

A Survey of the Life and Time of Aboulkhir Khan the Shaibani as Reflected in the Moghimkhani Biographies and Sparsely in other Authentic Historical Documents

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Abstract: Aboulkhir Khan was the founder of She banyan government in Qabchaq plain in Transoxiana. First he accession to the throne in Tourette, located in western Siberia, in support of most Uzbek tribes, and took the Sheibanyan families under his command by the year 834 A.D. (Hejira) and after a while he could dominate Qabchaq plain. He decided to leave his authority locality in the western Siberia to north lands of Oxus (Amu Darya). He was able to unite the tribes of Uzbek and establish a unified government from Qabchaq field to the borders of sea. What made him powerful was the support of Peter, the Great. Another factor to his authority and great power was the support of great Uzbek tribes. So he could capture major parts of Transoxiana by their help and protection and seized Khoazmia, the important city. He also decided to attack to Samarqand during Alagh-Beig Timurid and because of his authority in the area, Timurid rulers were always regarding him. Then they decided to ask him for help during their battles which is one of the most important and noticeable points in his system of government. He was a person who united vast area of Uzbek tribes during his rule of forty years. The researcher in this paper states that Aboulkhir khans rule in Qabchaq plain shows his forty years government, which has been written using historical authentic texts and the researcher attempted to survey both the sensitive history of Transoxiana and the brilliant history of Central Asia which are useful to scholars

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Introduction:

Aboulkhir Khan is a great Uzbek ruler and the founder of Shaibani line in the Ghabchagh region in Mavaranahre. As historians have reported Aboulkhir Khan decided to subjugate his tribe to the government of Russia in the time of Peter the Great in 1726, and was welcomed by the Russians. In fact, doing so, he meant to take over all the related tribes of the region under his control with the support of Russia. He was only 17 years of age when he promulgated himself as the great Khan in Tora region of Siberia. He then managed to invade all the lands north of Sihoon River and also those of Khwarizm and Khireh and add them to his jurisdiction. He became the head of a government which was to be continued by the attempts of his descendents, especially his grandson Mohammad Shaibani. Through the unity that he wrought among the Uzbek tribes, he could establish a unified kingdom all through Siberia to Sear Sea. Important among the events of his time are his clashes with Nader the Afshar and the Timoorian, both Persian dynasties. His

government was stable only till 861(AH) when Ghalmon tribes in his region rose to stand against him causing his downfall. In fact, his constant clashes with the Timoorian and regional tribes finally brought about his demise. As Aboulkhir Khan had played an important role in shaping the history of Middle Asia, we have intended to briefly clarify his 40-yaer-long rule in the region of Ghabchagh as it is reflected in authentic historical documents.

Aboulkhir Khan, the son of Dolat Oghlan, the son of Ibrahim, the son of Polad, the son of Mango Tymmoor Khan, the son of Yadoa Ghol, the son of Jooji Bogha, the son of Bahadoor Sultan, the son of Shiaban Khan, the son of Jooji, the son of Changiz Khan the Mongol is a famous Uzbek ruler and the founder of Shaibani dynasty in the Ghabchagh region. When he was very young, Aboulkhir Khan served a great Shiabani Khan called Jamdagh Khan who was slain by some rebellious warriors of his own. As the commander in charge of his left army, Aboulkhir Khan was also captivated but was soon released in 830 (AH). In 831, with the

support of the heads of prominent Uzbek tribes and those of Vaghas ruled by a certain Monghit in the city of Tora in the west of Siberia, he rose to the throne and managed to take over almost all Shiabani tribes of the region under his rule in a few years. He, in fact, sat on the grand throne of Ghabchagh region (Anoosheh 2001 , 27).

As historians have recorded when 17 only, he was officially announced as the chieftain of all Shaibani tribes which then resided near the Tora River in Siberia. This region is now situated to the west of the present city of Tobolesk. After being established as a the chief of all tribes, Aboulkhir Khan then attacked and took over all the Jooji tribes in the east of Oral River and north of Jayhoon. He later could also invade and take charge of Khwarizm, Organj and all other important towns near the banks of Sayhoon, ranging all through Sanghagh and Uzgand (Renah 1973, 774). Right at the same time, the weakness of Timoorian rulers in Mavarnahre made him to raid the region with the help of other Uzbeks, and as Timoorian could not stand against their surge soon the region became unsecure and tribal unions broke down, all providing for his full dominance over the whole region. From then on, Middle Asia witnessed the gradual rise of Uzbek rulers whose great leader and founder was doubtlessly Aboulkhir Khan. The dynasty that he founded continued to be through the attempts of his grandson, Mohammad Shaibani, and those of others. He well managed to establish a powerful central government by uniting all the regional tribes; a government which extended all over the Ghabchagh region from Siberia to Sear Sea (Kohestani 1994, 365).

