

Ghazi Malik's Rise as Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq: Foundation of the Tughlaq Dynasty"

-Bhupinder Singh

Assistant Professor in History

SGGS College Sec-26 Chandigarh

The early fourteenth century was a period of transition in the history of the Delhi Sultanate. The decline of the Khalji dynasty after the death of Alauddin Khalji in 1316 plunged the Sultanate into political instability. In this context, Ghazi Malik, a frontier commander of humble origins, rose to prominence. He eventually became Sultan Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq (r. 1320–1325), the founder of the Tughlaq dynasty. His rise symbolized both the resilience of military leadership and the reassertion of Turkish-Afghan authority.

This is my humble attempt to trace the Journey of Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq, Founder of Tughlaq dynasty, from nomadic life to Sultan of Delhi Sultanate.

Origin

According to Literary, numismatic and epigraphic evidences Tughluq was the personal name of the dynasty's founder. Though historians use "Tughluq" to describe the entire dynasty. but the dynasty's sultans did not use "Tughluq" as a surname: only Ghiyasuddin's son Muhammad bin Tughluq called himself the "son of Tughluq Shah" ("bin Tughluq").

The Moroccan traveller Ibn Battuta states that Tughluq belonged to the "Qarauna tribe of the Turks", who lived in the hilly region between Turkestan and Sindh. The historian Ferishta, based on inquiries at Lahore, wrote that Tughluq's father was a Turkish slave of Balban and his mother was daughter of local jat chieftain. Marco Polo considered them people of mixed parentage, whose fathers were Tatars and mothers were Indians. So it may be concluded that both India, Central Asia and Persia the term 'Qarauna' was used for a mixed race descendants of Mongol or Turkish Fathers and non-Turkish mothers

Early career

Ghazi Malik's early life is described differently by chroniclers. Some accounts claim he was the son of a Turkish slave and a Jat mother, which reflects the socially mixed character of Sultanate nobility.

Amir Khusrau ,court poet of Tughlaq, mentioned in *Tughluq Nama* that Tughluq described himself frankly as a man of no importance("awara mard"). Afif has stated that three brothers, Tughluq, Rajab, and Abu Bakr, arrived from Khurasan in Delhi during the reign of Alauddin Khalji. They impressed the Sultan with their loyal services to such an extent that Tughluq (Ghazi Malik) was given the administration of the famous city of Dipalpur.

He began his career as a house keeper and, after serving in the infantry and cavalry, acquired the office of the master of horses (amir ul-Khail) and thus entered the class of high nobles (umara-i kibar). Subsequently he was patronized by the Sultan's brother Ulugh Khan, who honoured for his bravery in the attack on Ranthambhore. He was made governor of Dipalpur and its dependencies on the accession of Qutbuddin Mubarak Shah Khalji and, in due course, he acquired the title of Malik ul-Ghazi for defeating the Mongols in twenty-nine battles.

The appointment of Ghazi Malik as the governor of Dipalpur marked the beginning of a process that transformed political and social life in Panjab. The Delhi Sultanate politically acquired stability and maturity. Internal conflict among the ruling class was considerably reduced. A vigorous military offensive against the Mongols rendered the north-western frontier safe from invasions. The old tradition of slave commanders who were guarded the frontier provinces among them some ambitious military commanders gathered large entourage and built impressive local reputations as warriors and patrons. Though they remained distant from the court conspiracies at Delhi, they possessed sufficient assets and initiative to seize power in the capital and establish their own dynasties. All the dynasties from 1290 to 1526 -Khilji, Tughluq, Syed and Lodi -had emerged from frontier region.

The death of Alauddin Khalji in 1316 unleashed a struggle for succession. Malik Kafur initially seized power but was soon removed. Alauddin's son, Qutbuddin Mubarak Shah, ascended the throne but his weak rule opened the way for ambitious nobles. Khusro Khan, a Hindu convert, usurped the throne in 1320 after murdering Mubarak Shah. His reign alienated the Turkish nobility and created an opportunity for Ghazi Malik. Ghazi Malik as an administrator of Dipalpur now looked for support among rural intermediaries, tribal chiefs, and prominent Sufis. The mixed parentage of the Tughluqs appeared to have paved the way for several other linkages of Ghazi Malik - the marriage of his brother Sipahsalar Rajab with the daughter of Rana Mal Bhatti of Abohar, his political alliance with the Khokhar chiefs of the Salt Range and his association with the shrine of Baba Farid at Pakhpatan.

