VI

EVIDENCE ON HUSSAIN KHAN KHESHGI

Rise of Hussain Khan Kheshgi:-

Hussain Khan Kheshgi, the most reputable leader of the Afghans of Kasoor had inherited a large fortune from his forefathers, consisting of servants and other paraphernalia. But unlike his forefathers he had kept himself aloof consistently from rendering a job under the Mughals. This earned him a great distinction among his own tribe. Relying on the huge wealth that fell in his hands, he ordered ‘Khutba’ also to be read in his own name and extended his sway over the area reaching the outer parts of the city\(^1\). He did not spare the zamindars even across the Lakhi Jungle whose residents were forced to surrender their jagirs to him. His followers too followed in his footsteps\(^2\). In this process many tenants of this area were pushed out of their homes and the country. He turned out many Imperial jagirdars and faujdars also from their jagirs. Khafi Khan said that he had been incited by the Sayyads into rebellion. They belonged to the Hindustani Party while Abdus Samad Khan was allied with the Turani Party. They were opposed to each other.

For the administration of justice and punishment for the breach of regulations in any sphere of administration was already fixed but the Afghans disregarded both the regulations as well as the punishments with scorn. In fact the Afghans were extremely jealous of their own sovereign rights over the area held by them, whereas the

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\(^1\) Ghulam-Muhy-ud-Din, Futuhat-Namah-i-Samadi, MS., BM., Or. 1870, London. f.139 (Lines 1-11).

\(^2\) Ibid., f.139 (Lines 13-15).
Mughals were equally determined to establish their own hegemony over the entire region. There was absolutely no meeting ground between the two and hence the inevitability of the settlement of the issue only through a bitter armed conflict. This was a serious violation of discipline in the administration and this could have earned them an adequate punishment too\(^3\). Keeping in view their huge members in the tribe the Subadars of Punjab preferred to ignore them altogether. The defeat of the Sikhs had raised the Nawab’s stature in the eyes of the central government but the Afghans continued to misappropriate the government Jagirs to the utter disregard of what the central government at Delhi and the Nawab in the Punjab had resolved to accomplish with all his resources, tacts, strategies and tenacity of purpose. The Nawab at the same time was anxious to keep them on the right path as far as possible but with all his consummate skill and masterly diplomatic actions he failed to realize what he desired the most. He therefore proceeded ahead to make preparations for the ultimate war.

**Nawab’s Strategies against Hussain Khan:**

The large scale massacre of the entire community of the unfortunate Sikhs all over the State appeared to have evoked some pain in his heart over their huge sufferings and he realized that the readers must be provided with some colourful account of the other happenings in the State\(^4\). The Mughal Afghan war thus became the next topic of narration in the *Futuhat-Namah-i-Samadi*. Inspired by the success of his stratagems, tactics and doggedness and also helped by the circumstances. When Sayyad Hassan Khan of the Sadat-i-Barah was appointed Nazam of Multan and Mahabat Khan became

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\(^3\) Ghulam-Muhy-ud-Din, *Futuhat-Namah-i-Samadi*, MS., BM., Or. 1870, London. f.140 (Lines 6-9).

\(^4\) *Ibid.*, f.139 (Lines 1-4).
governor of Thatta, he considered this an enormous opportunity to play his cards very astutely to further his designs on the forthcoming war with the Afghans. While proceeding to take charge of their respective offices at Multan and Thatta, the two met the Nawab and as all the three were the members of the Nobility, they discussed the Afghan problem and recommended a peaceful approach to the settlement of all the issues. They further recommended that, as far as possible war was to be avoided.

In the meantime Hussain Khan Afghan and his followers forced their entry into the meeting without observing any diplomatic niceties and other formalities. They crowded the place where meeting was being held. Their uncouth manners and impolite speech further offended especially Sayyad Hassan but being a farsighted and a prudent diplomat he kept his calm and invited Hussain Khan to the problems at issue. He made it clear to him that he should be content to accept a subordinate position under the Mughals and should never step out of its bounds. Secondly, he emphasized that national interests should always be kept in minds. Thirdly, the Mughal government would be allowed to install their own police stations inside the town. Fourthly, all the jagirs snatched from the zamindars must be restored to the respective owners. Lastly, the government jagirs in the parganas must be restored to the government. They assured Hussain Khan that observing the above stipulations will lead to a permanent peace and stability between the two and would encourage the settlement of other problems concerning political and economic affairs.

