

CHAPTER - I =====

THE FIRST DECADE OF SULTĀN MAHMŪD'S REIGN

Early years of Sultan Mahmūd's Life :

Sultān Mahmūd was born in the year 849/October 1445 and named Fataḥ~~Khān~~Khān. He was the grand son of Sultān Ahmad Shah. His mother was the daughter of Jam of Thatta in Sind. An interesting story of the marriage of Muhammad Shāh, which indicates the relations of Sultāns of Gujarat with the Bukhārī Saiyyids of Batwa, is given by Sikandar.¹ He writes that the Jam of Thatta, gave his two daughters, Bibi Mughali and Bibi Mirki, in marriage to Sultān Muhammad Shah II and Saiyyid Shāh Alam, the son of famous Bukhārī Saiyyid Burhān-ud-dīn Qutb-ī-Ālam of Batwa. It is stated that Bibi Mughali was fairer and as a result of the power and the prestige of the Sultān, she was given to him. This led Shāh Ālam to feel some bitterness and therefore he complained to his father. The father consoled to his son and told him that the queen would ultimately come to him.²

Incidentally, it happened so that Sultan Qutb-ud-din Ahmad Shāh II succeeded his father Sultān, Muhammad Shāh

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1. For more details "The Relations of the Saiyyids of Batwa with the Sultans of Gujarat"
 2. MIRAT-I -SIKANDARI (Trans-Faridi) pp. 3, 27, (Trans Bayley) pp. 153, 156 (hereafter M.S.)

II on the throne of Gujarat. Immediately after he became hostile towards his brother Fath Khān, then a minor, because he did not wish to have a possible claimant to his throne. Hence, the designs of Sultan Qutb-ud-din, forced Bibi Mughali to seek the protection of Saiyyid Shah 'Ālam for herself and her child.

Fath Khān, henceforth, was under the care of the Saiyyid but in the meanwhile Bibi Mirkī, the wife of the Saint died and so Bibi Mughali was married to Saiyyid Shah 'Ālam. This marriage was resented by Sultān Qutb-ud-din because he feared that this union might lead to a formidable coalition against him. Hence this fear resulted into vengeance against Fath Khān. Further, probably it was also regarded by him as an undesirable alliance for his father's widow to have made.

Various devices were used by Sultān Qutb-ud-din to secure Fath Khān. First, he tried to get at him by transferring his residence near the Saint's house. After his failure, he tried to get the Prince through his queen Rupmanjari and spies. But he did not succeed. Sikandar informs us that Prince Fath Khān was saved by the spiritual personality of Shah 'Ālam.³

3. M.S. Trans (B) Op.cit. 153, 156.

Sultān Qutb-ud-din did not succeed in his attempt, and after his death, he was succeeded by Dāūd Shāh, who lacked the qualities of a ruler. After a brief reign of one month and sixteen days Sultān Dāūd Shāh had to abdicate in favour of Fath Khān. It is interesting to note here that Malik Shābān and his followers engineered this revolt against Sultān Dāūd Shāh. Malik Shābān was the follower of Shāh 'Ālam, and probably Shāh 'Ālam owing to his interest in Fath Khān and his antagonism to Qutb-ud-din Shāh, might have influenced Malik Shābān to remove Dāūd Shāh from the throne.

After the consent of Bibi Mughalī, Prince Fath Khān was taken to the Bhadra citadel and declared the Sultan of Gujarat on Shābān 1, 863/May 25, 1458. The Sultān at this time was thirteen years old, and from this time he was known as Mahmūd Shāh.

Malik Shābān, other nobles and trusted persons, who helped the Sultān at the time of his accession, were rewarded with titles, jagirs and positions in the royal service.

The Political Condition of Gujarat at the time of his accession :

Since the time of Ahmad Shāh I, the nobles of Gujarat were divided in several groups. During the reigns of Sultān Qutb-ud-din Shāh and Dāūd Shāh, this feeling became acute. The incident that followed the

accession of Sultān Mahmūd Shah clearly indicates that Malik Sh̄bān and Burhān-ul-Mulk respectively were the leaders of two rival groups. The rival nobles were jealous of each other and so this faction affected the accession of Sultān Mahmūd.

