

FALL OF KALHORA RULE : REASONS

Miss Aziz Channa

It has always been interesting for the historians to evaluate and analyse historical situations and events to reach some conclusion. But in certain cases even historians have failed to leave enough material for their intellectual successors to pursue further research on clear lines or satisfy their curiosity in the matter. One such case is history of Kalhora family. Many historians have tried to trace its origin, but they have often arrived on different conclusions. Some histories have identical material which gives a touch of authenticity to their version in regard to the origin of Kalhora family.

Kalhoras are said to have descended from Hazrat Abbas, a paternal uncle to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). A descendent of Hazrat Abbas, named Mian Odhanna, lived in Kech Makran. He was known and respected for his piety and nobility. Mir Azimuddin in his early treatise "*Fateh Naama*" heads his second chapter as Majlis Doium Dar Zikar Tabka Abbasian.. Another historian, Baagh Ali Khaaef, in his Masaima Naghar Musnavi (1155 A.H.) calls them Abbasids. Daulat Ram in his work Miratdaulat-Abbasia and Shaikh Mohammad Azam in Jawahar Abbasia affirms that Kalhoras were Abbasids.

Maulana Ghulam Rasool Maher, in *Tarikh-Kalhora* has discussed at length the origin of Kalhoras. He has dealt with the subject in an elaborate and convincing manner and has also given their ancestral order in detail. Not only that, he has pin-pointed the mis-informations in *Mirat* and *Jawahar* and also rectified them. ¹

'*Tuhfatul Karam*' and '*History of Dera Ghazi Khan*' also give detailed order of descendance, which of course differ from each other. Maulana Maher is, however, convinced that Kalhoras were Abbasids. He writes:

"There is no reason to doubt that Kalhoras were Abbasids". ²

It is generally agreed that the name of first Kalhora entrant in Sind was Channa, Cheny or Chaney. Burton calls Kalhoras as descendents of Channa. ³

Kalhoras during early period of their reign brought about various reforms and historians have regarded them as important. ⁴

Mian Adam Shah (1520-1600 A.D.), the 10th grandson of Channa Khan, became a disciple of Syed Miran Mahammad Jaunpuri. ⁵

He himself followed the traditional style of Piri Muridi. He made Hurri as his place of religious teachings. Hurri, in those days, comprised of Taluka Chandka and now includes the area of Larkana, Qambar and Nasirabad. ⁶

The circle of his disciples widened, and in course of time his descendents Mian Shahul Muhammad, Mian Nasir Muhammad and Mian Din Muhammad gained influence, which ultimately found its way to sovereign power when Mian Yar Muhammad in 1710 A.D. occupied the throne of Sind. ⁷

The Kalhora period started with obstacles. The reign of Mian Yar Muhammad was marked with hardships and restlessness in the country. Mian Noor Muhammad got power in 1719 A.D. It was in these days (1719-1753) that Nadir Shah and Ahmed Shah attacked Sind. The internal disruptions and disputes erupted and brought in their wake a new way of life. Mian Yar Muhammad took various measures to bring about administrative and social reforms. Simultaneously he united the people of various sects. These reforms had a great impact on the socio-economic life of the people. The relentless efforts of about 35 years by Mian Yar Muhammad and Mian Noor Muhammad ultimately gave relief to the people. ⁸

Mian Muhammad Ghulam Shah, the heir of Mian Noor Muhammad, ruled for 19 years i.e. from 1753 to 1772. This period also witnessed harshness. But through his efforts social justice was guaranteed to every man. History has recorded his achievements for the well-being of the masses. A new chapter ushered in Maulana Maher, while quoting Tarikh Kalhora-wa-Istqarar-e-Talpuran written by Abdul Majeed Jokhio, remarks:

“It was only due to the foresight, invulnerability and generosity of Mian Ghulam Shah that people from all around came forth and joined Sindhi Army”. ⁹

The death of Mian Ghulam Shah gave a sudden and sad blow to Sind. The power of Kalhoras began to recede and a period of hardship, disunity, arson and the social evils started. His son Mian Muhammad Sarfraz had a dual personality. Though a poet and learned man, he was weak in administration and lacked foresight. Led by his own whims, he never followed a good advice. Due to his

immature decisions and ineffective policies, he not only brought bad name to his ancestors but also met a tragic end. His unjust acts include cold blooded murder of Mir Bahram Khan and inimical attitude towards Talpurs. He fell prey to the personal follies and intrigues and conspiracies of Rajo Lekhi. Every student of Sind's history is well-aware of the notorious character of Rajo Lekhi. He made Mian Sarfraz believe that Mirs planned to get him killed. He never missed a chance to create a wedge between the two. Mian fell victim to his lies and developed enmity with Mir Bahram, the chieftain of Balochs. Mian Sarfraz gave him an undertaking, by taking an oath on the copy of the Holy Quran written by Hazrat Ali, but immediately after that backed out. Mir Bahram had no ill will against him. He called his two sons Mir Bijar Khan and Mir Sobdar Khan and asked them to leave for some where.¹⁰ Ultimately Mir Bijar left to perform Haj but Mir Sobdar stayed with his father.

