

## **Emigres in Mughal Nobility during Akbar: A Brief Study of their Backgrounds**

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It is said that The Mughal presided over an international cosmopolitan ruling class. It is well established fact that Mughal nobility composed with various ethnic groups of people including immigrant people. The Nobility under the Mughals, was on a broad view a remarkable institution which produced a uniform and unique whole men belonging to different region, tribes, speaking different languages and believing different religions and different cultural tradition. The reputation of Mughal emperors, a liberal patron of learning and administrative talent and of their being remarkably free from narrow racial or sectarian narrow mindedness attracted to their court able and ambitious men from many countries. Most of these men came from the neighboring countries of Iran, Turan and Afghanistan. From different countries like turkey, Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Arabia, Persia, Gilan, Mazandran, Khurasan, Sistan, Trans-oxinia, Khawazaram, The Qipchaq-steps, Gharjistan, Kurdistan etc., people came to Hindustan for the suitable employment under the Mughal rulers.<sup>1</sup> Some of the new comers were remarkably able people and rose to occupy highest offices in the Mughal court. Mughal emperors were deeply attached to the aristocratic principle and when a representative of some nobles family of Iran or Turan or someone who held high office in a neighbouring kingdom came to the court, sometimes in consequences of political uncertainty or to flee from personal or sectarian persecution, they welcomed him and appointed him to a suitable *Mansab*.

In present study, I have discussed about the first generation of migrant noble during the time of Akbar. Here, I have mainly discussed about the two prominent ethnic group of the Mughal nobility that is Turani and Iranian nobles. I have tried to find out the backgrounds of these immigrant nobles. Further, I have attempted to provide the details of the previous life of the immigrant noble before they came to India during the period of Emperor Akbar. A number of immigrant nobles came to India from other country with huge administrative experience. In the present paper, I have tried to find out in which condition the migrant nobles came to India and how they were welcomed in the Mughal court. Here I have tried to examine how India became centre of attraction for Iranian and Turani people and came

to India during the reign of Akbar and at the same time the attitude of Akbar towards the immigrant people.

The present paper is based on two biographical source of Mughal period that is *The Maathir-ul-Umara* of NawwabSamsamUdDaula Shah Nawaz Khan and his son Abdul Hayy translated by H. Beveridge, *DhakhiratulKhawanin* of ShaikhFaridBhakkari translated by Z.A Desai. I have also consulted sources like *Ain-i-Akbari* of AbulFazal translated by Blochmann, *Akbar Nama* of AbulFazal translated by H. Beveridge and other sources.

### **TuraniMigrant Nobles and their backgrounds**

A number of Turani people came from various places to India during Akbar and served under him. I have made some profile of first generation of immigrant noble and discussed their backgraounds.

**Muhammad Quli Khan Barlas:** Muhammad Quli Khan Barlas came to India during the period of Emperor Humayun but he rose to high post during the time of Akbar. Muhammad Quli Khan Barlas was a decedent of Barantaq.<sup>ii</sup> His great- grandfather was one of the chief officers of Amir Timur. Muhammad Quli was cultured and manof good judgement and was distinguished amongst his compeers for his bravery and skill for leadership. During the time of Humayun, he for his distinguished decent and valuable service, raised to the rank of *Amir* and received Multan as fief. During the reign of Akbar he rose to high position and received 5000 rank.<sup>iii</sup>

**Qulij Muhammad Khan:** Qulij Muhammad Khan belongs to Andajan, a province of Fargana, South of the Sayhun. His ancestors had been serving under the Timurides for many years. His grandfather was noble at the court of SulatnHusaynMirzaBayqara.<sup>iv</sup> Owing to his close association, he was greatly relied on in the service of Akbar.<sup>v</sup> Muhammad Qulij Khan held 5000 rank under Akbar.

