

A Study of Most Popular Rulers of the Medieval India

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ABSTRACT

The present study is about the ten popular rulers who shaped the history of medieval India:- 1. Mahmud of Ghazni 2. Sultan Muiz-Ud-Din Muhammad of Ghur 3. Qutb-Ud-Din Aibak 4. Sultan Iltutmish 5. Ghiyas-Ud-Din Balban 6. Jalal-Ud-Din Firozshah Khalji 7. Ala-Ud-Din Khalji 8. Qutb-Ud-Din Mubarak Khalji 9. Nasir-Ud-Din Khusrav Shah 10. Ghiyas-Ud-Din Tughlaq Shah.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Yamini dynasty generally known as Ghaznavi dynasty, claimed its origin from the family of Persian rulers. During the course of Arab invasion, the family fled to Turkistan and became one with the Turks. Therefore, the family has been accepted as Turk. Alptigin founded the independent kingdom of this dynasty.

He snatched away the kingdom of Jabul with its capital Ghazni from Amir Abu-Bakr Lawik in 963 A.D., but he died the same year. He was succeeded by his son Ishaq who ruled only for three years. Then, the throne was captured by Balkatigin, the commander of the Turkish troops. Balkatigin was succeeded by his slave Pirai in 972 A.D. But Pirai was a cruel king.

His subjects invited Abu Ali Lawik, son of Abu-Bakr Lawik, to invade Ghazni. Jayapala, the ruler of the neighbourly Hindushahi kingdom who did not like the rise of a strong Muslim state at his border, also sent his army to help Abu Ali Lawik. But they were defeated by Sabuktigin, son-in-law of Alptigin. The success of Sabuktigin against the enemies of Ghazni enhanced his prestige. He, ultimately, dethroned Pirai and himself became the ruler of Ghazni in 977 A.D.

Sabuktigin was a capable and ambitious ruler. Slowly, he conquered Bust, Dawar, Ghur and some other nearby places. Towards the east lay the Hindushahi kingdom of East Afghanistan and Punjab, Sabuktigin started attacking its boundaries and occupied some forts and cities. Jayapala, the Hindushahi ruler, could not ignore these attacks and attempted to crush the rising power of Sabuktigin.

Since then began the long struggle of the kingdoms of Ghazni and Hindushahi which continued till Sultan Mahmud finally extinguished the Hindushahis. Twice Jayapala attacked Ghazni and was supported by certain other Rajput rulers also who sent their contingents to help Jayapala. But both his attempts failed and Sabuktigin succeeded in capturing all the territories which lay between Lamghan and Peshawar.

II. SULTAN MUIZ-UD-DIN MUHAMMAD OF GHUR

While making an assessment of the character and achievements of Muhammad of Ghur, one is usually tempted to compare him with that of Mahmud of Ghazni which sometime, unjustly reduces his importance. But, the status of Muhammad in Indian history, even while comparing him with Mahmud is unquestionable.

Muhammad cannot bear comparison with Mahmud as a military leader. Mahmud was a born military commander. His every Indian campaign was successful and he had been equally successful in Central Asia. Mahmud, thus, established an extensive and powerful empire and rightly deserved to be the first Sultan of the Islamic world. Thus, Muhammad's military successes were no match to the successes of Mahmud.

While Mahmud remained undefeated during his lifetime, Muhammad was seriously defeated by his different adversaries three times. Mularaja II, the ruler of Gujarat, Prithviraja III, the ruler of Delhi and Ajmer and Khwarizm Shah, the ruler of Persia defeated him in turn. But the greatness of Muhammad was that none of these defeats could weaken his spirits or check his ambitions.

He took his every failure as an experience, improved upon his weaknesses, removed them and got success in the end. The successes and conquests of Muhammad brought about more permanent results than the conquests of Mahmud.

III. QUTB-UD-DIN AIBAK

Qutb-ud-din Aibak was the real founder of Turkish rule in India. Primarily, he was responsible for the success of Sultan Muhammad in India. Muhammad was responsible for the Turkish conquest of India but he did not get time to remain and consolidate his Indian conquests.

