V

Evidence on Isa Khan Munj

Isa Khan was an upstart who started his early life in penury but his gallantry and intrepidity soon earned him under Ma’zzudin Jahandar Shah a mansab of 4000 horse in Multan and was appointed a faujdar in the service of the Mughals. Once in Multan, he expanded the sphere of his annexations with the help of a group of robbers and ruffians from Lakhi Jungle and its environs. Apart from this, many from the tribes of Munj and Rangar also gathered around him to help him. He began to rob the people of their goods, property and lands. Not content with that, the revenue from the government Jagirs far and near also enriched him. His riches enabled him to live in splendour. He held many elephants and heavy artillery. People, viewing his sudden rise to power and authority and unlimited capacity to deprive others of their possessions, chose to keep silent while the aristocracy in the surrounding was terrified and they would rather prefer to live in subordination to him. The extent of his potentiality to over-awe his subjects was such that the Afghans of Kasoor also preferred to keep away from him inspite of the fact that in the past they always treated him and the Munj as their subordinates who always earned their final scores under him. Pride always hath a fall. Power and pelf made him vain, arrogant and a conceited fellow who always assumed a presumptuous attitude in his dealings with his seniors, subordinates and the common man. Unfortunately for him the Jagir of Lakhi Jungle was added to his existing rank and grants. Isa Khan was so

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1 Ghulam-Muhuy-ud-Din, Futuhat-Namah-i-Samadi, MS., BM., Or. 1870, London. f.131 (Lines 1-9).
2 Ibid., f.131 (Lines 10-15).
immersed in misappropriating the government jagirs that he allowed none else to share revenues with him\(^3\). The Nawab knew all this but he avoided to precipitate and opted to wait for the moment when he could take appropriate action at appropriate time. He had, however, been repeating his warnings and councils but these fell flat on Isa Khan. He ignored all these and showed his readiness for a confrontation. The Nawab was a diplomat. He knew that Isa Khan was enjoying the patronage of Qutub-ul-Mulk Abdullah Khan of the Saddat-i -Barah. This made him deliberately ignore his undiplomatic utterances and impudent manners but he never relaxed and continued to ponder over the situation and ultimately evolved a policy to bring Isa Khan to his senses\(^4\).

**Nawab’s Steps to Vanquish Opposition:-**

Whereas arrogance of Isa Khan failed, fortune always smiled on the Nawab. The government of Lakhi jungle was added to his existing Subadari of Punjab. Secondly, a rumour had already spread that Shahdad Khan Kheshgi was being made Naib Subadar at Kasoor. The author made comments on Shahdad Khan Kheshgi and his followers’, for haughtiness and his ignorance of Punjab politics. This inspired Abdus Samad Khan to take a serious note of this new situation. It helped him consider Shahdad Khan a God-sent blessing for him\(^5\). He introduced him with the strategies, he wished to adopt against Isa Khan. All sorts of equipments for the forthcoming fight were supplied to him. A robe of honour was also bestowed upon him and he was finally dispatched to Lakhi Jungle.

\(^3\) Ghulam-Muhy-ud-Din, *Futuhat-Namah-i-Samadi*, MS., BM., Or. 1870, London. f.132.

\(^4\) *Ibid.*, f.133 (Lines 6-8).

As soon as Shahdad Khan reached Kasoor, he invited Hussain Khan Kheshgi and other Afghans to a meeting. His appeal to the Afghans for joining him against Isa Khan, met with such a response that the entire Afghan groups whom Isa Khan had annoyed in one way or the other voluntarily offered to join him immediately. This was Shahdad’s first victory. He scored another point also when he deliberately trespassed Isa Khan’s territory with the beat of drum hitting left and right which incited Isa’s wrath. This was a deliberate provocation rather an affront but Isa Khan was neither afraid of the military superiority of the Mughals and the Afghans nor was he ever prepared to recognize more wisdom and more strength in any rival.

Isa Khan’s father Daulat Khan Munj took the initiative and fell upon Shahdad Khan. A bitter fight ensued but unluckily for him Isa Khan’s father fell a prey to a mortar fired by the enemy. Daulat Khan’s attack on Shahdad Khan was unplanned, lacked tactical and strategic planning and acumen. Isa Khan’s emotional reaction to his father’s death sent him headlong into the jaws of death. He was a soldier who could face tumult and could display his valour in the battlefield but it was a mistake to fall upon Shahdad Khan’s elephant without pondering over its consequences. He noticed Shahdad Khan but his companion sitting behind him with a European gun aiming at him escaped unnoticed. This gave the man an opportunity to shoot him without any difficulty.

Shahdad Khan thereafter cut him into two. Isa Khan also met the same fate of his father. Nawab Abdus Samad Khan was fortunate. With one stroke of pen, he brought about a rift between the Afghans and enabling himself to permanently get rid of

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7 Ibid., f.134 (Lines 6-9).
8 Ibid., f.136 (Lines 1-6).
the one who was the most mischievous. Rashness or the quality of a sudden display of anger was no match for a well-thought out plan, strategically conceived and tactfully implemented.

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9 Ghulam-Muhy-nd-Din, Futuhat-Namah-i-Samadi, MS., BM., Or. 1870, London. f.137 (Lines 2-3).