

# **STUDY OF GHURIDS SITUATION IN SULTAN MOHAMMAD KHWAREZM SHAH PERIOD**

**ZOHREH ASADI\***

## **ABSTRACT**

The Ghurids was a great and influential dynasty in Khwarezmian neighborhood. The Ghurids kings could extend their realm and appeared as a power from political, economical, cultural and military viewpoints so that Nasser-al-Din Allah (The Abbassides caliph) used them to achieve his goals and to confront his enemies specially Sultan Mohammad Khwarezm Shah. After the death of great kings of the Ghurids such as Sultan Ghias al-Din and Sultan Shahab al-Din and appearance of disputes inside this dynasty, they were killed by Sultan Mohammad Khwarezm Shah. In this article, it is tried to study the Ghurids circumstances, their weakness reason and their defeat against Sultan Mohammad KhwarezmShah by using descriptive-analytic method and valid references of controversial times.

## **KEY WORDS**

The Ghurids, Khwarezmian, Sultan Mohammad, battle, Sultan Ghias al-Din Ghurid.

## **Introduction:**

Ghur is a mountainous and arduous land in the heart of present Afghanistan which is surrounded by Heart, Zamin Davar, Ghorchestan, Guzganan, Bamian, and Ghazna. The sources of Hirmand, Harrirud and Morghab rivers are located in Ghur. According to Mostoufi, "it was a part of Eghlim-chaharrom and its center was Ahangaran. " (mostoufi Ghaznavi, 1957: 190)

Due to special geographical situation of this land, its people were independent of other states. Some researchers believe that Aryans also entered into this land following their emigrations and settled there. (Habibi, 1988:127, Ostokhori, 1994: 220, and Roshan Zamir, 2537: 16). Some others believe that the rulers of this land were descended of Zahhak. (Jozjani, 1984: 1/321-323) .According to Ghaznavid authors, in spite of numerous invasions of muslims to this land, Ghor people followed different religions until 5<sup>th</sup> century when Sultan Mahmood invaded there and due to existence of Buddha temples in this land, most of them followed these religions and didn't believe Islam. Researchers believe that Ghaznavid authors called people of this land as "unbelievers " in order to convert Sultan Mahmoods battles into religious ones wherese Shansabani dynasty brought Islam to that land in the time of Harrun

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\* Ph.D student, Science & Research Branch, Islamic Azad University (IAU), Tehran, Iran.

al-Rashid, because one of the necessities of ruling in Ghur was priority in Islam. (Foroughi, 2002: 19 and 101). Also Jozjani believes that this dynasty accepted Islam in the time of Ali caliphate. (Jozjani: 1984: 1/320).

When Ghaznavids gained dominance, Shansabani rulers governed that land as their protegee rulers and safeguarded the Ghurids interests in Ghur in order to protect their own rulership. Mohammad Suri announced independency in the reign of Sultan Mahamood Ghaznavi which was immediately suppressed by Sultan. ( Mirkhand, 1960: 4/630) .Thereafter, the relationship between the Ghurids and Ghaznavids became very good and Ghaznavids dominated on that land. This, of course, continued until when Ghaznavids began to decline. Thereafter, it gained independency due to using inappropriate policy by Ghaznavid kings and at last it went under Seljuk dominance. Yet, Ghur Sultans tried to establish an independence rulership in Ghur and they became successful only in reign of Sultan Ghias al-Din and his brother Shahab al-Din. They could extend their realm to India and Khorasan and appeared as a power so that Nasser al-Din Allah (The Abassides Caliph) used them as a reliable force against Khwarezmian demands and desires. Although the relationship between the Ghurids and khwarezmian was very good in the reign of Sultan Takesh, this relationship became strained due to caliph intrigues. (Moayyed Baghdadi; 1936:145). Due to his successes in Iran, khwarezmian Sultan asked caliph to say sermons by using his name, as do Seljuks in Baghdad. (Ibn khaldoon, 2004: 4/163–164 ). That's why caliph asked Sultan Ghias al-Din to help him to resist Sultan Takesh, so he sent some ambassadors to Firoozkuh (The capital of Ghias al-Din rulership). As Ghias al-Din had introduced himself as a patron for muslims caliph; he warned Takesh to give up to caliph, otherwise he would invade to his territories. Then, he began to threaten by invading to Khorasan. In his book entitled "Zafarnameh" (Letter of victories), Hamdollah Mostoufi wrote Ghias al-Din's measures in a Verse form, as follow:

*The Ghur Sultan decided to coquer all parts of Khorasan;*

*His greedy desire provoked the Ghur troops. (Mostoufi Ghazvini, 1998: 1/601 )*

Takesh couldn't withstand the Ghurids, so he had to apologize Ghias al-Din and accepted his desire to obey the caliph .(Ibn Asir, Bita: 24 /182 and Ibn Khaldoon: 2004, 4 / 168) . This continued until the death of Sultan Takesh in 596 A. H.

