

Mawali Khan

Oral tradition has it that Dada Mawali Mian, as he is known out of reverence, was our first ancestor who migrated from the Roh country in the North West tribal areas of what is now Pakistan to settle in the district that is now known as Kaimganj. He was said to be the *Diwan* (the Chief revenue officer) of Nawab Rashid Khan Ansari (Nawab Rashid Mian) who was a nobleman during the reigns of the Mughal emperors Jahangir and Shah Jahan.



1. Tomb of Mawali (Qavi) Khan situated in Hamirpur, Kaimganj built sometime in the middle of the 17th century. The retaining wall is clearly visible in the foreground. Photograph Tariq khan 1990.

Mawali Khan is buried in Hamirpur village of Kaimganj in the Farrukhabad district. The ruins of what must have been a splendid tomb surround his grave. When I visited the tomb in 1990, a north-facing wall was still standing, as were parts of the east and west wall and one of the minarets. Retaining walls on all sides of the tomb still also survive. There must have been stairs leading into the tomb from all sides. It is quite possible that it may have had a dome shape roof at some time although it is not unusual also to find roofless tombs in the area but the structures normally tend to be much smaller in size. From what I can judge from this wall and the general dimensions of the tomb, it appears to have been constructed in a traditional red brick structure, more reminiscent of the style of the buildings built during Emperor Akbar and Babar demonstrating power rather than beauty which were more the hall marks of the style of construction during Jahangir and Shah Jahan's reign.

Such a tomb could only have been built for a very well respected and important person of that time. When I visited his tomb in 1990, I found someone claiming to be the caretaker of the tomb. When my cousin Nasir Khan, who was my guide for the day, questioned the fellow, it transpired that every Thursday evening he lighted incense sticks on the grave. It was also quite obvious that the grave is regularly whitewashed and sometime not in the distance past the walls must also have been whitewashed. My

aunt remembers that when my grandmother was alive, she used to cook and distribute sweets on his anniversary which fell in the winter months in Hamirpur, which is a mile or two from where she lived in Kuberpur. Not to appear mean and ungrateful, I left a few rupees with the caretaker to light some incense on my behalf.



2. Tomb of Mawali Khan showing his grave. Photograph Tariq Khan 1990.

Despite the splendour and apparent importance of Mawali Khan as the *Diwan* of an important Mughal nobleman, his life is still folded in mystery. A *Diwan* was equivalent to a chief revenue officer or finance officer and was an important position in the Mughal period. If documents, especially dealing with financial matters, survived from that period relating to Rashid Khan it is inconceivable that these would not bear the signature of his *diwan*. I have yet to see any documents bearing his name perhaps only because I have not as yet found any documents relating to the administration of Rashid Khan's *jagirs*¹ in Kaimganj. However, there is a lot of published material available on Rashid Khan. If we assume that the passed down family tradition is correct, then we can perhaps deduce if supported by the documentary evidence that he was probably our first ancestor in India and more crucially estimate a date on which he may have arrived in India. However, this is not so easy as an examination of the *shijraa* will show.

Rashid Khan's arrival in India and his obtaining *jagirs* in Kaimganj

Rashid Khan Ansari, whose given name was Allahdad, was connected to the *Roshaniya* sect, which was active for around a hundred years in the *Roh* country. In fact, he was the grandson of Sheikh Bayazid the self-styled *Pir-i-Roshan* the founder of the *Roshaniya* sect. Although adherents of this sect were regarded as heretics, Shaikh Bayazid, and his descendants for two generations, nevertheless carried a great emotional and personal appeal amongst the Pathan tribes. They were able to assemble armies and engage in military campaigns against the Mughals. Indeed, there was a continuous campaign from

1 Some documents to his Deccan administration during Shah Jahan's reign can be found in the Hyderabad Archives. Dr. Yusuf Hussain Khan published a selected number of them under the name of "Muntakhib Kaghzat Aihd-i-Shahjahan", which were translated into English as "Selected Documents of Shah Jahan's Reign", Published by Daftari-Diwani, Hyderabad Deccan 1950.

the time of Emperor Akbar to that of Emperor Shah Jahan to uproot this sect in the Province of Kabul.

