

Mirza Olughbek and His Works

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Abstract: *In general, Mirza Olughbek was a great scholar, a founder, and a leader. During his reign, Samarqand was turned into a splendid cradle of civilization. This paper aimed to introduce this scholar using the existing information in a different way.*

During his time, the great scholar and knowledgeable king, Mirza Olughbek, educated great scholars and his services are well-reflected in the history. Mirza Olughbek is known as a great Khashani scholar of astronomy.

Key Words: *Mirza Olughbek, Olughbek's Life, His Works and Offspring.*

1. INTRODUCTION:

Mirza Olughbek was Shahrukh Mirza's elder son, born from Princess Gawharshad Begum. According to Sharafuddin Ali Yazdi's writings, he has been a great man. Hearing this good news, Amir Temur named the newborn as Mohammad Tarakhay.

However, soon his name, Mohammad Tarakhay, changed to Olughbek and this name gained permanence. Like his other grandchildren, Amir relegated Olughbek to Saray Molk Khanim to educate. Together with Saray Molk Khanim, Mirza Olughbek used to accompany his grandfather in some of his onslaughts to certain destinations and return back to Samarqand. He holds a special place in the history due to his unique works in literature and history.

2. Mirza Olughbek's Life:

Mirza Olughbek, born from Princess Gawharshad Begum on Sunday 22 March 1394 A.D., was Shahrukh Mirza's oldest son. According to Sharafuddin Ali Yazdi's remarks, Mirza Olughbek's birth coincided with the time Sahibqiran Amir Temur captured the Mardin city.

Hearing this good news, Amir Temur showed mercy to the city's people, discharged the city from the taxes, and granted its governorship to the former governor's (i.e. Amir Sultan Hussein's) younger brother, Amir Sultan Salih and named the newborn boy as Mohammad Tarakhay.

However, shortly after that his name, Mohammad Tarakhay, changed to Olughbek and this name gained permanence. Like his other grandchildren, Amir relegated Olughbek to Saray Molk Khanim to educate. Together with Saray Molk Khanim, Mirza Olughbek used to accompany his grandfather in some of his onslaughts to certain destinations and return back to Samarqand. According to historical records, Amir Temur appointed the famous scholar, Sheikh Arif Azeri, as Mirza Olughbek's tutor, who was then a five years old boy in the year 1398 (Ishanch, 1374, p. 87).

After being appointed as the ruler of Transoxania, Mirza Olughbek spent most of his time in Samarqand. He did not even accompany his father, Sharukh Mirza's onslaughts but sufficed with sending corps.

No wars or clashes of significance happened during Mirza Olughbek's 40 years of reign. He came out victorious in wars against the internal and external foes of the country and mostly followed a tough governing policy.

In the autumn of 1413, Mirza Olughbek invited Fergana's ruler, Ahmad Mirza (Omer Sheikh Mirza's son), to Samarqand with the pretence of martial council. However, Ahmad Mirza kind of learned about Mirza Olughbek's intentions and did not attend the council. After that Mirza Olughbek assailed Fergana with his army. Ahmad Mirza fled to Kashgar abandoning the city. Mirza Olughbek and Akhasi captured Andijan and appointed one of his commanders as the ruler of the city and returned to Samarqand (Malayof, 1387, p. 221).

3. Olughbek's Actions:

After Shahrukh Mirza passed away in 14 March 1447, the bloodshed began once again among the Temuri princes over the throne. Mirza Olughbek fought against the united armies of his nephew Alawud-dawla Mirza and Abul Qasim Mirza for Khorasan's throne. In the meantime, taking advantage of Olughbek's presence in Khorasan, the leader of nomad Uzbeks, Abul Khair Khan, assailed upon Transoxania and ravaged Samarqand. He plundered the villages in the rural areas of Samarqand and Bukhara. After Mirza Olughbek heard of this event, he returned to Samarqand and was heavily defeated by Uzbek army along the Amu River (Faizi-uf, 1996, p. 214).

In general, Mirza Olughbek was a scholar, a founder, and a great leader. During his reign, the east of Samarqand had turned into the most splendid civilization center.

Olughbek's first tutor was Salahuddin Musa son of Mahmud Qazizada Rumi, the Aristotle of the time. Mirza Olughbek learned about the knowhow of astronomy from Qazizada Rumi and then invited Kashani Gheyasuddin Jamshid, son of Masood, to Samarqand with request of the aforementioned scholar. According to Aburrazaq Samarqandi's writings, Olughbek invited another Kashani astronomy scholar, Muenuddin, to Samarqand as well.

A world-known observatory was built by Mirza Olughbek's efforts in 1424-1428 in the east of Samarqand, along the Ab-i-hayat watercourse, in the mountainous region of Kohak. During the time, the related observatory activities of astronomy science between the years 1417 and 1420 were pursued in one of Olughbek's chambers.

