

## *Chapter 3:*

### *Hindustan's Political Climate Before 1857*

Before we uncover the origin of the problems with the British that led to the Uprising of 1857, we should understand the political climate in mid-eighteenth-century Hindustan.

#### **The Background of Mughal Hindustan After Emperor Aurangzeb**

During the rule of Emperor Shah Jahan (ruled 1628–1658) and Emperor Aurangzeb (ruled 1658–1707), there was a great rivalry between the Safavid dynasty of Persia, which chose to become Shi'ite, and the Emperor of Hindustan, so there were several alarms about a possible Persian invasion of Hindustan. Indeed, the Persian peril hung like a dark cloud over certain periods of these two reigns.

During his forty-nine years of iron but just rule, Aurangzeb had totally completed his conquest of all of Hindustan. Based on experiences he had during his reign, he proclaimed certain rules that he encouraged his successors and family members to follow after his death. He contained these rules in a document that was essentially his last will and testament, known as *Ahkam-I-Alamgiri (The Rules of Aurangzeb)*. Part of these rules are contained in the advice that the Emperor gave to his oldest son, Sultan Muhammad Mu'azzam Bahadur Shah, when he released him from confinement for disobedience, and conferred favors and gifts on him:

Although out of sheer necessity and because I had no other choice, I have punished your extremely ruinous conduct by keeping you in confinement for some years, yet this is the strongest sign of your future kingship, as the throne and dignity of the biblical Joseph were dependent on his being imprisoned. God willing, the same will happen to you. In this hope, I have in my lifetime entrusted to you the rule of paradise-like Hindustan.

The predictions of my horoscope—composed by Fazil Khan Ala-ul-mulk, and giving the incidents from the day of my birth till after my death—have all been verified by actual experience. In that horoscope, it is written that after me will come an Emperor, ignorant, narrow-minded, overpowered by injuries—whose words will be all imperfect and whose plans will be all immature. He will act towards some men with so much recklessness as almost to drown them, and towards others with so much severity as to raise the fear of utter destruction. Some counsels I am going to give you; you should lay them to heart. Although I know it for certain that it is far from your nature to put

them into practice, yet I am speaking out of paternal affection and in view of the love and obedience, which you have shown.

*First:* An Emperor ought to stand midway between gentleness and severity. If either of these two qualities exceeds the other, it becomes a cause of the ruin of his throne, because in case of excessive gentleness the people display audacity, while the increase of harshness scares away hearts. For example, our great ancestor uncle, Sultan Ulugh Beg,<sup>1</sup> in spite of his graces and good qualities, was fearless in shedding blood, so that for petty offences he used to order executions. His son, Abdul Latif, made him a prisoner and sent him to the fort at Nehawand. On the way, he asked a man, “What do you think was the cause of the fall of my royal power?” The man answered, “On account of your bloodshed, which made men shrink from you.” What my august ancestor the Emperor Humayun displayed was improper negligence, forgiveness, and weakness in affairs, because, in spite of his repeatedly hearing of the audacious deeds of Sher Khan in the province of Bengal, he neglected Sher Khan, and only rebuked his father, Hassan Sur, saying, “You know of your son’s acts, and yet you do not write to him to put some sense in him!” Hassan replied, “His acts have passed beyond the stage of writing. I know not what your Majesty’s negligence will at last result in.”

*Second:* An Emperor should never allow himself to be fond of ease and inclined to retirement, because the most fatal cause of the decline of kingdoms and the destruction of royal power is this undesirable habit. Always be moving about, as much as possible.

*It is bad for both Emperors and water to remain stagnant,  
The water grows putrid, and the Emperor’s power slips out  
of his control.  
In touring lie the honor, ease, and splendor of Emperors.  
The desire of comfort and happiness makes them  
untrustworthy.*

*Third:* Always plan how to train your servants, and appoint everyone to the task for which you deem him fit. It is opposed to wisdom to order a carpet-weaver to do the work of a blacksmith. Don’t impose the tasks of the great on the small, nor those of the little on the great, because great people feel ashamed to do the work of small people, and little fellows have not the capacity for doing the work of the great, so that utter disorder prevails in the affairs of the State.

All these admirable qualities and praiseworthy characteristics are found in your nature! Although I shall leave behind me a competent minister who has come to the front in my reign and whom I have secured, yet what good will it do, as the four pillars of the empire, that is to say, my

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<sup>1</sup>Sultan Mohammad Tariq Ulugh Beg, a grandson of Timur, and the learned author of Astronomical Tables, was the Sultan of Central Asia, from Turkey to Hindustan, till 1449, when he was deposed and murdered by his son Abdul Latif.

four sons, will never leave that poor man to himself to do his work?

In spite of this being the case, he will still exert himself so that the work of administration will on the whole be well done. But it is a rule of medicine that although the lower limbs of the body may retain their strength so long as the bad humor does not descend from the upper parts of the body, in the end the disease turns into general weakness and slackness, nay even into disorder and death. In this matter, too, the same is the case.

Although owing to my marching through wildernesses and forests, my officers, who love repose and feel disgusted with their own parents, long for the destruction of this my borrowed life, —yet after my death they will, owing to the thoughtlessness and ignorance of this son incapable of appreciating merit, beg from God for themselves that very thing (that is to say, death) which they are now praying for me. Anyhow, I advise you, out of fatherly love. “Don’t be so salty that your subjects would spit you out of their mouths, nor so sweet that they may gulp you down.” But this advice is out of place here, since selfishness is not at all present in your nature, but is the share of your dear brother. The portion of saltlessness is the lot of you, my very sagacious son. May God keep both the brothers in perfect moderation! Amen, O Lord of the Universe!”<sup>2</sup>

*Fourth:* Kings should never rest. As the conquest of Bijapur and Haidarabad was concluded, the prime minister petitioned the Emperor in a letter, “Praised be God! that through the grace of the Great Omnipotent and the never-to-decay fortune of your Majesty, two great kingdoms have been conquered. It is now good policy that the imperial standards should return to Paradise-like Hindustan (that is, Delhi), so that the world may know that nothing more remains for the Emperor to do here.

Then the Emperor showed his son the answer he had written to the prime minister on the back of his petition:

I wonder how an all-knowing hereditary noble servant like you could make such a request. If your wish were that men might know that no work now remains to be done, it would be contrary to truth. So long as a single breath of this mortal life remains, there is no release from labor and work. The traveler in the path of long hopes needs no guide.

*So long as a breath remains, the path of life is not smooth.  
It is hard that my runaway heart longs for home.  
The dew has so passed away, and yet it still remembers the  
garden.*

If my father, Emperor Shah Jahan, had not chosen to stay at Delhi and

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<sup>2</sup>Aurangzeb’s last and most favorite *wazir* (Prime Minister) was Asad Khan. Fazil Khan (Mulla Ala-ul-mulk), a versatile scholar, was Shah Jahan’s *Khan-i-saman* (Minister of Materials and Resources).

Agra, but had been constantly out on tour, his affairs would not have come to the pass that they actually did. If out of regard for good manners you do not again make such a request, and can bear the hardships of the expeditions for capturing forts, then in future I shall turn to the siege of forts. (Verse:)

*What fear of danger has the man drowned in love?  
What anxiety about headache has the man who has lost his  
head?*

Praised be God that in whatever place and abode I have been, I have by passing through it withdrawn my heart from all things connected with it, and made death easy for myself. (Verse:)

*Untie little by little the knot tying your heart to earthly  
things,  
Or else, Death will snatch away this string all at once and  
unawares.*

Fifth: Beware of the Sayyids of Barha!