Allah Dad left the Roh country in 1601 after the death of his father Jalal-ud-Din and migrated to India. The exact reasons for his departure are not clear but it appears that he had disputed with his brothers, “owing to the short sightedness and the mutual envy of Afghans²”. Sometime later after immigrating to India, he enlisted in the service of Emperor Jahangir. In fact, it appears that it was the Emperor’s governor of Kabul Mahabat Khan who brought him to the court through a policy of “coaxing bestowal and favours” upon the *Roshaniyas* when militarism was failing to suppress the insurrection. There are many conflicting accounts of how and when he was granted *jagirs* in Shamsabad at this time³. According to one account, Allah Dad chose to settle in “*Purani Dang area in Kampal sub-division*” where he “constructed a mud flanked fortification (*Garhi*) ruins of which exist even today. This town since then is known as Mau Rashidabad. During this time some Afridi and Bangash tribes migrated to settle down in Mau Rashidabad and its vicinity”⁴. Whilst the account is correct in most respects as I have witnessed the ruins myself, unfortunately, it does not tell us why Rashid Khan chose *Shamsabad* as the site for his *jagirs*.

Another account states that he was granted *jagirs* in the *pargana* of *Shamsabad* in 1621 following his revolt against Jahangir in 1619/1620⁵. In fact Jahangir gives the year of his intransigence as 1619⁶. He appeared in the court in 1620 when he was pardoned at the request of Intimadud Daula and had his *mansab* restored to 2,500 and 200 *sawar*⁷.

Yet another account states that he chose *Shamsabad* after carrying out a successful campaign at the orders of Jahangir against the Rajputs *zamindars* of Mainpuri, Rampur, Thation, and Khimsepur who were resisting Mughal authority. Prior to that there is no record of Afghan *zamindari* in *Shamsabad*. Rashid Khan Ansari was despatched against

2 *Maathir-al-Umara*, translation p. 599.

3 For example, Dr. Yusuf Hussain Khan in his memoirs ‘*Yadon ki Dunya*’ gives the impression that Nawab Rashid Khan established Mau Rashidabad soon after arriving in India. Unfortunately, Dr. Hussain does not quote any source materials for his narrative.

4 [*Dr. Zakir Hussain, Quest for Truth*](#) by Dr. Zia ul Hasan Farooqi, APH Publications, p. 9. In fact, Farooqi quotes Dr. Yusuf Hussain (*Yadon Ki Dunya*) as his source Op. cit. page 9. I don’t know the source of Dr. Hussain’s source as he has not provided any references in his book. However, we know from the *Ma’athir* that he was buried in Mau Shamsabad. Dr. Farooqi also writes on the same page that the “The dead body of Nawab Rashid Khan, according to his will, was brought to Mau Rashidabad by his brother, Elham Khan”. He has not quoted his source for this piece of information. Also when he says “will” does he mean his desire or *wasiyat* – testament.

5 The account appears on page 294 in the Indian History Congress (IHC): Proceedings, 60th Session 1999, under Medieval India, “The ‘Roshani’ Family in the Mughal Nobility” by Fatima Zehra Bilgrami. Bilgrami quotes *Tuzuk II*, pp 120, 153, 304 and for the details of his journey to the Imperial court the *Halnama*, ff417a 418b).

6 *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri II*, p 120, Rogers and Beveridge’s translation.

7 Ibid, p.153

them, and upon this successfully undertaking, he was granted a *jagir* in Shamsabad⁸. The date is likely to be in 1620/1621 but this is something I need to confirm with the *Tuzk-i-Jahangiri*. This seems the most compelling reason for how Rashid Khan came to know about *Shamsabad* and why he would have chosen to settle a *jagir* there close to the *Ruhela* jagirs.

We know that Rashid Khan was not really allowed to settle on his new *jagir* for long and it would have been during this time that Rashid Khan would have needed someone to administer his newly acquired *jagir*. Jahangir sent him to Prince Khurram in Deccan on 25 September 1621 with Rs. 20,00,000 for the expenses of the army of the Deccan. By 1622, Allah Dad had returned to the fold of the Amirs and was appointed with a fiefdom in Deccan. Jahangir writes when narrating his Qandahar campaign, “Lashkar Khan came from Deccan, and waited on me, and also attached to that army Allahdad Khan Afghan, Muhammed Isa Tarkhan, Mukarram Khan, Ikram Khan, and other Amirs, who had come from the Deccan from their fiefs, after being presented with horses and dresses of honour, were sent with (Prince) Khan Jahan”⁹.

