

CHAPTER - VIII

RELATIONS OF GUJARAT WITH MALWA.

The war of succession in Malwa :-

We have already referred to the arrival of the Prince of Malwa in Gujarat. Here, since it led to a conflict between the two kingdoms, it may be given in detail. Sultān Nāsīr-ud-dīn Khaljī, the ruler of Malwa died in 1510, leaving behind three sons viz. Shihāb-ud-dīn Muhammad Shāh or Sāhib Khān and Mahmūd Shihāb-ud-dīn, the eldest son of the Sultān revolted against his father during his reign and had left for Delhi. A struggle between the brothers for the throne of Mandu followed the Sultan's death. Mahmūd Khaljī, the younger, succeeded in it. However, he was overthrown by Muhammad Shāh with the help of Khwājāh Jahān Tawshī, a noble and Muhammad Shāh or Sāhib Khān was enthroned. Mahmūd sought the help of Medini Rai, ¹ the powerful Rajput chief of Chanderi. Medini Rai attacked Mandu, seized it and declared Mahmūd as the Sultan of Mandu Muhammad Shāh fled and took refuge in the court of Sultān Muzaffar Shāh.

1. All the Persian chroniclers and Shri Ojha write Medini Rai whereas Hājī-ud-Dabīr writes Raichand as the name and Medini Rai as the title of Ross Dennison E. An Arabic history of Gujarat P-I, p.103.

Sultān Muẓaffar Shāh sent Qaisar Khān, a noble, towards Dohad to prepare for the campaign, but the attitude and behaviour of Muḥammad Shāh and the embassy episode, together with his sudden departure led to the abandonment of the contemplated campaign.²

Medini Rai's ambitious plan :-

After the enthronement of Mahmud Shah as the Sultān of Malwa, Medini Rai gradually concentrated power in his hands. Medini Rai, according to Persian chroniclers, suppressed the Muslim nobles of Malwa and appointed the Rajputs to the key posts of the kingdom. This made the Sultān a figure head while real power passed into Medini Rai's hands.³ Mahmūd Shāh though allowed to live royally and treated with all courtesy, thus became virtually a prisoner in Rajput hands.⁴

The nobles of Malwa sought the help of the Sultān of Gujarat :

It is further stated that the nobles of Malwa sought the help of Sikandar Lodī of Delhi and Muẓaffar Shāh

2. MS - Trans (F) pp. 92-94.

3. MS - Trans (F), pp. 94-95

4. Ibid

against the increasing power of Rajputs in Malwa.⁵ In 1515, Habīb Khān, Chānd Shaikh and other nobles came from Malwa with complaints to Muzaffar Shāh,⁶ These nobles are also said to have complained against Medini Rai to Sultān Mahmūd Khaljī.⁷

Medini Rai, on the other hand, did not trust the Sultan and whenever he went to see the Sultān he took five hundred body guards with himself. Pandit Ojha considers this measure of Medini Rai, as necessary and states that in midst of such an opposition it was politically sound.⁸

Sultān Muzaffar after hearing the complaints against Medini Rai, determined to free the Sultān of Malwa from Rajput control.

5. Ojha G.H. History of Udaipur State (Hindi text) p.353

6. According to the Persian chroniclers the nobles complained to Muzaffar Shāh against the religious persecution of Medini Rai in Malwa, TA - Trans - (De) writes Shaikh Jaidā instead of Chānd Khān pp. 297-299.

7. TA - Trans (De) pp. 297-299. MS - Trans (F) pp.92-95.

8. Ojha G.H. History of Udaipur state (Hindi Text) p.353.

After making necessary arrangements, and leaving his son Sikandar Khān as his deputy, Muẓaffar Shāh left Ahmedabad for Godhra via. Champaner. The nobles from various places were summoned, with their contingents, to join him in the proposed expedition. Accordingly, 'Āin-ul-Mulk, the governor of Patan, left to join the Sultān, thus allowing Bhim Ray, the Rajput king of Idar, to lay waste the country as far as east of Sabarmati. This incident caused some delay in the march to Malwa.

