THE FAMILY OF MIRAN SADR-i JAHAN

The family of Miran Sadr-i Jahan was also an important Shaikhzada family which served during the reign of Akbar, Jahangir, Shahjahan and Aurangzeb. Sadr-i Jahan belonged to a family of Sayyids of Pihani, a qasba in Pargana Kannauj. But we hardly have any information about the ancestors of the family or the early career of Sadr-i Jahan except for Badauni’s brief reference in his volume III where he writes; ‘he (Sadr-i Jahan) acquired learning under the guidance of Shaikh Abdun Nabi and it was in consequence of Shaikh’s exertion that he was appointed Mufti-i Azam of the Empire’. He continued to hold this office for several years. Although the office was not of much significance but it provided Sadr-i Jahan an opportunity to be close to the Emperor, and read his mind which greatly helped him in his future career. Badauni pointedly mentions that he adopted liberal view about

2. *Muntakhab-ut tawarikh*, vol. III, 199;
   *Ain-i Akbari*, vol-I, 522;
religion and even indulged in taking wine. Abul Fazl also mentions that Sadr-i Jahan took part in a drinking party in 1590; and Akbar was so much delighted by his action that he recited a verse of Hafiz.

In 1595, he was appointed Sadrus-sudur; technically a very high office of the central government but at that time of his appointment the powers of Sadr were considerably reduced by Akbar. Sadr-i Jahan continued to work as Sadr till the death of Akbar and enjoyed his confidence. During Akbar’s reign on two occasions he was deputed on very important missions. The first important mission of his career was his appointment in 1586 as an envoy of Akbar to Abdullah Khan Uzbek, the ruler of Turan, who had conquered whole of Central Asia after expelling Timurid Princess. Initially, Akbar was not much concerned about these developments because Kabul was ruled by his half brother Mirza Hakim and acted as a buffer state between Mughal Empire and Uzbek Khanate. But after the death of Mirza Hakim, Kabul was annexed in the Mughal Empire and the boundaries of Abdullah Khan’s Kingdom and Mughal Empire become one. Akbar was now seriously

5. Akbar Nama, vol. III, 496-501;
Ain-i Akbari, vol. I, 522;
Muntakhab-ut tawarikh, vol. III, 144;
Ma’asir-ul umar, vol. III, 349.
concerned with the growing power of Abdullah Khan and counter him, he transferred his capital to Lahore. Abdullah Khan now realised that further expansion towards Afghanistan was not possible, therefore he invited Akbar to jointly conquer Shiite Kingdom of Persia by raising the boggy of Shia-Sunni controversy. In yet another letter he also seriously questioned about Akbar’s religious views.

Although Akbar was not very happy with the manner in which Abdullah Khan raised the Shia-Sunni controversy and invited him to jointly attack Persians and questioned about his religious beliefs, but at the moment he was not in a position to ignore him completely. Therefore, he decided to send an envoy alongwith a letter to explain his position; specially about his religious beliefs and relations with Persia. From the later developments it becomes clear that Sadr-i Jahan was quite successful in his job. After returning from Central Asia, Sadr-i Jahan rose very high in the estimation of Akbar and was appointed Sadr as mentioned above. At the time of his appointment to the office of Sadr he held the mansab of 700⁶.

The second important mission for which Akbar send him was to restrain Prince Salim from his rebellious act and bring him to court. Sadr-i Jahan was selected for this job mainly because of his close relation with the Prince from his childhood. Sadr-i Jahan Shaikh Abdun Nabi

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had given him lessons on Hadis. Sadr-iJahan left Agra for Allahabad in 1600, but we are not told about the out come of this mission. It seems that like such other attempts Sadr-iJahan’s mission also failed. However he remain faithfull to Akbar and continued to serve as Sadr till Akbar’s death and held the rank of 2000.

As it is well known at the time of Akbar’s serious illness which was followed by his death a conspiracy was hatched by two senior nobles of Akbar Mirza Aziz Koka and Man Singh to superced Prince Salim by his eldest son Khusrau. A number of other nobles also joined the conspirators resulting in serious threat to Prince Salim’s postion. At this critical juncture Sadr-iJahan remained firm in his loyalty to Jahangir. Jahangir in his memoirs makes following obserbation about Miran Sadr-iJahan:

“I knew him in my childhood when I read (forty Saying) From these days till now Miran Sadr-iJahan had acted torwards me with single minded loyalty, and I regard him as my preceptor in religious matters (Khalifa) whilst I was Prince and before my revered father’s illness and during that time when the ministers (pillars of the state) high nobles had become agitated and each had concieved some ideas of gain for himself and wished to become originator of some act which could only bring ruin on the state, he had not failed in the activity of his service and devotion.”

