

THE KHALJI DYNASTY
(1290-1320)
PART-2

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ALAUDDINS'S CONQUEST(GUJRAT)

Alauddin had strong reasons for coveting Malwa and Gujarat. He sent an army early in 1299 under the command of his leading generals *Nasrat Khan and Ulagh Khan* to conquer Gujarat. Alauddin's army besieged Anhilwara, the capital of Raja Karan. The king Raja Karan and his daughter escaped and took shelter at Devagiri. All his woman and treasures including beautiful chief queen Kamala Devi were captured by the Turks.

The chief cities of Gujarat where many beautiful temples and buildings had been built over generations were sacked. The famous *temple of Somanath* which had been rebuilt in the twelfth century was also plundered and sacked.

ALAUDDINS'S CONQUEST(GUJRAT)

- ❖ The conquest of Gujarat had historical, economic and romantic importance.
- ❖ Historically the power of Sultan extended towards western India.
- ❖ Economically, enabled the Sultan to establish his authority over flourishing sea ports and also gained an outlet to the Arabian Sea.
- ❖ Alauddin very much attracted to the classical charm and the royal dignity of Kamaladevi the queen of Karnadeva. He married her with great pomp and even made her as his chief Queen.

ALAUDDINS'S CONQUEST(GUJRAT)

- ❖ Kafur, Hindu turned Muslim eunuch, was also taken to Delhi as captive, later he became the commander in chief of the Sultan's army and was the name and fame to Alauddin.

ALAUDDINS'S CONQUEST(RANATHAMBHOR)

The Rajput state of Ranathambhor became next target of attack. *Hamir Deva of Chauhan family* was the Rajput ruler of the state. The cause for attack was that the Rajput ruler gave shelter to some Mongol fugitives who had revolted during the Sultan's Gujarat campaign. Alauddin sent messages to Hamir Deva to kill or expel the Mongol nobles. But Hamir Deva, with a high sense of dignity and obligation to those who had sought refuge with him, sent haughty replies. Alauddin dispatched an army in 1301 A.D. commanded by Nusrat Khan and Ulugh Khan.

ALAUDDINS'S CONQUEST(RANATHAMBHOR)

Nusrat Khan was killed, finally, Alauddin himself had to march against Ranathambhor. The famous poet, Amir Khusrau, who went along with Alauddin, has given a graphic description of the fort and its investment. After three months of close siege, the fearful Jauhar (self immolation) ceremony took place to fight to the last. All the Mongols, too, died fighting with the Rajputs. The fort was captured through the treachery of Ranmal, the minister of Hamir Deva, who was won over by the Sultan with the promise of valuable presents and high office.

ALAUDDINS'S CONQUEST(RANATHAMBHOR)

Alauddin, after the conquest of Ranathambhor , ordered Ranmal and his followers to be put to death for having betrayed their own ruler and people.

ALAUDDINS'S CONQUEST(MEWAR)

The conquest of Ranathambhor was followed by the attack of Chittor, the capital of Mewar. Mewar was the most powerful state in Rajasthan. Its ruler was Ratan Singh. It is known from Malik Muhammed Jayasi's work, Padmavati, that the cause for the attack of Chittor was to acquire Padmini – the peerless queen of Ratan Singh. However, many modern historians do not accept this legend because it is mentioned for the first time more than a hundred years later. Alauddin himself marched against Chittor. The Rajputs fought valiantly, but finally the ruler, Raja Ratan Singh submitted. In 1303 Alauddin stormed the Chittor fort.

ALAUDDIN'S CONQUEST(MEWAR)

Alauddin occupied Mewar, but he could not possess Padmini. After the death of Ratan Singh in the battle field, his queen Padmini burnt herself along with the other Rajput ladies on the funeral pyre. Chittor was assigned to Alauddin's minor son, Khizr Khan and a Muslim garrison was posted in the fort. After some time, its charge was handed over to a cousin of Ratan Singh.

The conquest of Gujarat, Ranathambhor and Mewar literally broke the back of Rajput power and resistance in North India. Thus, the Sultan's army easily conquered Malwa. All the important cities of Malwa like Ujjain, Mandu, Dhar, Champaner etc., fell flat at the feet of the forces of the Sultan. After this, Alauddin also conquered Jalor, another Rajput state.

The lack of unity among the Rajputs and their failure to present a united front to check the armies of the Sultan were the most important causes for the defeat of the Rajputs. The Sultan got satisfied with establishing his overlordship over the Rajput chiefs, since he wished essentially to ensure communication between Delhi and Gujarat.

