THE FAMILY OF DARYA KHAN RUHELA

The family of Daraya Khan Rubela was one of the most important Afghan families at the court of Shahjahan. Draya Khan Ruhela belonged to Baqar Zai clan of Daudzai tribe of Afghans. His ancestral homeland was the town of Barbar which was only few miles away from Peshawar. His father Ibrahim was the leader of his clan and lived on horse trading and agriculture. As we know till the closing years of Akbar's reign Afghans generally were not taken into Mughal service because the Mughal Emperors remained suspicious about them. However, with the accession of Jahangir, situation changed, and not only Khan-i-Jahan Lodi, who became a great favourite of Jahangir, but several other Afghans were also admitted in the nobility and Jahangir also reposed confidence in them.

In this changed atmosphere Daraya Khan Ruhela along with his brothers Usman Khan, Neknam Khan and son Bahadur Khan Ruhela joined service under a leading Mughal noble Murtaza Khan Shaikh Farid

2. Munshi Muzaffar Husain, Nama-iMuzaffar, Lucknow Edition,1914, 454, (This work though written in early 20th century is of immense value because the author has used family records and other authentic sources of information)
Bakhari who held the office of Mir Bakshi. However the author of Nama-i-Muzaffari in his notice of Daraya Khan Ruhela writes that he was introduced at the court of Jahangir by Khan-i-Jahan Lodi and on his recommendation the Emperor granted him the rank of 3000 Zat and 3000 Sawar. He further adds that Jahangir was so much impressed with his marshal qualities that shortly afterwards he was appointed ataliq of Prince Khurram, specially to train him in soldiery. Darya Khan Ruhela’s son Bahadur Khan Ruhella who was at that time only 15 years old was also included among the most favoured nobles of the Prince. Thereafter, Draya Khan Ruhella entered the service of Prince Khurram. We have no information whether he was admitted in the imperial service also at that time. He remained firm in his loyalty to Prince Khurram and when the Prince rebelled in 1623, Darya Khan Ruhella became his close ally and followed him in all his campaigns. When the rebel Prince reached Bengal and Ibrahim Khan Fateh Jung refused to submit Darya Khan Ruhella, who was commanding the vanguard, by his bold moves

4. Nama-i-Muzaffari, 455.
Ma’asir-ul umara vol. II 18.
Ma’asir-ul umara vol. II, 18.
captured Akbarnagar in 1624. For this important achievement he was given the title of Sher Khan Fateh Jung, and the rank of 5000 Zat, 5000 Sawar. However, his glory was short lived; soon after he failed to check Parvez and Mahabat Khan from crossing the Ganga at Kara Manikpur. Inspite of this Prince Khurram continued to have confidence in him. But in 1625 in the battle of Tons fought between the imperial forces and Khurram’s army in which rebels were completely defeated Darya Khan Ruhella’s role was questioned. Actually, he had been accused of inactivity in the battle. Prince Khurram now lost confidence in him. About the sametime it was rumoured that Prince Khurram was planing to go to Persia. Darya Khan Ruhela in sheer desperation left Prince Khurram and joined Khan-i Jahan Lodi who had been deputed by Emperor Jahangir to subdue Prince Khurram. However it is significant

The nobility under Akbar and Jahangir*, 159.
to note that his son Bahadur Khan Ruhela remained loyal to Khurram during the years that he was a rebel and the Prince Khurram also continued to have confidence in him.\(^{11}\) The author of *Nama-i Muzaffari* writes that Bahadur Khan Ruhella had been serving him from the young age of 15 years and therefore even when his father decided to leave Prince Khurram under the influence of Khan-i Jahan Lodi and attached himself with the group of NurJahan, Bahdur Khan preferred to remain with Prince Khurram.\(^{12}\) It is significant to note that Darya Khan Ruhell's brother Usman Khan also continued to served Prince Khurram.\(^{13}\) As a consequence of his leaving Prince Khurram and joining Khan-iJahan Lodi who had been deputed incharge of operation against Prince Khurram inplace of Mahabat Khan, Darya Khan Ruhella for the first time was on the side of the imperialist. His joining imperial service might have been the result of his long association with Khan-i Jahan Lodi,\(^{14}\) the leading Afghan noble at the court On the other the situation