Moreover, the Rajput kingdoms within Gujarat, who had accepted the overlordship of Sultān Ahmad Shāh, had gradually become independent. The control of the Peninsula of Saurashtra was vital but difficult and not yet secured. This land was divided among a number of petty Rajput chiefs. Junagadh, the independent and powerful Rajput stronghold was a major challenge to the Sultāns of Gujarat. Champaner, another powerful Rajput stronghold on the north-east boundary of Gujarat, was ruled by the house of Ravals.

The Conspiracy of Nobles :

After a few days of his accession, the young Sultān had to face a serious conspiracy at the hands of some of the nobles, namely; Kabīr-ud-dīn Sultānī or Burhān-ul-Mulk, Chānd, the son of Ismāīl or 'Adud-ul-Mulk; Khwājāh-ul-Mulk or Hisām-ul-Mulk.

It seems that the real cause of their anxiety was the rise of Malik Sh̄bān, Imāūd-ul-Mulk. Hence they thought of removing this powerful nobles by misguiding the Sultān about his intentions and activities. They

informed the Sultān that Malik Sh^hban was planning to de-throne him in favour of Shihāb-ud-dīn Ahmad his own son. The Sultān, who was too young to judge this issue, immediately ordered the imprisonment of Malik Sh^hban.

At night, Malik Abdullah, the Superintendent of Elephant Stables and a trusted servant of the Sultān approached him and told him that the conspirators intended to raise Hasan Khān ⁴ (the Sultan's brother) in his place. The Sultān, at this information, was perplexed and sought the guidance of his mother Bibi Mughali. Other trusted nobles viz. Hājī Malik Quālū and Malik Isānī were also called in by the Sultān.

Next morning in the durbar, the Sultān ordered Sharf-ul-mulk to present Malik Sh^hban before him. The guards in charge of Malik Sh^hban, being under the orders of the conspirators, did not carry out the orders. The

4. The Persian chroniclers differ regarding this name. Sikandar writes Habīb Khān (M.S. Trans. (F) pp. 42-44) Tabqāt-i-Akbari- Trans (De) (hereafter TA) Tarikh-i-Firishtāh (hereafter TF) (Text) and Cambridge History of India III (hereafter CHI-III) write Hasan Khān. Firishtāh writes that Hasan Khān was the brother of Sultan Mahmud - TF - Text, IV, II, p. 381.

Sultān then himself went to the "Tarpuliya Gate" of "Bhadra Citadel" where Malik Shāban was confined and freed him.

The servants of the disloyal nobles, finding the change in Sultān Mahmūd's attitude, submitted to the Sultān while others escaped from the scene.

Sultān Mahmūd masters the situation :-

The nobles at the failure of their plan collected a large army and marched towards the Bhadra Citadel from the "Tin Darwazah". The Sultān on the other hand had by comparison a small number of soldiers to meet the challenge.

Some of the experienced nobles, thought it inadvisable to face a superior force and advised the Sultān to escape by way of Sabarmati and there after collecting a large army to attack the enemy. The Sultān refused to accept this suggestion and so they advised him to charge with elephants, which he did. This created confusion and disorder in the enemy force, for it was difficult for them to manoeuvre in the narrow streets against the advancing elephant force. The large army, therefore, was dispersed, while others submitted and the conspirators fled to different places. ⁵

4. TF (Text) IV, II pp. 383-84 (Trans-Briggs IV pp.47-48, M.S. Trans (F) pp.42-45, TA-Trans (DE)-III, pp.238-242.

The Fate of the Conspirators :-

Hisam-ul-Mulk fled towards his brother Rukn-ud-din, who was the Kotwal of Patan. Kabir-ud-din during his flight was killed by a Rajput Garasiya in Sabarkantha and his head was sent to the Sultan and placed on the city gates, a rather brutal custom of the age. Burhan-ul-Mulk was caught in Fathpur by an eunuch, while on his way back to Ahmedabad from Sarkhez. He was ordered to be trampled to death by an elephant. Maulana Khidra-ul-Mulk was imprisoned and sent to Din, but was pardoned later and given a jagir at the request of Malik Shaban.

The Rebellion, its causes & Consequences :-

The factions among the nobles was the important factor in this rebellion. The rivalry among the nobles was not an unknown thing in this age. The enmity of nobles, might have, possibly, increased during the reigns of Sultans Qutb-ud-din and Da'ud Shah. At the same time it may also be that the rebel nobles had possibly held high positions during the reigns of the previous two Sultans. The accession of Sultan Mahmud on the throne was victory of the rival group. The larger part of the army was under their control and the Sultan was young. So they took the advantage of this situation to overthrow their rivals.