The *jagir* consisting of the village of “Mau in the *pargana* of Shamsabad of *sarkar* Kannauj , *suba* Akbarabad (Agra)” was finally converted into *inam-al-tamgha* by Shah Jahan by a royal *farman* to that effect in 1629 at the request of Rashid Khan¹⁰ as a reward for dealing with the rebellion of Jhujar Singh Budela in the Deccan in 1628¹¹. He was also raised to the *mansab* of 3,000/1,500. In fact, the account states that he was called from his *jagir*, which is not named but is most probably Mau Rashidabad, to appear before the Emperor to receive his orders for the campaign. The conversion to *inam-al-tamgha* meant that the *jagir* became hereditary as most *jagirs* granted by the Mughal emperors reverted back to the state following the death of the *jagir* holders.

On the birth of Mawali Khan, his arrival in Mau Rashidabad and the *shijraa*

In the above proceedings, I have assumed that the family oral tradition, that Mawali Khan was the *diwan* of Rashid Khan, and the *shijraa* produced from my grandfather’s diary record is correct. An examination of this *shijraa* when conducted against the facts from Rashid Khan’s narrative above, poses some interesting challenges that must be considered.

8 District Gazette (D.G.) Farrukhabad, p. 138; *Mukhtasar Hal-I Tarikhi Nawab Rashid Khan Sahib* (M.H.) (transcript, Research Library, Department of History, AMU). These references were quoted by Iqbal Hussain on page 26 in “The Ruhela Chieftaincies – The Rise and Fall of Ruhella Power in India”, Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) published by Oxford University Press. Other documents from Shamsabad suggest that Rashid Khan had probably received a very large assignment in altamgha or hereditary jagir which then remained in his family. (Shamsabad document no. 38, Shah jahan’s farman, 30 May 1629, AMU).

9 *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri* II, p 215 and 245, Rogers and Beveridge’s translation.

10 Indian History Congress (IHC): Proceedings, 60th Session 1999, under Medieval India, “The ‘Roshani’ Family in the Mughal Nobility” page 294 by Fatima Zehra Bilgrami. She quotes as her source in note 27, Shamsabad Belhaur documents, No 38, Research Library, Department of History, AMU.

11 Indian History Congress (IHC): Proceedings, 60th Session 1999, under Medieval India, “The ‘Roshani’ Family in the Mughal Nobility” page 294 by Fatima Zehra Bilgrami. She quotes as her source in note 25, *Tarikh-i-Kewal Ram*, f.72b.

According to a record in my grandfather's diary¹², Qavi Khan was my 6th great grandfather. Our grandfather's diary has a note showing him to have come from *wilayat*, a term used to describe someone who arrived somewhere from foreign lands. If he accompanied Rashid Khan then his arrival in Mau Rashidabad would have been between 1619 and 1628, the dates when Rashid Khan acquired his Shamsabad *jagirs*. My grandfather was born in 1890¹³. Thus, Mawali Khan would have arrived in Mau Rashidabad 270 years earlier and would probably have been born around 300 years before my grandfather's birth. This means that each of my grandfather's ancestors was born, on average, on the 50th birthday of their fathers. It is highly unlikely that each of my grandfather's ancestors would have had children so late in their lives so consistently. It also does not correlate with my maternal ancestors when we calculate the average equivalent birth year of each ancestor. My maternal 6th great grandfathers and grandmothers were born in the 1720's and 1730's which means that on average each ancestor was born on the 30th birthday of their father or mother. If we follow my maternal ancestors timeline, Mawali Khan should have been born sometime in the early 1700's, and not a century earlier. Either the *shijraa* below is missing two or three generations, or the oral tradition has got confused over the years and Mawali Khan did arrive in the early eighteenth century.

The latter explanation is plausible. It is not unusual for the *jagirs* to retain its original reference of ownership long after the death of the original owner, particularly of a personality such as Rashid Khan. Mawali Khan, instead of being the *diwan* of Rashid Khan, may have been the *diwan* of the "jagirs of Rashid Khan", having been known as "jagirs of Rashid Khan" perhaps in the middle of the 18th century. We do know that the *jagirs* of Rashid Khan remained in his family for 200 years¹⁴. But this hypothesis poses another dilemma.