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12 *Ma'asir-ul umara*, vol. II, 19; *Nama-i Muzaffari*, 365.
13 *Nama-i Muzaffari*, 365.
14 *Ma'asir-ul umara*, vol.I, 716-32;
at the court became tense following the dismissal of Mahabat Khan and appointment of Khan-i Jahan Lodi. Mahabat Khan’s coup further complicated the situation. In the absence of any military and financial support from the center Khan-i Jahan Lodi took certain decisions which were questioned later on. Although Jahangir succeeded in overcoming the crisis and but it took heavy toll of his health. He suddenly died in October 1627 while proceeding to Kashmir. Darya Khan Ruhella at this time was with Khan-i Jahan Lodi who was viceroy of the Deccan. As Khan-i Jahan Lodi was away from the court, he was not fully posted with the development leading to the death of Jahangir. Dawar Baksh who was raised to the throne only as sacrificial lamb was considered by him as a serious contender.

It appears Dawar Baksh’s assumption of the title Sher Khan probably with the intention of getting the support of Afghan’s further complicated the situation. Khan-i Jahan Lodi who already considered him a serious candidate because almost all important nobles including Asaf Khan were supporting him came out openly for Dawar Baksh. Shortly afterwards he was informed that Mahabat Khan had joined Prince Khurram (here after Shahjahan) and Shahjahan had conferred on

17 For details information of this crisis see B.P Saksena, PP. 56-69.
him the title of Sipahsalar. Khan-i-Jahan Lodi was shocked and provoked by this action of the Prince. Darya Khan Ruhella at this stage played a crucial role by advising him in the following manner: ‘you are by the goodness of God, master of forces and tribes, enter the service of whoever becomes the King.’ Acting on the advise of Darya Khan, Khan-i-Jahan Lodi dismissed Shahjan’s emissary Jan Nisar Khan without even replying to the farman. But after sometimes it became clear that his calculations and the calculations of his advisers were not correct. Therefore, after the accession of Shahjahan he offered his submission; the Emperor also ignored his past behaviour and appointed him Subedar of Malwa.

It appears that Darya Khan Ruhela also appealed the Emperor for pardon. As he had served him in his Princehood, he was re-admitted in the service. He was confirmed in his previous rank of 4000 Zat and 3000 Sawar and a suitable Jagir in Bengal was also given to him. He was ordered to proceed to Bengal along with Qasim Khan, the governor

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23 Ibid.
of the Suba. His son Bahadur Khan Ruhela who remained with the Prince throughout his period of crisis was specially favoured; he was given the rank of 4000 Zat 2000 Sawar and cash of Rs.5000. Shortly afterwards he was assigned Tuyuldari of Kalpi. Darya Khan’s brothers Usman Khan, Neknam Khan and Zakaria Khan were also given the rank of 1000 Zat, 300 Sawar, 700 Zat 300 Sawar respectively. Similarly several other members of Darya Khan Ruhela’s family were also admitted service. Sometimes after 1627, Darya Khan Ruhella was transferred to the Deccan and was assigned Jagir in the Pargana of Bander in Khandesh. Soon after his arrival he was informed of the hostile activities of Sahu in Khandesh at the instigation of Nizam Shah. As Khan-i Zman, the Subedar, was at Bir Darya Khan Ruhella came forward, gave him a battle and drove him out of the region. In appreciation of this service he was raised to the rank of 4000 Zat and 4000 Sawar.

In 1630, Shahjahan proceeded to Burhanpur to personally supervised the operation against Khan-i-Jahan Lodi. Darya Khan Ruhela came from his Jagir and presented himself before the Emperor. The evidence that we have tells us that soon after this incident Darya Khan Ruhela joined Khan-i-Jahan Lodi again and became one of his closest ally. It appears that the decision of Darya Khan Ruhela to join Khan-i-Jahan Lodi was sudden but it was not purely on tribal consideration as made out by Shahnawaz Khan. Darya Khan Ruhela as mentioned above had very intimate relation with Khan-i-Jahan Lodi and he remained Khan-i-Jahan Lodi’s close associate even after Shahjahan’s accession. He must have been watching carefully the development at the court which forced Khan-i-Jahan Lodi to rebel. It appears that after Khan-i-Jahan Lodi’s rebellion he also became unsure of his future in the Mughal Empire and therefore when Khan-i-Jahan Lodi came to the Deccan, he immediately joint him.