It also appears that the nobles were of different racial origin and since this factor acted as a uniting

factor/ amongst them, it also led to the formation of groups.⁶

It is very likely, that the gradual rise of Malik Shāh³, was envied by other nobles of high origin. Though he was not removed from his office in the first instance, we are informed that he willingly retired in 1461. This reason appears unconvincing for it hardly agrees with the normal attitude of the nobles of this age. The Persian chroniclers inform us that he retired due to the old age.⁷ Probably this story might have been the popular one, but it does not appear to be the whole truth. The later history of Sultān Mahmūd Shāh indicates that after the departure of Malik Shāh³, Khudāwand Khān Malik 'Alīm, Muhāfiz Khān^{and}, other nobles of high origin came to power. The rise of Malik Shāh³ may then be a factor in this rebellion.

Another notable feature of "the insurrection of the nobles", was that the Sultān at an early age showed unusual courage intelligence and ready-wittedness which enabled him to master the situation with the limited means at his disposal. The virtues and valour, which the Sultān showed during the course of war, helped him in establishing his power over his nobles. Barring one or two stray instances, we find that the Sultān, inspite

6. MS - Trans (F) 1 p. 86-87.

7. MS - ^{Ibid} Trans (F) pp. 86-87.

of his frequent absence from the capital, was able to maintain peace and order there.

Sultān Mahmūd I may be criticised for his cruel punishments during the course of rebellion, though if his actions are to be judged in the light of circumstances, it was necessary and was demanded by the age he lived in. Besides, he was not wholly responsible for this harsh policy. It was the characteristic of the medieval age. Therefore the Sultān may be judged too harshly when he followed this common policy for maintaining peace and order.

The Distribution of Jagirs and titles :-

After this event the titles and jagirs were distributed among the faithful nobles by the Sultān. Malik Shāban entitled 'Imād-ul-Mulk was entrusted the office of the wazārat. Malik Hājī was appointed as Muhtasib, with the title of 'Adud-ul-Mulk. among the others given titles were Malik Bahā-ud-dīn Tughan and Malik Isā Malik Sarang a noble of Rajput origin, ^{was} given was the title of Mukhlis-ul-Mulk and later on known as Qiwām-ul-Mulk.

GUJARAT, MALWA & THE NIZAMSHAHI STATE OF DECCAN

In 865/ 1461-62, the Sultān went on a hunting trip towards the South and encamped near the river Khari, a few miles from Ahmedabad. Here he received a letter from Sultān Nizām Shāh of Deccan, for assistance against

Sultān Mahmūd Khaljī, the ambitious ruler of Malwa, who was then on his way to Deccan, at the instigation of Nizām-ūl-Mulk Ghori. Nizām-ūl-Mulk Ghori, during the reign of Sultān Humāyūn Shāh the predecessor of Nizām Shāh had fled from the Deccan, to escape the anger of that Sultān and had taken shelter in Malwa.⁸

Meanwhile Sultān Humāyūn Shāh died and Nizām Shāh became the Sultān with Mahmūd Gāwān or Khwājah Jahān, the celebrated noble of Deccan, as the regent. This gave an opportunity to Nizām-ūl-Mulk Ghori to invade Deccan with the help of Mahmūd Khaljī of Malwa.

Sultān Mahmūd Shāh I acceded to the request and marched with a large army as far as Nandarbar. It is obvious that Sultān Mahmūd's decision was politically motivated. Since the times of Ahmad Shāh the relations of Malwa and Gujarat were not cordial. The rulers of both the kingdoms were expansionists and therefore they took opposite sides in the disputes which arose. The Malwa Sultān, for instance, Hoshang Shāh, during Ahmad Shāh's wars against Rajput principalities within Gujarat, helped the Rajputs. This policy of Malwa Sultāns continued in the reign of Sultān Muḥammad Shāh, who was at war with

8. MS - Trans (F) pp.50. TA - Trans (DE) -III, 243
Bombay Gazetteer - Vol.I (hereafter Bom. Gaz) P-I
pp. 244-45. CHI Vol. III, pp.304, TF-Trans (Briggs)
IV, pp. 225.

