

## CHAPTER - XI

### LAST DAYS OF SULTĀN MUZAFFAR SHĀH

#### An evaluation :-

The last days of Sultan Muzaffar Shāh are marked by the flight of Bahādur Khān from Gujarat to Delhi and a famine which brought severe hardships to the people of Gujarat.

#### Family of Sultān Muzaffar Shāh :-

Sultān Muzaffar Shāh, had eight sons and twelve daughters. His most beloved and chief queen was Bībī Rānī, the mother of Sikandar Khān and of his two daughters viz. Rājī, Ruqāiyāh and Rājī 'Āyashāh. Rājī Ruqāiyāh was married to 'A di l Khān Fārūqī, the ruler of Khandesh and Rājī 'Āyashāh was married to Fateh Khān, the son of the Sultān of Sind. Bībī Rānī is said to have been a lady of great abilities, mature judgement and firm decision. She seems to have wielded considerable influence in Gujarat politics, for Portuguese envoy Tristao de Ga refers the influence of this queen over the Sultān. She is said to have been a trusted counsellor of the Sultān. She died in 1524 and was buried in the musoleum of the Sultān's mother,

near Ghatta-mandal palace, at Ahmedabad.<sup>1</sup>

Another of his wives was Laxmi Bai, a Rajput Gohel, lady, the mother of Prince Bahadur. A third Raji Bai, the daughter of Mahipat Rao, was the mother of Latif Khān.<sup>2</sup> The remaining sons were by slave girls and we know nothing about them during or after the reign of Sultān Muzaffar Shāh II.

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Prince Bahadur's flight from Gujarat :-

According to Sikandar, the reason for Bahādur Khān's flight from Gujarat was, the jagir granted to him was smaller than that given to Sikandar. He was, therefore, dissatisfied with it and complained about it to the Sultān. The Sultān did not listen to him and therefore Bahādur Khān left Gujarat and went towards Delhi in north.<sup>3</sup>

It is necessary to note here the story about the succession dispute between Sikandar Khān and Bahādur Khān and how it was solved with the help of Bukhāri Saiyyid.

1. MS - Trans (F) P.115 Ross - An Arabic history of Gujarat I, pp. 120. 137.

2. MS - Trans (F) p. 135.

3. MS - Trans (F) pp. 115-116. TF - Text IV, II, 416

TA - Trans (De) III, pp. 320-322.

It is said that on the suggestion of Bibi Rani the Sultān went to Batwa to invoke Shāikhjiū, the Bukhāri saint's blessings for Sikandar, as his successor. Shāh Shāikhjiū had many disciples and one of them was Muzaffar Shāh. In the beginning Sultān Muzaffar Shāh and Shāh Shāikhjiū were not on good terms. Sikandar states that both Shāh Shāikhjiū and the Sultān saw, the late Qutb-i-<sup>6</sup>Ālam in their dreams, and since then they became friendly. Shāh Shāikhjiū was born in Asawal, near Ahmedabad, in A.H. 853/1484 and known as Salyid Jalāl-ud-dīn. He was a great spiritual force of the age.

Bahādur Khān's villages lay in the vicinity of Batwa and so he visited Batwa frequently and became a disciple of Shāh Shāikhjiū. On the <sup>occasion</sup> referred to earlier, it so happened that Bahādur Khān came and sat between his father and Sikandar Khān. The saint inadvertently gave his blessings to Bahādur Khān in place of Sikandar Khān as the Sultan's successor. In spite of this omen, Sultān Muzaffar Shāh declared Sikandar Khān as his successor. Sikandar Khān was dismayed at this incident in which the saint favoured Bahādur Khan and pointed him out as the successor to the throne of Gujarat. So he planned to kill Bahādur Khān, who, for to save his life, left Gujarat for Delhi.<sup>4</sup>

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4. MS. - Trans (F) pp. 135, 140-141.

The real reason for Bahādur's flight may be gathered from the remarks made by Firishtah "Prince Bahādur Khān complained that his allowances were insufficient to maintain the establishment due to his rank and requested that they might be made equal to those of his brother, Sikandar Khān. Muzaffar Shāh, for political reasons gave no decisive answer to this request, but promised to consider the subject. Meanwhile the prince, impatient of delay, left the king's camp (towards Idar, 931/1524) without taking leave." <sup>5</sup>

Another reason could be that Bahādur Khān saw no future for himself in Gujarat with his brother and rival on the throne. Hence he left Gujarat to seek his fortune in the north.

#### Bahādur's flight towards the North :-

On his way to Delhi, Bahādur Khān halted at Chitor, where he was hospitably received by Rana Sanga.<sup>6</sup> Here an incident took place. The nephew of Rana Sanga invited Bahādur to an entertainment. It is said that Bahādur Khān admired a dancing girl of great beauty, and was told by his Rajput host that she was the daughter of the Qādī

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5. TF - Trans (B) IV, p. 96, TF - Text, IV, II, pp. 415-417.