A *diwan* was a very important position of trust and responsibility. It seems somewhat unlikely that a newcomer would be given such a position in a well established family unless the family, or someone they trusted, knew him well. Moreover, when I first mentioned Qavi Khan to those in Kaimganj who grew up hearing about Mawali Khan, none of them recognised the name. On the other side of the argument however, since it was common for the *Pathans* arriving in the *Doab* area (the land between *Ganga* and

12 I have not seen the diary yet, which is currently in the possession of my cousin Salim Khan. At my request, Mohammad Khan, son of Salim Khan, converted the entries in the diary into a *shijraa*, a genealogy chart, showing Mawali Khan as the first ancestor extending it downwards to my father and uncles and aunts. There are no dates of births or deaths on the *shijraa*, presumably there are none in the diary either. The entry in the diary were probably written sometime between 1945 and 1952, the year of his death. We do not know the sources our grandfather used to collect this information. From another diary in my possession, it appears that my grandfather after retiring from the Indian Medical Corps shortly after 1945 was entrusted with obtaining probate for recently deceased relatives and friends and settling their properties to the rightful heirs. So perhaps during his endeavours he may have obtained access to similar documents relating to his own family.

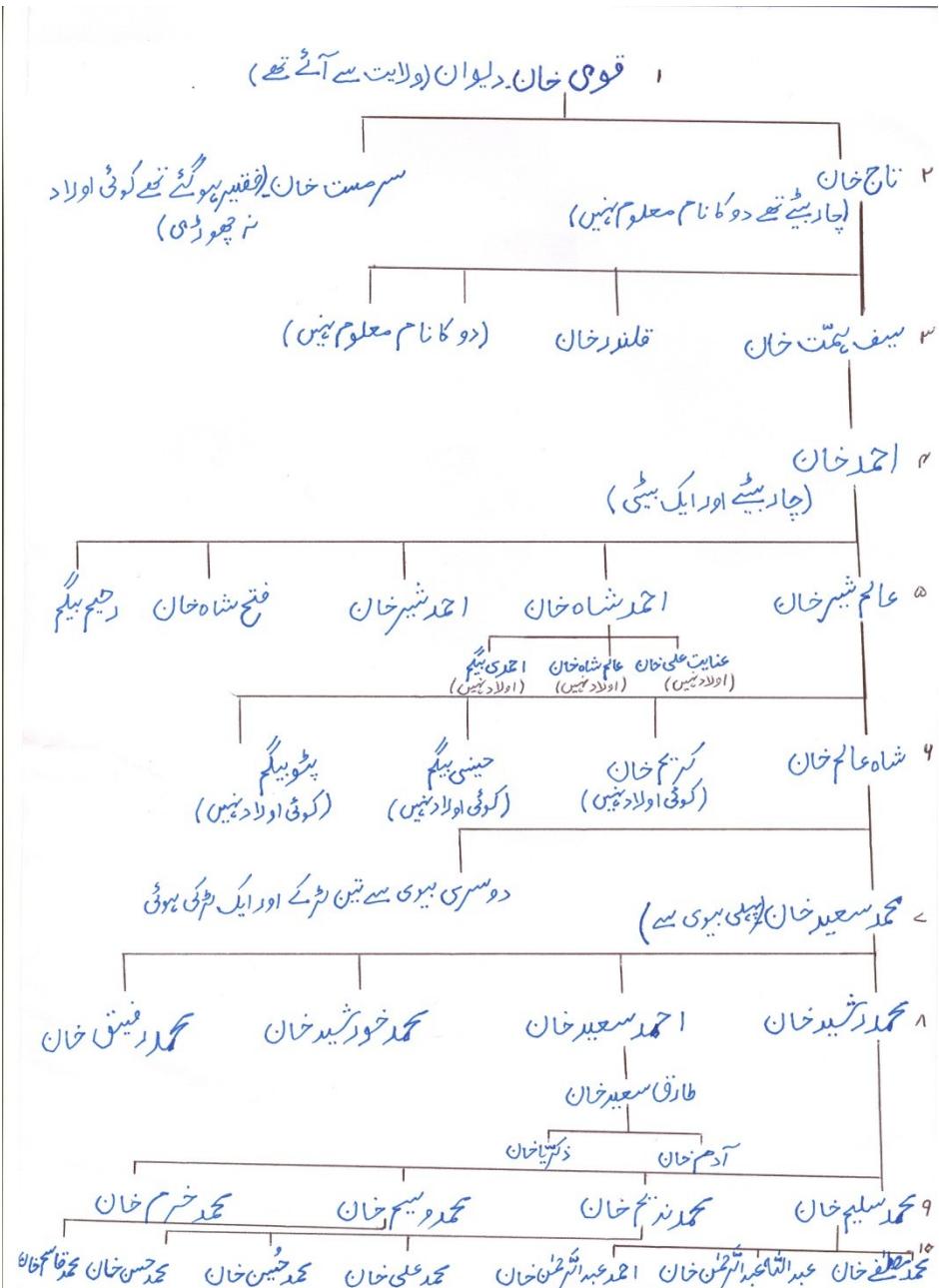
13 The birth is recorded in the Quarterly Indian Army List 1912-1946, page 572.