Now Shahjahan sent three bodies of troops consisting of 5000 cavalry under Azam Khan along with Bahadur Khan Ruhella and Usman Khan against Khan-i-Jahan Lodi who was at Rajaori about six

31. Nama-iMuzaffari, 482-83.
Kos away from the town of Bir. Azam Khan made a surprise attack on Khan-iJahan Lodi. Brave deeds were done on both sides. Bahadur Khan Ruhella fell on the ground and was about to be cut into pieces when he cried, “I am memorial son of Darya Khan and a house born of you.” Just about the same time Khan-iJahan Lodi reached there and spared his life. Khan-iJahan Lodi fled from there and reached Baidapur. On the way Darya Khan Ruhella joined him at Ahmadnagar. These event indicate that Khan-iJahan Lodi’s role in saving the life of his son even when he was on imperial side must have played a role in these developments.

Now attempts were made by certain Afghan chiefs including Darya Khan Ruhella to declare Khan-i Jahan Lodi as the Emperor of India, but Khan-iJahan Lodi himself declined the offer. This led to desertion in his camp. Some of his closest allies and Kinsmen like Bahlol Khan Miyana and Sikandar Dutai left his camp. On the other hand Nizam Shah also became cool towards him. Therefore on the advice of Darya Khan Ruhella he decided to proceed towards Punjab. He

was intercepted in the Bundela Country by Bikramjit, the son of Jujhar Singh Bundela and was killed after a sharp engagement\(^{37}\) in 1631. His son Muhammad who held the rank of 1000 Zat and 700 Sawar was also killed along with him.\(^{38}\)

The author of *Nama-i-Muzaffari* gives a very interesting account of the event relating to the killing of Darya Khan Ruhella. Muzaffar Husain writes that just before the death of Darya Khan Ruhella his son Bahadur Khan Ruhella reached there and met his father. Darya Khan Ruhella told him that now he was about to die and therefore he was to look after his family. He further added that if the credit for his killing goes to him he will further rise in the estimation of the Emperor. Therefore, he suggested that he should put his ring in his mouth and when after his death ultimately his severed head would reach the Emperor, he may claim that he had killed him and the ring from his mouth be presented as an evidence. The author tells us that the same was done by Bahadur Khan Ruhella and due to that Shahjahan showered on him much favours.\(^{39}\) Khan-i-Jahan Lodi was grieved to know of the

\[^{37}\] Qazvini, ff. 208-9 (b); Lahori, vol. I, 337-38. For more details of his career see *Ma'asir-ul umara* vol. I, PP. 526-27.


\[^{39}\] *Nama-i-Muzaffari*, 485.
death of Darya Khan Ruhella but continued the march. He too was killed in the battle with the imperial army led by Muzaffar Khan Barha in 1631.40

The revolt of Khan-iJahan Lodi was an event of great importance. It was one of the strongest Afghan rebellions witnessed in the recent past and its fury could have engulfed not only Shahjahan but also the Mughal Empire, which had just begin to recover after the struggle for succession. After the successful completion of the campaign against Khan-iJahan Lodi, Bahadur Khan Ruhella was despatched to the Deccan under the command of Azam Khan who had been specially deputed against Ahmadnagar and Bijapur. While Azam Khan was engaged in pitching his tent on the bank of river Manjera, Ranadola Khan, the Commander of the Daccani forces made a surprise attack on the Mughal army. The contingent led by Bahadur Khan Ruhella fought against the Daccanis very bravely but Bahdur Khan Ruhella was severely wounded, captured and imprisoned in Bijapur.41

When Shahjahan came to know of the humiliating defeat of Azam Khan and the capture of Bahadur Khan Ruhela and certain other Mughal