From a report from the province of Nanded, I learned that Sayyid Hassan Ali Khan Bahadur and his brother, Sayyid Hussein, showed great bravery in fighting with Hanumant, the general of the Marathas, sacking his base camp, taking alive his brother Janaji's son, and imposing on him the honor of converting to Islam. One of my senior generals, Zulfiqar Khan Bahadur Nusrat Jang, who was passing by that place to chastise the disturber Dhana Jadav, and knew about the bravery, recommended promotions for both the Sayyid brothers and sent a letter of recommendation to me by courier, praying that Sayyid Hassan's rank, giving him command over 800 soldiers, might be raised to 1,000, and Sayyid Hussein's from 700 to 900.<sup>3</sup>

Across the sheet of this, the Emperor wrote:

Bravo! Why should it not be so? The Sayyids, who are sources of good fortune, spend their whole life supporting the strong faith of their forefather, His Holiness the Sayyid among prophets, Mohammed. Send to both the brothers with a mace bearer two robes of honor from the royal wardrobe, with two daggers set with plain-work jasper and having pearl straps. The prime minister should write a "Letter By Order" full of praise

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<sup>3</sup>*Anecdotes of Aurangzeb*, 2nd. ed. (English translation of *Ahkam-I-Alamgiri* with a life of Aurangzeb and historical notes by Jadunath Sarkar (Calcutta: M. C. Sarkar & Sons, 1925).

and send it to them.<sup>4</sup>

Across the letter of Nusrat Jang, the Emperor wrote:

The recommendation of promotion made by this hereditary servant, aware of my sentiments, was very proper. Failure on the part of generals to conciliate good soldiers is a matter of regret. It should not be done. But it is difficult for me to consent to their promotion in one step. True, love for the highly respected Sayyids is a part of our faith—nay, more, it is the very essence of spiritual knowledge; and enmity toward the good descendants of the Prophet's family will send one to hellfire and incur God's anger. But we should not do anything that might be a source of our grief in this world and misery in the next. In running government affairs, everyone should be treated equally, and we should not favor any particular families. To give power to the Sayyids of Barha would be to bring on final ruin—that is, a bad end; because these people, when they get the least prosperity and promotion, boast, "There is none like me," stray from the path of right conduct, think very highly of themselves, and cause trouble. If [then] they are neglected, worldly affairs become difficult. If they are corrected, the feet ultimately fall into mud."<sup>5</sup>

*Fig. 000: Emperor Aurangzeb Seated on a Golden Throne Holding a Gyrfalcon, with His Sons*<sup>6</sup>

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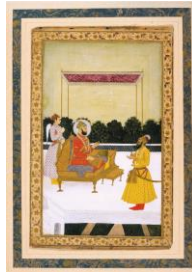
<sup>5</sup>Sayyid Hassan Ali Khan of Barha afterwards became Qutb-ul-mulk Abdullah Khan and the *wazir* of Emperor Farrukhsiyar. He is famous as one of the Sayyid Brothers, or the first Mughal king-maker. During Aurangzeb's reign, he was a minor commander of Nandurbar and Sultanpur. His brother, Hussein Ali Khan, afterwards called Amir-ul-Umara, was *Fujidar* (brigadier) of Hindun-Biana under Aurangzeb. Their father, Sayyid Abdullah, was appointed *Fujidar* of Nandurbar in February 1690, and is referred to as its governor in various documents in 1695. The term *Sayyid Brothers* refers in Hindustan to these two men, who became powerful generals of the Mughal Empire in 1712, and then created and dethroned Mughal Emperors at their will. Among the many powerful people these Sayyid Brothers assassinated were two Mughal Emperors, Jahandar Shah and Farrukhsiyar.

<sup>6</sup>This painting was completed around 1675. At the far left is Sultan Muhammad Akbar, the Emperor's third oldest surviving son. Second is the oldest son, the Crown Prince, Sultan Mu'azzam Shah. Third is the Emperor's oldest grandson, Sultan Muiz ud-din Muhammad Jahandar Shah. Next is the Emperor's second oldest surviving son, Sultan Azam Shah. Just behind the Emperor is a confidential servant, and at the far right is the Emperor's fourth oldest surviving son, Sultan Muhammad Kam Bakhsh.

Emperor Aurangzeb's oldest son, Sultan Mu'azzam Shah, mostly obeyed his father instructions, but he did not rule for long, and after him the affairs of state did not go as planned. Without clear rules of succession, fights among the family members became increasingly bitter, giving advantages to powerful non-family members. But the first threat that actually shook the empire came from Persia when Nadir Shah Afshar invaded.<sup>7</sup> His victory would not have been possible without the betrayal of two generals of the Mughal army.

*Fig. 000: Nadir Shah Afshar of Persia*

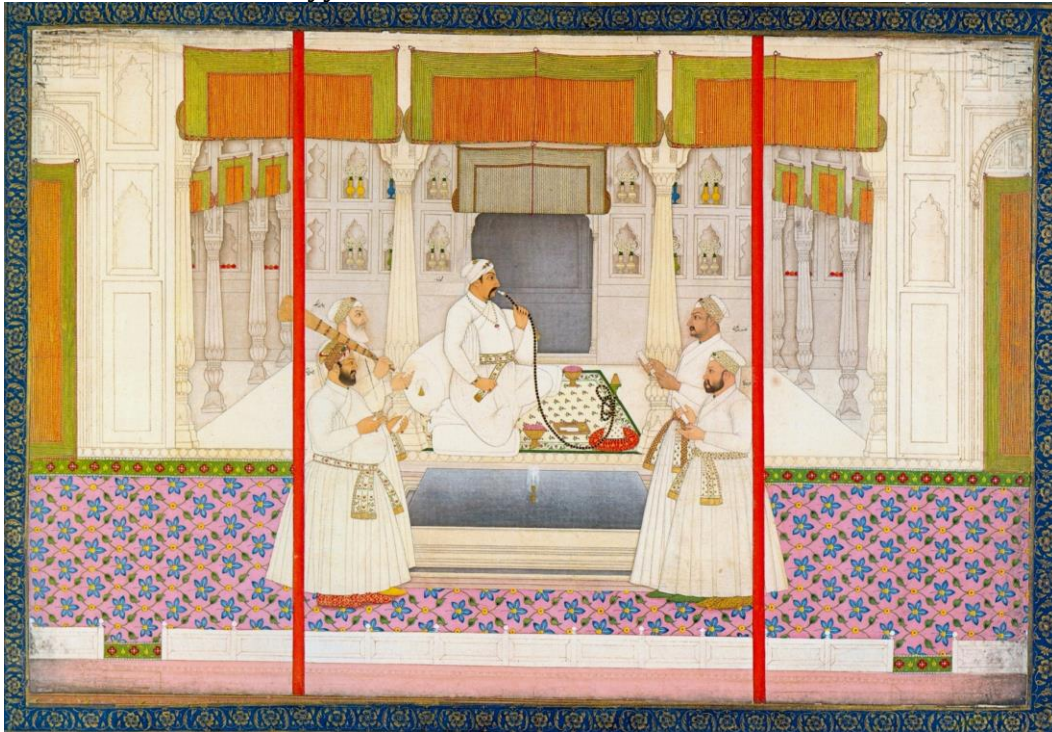
*Fig. 000: Nawab Qamar-ud-din, Nizam-ul-Mulk*



<sup>7</sup>Nadir Shah Afshar- 1736 - 1747 Titled as, H.M. *Zill-u'llah Hast Sultan bar Salatin-i-Jahan Shah-i-Shahhan* Nadir *Sahib-i-Qiran*\*, Shahanshah of Persia. *b.* at Dastgird, Darragaz, November 22, 1688, as Nadir Quli Beg-e Afshar. Entered the service of Tahmasp Shah II of Persia and was appointed as Dep. Governor of Abivard 1726, Master-General of the Ordnance 1726, prom. General 1728, Governor of Khorasan, Kerman and Mazandaran 1730. Granted the personal title of *Tahmasp Quli Khan*, 1726. Deposed his master and placed his infant son on the throne as Abbas III and assumed the Regency of Persia with the titles of *Vakil ud-Daula* and *Nai'b us-Sultana*, 7<sup>th</sup> September 1732. Deposed his charge and was crowned as Nadir Shah on the Mughan plain, March 8, 1736. Changed the state religion to Shi'a. Invaded and subjugated Bokhara, Khiva, Kandahar, Kashmir, Baluchistan and large parts of Northern India. Defeated the armies of the Mughal emperor at Karnol, 24<sup>th</sup> February 1739 and took away 700,000,000 rupees worth of money and jewels including the famous Koh-i-Noor diamond and the peacock among the 14 other thrones. married several wives, including (1).1718, elder daughter of Baba 'Ali Beg-e Kusa Ahmadlu, Governor of Abivard. (2) 1722, Gauhar Shad Begum, another daughter of Baba 'Ali Beg-e Kusa Ahmadlu, Governor of Abivard. (3) 1729, H.R.H. Shahzadi Razia Begum, widow of Mirza Daud, a Georgian Prince, and second daughter of H.M. 'Abu'l Muzaffar Sultan Husain Shah, Shahanshah of Persia. (4) 1740, Shams un-nisa Begum daughter of Mirza Muhammad 'Ali al-Husaini al-Marashi, Governor of Qazvin(5) at the Palace, Bokhara, October 1740, the elder daughter of Sayyid Abu'l-Faiz Muhammad Shah, Khan at Bokhara. *m.* (6) Chuki Khanum, a daughter of Muhammad Husain Khan Qajar. (7) Khadija Sultan, daughter of Hasan 'Ali Daghestani. He was *Murdered* by Muhammad Khan-e Qajar, of Erivan, at Fathabad, 19<sup>th</sup> June 1747 (*bur.* at Najaf), having had issue, five sons.

