

TURKISH RULE IN INDIA :SHAMSHUDDIN ILTUTMISH (PART-1)

भारत में तुर्की शासन

(UG , SEM-4, PAPER MJC-7)

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SHAMSHUDDIN ILTUTMISH

- **Shamsuddin Iltutmish (1211-1236)**

On the death of Aibak, the Turkish faction at Lahore supported Aibak's son Aram Shah (there is a good deal of controversy whether he was actually the son of Qutubuddin Aibak or not) while the nobles at Delhi, led by Ismail, who occupied the post of *amir-i-dad* (an important functionary of judicial department), invited Iltutmish to ascend the throne. At that time Iltutmish was the governor of Badaun. He marched towards Delhi.

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But before entering the capital he met the army of Aram Shah. He easily defeated Aram Shah, whose rule lasted only for about eight months (1210-1211) and was of no significance.

• **Early Life and Career of Iltutmish**

Shamshuddin Iltutmish was born of Turkish parents of the Ilbari tribe of Central Asia. He was handsome and intelligent and his father loved him very much. He excited the jealousy of his half-brothers, who deceitfully sold him to a slave-trader while he was yet a child.

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After passing through many hands, Iltutmish was finally purchased by Qutbuddin Aibak. Iltutmish proved his worth and rose to higher positions by his own merit. He got promotions one after another till he became *amir-i-shikar* (the master of the hunt). Then he was sent as in-charge of the fort of Gwalior. After that he got the governorship of the iqtas (provinces) of Gwalior and Baran (Bulandshahar). He was married to the daughter of Qutubuddin and, finally, appointed as governor of the iqta of Badaun.

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While fighting against the Khokhars in 1205-06, Muhammad Ghori was deeply impressed with his valor that he advised Aibak to free him from slavery which was subsequently done. After the death of Aibak, the citizens of Delhi felt that the infant Turkish Empire in India required the services of a capable ruler than that of incompetent and unpopular Aram Shah. Therefore, Sipahsalar Amir Ali took the consent of the citizens and Turkish nobles of Delhi and invited Iltutmish to come to Delhi. Iltutmish assumed the reign of government, defeated Aram Shah and, thus, became the ruler of Delhi in 1211.

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- **Real Founder of the Delhi Sultanate**

Iltutmish was the real founder of the Delhi Sultanate. He made Delhi his capital instead of Lahore and proved to be a very strong and capable ruler who enjoyed a long reign of 26 years. He strengthened the foundations of the infant Turkish state in Northern India by saving it from internal forces of disintegration and external dangers. The centre of political significance shifted from Kannauj to Delhi in 1211, which came to occupy a premier position as the capital of India. Delhi continued to enjoy this privileged status throughout the medieval period for over 500 years.

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- **Difficulties and Achievements of Iltutmish**

(i) Rival Turkish Nobles- The throne of Delhi was not a 'bed of roses' for Iltutmish. The death of Aibak had plunged the Delhi Sultanate into confusion. The weak, and also brief rule of Aram Shah had stimulated the disruptive and rebellious tendencies among the Turkish nobles; it endangered the disintegration of the newly-founded Turkish state in India. In spite of his victory over Aram Shah and the popular support of the Turkish nobles of Delhi, Iltutmish's accession to the throne did not go unopposed.

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The governor of Uchh (Sind) and Multan, Nasiruddin Qubacha, captured Lahore, Bhatinda and even Sursuti as well and declared his independence. Ali Mardan Khalji, who had succeeded to the governorship of Bihar and Bengal on the death of Bhakhtiyar Khalji in 1206, also stopped sending the tribute to Delhi. Tajuddin Yaldoz (the father-in-law of Qutubuddin Aibak), now the sultan of Ghazni, attempted to assert his political dominance over Iltutmish by sending him the *chhatr* (royal canopy) and a *durbash* (baton) at the time of his accession to the throne.

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As a shrewd diplomat, Iltutmish accepted them and, thus, pretended to recognize his suzerainty but he never permitted Yaloz to encroach upon his Indian possessions.

- **(ii) Defeat of Tajuddin Yaloz (1215-16)** - Yaloz claimed overlordship over Iltutmish and asked him to send military help. Iltutmish marched against him to settle his score finally with him. Between 1215 and 1216, Iltutmish gave a crushing defeat to Yaloz in an open battle at Tarain and imprisoned him.

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He was first sent to Badaun and killed later on. Iltutmish's gain was two-fold. One was that he had killed the most dangerous rival to his power and, the other, was that it led to the final break with Ghazni. Hence onwards, Delhi Sultanate became an independent state in fact if not legally so far.

(To be continued)