6. Ojha G.H. History of Udaipur State (Hindi Text) No.

of Ahmadnagar (Himatnagar), captured during the sack of the city. <sup>7</sup> Bahādur Khān was infuriated at the insult contained in these words and attacked and killed him. Only the intervention of the Rana's mother saved Bahādur Khān from the consequences of this rash act and leaving Chitor, he arrived at Mewar, where the ruler Hasan Khān received him with suitable honours. After this Bahādur Khān went to the court of Ibrahim Lodi (1517-1526) of Delhi, who was then preparing against the Mughal invasion. <sup>8</sup>

Bahādur Khān quickly became popular among the Afghan nobles and the people of Delhi. According to Nizām-ud-dīn, both the nobles and people of Delhi were disgusted with Ibrāhīm Lodī and a conspiracy was formed to dethrone him and to put Bahādur Khān in his place. <sup>9</sup> But he in the meanwhile left Delhi for Jaunpur. <sup>10</sup> There is

6. (contd.) <sup>pp.</sup> 361-363. The author tells that Bahādur Khān sought the shelter of Rana Sanga.

7. Bayley Gujarat pp. 275-277.

8. Ojha G.H. op. cit p. 363- ~~p.~~ TA - Trans (De) III, p. 321 N.S. Trans (F) pp. 115-116.

9. TA - Trans (DE) III, pp. 320-322.

10. Ibid -Firishtah states that Bahādur left Delhi for Jaunpur for his safety. TF# - Text - IV, II p. 417

no proof which shows that he was "privy to this plot" to place him on the throne. On the way to Jaunpur he received the news of his father's death and returned speedily to Gujarat.<sup>11</sup>

Muzaffar Shāh II - an appraisal :-

Sultān Muzaffar ruled over Gujarat for more than fourteen years (1511-1526) and his reign is marked by important events, which have been discussed earlier. Before discussing the political achievements and military successes, it is essential to throw some light on the personality of Sultān Muzaffar Shāh.

His accomplishments :-

Muzaffar Shāh had inherited all the personal bravery of his forefathers, and was an accomplished horseman, expert swordsman, and a skillful wrestler. He was an able musician and knew the art of playing on many musical instruments. He was an expert ~~in~~ calligraphist and trans-

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10. (contd.) Sikandar states that Ibrāhīm Lodī was jealous of Bahādur Khān for the latter's successes during his stay in Delhi. So he left Delhi for Jaunpur. MS - Trans (F) pp. 115-116.

11. MS - Trans (F) pp. 115-116 TA - Trans (De)III, pp.320-322. TF - Text, IV, II. p. 417.

cribed in a beautiful hand several copies of the Quran which he sent to Mecca or Madina. He also promoted learning greatly and men of letters from Persia, Arabia and Turkey came to Gujarat, during his reign.

His religious piety :-

The author of *Mirāt-i-Sikandarī* speaks highly of Sultān Muẓaffar's piety. He strictly followed the tenets of Islam. The birth day of the Prophet was celebrated by a grand feast to which, the Saiyyids and 'Ulamās were invited. A fixed sum was set apart for the poor of Mecca and Madina, and was regularly remitted to those places every year. Ships were provided free of coast to those who wished to go for "Ḥājj" and their expenses while on board were also met by the Sultān. Jagirs were given to the religious people and orders were issued to the effect that their jagirs were not to be resumed in case of death but shared equally by the heirs.<sup>12</sup> The Sultān is said to have strictly observed religious injunction against intoxicating drinks. It is said that he hardly used the name of any intoxicant in his conversation. Sikandar reported that his favourite horse was one day seized with gripes, and when all other remedies failed, it recovered on being

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12. MS - Trans (F) pp. 126-127.

given pure spirits. The Sultan, when he knew this, never rode on that horse again.<sup>13</sup>

It appears, however, that the Sultān's generosity was directed to one section of people alone, viz. the Sunnis. The same author, Sikandar, informs us that the Sultan did not like the Shiah and even disliked the use of the word "Bohra". We may, therefore, presume that the Sultān though personally accomplished and also a generous ruler, was a sectarian ruler with all the bias of a sectarian.

His mild nature and its effects :-

Many stories are related by Sikandar, to show the good qualities and mild nature of Sultān Muẓaffar Shāh II. On the basis of these stories, the Sultān has been known as "Clement" in the history of Gujarat "Clemency" might be a virtue for an individual but it is not necessarily a virtue, when a person is burdened with important office or position. It may prove to be weakness at such times. This can be said to apply to Sultān Muẓaffar. His mild nature might be a good point in his character as Sikandar informs us, but at the same time this nature of the Sultān weakened the Sultānate of Gujarat in many respect.

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13. Ibid.



We may quote here some instances of his mild nature and generosity, as they are reported by Sikandar.