Then, army advanced to the boundary of Malwa. Qiwām-ul-Mulk moved towards Dhar, and after returning from there described the beauty of "Deer Park" ⁹ to the Sultān. At this the Sultān desired to visit the "Deer Park" and encamped near Dhar.

Nizām-ul-Mulk, a deputy of Idar, with some soldiers went towards Na'loha and while on his way back, a band of Purabiya Rajputs attacked him. ¹⁰ At this early reverses, Sultān Muẓaffar gave up the proposed march and returned to Champaner.

Sultān Muẓaffar suddenly retreated from Dhar to Champaner and the historians do not account for it. From

9. "Deer Park" was famous for its beauty and constructed by Sultan Ghiyāth-ud-din of Malwa.

10. TF - (Text) -IV, II, p. 407.

the description of the march, it appears that the Sultān was assisted by a well-equipped army and Sikandar Khān, his son, was in charge of the administration of Gujarat. Thus there was no apparant reason which made the Sultan to retreat from Dhar.

The Persian chroniclers write that the Sultān decided to return to Champaner after Nizām-ul-Mulk's reverse at the hands of Purabiya Rajputs. It is likely, that this incident might have led him to believe that his preparations were not adequate, for the attack on the Rajputs. He also, might have considered the possibility of joint Rajput front against himself made of Medini Rai and Rana Sanga of Chitor.

Secondly, in 1515, Raja Bhim Singh of Idar died and his death was followed by a succession dispute between Bharmal the son of late ruler and Raimal the cousin of Bharmal, Raimal, being the son-in-law of Rana Sanga, was favoured by the latter, and was placed on the throne of Idar. This was sufficient to alarm Muzaffar Shāh, for the dominance of Rana Sanga in Idar, led to an apprehension of Rajput invasion of Gujarat. To meet this danger, it was necessary for the Sultan to consolidate his defences. Later incidents indicate this fear regarding Rana Sanga on the part of the Sultān. Hence this could also have led to a retreat from Dhar to Champaner.

Restoration of Sultān Mahmūd Khaljī on the throne
of Mandu, 1518 A.D. :-



Two years had pass ~~to~~ without Muzaffar Shāh's taking any further steps in Malwa. Mahmūd Shāh in the meanwhile became tired of the domination of the man, who had raised him to the throne and he decided to escape. One day he proceeded far from Mandu, and at night took the way to Gujarat.¹¹

On arrival at Dohad, he was received by Qaiṣar Khān, the "Thāṇḍar" of Dohad, with due honours and the Sultan was informed about the same at Champaner. Muzaffar Shāh proceeded towards Dohad to meet the Sultān of Malwa.

Muzaffar Shāh, now, possibly thought it proper to declare war on Medini Rai. Together with the Sultan, he marched towards Dhar, leaving behind his son Sikandar Khān, as his deputy in Gujarat, and the remaining two sons Bahādur Khān and Latīf Khān accompanied the Sultān to Malwa.

On the receipt of the news of the advance of the army of Gujarat towards Mandu, Medini Rai leaving the defence of the fort in charge of his son Rai Pithora and other Rajputs, left to seek the help of Rana Sanga.

11. MS - Trans (F) pp. 97-99.

The Gujarat army reached Mandu and besieged the fort. Meanwhile, the Rajputs in the fort requested Sultān Muẓaffar Shāh to allow them a month's time, to evacuate the fort and hand it over. The Sultan allowed this probably because the Rajputs had in their possession the harem of Sultān Mahmūd.¹²

Nizām-ud-dīn writes that Rai Pithora had received a letter from Medini Rai to retain fort for one month because by that time he expected to reach Mandu with Rana Sanga. Therefore, to await Medini Rai's return with reinforcement Rai Pithora asked the Sultan for this time.¹³

After some time it was reported to the Sultān that Medini Rai had himself gone to seek the help of Rana Sangha.¹⁴ Realising the plan of the Rajputs, Muẓaffar Shāh ordered Qaisar Khān and Khudāwand Khān, two of his

12. Nizām-ud-dīn writes that Muẓaffar Shāh sent many presents to the Sultān of Malwa to make him cheerful, but Mahmūd was unhappy, because his whole harem was in possession of Medini Rai. - TA - Trans (De) III, pp. 301-303.