\*Shadow of God, the Sultan over the Sultans of the earth is Nadir, the King of Kings, Lord of the Fortunate Conjunction; he took that from the Timurids.

Emperor Farrukh-Siyar on the throne,  
with Prime Minister Sayyid Hussein Barha.



The first traitorous general, Nawab Qamar-ud-Din Nizam-ul-Mulk, rose to importance during the time of the Sayyid brothers.<sup>8</sup>

Hoping to find a strong rival for his unruly ministers, the Sayyid Barha brothers, the great-grandson of Aurangzeb, known as Emperor Farrukh-Siyar,<sup>9</sup> gave Qamar ud-din Khan the important post of *Subahdar*<sup>10</sup> (Governor and Army General) over six

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<sup>8</sup>Qamar-ud-Din was politically active from 1713 until he died on June 1, 1748. During that time, he was honored by the Mughal Emperors with the titles of Nizam Ul-Mulk, Nizam ud-Dullah, Nawab Mir, and Khan Subahdar of Deccan. He should not be confused with his cousin Mir Muhammad Fazil, who was killed on March 21, 1748 by a cannonball while he was praying. This Muhammad Fazil was given the title of Qamar ud-din when he was a faithful Prime Minister under Emperor Mohammed Shah. His full titles were Wazir ul-Mamalik-i-Hindustan, Itimad Al-Dawllah, Nawab Qamar ud-din Khan Bahadur. His father's name was Mir Muhammad Amin Khan Chin Bahadur.

<sup>9</sup>His full name was His Majesty, Emperor Abu'l Muzaffar Muin ud-din Muhammad Shah Farrukh-siyar Alim Akbar Sani Wala Shan Padshah-i-Al bar-Wa-Al Bahar [Shahid-e-Madhlum]. He reigned from 1712 until he was murdered on April 29, 1719 and buried in the mausoleum of Humayun, Delhi. He left behind one daughter, Nawab Malika uz-Zamani Begum Sahiba (known as Padshah Begum). A few years before this, his two young sons had died of illness.

<sup>10</sup>The Persian word *Subahdar* (also known as *Nizam* and *Sahib-i-Subah*) was one of the designations of a governor of a *Subah* (province) during the Mughal period. The *Subahdar* administration was assisted by other officers, including the provincial *Diwan*, the *Bakhshi*, the *Fujidar*, the *Kotwal*, the *Qazi*, the *Sadr*, the *Waqqa-i-Navis*, the *Qanungo* (a semipublic administrative

provinces of Deccan, but Qamar ud-din failed to control them in any way. Therefore, the Emperor reassigned him to be the governor of Moradabad, near Delhi, where he could politically oppose the older Sayyid brother, Hassan. But Qamar ud-Din was no match for the Sayyids, so the Emperor was finally left with no choice but to remove him from his post in Moradabad.

Then, in a move to win him to their side, Hassan offered Qamar ud-Din the governorship of Bihar, a difficult post that the Sayyids hoped would exhaust his strength. But under pressure from Emperor Farrukh-Siyar, Hassan later changed his offer to the governorship of Malwa. The Sayyid brothers believed that with good relations was the Subahdar of Akbarabad (Agra) on one side and the younger Sayyid brother, Hussein, ruling Deccan on the other side, Qamar ud-Din would not be able to rebel because he could be crushed from two sides.

Qamar ud-Din had many reasons to distrust the Sayyids. Spoiled in earlier years by the extraordinary favors with which his father was honored during the last years of Emperor Aurangzeb's reign, he was subsequently unhappy with the treatment he received under the Sayyid brothers. However, he had no alternative but to accept the new post, receiving the promise that he would not be removed again soon. Qamar ud-Din journeyed to Malwa with his whole family and all his possessions, so that he would leave no hostages or anything else of value behind for the Sayyid brothers to control him. During that trip, Qamar ud-Din received news that the Sayyid brothers had imprisoned the Emperor after blinding him, and then murdering him a few weeks later by beating, strangling, and stabbing at the Tripolia Gate Prison in Delhi on April 29, 1719. With the murder of the Emperor, the Gorkani throne was vacant.<sup>11</sup> Then, in Agra, the old capital of the Mughals, the citizens put Naku-siyar on the throne as the new Mughal Emperor, on May 19, 1719.<sup>12</sup> It was rumored that this took place with the

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body), and the *Patwari*. The *Subahdars* were normally appointed from among the Mughal princes or the officers holding the highest *mansabs* (ranks).

<sup>11</sup>Gorkani (sometimes spelled Korkani, Gorgani, or Jurjan, and later temporarily known as Astarabad) is the last name of the Imperial family of the Timurids, the descendants of Timur. The word *Gorkani* was first printed on Timur's coins, and this practice was continued on the Mughal Emperors' coins. Some historians have mistakenly concluded that Timur was of Mongolian descent because *Gorgan* is a Mongolian word that means "son-in-law." Actually, his paternal great-grandfather joined the Mongol army as a general in Gorgan, which is in present-day northern Iran. In Timur's time, the Mongol rulers spoke Persian or Turkish, not Mongolian. Most of Timur's battles were against the Mongols. His last campaign was to rid China of the Mongols, but he died first, in 1405.

<sup>12</sup>*Niku-siyar* means "good character" in Persian. His full title was His Majesty Emperor Sahib-i-Qiran Mohammed Shah Niku-siyar Timur Al-Thani, Badshah Al-Zaman. He was born on October 6, 1679, the second son of Sultan Muhammad Akbar Mirza, who was the fourth son of Emperor Aurangzeb. He was confined at Agra Fort in 1681 by orders of his grandfather, Emperor Aurangzeb. Later, he was

support of the Rajah Jai Singh Sawai of Amber and the Rajah Chabela Ram-Subahdar of Allahabad. The events in Agra ruined the plans of the Sayyid brothers to place the Empire entirely in their name, so, on May 28, 1719, in a desperate move to calm the public, they raised a 20-year-old imperial Prince to the throne in Delhi under the title Emperor Rafi-ud-Darajat and started to issue orders in his name.

During his short reign, from May 28 to June 6, 1719, Emperor Rafi-ud-Darajat was completely in the hands of the two Sayyid brothers. Unlike the Emperors before him, no matter how much they might leave state affairs in the hands of their prime minister, ultimate power resided only in the hands of the Emperor, including appointing ministers and transferring authority from one minister to another.

The young Emperor's meals were only served under the express orders of his tutor, Himmat Khan, who was a relative of the Sayyid brothers and essentially the Emperor's guard and prisoner. Because of this insult, the Emperor resigned, asking the Sayyid brothers to recognize his older brother, Rafi-ud-Din, as the new Emperor, which they did on June 6, 1719.<sup>13</sup> One week later, on June 13, 1719, Emperor Rafi-ud-Darajat died of poison, most likely murdered by the Sayyid brothers.

With the new Emperor in Delhi under their control, the Sayyids' next move was to leave for Agra to topple Niku-Syir, the pretender to the throne there. They immediately sent new orders in the name of the Delhi Emperor, recalling Qamar-ud-din from Malwa, contending that it was necessary for the government in Deccan that the younger Sayyid brother, Hussein Ali Khan, should take charge of Malwa himself. Qamar-ud-din was offered the choice to be the governor of any one of four provinces: Akbarabad, Allahabad, Multan, or Berhampur. This offer was a distinct breach of faith with Qamar-ud-din, since the Sayyid brothers had promised not to remove him soon from his post in Malwa. This breach no doubt confirmed Qamar-ud-din's belief that he was to be destroyed, so he did not comply.

Meanwhile, the Sayyid brothers reached Agra, at which point Hussein Ali Khan personally selected the positions for the siege cannons to attack the fort there. However, because of a monsoon, it took twenty days to drag the heavy cannons for a mile or two.

There were approximately 1,300 cannons of every kind inside the fort, from which the artillerymen, known as the Baksariya, kept up an incessant fire even during the night, never allowing the Sayyid brothers to rest. The siege lasted for several months, in the course of which there was great damage on both sides. Eventually, the Sayyid brothers were able to bribe a traitor inside the fort and capture it on August 13, 1719. The treasure that the Sayyids took from Agra amounted to 100 million rupees in silver and gold coins as well as precious stones.<sup>14</sup> In the following month, on September 19, 1719, Rafi-ud-Din died from illness, probably from grief over his brother's death.