By this time, Shahrukh Mirza's all sons had passed away, except Mirza Olughbek. Claiming his father's throne, with his army of 1000 soldiers, Mirza Olughbek battles his nephew, Alawud-dawla Mirza, in the spring of the year 1448 in order to appoint his son, Abdul-Latif Mirza, to Khorasan's throne. Albeit Mirza Olughbek attained the sovereignty of Khorasan through war, this victory did not bring him fame. Conversely, it generated an inevitable conflict between him and Abdul-Latif Mirza (Faizi-uf, 1996, p. 216).

Meanwhile, taking advantage of Olughbek's being in Khorasan, the leader of nomad Uzbeks, Abul Khair Khan, arrived to Samarqand by raiding on Transoxania and demolishing many towns and villages. Hearing of this event, Mirza Olughbek leaves Herat to Mirza Abdul Latif and moves towards Samarqand. In his return, Mirza Olughbek takes his father, Shahrukh Mirza's sister, Payanda Sultan Begum, with himself. Learning about Mirza Olughbek's departure from Herat, Abul Qasim Babur Mirza sent his army from Sarakhs to Herat against Abdul Latif Mirza. Unable to persist in the battle, Abdul Latif Mirza abandoned Herat and fled to Balkh.

While Mirza Olughbek was planning to take over Khorasan in 1449 once again, Abul Latif Mirza united with his cousin, Abul Qasim Babur Mirza, and initiated a war against his own father, Mirza Olughbek. Mirza Olughbek got defeated in the autumn of 1449 nearby a village named Dimish and returned to Samarqand. However, Miranshah, the ruler of the city, did not let him in. The disappointed leader then went to Shahrukhia. However, instead of allowing him to enter the city, the ruler of Shahrukhia, Ibrahim Polad, intended to arrest and hand him over to Abdul Latif Mirza. According to the writings of Dawlat Shah Samaqandi and Masood son of Osman Kojistani, the author of the "History of Abul-Khair Khani", being in difficult condition, initially, Mirza Olughbek intended to ask Mirza Abul Khair Khan for help but then changed his mind and preferred to give up and leave the sovereignty to his own son, Abdul Latif Mirza, aiming at moving to Samarqand and devoting the rest of his life to the art and science. Abul Latif Mirza then ordered to send his father, Mirza Olughbek, for pilgrimage to Mecca (Anosha, 1378, p. 195).

4. Mirza Olughbek's Death:

The historian, Mirkhowand, writes about Mirza Olughbek's death as follows: "Late in the evening, Mirza Olughbek set out with horses from Samarqand towards Mecca in Hajji Mohammad Khesraw's company who previously had performed pilgrimage to Mecca several times. Shortly after their departure, a trooper arrived hurriedly and conveyed the message that containing an order for them to wait in the neighboring village until the preparation for a royal ceremony for conveying the former ruler to Mecca comes to an end. Panicked by the order, Mirza Olughbek had no choice other than waiting in one of the houses in the neighboring village. The weather was very cold and Mirza Olughbek ordered for setting fire to cook meat. Setting nearby the fire to get warm, Mirza Olughbek's coat got burnt. At this time, looking at the fire, Mirza Olughbek said in the Turkic language "You also realized this" and turned gloomy, and Hajji's efforts failed to becalm Olughbek.

The door opened at the moment and a person named Abbas entered along with his footman. Seeing Abbas, Mirza Olughbek jumped and attacked him throwing a punch on his chest. The footman held Olughbek firmly and Abbas went outside to bring a rope. Hajji locks the door from inside for Olughbek to perform his last ablution. Then, Abbas entered the room and pulled the former ruler out of the room tying his hands and forced him to kneel down at the bank of a watercourse and chopped down his head with a sword strike. According to the writings of the historian, Mirkhovand, this tragic death was issued in the 8th Ramadan of the year 853 (25 October 1449). However, on the headstone of Mirza Olughbek, it is written “10 Ramadan, 853” (Wasifi, 1349, p. 254).

This way, the great scholar and knowledgeable king, Mirza Olughbek, was martyred at his 56th. The date he was martyred was written in Arabic Abjad as “Abbas killed” which denotes 8 Ramazan 853 (25 October 1449).

5. Sultan's Wives and Children:

According to Khowandmir, Mirza Olughbek had five wives and only three of them are mentioned. His first wife, born in 1395 in Samarqand, was Ogi Begi, the daughter of Mohammad Sultan Mirza son of Jahangir Mirza. Mirza Olughbek got married to Ogi Begi in the year 1404 when he was only 10. She gave birth to a girl in the year 1412 who was named then as Habiba Sultan. She passed away after falling ill at her 25 on February 3, 1419 (7 Maharam 822) in Samarqand. Ogi Begi was buried next to her father in the school which was founded by Mohammad Sultan Mirza.