During his reign in 839 (AH), Uzbeks once again attacked and invaded Khwarizm. Till 850, they also conquered such other cities as Saghmagh, Sazgh, Osgand and Aghgharghan along the shores of Sear Sea, choosing Saghmagh as their capital city and the center of power. Following the death of Shahrookh Timoori (850 AH), his son Alagh Beik left Samarkand, the center of their government, meaning to seize up Herat. As he was away, Aboulkhir Khan set out in 852 to invade Samarkand but did not succeed and after raiding the suburbs returned to his country. In 855, however, being supported by Aboulkhir Khan,

Abu Said Timoori fought and defeated Abdullah, the son of Ibrahim Shahrookh, the other Timoori prince, and finally invaded Samarkand. Abu said sent many gifts to Aboulkhir Khan giving Rudabeh Sultan Bigoom, the daughter of Alagh Beik to his marriage, and finally upon such victory the Uzbeks returned to Ghabchagh Anoosheh 2001 , 28).

Aboulkhir Khan now was rising more and more in power, extending his territories from the present city of Tobolesk to Sayhoon when he was unexpectedly attacked by the great tribe of Iorat or Kalmook, that is, the east Mongols. There happened an titanic war between them in which he was defeated and helplessly returned to Saghmagh while the conquerors raided the northern banks of mid Sayhoon. This was a great destabilizing strike to Aboulkhir's power and authority (Renah 1973, 786). Recovering from such failure, he, however, soon reconstructed and fortified his military forces and resumed his position of power and dominance in Ghabchagh so that Timoorian sought for his assistance against their rivals. When, for example, Abu Said came into clash with Abdullah Mirza, the son of Alagh Beik, he deceitfully claimed that the Uzbek troops were on their way to his help, and doing so he could release the city, Yesi, an important political center, out of the besiege of Abdullah. Then, upon consulting with his close retainers, he decided actually to ask for the help of Aboulkhir Khan to fight against Abdullah. And although he later on won over his long-hated enemy by the support he received from Aboulkhir, he thanklessly did not allow Aboulkhir khan to enter Samarkand, saying: "You had better reside no in this region as it is of no profit to you." Hearing this, Abulkhir got into rages but had no other way than returning to Ghabchagh. He was not, however, bereft of profits he desired because he achieved the Samin gem and Rudabeh, the daughter of Alagh Beik to his marriage, whom Abu Said gave to him with great honors deserving a great king of piety (S a m a r q a n d i 1987 , 1016) .

Also, as mentioned in historical documents, when fleeing from the swords of prince Alldullatif, the son of Alagh Beik, king Abu Said Mirza went to the court of Aboulkhir Khan

in supplication to serve him as his retainer and the Khan in return, military support. After he spent some time serving the Khan, Aboulkhir Khan also took his troops from Uzbek lands and went to Mavaranahre whose governor, Abdullah-ibne- Ibrahim, came out against him. The armies of Aboulkhir Khan, however, attacked and defeated them as he had sincerely promised to back up Abu Said with no expectation of gains (Sotodeh 1974, 145-6).

The authority and dominance of Aboulkhir Khan was greatly shaken and enfeebled when in 861 Kalmook tribes managed to do him a decisive strike. Led by Timoor Tashi, they attacked him breaking through his fortifications in Kook Kashaneh zone, upon which Aboulkhir escaped to the Sigman fortress where he was finally forced into peace with the invaders. Before that, of course, Kalmook tribes had raided and destroyed Turkestan, Shahrokhi and suburbs of Tashkent and their related peasants. Despite all these, Aboulkhir Khan remained an active agent in the military transactions of the regions. And the competitions among Timoori princes gave him a chance of asserting his power and influence. In 864, for instance, he again took part in such clashes when, supporting Abu Said Mirza who had come out against Mohammad Jooki, he sent a group of his warriors commanded by Bargh Sultan and Beishak Oghlan who raided Mavaranahre forcing Mohammad Jooki to surrender. Thus, the ever present clashes and rivalries among the Timoorian would not let them ignore Aboulkhir Khan. When going out to conquer Khurasan, Sultan Hossein Mirza also went to ask for his help against Abu Said, but was killed after one week and failed to receive the help of the Khan (Kohestani 1994, 350-1).

About the year 870 AH two lesser Khans, descendants of Aurde, the eldest son of Jooji, named Gharaie and Janibeik with a number of their related troops abandoned Aboulkhir and went to Mongolia. Later on also some more nomadic tribes all subordinated to him joined them. These nomads have become famous as adventurous Cossacks during the history. In 872 AH the Timoori Sultan, Hussein Baygheri, meaning to invade Khurasan, came to Aboulkhir to ask for his backup. Aboulkhir welcomed him

kindly and tried to prepare him a large military force but could not do that (Rench 1973, 745).

