



## MEDIEVAL INDIA— THE DELHI SULTANATE

### Short-Answer Questions

**1. Name any two literary sources of the Delhi Sultanate.**

**Ans.** *Tariq-i-Firozshahi* and *Prithvirajraso*

**2. What is the importance of Qutab Minar as a source of history of the Delhi Sultans?**

**Ans.** The Construction of Qutab Minar was started by Qutubuddin Aibak in 1199 AD and the structure was Completed by Iltutmish in 1230 AD. Red sandstone, marble and grey quartite were used in the construction of the Minar which signifies high artistic ability and development of architecture during the phase of Delhi Sultans.

**3. What was the period during which the Delhi Sultanate flourished?**

**Ans.** The Delhi Sultanate flourished from AD 1206 to 1526.

**4. Name any two rulers of the Slave dynasty.**

**Ans.** Qutub-ud-din Aibak and Iltutmish.

**5. Name the Delhi Sultan who first of all invaded the Deccan.**

**Ans.** Ala-ud-din khalji

**6. Name the ruler of the Tughlaq dynasty who was known for his visionary plans.**

**Ans.** Muhammad - Bin - Tughluq

**7. Name any two Sultans of the Tughlaq dynasty.**

**Ans.** (i) Muhammad-Bin-Tughluq and  
(ii) Firoz Shah Tughluq

**8. Give two reasons why Razia Sultan was not accepted as a ruler by the nobles.**

**Ans.** Razia Sultan ruled for a brief period of four years but her nobles did not let her rule in peace. They resented a woman ruler, accused her of moving about without a veil (purdah) and favouring a Slave Yaqut.

**9. How long did Balban rule the Delhi Sultanate?**

**Ans.** Balban ruled Delhi Sultanate for 20 years.

**10. Name two reforms of Ala-ud-din Khalji.**

- Ans.** (i) Ala-ud-din Khalji fixed the prices of food, vegetables and other commodities of daily use. He also saw to it that people got adequate supply of essential commodities.
- (ii) He introduced a new system of land revenue. The land under cultivation was first measured and then the land revenue was fixed on the basis of this measurement. He gave a high salary to lower revenue officials to keep corruption under control.

**Structured Essay-Type Questions**

**1. With reference to the sources of the Delhi Sultanate explain the importance of the following :**

- (i) *Tariq-i-Firozshahi*
- (ii) *Prithvirajraso*
- (iii) Qutab Minar

- Ans.** (i) **Tariq-i-Firozshahi:** This book throws a 'good deal of light on the history of the Delhi Sultanate upto the reign of Firozshah Tughlaq. Zia-ud-din Barani claims that what he has written is true and his account is considered trustworthy by the then scholars. Later on various medieval historians like Nizam-ud-Din Ahmad, Badauni, Ferishta and Huji-ud-Dabir made much use of this work to give an account of the period covered in this book. Another historian Abdul Haq Dehlvi in his *Akhlus-ul-Akhyar* depended on this book for the biographical sketch of Nizam-ud-Din Auliya and other Sufi saints.
- (ii) **Prithvirajraso:** *Prithvirajraso* by Chandbardai is an epic poem on the life of Prithviraj II, a Chauhan king who ruled over Delhi and Ajmer between 1165 and 1192. Chandbardai who accompanied his patron, Prithviraj in all his battles vividly described

the different battles in all details. While not strictly history, this book has proved an important source of information for the social and clan structure of the Kshatriya communities of northern India. This book also gives a graphic picture of Svayamvara of Sanjogita, the First Battle of Tarain and the Second Battle of Tarain. These events ultimately led to the establishment of the Muslim Empire in India known as the Sultanate of Delhi.

- (iii) **Qutab Minar:** The foundation of this famous minar was laid Qutub-ud-din Aibak in 1199 AD and was completed in 1230 AD by Iltutmish. This minar has become world famous for its great height and architectural design. It is dedicated to the Sufi Saint Qutub-ud-din Bakhtiyar Kaki.

Qutab Minar is a five storey tower that tapers as they ascend. It is a circular tower about 13.8 metres at the base and tapers to the width of 3 metres at the summit. Red sandstone, marbles and grey quartzite were used to construct it. Verses from the Holy Quran and some intricate carvings, floral motifs are inscribed on this Minar.

**2. With reference to the Delhi Sultanate answer the following:**

- (i) Why is it called the 'Delhi Sultanate'?
- (ii) Which was the first dynasty to rule the Sultanate?
- (iii) Name three great kings of this dynasty and the years they ruled.

