

Struggles of Ahmad Shah Durrani Against Mughals

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Abstract

History is a matter of perception. To understand a phenomenal event like Ahmad Shah Durrani's struggle against Mughals, it is imperative to examine various and varying perceptions about it. The study explores the objective of his struggle against Mughals was to consolidate his Kingdom and to establish political hegemony in India as he was quite familiar with the weak Mughal administration of Delhi. Rallying his Afghan tribes and allies, he pushed the Mughals towards the east of India. Within a few years, he occupied Lahore, Multan, Sindh, Kashmir and the sarkar of Sirhind and ruled over his conquered territories in India. The research is comprehensive in nature which is going to answer critical history questions when it comes to the rule of Ahmad Shah Durrani in his conquered territories in India. The study further highlights various perceptions and viewpoints regarding Durrani and his rule in India.

Keywords: Ahmad Shah Durrani, Mir Mannu, Chahar Mahal, Suba of Lahore, Kashmir, Multan, Sarkar of Sarhind, Mughlani Begum.

Introduction

Ahmad Shah Durrani was the son of Zaman Khan and grandson of Daulat Khan. He belonged to the Sadozai clan that according to tribal division of Pashtoon was a branch of Sarband Abdalis. He ascended the throne in July 1747. There was no such thing as Afghanistan in the beginning. The first thing for Ahmad Shah Durrani to accomplish was to bring together various Afghan districts into one political unit. After the arrangement of the capital, he started expeditions to unify the natural soils of Afghanistan and occupy all its areas. After getting the invitation of Shah Nawaz Khan (son of Zakariya Khan), the Subedar of Lahore, he marched toward India in the middle of December 1747. He became the ruler of almost the whole of the Punjab in 1752. He not only added the *sarkar* of Sirhind to his dominion, but in 1757 also administered his conquered territories in India. The historians of Ahmad Shah Durrani have not paid adequate attention to his struggle against Mughals in India. In the present article, an attempt has been made to discuss Ahmad Shah Durrani's struggle against Mughals in detail.

Ahmad Shah Durrani s Struggle against Mughals

Occupation of Kabul and Peshawar (1747-48 A.D.)

In order to bring various Afghan districts into one political unit, Ahmad Shah Durrani started expeditions. He began with east. Nasir Khan was former Mughal governor of Kabul and Peshawar; he had surrendered to Nadir Shah during his expeditions, and was allowed to continue in its government. But After the death of Nadir Shah, he refused to recognize the kingdom of Ahmad Shah Durrani and declared himself as an independent ruler from Attock to Ghazni, and started preparing troops against Ahmad Shah in Ghazni and Kabul.(4: pp.40-41) But his governor was defeated by the troops of Ahmad Shah Durrani in Ghazni; it was occupied without much opposition. Nasir Khan appealed to the Mughal Emperor for troops and money, but did not receive any help from Delhi. On the other hand, Ahmad Shah Durrani entered into communication with the Afghans in Kabul who assured him of cooperation.(6: p.100) When Nasir Khan could not receive support of people, he was compelled to flee from Kabul. He reached Jalalabad, there he was faced with same condition like Kabul, people, there also didn't support him. From there, he went to Peshawar. Kabul was defended for some time by a deputy of Nasir Khan, but with the defection of the Afghans to the side of Ahmad Shah, he lost all hope and fled away to Peshawar to join his master. The fall of Kabul added another province to Ahmad Shah's kingdom.(5: p.361)

When Nasir Khan reached Peshawar, he once again started collecting troops but people of Peshawar did not support him. Nasir Khan fearing an attack from the Afghan tribes, decided to surprise them by a night attack upon one of their leading chiefs, Abdul Samad Khan Monenzai of Hash-Nagar, but could not succeed. Abdul Samad Khan escaped from his fortress towards Jalalabad and joined the army of Ahmad Shah Durrani under Sardar Jahan Khan. The latter, guided by Abdul Samad Khan, rushed into Khyber Pass before Nasir Khan could take any effective measures to block it. Ahmad Shah followed them soon afterwards. Nasir Khan could not collect a strong force to oppose them as the whole of the Kabul province, including Peshawar was populated with the Afghans and they had openly declared their support for the Afghan ruler. Nasir Khan evacuated Peshawar and sought shelter in Chhachh Hazara. Ahmad Shah entered Peshawar as a national hero and was acclaimed as such by the Afghan tribes living in that area.(4:pp.42-43)