Mostly it was done by Qutb-ud- din. And, when Muhammad died, Qutb-ud-din persuaded Turkish nobles in India to accept his supremacy, strengthened his position by matrimonial alliances with influential rival chiefs, stubbornly refused to accept the overlordship of Yildiz, turned him out of Punjab and saved his infant kingdom from the politics of Central Asia. Thus, both by diplomacy and force, he succeeded in maintaining separate and independent status of the Delhi Sultanate.

Qutb-ud-din proved the most capable slave among the slaves of Sultan Muhammad. He was a self-made man who rose to the status of Sultan by his own merit and efforts. He possessed the qualities of both the head and the heart.

IV. SULTAN ILTUTMISH

Iltutmish was a cultured and religious minded individual. He was a brave soldier, an experienced commander and a capable administrator. He was also a shrewd, cautious and farsighted statesman. He was the slave of a slave. Yet, by his own merit and efforts he became the Sultan of Delhi.

Iltutmish introduced Persian customs and rules in his court. He patronized cultured people and scholars. All scholars, members of ruling families and capable persons who fled from Central Asia and other Islamic states because of the attacks of the Mongols were provided shelter at the court of Iltutmish.

The contemporary scholars Minhaj-us-Siraj and Taj-ud-din were at his court and so were Nizamul-mulk-Muhammad Junaidi, Malik Qutb-ud-din, Hasan Ghuri and Fakhrul-Mulk Isami each of whom distinguished himself in his respective field.

The court of Iltutmish had become as respectable as that of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni because of these capable persons. Iltutmish made Delhi his capital and beautified it accordingly. Many minarets, mosques, madarsas, Khanqas and tanks were built by him. The famous Qutb Minar was also constructed or completed by him.

In fact, he made Delhi not only the political and administrative centre of the Turkish empire in India but also the centre of its cultural activity which attracted and absorbed Muslim talents from many countries.

Iltutmish was a religious minded person. Minhaj-us-Siraj, the author of Tabakata-i-Nasiri, wrote about

Iltutmish that there had been no ruler by then who had been so religious, kind and respectful towards saints and scholars as Iltutmish had been. Iltutmish strictly observed all rites of his religion and spent considerable time at night in prayer and contemplation.

He showed profound respect to sufi saints like Shaikh Qutb-ud-din Bakhtiyar Kaki (in whose honour, according to Dr Iswari Prasad, he constructed Qutb Minar), Qazi Hamid-ud-din Nagauri, Shaikh Jalaluddin Tabrizi, Shaikh Baha-ud-din Zakariya and Shaikh Najib-ud-din Nakhshabi. But, Iltutmish was intolerant towards the Hindus and Muslim heretics like Shias.

He destroyed the Hindu temples at Bhilsa and Ujjain and the attempt to murder him in a mosque of Delhi by the Ismaili Shias was, certainly, because of his intolerant policy towards them. But, as Dr K.A. Nizami has expressed, he normally kept politics free from his religious convictions. He succeeded in getting the goodwill of religious leaders of his age and, thereby, got moral support for his state and dynasty but he did not bother to consult the Ulema every time on matters of state policy.

Iltutmish was a just king. Ibn Batuta wrote that 'Iltutmish got erected two marble statues of lions and bells were hanged in their necks. Anybody could ring those bells and seek justice from the Sultan.'

Iltutmish was a courageous soldier and an experienced military commander. He proved his valour in the war against the Khokhars during the lifetime of Sultan Muhammad which brought him freedom from slavery. He himself participated in battles against Yildiz and Qabacha and led his armies many times against the Rajputs in Rajputana and in Bengal. Thus, the success of his military campaigns was largely due to his own capabilities as a military commander.

According to Dr A.L. Srivastava, "Iltutmish was not a builder of civil institutions and was not a constructive statesman." Of course, no conclusive evidence is available to know the administrative set up of Iltutmish and, probably, he created no novelty in internal administration. But, Dr K.A. Nizami has written that the administrative set-up of the Iqta (province) and the maintenance of the army of the Sultan were his contributions to the administration of the Delhi Sultanate.