At the instance of Rajo Lekhi, Mian Sarfraz planned to get Mir Bahram and Mir Sobdar killed. In Fateh-Nama Mir Azimuddin describes this episode as under:

“When Mir Bahram entered the exclusive chamber there were only few selected people. Mian Sarfraz handed over a letter to him saying that the letter was received from Mir Bijar Khan. When Mir Bahram started reading it, a slave named Hussain came over to him from back side and with his sword cut him in two.”

Jokhio adds that at that time Mir Sobdar was in the verandah. As soon as he got the sad news, he reached on the spot, where he first killed Allah Bux Lekhi and then fought the rest of the guards but could not sustain the slaying swords.

This brutal act had far-reaching effects on the political life of Kalhoras and caused an everlasting feeling of disgust against Mian Sarfraz. The infuriated Mirs first attacked Khudadad near Hala. Mian Sarfraz in attempt to save his life had to flee bare-foot. His companions and admirers like Allah Bux Jhunghan, Mehrab Jotoi, Rajo and many others left him alone.

As against that, the behaviour of Mirs was still favourable to Kalhoras, as if they still wanted to show their allegiance to Kalhoras. The Chiefs of Mirs, Mir Fateh Khan placed Mian Mahmood, brother of Mian Sarfraz Khan, on the throne. Mian Sarfraz was imprisoned

but the administrative powers, with the advice of Mir Fateh Khan, virtually remained with Rajo, who on his part missed no chance of favouring his own relatives. The result was that on the one hand the conspirators continued gaining power and on the other administration was left loose, so much so that the ruler was reduced to a figurehead only.

The history has yet to thrash out as to why Mir Fateh Khan did not wait for the return of Mir Bijar Khan, how Rajo became so powerful that he was answerable to none and whether Fateh Khan really lacked intellect and administrative skill. The undue advantage which Rajo was having at that time went against Mian Sarfraz Khan, whose intelligence otherwise is evident from the following reference made by Yar Muhammad, a member of Talpur family:

“Mian Muhammad Sarfraz Khan was an intellectual learned ruler and man of letters. He was a versatile poet and lover of intellectual people.” 11

That such a man did not distinguish between friend and foe, is a tragedy. He under-estimated his own well-wisher, and by eliminating him ruined himself with his own hands. At the time of assuming power, Mahmood Khan was too young to become an administrator. He delegated all the powers to Rajo, who in turn re-delegated them to his own son Tajo, who became virtually a King. Even then, Rajo was not satisfied. He so manoeuvred that, the uncle of Mian Sarfraz, named Mian Ghulam Nabi, ultimately assumed the throne

Why he had to fight with Bijar Khan at Lanyari? In that battle Mian Ghulam Nabi was killed by Tajo, although Tajo was fighting for Mian Ghulam Nabi. Mir Azimuddin in his work Fateh-Nama describes this in these words:

“Mir Bijar Khan rode to the corpse of Mian Ghulam Nabi and after wailing over it ordered for an official funeral.” 12

Mir Bijar had intended to set free Mian Sarfraz and put him on the throne again. In the prison, along with Mian Sarfraz, his son Muhammad Khan, brother of Mahmood Khan and uncle Attur Khan were also imprisoned. On the other hand, another uncle of Mian Sarfraz, Mian Abdul Nabi in attempt to capture power, conspired to kill all the heirs to the throne. His maternal Junejas were the prison guards. In the winking of an eye all the prisoners were killed.

In the days of captivity Mian Sarfraz composed a *Munajat*, which actually reflects his feelings and is a masterpiece of Sindhi literature.

Then came the reign of terror when Mian Abdul Nabi assumed the throne. He was proclaimed king by Bijar Khan. Tajo was apprehended and ordered to be hanged but was rescued on the recommendation of Mir Bijar Khan.

The state of affairs with Mian Abdul Nabi was that whenever he wanted some help, he had to seek it from others. He approached Afghan court and prayed Madad Khan for help, who in turn burnt Sind to ashes. He also secured help from Qalat court and put them into trouble.

The last assault took place at Halani and in 1782 A.D. Mian Abdul Nabi succumbed to his own follies and the rule of Kalhoras came to an end.¹³

Mir Fateh Ali Khan became the ruler of Sind and along with three partners, Mir Ghulam Ali, Mir Karam Ali and Mir Murad Ali ruled the province, emerged as the first of what is known as Cho-Yari or Char-Yari.

Mir Hassan Ali Khan "Hassan" in his poetical composition *Masnavi*, *Sind-jo-Shahnamo* attributes the reasons of fall of Kalhoras to the unjust behaviour and tyranny of their last rulers. He says: says:

Quoting, Saadi, he says:

"The ruler is tree and the subject is its root". So if the ruler up-roots the subject, he will definitely be up-rooted.

Kalhora rulers, Mian Sarfraz and his uncles Mian Abdul Nabi and Ghulam Nabi, up-rooted the subjects but they were themselves rooted out and in this way their dynasty came to an end.

The periods of Mian Yar Muhammad and Noor Muhammad also witnessed a few tragic incidents.¹⁴ But the latter rulers like Mian Sarfraz, Mian Ghulam Nabi and Abdul Nabi with their attitude and anti-people acts brought an end to their own rule.

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