Ahmad Shah Durrani was accepted as the king of Afghanistan by the people from Kandahar to Peshawar. He met the chiefs of various tribes, appointed them on different posts and prepared new troops from new people. Soon after, all people and tribes who lived on the right bank of the Indus, accepted the kingship of Ahmad Shah Durrani and promised their support to him. On arriving at Peshawar, Ahmad Shah Durrani ordered Sardar Jahan Khan not to slacken the pursuit of Nasir Khan till he had driven him out of Hazara. They soon got the news that fugitive (Nasir Khan) had fled to the Punjab. Sardar Jahan Khan returned to Peshawar after the flight of Nasir Khan. Ahmad Shah now became supreme power in the country lying between Kandahar on the one hand and Indus on the other.(5: p.361) He planned to expand his territory beyond Indus, so as to occupy Punjab and Delhi, and luckily he got a chance to fulfill his dream. He was invited by Shah Nawaz Khan who wanted his help to become the governor of Lahore.

Expedition towards India

Shah Nawaz Khan was the second son of Zakariya Khan, the governor of the Punjab from 1726 to 1745 A.D. After the death of his father, Zakariya Khan, in 1745 A.D, his elder brother Yahiya Khan who was married to the daughter of Wazir-ul-Mumalik (Prime Minister of Delhi) Qamar-ud-Din Khan, was appointed *naib* of Lahore and Shah Nawaz Khan the *naib* of Multan, both of them, in fact, were nephews of *Wazir* Qamar-ud-Din Khan. Soon after, Yahiya Khan went back to Delhi to negotiate for the release of his father's property which, according to the Mughal practice, had been confiscated by His Majesty. He got his father property but was not willing to share it with his younger brother. Shah Nawaz Khan arrived at Lahore from Multan and demanded a formal division of the property; Yahiya Khan did not accept his demand. Therefore, war started between them and as a result, Yahiya Khan was defeated, Lahore came under the control of Shah Nawaz Khan. Yahiya Khan went to Delhi, this added to the anxieties of Shah Nawaz Khan.^(4: pp.45-47) While Ahmad Shah Durrani was staying at Kabul province, he received invitation to take possession of the country from Shah Nawaz Khan, who wanted to free himself from the impending danger of punishment from Delhi. For himself, Shah Nawaz Khan only asked for the office of the Subedari of Lahore under him. Keeping in view utter weakness of the Delhi Empire which he had himself seen when in attendance upon Nadir Shah in 1737-38, he at once accepted the invitation and left Peshawar with 18,000 troops in the middle of December 1747, and arrived at Shahdara on 8th January 1748.^(2: p. 84)

When Wazir Qamar-ud-Din Khan got the news of Shah Nawaz Khan making contract with Ahmad Shah Durrani and inviting him to take possession of country, he tried hard to change his mind and convinced him to expel Ahmad Shah Durrani from India. *Wazir* promised Shah Nawaz that five provinces of Kabul, Kashmir, Thatta, Lahore and Multan would then come under his own jurisdiction. This reversed the whole situation and Shah Nawaz promised not to join Ahmad Shah Durrani.^(3: p.79) When Ahmad Shah Durrani received the news that the situation had changed in Lahore, he tried his utmost to regain the young governor's loyalty but could not. He did not lose hope and decided to go ahead to occupy Lahore province.

He crossed the river Ravi on the 10th January. Shah Nawaz Khan, with large force and an enormous quantity of war materials, was waiting to receive Ahmad Shah Durrani. At this time Jalhe Khan of Kasur who was originally an Afghan, joined Ahmad Shah Durrani with his troops and equipment. The battle between the opposing troops took place on the 11th January in which Shah Nawaz Khan was defeated. Shah Nawaz Khan fled to Delhi, with his officers and soldiers, Lahore fell into the hands of Ahmad Shah Durrani without any further resistance.^(4:pp.54-58)

Ahmad Shah entered the city of Lahore on 12th January of 1748. The booty acquired by Ahmad Shah from Lahore was enormous. In addition to the ransom and the property of the governor and his family, rich treasures and large quantities of war material, including guns, *rahkals* and rockets fell into his hands. Ahmad Shah Durrani stayed in Lahore for five weeks. During this period, the Rajahs of Jammu, Bahu and other northern hills sent their *vakils* with petition of submission, and the leading chiefs and Zamindars of the Punjab came to do him homage. Ahmad Shah Durrani struck a coin in Lahore and he set up a native government in Lahore with Jalhe Khan, an Afghan chief of Kasur, as the governor, Mir Moman Khan as his deputy and Diwan Lakhpat Rai as *diwan* or the chief secretary.^(3: p. 80)