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briefly made Emperor, only in Agra, and then imprisoned again. He died in Delhi, on April 12, 1723, and was buried in the Mausoleum of Khwaja Qutub ud-din Kaki.

<sup>13</sup>This Emperor was His Majesty Sultan Rafi' ud-din Muhammad Shah Jahan Al-Thani (the second) Ghazi, Shahanshah-Al bar-Wa-Al Bahar, born in June 1698, the second son of Sultan Muhammad Rafi' ul-Qadr, Subadar of Kabul.

<sup>14</sup>From the end of Emperor Aurangzeb's reign in 1707 until around 1750, one gold coin, or Mohur, was worth ten silver rupees.

On September 27, 1719, the Sayyid brothers placed another young prince, Mohammed Shah, on the throne as Emperor, but this young man, who was only 17, was determined to outsmart the Sayyid brothers.<sup>15</sup> With the help of his mother, Fakhr un-Nisa, he devised a plan to get rid of the Sayyid brothers, who had so long tyrannized the empire and disrupted the whole government system. However, he had no immediate opportunity to put his plan into action. In the meantime, he showed the Sayyid brothers that they could work with him. He even convinced them that his marriage to Nawab Malika Al-Zamani Begum, the daughter of former Emperor Farrukh-Siyar, was only an act to smooth over the tense atmosphere in the Imperial family.

Mohammed Shah and his mother took every opportunity to rally nobles around them who understood that the Sayyid brothers were evil, and their only hope lay with the Emperor. An opening arose when the Sayyid brothers became busy trying to quiet the political situation in Allahabad after Rajah Chabela Ram-Subahdar died of natural causes. He had requested to be succeeded by his nephew, Girdhari Bahadur, but the Sayyids at first refused. However, when problems arose in Deccan, they agreed. The problems were that Qamar-ud-din had attacked and taken considerable territory in Deccan and killed a nephew of the Sayyid brothers called Dilawar Ali Khan, who was left in charge of Deccan. That irked the Sayyid brothers, who decided to get even with Qamar-ud-din.

First, they sent advance forces to Bundi in Rajasthan, which was adjacent to Malwa, to spy on Qamar-ud-din while a major army was prepared to go there under the Emperor.

By this time, Mohammed Shah had persuaded many nobles to join him, including powerful *Subahdars*, such as Qamar-ud-din in Malwa, Rajah Girdhari Bahadur in Allahabad, Rajah Jai Singh Sawai in Rajasthan, and Abdul Sammad Khan in Punjab. The nobles in Delhi were also ready for action against the Sayyids. Foremost among them was a cousin of Qamar-ud-din, Mir Muhammad Amin Khan Chin Bahadur,<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>This Emperor was His Majesty Abu Al-Muzaffar Nassir Al-din Mohammed Shah, who was born on August 17th 1702 in Ghazni, present-day Afghanistan, as the second son of Sultan Khujasta Akhtar, Governor of Malwa, who was the son of Emperor Bahadur Shah, or Shah Alam I. Mohammed Shah's mother, Fakhr un-Nisa (known as Hazrat Qudsiyah Al-Alqab Begum Sahiba), was the daughter of a *Qadhi* (judge). Mohammed Shah died on April 26, 1748.

<sup>16</sup>Mir Muhammed Amin Khan Chin Bahadur was the son of Khawaja Baha ud-din, son of Shaikh Mir Ismail, son of Allahdad, son of Abdulraman Shaikh. The family migrated to India from Bokhara. Muhammed Amin entered Mughal service in 1689 under Emperor Aurangzeb, rose from the rank of commander of 2,000 foot soldiers to Subahdar of Malwa in 1718, before his cousin, Qamar-ud-din,

who had a major grudge against the Sayyid brothers, since they had tried to poison him, fearing his strong relations with the family of Abdul Sammad Khan, the governor of Punjab, by way of marriage.

The Emperor had very charmingly gained the trust of the Sayyid brothers, and even agreed to accompany Hussein Sayyid to Deccan to help him get the state back under the brothers' control. Meanwhile, Hassan Sayyid would remain in Delhi to manage the affairs of state, while Mohammed Amin Khan and other nobles would accompany the Emperor to Deccan.

An army of 100,000 soldiers marched with the Imperial party toward Deccan via Agra. Once they passed Fatehpur Sikri, Mohammed Amin decided that the time had arrived to begin the plot, just as the Farrashas<sup>17</sup> started to move the advance tents to a new location.

It was the custom for Hussein Sayyid to bow to the Emperor every morning. Accordingly, on the morning of October 8, 1720, when Hussein Sayyid paid his respects to the Emperor and then returned to his tent, Mohammed Amin and a few other nobles were waiting for him with seven or eight other men. When Hussein Sayyid entered his tent, Mohammed Amin immediately pretended to be ill and fell to the ground. Hussein then sent a few of his servants to fetch rose water and some medicines to restore Mohammed Amin's health. When Mohammed Amin pretended to regain consciousness, he asked to be carried to Hayidar Quli Khan Dughlat's tent,<sup>18</sup> which was close to the Imperial gateway. Once they were inside, some officers presented a petition to Hussein, who, in his usual way, became immersed in reading it. At some point, Hayidar Quli Khan pulled a long daggerlike butcher's knife from his waistband and plunged it into Hussein's side, thus bringing an end to the younger of the Sayyid brothers.

Since there was no longer any reason to go to Deccan, the Emperor issued instructions to Qamar-ud-din to secure that area, and awarded him the title of vice regent and representative of the Emperor in the southern parts of Hindustan.

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was appointed to that position in 1719. Emperor Mohammed Shah, after getting rid of the Sayyid brothers, appointed Muhammed Amin as Prime Minister of Hindustan on November 25, 1720. Unfortunately, he died suddenly on February 8, 1721.

<sup>17</sup>Farrashas are servants whose specific tasks are to arrange tents, beds, and all other comforts in the traveling royal camp. Today they are called "batmen" or "orderlies" by the British, and are known as "Sahayak" in India.

<sup>18</sup>Hayidar Quli Khan was a descendent of Emperor Babur's mother.

When he learned about his brother's assassination, Hassan Sayyid placed the young Prince Mohammed Ibrahim<sup>19</sup> on the throne on October 13, 1720. With what was left over from his plundering of the Delhi and Agra treasuries, Hassan paid civilians to enlist in his army.

But all was in vain. In less than a month, Emperor Mohammed Shah arrived at Delhi, where there was a great battle from morning to night, during which Hassan was captured and imprisoned.

The second general who betrayed Emperor Mohammed Shah was Sa'adat Ali Khan, who, after helping to assassinate Hussein Sayyid, was appointed to be the Commander of the Imperial private guards.<sup>20</sup> A few weeks earlier, he had been appointed the *Fujidar* of Hindaun and Biana, some fifty to sixty miles southwest of Agra. Since the Imperial army's route to Deccan lay through his district, he was in attendance. Prior to the assassination of Hussein Sayyid, he paraded his troops daily before that brother and made such a great show of zeal that his requests for more money and land were willingly complied with. But he was very materialistic and could be bought by the highest bidder.

*Fig. 000: Nawab Sa'adat Khan Bahadur*

After the assassination of Hussein Sayyid, when Mohammed Amin made his way to the Imperial quarters, he called on the Emperor to come out and take command of his troops. During this time, Sayyid Ghulam Khan, who was the cousin of the slain Hussein Sayyid and the Bakhshi (head of the military administrative department) of the Empire, together with the superintendent of the privy audience chamber,

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<sup>19</sup>The young Prince was never actually the Emperor, but only given the title of His Majesty Emperor Abu'al-Fath Zahir ud-din Muhammad Ibrahim. He was the youngest son of Sultan Muhammad Rafi' ul-Qadr Mirza, Rafi' us-Shan Bahadur, *Subahdar* of Kabul, and the grandson of His Majesty Bahadur Shah, Shah Alam I. The Prince died in Delhi on January 31, 1746, and is buried in the Mausoleum of Khwaja Qutb ud-din Kaki.