He has stated that Iltutmish assigned a large number of Iqtas (Jagirs) to his nobles which were of two types—large ones and small ones. Assignees of small Iqtas were given the right to collect revenue only in lieu of military services while assignees of large Iqtas were given administrative rights as well. Iltutmish transferred Iqtadars from one place to another frequently so that elements of the Jagirdari-system could not enter the Iqtadari-system.

Iltutmish also made a beginning of organising a centralized army whose recruitment, training, payment of salaries etc. were the responsibilities of the central government. However, the fact that Iltutmish was the first Turkish ruler to introduce a purely Arabic coinage has been accepted by all historians. He introduced the silver Tanka and the copper Jital, the two basic coins of the Sultanate period. According to Nelson Wright, 'besides this, the credit of beginning of the practice of engraving the name of the taksal on the coins can also be given to Iltutmish.'

Iltutmish was a farsighted and diplomatic statesman. The establishment of a dynastic monarchy was a political necessity of that time. Iltutmish understood it, strived for it and succeeded. It was a part of this policy that he requested the Khalifa to recognize him as the Sultan of Delhi. He behaved diplomatically with Cenghiz Khan and Jalal-ud-din Mangbarni.

He saved his kingdom from the wrath of Cenghiz Khan and, even when he refused shelter to Jalal-ud-

din, could keep the supporters of Islam satisfied. Besides, his suppression of Yildiz and Qabacha when they were left most ineffective against him also justify his quality as a statesman and a shrewd judge of circumstances.

However, the greatest success of Iltutmish had been that he provided security to the infant Turkish kingdom in India, strengthened it further, provided it a legal status and established the dynastic rule over it.

V. GHIYAS-UD-DIN BALBAN

Balban laid down the foundation of a new dynasty called the Balbani though, of course, he was intimately related with the dynasty of Iltutmish as both Sultan Masud Shah and Sultan Nasir-ud-din were his sons-in-law and his own son Bughra Khan was married to the daughter of Sultan Nasir-ud-din by his another wife.

Early Career:

According to Dr A.L. Srivastava, Balban was an Ilbari Turk whose father was a Khan of 10,000 families. His original name was Baha-ud-din. In his early youth Balban was taken prisoner and sold as a slave in Baghdad by the Mongols. His master Khwaja Jamal-ud-din brought him to Delhi where he was purchased by Iltutmish in 1233 A.D. and, after sometime, promoted to the rank of Khasdar.

Raziyya appointed him to the post of Amir-i-shikar. Balban proved treacherous and became a party to depose Raziyya from the throne. Bahram Shah gave him the jagir of Rewari and Masud Shah assigned him the jagir of Hansi. Vazir Abu Bakr appointed him Amir-i-Hazib and from that position he got the opportunity to consolidate his position among 'the forty'.

He conspired against Masud Shah and was primarily responsible to put up Nasir-ud-din on the throne. In 1249 A.D., he married his daughter to Sultan Nasir-

ud-din, got the post of naib-i-mamlakat and also the title of Ulugh Khan.

During the reign of Nasir-ud-din, Balban practically enjoyed all the powers of the state except for a brief interval of about a year. By ability, tact and diplomacy, Balban, certainly, had become the first among the powerful Turkish nobility. Therefore, after the death of Nasir-ud-din in 1265 A.D., he ascended the throne of Delhi without any opposition.

His Difficulties:

Though Balban had ruled for nearly twenty years during the reign of Nasir-ud-din, yet there were many difficulties which he had to face when he himself became the Sultan. The primary necessity of the state as well as that of Balban was to restore the lost prestige of the Sultan. After the death of Iltutmish, his Turkish slave-nobles tried to capture the power of the throne.

The resistance of the Sultan proved ineffective and the nobility succeeded in its efforts. One after another, the successors of Iltutmish gave way to the rising power of the nobles and therefore, the prestige of the Crown was lost. Nasir-ud-din, the last ruling descendent of Iltutmish wielded no power of the state. It was Balban who had captured the ruling power.