13. TA - Trans (De) III, p. 303.

14. Ibid P. 304

generals, to attack the fort. 'A dil Khān Fārūqī, the Sultān of Khandesh, by this time had also joined the army, in Mandu.

The Sultān sent Qiwām-ūl-Mulk against the Rajputs and 'A dil Khan was instructed to keep watch on Medini Rai and Rana Sanga. Mahmūd Khaljī pressed the attack from Shahpur Gate, Qaisar Khān from the Delhi Gate and Malik-ūs-Sharq Imā'd-ūl-Mulk from the Sari Gate.

On Safar 2,924/February 23, 1518 Mandu was carried by assault, after the rites of Jauhar had been performed inside the fort. The Gujarat army occupied the fort and the Rajputs were killed in large number. Among were, Medini Rai's son and other leaders.¹⁵ After this victory, the Sultān ordered the customary tower of skulls to be built.¹⁶

Rana Sanga, and Medini Rai, while at Ujjain, received the news of the defeat of the Rajputs, Medini Rai was deeply hurt but Rana Sanga consoled him and both retreated to Chitor where the Rana appointed him to Chanderi.

15. Ross E. Dennison. An Arabic history of Gujarat, P.L. p. 105, Nadvi-Muzaffar Shahi, p. 29.

16. Nadvi, Muzaffar Shahi, p. 29.

While Rana Sanga and Medini Rai were retreating towards Chitor, 'Ādil Khān of Khandesh, sent earlier against them, requested leave to attack the Rajputs. The Sultān satisfied with the victory at Mandu, refused permission and 'Ādil Khān returned with his force.

Muzaffar Shāh invited to a grand entertainment :-

The fort of Mandu was handed over to Mahmūd Khaljī. A few days later he invited Muzaffar Shāh to a sumptuous banquet in his honour in the fort. Firishtah states that Sultān Muzaffar Shāh was treated with utmost respect by the ruler of Malwa. Sultān Mahmud requested the Gujarat Sultan to take his seat on the throne and himself stood before him. The royal dignitaries who accompanied the Sultān in the campaign also attended this function. ¹⁷

Sikandar has given a long description of entertainments which followed. The palace was illuminated and decorated with precious things. ¹⁸ Nizām-ud-dīn, gives shorter description of these celebrations which took place after the victory of Mandu.

Firishtah describes the event as follows "After the feast was over, two thousand beautiful women of his seraglio

17. TF (Text) IV, II p. 410.

18. MS - Trans (F) pp. 100-120.

gaily dressed and adorned and carrying plates of gems and golden ornaments, were presented before the royal guest, and their master declared that, they and all he had, were at Sultān Muẓaffar Shāh's disposal. The Sultan of Gujarat thanked him and expressed the desire to be allowed to retire." 19

owed his throne to Muẓaffar Shāh,

It seems that since Mahmūd Shāh, ^{owed his throne to Muẓaffar Shāh,} so he arranged this entertainment to do him honour. The description given by the Persian chroniclers seems to be exaggerated. The long description given by them, and this indifference to beautiful women was probably meant to indicate the strength of Muẓaffar Shāh's character and also his piety. Therefore, we may hardly take this description as literally correct though it may be substantially true.

After visiting the principal buildings of Mandu, Sultan Muẓaffar left Mandu for Gujarat. Sultān Mahmūd accompanied him as far as Deolah on the border of Mandu. Aṣaf Khān was ordered by Muẓaffar Shāh to assist Sultān Mahmūd.