41. Lahori, vol. I, 380-81;
nobles, he ordered Asaf Khan to invade Bijapur. Mughal army captured Bhalki and reached Gulbarga without much resistance. The town of Gulbarga was ransacked and a large number of people were massacred. Thereafter the fort of Bijapur was put to seige. As the seige continued for a long time, negotiations started. Mustafa Khan held negotiation on behalf of the Adilshahi and it appeared that settlement was about to take place. The agreed terms of the treaty were recorded and as a token of goodwill Bahadur Khan Ruhella and Yusuf Khan Tashkandi were released. But at the final stage of the negotiations differences arose among Adilshahis on the terms of the treaty; Khaws Khan specially declined to accept the terms. On the other hand, in the Mughal camp due to the shortage of provisions situation became very bad, the prolonging negotiations panicked the Mughals. The Deccanis apparently aware of the situation in the Mughal camp deliberately prolonged the negotiations. When Asaf Khan came to know of the real intention of the Deccanis he broke his camp and fled. The invasion proved a dismal failure but for the release of Bahdur Khan Ruhela and Yusuf Khan Tashkandi. On his arrival to court Bahadur Khan Ruhella was given promotion of 500 Sawar in his mansab and also a cash of Rs.25000.

He was given leave to go to his Jagir in Kalpi and Kannauj. After this victory on the occasion of new year celebration Bahadur Khan came from his Jagir presented himself before the Emperor. He was given a dress of honour and promoted to the rank of 4000 Zat 4000 Sawar.\textsuperscript{44}

In 1635, Bahadur Khan Ruhella along with Abdullah Firoz Jung\textsuperscript{45} and Khan-iDauran\textsuperscript{46} was despatched to suppress the rebellion of Jujhar Singh Bundela who had rebelled soon after Shahjahans accession. He was defeated and subsequently pardoned by the Emperor. His rank was also restored\textsuperscript{47} but some portion of his Jagir was confiscated. He was sent to the Deccan where he served till 1634. When he returned to his watan, he started making efforts to expand his territories. As a first step he attacked Prem Narayana and besieged his stronghold Chauragarh and compelled him to surrender the fort\textsuperscript{48}. While he was coming out of the fort he was treacherously attacked. Prem Narayan having no other option killed his women and died fighting for his honour. This act of Jujhar

\begin{footnotes}
  \item[44] Lahori, vol. I, part. II, 87; Nama-i Muzaffari, 373.
  \item[45] For details of Abdullah Khan’s career see Ma’asir-ul umar, vol. II, 777-789.
  \item[48] Lahori, vol. I, part. II, 93.
\end{footnotes}
Sing was not only rebellious but very provocative. Meanwhile the son of deceased Raja presented himself at the court and appealed for help. Shahjahan sent Kavi Rao as his envoy and asked Jujhar Singh to pay ten lacs of rupees or territory of equal value as compensation for the capture of Chauragarh. When Jujhar Singh Bundela refused to comply, the Emperor ordered mobilization of the army against him. Abdullah Khan Firuz Jung and Khan-i-Dauran along with Bahadur Kha Ruhella and his uncle Neknam Khan hotly chased the enemy and almost all important forts of Jujhar Singh Bundela were captured. The imperial army therefore made a surprise attack on Chauragarh where Jujhar Singh Bundella had taken shelter. Jujhar Singh now fled towards the Deccan by way of langi forest. Bahadur Khan Ruhella and other imperial officers hotly pursued him and when they reached on Chanda an unfortunate incident took place. Bahadur Khan Ruhela who was leading the campaign was seriously taken ill and could not ride. Therefore, he ordered his uncle Neknam Khan who was also an imperial officer to engage the enemy. Jujhar Singh Bundela having came to know of the limitation of the imperial forces suddenly attacked him. Neknam Khan fought bravely but he was outnumbered, and along with several of his close associates he was seriously wounded.

seriously wounded. But soon after Khan-iDauran and Bahadur Khan Ruhella reached there and turned the tables against the rebel. In great desperation, the rebel fled towards Golcunda. But they were overtaken and Durgabhan son of Jujhar Singh and Durga Seth his grand son were captured but Jujhar Singh Bundela escaped in the neighbouring forest where he was killed by Gonds. Jujhar Singh Bundle’s dead body was found by Khan-iDauran who cut off his head and sent it to court. After the successful completion of the campaign, Bahadur Khan Ruhella came back to the court where he was rewarded with a sword and a horse.