Thus, the power and prestige of the Sultan was completely lost. Balban himself had contributed towards it. But when he became the Sultan himself he realised the necessity of restoring the power of the Crown and, for that, felt the necessity of breaking the power of the nobility and creating awe and terror among the general populace.

Another problem before Balban was to provide security to the Delhi Sultanate and consolidate it further. All other problems were connected with it. In the north-west, the Mongols had got a strong foothold in West Punjab and therefore, it was absolutely necessary to check their further advance.

In the east, Bengal had become independent and it was necessary to bring it under the control of the Delhi Sultanate so that other provinces were not encouraged to follow its example. The Hindus were adopting aggressive policy against the Delhi Sultanate in Doab, Malwa, Bundelkhand and Rajasthan and it was necessary to break up their attempt for further inroads.

The Meos in Mewat and the Hindus in Katehar were revolting within the territories of the Delhi Sultanate and even the capital was not safe from their terror so that the western gate of the city of Delhi was always closed after the afternoon prayer. All this needed immediate attention of the Sultan.

Death of Balban:

Balban had grown too old. The death of prince Muhammad broke his heart. He was his eldest son and also well-educated and cultured. The two greatest poets of that age. Amir Khusrav and Amir Hasan, started their literary career under his patronage. He had invited the famous Persian poet, Shaikh Sadi as well who, however, could not comply with his request because of his old age.

Balban had expected him to be his worthy successor but his death destroyed all his hopes. Balban fell ill and called his second son Bughra Khan from Bengal to be by his side. Bughra Khan came to Delhi but soon left for Bengal secretly as he preferred its luxurious life more than the life of responsibility at Delhi. Balban nominated Kai Khusrav, son of prince Muhammad, as his heir and then died after some days about the middle of 1287 A.D.

VI. JALAL-UD-DIN FIROZSHAH KHALJI

The Khaljis were certainly Turks. Fakhruddin, the writer of *Tarikh-i-Fakhruddin Mubarakshahi*, Raverty and Barthold etc., regarded them as Turks. The territory of the Helmand valley in Afghanistan was called Khalji at that time and those people who inhabited that valley were called the Khaljis.

The family of Jalal-ud-din also belonged to those families who were Turks but had migrated to that valley two hundred years back. Their manners, living and social traditions became similar to the Afghans and therefore, they were regarded as the Afghans in India.

Thus, though the Khaljis were Turks, yet their polity differed from those of the Ilbari-Turks. With the accession of Jalal-ud-din Khalji on the throne of Delhi, the supremacy of the Turks finished in India.

The Ilbari-Turks had consolidated the Muslim empire in India and they maintained their supremacy in the state and its administration. Balban, the last of the Ilbari -Turk rulers, tried to finish other powerful families other than the Turks—with a view to maintain the supremacy of the Turks. But his attempt failed.

The Ilbari-Turks failed to realise the growing influence and power of Indian Muslims and other non-Ilbari Turks. The revolt of the Khaljis was, in fact, the revolt of Indian Muslims and non-Ilbari Turks against the Ilbari-Turks who looked not towards Delhi but towards Ghazni as source of their inspiration.

The capture of the throne of Delhi by the Khaljis established the power of Indian Muslims and non-Ilbari Turks in India and also settled the fact that the monopoly of power of the state was not the privilege of a particular group of people or that of a family.

The Khaljis brought about certain other changes also. The Turkish slave- rulers had failed to extend their empire even after nearly a century of struggle. From Aibak to Balban every ruler of Mamluk dynasty remained busy in consolidating the empire conquered by Muhammad of Ghur in India. None could extend its frontiers.

With the capture of the throne of Delhi by the Khaljis, the situation changed. The rule of the Khaljis marked the zenith of Muslim imperialism and Muslim power

in India during the period of the Delhi Sultanate. Ala-ud-din Khalji succeeded not only in extending the Muslim empire but also in breaking the power of resistance of the Hindus.

