

Ghiyasuddin Balban

Balban was one of the most efficient slaves of Iltutmish. He was sold as a slave by the Mongols and in the year 1232 AD Iltutmish purchased Balban and being impressed by his abilities Balban was appointed as Khassadar. Balban also enjoyed the position of Amir-i-shikar during the time of Razia and he was given the zagir of rewari and hansa by the later sultans. During the reign of Nasiruddin Mahmud, who was made Sultan by Balban in return of which the position of Amir-i-Hajib and Naib-i-mamlakat was given to Balba. He was also given royal canopy by the sultan which indicated the power of Balban during the time of Nasiruddin.

Balban as the King

Early problems of Balban

- 1) The first and the most important problem which Balban faced was regarding the future relationship of the nobles and the king. Balban wanted to gain confidence of the nobles either by making them his friend or suppressing them completely because for Balban it was necessary to tell the Amirs that there was no question of competition or rivalry between the king and the nobles. For this he made certain changes in the administration like the introduction of Divine theory of Kingship and destruction of the team of forty.
- 2) The second problem was how to bring back law and order in the sultanate because all these year before Balban, anarchy and misgovernment prevailed everywhere and Balban knew that he needed a properly organized military and police force to maintain law and order. There were mainly four areas of problem and they were ;
 - (i) The area near Delhi
 - (ii) The doab area
 - (iii) The trade routes especially one to Awadh
 - (iv) Rebellions of Rohilkhand

Achievements of Balban

1) Suppressions of the rebellions by the introduction of Blood and Iron theory

When Balban ascended the throne of Delhi many revolts and problems were going around in the city of Delhi. The city of Delhi and its neighbouring areas were disturbed by the Mewatis/Meos. Apart from it the Ganga-Yamuna doab and Awadh area were infected by the robbers that the communication with the eastern areas had become difficult. Balban spent a whole year in suppressing the meos. He cut down the forest areas around Delhi so that the hiding place of the meos could be destroyed and after that Meos were killed in large number . After that a fort was constructed in that area.

The area of doab was controlled by giving quashbas and territories to iqtedar . Balban ordered killing of all the men who did not follow his order at village. The iqtedar were also allowed to make any kind of decision regarding the administration of their particular area.

For the safety of trade route of Awadh, Balban undertook campaigns. He went out to Delhi and stayed at the places which were famous trade route for 5 to 6 months. Balban constructed forts over these places and fortification of forts were also done. Afghani soldiers were employed in these forts.

Next Balban marched with his army to rebellious territories of Katehar and he with his army killed all the rebellions in that region. Similar expedition was carried on by Balban in the Jud hill areas where he suppressed the rebellions by killing them on a mass level. Balban not even spared the children and the women

2) Adaption of the policy of consolidation

After his policy of blood and iron, Balban devoted all his time in consolidating the administration not only against Rajputs but Mongols also because Mongol invasion had become a daily routine after the death of Iltutmish. So, Balban devoted quite a time for the fortification of north-west frontier of India.

3) Balban's theory of kingship

Balban was perhaps the only sultan who was very vocal about his idea of kingship. He called himself the representator of god on earth. He also took

the title "Zillullah" (shadow of god). Kingship is the vice-regency of god on earth i.e Niyabat-i-khudai .

The actual implication of this concept was that the source of a king's power lie not within the nobles or common people but with god only and consequently his action could not be the subject of public scrutiny. This was a religious device used by Balbanto establish his despotic rule.

Balban throughout his rule maintained a great distance from the common masses. He gave up public drinking. He never appeared in the court without the full regalia. Balban never used to laugh or smile in public. He used to celebrate Persian festival in his court on Iranian model. All ministers has to perform 'Sijda" and "Paibos" . He adopted all these methods to fill the mind of ordinary people with a sense of wonder.

4) Establishment of administration of justice or the organization of Spy system

The efficient administrative system of Balban depended on Diwan-i-barid or the spy department. He also appointed secret newswriter all over the province. Balban used to give them a very good salary and made them free from the influence of the officers.

5) Destruction of the team of forty

Balban realized that one of the greatest hurdle in the way of his absolute despotism was the presence of Turkish noble class at the head of which stood a selected body known as the Forty. In order to make the position of crown safe for himself and for his coming generations Balban decided to destroy this organization.

First of all he promoted junior Turkish officers and placed them in a position of equality with the members of Chalisa Dal. Then, he inflicted harsh punishment on the members of this group for minor mistakes in order to reduce their importance in the eye of the people. Mallick Baqbaq, the governor of Badayun and an officer of the team of forty caused one of his servant to be beaten to death when a complaint was made against him. Balban ordered him to be flogged publically. Not only this Balban used to send many abled ministers of forty to fight with the Mongols as he knew

that either they will be killed by the Mongols and if not, they will be defeated.