

### **Ilutmish (1211 - 1236 AD)**

Ilutmish was the first Muslim ruler to rule from Delhi and that's why he was regarded as the effective founder of the Delhi Sultanate. He was also the first Sultan of India to be recognised by the Khalifa. He was successful in protecting Delhi's throne from Mongol invasion as well as Yeldoos and Qubacha attacks. He shattered the Rajput powers in the north and established his dominance over them. He made his rule hereditary, issued coins in his honour, and made Delhi a beautiful capital. He was a patron of art and architecture and built numerous mosques in Delhi.

#### **Ilutmish (1211 - 1236 AD) - Background**

Ilutmish was a slave of the Sultan of Delhi, Qutubuddin Aibek. His father was a high-ranking noble of the Turkish Ilbari tribe. He was eventually purchased at a phenomenal price by Qutubuddin Aibek in Delhi. Ilutmish received a good education and a broad knowledge of the Islamic world during the early days of his hardship. That is why, within a decade, he rose to become amir-e-shikar and son-in-law of his master. Soon, he became governor of the iqta of Gwalior and Baran (Bulandshahar). In 1206, he was one of Aibek's most dependable lieutenants, commanding Badaun. The Turkish nobility of Delhi did not support Aram Shah's hereditary succession as he was an inept and unpopular ruler. They invited Ilutmish of Badaun to succeed them as Sultan. Aram Shah refused to abdicate but was defeated and dethroned in 1211 by Ilutmish.

#### **Achievements and Expansion of Empire**

##### **Defeat of Yildiz**

Taj al-Din Yildiz, a former slave who claimed to be the rightful successor to the Ghurid emperor, ruled the Ghurid capital of Ghazni. Yildiz declared to Ilutmish that he was the true successor of Mu'izz ad-Din and thus had claims to the former Ghurid territories in India. Ilutmish offered to negotiate if both men arrived at the meeting unaccompanied by warriors. Yildiz refused the offer, resulting in a battle at Tarain on January 25, 1216, which Ilutmish won. Yildiz was later taken to Ilutmish's stronghold of Badaun and murdered. The success of Ilutmish in this conflict bolstered the Delhi Sultanate's independence.

##### **Defeat of Qabacha**

Qabacha was another serious threat to Ilutmish rule. However, his power had been reduced by the simultaneous attacks of Yeldoos and Mangabarni. Taking the advantage of his situation, Ilutmish decided to launch an all-out assault on Qabacha. He dispatched two armies, one from Lahore to attack Multan and the other from Delhi to invade Uch. During the capture of Uch, Qabacha sought refuge in the fort of Bhakkar, which was besieged by the Delhi Army. Finally, with no other options, he committed suicide by drowning in the Indus River. As a result, Sind and Multan were absorbed into the Delhi Sultanate's empire.

### **Annexation of Bihar and Bengal**

During the reign of Qutb-ud-din Aibak, province Bengal was under the authority of the Delhi Sultan. However, after the death of Aibak, Bengal declared independence. Iltutmish, on the other hand, was preoccupied with the western frontier provinces and had no time to devote to Bengal. Soon after the death of Qabacha, he considered invading Bengal and sent an expedition to Bengal. Sultan Ghiyasuddin was the ruler of Bengal at the time. Sultan Ghiyasuddin submitted without a fight, acknowledged Delhi's suzerainty, and agreed to pay the annual tribute. But, within a short time, Ghiyasuddin revolted once more and declared Bengal independent. Iltutmish sent another expedition and killed Sultan Ghiyasuddin and made Nasiruddin Mahmud as governor of Bengal. Following Nasiruddin's departure, there was another rebellion in Bengal led by Malik Balkha Khalji. In 1230 AD, Iltutmish personally went to Bengal and killed Malik Balkha Khalji, and annexed Bengal to the Delhi Empire.

### **Other Conquests of Iltutmish**

- Iltutmish re-annexed many states which declared independence after the death of Aibak such as Ranthambore, Gwalior, Ajmer, Bayana, Jalor, Mander Kalinjar, Thangir.
- In 1231 AD, **Kanauj and Benaras** were reoccupied.
- He annexed **Malwa and Ujjain** to his empire in 1239 A.D.
- As a result, Iltutmish expanded the Turkish empire in India to the size it was during Aibak's reign.

### **Architecture During Iltutmish's Reign**

- Iltutmish was a patron of art and architecture and built numerous mosques, waterworks and civic amenities in Delhi.
- He finished the **Qutb Minar**, which **Qutb al-din Aibak** had begun.
- He also built the **Hauz-i-Shamsi** reservoir south of Qutub Minar, as well as the madrasa (school) that surrounds it.
- He constructed several **khanqah (monasteries) and dargahs (graveyards)** for Sufi saints.
- He began construction on **Hamid ud-din's Khanaqa** and built the **Gandhak ki Baoli**, a stepwell for the Sufi saint **Qutbuddin Bakhtiar Kaki**, who moved to Delhi during his reign.
- In 1231, he erected the **Sultan Ghari** funerary monument in memory of his eldest son Nasiruddin, who died two years earlier.

### **Death of Iltutmish**

As a result of continuous military operations, Iltutmish became ill in 1235 AD. During his last expedition against **Bayana**, he became ill and was immediately brought to Delhi for treatment.

But he could not recover from such illness, and after a year of struggling with life, he breathed his last in 1236. He was laid to rest in **Mehrauli's Qutub complex**. With his death, the country lost a great ruler, and the long twenty-five-year glorious reign of the Delhi Sultanate came to an end.

### **Conclusion**

Iltutmish established the Turks' absolute kingship in northern India. He was a military dictator similar to Aibek, but with the difference that all power was concentrated in his own hands. He personally appointed all central ministers and regional military governors. He forbade the Turkish nobility from interfering in state affairs beyond certain limits. He completed the Qutub Minar and rejoiced in his association with the sufi saints of the time. During his last expedition against Bayana, he became ill and after a year of struggle with life, he breathed his last in 1236.

### **Suggested Readings:**

1. Mukherjee, L., A Study of India (Medieval Period), M. L. Mukherjee Publishers, Kolkata
2. Sharma, L. P. (2010), History of Medieval India 1000-1740 AD, Konark Publishers, New Delhi