Besides, large scale changes were brought about in the administrative set-up and Indian Muslims were associated with it. Dr K.S. Lal writes- "It not only heralded the advent of a new dynasty; it ushered an era of ceaseless conquests, of unique experiments in statecraft, and of incomparable literary activity."

The accession of the Khaljis on the throne of Delhi is important from another point of view. Jalal-ud-din neither occupied the throne on the basis of heredity or election nor was it the result of a conspiracy. But he captured the throne by his power and the Khaljis kept their power simply by force. The Khaljis neither sought support of the Ulema nor that of the people. They did not ask for favour even from the nobility.

Therefore, they cared for nobody in administration and even did not seek the recognition of Khalifa for themselves. They proved that the state and its administration depended on the power of the Sultan alone who need not depend on anybody, not even on religion for support.

VII. ALA-UD-DIN KHALJI

Ala-ud-din occupies an important place among the rulers of medieval India. He became Sultan at the age of thirty years and within a period of fifteen years became the most powerful ruler of India. The success which Ala-ud-din achieved during his life-time was unique both regarding the extension of the empire and its administration. Dr K.S. Lal writes- "From nothingness, he rose to be one of the greatest rulers of medieval India."

As a person, Ala-ud-din was cruel and selfish. He was devoid of the instinct of love and observed no morality. His one aim of life was to achieve success and he was always prepared to adopt any means to

achieve it. Therefore, 'End justifies the means' remained his principle. He murdered his benefactor and uncle Jalal-ud-din, captured the throne and imprisoned and blinded all his sons.

He kept in good humour all the Jalali nobles till they were useful for him and as soon as their utility was over, he cruelly destroyed them all. He started the practice of killing the wives and children of those nobles who revolted against him.

He constructed towers of skulls of the Mongols and either killed their wives and children or sold them as slaves. He killed thousands of 'New Muslims' merely on suspicion and gave their wives and daughters to the murderers of their husbands and fathers. Thus, his punishment was barbaric.

Ala-ud-din neither loved his wives nor his children whose education and care he always neglected. Ala-ud-din possessed no virtue like generosity, kindness and toleration. Whomsoever he disliked, he destroyed. He was jealous and never permitted anybody to influence him and nobody dared to give him advice frankly except his friend, Kotwal Ala-ul-Mulk.

Ala-ud-din believed that power and authority could be maintained only by maintaining strict discipline, creating awe and fear among all by pursuing a policy of bloodshed and severe punishments. That is why V.A. Smith placed him among cruel and oppressive rulers.

He wrote- "In reality he (Ala-ud-din) was a particularly savage tyrant with very little regard for justice and his reign though marked by the conquest of Gujarat and many successful raids, like the storming of the two great fortresses, was exceedingly disgraceful in many respects."

However, Ala-ud-din was a brave soldier, a most capable military commander, a shrewd diplomat, a great conqueror, a successful administrator and a powerful and ambitious Sultan. His primary object

was to gain success and he achieved it in practically all fields although his life. Elphinstone wrote- "His reign was glorious, and, in spite of many absurd and oppressive measures he was, on the whole, a successful monarch and exhibited a just exercise of his powers."

Ala-ud-din proved himself a brave soldier and capable commander even during the life-time of his uncle, Jalal-ud-din by his successful campaigns of Bhilsa and Devagiri. His campaign of Devagiri has been regarded as a unique achievement in the history of military campaigns. It would be wrong to say that the success of military campaigns during his reign was due to his capable commanders like Zafar Khan, Nusrat Khan, Alp Khan, Ulugh Khan and Malik Kafur.

Of course, each of them was a capable commander but Ala-ud-din was superior to them. All of them accepted him as their leader and obeyed his command and where they failed he succeeded. All important campaigns in Rajasthan were led by Ala-ud-din. When Nusrat Khan and Ulugh Khan failed to conquer Ranthambhor, Ala-ud-din went there and captured it. The same way, Chittor was also conquered by Ala-ud-din himself. In 1299 A.D. when the Mongols reached Delhi with firm determination to fight the Sultan, Ala-ud-din decided to meet their challenge even against the advice of his friend, Al-ul-Mulk and, if the success of the battle of Kili was because of the chivalry of Zafar Khan, it was also due to determination and capable commandship of the Sultan. Thus. Ala-ud-din was a most capable and successful commander of his age.