Battle of Manupur

The news of Ahmad Shah's approach, were daily pouring in the imperial capital, but they didn't do anything and the court was as passive as ever. When they got the news that Lahore had been seized by Ahmad Shah, the imperial army, consisting of two lakhs of men, slowly stirred out under the nominal command of Prince Ahmad Shah, though Prime-minister, Qamar-ud-Din Khan was the supreme head or commander-in-chief in reality, and his deputies were Nawab Mansoor Ali Khan Safdar Jang of Oudh and Raja Ishri Singh of Jaipur and he was also assisted by a host of other officers. Huge sum of money, totaling sixty lakhs of rupees, were lavishly distributed among these nobles and dignitaries to enable them to equip themselves for campaign.(9: pp. 132-133)

When Ahmad Shah was at Lahore, the news came from Delhi that Emperor Mohammad Shah was fitting out a huge expeditionary force to be sent against him. Therefore, Ahmad Shah Durrani prepared himself and left Lahore with an army of thirty thousand horse, on February 19, 1748, to meet advancing Mughal army. The imperial army arrived at Sirhind on 25th February, when they found to their dismay that fort had been deserted by Ali Muhammad Rohilla, who wanted to avoid fighting against his Afghan tribesmen, he (Ali Muhammad Rohilla) along with his twenty thousand horse and foot army retired to his own country at the foot of the Kamaun hills. Believing the enemy to be somewhere in the neighborhood, they decided to make Sirhind their base of operations. They left their heavy baggage, surplus stores and their women including *Wazir's haram* in the fort with a garrison of only 1,000 horses and foot and marched to the river Sutlej, instead of crossing it by the direct route at Ludhiana, decided to ford it by the Machhiwara Ghat, twenty-two miles above. They blundered again in neither guarding Ludhiana road nor collecting intelligence of the enemy's movements, and maintaining communication with Sirhind. Ahmad Shah reached the Sutlej following the direct Ludhiana route on 1st March and captured Sirhind on 2nd March. The entire treasure, luggage, and *haram* of the *wazir* fell into the hands of Afghans, and a large number of men were put to sword.(3:pp.80-81)

Learning of the catastrophe, the imperial army became panicky. They hurriedly returned and halted near Manupur, 10 miles north-west of Sirhind, where they took up position. The position taken up by the Mughal army was not safe one. It was dry and sandy region and they suffered from scarcity of water. But Ahmad Shah Durrani, on the other side, was in a more advantageous position with the city of Sirhind having plenty of food and water behind him. But he was greatly handicapped for want of artillery of which he had only one heavy gun and seven pieces of light Top-i-Jilan, as against several hundred Mughal guns of various descriptions including many heavy pieces. Therefore, he could not launch an offensive against the enemy on any large scale. He contented himself with sending out roving parties and skirmishers to harass the Mughals on all sides. They also cut the food and fodder that was going to Mughal army from other areas. Skirmishes went on daily and some of the local chiefs such as Jamal Khan of Malerkotla, RaiKalha of Jagraon, Alla Singh of Patiala and Adina Beg Khan, the Governor of the Jullundur Doab rendered valuable services to the imperial army by harassing the enemy and cutting off his supplies.(4: p.65)

The fixed day for general action was Friday, March 11, 1748. The army of Mughal was about sixty thousand and was divided into five divisions with chief command in the hands of Wazir:

1. Turks troops of Mughals were led by Mir Muin-ul-Mulk (Mir Mannu).
2. The right wing was held by Abu-ul-Mansur Khan Safdar Jang, they were Persian troops of Mughal.
3. In the center, the command was held by Prince Ahmad.
4. The left wing was held by Raja Ishri Singh of Jaipur and other Indian chiefs with the Rajput troops.
5. The rear was commanded by Nasir Khan the ex-governor of Kabul.^(4: pp. 67-70)