<sup>20</sup>Nawab Sa'adat Khan Bahadur, Shaukat Jung, Nawab of Oudh. He was born in Nishapur, near Mashhad, Iran, around 1680, as Muhammad Amin, second son of Meer Mohammed Nasir, by his wife, a daughter of Mirza Raza Quli Beg Qizilbash, sometime *Wazir* to Shah Abbas II of Persia before 1666. In 1709, he arrived in Hindustan, where, from 1710 to 1712, he served in the Mughal army as Camp Superintendent to Nawab Sarbuland Khan. He was appointed to an Imperial rank equivalent to Colonel, with 1,000 cavalry under his command in the Walashahi Household Cavalry Regiment. On October 9, 1720, he was promoted to a rank equivalent to brigadier general, with 5,000 foot soldiers and 3,000 cavalry under his command. Then, six days later, on October 15, 1720, he was promoted to the full rank of general, with 7,000 foot soldiers and 7,000 cavalry under his command. In addition, he was made the *Subadar* of Agra (Akbarabad) and the *Fujidar* of Farrukhabad, Ettawa, and Jalaun, and was granted the titles *Sa'adat Khan Bahadur*, *Burhan ul-Mulk*, and *Shaukat Jung* together with the insignia of royalty. In 1722, he was made the *Subadar* of Oudh and the *Fujidar* of Gorakhpur. On March 6, 1739, for his services to Persia, he was invested as Viceregent of the Empire with the title of *Waqil-i-Mutlaq* by the invading Emperor Nadir Shah of Persia. He had no sons, but five daughters.

entered the Emperor's private enclosure with Islam Quli, a slave, and some soldiers (*Hazari*) by cutting through the canvas walls and trying to capture the Emperor. Muhammad Amin Khan and some Mongolian bodyguards then drove them back, after which Sa'adat Khan captured and confined them and personally beheaded Sayyid Ghulam Khan. When he rolled the head over the carpet in front of Sayyid Ghulam Khan's men, they ran away. Brushing aside all the restraints of etiquette, Sa'adat Khan put a shawl over his head so he couldn't see any women, pushed his way into the Emperor's harem, took the Emperor by his arms, and dragged him away to safety from the scene of the assassination.

The Emperor was put on an elephant that belonged to Qamar-ud-din Khan, who was not the traitor, but the son of Mohammed Amin, whose full name and title were His Highness Wazir ul-Mamalik-i-Hindustan, Itimad ud-Daula, Nawab Qamar ud-din Khan Bahadur, Nusrat Jang. But to avoid confusion with the other Qamar ud-din in this book, I will call him by the name he was born with, Mir Muhammad Fazil.

As the Emperor rode along, his soldiers passed around the pole that held the head of Hussein Sayyid. Once the Emperor was safe, he issued orders to attack Hussein Sayyid's camp with artillery and plunder it. After a brief battle, most of Hussein's men surrendered, and the Emperor celebrated the victory by handing out new titles to the nobles who had helped him. However, he made few changes among the provincial governors. The chief changes were as follows: Hayidar Quli Khan was made the governor of Ahmadabad; Zakariya Khan, son of Abdul-Samad Khan, was made the governor of Kashmir; Muhammad Khan Bangash was made the governor of Allahabad; and Sa'adat Khan was made the governor of Agra.<sup>21</sup> The most important change was that, on November 25, 1720, Mir Mohammed Amin became the Prime Minister and the Viceregent of the Empire, with the title of Wazir ul-Mamalik, replacing Hassan Sayyid. Mir Mohammed Amin's son became the Mir Bakhshi, or head of the military department, with the rank of Imperial Minister of the Empire.

When Prime Minister Mohammed Amin Khan suddenly died of natural causes on January 27, 1721, Emperor Mohammed Shah initially wanted to continue the same tax collection policies by the central government as had been practiced for centuries (known as the Mansabdari system). He even thought of releasing Hassan Sayyid from prison to get help in running the affairs of the state. However, the major nobles wanted a decentralized system that would pass the money through their hands, and so they poisoned Hassan Sayyid in prison. The main opposition to the Mansabdari system came from the supporters of Qamar ud-din, who was known as Nizam ul-Mulk ("Organizer of the Empire") after he was made Viceregent. Thanks to his experience and knowledge, he was now the frontrunner to become Prime Minister, and in fact was called from Deccan in late 1722 to assume that office.

But Nizam ul-Mulk could not manage that important post well and had issues with his own family members, including Mir Muhammad Fazil, the son of the late Prime Minister, Mir Muhammad Amin Khan. Although Nizam ul-Mulk wanted to be a

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<sup>21</sup>William Irvine, *Later Mughals*, edited by Jadunath Sarkar and augmented with the History of Nadir Shah's Invasion (Calcutta: M. C. Sarkar, 1922), vol. 2, p. 103.

strong Prime Minister, that was very difficult, because there were now many nobles around the Emperor who sometimes questioned his judgment.

In April 1724, Nizam ul-Mulk left Delhi for Agra without the Emperor's expressed permission, causing many people to suspect his intentions when he brought his whole family with him. However, as he traveled, he sent the Emperor many lengthy letters, in which he stated that he would return to Delhi from Agra. But when he reached Agra, he reported that, since the Marathas had attacked Malwa and Gujarat provinces, which were under his and his son's charge, he must march southwards to expel them. By the time he reached Marwar and Ujjain in Malwa, the Marathas had already crossed the Narmada River on their way home to Maha-rashtra (the Great Kingdom).<sup>22</sup>

At that point, he camped near Sironj. But he soon abandoned these pretenses, for his real intention was to return to his home province of Deccan. He arrived at Berhampur in Khandesh in June 1724, and at Aurangabad, the capital of Deccan, the following August.

The nobles in Delhi then made arrangements to encourage Nizam ul-Mulk's deputy in Deccan, Mubariz Khan, to attack him and push him aside. Those arrangements included a grant of five lakhs (500,000 rupees) from the Imperial treasury and several lakhs from the treasury of Deccan to enable Mubariz Khan to raise a large army. Nearby chiefs and nobles, such as Rajah Shahu (the head of the Marathas) and Rao Rambha, were also ordered to assist Mubariz Khan. However, when it became clear that Nizam ul-Mulk could not be easily defeated, the nobles decided to conceal their failure by nominally restoring him to the Emperor's favor. Accordingly, on June 20, 1725, Nizam ul-Mulk's offenses were pardoned, and all the estates he had held before he became Prime Minister were returned to him.

By the end of 1727, Nizam ul-Mulk agreed to let the Marathas collect the taxes in their areas, keeping one-fourth for themselves, but only for Rajah Sahu, not his chief minister, Baji Rao.<sup>23</sup> This plan was not accepted by Baji Rao, who then tried to collect the taxes for himself. With three of his trusted officers (Udaji Puar, Malhar Holkar, and Ranuji Sindhia), he successfully collected the taxes, pushing aside the other fourteen Marathas officers, including Trimbak Rao Dabhare, Udaji Anand Rao

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<sup>22</sup>From 1721 on, the Marathas encroached more and more on the territory north of the Narmada River. Their province was divided geographically into three different natural areas: beaches and cliffs along the coast; mountains in the interior; and farms in-between. This gave the Marathas good natural protection against their enemies. By religion, the Marathas were and are almost entirely Hindu, and most of them belong to a respectable but not high-ranking caste. Their main occupation is agriculture. Most Marathas came from the Kunbis tribes. Even their founder, Shivaji, was a Kunbis. But soon after 1719, power passed from the Rajahs of Shivaji's house and line into the hands of the administrators of the Palace, the Brahman Peshwas (chief ministers).

<sup>23</sup>Irvine, *Later Mughals*, vol. 2, p. 103.

Pura, Kanthaji Raghuji Kadam Bande, Pilaji Gaekwad, and Chimanji Damodar. When Nizam ul-Mulk got news that Baji Rao was moving toward Aurangabad, he headed north with his army to intercept Baji Rao and his army, confident that he would crush them.

However, Nizam ul-Mulk's army was cornered in a waterless tract near Palkhed on February 25, 1728, and could not destroy the Marathas. In 1731, Nizam ul-Mulk and Baji Rao signed a treaty, which allowed Nizam ul-Mulk to expand his territory to the south, and Baji Rao to expand his territory to the north. With peace secured between them, Nizam ul-Mulk did not care that he lost some northern territory, including Gujarat, whose governorship was transferred to Sarbuland Khan, since Nizam ul-Mulk wanted the Empire to deal with Baji Rao without having to fight against him himself.