Ala-ud-din was an imperialist. Dr A.L. Srivastava has regarded him as the first Turkish empire-builder in this country. He extended the frontiers of his empire as much as could be possible and where he did not annex the territory, he forced the rulers to accept his suzerainty.

The conquest of India by Ala-ud- din was a marvellous achievement particularly in view of the

fact that the Mongols were constantly attacking India at that time with a view to capture its territory. No Sultan of Delhi had achieved it prior to him.

Dr A.L. Srivastava writes- "Ala-ud-din successfully accomplished this two-fold task. This alone entitles this Khalji ruler to a place higher than that occupied by any of his predecessors in the thirteenth century. He may, therefore, rightly be called the first Turkish emperor of India."

Ala-ud-din conquered larger part of north India and, except one, forced all the rulers of south India to accept his suzerainty. No Turkish Sultan of Delhi could achieve it and the Mughals who followed them could achieve it after a hard and continuous struggle. Thus, the conquest of India by Ala-ud-din was his unique achievement.

Ala-ud-din was an all-powerful monarch. Despotism reached its highest mark during his reign. Ala-ud-din concentrated all powers of the state in his hands. His ministers, nobles, military commanders and administrative officers were all his subordinates. They simply obeyed his orders and carried out his wishes. Nobody even dared to advise him frankly except his friend, Ala-ul-Mulk. Ala- ud-din succeeded not only in suppressing all the revolts which were attempted during his reign and destroyed the power and influence of the nobility but even sapped up the resources of their power and influence.

Neither the provincial governors nor his subjects dared to revolt against him. Some revolts were attempted only during the beginning of his reign. Afterwards, we find no trace of them. The commands of Ala-ud-din were obeyed without murmur within the entire boundary of his empire. Besides, Ala-ud-din succeeded in providing complete security and peace to his subjects.

Ferishta wrote- "Justice was executed with such rigour that robbery and theft, formerly so common, were not heard of in the land. The traveller slept

secure on the highway and the merchant carried his commodities with safety from the sea of Bengal to the mountains of Kabul and from Telingana to Kashmir.” Ala-ud-din also did not allow the Muslim Ulema to interfere in the affairs of the state.

He was the first Sultan of Delhi who did not allow religion to interfere in administrative and political affairs. Of course, his policy towards the Hindus was oppressive but its primary cause was not religion but politics. He felt that the Hindus could not stop revolting against him unless their social and economic power was broken.

Ala-ud-din was a great administrator. He made certain innovations in administration. He was not advised by anybody in taking up these administrative reforms, whether civil or military. Of course, he used to consult his nobles from time to time but nobody was responsible for his administrative innovations.

His friend, Ala-ul-Mulk was the only individual who could advise him frankly but he had died by the time Ala-ud-din took up his new administrative measures. He organised a large and powerful army. He was the first Sultan of Delhi who kept a large standing army permanently at the Centre, started the practice of branding the horses and that of keeping Huliya of the soldiers.

He was again the first Sultan who introduced a system of measurement of land as a preliminary to fixing the State demand of the produce, got the revenue collected by government servants and abolished the privileges of hereditary revenue officers like the Chaudhries, the Muqaddams etc. As regards his market-system, it was a novelty which had no parallel before or after him throughout the medieval period of Indian history.

Besides, Ala-ud-din central-ized the entire administration and yet brought about efficiency and perfection in it. Reviewing the success of his administration, Dr K.S. Lal has concluded, “Ala-ud-

din stands head and shoulder above his predecessors or successors in the Sultanate.”

VIII. QUTB-UD-DIN MUBARAK KHALJI

Under the influence of Malik Kafur, Ala-ud-din had nominated his younger son Shihab-ud-din Umar as his successor. Shihab-ud-din was hardly five or six years of age. Kafur, therefore, became his regent and de facto ruler of the state.

