

**ILTUTMISH (PART-3)  
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## ILTUTMISH (1211-1236)

### **The Doab:**

There were a number of rulers in Doab , who were defeated by Iltutmish. Badaun Kanauj, Banaras, and Katehar (Rohilkhand) etc. asserted their independence in the time of Iltutmish. However, as soon as Iltutmish was able to re establish his authority, he took action against them, one by one. Badaun, Kanauj, Banaras were recaptured. The same was the case with Katehar. Expedition were sent against Chandwar and Tirhut.

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## **Mongol Invasion:**

A dreadful danger threatened India during the period of Iltutmish . Chengiz Khan, the dreaded leader of the Mongols, advanced as far as the Indus in pursuit of Jalal-ud-din, the fugitive prince of Khwarizm or Khiva, who sought refuge at the court of Delhi. Iltutmish refused to comply with the request of his unwelcome guest and so Jalal-ud-din after plundering Sind and Gujarat fled to Persia. There upon Chengiz retired, and India was spared the horrors of Mongal invasion (1221).

The last expedition of Iltutmish was directed against Bamian.

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This was situated in the hill tracts of the Sindh-Sagar Doab or in the country immediately west of the salt range. Iltutmish was attacked on the way by such a severe illness that he had to be carried back to Delhi in a litter. The disease proved fatal and he died on 29 April, 1236.

### **Internal Development:**

The famous Qutub Minar near Mehrauli in Delhi was got completed by Iltutmish in the year 1231-32. It stands as a testimony to the greatness of Iltutmish. The Qutub Minar was not named after Qutub-ud-din Aibak but after sufi saint Khwaja Qutub-ud-din Bakhtiyar Kaki who was held

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In great esteem by Iltutmish and others. Out of gratitude Iltutmish got the names of his patrons Qutub-ud-din Aibak and Sultan Muiz-ud-din, inscribed on it. A magnificent mosque was also built by the orders of the Sultan. The reign of Iltutmish saw the decline of Lahore and the rise of Delhi. Delhi gradually became the greatest centre of learning and culture in the East. Great scholars like Nur-ud-din Mohammad Afi, Minhaj-us-siraj and Hasan Nizami were assembled in his court. Likewise, many saints, artists and artisans also flocked to Delhi. The result was that Delhi became “Second Baghdad.”

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The Delhi Sultanate owes the outlines of its administrative system to Iltutmish. He organized the revenue and finance Department. This was a task which had not been attempted by any other Muslim in India before him. As administrative structure could not be built without the support of the Turkish nobility and that could be done either by fear or through favour. The first was out of the question as the Muslim state in India was in its infancy and there was also the danger of Mongol invasion and opposition from the Hindus. No wonder, Iltutmish tackled the problem in a spirit of reconciliation and compromise. He divided the empire into several *Iqtas*. Which were assigned to various nobles

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Every *Iqtadar* had to maintain law and order and collect revenue. After deducting his salary and the expenses of the Government, he sent the surplus revenue to the Central Government. The Iqtadars were not the owners of the land allotted to them. They were mere functionaries. They could be transferred from one assignment to another and could even be deprived of their Iqtas at the will of the Emperor. It is true that the Iqtadari system was not an Ideal one but it suited the needs of the moment. The system also satisfied the vanity of the nobles and they could be prevented from frittering away their energy in mutual fights or in opposing the Emperor. In order to check the tendency on the part of

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the nobles to become too powerful, Iltutmish set up an official nobility of slaves known as the *Chahalgani* or the Corps of Forty. As the members of the Chahalgani were the personal slaves of the emperor, the latter could depend on their loyalty and allegiance and through them could keep a grip over the affairs of the governments. Thus Iltutmish created a sort of political unity and a centralized government which guaranteed protection to the people both from foreign invasion and internal disturbances.

Iltutmish inscribed upon his coins proud legend. “The Mighty Sultan, sun of the Empire and the Faith. Conquest laden Iltutmish” and “Aid of the commander of the faithful”. Before



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Iltutmish, the Muslim rulers issued small bullion coins of the native form and inscribed their names sometimes in Nagari script and sometimes in Arabic. Those coins also bore symbols familiar to the Hindus, such as the bell of Shiva and the horseman. **Iltutmish was the first who introduced purely Arabic coinage.** He adopted as his standard coin the silver tanka, the ancestor of the rupee, weighing 175 grains. Gold tankas of the same weights were introduced later on by Balban. Iltutmish was a pious Muslim. He was very particular about his five daily prayers. However, he was intolerant towards Shias. No wonder, the Ismaili-Shias revolted against him but their revolt was crushed. A large number of them

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were put to death. His treatment of the Hindus was also not enlightened. He continued to persecute them. Iltutmish was not a constructive statesman. However, through his courage and bravery, he was able to save the infant Muslim empire in India.

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## Assessment

Iltutmish was undoubtedly the real founder of Slave dynasty. By receiving title “*Aide of commander of Faith*” from Caliph of Baghdad, he elevated the authority of the Sultanate considerably. Yet, it would be too much of an exaggeration to call him the greatest of the slave king as Dr. Kalikinkar Datt has done. Balban deserves the title more than Iltutmish.

(Concluded)