

## UNIT 117 – UPSC - Battle of Tarain

### India's History : Medieval India : Second Battle of Tarain

#### Defeat of Prithviraj Chouhan



Battle of Tarain

On his return to Ghazni, Ghori made hectic preparations to avenge the defeat. He proceeded towards India with a large force numbering 120000 mounted men. When he reached Lahore, he sent his envoy to Prithviraj to demand his submission, but the Chauhan ruler refused to comply. Prithviraj saw through Ghori's stratagem. So he issued a fervent appeal to his fellow Rajput chiefs to come to his aid against the Muslim invader. About 150 Rajput chiefs, both big and small, responded favourably. Except the ruler of Kannauj Raja Jaichand who met Ghori and divulged he secrets of Chauhan's planning of war.

Whatever army could be mustered, Prithviraj proceeded with it to meet Muhammad Ghori in Tarain where a year before he had inflicted a crushing defeats on his adversary. Ghori divided his troops into five parts. While he deployed four parts to attack the Rajputs on all four sides, the fifth part was kept as reserve. As the sun declined, Ghori led a final charge with his reserve army. The final charge came as a last straw for the brave Rajputs. Khande Rao, the able general of Prithviraj, was killed. The enthusiasm of Prithviraj also dampened against these reverses. He abandoned his elephant and rode out of the battlefield in order to prepare his defenses for another round of attack. But he was pursued and killed by the Afghan troops in a village near Sambhal U.P.

In some popular legends woven around the bravery of Prithviraj, it is said that Ghori did not killed Prithviraj but blinded him. Subsequently, Prithviraj discharged a Shabdbhedi (an arrow which travels in a path created by sound waves) arrow, on being challenged by Ghori to do so. The arrow hit Ghori and subsequently he was killed. Yet there is no historical evidence to substantiate it.

The seriousness of this defeat for India cannot be exaggerated. The victory of Mohammad of Ghur was decisive, and laid the foundation of the Sultanate of Delhi and, for Hinduism, the period was critical.

After this defeat, the role of the kings of Mewar became clear: They accepted this responsibility of defence in preference to the life of relative security of a slave. And so began centuries of war with the Muslims, lasting until the Mughal dynasty began to fall apart after the death of Emperor Aurangzeb (1707).