Not having to worry about Nizam ul-Mulk, Baji Rao began to plunder the Umait landholders to the north of the Narmada River, between Sironj and Narwar. He also attacked the small estates and farms in Malwa, trying to collect taxes in areas that were not protected by the Mughal army. He found it relatively easy to do this, since the nobles in the northern area, such as Rajah Jai Singh, Muhammad Khan Bangash, and Rajah Girdhari Bahadur, were busy calming the situation in Ajmer, where Rajah Ajit Singh was battling the Jats near Agra, since Sa'adat Khan, the *Subahdar* of Agra province, had not done his job properly, and was transferred to a post in Awadh. When Baji Rao became enough of a menace to the Empire, the Emperor decided in early 1733 that the situation needed his personal attention because things were getting out of control in the south. But when he learned that the Persians had attacked Kandahar, he returned to Delhi and sent the Prime Minister, Mir Muhammad Fazil, to the south with an army to deal with Baji Rao.<sup>24</sup>

Before the army arrived, Baji Rao met in Dholpur on July 16, 1736, with Rajah Jai Singh, a powerful general, and agreed not to pillage any more Imperial territories. In exchange, Rajah Jai Singh appointed Baji Rao as the deputy governor of Malwa, and the Prime Minister, hearing about this, took his army further south to attend to other business.

As soon as Baji Rao realized that he was out of danger, his two most important generals, Sindhia and Holkar, who were loyal to him at the time, complained to him that they had no money to pay their soldiers, so he began once again to attack and loot villages.

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<sup>24</sup>At this time, the Persians freed Ahmad Khan Abdali as a prisoner from Kandahar and took him to Persia, giving him to Nadir Shah, who named him Durra-Durrani, which means "pearl of pearls." See Michael Axworthy, *The Sword of Persia: Nadir Shah, from Tribal Warrior to Conquering Tyrant* (New York: I. B. Tauris, 2006).

In response, the Emperor ordered Sa'adat Khan, the *Subahdar* of Awadh, to capture him, but, in a brilliant move, Baji Rao unexpectedly headed north toward Delhi, since Mir Muhammad Fazil was in the south, and Sa'adat Khan was in the east, leaving the Emperor with only a weak army in Delhi. But it was beyond Baji Rao's capabilities to attack Delhi itself, since he lacked the men and the guns for that, so he plundered areas that were within a day or two's journey from the city. But these attacks were carried out without the approval of Rajah Shahu.<sup>25</sup>

Baji Rao permitted the victims of his attacks to escape to Delhi in order to create panic in the city, since he wanted the stories of his plunder to reach the ears of the Emperor in order to be recognized by him. In a desperate move, Baji Rao, even though he was himself a Brahman Hindu, attacked the temple of the Hindu goddess Kali (also known as Kalka), an ancient place of worship six miles south of the city, near Khizrabad. He began his attack by seizing some elephants and camels that people were leading out of the city, and then he sent his men to slay and plunder worshippers at the temple. As the number of plundered victims kept increasing, the Emperor decided to send part of his army of 18,000 foot soldiers and 12,000 cavalry on raiding parties against the forces of Baji Rao.

When Baji Rao retreated, only 1,500 cavalry chased after him. When they were all approximately twenty miles from the rest of the Emperor's forces, Baji Rao counterattacked the cavalry with 25,000 to 30,000 of his own men.<sup>26</sup> This enraged the Emperor, who ordered his entire Imperial army to attack Baji Rao. When Baji Rao learned of this, he retreated and returned home with his army to his province of Maharashtra.<sup>27</sup>

Many nobles in Delhi wanted to pursue Baji Rao and destroy his forces once and for all. But Rajah Jai Singh, noting that the Persians were building up their forces in the northwest, argued that the Marathas should not be destroyed, since they were good fighters and could be used for various purposes. To accomplish this, Rajah Jai Singh advised the Emperor to recognize Baji Rao as a *Subhadar* in one of the southern provinces, giving him funds to pay for his army from that province.

By December 1736, with the threat from the Persians intensifying, the Emperor, not wanting to engage in a religious war with Muslims against Hindus, which would give the Persians an advantage, ordered all his Muslim generals, especially Nizam ul-Mulk and Sa'adat Khan, to go to Lahore to shore up the forces of the *Subhadar* there, Abdul Sammad Khan. As part of his orders, Nizam ul-Mulk was supposed to visit Baji Rao and conclude an agreement that would make Baji Rao the *Subhadar* of Malwa. However, Nizam ul-Mulk took time to be reassured that, while he was gone from his home province of Deccan, his governorship would not be terminated. Therefore, he did not set out from Burhanpur until April 17, 1737. However, hoping that the Persian would be settled by the time he got to Lahore, Nizam ul-Mulk gave the

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<sup>25</sup>Vincent Arthur Smith, *The Oxford History of India: From the Earliest Times to the End of 1911* (Oxford, England: Clarendon Press, 1919).

<sup>26</sup>Since Baji Rao had four generals (Sindhia, Puar, Gaekwad, and Holkar), each one commanding 5,000 to 6,000 soldiers, in addition to Baji Rao's own force of 10,000 to 15,000, he commanded a total army of anywhere from 30,000 to 40,000 men.

<sup>27</sup>Muhammad Zaka'ullah, *Tarikh-e-Hindustan* [The History of Hindustan], retrieved from <https://archive.org/details/tarikhhindustan02zakauoft/>.

Emperor various excuses for not meeting up with Bajji Rao. In fact, their armies did not meet until December 1737, near Bhopal.

Finally, on January 16, 1738, Nizam ul-Mulk reached an agreement with Bajji Rao and his officers—especially Ranuji Rao Sindhia, Malhar Holkar, Gaekwad,<sup>28</sup> and Udaji Puar.<sup>29</sup> In the Emperor's name, Nizam ul-Mulk made Bajji Rao the *Subhadar* of Malwa and promised to ask the Emperor to grant Bajji Rao fifty lakhs (5 million rupees) to pay for his expenses.

In April 1738, Nizam ul-Mulk reentered Delhi, and, on coming before the Emperor, made an offering and was honored exuberantly in return and given the high title of *Asif Jah*. All this was done with the idea that Nizam ul-Mulk would wholeheartedly support the Emperor in the future. Possibly, this great reception of Nizam ul-Mulk was the turning point of Sa'adat Khan's betrayal, since he was becoming old and may have feared that he would lose some of his power.



On January 18, 1739, Emperor Mohammed Shah marched from Delhi toward Lahore, reaching Panipat on January 27. His generals had already reached there nine days before and were awaiting his arrival. When he heard about the capture of Lahore by Nadir Shah, the Emperor decided to encamp at Karnal, which was nearby, and wait for the enemy there. The point of waiting was to give Sa'adat Khan time to join him with his 30,000 horsemen, the largest cavalry on the Emperor's side. At that time, Nizam ul-Mulk also decided to encamp at Karnal. Sad-ud-din Khan, the chief general of the Imperial artillery, enclosed the enormous camp with mud walls and positioned his cannon to face the enemy, with instructions to his soldiers to keep watch, day and night.

When Nadir Shah arrived at Karnal on February 11, 1739, he camped the night, waiting for the right opportunity to make his move. His army of between 60,000 and 70,000 men, not including the young Afghans that he had lately recruited, was positioned directly in front of Nizam ul-Mulk's right flank, three miles east of the Imperial camp, between the Alimardan and the Jamuna Rivers.

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<sup>28</sup>Ranuji Rao Sindhia was made the *Subhadar* of Malwa. Malhar Holkar was made the Deputy *Subhadar* of Malwa and also was recognized as *Jagirdar* of Indore, Maheshwar, and nine other villages. Much later, he was granted the title of *Subhadar* of Indore. Gaekwad was confirmed as the Rajah of Baroda and also given the title of *Shamsher Bahadur*.

<sup>29</sup>Udaji Puar, a Maratha general, received a grant from the Peshwa that made him the *Sardar* of Dhar and Jhabua on August 11, 1725. He joined Trimbak Rao Dabhade and Pilaji Rao Gaekwad in opposing Bajji Rao, and was severely defeated with them at the Battle of Dabhoi on April 1, 1731, after which he was taken prisoner by the Peshwa, and his *Sardarship* and *Mokassa* rights were transferred to his younger brother.

*Fig. 000: Map of the Battle of Karnal*

The next day, February 12, in the early morning, Sa'adat Khan arrived near Karnal and met with General Khan Dauran, who welcomed him a mile ahead of the Imperial camp. On February 13, Sa'adat Khan paid his respects to the Emperor and was attending a council of war in the Emperor's presence, when suddenly news arrived that Nadir Shah's forward cavalry had attacked Sa'adat Khan's supplies of ammunition and were carrying off 500 loaded camels.