After the suppression of the revolt of Jujhar Singh and his killing, the Emperor made settlement in Bundelkhand and it appeared as the situation had returned to normal. But within a very short time Champat Rai Bundela, the chief of Mahoba put up Prithviraj son of Jujhar Singh Bundela as a rival claimant to the Bundela Gaddi and raised a banner of revolt against the imperial authority. He raised a large army and in collaboration with Prithviraj started punitive action against the Mughals.

54. He was a descendant of Udayjit, whose dynasty had fallen into a shade before the dazzling glory of the house of Orchha. He had a good relation with Birsingh. He gave much assistance to Jujhar Singh during the course of his rebellion (Lahori vol. II, 136).
The geographical terrain of BundelKhand and the guerilla tactics adopted by Champat Rai gained them great success. As the situation became alarming, Shahjahan despatched Abdullah Khan Firuz Jung to suppress the revolt of Champat Rai and Prithviraj, but he failed. At this Bahadur Khan Ruhella requested the Emperor to assign him the duty and promised to suppress the revolt in a very short time. Shahjahan agreed to his request and ordered him to proceed to Mathura. The Emperor increased his mansab by raising 3000 Sawar do aspa she aspa to his rank of 4000 Zat, 4000 Sawar. Bahadur Khan Ruhella opened the campaign against the rebels with characteristic vigour and zeal. He at once ordered the clearing of forest so that swift movement of troops could take place and the rebels could be deprived of places of shelter. He also defeated a party of rebels.

However, before any significant outcome of his efforts could take place, his opponents at the court prevailed upon Shahjahan to recall him. They alleged that Bahadur Khan Ruhella was converting Bundelkhand into Rohelkhand. This was really a grave charge; but he was up to what in Bundelkhand is not very clear. Probably Bahadur Khan Ruhela

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making settlement of Ruhella Afghans in the area which was considered dangerous. This further indicates that in spite of their substantial presence in nobility Afghans were still suspected because of their extensive tribal loyalties.

He was recalled and asked to report to MuradBKsh who had been deputed to suppress Jagat Singh son of Raja Basu, Zamindar of Mau in 1641. The emperor ordered to besiege Nurpur and Mau simultaneously. Bahadur Khan Ruhella who was deputed to invest Mau pressed the seige with great vigour. In a hand to hand combat Bahadur Khan Ruhella's 700 retainers were killed but he succeeded in capturing major part of the Raja's territory. Soon after he was sent back to expell the rebels from Taragarh which was still holding. The fort was immediately put to seige (1642). After a seige of two months Jagat singh sent his son Rajrup to Sayyid Khan-iJahan, to request the latter to intercede on his behalf with the Prince and the Emperor to secure the restoration of his mansab, Watan and Jagir. On the recommendation of Prince Murad,

59. It was a official headquarter of Kangra.
Sayyid Khan-i Jahan was sent to bring Jagat Singh to court. Jagat Singh welcomed Khan-i Jahan in the fort, and gave a banquet in his honour to which Bahadur Khan and Asalat Khan were also invited. Shortly afterwards orders were received for the demolition of the fortifications of Taragarh which created difference of opinion among the imperial officers. Bahadur Khan Ruhella and Asalat Khan were in favour of carrying out the orders immediately, but Khan-i Jahan counselled delay. The attitude of Bahadur Khan Ruhella and Asalat Khan irritated Jagat Singh and is said to have remarked; “you were able to enter the fort because I led you into it. Even now not much is lost. I present the outer fortifications to Sayyid Khan-i Jahan and am retiring behind the second line of defence. Let me see how you can overcome me.” Shahjahan however insisted on the demolition of Taragarh and complete surrender of Jagat Singh which was ultimately carried out. In appreciation of his services in the suppression of Jagat Singh’s revolt, Bahadur Khan Ruhella’s rank was raised to 5000 Zat, 5000 Sawar with all do aspa seh aspa.