DECCAN AND SOUTH INDIAN EXPEDITION

Alauddin's *greatest achievement was the conquest of the Deccan and the far south*, which were ruled by three important Hindu dynasties. The Kakatiyas of Warangal, The Hoysalas of Dwarasamudra and The Pandyas of Madurai were the rulers of south India. There existed an atmosphere of animosity between these rulers. This lack of unity amongst the south Indian rulers was exploited by Alauddin Khalji to a very great extent. Alauddin did not annex their territories but forced them to pay annual tributes.

DECCAN AND SOUTH INDIAN EXPEDITION

The court poet of Alauddin, *Amir Khusrau*, made them the subject of his work. These campaigns reflected boldness, self confidence and high degree of a spirit of advance on the part of Delhi ruler.

- ❖ In 1302-1303 an army was sent against Prataparudradeva II of Warangal, who, however, succeeded in defeating the invaders.
- ❖ In 1306 – 1307 he sent Malik Kafur to chastise Raja Ramachandradeva of Devagiri for withholding tribute. After a feeble resistance Ramachandradeva surrendered and agreed to pay yearly tribute.

DECCAN AND SOUTH INDIAN EXPEDITION

- ❖ Again in 1309 Malik Kafur launched his campaign against Warangal, Prataparudradeva II, ultimately surrendered and an enormous booty was collected.
- ❖ Malik Kafur's next target was the Hoysala ruler Vira Ballala III. Raja Vira Ballal III was taken by surprise and agreed to become the Sultan's vassal. Here also vast quantities of booty were seized.
- ❖ Kafur next marched against the Pandyan kingdom. Its ruler Vira Pandya fled from the capital, enabling Kafur to seize immense booty and returned to Delhi.

DECCAN AND SOUTH INDIAN EXPEDITION

- ❖ Kafur was able to force the South Indian rulers to sue for peace, to surrender all their treasures, elephants and to promise to pay an annual tribute. Kafur was accorded a royal welcome and was made the Malik Naib.
- ❖ Alauddin's South Indian campaigns had some significant results. He was the first Sultan in the history of India to establish his sway over north India, Deccan and South India. It paved the way not only for the spread of Islam but also for the cultural diffusion from North to South and vice versa. It improved the transport and communication facilities from north India to south India. His campaigns also helped for the spread of Bhakti movement from south India to north India and Sufi movement from north India to South India.

ALAUDDIN'S THEORY OF KINGSHIP

- He was not only a great victorious general but also *an able and efficient genius*. He was the first Muslim ruler of India to make a *bold experiment in administration*. The reign of Alauddin marks the highest point of the Sultanate political power. Regarding the power of Sultan, his policy displayed an independent attitude which was unique among the rulers of Sultanate.
- ❖ In his conception of sovereignty, Alauddin departed from the ideas of his predecessors. He had the courage to challenge, for the first time in the history of the Delhi Sultanate, the pre-eminence of the Orthodox in matters of State and *declare that he could act without the guidance of the Ulemas*.

ALAUDDIN'S THEORY OF KINGSHIP

- ❖ Thus, Alauddin *separated politics from religion and vice versa*. This does not mean he disregarded Islam. Alauddin did not consider it necessary to get the sanction of Khalifa to add to his authority and no wonder he did not apply for an investiture from the Khalifa. This shows that *he did not recognize Khalifa as his temporal and spiritual head*.
- ❖ He revived Balban's theory of divine rights of kingship and declared himself to be the Zili Ilahi – the Shadow of God on Earth. Alauddin's theory of kingship revolves round the dictum that the *“kingship knows no kinship”*.

ALAUDDIN'S THEORY OF KINGSHIP

- ❖ Alauddin himself said “I do not know whether this is lawful or unlawful, whatever of thought to be for the good of the State, or suitable for the emergency, that I decree” Alauddin cared only for loyalty and efficiency at the time of offering a responsible post to a person. He neither bothered about the race or the genealogy of the person. He also paid salaries to the officers in cash, but not land assignments. He maintained a centralized administration.
- ❖ He framed a series of regulation to prevent the nobles from conspiring against him. They were forbidden to hold banquets or festivities or to form marriage alliances without the permission of the Sultan.

ALAUDDIN'S THEORY OF KINGSHIP

- ❖ To discourage festive occasions, he banned the consumption of wines and intoxicants. By these harsh methods, Alauddin cowed down the nobles and made them completely subservient to the crown. No further rebellions took place during his life time. But, in the long run, his methods proved harmful to the dynasty.(To be continued)