**MirzaJaniArgun, Tar Khan:** MirzaJani Beg was a descendant of Shakal Beg Tarkan who had good relation with Timur.<sup>vi</sup> Mirza Abdul Ali son of Abdul Khaliq was great grandfather of Jani Beg and obtained high rank from Sulatn Mahmud and was made governor of Bokhara.<sup>vii</sup> In Bokhara Mirza Abdul Ali was killed by ShaibaniUzbek. The Argun clan being without a head left Transoxinia and came to Khorasan to Mir Dhu-un-Nun who was the AmirulUmara and commander in chief of Sulatn Husain Mirza and held Qandahar as fief.<sup>viii</sup> In course of time Mirza Isa son of Abdul Ali, the great grandfather of Jani Beg

became the ruler of Thatta.<sup>ix</sup> Then After the death of Muhammad Baqi, son of Mirza Isa, Jani Beg became the ruler of Thatta.

In the 38<sup>th</sup> year of Akbar's reign, MirzaJani Beg Came to India and paid homage to Akbar in court. MirzaJani received 3000 rank and was granted the fief of Multan.<sup>x</sup>

**MirzaSulaiman S/O Mirza Khan:** MirzaSulaimanwas connected through five generation with Amir TimurGugani. After the conquest of India, Prince Humayun in 1527 took leave to settle Kabul and Badakhshan.<sup>xi</sup>Humayun gave Badakhshan to Sultan Waris who was fater-in-law of MirzaSulaiman.<sup>xii</sup> After sometimes, MirzaSulaiman became the ruler of Badakhshan. During the reign of Akbar, MirzaSulaiman came to India and he was welcomed very warmly. Emperor Akbar himself rode forward to welcome him.<sup>xiii</sup> Although intention of MirzaSulaiman was not to stay in India but to get help from Akbar to recapture Badakhshan from his grandsonMirzaShahrukh. Therefore, he returned to Badakhshan. However, again after sometimes, in1584A.D, MirzaSulaiman left Badakhshan and came to India. This time Akbar gave his 5000 rank.<sup>xiv</sup>

**MirzaShahrukh:** MirzaShahrukh was grandson of MirzaSulaiman, The ruler of Badakhshan. MirzaShahrukh in Badakhshan became opponent of his grandfather MirzaSulaiman. The enmity became so large that MirzaSulaimanmigrated to India. However, a peace was arranged between them. When MirzaShahrukh and MirzaSulaiman were fighting with each other, Abdullah Khan the ruller of Turan came to Badakhshan to capture it. Then MirzaShahrukh with his three son migrated to India. In the 29<sup>th</sup> year, Prince Daniyal welcomed him outside capital and introduced to the presence.<sup>xv</sup>Emperor Akbar gave him his daughter Shagr-unNisha marriage in 1593. He was appointed governor of Malwa and raised to the rank of 5000. <sup>xvi</sup>MirzaShahruh distinguished himself in the conquest of Deccan.

**Shah Budhgah Khan:** Shah Budhgah Khan was one of the MiyankalAimaq of Samarqand. He came to India during emperor Humayun and performed outstanding deeds and his service were recognised by his elevation to the rank of Amir. Diring the time of Akbar he was rewarded with the rank of 3000.<sup>xvii</sup>

**Shamsuddin Muhammad Khan Atka:** He was son of Mir Yar Muhammad of Ghazni. Mir Yar Muhammad was simple farmer.<sup>xviii</sup>In The MaathirulUmara Mir YarMuhamad was described as spiritually minded landlord.<sup>xix</sup>When Shamsuddin Khan Atka became 20 years old, he dreamt that the moon come into his hand. He told his father about the dream and his father interpreted that some good fortune must come to his hand. Then afterword he joined

the service of of Mirza Kamran. Although he was in service under Kamran and Humayun, he rose to high dignity during the reign of Akbar.<sup>xx</sup>