He also married the mother of Shihab-ud-din in order to strengthen his position. Kafur imprisoned all sons of Ala-ud-din, sent Khizr Khan and Shadi Khan to the fort of Gwalior and blinded them there. Probably, he desired to kill them all and capture the throne for himself.

But Kafur could not enjoy power for more than thirty-five days. He had disrespected and imprisoned the entire family of the previous Sultan and afterwards, desired to destroy all those nobles who were suspected to be loyal to the previous ruling family. Therefore, those nobles became dissatisfied with Kafur. However, the events moved more quickly than anybody could imagine.

Kafur sent some foot soldiers to blind Mubarak Khan, the third son of Ala-ud-din. When those soldiers approached the prince, he bribed them with a jewelled necklace and also reminded them of their duty towards the royal family. Tempted by gold and moved by sentiments, the soldiers returned to the apartment of Kafur and killed him there and then. Thus, ended the de facto rule of Kafur just after thirty-five days.

Mubarak Khan then became the regent of Sultan Shihab-ud-din. Within two months he strengthened his position among the nobility, blinded Shihab-ud-din and sent him in imprisonment to the fort of Gwalior. He then declared himself Sultan Qutab-ud-din Mubarak Shah on 19 April 1316 A.D.

The soldiers and their commanders who had murdered Kafur tried to gain higher posts and interfered in administration. Mubarak Shah could not tolerate it. He managed to kill those officers while the soldiers were sent to different provinces after dividing them in small units. Barring this, the rule of Mubarak Shah began with liberalism.

On the day he ascended the throne, all oppressive laws of Ala-ud-din were revoked, nearly eighteen thousand prisoners were made free and all those who were turned out of capital were allowed to come back. Mubarak paid six months advance salary to his soldiers, enhanced the salaries and jagirs of his nobles, many people whose jagirs were taken over by the state were given back their jagirs, severe punishment was stopped, the administration and the working of the spy-system was relaxed and, though prohibition laws were not revoked, yet their implementation was stopped in practice.

These measures of Mubarak Shah, certainly, brought relief to the people and the nobility but they also resulted in soaring prices of commodities and inefficiency in administration. Besides, as Mubarak Shah himself was fond of pleasure the nobles and the subjects also followed his example which brought about all round corruption which weakened the state.

IX. NASIR-UD-DIN KHUSRAV SHAH

Khusrav Shah was a converted Muslim and he was supported by Hindu soldiers from Gujarat. It was his greatest fault. Though he was converted to Islam in his early childhood, exhibited religious zeal during his campaign of the South and assumed the title of the 'commander of the faithful,' yet his enemies declared him as an 'enemy of Islam' and declared that 'Islam was in danger' under his rule.

After his accession on the throne, he either killed or blinded the remaining sons of Ala-ud-din and also all those nobles who were loyal to the Khaljis. He married the widow (probably Deval Devi) of Mubarak

Shah and even succeeded in getting the moral support of saints like Nizamuddin Auliya. He also gained the favour of the rest of the nobles by assigning them high offices.

Yet, his position on the throne remained precarious. Those Turkish nobles who believed in the superiority of the Turkish race could not tolerate the accession of a Hindu convert on the throne of Delhi. Ghazi Malik Tughluq who was the governor of the north-west and Dipalpur took advantage of it.

He was an ambitious man and his son, Muhammad Jauna was one of the influential nobles at Delhi. He asked his son to join him at Dipalpur. Muhammad Jauna fled away from Delhi and joined his father. Ghazi Malik, then appealed to the governors of Uch, Multan, Sehwan and Jalor to rise in revolt against Khusrav. Only the governor of Uch responded favourably.

Then he instigated the people and junior officers to rise in the name of Islam. That paid him and officers and people in large number joined him. He, then, proceeded towards Delhi. Khusrav Shah faced him near Indraprastha outside Delhi.