When he heard the news, Sa'adat Khan at once took up his sword, which he had laid down on the carpet before the Emperor, and asked for permission to depart at once to fight the invaders. But Nizam ul-Mulk urged him to delay, since Sa'adat Khan's soldiers were exhausted from long months of marching and needed at least a day to rest. Furthermore, he said, it was already afternoon, so there were only a few hours of daylight left.

Observing that the Imperial troops had not been given enough notice to coordinate a combined attack by three armies, General Khan Dauran agreed. After that, the Emperor ordered the battle to begin on the next day, when his forces could follow their accustomed tactics, especially their use of artillery against the enemy's large cavalry.

The Prime Minister, Mir Muhammad Fazil, also advised Sa'adat Khan that 500 camels would be nothing after the Emperor defeated Nadir Shah. In fact, after the victory, Sa'adat Khan would be the first noble to choose from among the Persian booty. Unfortunately, Sa'adat Khan stubbornly refused to listen, insisting on rescuing his camels.

Sa'adat Khan's argument made the Emperor question his loyalty, especially since Sa'adat Khan was a native of Persia and a Shi'ite, so he had the man swear his fidelity on the Quran. Nevertheless, aside from the Emperor, everyone had their doubts about Sa'adat Khan, suspecting that he was lying under the Shi'ite concept of *taqiya*.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> *Taqiya* xxxx xxxxx xxxxxx xxxxxxxx xxxxxxxx xxxxxxxx xxxxxxxx xx xxxx xxxxx xxxxxx

Despite his promises, Sa'adat Khan left the Imperial camp and immediately set out to attack the advanced Persian cavalry. However, After he issued the orders to attack, only those immediately around him responded, which included his personal escort, plus approximately 4,000 cavalry and 1,000 infantrymen, but without any artillery support. By leaving behind 30,000 cavalry and 10,000 infantrymen that were under his direct command, he may have already been planning to betray the Emperor.

At that time, cavalymen were required to provide their own horses, and would be reduced to infantrymen if any harm came to those horses. Therefore, cavalymen were reluctant to rush off into battle without proper preparations. Instead, Sa'adat Kahn visited the Emperor and then failed to address his troops to inspire and prepare them before the attack.

As Sa'adat Khan chased after the Persians, they pretended to flee, luring his troops farther and farther from his camp, until he was two miles away. At that point, instead of admitting he was trapped, Sa'adat Kahn sent couriers to the Emperor, asking for reinforcements to complete his "victory."

The Emperor then counseled Nizam ul-Mulk, who did not want to commit his troops that day, so he advised the Emperor that, since Khan Dauran's forces were closest to the Persians, they should be the ones to attack.

Khan Dauran, who was a personal friend of Sa'adat Kahn, believed his report of victory, immediately mounted his elephant and headed toward Sa'adat Kahn's forces without bringing any artillery. His idea was not to start a full attack, but to frighten the enemy into believing a full attack was coming. Since Khan Dauran was very popular with his soldiers, many of them armed themselves and followed him on their own accord, till eventually he had some 8,000 cavalymen behind him.

When Nadir Shah was brought news of Sa'adat Kahn's army appearing on the plain, he was delighted because his trap was working. The Hindustani army had been drawn out of its strongly entrenched position, and at last a battle of maneuvers was possible in

which Nadir Shah could show his genius.

At once, 3,000 Persian horsemen created an ambush to draw Sa'adat Khan and Khan Dauran further into the field. Then, Nadir Shah himself, clad in full armor and wearing an ornamental helmet, mounted a swift horse and rode into the fight with 1,000 handpicked Turkish horsemen from his own Afshar clan to direct the battle.

The Persian army was composed of approximately 50,000 cavalymen, 10,000 infantrymen, and 1,000 light artillerymen. The last of these were armed with *jazair*—long muskets or swivel-guns, which were seven or eight feet long and rested on stands. In addition, the artillerymen had *zamburaks*, long cannons that fired one- or two-pound balls from the backs of sitting camels. The Persians concentrated their fire on the advancing Hindustani elephants, on which the Hindustani army mostly relied.

In addition, Nadir Shah had had a number of wooden platforms constructed and placed between two camels. On these platforms, he had had his men place naphtha and a mixture of other combustibles in order to set them on fire during the battle. His plan was that the elephants would be sure to flee at the sight of the quickly approaching fire, and hastily put the Hindustani army behind them in disorder.

The battle began a little after 1:00 P.M., with a discharge of arrows on both sides. The Persian scouts pretended flight, turning back in their saddles, and discharging their bows and muskets while galloping, in the manner of their Parthian ancestors. As they moved, Nadir's Right Wing consisting of 4,000 cavalry carrying jazzier, under himself." screen drew aside in front and Sa'adat Khan's army was assailed by the discharge of many hundred swivel-guns at point-blank range. The bravest of his troopers who rode foremost fell.

After standing this murderous fire for a short while, the Hindustani vanguard fled. But Sa'adat Khan maintained his ground for some time longer, amidst a band of devoted followers, who fought to the death. But early in the evening he was forced out of the field, and the fight in the extreme Right of the Mughal army ceased.

The same fate overtook Khan Dauran's division in another part of the field (the Centre), though he made a longer stand.

The Nizam ul-Mulk portion stood still, far away without contributing anything to the struggle, causing a vaster butchery during the retreat. The extremely mobile enemy evaded, as they found most advantageous to them.

Trying to rectify this chaos, the Emperor himself, marched out of his tents with the Wazir and stood with marshaled banks by the side of the canal, but the damage was already in the absence as the bulk of the army moved from its strong fortified position, and the main three divisions being separated from one another by more than a mile's.

When the Hindustani army became absolutely hopeless and most of their officers had fallen, about 1000 of the bravest soldiers of Khan Dauran dismounted and in the Indian fashion, tying the skirts of their long coats together fought on foot till they all died. Khan Dauran himself had been mortally wounded in the face and fallen down unconscious on his Howdah. But a party of devoted retainers, surrounded his elephant and by desperate fighting brought him back to the camp, near sunset, but only to die.

A Sa'adat Khan drama capture was taken place when a young Persian soldier of his native city of Naishabur boldly galloped up to his elephant, and addressing him by his familiar name, cried out, "Muhammad Amin! Are you mad? Whom are you fighting? On whom are you still relying?" Then driving his spear into the ground, and throwing the reins of his horse round it, he climbed up to Sa'adat Khan's howdah by the rope hanging down from it. The Khan now surrendered and was taken to Nadir's camp. At the disappearance of these two leaders, the Indian army melted away, pursued by the Persian horsemen with heavy slaughter.

The Emperor with his other nobles stood in battle order by the side of the canal (in the extreme west of the field) expecting an attack. But Nadir Shah kept his men back from assaulting such a strongly fortified position and its heavy artillery; he had a surer and easier means of compelling the Emperor's submission. At sunset, Muhammad Shah retired to his camp, after having all that day done absolutely wrong.

Off course the defeat of the Hindustani at Karnal was due to their being outclassed in their old weapons of war and method, But sudden victory and the exact preparation of Nadir Shah to get the Hindustani army out of it strong hold could not have been achieved

without most probably Sa'adat Khans pre plan of events, and Nizam ul-Mulks non corporation which is evident in the aftermath of the battle...and them being receiving highest honors from Nadir Shah.

Nadir Shah camped for the night, waiting for the right opportunity to make his move. During that night, Sa'adat Khan, who was Shi'ite, like the Persians, betrayed the Emperor by going with his nephew to the camp of Nadir Shah, who pardoned him and made him.

Nizam-ul-Mulk cashing on this opportunity, went to the Emperor and spoke ill about Sa'adat Khan and told the Emperor to pay Nadir Shah some money and make him retreat.

So the Emperor ordered Nizam-ul-Mulk to approach Nadir Shah and make a treaty with him, offering him a desirable amount of money, which was done accordingly and duly accepted by Nadir Shah as well. But Sa'adat Khan, been a cunning man saw that he was in a deep mess so to break the treaty he brainwashed Nadir Shah by telling him about the treasury of Delhi.

This made Nadir Shah march further with his army; to stop him, the Emperor asked his Imperial army with his Commander-in-chief to fight against them. The commander-in-chief of the Imperial army was killed in the battle, while on the one hand the forces of Sa'adat Khan stood audience to it without moving since Sa'adat Khan, their commander was not there with them, while on the other hand Nizam-ul-Mulk stood unmoved and remained a silent spectator fearing Nadir Shah.