**Ghazi Khan Badakhshi:** His Name was Qazi Nizam. He Studied science under Mulla Islam and was unique of the age in traditional and rational Knowledge. He was also a pupil of Shaikh Husain of Khwarazm.<sup>xxi</sup> He acquired knowledge of Sufism. As a able person he became an Amir. Initially he was a great companion of Mirza Sulaiman, the ruler of Badakhshan. He received the title of Qazi Khan. In the year when Humayun died, and Mirza Sulaiman took advantage of his opportunity and besieged Kabul, Munim Khan defended it. When the siege last long, Mirza Sulaiman sent Qazi Khan to to Munim Khan with messege. Qazi Khan stayed with Munim Khan and Qazi Khan realised that to capture Kabu was impossible. Qazi Khan told this to Mirza Sulaiman and Mirza Sulaman was ready to make peace and returned to Badakhshan. After that, the Qazi left Sulaiman and came to Kabul where the Mughal officials respectfully received him. In the 19<sup>th</sup> year of Akbar's reign, Qazi came to India and paid his respect to Akbar. Emperor Akbar gave him a waist dagger, a decorated sword, a robe of honour and made writer of orders. He soon rose to the rank of 1000.<sup>xxii</sup>

**Mirza Wali Turani:** Mirza Wali Turani was elite from Turan. His descendent was in high position and respected among the Khwajas. He came to India during Akbar. Because of the excellence of lineage, Akbar favoured him in court.<sup>xxiii</sup>

### **Iranian Migrant Nobles and their backgrounds**

Like Turani nobles, large number of Iranian nobles came to India during Akbar and rose to high position in court. I have tried to make some profile of the immigrant nobles and discussed their backgrounds.

**Sher Afghan Turkman:** His name was Ali Quli. He was under the service of Shah Ismail of Iran. After the death of Shah Ismial, he came to India in 1591-2 A.D. he came to India through Qandahar and he joined service under Khan Khannan Mirza Khan. Khan Khannan enrolled him in absentia in the cadre of imperial army and he rendered laudable service in the expedition of Thatta. After the successful expedition, Sher Afghan got suitable *mansab*.<sup>xxiv</sup>

**Sadiq Muhammad Hirati:** He was so of Muhamad Baqir of Hirat who was the minister of Qarz Khan Turkman, the ruler of Khorasan.<sup>xxv</sup> Muhamad Baqir rebelled against Shah Tahmsap. It became impossible to Sadiq Muhammad Khan to stay there; therefore, he came to India and served under Bairam Khan. He was very honest person and he soon obtained

service under the crown and after the the death of Bairam Khan, he was promoted to rank of Amir.<sup>xxvi</sup>

**Tarsun Muhammad Khan:** Tarsun Muhammad Khan was nephew of Shah Muhammad SaifulMulk. Shah Muhammad SaifulMulk was an independent ruler of Gharjistan, a part of Khorasan. However, Shah Tahmasp conquered Gharjistan and Muhammad SaifulMulk had to submit it.<sup>xxvii</sup> After that, Tarsun Muhammad Khan migrated to India and was in service under Bairam Khan. He rose to high position during the time of Akbar.<sup>xxviii</sup>

**Muzaffar Husain Safavi:** He was son of Sulatn Husain. When fort of Qandahar came into possession of Shah TahmaspSafavi, he gave that Qandahar with ZamanDawar and Garmsir as far as river Hemland to Sulatan Husain Mirza. In 1566 A.D Sultan Husain Mirza died durng the reign of Shah Ismail II. The Shah was suspicious about the Mirzas. Out of five sons of late Sultan Husain, Muhammad Husain who gone to Iran was killed there. Shah Quli Sultan, governor of Qandahar commissioned to murder the other four brothers. But sudden death of Shah saved the lives of four brothers including Muzaffar Husain Safavi.<sup>xxix</sup>

When Muhammad Khudabanda became the ruler of Iran, he made over Qadahar to Muzaffar Husain to the oldest son of the four brothers and ZamanDawar up to the bank of Helmad to RustamSafavi and the other two brothers. Abu Said Mirza and SanjarMirzawere sent with him. Hamza Beg BhulQadar, Known as the blind Hamza –who hadbeenvakilof Sultan Husain Mirza, appointed as guardian of the mirzas. When Hamza became too powerful, MuzaffarMirza tried to kill him. Hmaza escaped and fled to ZamanDawar and taking RustamSafavi , he returned to fight against MuzaffarSafavi. Muzaffar Husain Safavi was defeated in the battle and took shelter in Qandahar. However, with the involvement of Iranian headman, a peace took place between them. However, after sometime, Muzaffar Husain again tried to kill Hamza Beg. He secretly summoned RustamSafavi to Qandahar. Again, Malik Muhammad, father-in-Law of MuzaffarSafavi acted as intermediary and arranged peace with Hamza.<sup>xxx</sup>