Modern historians have attempted to understand the circumstances and implications of the above conjugal union. He has cited the examples of the marriages of four Muslim rulers (Muhammad bin Qasim, Sultan Muizzuddin of Ghor, Alauddin Khalji and his son Khizr Khan) with the women of Hindu ruling houses. He argued that the idea underlying this marriage was to overcome difficulties faced by a Muslim governor in securing the cooperation of the Hindus.

After the death of Alauddin struggle for power started among rival groups. Malik Kafur to aspire for kinship after his master's death and installed his younger son Shahab-ud-din Omar on the throne and himself became his regent. Then he started a systematic policy of eliminating other claimants to throne and got Khizr Khan and Shadi Khan the sons of Ala-ud-din blinded and even prepared a plan to execute third son Mubarak Shah, but he escaped and Malik Kafur got killed. After two months Mubarak Shah dethroned Shahabuddin and became Sultan. he abandoned the harsh regulations enacted by his father that resulted in over-all degeneration of the political authority and revolts took place in Devagiri, Marwar and Gujarat. Those successfully suppressed. Then he made Khusro Shah his Prime Minister who hatched a conspiracy and killed Mubarak Shah and ascended the throne Nasiruddin Khusro Shah. New Sultan decided to retain most of the old officers and nobles of Mubarak Shah. But some Turkish nobles were opposed him began to intrigue for his overthrow. In this regard Ghazi Malik, the Governor of Dipalpur & Lahore played a leading role and won over a number of nobles to his side. Now Ghazi Malik was organizing a movement against Khusrau Shah. When he marched from Dipalpur to fight against Khusrau Shah, his army comprised of three elements kinsmen, the Khokhars and non-indigenous tribesmen. Khokhars in the army of Ghazi Malik played a crucial role in the Dipalpur-Delhi military conflict.

The dependence of Ghazi Malik on the above elements increased when he failed to get the support of fellow officers in whom he had sent letters seeking assistance like the governors of Uch, Multan, Samana, Sind and Jalor. Except Bahram Aiba of Uch, all the governors refused and showed an inclination to oppose him. The governor of Samana, sent Ghazi Malik's letter to Khusrau Shah and marched against Ghazi Malik but was defeated in the battlefield, went back to Samana and killed by some irate local people. Ain ul-Mulk Multani the governor of Malwa, to prove his loyalty to the new ruler showed Ghazi Malik's letter to Khosrow Khan. The attitude of the provincial governors indicated that they were not willing to challenge the new regime in Delhi.

Battle of Sarsuti

While Ghazi Malik marched from Dipalpur, he learnt that a caravan carrying the revenues of Sind and numerous horses for the Sultan of Delhi was travelling from Multan to Delhi. Ghazi Malik plundered the caravan and distributed the booty among his soldiers. Ghazi malik established his control over the territory extending up to Sarsuti. When Fakhruddin Jauna (Mohd. Tuglaq) left the Khosrow khan and joined Ghazi malik, the Sultan felt that one of pillar of his throne had broken. So he sent an army of fourty thousand horsemen under his brother Khan-i-khana against Ghazi malik. The army bypassed the fort sirsa, which was placed under Ghazi malik trusted lieutenant Mahmud. Ghazi Malik, advancing via Alapur, reached tank of Bhat. Meanwhile Khan-i Khanan crossed a jungle during the night and suddenly appeared before the opposing troops. In the plain of Sarsuti, Ghazi Malik took position in the centre of his army. The Khokhars, who were led by Gul Chand, formed the vanguard. Bahram commanded the left wing while Asaduddin held the right wing. The Khokhars attacked the captain (Malik Qutlugh) of the rival vanguard and, pulling him down from his horse, cut off his head. As the Delhi army began to flee, Gul Chand charged at the Khan-i Khana and, killing his parasol(royal umbrella) bearer, sent his head to Ghazi Malik then he snatched the royal umbrella and raised it over the head of Ghazi Malik. Thus, Ghazi Malik received his first symbol of royalty from the hands of a Khokhar chief. As a result, Ghazi Malik annexed the territory up to Hansi.

