

disgrace. But persecution appeared in many shapes. Perhaps the persecution felt most keenly by the people, because more lasting and more closely connected with their daily life, was that produced by political coercion. Hindu rulers and *zemindars* could retain their authority only on condition that they embraced Islam. Hindu princes were forcibly circumcised, and officials in the service of the Mogul government had to become Moslems with their wives, or suffer dismissal.

Then there was instituted a capitation tax on non-Moslems called *Jizya*. Virtually, it was the revival of the old system of giving the alternative of accepting the Koran, paying tribute, or extermination. It was the lawful price of toleration. Firuz Shah Tughlak (1351-1388 A. D.), who is said to have been one of the most lenient of Moslem rulers, says in his autobiography, "I encouraged my infidel subjects to embrace the religion of the prophet and I proclaimed that every one who repeated the creed and became a Mussulman should be exempt from the *Jizya* or poll-tax. Information of this came to the ears of the people at large and great numbers of Hindus presented themselves, and were admitted to the honour of Islam. Thus they came forward day by day from every quarter, and adopting the faith were exonerated from the *Jizya*, and were favoured with presents and honours." But it was not the tax that did so much injury as the way in which it was imposed and collected. The revenue officers were looked upon in the same way as plague and famine and fever. If the officers wished "to spit in their mouths" the people had to submit. Such humiliation (which, of course, made men outcasts) was "to promote the glory of Islam, the true religion and the contempt for false religion."¹

¹ "Tarikh i Firuz Shah," p. 290. This is also graphically told in Begali rhyme by a Hindu, Bijoy Gupta, in "Padma Purana."