On the other hand in Afghan army, right wing was under Sapah-Salar Jahandad Khan, the left wing was under Shah Passand Khan and center part of the army was under Ahmad Shah Durrani himself. The battle began with fire from the Durrani light guns on 11th March. The *Wazir*, struck by a ball in his tent, was instantly killed.^(6: pp.102-103) His son Muin-ul-Mulk (Mir Mannu) kept the sad news a secret. He mounted on the *Wazir's* elephant and delivered the assault. A fierce fight followed. Under the superior tactics of Ahmad Shah Durrani, the left wing of the imperial army under Ishri Singh was defeated and gave way. Having cleared the Rajputs off the field, Ahmad Shah wheeled to his left and fell upon the rear of Mir Mannu's trenches, threatening the Center held by the Prince. Mir Mannu turned round to check the advancing Afghans and there was a great loss of life on both sides, many officers were killed. The battle reached at its height. Mir Mannu was supported by Zulfiqar Jang, Saadat Khan and Nasir Khan from the rear. The battle raged so furiously that there was hardly an officer who remained unscathed. Muin-ul-Mulk (Mir Mannu) himself had his skin scratched by a bullet, his brother Fakhr-ud-Din had been wounded in the foot, Adina Beg, the Governor of Jullundur Doab, was twice wounded and many officers of all ranks were killed. There was panic among the Indians and many of them deserted their posts and fled towards Delhi, it seemed as if the defeat of the Mughals was near. In the meantime, the right wing under Safdar Jang defeated the left wing of Afghans; they were compelled to retire with a heavy loss. Safdar Jang then rushed to the rescue of Muin-ul-Mulk. Just at this time, when the Afghans were hard pressed, their own stores of rockets caught fire. The sparks set fire to the gunpowder of the field artillery, killing 1,000 Afghans on the spot. Ahmad Shah Durrani, therefore, retired leaving the Indians masters of the field.^(7: p. 165)

On 13th March 1748, Ahmad Shah sent out some pieces of his light artillery to engage the enemy, while he himself was making arrangements for the dispatch of his treasure and luggage to Lahore. On 15th March, Ahmad Shah Durrani sent a peace message to the Prince, saying that he would return to his country if the territories given over to Nadir Shah be left to him. The Prince and Mir Mannu were not in a mood to hear anything of the sort and sent back a court reply. With the refusal of peace terms, the Afghans appeared again for a fight on 16th March. But in fact this was all to beguile the prince and Mughal army to gain time to get his treasure and luggage safely out of Sirhind beyond the reach of Mughals. The main army had left unperceived with all the property and some important prisoners of war, it was only the rear guard that was playing hide and seek with Mughals and keeping them side tracked. On the 17th March, these also disappeared, and before they could be traced and chased, they reached Ludhiana, crossed the Sutlej and marched towards Lahore.^(4: pp. 78-79) In the meantime all operation, however had to be suspended on April 9 when the Prince received a letter of recall from the Emperor who died on April 15 when the Prince was yet on his way. On the other hand, Ahmad Shah Durrani received the news of his nephew Luqman Khan's rebellion at Kandahar. The Shah had therefore, to hurry back to his country. He could not stay at Lahore to punish Lakhpat Rai, who had a

couple of days earlier, turned out Jalhe Khan Afghan of Kasur from Lahore and taken the administration into his own hands. (3: p.81)

Agreement with Mir Mannu and Occupation of Sialkot, Aurangabad, Gujrat and Pasrur

Ahmad Shah Durrani suppressed the revolt of his nephew Luqman Khan and secured his country. After that he started preparations for his future campaigns. Immediately, he had two works to attend: regaining of his prestige in India and the conquest of Herat. Herat was an important province of Afghanistan, but it was still under Persians. It was necessary to occupy it, first, and then go towards India because without Herat there could be no consolidated Afghanistan, but Ahmad Shah Durrani decided to expedite India first. This decision of Ahmad Shah had many reasons.

- Muin-ul-Mulk (Mir Mannu) was appointed as the governor of Punjab by Prince Ahmad Shah (later the Emperor) on 11 April 1748 before his departure to Delhi. Mir Mannu's strength in men and material was daily increasing. He could easily threaten and disturb Peshawar and the border territories during the absence of Ahmad Shah Durrani from Kandahar.
- Nasir Khan, the ex-governor of Kabul, had come to Lahore where Mir Mannu had promised to help him in regaining Kabul. The combined forces of Mir Mannu and Nasir Khan could be a source of danger to Kabul if he were to be busy in the campaign of Herat.
- The political situation in the Imperial capital at Delhi was also favorable for the expedition of India. Prince Ahmad Shah succeeded his father Mohammad Shah. He was incapable emperor and was a puppet in the hands of the eunuchs of the *haram*. The prime minister, Safdar Jang looked more to the satisfaction of his personal animosities than strengthening the state. He wanted to reduce the power of Mir Mannu, son of his old rival late *wazir* Qamar-ud-Din. He instigated Nasir Khan against his patron, Mir Mannu and later on, sent Shah Nawaz Khan to take forcible possession of his province of Multan. In such condition, Mir Mannu could expect no help from the centre, in the case of expedition from west. (4: pp. 82-83)

