

UNIT 80 – UPSC - Sambhaji Raje

India's History : Medieval India : Execution of Sambhaji - 1689

Sambhaji's Execution



Early in 1685 Aurangzeb moved his armies to the south and invested Bijapur on 27th March. Bijapur capitulated on 12th September 1686. Golkonda was then invaded on 28th January 1687 and was captured on 1st October 1687. During the course of these invasions, the main attention of the emperor had been withdrawn from the Maratha country. Prince Akbar again and again urged Sambhaji to make a sudden sweep upon the emperor's central camp and effecting a complete rout of his powerful armies. But either Sambhaji was half-hearted in his promises to Akbar or he did not feel himself equal to that task so that a magnificent opportunity was lost. Akbar therefore in sheer desperation gave up his attempts to secure the throne and escaped to Iran where he reached in January 1688. During Aurangzeb's campaign against Bijapur and Golkonda Sambhaji kept his residence at Panhala and shortly before in the beginning of 1685 his troops passing through Ahmadnagar district devastated the Moghal territory from Aurangabad to Burhanpur carrying away enormous booty. But now Aurangzeb was free to devote his entire resources against Sambhaji and one of the Moghal Generals Sharza Khan invaded Satara district.

A kind of encircling movement began against Sambhaji and on 1st February 1689 Sambhaji was trapped at Sangameshwar. The news was received by the emperor at Akluj. He at once left Akluj and proceeded to Bahadurgad where the captives were brought under the guard of Hamiduddin Khan. Under emperor's order Sambhaji was made a mark of public ridicule. Four miles away from the camp Sambhaji and Kavi Kalash were dressed as buffoons in long fool's caps with bells fixed on them. They were then mounted on camels and brought to Babadurgad where they were slowly paraded through the entire camp and brought before the emperor after which they were removed to their cell. Next day Aurangzeb sent Ruhulla Khan to Sambhaji making him an offer of his life on condition that

- (1) he surrendered all his forts,
- (2) disclosed all his hidden treasures and
- (3) declared the names of those Mughal officers who were in league with him.



Sambhaji whose heart was swelling under the insults heaped upon him spurned the offer and loosened his tongue in abuse of the emperor and his prophet. The consequences were obvious. The helpless prisoners were cruelly tortured and then removed from Bahadurgad to Koregaon where they were executed on 11th March 1689.