### **The Relations between Sultan Mohammad Khwarezm Shah and the Ghurids**

After the death of Sultan Takesh, his son (Sultan Mohammad Khan) gained the rulership; he came across his nephew (Hindu khan, son of Malek Shah who died during his father reign) claim to crown. When disputes

appeared between Sultan Mohammad Khan and Hindu Khan, Ghur king interfered in Khwarezm affairs and ordered his brother, Moez al-Din, to invade Khorasan in order to help Hindu Khan. Therefore he threatened the frontiers of Khwarezm. (Ibn Asir, Bitar: 24 / 230-232 and Ibn Khaldun, 204 : 4/171). He could conquer Neishaboor and appointed his cousin, Zia al-Din Mohammad, as ruler of Neishaboor. (Khandamir, 1984: 2 /642). He invaded Marv next year and conquered Sarakhs, Nesa and Abiverd and appointed Hindu Khan (The nephew of Sultan Mohammad) as ruler of Marv. (Ibn Asir, Bitar: 24/244).

By using this Strategy, he increased the disputes inside the Khwarezmian dynasty in order to take advantages. At first, Sultan Mohammad sent Sultan Ghias al-Din some ambassadors to resolve disagreements between himself and the Ghuids, and asked for friendly relations between two states, because he could concentrate on other enemies and retake their missed lands. He wrote a letter to the king of Ghur as follow: "There was a rigid treaty for friendship between my father and other kings; I want to do so. If you deem it advisable, my mother marry to Sultan Ghazi Moez al-Donya Va-Din, and adopt me as your son and if Sultan Ghais let me to control Khwarezm and Khorasan, I will retake all parts of Iraq and Transoxiana from the enemies. (Jozjani, 1984: 1/360). Ghias al-Din didn't refused him. When Sultan Mohammad was informed of that, he decided to threaten him in order to reach his goal. That is why he wrote another letter : " I Supposed that you would appease me after my father death and you would help me to overcome Cathays and send them out of my cities .If you don't do so, don't disturb me and don't occupy my cities. All I want is that you would give back whatever you took from me. If I can not retake my cities, I will ask Cathays and Turks to help me in battle with you. I was involved in funeral ceremonies of my father and problems of my cities. So I didn't get a chance to prevent your invasion. If I was not involved in those affairs, I could resist your invasion and I was able to conquer your cities in Khorasan and other regions." (Ibn Asir, Bitar:24/ 266 - 267).

After receiving the second letter, Sultan Ghias al-Din didn't reply Sultan because he suffered from gout and his brother, Shahab al-Din, was in India. For this reason, he kept the representatives of Sultan in Ghur and refused to reply. Khwarezm Shah could resolve his problems and began to mobilize his troops and moved towards Khorasan in 597 A.H. Khwarezm troops could conquer Neishaboor and after a while they moved towards Sarakhs. Sultan Mohammad ordered to withdraw because the ruler of Sarakhs, Amir Taj al-Din Zangi Ibn Masud, resist Sultan and Shahab al-Din had to stop pursuing the Sultan troops and decided to returned to Ghur in order to make everything better in Ghur after his brother death. (Roshan zamir, 2537: 97). When Shahab al-Din succeeded his brother, he divided the Ghur dynasty among himself and his nephew, Mahmood. Then he assailed Khorasan. He could