It is a well known fact that Shahjahan was very much eager to conquer Balkh and Badakshan and was waiting only for a suitable

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61. For Asalat Khan’s career see Ma’asir-ul umara, vol. I, 222-25.
63. Lahori, vol. II, 278.
opportunity. In the latter part of 1645 he despatched several officials including Bahadur Khan Ruhella to Kabul to explore possibilities of a successful campaign on Balkh and Badakhshan. After reaching Kabul, Emperor Shahjahan further directed Bahadur Khan Ruhella and other to despatch a reconnoitring force of 1000 men towards Balkh and Badakhshan and employed large number of sappers to cut a wide road through Tulipasses into southern Badakhshan.64 After arriving in the region of Balkh and Badakhshan a grand army of 50,000 horses and 10000 musketeers was raised and divided into seven section. The vanguard was put under Bahadur Khan Ruhella who was to be assisted by Raja Bithal Das Nazr Bahadur Khan Kheshgi and several other nobles.65 Finally considering the importance of Balkh and Badakhshan campaign Shahjahan decided to despatch Prince Murad as the supreme commander of the imperial army. Prince Murad reached Kabul on 15 May 1646, and on 24 May, Bahadur Khan Ruhella and Asalat Khan were sent with advance guard to clear the Tuliroute of snow66 when the Prince alongwith the entire army reached Narin, Shah Muhammad Qutghan fled abandoning the fort of Qunduz. Thus Qunduz and thereafter Badakhshan was captured without much difficulty. The imperial

66. Ibid, 509.
the Emperor sent a letter to Nazar Muhammad advising him to present himself before Prince and accept the subordination of the Mughals. However, the Mughals nobles who were sent with the letter noticed consternation at the court of Nazar Muhammad and also heard some of his followers speaking in disparaging terms of the Mughals requested the Prince to come quickly to Balkh.

The Prince without waiting any time started for Balkh and pitched his camp on Shutarkhvar gate and ordered his troops to watch carefully the movement of enemy. Nazar Muhammad got pannicky on the arrival of the Mughal army on the gates of Balkh and secretly fled through one of the gates which under his men. Thus Balkh was also captured without any serious trouble. As soon as Murad came to know of the flight of Nazar Muhammad he deputed Bahadur Khan and Asalat Khan to pursue him. Bahadur Khan overtook him Shutarakhvar and defeated his in a sharp engagement but he succeeded in fleeing to Andkhud and from there Marv. When the news of the conquest of Badakshan and Balkh reached the court Bahadur Khan and Asalat Khan were rewarded with ropes of honour and an increase of 1000 Sawar in their rank. Bahadur Khan in addition was granted a cash reward of Rs. 20,000 from the Balkh treasury.

He now requested the Emperor to allow him to return from Balkh. Although the Emperor ordered him to stay where he was and send Sa’adullah Khan to dissuade him from returning to court but the Prince ignored the imperial orders. Sa’adullah Khan now appointed Bahadur Khan to look after the administration of Balkh with absolute powers. As mentioned above the Emperor has specially rewarded Bahadur Khan for his role in the Balkh and Badakshan campaign and Sa’adullah Khan had appointed him to maintain peace and order in Balkh but his opponents were still quite active at court they succeeded in poisoning the mind of Emperor by alleging that Bahadur Khan had deliberately moved slowly and allowed Nazar Muhammad to escape after the capture of Balkh. He was also charged for providing sufficient help to sa’id Khan at the time of Uzbek victory. Therefore, Bahadur Khan Ruhelia’s Jagir of Kalpi and Kannauj were confiscated. He was further humiliated when the afore mentioned Jagir were conferred upon his younger brother Jalal Khan (Diler Khan). Despite all humiliation and setbacks Bahadur Khan continued to serve the imperial cause in central Asia with all loyalty.

70. Lahori, vol. II, 650-77; Nama-iMuzaffari, 390-400.
He died due to asthma on 19\textsuperscript{th} July 1647 while serving in Qandhar under Prince Aurangzeb. His eldest son Dilawar Khan was given the rank of 1500 Zat 1500 Sawar. His other sons were also given offices; however none of them could get mansabs. Shahnawaz Khan writes that 'Bahadur Khan Ruhella always lamented that he could not take revenge from the Bijapuris and that as long as he lived the shame of the affair appeared on his face.'\textsuperscript{72}

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\textsuperscript{72. Ma'asir-ul umara, vol. I P 423.}
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