However, Muzaffar Husain succeeded to kill Hamza. Killing Hamza resulted in RustamSafavi leading army against Qandahar. But he was unsuccessful. Meanwhile Muzaffar Husain became too ambitious and tried tosabotage Malik Mahmud and Muhammad Beg and he succeeded in killing Muhammad Beg. Therefore, he consolidated his position. However, he had to face many problems at a same time. Uzbegs had send force to the border of Qandahar and fought against MuzaffarSafavi. Although, Muzaffar Husain was successful against the Uzbegs, the danger was yet to disappear. When the

tension was going on over Qandahar, news of arrival of Imperial army from India came to knowledge of Mirza. Finally, he decided to migrate to India.<sup>xxxix</sup>

In 1595 A.D. Muzaffar Husain Safavi with his sons and 1000 Qazilbash soldiers came to India. He was greatly honoured in court and Akbar honoured him by calling him son. Akbar gave him 5000 rank and territory of Shambahl.<sup>xxxix</sup>

**Mir Sharif Amuli:** His home was in Amul, an old city of south of Caspian and west of Astrabad.<sup>xxxix</sup> He gained all his education in Iran. He also gained Knowledge of sufism and about religion. When he came to India, he found India as an appropriate land for him.<sup>xxxix</sup>

**Mir MuizzulMulkMashhadi:** He was Saiyed and one of the nobles of holy Mashhad.<sup>xxxv</sup> During the time of Akbar, he was enrolled among the commander of 3000 and was highly favoured for his services.<sup>xxxvi</sup>

**MirzaRustamSafavi:** He was younger brother of MirzaMuzaffar Husain of Qandahar. He was so of Sultan Husain. Sultan Muhammad Khudabanda, the Shah of Iran gave Qandahar to Sultan Husain. After the death of Sultan Husain, ZaminDawar came to MirzaRustamSafavi.<sup>xxxvii</sup> As the territory of ZaminDawar was very limited compared to Qandahar and was not sufficient for the support of RustamMirza and his brothers, MirzaRustam wished to conquer Sistan from Malik Mahmud-who was of the old race of ruler of that country and taken possession of it after the death of Shah Ismail II. Malik Mahmud made an alliance with MuzaffarMirza, elder brother of MirzaSafavi against him. This led to disagreement between the two brothers. RustamMirza with the help of Hamza Beg led army against Qandahar but failed to capture it. During that time as many of the cities of Khorasan had been plundered by the Uzbeks and they had no agreed chief, MirzaRustam marched from ZaminDawar to Farah and took possession of that territory. He several times fought against the Uzbeks and raised the standard of bravery. After that he took possession of Sistan. However, when Jalaluddin, son of Malik Mahmud came to Sistan, MirzaRustamSafavi returned to ZaminDawar. Jalaluddin chased Mirza and he was defeated by Jalaluddin. Muzaffar Husain, his elder brother waiting for the opportunity, sieged ZaminDawar. At that situation, MirzaRustam had no choice but to submit to Akbar. Thus, he wrote a letter to Sharif Khan Atka, governor of Ghajnin and expressed a wish for enlistment in the service of Emperor Akbar.

In 1592-3 A.D, MirzaRustamSafavi came to India and was honoured in court. He was given 5000 rank and territory of Multan and several province of Baluchistan.<sup>xxxviii</sup>

**Conclusion:** Throughout the reign of Akbar from different country, different ethical people came to India for desirable employment. A large number of people came to India during

Akbar who had plenty of experience in the administrative work. When these migrant people lost imperial favour in their respected country, they came to India for suitable job. If we look at the number and the rank, it is clear that during the reign of Akbar, those who held administrative position in their native country, they were given high position in Mughal court. Mughals were famous for being tolerant people and they were known for their hospitality. Therefore, large number of people from various places came to India and held position in Mughal court and made cosmopolitan ruling class.

## References:

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