

Mohammad Ghori: Founder of Muslim Rule in India

1. Ghori as a conqueror of territory:

Undoubtedly as a military commander, Mahmud was far ahead of Ghori. In the words of S.M. Jaffar,

“Mahmud was verily endowed with a genius of war. He was a scientific general, skillful in planning and thorough in execution.”

In the words of Dr. R.C. Majumdar, “Sultan Mahmud was undoubtedly one of the greatest military leaders, the world has ever seen. It is true that he never faced any defeat.

It is, however, equally true that he never tried to consolidate his position. He came like “a wind and went back like a whirl wind.”

Unlike Mahmud, Ghori was not a great general and had to suffer humiliating defeats several times. He was defeated by Mularaja II, the ruler of Gujarat; by Prithviraj Chauhan in the first battle of Tarain and by Khwarizam Shah, the ruler of Persia. In fact, he was killed in his own camp by his Khokar enemies. But the greatness of Ghori was that none of these defeats could weaken his spirits or check his ambitions. He took his every failure as a valuable experience. He improved upon his weaknesses, removed them and ultimately got success.

The conquests of Ghori brought about more permanent results than the conquests of Mahmud. Mahmud was contented to plunder the wealth of India and did not think of establishing his empire. Mahmud kept himself busy in invading and looting but Ghori attempted to build -up an empire which lasted for centuries.

As Dr. Iswari Prasad has observed, “Wealth, not territory, .extirpation of idolatory and not conquest, were the objects of Mahmud’s raids, and when these were accomplished, he cared nothing for the myriad people of India.” According to Sir W.W. Hunter, “He (Muhammad Ghori) was no religious knight-errant of Islam like Mahmud of Ghazni but a practical conqueror. The objects of his distant expeditions were not temples but provinces.”

2. Ghori as a practical statesman:

Dr. Habibullah regards Ghori as a practical statesman who took the fullest advantage of the rotten political structure of India.

Ghori gave proof of his statesmanship while dealing with different Rajput rulers.

After his victory over Prithviraj, instead of annexing Delhi and Ajmer to his territories, he handed over the administration of Delhi and Ajmer to the relatives of Prithviraj.

Ghori did not change the status of those Hindu chiefs who accepted his suzerainty and did not interfere in their administration. Of course, he established forts in these territories.

3. Political realism of Ghori:

Prof. K.A. Nizami puts stress on two qualities of Ghori i.e. his digged tenacity of purpose and his grim political realism. He wrote, "This Hero of three stupendous defeats at Andh-khud, Tarain and Anhilwara had to his credit the establishment of one of the greatest empires of the middle ages and in this he definitely rises above Mahmud of Ghazni." According to Stanley Lane-poole, Ghori's conquests in India were wider and far more permanent than Mahmud's. He wrote, "of the two tides of Mohammedan invasion that surged into India, Mahmud's had left little trace. It had been but a series of triumphant raids."

4. Great ability to select officers:

Ghori had the art of selecting the best men for his services. He trained generals and administrators like Qutab-ud- din Aibak, who proved quite competent to maintain his empire.

5. Appointment of governors:

Ghori appointed governors of the provinces he conquered. These governors consolidated the position of Turks and they suppressed rebellions. After the death of Ghori, Qutub-ud-din Aibak, his most able military commander founded the Slave Dynasty that ruled India for about one hundred years.

Summing up:

Thus from the above details it becomes quite clear that though Mahmud was a great military commander and always a victor but he did not try to establish his kingdom in India. There is no doubt that he paved the way for the establishment of Turkish empire. Ghori also accumulated vast wealth without any scruples but his main objective always remained the founding of an empire and he was successful in that aim.