Battle of Lahrawat

As he marched to Delhi, he passed through Madina(a village near Rohtak), Mandoti, and Palam(Presnt International Airport), the hillocks of kosambar and camped at the plain of Lahrawat between the Jamuna and the City of Delhi. The reports of Ghazi Malik's march and the flight of the vanquished from Sarsuti to Delhi caused a breakdown of administrative order. The areas around the capital were subjected to chaos and plunder. Khusrau Khan consulted his close advisors on the future course of action. Some nobles asked him to make peace with Ghazi Malik by offering him the territory north of Hansi that was, in fact, already in his control. Others urged him to act like a king and fight, Thus, Khusrau Khan encamped his forces at Hauz Khas for resistance. His retinue comprised such prominent men as Yusuf Khan Sufi, Kamaluddin Sufi, Shaista Khan, Kafur Muhardar, Shihab and Bahauddin. Besides the Khan-i Khanan, Rai Rayan Randhol and Hatim Khan, there were officers who had risen from slavery to nobility. A strong contingent of 10,000 Baradus came out with distinctive banners under Randhol rai Narayan, Nag, Kajb, brahma and Maladeva. The army comprises half of the Hindu soldiers and the other half of Muslim soldiers.

The second decisive battle between the contenders was fought in Delhi near the plains of Lahrawat. In the battlefield, Ghazi Malik placed himself in the centre, while in front of him stood Ali Haidar and Sahij Rai. Gul Chand led the vanguard along with all the Khokhars. Asaduddin, the nephew of Ghazi Malik, commanded the right wing along with Shadi, Malik Fakhruddin. while Bahauddin the sister's son of Ghazi Malik, was stationed on the left wing with Bahram Aiba. Initially the Delhi army secured the upper hand, as Qabula fired a volley of arrows and a fierce Baradu charge forced two captains, Malik Fakhruddin and Shihab Jashghuri, to withdraw. Though Asaduddin overpowered Bughra Khan, the Delhi army still appeared to be moving towards victory. Shaista Khan rushed towards Ghazi Malik's camp, cut down the ropes of his pavillon and shouted that the challenger fled back to his territory. Then the soldiers of the khusrow start to plundering the rival camp. Ghazi Malik took this golden opportunity and rallied his leading men - Gul Chand, Bahram Aiba and Bahauddin - to the centre and resorted to a new tactic. A contingent of one hundred warriors, headed by Gul Chand, was deputed to attack the rear of the Khusrow khan. Ghazi Malik made a sharp assault from the front and, thus, change fate of battle. Khusrau Khan chose to flee from there, seeing their sultan nowhere, army also left the battlefield. Gul Chand pursued the fugitives and, while doing so, repeated the act he had performed at Sarsuti. He caught up with the rival parasol bearer (Royal Umbrella bearer) and slashed his head from behind and seized the parasol and presented it to Ghazi Malik. The victors acquired the keys of two forts from Mohd. Ayaz, the police chief (kotwal) of Delhi. Thus the Khokhar chiefs and their retinue played a decisive role in Ghazi Malik's campaign against Khusrau Khan and the establishment of the Tughluq dynasty at Delhi. The nobles acted wisely in placing the crown on the head of Ghazi Malik, who had proved his worth as a leader of mature experience and dauntless courage. Ghazi Malik ascended the throne under the title Ghias-ud-din Tughlaq and laid the foundation of Tughlaq dynasty.

Reference Readings:-

1. Habib, Mohammad and Nizami, Khaliq Ahmad: **A Comprehensive History of India**, People Publishing House.
2. Rizvi, S.A.A : **The Wonder that was India part II**, Rupa & Co.
3. Chandra, Satish : **History of Medieval India** , Orient Black Swan.
4. Moreland, W.H. : **The Agrarian system of Moselm India**, New Delhi; Oriental books reprint Corporation, 2nd edn., 1968

5. Rashid, A: **Society and culture in Medieval India (1206-1556)**, Calcutta: Firma 1969.
6. Naqvi, H.K: **Agricultural, Industrial and Urban Dynamism under the Sultans of Delhi (1206-1555)**, Delhi, 1986.
7. Nizami, Khaliq Ahmad :(ed.) **Politics and Society during early Medieval Period**, Delhi ,1974.
8. Siddiqui, Iqtidar Hussain: **Composite Culture Under the Sultanate of Delhi**, Primus, 2012.
9. Jackson, Peter :**The Delhi Sultanate: A Political and Military History**, Cambridge University Press, 1999.
10. Prasad, Ishwari: **History of the Qaraunah Turks in India, vol. I**, Allahabad: Central Book Depot ,1974.