Raval Gangdas of Champener. Similarly Sultān Mahmud Khaljī attacked Gujarat during the reign of Sultan Qutb-ud-dīn Shāh in 1451.⁹

Strategically, it was in the interest of the Sultān of Gujarat to help Khandesh in maintaining its independence as a buffer between Malwa, Gujarat and Bahamanides, on the Southern frontier.

The Course of the War :-

After reaching Nandarbar, Sultān Mahmud, encamped there to watch the movements of the Sultān of Malwa. Here, he received a second letter from Nizām Shāh, stating that Khwājah Jahān Turk and Sikandar Khān Bukhārī, two of the Bahamani nobles, had been forced to retire with their master in the fortress of Bidar after an unsuccessful battle with the Sultān of Malwa. In this engagement Sultān Mahmud Khaljī had also lost his two of his generals Mahabat Khān, the governor of Chanderi and Zahir-ul-Mulk one of his ministers. This was a serious loss for the Sultān of Malwa and hence he did not press the advantage afresh. In the meanwhile, Khwājah Jahān Turk, who commanded the centre of the army of Deccan, carried away the young Sultān in the fort of Bidar. On this, Sultān Mahmud of Malwa collected the force and besieged the fort. By this time Mahmud Gawān collected a large force to raise

9. TF - Trans [Briggs] IV pp. 276-278, 40, 41.

the seige. According to Firishtah Sultān Mahmūd Khaljī gave up the seige of the fort because of the hot weather.¹⁰

On receiving this news, Sultān Mahmūd marched towards Bidar. On his way to Bidar, he received Khwājah Jahān Turk near Thalner. The meeting of Gujarat and Deccan armies at Thalner, forced Mahmūd Khaljī to retreat from Bidar to Mandu, for he feared the possibility of the joint attack of the armies of Gujarat and Deccan on his capital. The siege of Bidar was raised but the usual route to Malwa was closed and hence Mahmūd Khaljī had to retreat by the dangerous and wild Gondwanah route,¹¹ in the course of which he and his army suffered greatly.

The expedition against Mahmūd Khaljī of Malwa in Deccan, according to Sikandar, was made at a heavy cost. The author states that the Sultān had to spend the whole revenue of Gujarat after the maintenance and equipments of the army. "No king had sent such forces in any direction."¹²

Sultān Mahmūd Khaljī attacks Deccan again :-

In 867/1463 A.D. Sultan Nizām Shāh again appealed to Mahmūd Shāh against the Malwa Sultān, who had invaded Deccan for the second time. This time Sultan Mahmūd Khaljī

10. TF- Trans (Briggs) IV, pp. 227. 49-51

11. Ibid (Text) IV, II pp. 384-85

12. MS - Trans (F) p. 51.

had reached as far as Daulatabad.¹³ On the receipt of the letter, Sultān Mahmūd Shāh, marched with a well-equipped army towards Sultanpur. On hearing the march of the Sultān of Gujarat, Sultān Mahmūd Khaljī abandoned his plan and withdrew to his capital, possibly because of the bitter experience that he had in the past. Sultān Mahmūd also returned to Ahmedabad from where he is said to have written to Sultān Mahmūd Khaljī, "your action is against the law of Islam. If you again invade Deccan, I shall on this side attack Mandu; take therefore your choice."¹⁴

THE CONQUEST OF BARHOT, PARNERA & DUN :

In 1465, Mahmūd sent his army to Northern Konkan to capture the forts of Parnera and Barhot and the sea-port town of Daman,¹⁵ all of which were till then, in the hands of Rajput kings. These rulers were frequently engaged in piratical activities on the sea-coast and they attacked the Gujarat vessels.

13. Ibid, p.51, TA - Trans (De) pp.244-45, Bom. Gaz. Vol. I, part I, p.245, CHI, III, States that Khalji penetrated no further than the Northern confines of Tailangana, pp.304-05, TF (Text.) IV,II, p. 385 BR

14. MS - Trans (F) p.51

15. Persian chroniclers give these name differently Sika-
 ndar writes Baradar Hill fort (MS Trans F p. 51).
 Nizām-ud-dīn writes Bawar (TA - (Trans) - (De) III, pp.

