


## The 'Khans' and Hindu Dharma- Modern story of irony & ignorance

Every Indian in the past three or four decades who follows the Hindi film industry and watch the movies produced by it are familiar with the name 'Khan'. There are numerous actors with the title Khan. The long list includes names such as Aamir Khan, Salman Khan, Shahrukh Khan (aka King Khan), Saif Ali Khan, Imran Khan, Irrfan Khan etc . These are all lead actors in our cinema otherwise known as 'heroes'. Originally however the original 'Khan' to grace our screens was a gentleman known as Amjad Khan who was mainly a villain/negative character type actor. He burst on to our screens as Gabbar Singh in the blockbuster 'Sholay'. All these Khans bar none are Muslim by faith. Most of them are quite liberal and open minded as far as religion is concerned at least on the surface.

India is a mainly Hindu Country (with over 80% Hindus) and there is a long and absolutely horrific history of conflict and genocide between Hindus and Muslims. Therefore the fact that Indians/Hindus are quite happy to accept these Muslim actors and popularise them to a great extent has something to do with their surname 'Khan'. What makes this phenomenon even starker is the fact that there is hardly any other Muslim actor who is a leading star with your average Muslim surname like Ahmed or Iqbal etc.

What is it about the name Khan that strikes such a resonance in Hindu society? There is a sub conscious level acceptance and adoration of this name amongst Indians. It's as if every Hindu/Indian instinctively likes this name and has a good impression of it. To discover the reason for this remarkable phenomenon let us try and discover the roots and history of this name.

Notably in South Asia (I.e. India Pakistan Bangladesh, Afghanistan) it has become a part of many South Asian Muslim names, especially when Pashtun descent is claimed. However the history of the name Khan is not South Asian at all.

Khan (Mongolian: хаан, xaan; Middle Mongolian: , qayan; Turkish: kağan or hakan; Old Turkic: , kayan; Chinese: 汗, hán) is an originally **Altaic and subsequently Central Asian** title for a sovereign or military ruler, widely used by medieval nomadic Turko-Mongol tribes living to the north of China.

It now has many equivalent meanings such as commander, leader, or ruler. The female alternatives are Khatun and Khanum, These titles or names are sometimes written as *Han, Kan, Hakan, Hanum, or Hatun* (in Turkey). Various **Mongolic and Turkic peoples** from Central Asia had given the title new prominence after the Mongol rule throughout the Old World and later brought the title "Khan" into Northern Asia. **Which later was adopted by locals in the country as a title.** Khagan is rendered as *Khan of Khans* and was the title of **Genghis Khan** and the persons who are elected to rule the Mongol Empire.

The Undisputed owner of this name and the most famous Khan is Genghis Khan the man himself. He was the founder and Great Khan (emperor) of the Mongol Empire, which became **the largest contiguous empire in history after his death.**

**However Ghengis Khan was not Muslim. In fact he was the worst nightmare the Muslims have ever had.**

Genghis Khan's religion is widely speculated to have been Shamanism or Tengriism, which was very likely among nomadic Mongol-Turkic tribes of Central Asia. But he was very tolerant religiously, and interested in learning philosophical and moral lessons from other religions. To do so, he consulted Buddhist monks, Muslims, Christian missionaries, and the Taoist monk Qiu Chuji. In fact he rather sounds like a Hindu if anything. The definition above where he is "tolerant religiously, and interested in learning philosophical and moral lessons from other religions" sounds startlingly like a modern Hindu person.

Anyway his most famous exploit is the complete destruction of the Khwarezmian Empire a vast **Muslim** Central Asian empire. The Mongols' conquest, even by their own standards, was brutal. After the capital Samarkand fell, the capital was moved to Bukhara by the remaining men, and Genghis Khan dedicated two of his generals and their forces to completely destroying the remnants of the Khwarezmid Empire, including **not only royal buildings, but entire towns, populations and even vast swaths of farmland**. According to stories, Genghis Khan even went so far as to divert a river through the Khwarezmid emperor's birthplace, erasing it from the map.

A thirteenth-century Persian eyewitness succinctly summarized their initial impact in Iran: "They came, they sapped, they burnt, they slew, they plundered and they departed" (Juwayni, 1916/1997, p. 107). The Arab chronicler ibn al-Athir, although not an eyewitness, described his emotions on hearing of the Mongols' rise in words that have echoed down through history and colored half the world's perception of the Eurasian hordes:

O would that my mother had never borne me, that I had died before and that I were forgotten [so] tremendous disaster such as had never happened before, and which struck all the world, though the Muslims above all . . . *Dadjjal* [Muslim Anti-Christ] will at least spare those who adhere to him, and will only destroy his adversaries. These [Mongols], however, spared none. They killed women, men, children, ripped open the bodies of the pregnant and slaughtered the unborn (Spuler, 1972, pp. 29–30).

Genghis Khan (1167–1227) even described himself as "**the punishment of God**" and was pleased that others perceived him to play this role.

The Mongols did not rest after the destruction of the Central Asian Muslim Empire. Hulegu Khan the famous mongol general attacked and completely destroyed the venerable Arab Abbasid Caliphate.

Many historical accounts detailed the cruelties of the Mongol conquerors.