conquer Toos, Sarakhs, and Marv and appointed Mohammad Khorang as ruler of Marv. (Joveini, 1996: 2/47). He had to leave Khorasan immediately and moved towards India because there were revolts in regions (which were in possession of India) due to his death rumor. Sultan Mohammad profited from his absence and conquered Marv and killed Mohammad Khorang. He also could conquer Heart by signing the peace pact. When Shahab al-Din was informed of that, he moved towards Khorasan and then went to Khwarezm in order to capture his capital, Gorganj. Sultan forced his troops to stop by opening the dams of Jeihoon rivers, by uniting with Gharakhtaian and Gharakhanian and by help of Khwarezm people through religious statement of Iman Shahab al-Din Khiyooghi and Tturkan Khatoon, mother of sultan. (Barthold, 1987: 2/732 and Joveini, 1996, 2/54). For this reason, Moez al-Din had to withdraw because he found the siege of Gorganj useless and he might lost his realm. He was sieged by Gharakhtaian and if Osman Khan (ruler of Samarghand) didn't help him to sign peace pact between the Ghurids and Gharakhtaian, he would defeated by them. (Ibn Asir, *Bitā*: 25/13, Esfandiyar, 1987:170-171 and Joveini, 1996: 2/57). Thereafter, Sultan Mohammad could conquer different regions and became more powerful. Due to his power and disputes between Sultan and Abbassides caliph, Al-Nasser decided to provoke the Ghurids again so that they invade the regions occupied by Khwarezm. Hatibeh Shahab al-Din suggested him to unite with Gharakhtaian, but he refused this suggestion (Barthold, 1987:2/375). Shahab al-Din needed more facilities and equipments in order to assail the Khwarezm, so he went to India but he was killed in the way back to Ghur before he could battle with Sultan Mohammad. (Bathors,2002: 5/164, Shabankarei, 1984: 124 and Linpole, 1984: 264).

In fact, Shahab al-Din was the last worthy ruler of Ghur. After his death, Ghur dynasty began to decline due to disputes between them and they couldn't resist their enemies specially Sultan Mohammad Khwarezm Shah who took advantage of those circumstances. Finally, his nephew, Ghias al-Din could overcome other pretenders of crown by help of his Turk commandars and took the power. Sultan Mohammad seized the opportunity and conquered cities such as Balkh, Jozjan, and Tarmaz. Based on his treaty with Gharakhtaian, he gave them Tarmaz in order to protect against their future invasions to Khorasan. (Ibn Khaldoon, 2004: 4/178). Sultan Ghias al-Din Mahmood didn't react to Sultan Mohammad acts because he was involved in civil disputes and invasion of Ghozan and Gharakhtaian to frontiers of his state. Sultan Mohammad took Ghur under his control seized opportunity and negotiated with Ghias al-Din in order to retake the missed lands so that he could intervene the civil affairs of Ghur. He suggested Sultan Ghias al-Din that he will give him one-third of the wealth gained from Ghazneh, the other one-third will be for troops and the last one will be for Ghias al-Din if he retake him Ghazneh. (Ibn Asir, *Bitā*, 25/157). Ghur Sultan had to accept that

suggestion. But they never signed that treaty because Sultan Mohammad faced many problems such as his brother (Ali Shah) claim for independency in Mazandaran. Ali Shah fled towards Ghias al-Din and Sultan Mahmood asked Ghias al-Din to arrest him. Ghur Sultan accepted it because he couldn't refuse. That's why he was killed by family and adherents of Ali Shah. (Jozjani, 2004 : 1/374). Ibn Asir believed that Ghias al-Din and Ali Shah were arrested by Amir Malek (one of the commandars of Sultan Mohammad) and were killed by his order. (Ibn Asir, Bitā: 25/202– 203). After the death of Ghias al-Din Mahmood and appearance of civil disputes and foreigners invasion, the Ghurids began to decline. According to Jozjani, "After a while the great men of Ghur decided to elect Ali Shah as their real ruler –who was freed from prison after the death of Ghias al-Din – in order to resist Sultan Mohammad Khwarezm Shah and prevent his expansionism. (Jozjani, 2004:1/378). Sultan Mohammad favoured Ala-al-Din Atsez, who was another pretender of crown, and appointed him as ruler of Ghur in order to resist them. Therefore Ghur went under Khwarezmian dominance. Thereafter, Atsez was killed in the battle with Taj al-Din and Atsez appointed as the ruler of Firoozkuh. When Sultan Mohammad Khwarezm Shah was informed of that, he sent them an ambassador and asked them to obey him unconditionally. Ala-al-Din Mohammad accepted it and gave Firoozkuh to the trusted people of Sultan. Eventually, he was died in Khwarezm. (Ibn Asir, Bitā: 26/11-12). After his death, Ghur reign came to end in Firoozkuh and Ghazneh, but it still remained in India.

### **Conclusion:**

In fact, after the death of great Sultans such as Shahab al-Din and Ghias al-Din, the Ghurids dynasty began to decline because there was no unity between rulers and there was no policy in order to protect the state and to take advantage of neighbours problems specially Sultan Mohammad Khwarezm Shah. Even Nasser al-Din Allah (The Abbassides caliph) didn't favour the Ghurids dynasty and he didn't help them to battle with their enemies because there might appeared some problems for caliph and he couldn't reach his great goals in Islam world, getting the world and religious rulership.

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