Before the battle, Ain- ul-Mulk withdrew with his troops to Malwa. Yet, Khusrav fought valiantly. However, he was defeated and killed on 6 September 1320 A.D. On 7 September, Ghazi Malik entered the palace of Ala-ud-din and on 8 September declared himself Sultan of Delhi under the name of Ghiyas-ud-din Tughluq Shah.

Thus ended the rule of Khusrav within four and a half months. Khusrav was corrupt and disloyal. He had destroyed his master and his family. He also lacked the virtues of a king. Yet, the charge that he worked against Islam was baseless.

He lost the throne not because that he was against Islam which was simply a successful propaganda manipulated by Ghazi Malik and his son but because

Ghazi Malik was not only ambitious but also succeeded in getting support of the Turkish nobles and killed him in the battle.

X. GHIYAS-UD-DIN TUGHLAQ SHAH

Contemporary historians regarded Sultan Ghiyas-ud-din as an ideal Muslim ruler. The primary reason of their opinion is that he saved Islam in India from the invasions of the Mongols and, by finishing the rule of Khusrav Shah, re-established the glory of Islam. However, from this point of view Sultan Ghiyas-ud-din can be accepted only as the protector of Islam. But he possessed many other qualities.

As a person, Sultan led an ideal life. He was interested neither in wine nor in women. Like Ala-ud-din he tried for prohibition. He followed the principles of Islam honestly and respected religious men and saints. His policy towards the Hindus was not liberal, yet it was not that of oppression.

However, his success should be ascertained not on the basis of his character but on the basis of his achievements. Ghiyas-ud-din was a capable commander. He proved it before his accession to the throne and even after it. Under his capable leadership, the army of the Delhi Sultanate once more became effectively powerful and helped in the extension of the empire.

Ghiyas-ud-din conquered Bengal and a large part of south India and, thus, became the master of a more extensive empire than that of Ala-ud-din Khalji. He frankly pursued the policy of annexation and the territories which he conquered were brought under his direct rule. Ghiyas-ud-din was successful as an administrator as well. He followed a middle path in administration which combined firmness with fairness.

He established peace and order in the kingdom and thus saved it from the anarchy which prevailed after the death of Ala-ud-din. He rooted out corruption

from the administration, looked after the welfare of peasants, increased the area under cultivation, improved means of communication, transport and postal system, constructed bridges and canals, developed gardens, increased the wages of his civil servants so that they might remain free from petty temptations and restored the privileges and perquisites of his revenue officers. His measures proved successful.

It increased the material prosperity of his subjects and filled up the state treasury as well. The Sultan, thus, was not only an innovator in certain fields but was also a successful organiser of the power of the State. Ghiyas-ud-din by his success in administration and conquests restored the power and prestige of the Sultan as well as that of the Delhi Sultanate.

He had risen to the position of the Sultan from a humble position yet, like Balban, he did not feel the necessity of proving himself of pure Turkish blood. He neither claimed to be of pure Turkish blood nor depended on Turkish nobility for his power. The same way, though he was trained in the methods of Ala-ud-din, yet he refused to adopt cruelty and ruthlessness as the basis of his administration.

Ghiyas-ud-din had faith in his own capability and tried to find out capabilities among others and used them for the benefit of the state. Therefore, he neither felt the necessity of support of blue blood or that of cruelty. And, yet he was a successful ruler.

XI. CONCLUSION

Medieval period is an important period in the history of India because of the developments in the field of art and languages, culture and religion. Also the period has witnessed the impact of other religions on the Indian culture. Beginning of Medieval period is marked by the rise of the Rajput clan. This period is also referred to as Postclassical Era. Medieval period lasted from the 8th to the 18th century CE with early Medieval period from the 8th to the 13th century and

the late medieval period from the 13th to the 18th century. Early Medieval period witnessed wars among regional kingdoms from north and south India where as late medieval period saw the number of Muslim invasions by Mughals, Afghans and Turks. By the end of the fifteenth century European traders started doing trade and around mid-eighteenth century they became a political force in India marking the end of Medieval period. But some scholars believe that start of Mughal Empire is the end of Medieval period in India.

XII. REFERENCES

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