- Ans.** (i) It is called the Delhi Sultanate because it was based in Delhi. The second reason is to differentiate it from another Sultanate in the Deccan Plateau called the Deccan Sultanate.
- (ii) The Slave dynasty was the first to rule the Sultanate. They ruled from 1206 to 1290 AD and many sultans ruled during this period.
- (iii) The three great sultans of this dynasty were (i) Qutub-ud-din Aibak, (ii) Iltutmish, and (iii) Balban.



**3. With reference to the Slave Dynasty, describe :**

- (i) Achievements of Iltutmish.
- (ii) Contribution of Balban to the dynasty.
- (iii) Why did Razia Sultan fail in spite of her ability?

**Ans.** (i) Iltutmish really established the Turkish Kingdom and saved it from destruction. He faced many problems to his reign firmly. He defeated the local rulers and won over the Turkish nobles by giving them grants of land. He defeated some Rajput rulers also.

He is said to have completed the Qutub Minar started by Qutub-ud-Din Aibak. He was the first Turkish ruler to introduce coins with Arabic inscriptions on them—silver **Tanka** and copper **Jital**.

Iltutmish's greatest achievement was to save his newly born kingdom from the attack of Mongols. The Mongol leader, Changez Khan, came right upto the border of India, chasing an enemy. Iltutmish refused to help and give shelter to Changez Khan's enemy. Changez Khan returned from the Indus in AD 1221 and did not attack Iltutmish's kingdom.

- (ii) Balban extended the empire from Indus river in the west to the Brahmaputra in the East; from Himalayas in the North to the Narmada river in the South.

He built forts in the North-West, fought and threw back the Mongols.

He maintained a strong and well trained army, gave top priority to production of arms and weapons.

He kept strict control over his Turkish rulers called the "Chalisa" or the "Forty". He introduced the practice of "**Sijda**" in which people had to kneel and touch the ground with their forehead in Salutation to the king. It was resented by his nobles.

- (iii) Razia Sultan failed inspite of her ability because her nobles did not let her rule in peace. They resented a woman ruler, accused her of moving about without a veil (purdah) and favouring a slave Yaqut.

**4. With reference to the Khalji Dynasty, explain briefly :**

- (i) Conquests of Ala-ud-din Khalji and the extent of his empire.
- (ii) His land reforms and taxation policy.
- (iii) His control of prices.

- Ans.** (i) Alauddin was a great military commander. He conquered Ranthambhor and Chittor and defeated Rajput kings. He was also successful in conquering Gujarat and Malwa. His campaigns in the South were carried on by his commander **Malik Kafur**. The Yadavas of Devgiri, the Kakatiyas of Warangal and the Hoysalas of Dwar Samudra were defeated by Malik, who even marched upto Rameswaram and attacked Madurai. He brought enormous wealth for Ala-ud-din and made him rich and powerful.
- (ii) He introduced a new system of land revenue. The land under cultivation was first measured and then the land revenue was fixed on the basis of this measurement. He was able to obtain more revenue in this way. A complete record of land and land revenue was kept. He gave a high salary to lower revenue officials to keep corruption under control.
- (iii) The control of market was a very important feature of Ala-ud-din's administration. Ala-ud-din fixed the prices of food, vegetables and other commodities of daily use. He also saw to it that people got adequate supply of essential commodities. He accepted land revenue in cash or kind. Granaries were built to store revenue collected in kind and special officers distributed the goods or food. He raised the tax in the rich fertile land of the Doab (land between rivers Ganga and Yamuna).

**5. With reference of the Tughlaq Dynasty, answer the following:**

- (i) Give three reasons why Muhammad Bin Tughlaq is known as the "Wise Fool".

- (ii) What did Firoz Shah Tughla do for the welfare of his people?
- (iii) Why did the dynasty decline during the time of the above two rulers?

**Ans.** (i) Muhammad Bin Tughlaq has been called by historians "The Wisest Fool". He was a great scholar, mathematician and philosopher, yet he failed in implementing his ideas. His very sensible and rational ideas failed as he chose wrong methods to implement them.

- (a) **Taxation in Doab:** The area of Doab was suffering from famine in the year he raised the tax. The angry peasants refused to obey the king. The Sultan ordered his officers to crush the peasant's rebellion. Many people died. Much damage was done to the, farmers, to agriculture and Sultan's reputation by then.
- (b) **Transfer of Capital:** The Sultan decided to transfer his capital from Delhi to Devagiri in the South which he renamed as Daulatabad. He ordered the entire population of Delhi to shift to the Daulatabad. Due to lack of transport and other amenities many people died on the way. He ordered his people to return when he found people didn't like it. He also saw that he couldn't defend Delhi from so far south. The Southern kings seized this opportunity to establish new kingdoms in the South. The Bahamani and Vijayanagar Kingdoms were founded after the Emperor's return to Delhi.
- (c) **Use of Token Currency:** In Muhammad's time a silver coin called the '**Tanka**' was in circulation. The Sultan had the idea to replace it with a copper coin but he did not ensure that only the government would produce copper coins, due to which people started making copper coins at home and the market was flooded with fake copper coins. Foreign traders refused to accept them. The Government suffered



a great financial loss as they had to take back the copper coins (even the fake ones).

