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**PROF. MUKHTARUDDIN AHMAD &**  
**DR. MOHAMMED AMIN**



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UNDERSTANDING OF SOME HISTORICAL ISSUES  
OF EARLY SULTANATE PERIOD THROUGH  
TEXTUAL ANALYSIS : WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE

TO *TAJUL MA'ATHIR*

By MOHAMMAD RIZWAN\*

The author of *Tajul Ma'athir*, Sadrudin Hasan Nizami who was one of the pioneering scholars to initiate the process of writing historical works in Persian, particularly with reference to India, as early as in the thirteenth century A.D. may be considered as the father of Persian historiography in India.

Biographical profile of Sadrudin Hasan Nizami is hard to find in any of the contemporary or later works. Personal references in *Tajul Ma'athir* are few and far between. It is difficult, therefore, to say anything about his religious or political views or even about his circle of friends. According to Handullah Mustafa, he was the son of the author of *Chahar Magala*, Nizami Aruzi Samarqandi.<sup>1</sup> He was born in the late 12th century A.D. at Nishapur in Iran. Due to family feud and political conflicts, he moved to Ghazni to start his career at the advice of his mentor Muhammad Kufi. However, he could not do much in Ghazni owing to his ill health. Soon he shifted to Delhi to try his luck with his literary erudition, in the court of Delhi Sultanate. He was warmly received here by Sharaful Muluk, 'Sadr-e-A'la' of Delhi, who got him an assignment from the nascent ruler Qutbuddin Aibak.<sup>2</sup> Sadrudin Hasan Nizami started his work *Tajul Ma'athir* roughly in 1205 A.D. and is said to have completed it in 1229 A.D. In this work he begins with the battle of Tarain in 1191 A.D.

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which opened the gates of northern India for the Turks, and covers the period upto the Caliphal recognition of Ilutmish's authority in 1229 A.D. (In some manuscripts the account is given only upto 1217 A.D.). It may not be out of place here to mention that the extended version of *Tajul Ma'athir* in its manuscript form is nowhere available in the world. Abdi in his introduction to the Bhagwat Saroop's translation of *Tajul Ma'athir* observes: "Elliot has referred to a very valuable manuscript copy in possession of Nawab Ziaud Din of Delhi, written in 779 A.H. (1377-78 A.D.). In this we have the history carried over to twelve years later or 626 A.H. (1228-9 A.D).<sup>3</sup> But such a manuscript does not exist today. Even if we accept that this manuscript was in possession of the Nawab and was utilized by Elliot, what is the proof that it was written by Nizamud din himself"<sup>4</sup> Therefore in our study we take only the manuscript which stretches upto 1217 A.D.

*Tajul Ma'athir* is the first official historical work of the Delhi Sultanate. It commences with the battle of Tarain and concludes with the consolidation of Ilbari dynasty with the approval of the Abbasid Caliphate in 1229 A.D. This was an epoch of great political significance in the history of the Delhi Sultanate. The Turkish military activities in the northern India were followed by the liquidation of the feudal system of the Rajputs and the emergence of a strong monarchy with centralized and bureaucratic system of provincial administration. To write the history of a period of such hectic political and military activity was a fascinating task, though it had its own hurdles. For one who had seen the pathetic spectacle of Muslim states of Ajam going down the abyss, it must have been a psychological problem to transform his pessimistic and despondent mood into one of buoyancy, hope and prosperity. *Tajul Ma'athir* is a sui generis work in more than one way. Written in a high flown, florid, bombastic, ornate language, *Tajul Ma'athir* "the crown of exploits"<sup>5</sup> or "the crown of glorious deeds"<sup>6</sup> attempts to enumerate the evolution of early Sultanate rule in Delhi. *Tajul Ma'athir* is written in a running Persian prose of 12000 lines, replete with 7000 Arabic and Persian verses, particularly emphasizing the historical importance of Islamic culture and Persian niceties. As a pioneering historian he makes an attempt to include a range of