Mirza Olughbek's second wife was Aq Sultan Khan Agha, the daughter of Mongol Sultan Mahmood Khan, one of Amir Temur's Khans. Mirza Olughbek loved Aq Sultan Khan Agha and always took her with himself when taking a trip. According to Mirkhovand, the historian, one day, when talking Mohammad Ardistani, an astrology scholar, Mirza Olughbek asks him to foretell what will happen in near future. Since Ali Qushchi was also present, Mohammad Ardistani said he cannot talk openly in the presence of the strangers, as the coming events are kind of tied with the harem. “Ali Qushchi is my friend. I don't keep anything from him. Therefore, you can talk without hesitance”, Mirza Olughbek said. After that, Mohammad Ardistani said “The sovereign will kill one of his wives one day and divorces his second wife, the Khan's daughter”. Mirza Olughbek did not believe what the astrologer said, as he loved the Khan's daughter, Aq Sultan Agha, a lot. However, after a while what the astrologer foretold came true. As the Khan's daughter fails to hide her happiness for the death of Olughbek's other wife and even blames him by using taunting words. Regardless of how much he loved her, Mirza Olughbek could not tolerate and divorced her.

Mirza Olughbek's third wife was Hasan Nigar Khan Agha, Khil Sultan's daughter. According to Academic B. B. Bartal, Hasan Nigar Khan Agha was Shah Jahan's daughter, one of the Khans of Mongols (Maroof-uf, 1981, p. 247).

Aside from them, Mirza Olughbek married six of his bondwomen. One of his bondwomen, Ruqiya Sultan Khatun, gave birth to his two daughters, Aqbash and Sultan Bakht. His second bondwomen was Mihr Sultan and the third was Dawlat Bakht Saadat who gave birth to his daughter, Turkan Agha. The fourth one was Khowand Sayed's daughter, Dawlat Sultan, the fifth was Bakhtim, and the sixth was Sheikh Mohammad Barlas's daughter, Dawlat Bakht (Encyclopedia, 2000, p. 238).

Mirza Olughbek's first wife, Ogi Begi, gave birth to his daughter in 1412. When the birth was due, the pregnant Ogi Begi was brought to Herat from Samarqand congenial to the Shahrukh palace. On August 18, 1412, Ogi Begi was relieved of pregnancy. The baby girl born was named Habiba Sultan. Since Ogi Begi was of offspring of Khan, they titled her daughter as “Khanzada Begum”. Although, after a while, Ogi Begi returned to Samarqand, her daughter, Habiba Sultan Begum, remained under Gawharshad Begum's supervision in Herat to be educated.

However, Mirkhovand, the historian, claims that Habiba Sultan died when she was only two years old. Therefore, considering Mirkhovand's remarks, apparently, Ogi Begi's second daughter was also named Habiba Sultan and titled as Khanzada Begum. In short, Fasih-al-Khawafi writes that in 1438, Mirza Olughbek requested his daughter, Habiba Sultan, to be sent from Herat to Samarqand. Accordingly, Habiba Sultan went to Samarqand that year and returned to Herat again on April, 1439 (Mirkhovand, 1374, p. 352).

Mirza Olughbek had another daughter named Sultan Bakht. However, no information exists about her. He also had another daughter, Rabia Sultan Begum. When Sultan Abu Sayed Mirza over took Samarqand with

the help of Abulkhair Khan, the Uzbek leader, Abulkhair Khan married to Rabia Sultan and took her to Turkistan. Rabia Sultan gave birth to Abulkhair Khan's two sons. He named his elder son as Kochkonchi and his younger son as Sewinch. According to Khowandmir, Olughbek had seven daughters. One of them, named Tugha Turkan, died at his young age. His second daughter was Agha Tughan Shah. However, he has not written about Rabia Sultan Begum.

Ebadullah Mirza was Mirza Olughbek's elder son, born in 1412 and passed away in 1417. Abdullah Mirza was his second son, born in 1420 and passed away at his 14 in 1433. His third son, born in 1421, was Abdu-Rahman. According to Mirkhowand, the historian, Abdu-Rahman saw his father, Mirza Olughbek, in 1425 when he had returned from the Mongolian battle. This prince also died at his childhood in Samarqand when he was only 12 years old. His fourth son, Abul-Latif Mirza, was born in 1428 while his fifth son was born in 1430 (Mirkhowand, 1327, p. 421).

6. SUMMARY:

The bloodshed over the throne rejuvenated among the Temuri princes once again. Mirz Olughbek fought against the united armies of his nephew, Alawudin Dawla Mirza, and that of Abul Qasim Mirza. Meanwhile, taking advantage of Mirza Olughbek's being in Khorasan, Abulkhair Khan, the nomad Uzbek leader, attacked Transoxania ravaging Samarqand and plundering the villages nearby Samarqand and Bukhara. Hearing of this incident, Mirza Olughbek returned to Samarqand but got heavily defeated by Uzbek army along the Amu River.

In general, Mirza Olughbek was a great scholar, a founder, and a leader. During his reign, Samarqand was turned into a splendid cradle of civilization.

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