- (ii) Firoz Shah became the next ruler and his greatness lies not in conquests but in his kindness and charitable activities. He started many public utility works like canals and wells for irrigation of fields.

He established a charitable trust, 'Diwani Khairat' which gave financial help for the marriage of needy girls, to needy widows and orphans. He opened a hospital where medicine and food was supplied free to the poor.

He promoted learning and literature, established many madrasas (colleges) during his rule. He got Sanskrit books translated into Persian.

- (iii) Firoz's successors were weak and many provinces declared themselves independent. A death blow was given to this dynasty by Timur the lame (a Turkish chief of Central Asia) in 1398. His invasion of Delhi destroyed the Tughlaq Empire.

**6. With reference to the administration under the Delhi Sultanate describe the following :**

- (i) The position of Sultan
- (ii) The Central Government
- (iii) The Provincial Government
- (iv) The Land Revenue System

**Ans. (i) The Sultan:** The Sultan was a despot. He ruled with the help of nobles. The law was based on the Islamic tradition. Qazis and Ulemas had a great hand in the administration. The power of the Sultan was based on the military force. He administered all the functions of the government. There were wars for most of the period and the booty was also a source of income.

- (ii) **The Central Government:** The government was run under various departments. Four departments were most important. Each department was supervised by a minister or a high officer. The **Wazir** was the Chief Minister. He headed the **diwan-i-wizarat**. The

**Bakshi** was the Paymaster of the army. The **Qazi** was the Chief Justice. Justice was based on the Islamic Law. The department of **diwan-i-insha** looked after the state correspondence. The **diwan-i-risalat** looked after religious affairs and education.

- (iii) **The Provincial Government:** The provincial government reflected the same set up as at the centre. The heads of the provinces were known as **Wali** and **Mufti**. The provinces were further divided into **shiqs** and **paragana**. A **paragana** was headed by an **Amil**.
- (iv) **The Land Revenue System:** Land revenue was the most important source of the income of Delhi Sultans, so they were particular in keeping the land control in efficient hands. Some of the land was reserved for the Sultan. The revenue from such land was used for Sultan's personal expenses. Revenue from these lands was fixed at one-third of the produce and this was treated as the share of the state. The rest of the land was distributed among different officers, nobles, governors etc. These nobles, as already said, kept a certain amount of the land revenue as their salary, another amount to maintain soldiers for the Sultan. Sometimes, they were forced to send some amount to the Sultan too.

There was a separate Agriculture Department, known as **Diwan-i-Amir Kohi**, which looked after the work of land-revenue. Different officers such as the **Muqqadams**, **Patwaris** helped in the land-revenue collections.

**7. With reference to the social conditions under the Delhi Sultanate describe the following :**

- (i) Division of the society
- (ii) The effect of the caste system
- (iii) The slave system
- (iv) Position of women in the society

**Ans. (i) Division of Society into Three Different Sections:**  
During the reign of Delhi Sultanate, the society was



divided into different sections. The society constituted of the foreign Muslims, the Indian Muslims and the Hindus. Among them, the foreign Muslims constituted the ruling class. The next section was that of the Indian Muslims who were either converted to Islam or were the descendants of the converted Muslims. The Hindus also formed a major part of the society at that time and were divided among themselves on the basis of castes.

- (ii) **The Effect of the Caste System:** The caste system among the Hindus had divided them into various sections. But the caste-system of the Hindus affected the Muslims, especially the Indian Muslims, also. They continued to maintain divisions among themselves on the basis of their previous castes. Thus, both the foreign and Indian Muslims were divided among themselves.
- (iii) **The Slave System:** Slave system was prevalent among the Muslims and the Hindus and slaves were sold and purchased in the open market. The slaves were treated well though their property and lives were the property of their masters. The slaves of the Muslims were better off as compared to the slaves of the Hindus. The Sultans and the nobles kept slaves in huge numbers, provided education to them and gave them training and opportunity to rise in their lives so that many of them rose to the position of prominence in the state.
- (iv) **Position of Woman:** Women in the Hindu society enjoyed respect in the family and participated in the religious ceremonies. They received education and many of them had acquired scholarly fame. Yet, in general their status had deteriorated in the society and they suffered from many social evils.