Final attempt of Rajputs to recover Mandu :-

The year following i.e. 925/1519, Sultān Mahmūd

19. TF (Text) IV, II p.410, c.f. ^{Tras} (Briggs)
IV pp. 84-87.

decided to invade the jagir of Medini Rai Asaf Khān, an envoy of Gujarat at the court of Mandu advised him against it but Mahmūd Shāh did not listen.²⁰

In 925/1519-20, Sultān Mahmūd Shāh marched against the holder of Gaughroan ²¹(in Kota, District) whose name is given as Hemkaran or Bhimkaran. In the battle, which followed the Rajputs were defeated.

On hearing this, Rana Sanga, marched towards Malwa. Mahmūd Shāh also moved to meet the invader. A severe battle took place between the two near Gaughroan. In this engagement Asaf Khān's son was together with his followers from Gujarat and a number of Malwa nobles was killed.

Sultān Mahmūd was wounded and he fell into the hands of the Rajputs. Rana Sanga took him to his capital and gave him the care and attention he needed and treated him with due distinction till he recovered. Then he sent

20. Ojha holds the view that Mahmūd Shāh was advised not to invade the territory of Medini Rai whereas the Persian chroniclers are silent about this ~~C.F.~~ Ojha G.H., History of Udaipur State (Hindi Text) pp.354-355.

21. The Persian chroniclers mentioned this place as Kakoran or Karwan.

Mahmūd Shāh back to Mandu with one thousand Rajputs and restored him to his throne, keeping back one of his sons as hostage.

All writers praise the chivalrous conduct of Rajputs' chief. Sikandar, however, remarks that this generous action was dictated by the fear, the Rajput leader felt on account of the Muslim states around Malwa. This remark betrays both the ignorance of the author regarding the Rajputs, as also his prejudice. Had Rana Sanga been so afraid, he would hardly have imprisoned Sultān Mahmūd or carried him to Chitor. Thus, his policy was mainly to establish Rajput ascendancy in Malwa but not to do away with its ruler. Therefore, he was chivalrous with his "guest" and restored him to the throne - an act of gallantry not unmixed with political motives.

The Persian writers, it will be noted, emphasize the religious aspect of these events but minimise the role of other forces, namely the political and strategic considerations.

Religion was undoubtedly, a factor in these transactions. Religious affinity brought the two Sultāns of Gujarat and Malwa together against the Rajputs. But this was not the only factor. Since the time, the two kingdoms, the Sultānate of Gujarat and the Sultānate of Malwa

had come into being, changes in the one had reactions in the other. And therefore, the Sultān of Gujarat could not afford to remain indifferent to the changed situation in Malwa - religious preferences notwithstanding.

Besides, the emergence of Rana Sanga as the powerful leader, who had united the whole of Rajasthan posed a serious threat both to Gujarat and Malwa. Therefore, the extension of Rajput influence in Malwa alarmed Muzaffar Shāh and he moved to counteract the danger. In 1515 Rana Sanga had established his nominee on the throne of Idar. Thus it was necessary for Muzaffar Shāh, the most powerful ruler, to safe-guard the interest of the two Sultans in this region.

The sense of danger which Muzaffar Shāh felt is indicated by the arrangements he made to defend his kingdom before marching to Malwa and by number of soldiers, regular and irregular who marched with him.²³

Thus, it was not purely a religious conflict as the chroniclers make it out to be nor can Rajput action be called as "an action against Islam." In its essence it was a political conflict though religion was an important factor.

23. Nadvi - Muzaffar Shāhī pp. 15-16.

After the recovery of Malwa annexation was suggested to Sultān Muzaffar by his nobles. The Sultān turned down this as "an action against Islam."

It was not due to the religious affinity that the Sultan refused to annex Malwa. The political changes that were taking place in Rajasthan also prevented the annexation of Malwa. Since Malwa was surrounded by Rajput feudatories and Rana Sanga had brought them under his leadership, it was difficult for Muzaffar Shāh to control this hilly areas from the plains of Gujarat. Therefore the opinion of the Persian writers is misleading and cannot be accepted as the whole truth.