- The [Grand Library of Baghdad](#), containing countless precious historical documents and books on subjects ranging from medicine to astronomy, was destroyed. Survivors said that the waters of the Tigris ran black with ink from the enormous quantities of books flung into the river and red from the blood of the scientists and philosophers killed.
- Citizens attempted to flee, but were intercepted by Mongol soldiers who killed with abandon. Martin Sicker writes that close to 90,000 people may have died (Sicker 2000, p. 111). Other estimates go much higher. [Wassaf](#) claims the loss of life was several hundred thousand. Ian

Frazier of [The New Yorker](#) says estimates of the death toll have ranged from 200,000 to a million.<sup>[12]</sup>

- The Mongols looted and then destroyed mosques, palaces, libraries, and hospitals. Grand buildings that had been the work of generations were burned to the ground.
- The caliph was captured and forced to watch as his citizens were murdered and his treasury plundered. According to most accounts, the caliph was killed by trampling. The Mongols rolled the caliph up in a rug, and rode their horses over him, as they believed that the earth was offended if touched by royal blood. All but one of his sons were killed, and the sole surviving son was sent to Mongolia, where Mongolian historians report he married and fathered children, but played no role in Islam thereafter (see [Abbasid: The end of the dynasty](#)).
- Hulagu had to move his camp upwind of the city, due to the stench of decay from the ruined city.

Baghdad was a depopulated, ruined city for several centuries and only gradually recovered some of its former glory.

"Iraq in 1258 was very different from present day Iraq. Its agriculture was supported by canal networks thousands of years old. Baghdad was one of the most brilliant intellectual centers in the world. **The Mongol destruction of Baghdad was a psychological blow from which Islam never recovered.** Already Islam was turning inward, becoming more suspicious of conflicts between faith and reason and more conservative. With the sack of Baghdad, the intellectual flowering of Islam was snuffed out. Imagining the Athens of Pericles and Aristotle obliterated by a nuclear weapon begins to suggest the enormity of the blow. The Mongols filled in the irrigation canals and left Iraq too depopulated to restore them."  
(Steven Dutch)

"They swept through the city like hungry falcons attacking a flight of doves, or like raging wolves attacking sheep, with loose reins and shameless faces, murdering and spreading terror...beds and cushions made of gold and encrusted with jewels were cut to pieces with knives and torn to shreds. Those hiding behind the veils of the great Harem were dragged...through the streets and alleys, each of them becoming a plaything...as the population died at the hands of the invaders." (Abdullah Wassaf as cited by [David Morgan](#))

Anyway you get the picture. To this day the name Hulagu Khan brings sheer terror throughout the Islamic world. It is recorded however that Hulagu Khan was a Buddhist<sup>[1]</sup> as he neared his death, against the will of his Christian wife Dokuz Khatun (notice the Christian khatun).

Anyway back in India the first Islamic invasion had happened as early as 738 CE about 400 years before the Mongols. Surprise surprise the Hindus had completely defeated the initial Arab invasion and repulsed the Arab Muslims. The greatest Hindu hero that you have never heard of is Bappa Rawal aka Nagabhata king of the Gurjar Pratiharas.

The Arab chronicler Suleiman describes the army of the Imperial **Gurjara Pratiharas** as it stood in 851 CE; *The king of Gurjars maintains numerous forces and no other Indian prince has so fine a cavalry. He is unfriendly to the Arabs, still he acknowledges that the king of the Arabs is the greatest of kings. Among the princes of India there is no greater foe of the Islamic faith than he. He has got riches, and his camels and horses are numerous.*

The Battle of Rajasthan is a battle (or series of battles) where the Hindu Rajput clans defeated the Muslim Arab invaders in 738 CE. While all sources (Hindu and Muslim) agree on the broad outline of the conflict and the result, there is no detailed information on the actual battle/s. There is also no indication of the exact places where these battles were fought—what is clear is that the final battle took place somewhere on the borders of modern Sindh-Rajasthan. Following their defeat the remnants of the Arab army fled to the other bank of the River Indus.

We can take the “*still he acknowledges that the king of the Arabs is the greatest of kings*” as usual historical misinformation by sycophants. The rest of the statement is informative though. Something similar to what is taught in school syllabus in India today. The official Indian history totally glosses over the Mongol invasions as well as the Battle of Rajasthan which is the **single most important event in Indian history**. Without this battle all Indians would have been converted to Islam just like Persia and other states which could not fight and resist. By any measure the Indian Hindus were extraordinary.

Although the Muslim Arabs were defeated the newly converted Turks kept attacking India and through their forced conversions and atrocities made Indian Hindus absolutely hate Muslims. **Some estimates put the number of Hindus converted to Islam or killed as high as tens of Millions.**

Interestingly even the initial Mongol invasion subjugated most of the known World except, you guessed it again - India. For some reason of all the countries India was relatively untouched by Genghis Khan. Why? Why not? Not sure.

Why did he describe himself as "the punishment of God"?? Punishment for what??

Persian Historian Juv'aini wrote:

**“In the Muslim Countries devastated by Genghis Khan not one in thousand of the inhabitants survived...if from now to the day of resurrection nothing hindered the natural increase of the population it could never reach one tenth of its density before the Mongol Conquest.”**

**Is it possible that Genghis Khan was aware of India** and its history and the constant peril from Muslims India faced. Without his complete destruction of Islamic Empires India again would not have survived as a Hindu country. Is it possible that the great Khans were friends to the Hindus??

It is an interesting question that merits investigation. The later extremely successful and relatively tolerant Mughal empire is once again essentially a Mongol empire.

Anyway the name Khan therefore has a completely different and interesting meaning to the Hindus. Isn't it ironic then that when a film to depict the plight of the Muslims was made it was called:

**“MY NAME IS KHAN”**

