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Lecture No. 22.

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Topic: Establishment of Mughal Empire.

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... And at short intervals caravansaries were set up with separate lodgings for Muslims and Hindus, with servants to supply food to the travelers of each religion. Safety was ensured by making the officials of the adjacent villages responsible for incidents on the roads passing through their areas. Trade along the highroads was encouraged by the abolition of all tolls, with custom duties levied only on the frontiers. Although Sher Shah was rigidly orthodox, Hindu held high positions in his army and Todar Mal, who later gained renown under Akbar, was originally in his service. One of his best-known generals was Brahmajit Gaur, whom he sent in pursuit of Humayun and Raja Ram Singh of Gwalior is also said to have been in his service. His army included a contingent of Rajputs.

Islam Shah, who succeeded Sher Shah in 1545, made an effort to preserve the institutions of his father. He kept the fortifications in good repair, increased the number of caravansaries, and ordered the compilation of a detailed statement of government regulations, extracts of which were read every Friday in meetings of government officials of each area. He was, however, unable to keep his rebellious nobles in check, and religious unrest among his subjects further undermined his power.

The religious ferment of Islam Shah's reign was part of a widespread movement. At this time the millennium of the migration of the prophet of Islam from Mecca was approaching and many people believed in the imminent appearance of a Mahdi who would convert the whole world to Islam and fill the earth with equity and justice. Sayyid Muhammad, a leading scholar and saint of Jaunpur, encouraged this

expectation and later claimed to be the Mahdi. Those who accepted his claims and followed his injunctions were known as Mahadwis. The Mahadwi movement gradually lost its importance in northern India, but it flourished longer in the south, and Mahadwi doctrines have been held by some important persons in Hyderabad Deccan (including the late Nawab Bahadur ~~Yor~~ Jang). Even in Northern India, the struggle which it generated and the conflict which ensued between the court jurists and the Mahadwi notables had their effect on the religious history of Akbar's day.

Sayyid Muhammad Jaunpuri died in Farah, in modern Afghanistan, in 1564; but his doctrines were kept alive by his enthusiastic followers. In the Sher Shah's reign, Shaikh Alai, son of a leading religious teacher of Bengal, established himself at Bayana near Agra, where he came under the influence of Shaikh Abdullah, an Afghan follower of Sayyid Muhammad.

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