

# **KHIRDHAHI AND AIWAZ SHAH GRAVE-YARD**

**Autobiography of M.H. Panhwar  
(First ten years of my life seventy chapters, 250 pages.)**

From the Vedic times. Brahmans have played the role of locating sites of different villages/towns, laying out of foundations of individual houses, locating sites for temples, bazars and cremation yards. Like-wise they were considered water diviners and none of the utility was sited without their assistance. They read different mantras for the different jobs performed.

Our Village Ibrahim Panhwar was located in 1857 without interference of any holy man or Syed, but while looking for graveyard, great care had to be taken as men, women and children were to sleep there until doom's day, so a holy man was called who, after reading some kind of Talisman or probably some Dua declared that an old Syed named Aiwaz Shah was buried there under shed of a grove of Kirir, Khabar and laee trees near Khirdhahi mound. The villagers were now assured that with the blessings of God, their bodies will be unmolested till the day of resurrection. With all the respect for the dead people we do not open their graves. Much can be learnt if we allow atleast some of the graves to be opened up for understanding science. In my childhood, I heard that saint so and so, was so holy that five years after his death, grave was opened and his face was so fresh as if buried just now etc. Similar stories are told about Christian and Jewish holy-men.

Actually once a person is buried and air supply is cut off, anaerobic bacteria, which is present almost every where and also inside human body, starts eating up the corpse and in less than one year the job is complete. In the process bacteria is killed for want of more food and their dead bodies are cannibalised by living ones, till all of them are dead. What is left after a year is bones, but even bone marrow and any other matter inside the bones is also digested totally. Bones can remain there for a long time, but if moisture is available from rain water or the area is water logged bones too are converted in various compounds and form part of the soil.

Coming back to the excavation of graves, the tombs of Taimur Lang and Ululbeg were opened by the Russian archaeologist Garasimo to verify if Taimur Lang was actually lame and Ululbeg had been assassinated. It was found that former was lame and the latter's head was chopped off with a sword. In case controversy surrounding Makhdoom Bilawal's death, I have suggested that by opening the grave we can verify, if he was crushed to death in oil expeller or not.

Any sensible people and Government should encourage such scientific research.

To me Khirdhahi mound next of Aiwaz Shah is more important than the latter as the former is an ancient settlement. As Khirdhahi was a small mound, Aiwaz Shah was invented near it, with a guess that the mound must be an old graveyard. The story for Khirdhahi goes to say that at this site lived Khirdahi the sister of tyrant king Dalu Rai, who lived at Lohamjo Daro three miles north of it. She was producer of beautiful virgins for her nymphomaniac brother and the two sites were destroyed simultaneously due to wrath of God. Almost every mound in Sindh and the Southern Punjab is connected with such stories of Dalu Rai.

In 1931/32 while excavating Khariro minor, the Irrigation Department's dragline cut through the mound and debris spread on the embankments contained lot of pottery pieces. The villagers did not know their value. My grand father collected a number of pieces. They were very small cups and jars and I was happy to get them and use them as ink pots. Archaeologically Lohamjo Daro is contemporary of Mohenjo Daro and about 4500 years old, while no body has collected artefacts from Khirdahi to know the exact period. However, my father purchased some 13 acres of adjoining land from the government in 1960. While ploughing my step-brother recovered a burnt clay piece about fifteen inches diameter two inches thick totally intact and I recognised it as device for removing husk from paddy grains. If Khirdahi and this land has the same age then it could be dated around 1300-1550 AD, when the river Indus or its branch flowed near the site.

It also seems that inventors of Aiwaz Shah had seen pottery debris and were sure that there was an ancient settlement there and therefore coined the story of existence of holy-man named Aiwaz Shah.

I was about five years old, when I accompanied my mother and many women who were going to Aiwaz Shah at a distance of about half a kilometre from our village, while singing and merry making on way. On reaching there, they prayed and a barber shaved the head of newly born baby boy, only a few month old. They all were jubilant while the child was crying badly and his mother was happily consoling him, while she herself was like bride of the occasion and centre of attraction. Immediately after ceremony they distributed some sweets and put red cloth over the grave under ceremony uttering a few words in Arabic without knowing their meaning. The women contributed some money to her and the barber left touching the head and face of the boy with both hands and getting payment. I asked my mother what it was? She said "Aiwaz Shah is Waliullah

(friend of God). This ceremony is under his feet (to the south his grave) and under Kirir, Khabar and Laee trees (all salt bushes of arid alkaline soils), under which he prayed day and night. It will lead to his blessings and the child will also live long." She said: "We did the same thing to you and you cried much more than this boy." I thought it was an early childhood torture to all males, to prepare them for tough days, he would be likely to face. I asked her if they do the same thing to girls. She said "No the girls hair are not shaved and they have to enter their graves with their hair."

My maternal uncle Muhammad Saleh (b. 1912), told me that his own father Ahmed and all males born in the village since that time had their head shaved off for the first time at Aiwaz Shah and since rural women of Sindh are more superstitious than men, they invariably have been taking their off-springs to one of other such holy grave for the first shave in life.

In 1967/68 Ghullam Ali Allana of Karachi (called G. Allana) delivered a lecture at NIPA, where I was one of the participants. I asked him some awkward questions one of which was: "Considering three decades of Sindh's history, 1937-47, 1947-58 and 1958 to this day, do you think that corruption was minimum in first decade, it increased in the second and has reached its worst in the present decade. The type of Government in the first decade, democracy was tempered with, by the Executive and their employees from the incept and in the third it is dictatorship. Do you agree that corruption is directly proportionate to the lack of democracy?" He did not want to Say "Yes" as NIPA management would never call again and therefore suggested that, it would be a long discussion and I should meet him some time in his house. I did so. A few years earlier, with help of Ms. Fatima Jinnah, he was preparing biography of Mr. Muhammad Ali Jinnah and I wanted to know some interesting episodes of latter's life. He narrated that Muhammad Ali's mother had prayed to the family's deceased Pir in Kutch, that when her first son was born, she would have his head shaved off at his shrine. So the poor boy was first taken by boat from Karachi to a Kutch port, where from he was taken by bullock-cart many miles away to the holy grave and the whole journey took a few days to reach there and the same time to return. I thought of a few things; firstly, he must have will to live from the birth to stand the journey, secondly had he not survived, we would not have heard of Pakistan and finally I was pleased that my village folks were very smart and lucky to have invented a Pir and his grave, which was less than half a kilometre, otherwise our village could never have attained the population figure of today. Jinnah was lucky to survive and to become leader of one hundred million Muslims, but in my case, "Long live Aiwaz Shah, who did not exist". At least this legendary figure is better than a God's good man, who

went to Pathan country and was murdered and buried so that they could go to his grave to seek his blessings.