Over his 40 years of reign over the vast region of Ghabchagh, Aboulkhir Khan played a decisive role in the history of Middle Asia. About his death historians have provided various accounts among which a more famous one is right before his death he went out leading a large army of forces to fight against Mongols and was finally deceased in a site called Agh Gheshlagh, somewhere near the present Almati (Mirkhond 1998, 131-3).

Another account tells of his being slain in a clash against rebellious Cossacks, and his being buried outside of the city of Saghnaah (Mirkhond 1998, 131). Also, the author of the Aboulkhir History has dated his death to have been at the age of 57 with no reference to the cause (Mirkhond 1998, 32).

In fine, he was a king of grand honor and piety who reigned over an area extending from Ghabchagh to Turkestan and Saghnaah. As a great king, he was widely famous to whom many came in supplication and need. Among them had been such great leaders as Amir Timoor Gorkani, Sultan Abu Said Mirza, his brother Manoochehr Mirza, Mohammad Jooki Mirza and Sultan Husein Mirza all have both served him and had their wishes granted by his generosity. He bore eleven pious sons as; Shah Bodagh, Khajeh Mohammad Sultan, Ahmad Sultan, Mohammad Sultan, Sheikh Hiedar Khan, Sanjar Khan, Ibrahim Sultan, Kochkonji Khan, Soinch Khan, Agbron Sultan, and Seid Baba Sultan (Islamic Encyclopedia 1991, 438-41). Shah Bodagh, his eldest son, died before his father and left two sons, Mohammad Khan Shaibani and Mahmud Sultan.

He reigned for about forty years over the Ghabchagh region, one of the best and richest of lands, and took charge of Turkestan lands with all their suburbs, inhabitants, lords and peasants treating them with justice and compassion. After his death, his fifth son, Sheikh Hiedar, accompanied by government heads, retainers and consultants, succeeded to the throne. And now all great leaders who had been at the service of Aboulkhir Khan became the retainers of Sheikh Hiedar. But as then administrative

policies and rules were not as what had been before, there soon appeared indifference and feelings of frustration among them whose foolish measures gradually brought corruption and defect to the nation. Therefore, they were gradually losing their faith and fidelity to Sheikh Heidar, many of the rulers of the tribes in the region saw the chance ripe for standing against him. Among such rebellious chieftains were Sidak Inagh Khan, the son of Haji Mohammad Khan; Janibeik Khan, the son of Bodagh Khan, and Noorikeh Sultan, the son of Gherai Arab who frequently sat out against Sheikh Heidar. Each time any of them ventured upon that, there happened a decisive clash between them with many killed from both parties. An each time there was such clash, Gharachin Bahador, one of the bravest and strongest of warriors, who was assigned to guard Mohammad Shiabani and his brother Mahmud Sultan, sent an army of his to help the Khan as he believed in his excellency. After some time, however, as Sheikh Heidar was ignorant, Ahmad Khan accompanied by Inagh Khan attacked him. As Sheikh Heidar and his troops were unaware of it, they could prepare only a small band of warriors to defend their rights and so soon lost the war, and Sheikh himself was killed with many a wound from swords leaving the throne to Mohammad Shaibani. He once again could take many of Uzbek tribes under his rule. He opened up Fararood region and sat up a powerful center of Shainbanis there. This also lasted for long time leaving great influences on the political history of Middle Asia and Khorasan for many years (Arab Teghan 2006, 9-16).

Conclusion

As an Uzbek ruler, Aboulkhir Khan was the founder of Shaibani dynasty in Ghabchagh plain. Obviously some major factors are responsible for the stability and strength of his rule. One was the support that he received from Russian court. He also enjoyed the great support of great Uzbek tribes with whose help he could establish a strong central government in Tora in western Siberia. During his reign, he paid special attention to the Ghabchagh area and could take a large part of it under his rule. That was especially because of the weakness of the

Timoorian in Mavarnahre against the Uzbeks. He also could raid Khwarizm and its related regions adding parts of Sear Sea to his territories. He took the control of Samarkand when Alagh Beik was its governor. From then on the Timoorian always were after his supportive regards when faced with foreign challenges. His other important measure to note was his active participation in the clashes among the Timoorian, when, for example, he helped Mohammad Jooki against Abu Said Mirza. What we can finally conclude is that in his 40-year prosperous reign, Aboulkhir Khan provided for the unity of a large number of Uzbek tribes making a golden epoch in the history of Middle Asia. He finally died in a war against Mongols in a region called Agh Gheshlagh somewhere near present Albania.

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