The Emperor in his camp was only surrounded and protected by few thousand men. Grabbing this opportunity, Nadir Shah surrounded the camp/tent of the Emperor with his men. The Emperor to avoid any further battle, asked Nadir Shah to join him on his ride/march back to Delhi. The atmosphere was peaceful, but Nizam-ul-Mulk and Sa'adat Khan were the one not at peace as they knew of the wrong moves they took and the sins they have done.

The Emperor depend only on Sa'adat Khan and Nizam ul-Mulk, when he could have asked the Marathas and the Rajput Rajah's like Sawai Jai Singh to defend Hindustan with

their army, The the only possible reason why the Emperor wouldn't have asked the Marathas or the Rajput Rajah's to join him is because he wanted to avoid any Hindu-Muslim problem that could have been raised by Nadir Shah under the name of Jihad.

Its not that the army of the Emperor didn't consist of Hindus but the head or the commander of his army was always a Muslim to avoid any such problem. If Nadir Shah had declared a Jihad, then all the Muslims would have joined him, and as you know the eastern and northern side of Hindustan is majority of Muslims. It would have made it difficult for Emperor Mohammed Shah to defend Hindustan then.'

On reaching Delhi, the Emperor treated Nadir Shah as his guest and handled the matter well. Nadir Shah been obliged to Sa'adat Khan asked the Emperor to make Sa'adat Khan the Prime Minister, to which the Emperor asked Nadir Shah what he is getting in return and also informed Nadir Shah of the enormous wealth of Sa'adat Khan. To this Nadir Shah asked Sa'adat Khan to pay him 2 crore (20 Million). Sa'adat Khan been in a fix now, couldn't let things go smoothly between the Emperor and Nadir Shah, so he created a riot in the market of Delhi by spreading the rumor of the death of Nadir Shah. This gave rise to a huge furor. Hindustanis started attacking the Persians. When Nadir Shah came to know of it, he ordered his soldiers to plunder the city. In one day 20,000 to 30,000 Hindustanis were killed by Persian troops. The city was painted in red with the bloodbath of the men that were massacred mercilessly. The whole city was wailing and mourning in pain. Mohammed Shah was devastated on hearing about the barbarous act. The Emperor was left with no option, but to beg for mercy from Nadir Shah.

The Emperor pleaded on his knees with tears welled up in his eyes, to spare the city of Delhi. Nadir Shah on seeing the pitiful sight of the Emperor, agreed to withdraw, but on the condition that he needed to be paid 25 million rupees extra. The Emperor was aghast at the demand made, but he assured to pay Nadir Shah, and in exchange he asked Nadir Shah to marry off his son to his daughter, to which Nadir Shah agreed.

The Koh-i-Noor diamond was studded on the turban of Mohammed Shah.<sup>31</sup> Nadir Shah very cunningly tricked the Emperor in exchanging their turbans. Thus Nadir Shah got his

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<sup>31</sup>Koh-i-Noor meaning 'mountain of light' in Persian language was once known to be the largest diamond.

first major loot. The Emperor had to give away the Peacock Throne,<sup>32</sup> another dimenend knowan as Darya-ye Noor,<sup>33</sup> and several other precious stones and jewels, and ornaments from the Royal Treasury to meet his demand of 25 million rupees. The Emperor was thus indirectly robbed and swiped off his wealth. The soldiers were no less. They also took with them hundreds and thousands of elephants, camels, and horses loaded with the booty they robbed.

The booty made Nadir Shah so rich that he stopped collecting taxes in Iran for the next 3 years following his return to Persia. After Hindustan was literally robbed off its wealth by Nadir Shah, the Mughal Empire began to decline considerably and during the ten years of reign of Emperor Mohammed Shah the government grew weaker and weaker. In 1740, Nawab Alivardi Khan<sup>34</sup> of Bengal also traid to proclaim independence. In April 28 1740, Baji Rao died due to sudden fever, possibly a heat stroke while inspecting his Jagirs enroute Delhi with 100,000 troops under his command in the district of Khargon.

After the assassination of Nadir Shah in June 1747, Ahmed Shah Abdali became the Emir of Khorasan. He then conquered Kabul and Afghan territories and was able to add Baluchistan, Peshawar, Daman, Multan, Sind and Punjab from Delhi and established the Durrani kingdom in 1747. He invaded Hindustan for the first time in January 1748, but was defeated by Ahmad Shah Bahadur, son of Emperor Mohammed Shah, along with Prime Minister Mir Muhammad Fazil and his son Mueen-ul-Mulk, Ghazi Uddin Khan and nephew of Sadat Khan with their 75,000 men. The people of Delhi began to rejoice and celebrate the victory, but the victory was not sweet as it was at the cost of Mir Muhammad Fazil's life. The Emperor on hearing the news of the death of his Prime Minister, Mir Muhammad Fazil, was heart-broken and shattered. He locked himself in his chamber for few days, during which he fell very ill and died due to grief on 26th April 1748.

The death of the Emperor made his son, Ahmad Shah Bahadur become the Emperor on 29th April 1748, at a young age of 22. The title Bahadur was given by the late Emperor

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<sup>32</sup>Peacock throne called Takht-e Tavus in Persia, is the name given to the Mughal throne of India.

<sup>33</sup>Darya-ye Noor meaning 'ocean of light' in Persian language is one of the largest diamonds mined in Golconda, India.

<sup>34</sup> Alivardi's birth name was Mirza Muhammad Ali. Shuja-ud-Din Muhammad Khan, Subahdar (Governor) of Orissa, promoted by the Emperor, Mohammed Shah as Faujdar (Bergedier) of Rajmahal and entitled him as Alivardi Khan. Shuja ul-Mulk (*Hero of the country*) Hashim ud-Duala (*Sword of the state*) Mahabat Jang (*Fearfully in War*).

Mohammed Shah, after his victory at the battle in Sirhind where he defeated Ahmed Shah Abdali. Ahmad Shah Bahadur inherited the empire that had weakened after the invasion of Nadir Shah.

The Sikhs started occupying Lahore between 1749 and 1751, so Ahmed Shah Abdali returned in 1751 to oust the Sikhs. In 1752, Abdali invaded Kashmir and sent his army to conquer the areas of the north, and so Turks, Uzbeks, Tajiks and Hazara tribe of northern, western and central Afghanistan was brought under his control. He also plundered Delhi.

The Marathas after the death of Baji Rao was under the leadership of Balaji Baji Rao, son of Baji Rao. The Emperor Ahmed Shah signed also signed a treaty with the Marathas under Balaji Rao as the Peshawa, like his father late Emperor Mohammed Shah, who had gained the support of the Marathas under Baji Rao by signing a treaty with them. The Marathas now began to expand their area of control towards the northwest of Hindustan. And as an answer to Abdali's attack on the Mughal capital, on the orders of the Emperor Ahmad Shah, Balaji Baji Rao sent Raghunathrao, younger brother of Balaji Rao, who succeeded in dislodging Abdali and his men from Hindustan and brought Lahore, Kashmir, Multan and the provinces along the northern borders of Punjab under the rule of the Emperor.

In 1757, Ahmed Shah Abdali reached Kandahar and he decided to return to Hindustan and fight Balaji Rao and his men. So on his march towards Hindustan he declared Jihad [28] and gathered the warriors from various Pashtun tribes such as the Baloch, Tajiks and Muslims from South Asia, against Balaji Rao and his men, and in 1759 Abdali reached Lahore. The Emperor now expecting the Peshawa's to defend Hindustan, on hearing about Abdali's army march towards Hindustan, in 1760 allowed Peshawa's to raise a huge army under Sadashivrao Bhau, nephew of Baji Rao who was the commander-in-chief of the Maratha army. Finally, in January 1761 the third battle of Panipat was fought between Ahmed Shah Abdali and the army of Hindustan under the leadership of the Peshawa's, but Abdali won.

During the battle between the Peshawa's and Abdali, the Sikhs didn't support either side and waited to see the outcome. Ala Singh, an exception supported the Afghans and in return he was crowned the first Sikh Maharajah.

By the end of 1761 the Sikhs also began to rebel. Ahmed Shah Abdali returned again, crossing the passes for the sixth time and crushed the Sikhs in 1762. He also attacked Lahore and Amritsar. Within two years after their defeat in 1762, the Sikhs rebelled again in 1764, resulting in an even battle i.e. neither Abdali nor the Sikhs won. Then in 1766, Sikhs vacated Lahore after Ahmed Shah Abdali invaded Hindustan for the eighth time.