

Chapter – 65

Ibn Battuta

(1304 - 1377 AD)

Ibn Battuta's real name is Abu Abdullah Muhammad. Shamsuddin is his title. He was born in 703AH/1304AD in the Tanja city of Morocco. Ibn Battuta was an Islamic scholar, master of Jurisprudence, and a Judge, but his main identity is that of a great Muslim Tourist and Geographer. He spent nearly 30 years for touring Asia and Africa. During this time, he made journey of about 75,000 mile (120 thousand km) land and sea routes.

Ibn Battuta was 20 years old when he came out of Morocco for the first time, leading a caravan of some people, with the intention of Hajj. Their convoy arrived in Jeddah and Makkah via Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Palestine and the upper regions of Syria. In the city of Alexandria of Egypt, Ibn Battuta met with Burhanuddin and after meeting him his heart fostered for a grand tour of India and China.

After completing the pilgrimage, Ibn Battuta started regular tourism. His first research trip was in 1325AD to Iraq and Persia. After this he again performed Hajj. This time he lived in Makkah for more than two years. In 1330AD, his second voyage started from south Arabia, means Yemen, to South Africa and East Africa. After that he returned to Makkah again for his third pilgrimage. Ibn Battuta's next journey was to Turkey, Asia Kochak, via Syria and Egypt. In Turkey, he met

Sultan Muhammad, the ruler of Turkey. Then he reached to Constantinople. Here he met the emperor Andronicus III.

In 1333AD, he planned to go to India. For this, he made a journey through the Volga River via Khwarizm, Bukhara and Khorasan he reached to India, crossing Hindukush mountains. At that time, Muhammad Tughlaq was the Ruler in Delhi. The King not only welcomed Ibn Battuta but also insisted him to stay in his country. At the same time, he was appointed as a Qazi of the Maliki Sect. Ibn Battuta spent many years in India, and during this long stay, he reached in all the directions of India and watchfully studied the various cultures and customs of the country.

When Ibn Battuta reached to Maldives in 1342AD, the Sultan of this place also gave him the position of Qazi and offered to stay in the Maldives. Ibn Battuta accepted it too and stayed here for more than a year.

After that Ibn Battuta arrived in Lanka. Here he also visited the famous "Adam's Peak". The hill is 7360 feet high and its peak is sufficiently plain. Here, an unusual footprint is found. Hindus call it the foot of Shivaji. Whereas, Buddhists consider it as Gautama Buddha's foot. While Muslims consider it as the image of Hazrat Adam's foot.

In 1345AD Ibn Battuta traveled to Bengal, then to Cambodia, and then traveled to China. While returning he visited to Sumatra, Mala Bar, Zafar, southern Persia and Baghdad and then to Makkah. He arrived in Makkah in 1347AD and then performed a Hajj once again. When he heard of his father's death, he reached Morocco to visit his mother. In this way, he returned back to his home after about 24 years.

Ibn Battuta stayed at his house for about five years. But his passion for tourism struck again and in 1352AD he embarked on a new journey. During this visit, he traveled in southern parts of Morocco through Algeria, Niger and Nigeria.

Then he traveled to Mali and the surrounding country and studied these areas in detail. In 1354AD he returned back to Morocco. And so his tourism ended too.

When Moroccan Ruler, Abu Ghannan, came to know that Ibn Battuta has now finished his journey, he deputed him to write a book for all about his voyages. Ibn Battuta wrote the entirety of his long journey under the name of "رحلة" (*Hunting Expedition*) and gave its dictation to his deputy Ibn Jazi, who was also a scholar himself. This work took about three months to complete.

All these trips of Ibn Battuta did not go as a common tourist, but the main purpose of each of his journeys was not only to observe and acquire information, but also to study the culture and civilization of each country and their problems. That is why Ibn Battuta is regarded as "*A Mediaeval Traveler*", a researcher of the Middle Ages systems and society.

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