Shahnawaz Khan also corroborates Jahangir's close association with Miran Sadr-i-Jahan in the following words: 'Prince (Salim) was very fond of him; one day he promised the Sayyid that if he became King, he would pay his debts or give him whatever office he desired.'

Soon after accession Jahangir kept his promise and raised him to the rank of 4000 and the office of Sadarat was also conferred on him. Later on he was promoted to the rank of 5000 Zat, 1500 Sawar. He was also granted Jagir of Kannauj. During his tenure of office as Sadr of Jahangir he gave away very large area in madad-i mash. Asaf Khan is reported to have said that Sadr-i-Jahan had given away in five years what Akbar had granted in fifty years.

Sadr-i-Jahan died at the ripe age of 120 years however his exact date of death is not known. *Ma’asir-ul umara* writes that Sadr-i-Jahan died in 1611 but *Tuzuk* records his arrival from his native place to presence with an offering in 1615. He was survived by two sons. Mir

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Badr-i-Alam was more inclined towards mysticism and lived the life recluse. But his second son Sayyid Nizam was introduced in the court of Jahangir who awarded him the mansab of 1000 Zat 700 Sawar and faujdari of Lucknow. However, in 1618, he was transferred to the faujdari of Kannauj which was held by his father. After that we do not find any reference of Sayyid Nizam in any of the contemporary source till the accession of Shahjahan. We are only informed that at the time Jahangir’s death he was holding the rank of 2500 Zat and 2000 Sawar.

After the accession of Shahjahan Sayyid Nizam along with a number of other nobles was also promoted. He was raised to rank of 3000 Zat 3000 Sawar. Shortly afterwards, after the death of Murtaza Khan Mir Hismuddin who was Subedar of Thatta, he was given the title of Murtaza Khan. After the failure of Azam Khan, Shahjahan appointed Mahabat Khan and as viceroy of Deccan with express order to only retrieve the position of the Mughal army with specific purpose of established peace in the region. Sayyid Nizam was also deputed with him. In 1633 Mahabat Khan besieged the fort of Daulatabad and

20. Ibid, 299.
conquered it. Now he decided to proceed to Burhanpur after leaving the fort under the charge of trustworthy and competent military commander. But no one was willing to accept the responsibility due to pressure of the enemy and constant shortage of provisions. Keeping in view the military skill and the strong following that Sayyid Nizam had possessed. Mahabat Khan ordered him to take the charge of the fort. But Sayyid Nizam was not only declined accept the charge but raised strong objections to Mahabat Khan’s conduct. Mahabat Khan now approached Khan-i-Dauran who had come from Malwa to take the responsibility of the protection of the fort which he agreed. At the same time he forced Sayyid Nizam to resign from imperial service. But this arrangement could not last long. With in a very short time Khan-i-Dauran received express messages of disorder in Malwa. Therefore Mahabat Khan had no alternative but to allow him to go to Malwa after handing over charge of the fort to Sayyid Nizam it seems by now some understanding was reached between Sayyid Nizam and Mahabat Khan.

After that Sayyid Nizam was transferred to Dalmau which was in state of disorder. He was particularly entrusted to suppress the rebellious elements who had become a great source of trouble for the Mughal Empire. Since Dalmau was his native place he seems to have gathered a large force and by vigorous exertions, he suppressed them.

23. Ibid.
He remained for a longtime in Baiswar and Lucknow where he engaged himself in bringing peace and order in the region. But it seems due to old age he could not manage the affairs to the satisfaction of the imperial administration. Therefore, in 1650, he was granted a pension of twenty Lacs dam which was to be paid of the revenue of Pargana Pihani, his native place.24

Owing to the death of his sons in his lifetime, his grand sons Abdul Muqtadir and Abdullah were granted mansabs and his other grand children were also given suitable allowances. According to Shahnawaz Khan eighty Lacs of dams out of the annual revenue of Pargana Pihani was received by the family. Abdul Muqtadir was later on promoted to the rank of 1000 Zat and 600 Sawar and made the faujdar of Khairabad.25

24. Ma’asir-ul umara, vol. II, 480; The total annual income of Pihani was one crore dam.