On hearing the advance of the Sultān, the pirates with their leaders took refuge in the hill fort of Bahrot or Bawar. The Sultān crossed by the difficult way to Barhot or Bawar and encamped in the vicinity of the fort. After a sharp struggle, the Sultān captured the fort, forcing the enemy to submit and pay the tribute. On this acknowledgment, they were pardoned.

This episode is not very important in itself, and briefly treated by the Persian chroniclers. It is nevertheless important as it is connected with the early history of Parsis in Gujarat.

The Sack of Sanjan :-

It was in the course of this expedition or perhaps in 1491, that the Sultān's generals destroyed the old Parsi colony of Sanjan and a principality of a Hindu Ruler

15. pp.246-247). Daman is also spelt differently by
 contd. them. Sikandar writes Dun and Dahanu clearly. Prof. Commissariat and Haig call it Daman. If "Dun" is correct then it is wrong to identify it as Daman. Dahanu and Daman are equi-distant from Sanjan. Bawar might be the variant of Bahrot. Firishtah writes Bawar and Dun Bunder between Gujarat and Konkan, TF - (Text) IV,II, p.385.

Jeddi Rana. This king and his Parsi subject valiantly defended Sanjan, when it was attacked by the Sultān's general Alp Khān. The details have been recorded in Qissah-i-Sanjān, a chronicle in Persian, written by a priest Bahman Kaikobad Sanjana at Navsari in the year 1599.

The Parsis landed in India on their flight from Persia to escape the persecution of their religion by the Arab. They first settled at the port of Diu and later near Sanjan. The exiles were hospitably received by Jeddi Rana, the ruler of Sanjan and the surrounding territory.

According to the author "1,400 horsemen clad in steel armour and their leader Ardeshar led the host of Raja to war against the forces of Mahmud Begada." ¹⁶

In the beginning Alp Khān was repulsed but he obtained reinforcements and resigned to the attack. Ardeshar was wounded. Jeddi Rana and his army was completely routed. Alp Khān ravaged the town after his victory. The Parsis fled with their sacred fire to the hill fort of Barhot and from there they went to Vansda, Navsari, Bulsar

16. S.H. Hodiwala - Studies in Parsi History pp.92-117.

quoted also in Prof. Commissariat, History of Gujarat Vol. I. p. 181.

and ultimately to Udwada.¹⁷

SULTAN MAHMUD HELPS USMAN KHAN TO RECOVER THE
THRONE OF JHALORE

The Persian historians are silent about some events that took place during the early years of Sultān Mahmūd's reign. This has been recorded in the history of Palanpur State.

The independent State of Jhalore was at that time under the sway of Chauhan Rajputs. Malik Sher Khān, the leader of the Lohani Afghāns, came from Bihar and was employed by the Rajput King in this Kingdom. The Chauhan Rajputs of Jhalore and the Rathods of Marwar were not on good terms. Once the Rathod king invited Visaldev Chauhan to his place and killed him. Jhalore was then brought under the Rathods of Marwar. Visaldev's widow sought the help of Malik Khurram, the Afghān, in recovering the lost kingdom. Later, this Afghān betrayed the widow and established an independent Muslim State in Jhalore in 1394 A.D.. Zafār Khan, the Governor of Gujarat helped him in this plan.¹⁸ Hence, the relations of Gujarat with the Muslim State of Jhalore were frinedly, since its inception.

17. Ibid.

18. Sir Taley Muhammad Khan, History of Palanpur State (Guj. Text) pp. 11, 13.

In 1461, Usmān Khān of Jhalore came to Gujarat and asked Sultān Mahmūd to help him against his brother Malik Sālār, who had seized the throne and driven him out. The Sultān kept the Prince in the capital and called the army to assemble. The Sultān was successful in recovering Jhalore. He also captured Bhinmal, Sachar, Satyapur and restored Usmān Khān to its throne. As a token of special favour he conferred upon him the title of Zubdat-ul-Mulk.¹⁹

19. The Title of Zubdat-ul-Mulk granted to Usmān Khān was corrupted in the Marwari language into "Zubdal" or "Jabdal" and in later years it was common when any ruler emulated the greatness of Usman Khan, to describe him as a "Second Jabdal", prof. Commissariat - History of Gujarat Vol. I p. 178 n, also Sir Taley Muhammad Khān, History of Palanpur State (Guj. text) p.13 n.