14 Rashid's Khan family had lost control of its zamindaris by A.D. 1824. Nawab Fazle Ali Khan, Prime Minister of Nasiruddin Haider, King of Awadh, acquired it largely through purchases. (D.G. Farrukhabad, pp 82-3). The Ruhela Chieftaincies, Afghan Zamindaris, Iqbal Hussain, AMU and OUP

Jamunah) to retain trading links with their old country of origins, personalities in the old country would not have been complete strangers to these new immigrants even several generations after the first settlers arrived in the area. So it is still plausible that someone could have recommended Mawali Khan to the heirs of Rashid Khan. It does appear that the ownership of the heirs of Rashid Khan was not without controversy, as there are a number of records making references to further *farmans* regarding the ownership to the *jagirs* of Rashid Khan.

“A hasb-ul hokum, dated 17 July 1784, confirms an original grant of 600 bighas of land to Iradatullah Khan, son of Kale Khan Raushani, grandson of Rashid Khan in village Ruhela, pargana Shamsabad. The hasb-ul hokum further says that the grant had been made in ma’afi (revenue free) to the family long ago in accordance with the earlier farman and sanads issued by previous Emperors including Shah Alam (1707-12) (Shamsabad Document No. 8, AMU)¹⁵”.

¹⁵ The Ruhela Chieftaincies, The 3rd battle of Panipat. Iqbal Hussain, AMU OUP 1994.



3. Shijraa chart of Qavi Khan Diwan constructed from diaries of Mohammad Said Khan

As no one who has been brought up with this story, recognises the name of Qavi Khan, the story that Mawali Khan and Rashid Khan arrived together in Shamsabad still seems far more plausible. This means that my grandfather was probably wrong in assuming that Qavi Khan was the original ancestor who came from *wilayat*. Given the difficulties even today in tracing family histories back to the 16th century even here in the UK where far more work has been done to preserve such records, I cannot be sure that the above *shijraa* is correct. I think that on balance of probabilities, the oral tradition is correct and that the *shijraa* needs to be extended back maybe 3 more generations. By this reckoning Mawali Khan would be my 8th or 9th great grandfather and not as shown above my 6th great grandfather. So in the absence of any other information, we can assume that the *shijra* is correct up to the point where it asserts that Qavi Khan arrived

from *wilayat*. Qavi Khan may have been the grandson or great grandson of Mawali Khan.

Furthermore, although I might be on the wrong track, I found a reference to Qalandar Khan, the grandson of Qavi Khan, campaigning against the Marhathas on behalf of Ahmad Shah Abdali around 1760¹⁶ which fits in with the timeline of the *Shijraa*. The relevant extract is as follows:

“Abdali laid siege to Dig on 7 February 1760. While so engaged, he received reports of the Marhathas operating under the command of Malhar Rao in Mewat. The Shah retired from the Dig to confront Malhar Rao, but the latter avoided battle, crossed the Yumana and entered the Doab, causing alarm to the Ruhelas as their country lay defenceless and exposed. Malhar Rao plundered the treasure and supplies on the way to Ahmad Shah Abdali's camp and encamped at Sikandra. Highly provoked, Ahmad Shah Abdali dispatched Shah Pasand Khan, Qalandar Khan and Afzal Khan Ruhela and they, after a day and night march, took Malhar Rao completely unawares. In the confusion he fled with a handful of followers to Bharatpur, where he joined Janakoji and Imad-ul-Mulk.”

¹⁶ ibid. In the notes Hussain quotes T. Muz., vol. II, 80ab; T. Shakir Khani, 86ab; Zikr-i-Mur, p. 89. Siyar, p. 910, places this event after Malhar's defeat at Sikandra. Also see Khazana-i-Amira, p. 103; Miskin, 50a; Mir'at-i-Ahmadi, p. 586; Risula Shazada Pisar Ahmed Shah Durrani, 2.

