangzeb. He patched up a treaty with Rana Jagat Singh, Rana Raj Singh having died in the meantime. The new rana was forced to surrender some of his *parganas* in lieu of *jizyah*, and was granted a *mansab* of 5000 on a promise of loyalty and of not supporting Ajit Singh. Regarding Ajit Singh, all that Aurangzeb would promise was that *mansab* and *raj* would be given to him when he came of age.

This agreement and the promise regarding Ajit Singh satisfied none of the Rajputs. The Mughals kept their control on Marwar and desultory warfare continued till 1698 when at last, Ajit Singh was recognised as the ruler of Marwar. But the Mughals refused to relax their hold on the capital, Jodhpur. The rana of Mewar, too, remained dissatisfied at the surrender of his *parganas* to the Mughals. There was no change in this situation till Aurangzeb died in 1707.

Aurangzeb's policy towards Marwar and Mewar was clumsy and blundering, and brought no advantage of any kind to the Mughals. On the other hand, Mughal failure against these states damaged Mughal military prestige. It is true that the warfare in Marwar after 1681 involved only a few troops, and were not of much consequence militarily. It is also true that Hada and Kachhwaha and other Rajput contingents continued to serve the Mughals. But the results of the Marwar policy of Aurangzeb cannot be judged solely by these. The breach with Marwar and Mewar weakened the Mughal alliance with the Rajputs at a crucial time. Above all, it created doubts about the firmness of Mughal support to old and trusted allies and the ulterior motives of Aurangzeb. It showed the rigid and obstinate nature of Aurangzeb. It did not, however, amount to a fixed determination on his part to subvert Hinduism, as has been alleged, because during

the period after 1679, large numbers of Marathas were allowed entry into the nobility.

Aurangzeb's conflicts in the northeast and with the Jats, Afghans, Sikhs and Rajputs put a strain on the empire. However, the real conflict lay in the Deccan.