It is said that he hardly punished the servants of his household. Once, due to the carelessness of the water-carriers a musk-rat was boiled in bath water and its remains were poured over the Sultan's head. In spite of this carelessness of the water-carriers, he pardoned the responsible person saying, "I am an old man <sup>and</sup> can pardon the offender; but my sons are young - how will you satisfy them? Will your life be safe with them, you miserable men, if you are equally careless with them?" <sup>14</sup>

Second instance is of his careless body-guard Latīf Khān. Due to intoxication his (Latif Khan's) sword fell on the body of the Sultān. His life was, however, spared, when he promised "not to touch intoxicants in future". <sup>15</sup>

The above instances clearly indicate that during his reign the functionaries were not performing their duties well and administration became slack owing to his mild nature. Though Sikandar admires the unassuming nature of Sultān Muẓaffar, he at the same time notes that highway robberies had increased and even the roads in the vicinity of Ahmedabad were not safe for the travellers.

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14. MS - Trans (F) pp. 120-123.

15. Ibid pp. 123-125.

The author adds that the Sultan did not punish the evil doers, hence they did evil things without any fear.<sup>16</sup>

Sultān Muẓaffar's mild nature also adversely affected his hold on the nobles. Malik Sārang and Malik Copi, as Sikandar informs us, conducted the administration of Sultanate. It is said that Malik Sārang did not carry out the administration according to the orders of the Sultān. The Sultān, though he suspected the loyalty of this noble, continued him, as an old associate of his father, in the office of "Abdar".<sup>17</sup>

While analysing the above instance, we find that the Sultan showed his weakness by continuing Malik Sārang in his office though the latter became overbearing. It is difficult to agree with Sikandar, that Malik Sārang was tolerated for his misbehaviour only because he was the Sultān's father's old associate. It seems that probably it was beyond the power of the Sultān to remove Malik Sarang from his position and therefore to shield his weaknesses, the Sultān tolerated Malik Sārang in the guise of his father's "old associate". But if Sikandar is correct, then it seems to be an example of Sultān Muẓaffar's tolerance of doubtful loyalties and consequently

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16. MS - Trans (F) pp. 131-133.

17. Ibid pp. 131-133.

harmful to the kingdom though advantageous to the nobles for consolidating their positions.

The same factor also affected the strict military discipline firmly established by his father Sultan Mahmud Shah.

The history of Sultān Muẓaffar's reign indicates that the military strength of the Sultān was same as it was before. His generals had successful military career. Inspite of this the achievements of his army do not compare with his predecessor.

The reason, probably was that the Sultan lacked capacity for the proper organisation of the army and also he relied implicitly on his nobles in matters of war. As compared to Sultān Mahmūd Shāh, Muẓaffar Shāh than was much less able or competent.

From the Persian accounts of Sultān Muẓaffar Shāh's reign, we see that the Sultan entrusted most of the military engagements to his nobles, who did not distinguish themselves to the battle fields and sometimes to their mutual jealousies. The wars with Rana Sanga, the formidable enemy of the Gujarat Sultān, for instance, resulted in failure because of the dissensions among the nobles. Besides the Gujarat army suffered heavily in Ahmadnagar<sup>o</sup> (Himatnagar) at the hands of Rajputs when the latter

attacked it. Here too, the Persian historians inform us that the Sultān was wrongly guided by his nobles; when Nizām-ul-mulk, the deputy in charge of Idar, asked for reinforcements against the Rajputs. Hence, it could be seen that the mild nature of Sultān Muẓaffar Shāh, was not a virtue but it was his weakness.

Rivalry between Malik Ayāz and Malik Gopi :-

The rivalry between Malik Ayāz and Malik Gopi the two important nobles, assumed importance during the reign of Sultān Muẓaffar Shāh. It seems that these two nobles fought each other indirectly, especially in the matter relating to the Portuguese.

The accounts indicate that the nobles of Sultān Muẓaffar Shāh formed cliques among themselves. It seems that the nobles, viz. Malik Sārang, Malik Gopi and Nizām-ul-mulk, who were of Rajput origin, formed one party, and likewise the other nobles, also formed into cliques. Thus the jealousy and competition for power increased among the different groups of the nobles.

In his dealings, with Portuguese Sultān Muẓaffar Shāh, was dominated by the two rival nobles viz. Malik Ayāz and Malik Gopi. Malik Gopi, with the help of Malik Sārang, helped the Portuguese. Malik Ayāz, opposed the

concessions for the Portuguese and he managed to bring over to his side, Bibī Rānī, the beloved queen of the Sultan. Thus, the policies with the Portuguese was influenced by the two rival groups, of which one favoured the Portuguese and the other opposed it.

Similarly, Sultān Muẓaffar Shāh's policy towards Rajput hero Rana Sanga is an instance of his failure to understand such a formidable enemy. Instead of following a bold and decisive policy against Rajputs, he relied more on the opinions of his nobles, particularly in case of sending reinforcement to Nizām-ūl-mulk. Even his attitude towards Malik Ayāz after the latter's failure in humbling the Rajputs, is open to criticism. The Sultān had failed to realise the difficulties which Malik Ayāz had to face from the rival nobles. In this incident the other nobles were, also equally responsible but the Sultan spared them for reasons of his own.

Therefore though he was a man with certain good qualities but as a ruler he was weak and incapable.

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