Hussain Khan was so puffed up with himself that he rejected all the terms and refused to discuss any. He rather indulged in impolite utterances and in an agitated

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5 Ghulam-Muhy-ud-Din, Futuhat-Namah-i-Samadi, MS., BM., Or. 1870, London. f.141 (Lines 8-15).
6 Ibid., f.142.
state of mind left the meeting beating the drum. Sayyad Hassan and Mahabat Khan departed to their respective charges. The Nawab deliberated over the shape of war with the Afghans. Qapchak Khan, Arif Khan, Sayyad Quli Khan, Aghar Khan, Hafiz Ali Khan and some other important members of the Nobility were summoned to discuss the impending shape and consequences of the war with the Afghans.

It was evident to the members of the committee that the Mughals and the Afghans were nursing a grudge of mutual contempt and hatred against each other to such an extent that even their children while playing with each other would not desist from giving a loud expression to their feelings even in the games. They often started actually fighting over the result. Promoting peace and tranquility between the two was an improbability in itself. Nawab Abdus Samad Khan, with faith in God, started the war with the beat of drum. As an act of strategy they marched ahead leaving Kasoor to their left and stationed their troops on the bank of Ravi. He was seated on the Subadari’s seat. During the course of the march some Bhatti and the Kharal chiefs also joined the Subadar’s army. The Imperial forces marched towards Chunnian, situated at the distance of 40 Kohs from Lahore. Hussain Khan too marched against them and fell upon the Mughals on the 18 Kohs of territory situated between Chunnian and Kasoor. Some Afghans criticized him for his out of place and meaningless exhibition of his immature plans. The Afghan forces ignored the Imperial artillery and advanced forward on horses. The artillery men fired their guns but the Afghans continued to march ahead and engaged

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7 Ghulam-Muhy-ud-Din, Futuhat-Namah-i-Samadi, MS., BM., Or. 1870, London. f.145 (Lines 1-7).
8 Ibid., f.145 (Lines 8-12).
9 Ibid., f.146 (Lines 9-10).
10 Ibid., f.147 (Line 4).
11 Ibid., f.147 (Line 15).
the Mughals in a battle of small weapons. A fierce battle was fought between the two. The Afghans fought with intense courage and bravery such that the Mughal soldiers almost forgot what the Sikhs had done to them earlier. The Nawab was very profuse in admiring and inspiring his own soldiers.

The Kharals and the Bhatti volunteers who had joined the Mughals, however, dispersed gradually and left the field. This resulted in the disorganization of the Mughal lines and the Afghans tried to avail this opportunity to their own benefit. The Nawab in order to keep up the spirits of his own soldiers did not pursue the Kharals and the Bhattis. On watching the Nawab’s determination in the battle-field his soldiers issued forth out of their hideouts and morchals and jumped into the fight. Karim Quli Khan Bakshi, Aghar Khan, Qapchak Khan, Sayyad Quli Khan, Arif Khan and other members of the Nobility made stupendous efforts to narrow down the gap between the two. Hussain Khan was sitting on an elephant seat. He was killed by a bullet shot from a big gun which made a short work of his life. The Mughals made a loud cry to announce their victory. The Afghans took no time to flee from the battlefield. The Mughals fell upon the fugitives for obtaining their dresses and horses. A number of Afghans were put to death in the scuffle. The Nawab sent a letter to the Hazur-i-Wala at Shahjahanabad offering his greetings on their victory over the Afghans. He rejected all the suggestions to grant permission to his army for plundering of Kasoor. He reminded his men that the cause of enmity with the Afghan had disappeared and there was no justification in plundering the town. It was a very tactful move on his part to come to the rescue of the

12 Ghulam-Muhy-ud-Din, Futuhat-Namah-i-Samadi, MS., BM., Or. 1870, London. f.152 (Lines 9-11).
13 Ibid., f.153 (Lines 7-15).
14 Ibid., f.154 (Line 15); f.155 (Line 1).
families of the defeated Afghans, and their establishments in the city from loot and plunder, devastation and destruction at the hands of the victorious forces\textsuperscript{15}.

Hussain Khan Khesghi had affiliation with the Sadat group. The Nawab, however, informed the Sadat of Hussain Khan’s death. In spite of their relations with Hussain Khan Khesghi, the Sadat preferred to keep quiet and sent a greeting to the Nawab which was of course only a diplomatic courtesy\textsuperscript{16}.

\textsuperscript{15} Ghulam-Muhy-ud-Din, \textit{Futuhat-Namah-i-Samadi}, MS., BM., Or. 1870, London. f.155 (Lines 1-9).

\textsuperscript{16} \textit{Ibid.}, f.156 (Lines 7-13).