Ahmad Shah Durrani marched upon Punjab before the close of the year 1748 and crossed the Indus. When he reached Peshawar, he sent Sardar Jahan Khan Popalzai in advance at the head of a well equipped force. A large number of Khatak tribesmen joined him at the ferry of Attock. Ahmad Shah Durrani left Peshawar in December 1748, followed Sardar Jahan Khan soon after, and, finding the other side of the Chenab occupied by Mir Mannu and the passage blocked, he ordered the army to be encamped and they halted at Kapora. (8: p. 135)

Mir Mannu decided to oppose Ahmad Shah Durrani and prepared himself for defense. He left Sayyid Evaz Khan and Diwan Lakhpat Rai in charge of the capital and himself encamped at Sohadara, four miles east of Wazirabad, on the Chenab. Adina Beg Khan of the Jullundur Doab and Mehdi Ali Khan were the two important officers in his train. Not finding himself strong enough to face Ahmad Shah Durrani, he could not run the risk of a general action and kept waiting for reinforcements from Delhi. But no help came from there. For some time, skirmishes continued between the two armies and no decisive battle was fought. Ahmad Shah then made a plan and divided his army into two sections. One section he kept under his own command to keep Mir Mannu engaged at Sohadara. The other section, he placed under Sardar Jahan Khan,

and ordered him to occupy Lahore from other side. He reached as far as Sohadara on the Ravi, opposite Lahore. But he found his passage blocked and could not cross over to the city to capture. Evaz Khan defended the fords of the Ravi with guns. Finding his attempt to take the city thus foiled, Jahan Khan returned to the main army with no result. When Ahmad Shah Durrani came to know about unsuccessful mission of Jahan Khan, he sent Mahrab Khan with a letter to Mir Mannu asking him to surrender. Mir Mannu readily accepted the proposal. The Shah was pleased and the terms of peace were concluded to the satisfaction of both the parties. It was agreed that all the territories west of the Indus would be considered as forming the part of the Afghan dominions and that the revenue of the Chahar Mahal, or the four districts of Gujarat, Sialkot, Aurangabad and Pasrur assessed, at fourteen lakhs a year, would be assigned to him. This was only the reiteration of the treaty signed by Emperor Muhammad Shah of Delhi and Nadir Shah in 1739. This treaty was more advantageous to Ahmad Shah Durrani as he regained his prestige both in India and Afghanistan, removed the danger of the Mughal from the east and annual revenue of fourteen lakhs of rupees would add to his resources. (4: pp. 84-89) According to the author of Tarikh-i-Ahmad Shahi, Mir Mannu had concluded the treaty according to the advice and approval and written instructions of his master Emperor Ahmad Shah of Delhi. Emperor appointed Nasir Khan in these four Mahals to manage and to send the yearly revenue to Kandahar. The pusillanimity displayed by the Delhi Government strengthened the ambition of the Afghan monarch, who now resolved to seize the rich and fertile lands of the northern India. (7: p. 166)

Surrender of Multan, Deras and Qalat to Ahmad Shah Durrani

After the arrangement of affairs of Punjab, Ahmad Shah Durrani returned back to Kandahar by the south-western route through Multan and Deras. On his arrival at Dera Ghazi Khan, Zahid Khan Saddozai, the governor of Multan came to pay his respects and to present him gifts. Ahmad Shah Durrani reappointed him as a governor of Multan under Afghan kingship. It was probably at this time that the southern Afghan tribes of the Deras (Dera Ghazi Khan and Dera Ismail Khan) and Shikarpur acknowledged Ahmad Shah as their king. The old tribal chiefs of these places were confirmed or reappointed by Ahmad Shah in their possessions. Mir Naseer Khan, the chief of Baluchistan, also allied himself with Ahmad Shah Durrani. The latter after the settlement of the affairs of these parts, went to Kandahar.

Conquest of Punjab (1751-1752 A.D.)

As mentioned earlier, a treaty was signed between Ahmad Shah Durrani and Mir Mannu but no regular payments of revenue from Chahar Mahal had been received. At the end of the first year in 1749, Ahmad Shah Durrani sent Raja Sukh Jiwan to Lahore to collect the dues, who returned home with only a nominal payment. It is true that there had been internal dissensions in the country and that Nawab Nasir Khan, who was the administrator of the Chahar Mahal, had rebelled against the governor (Mir Mannu), spent most of the revenue on his military preparations and carried away the rest. But this was only for the first half of the year. For the next two harvests, the collection had been made by the agents of Mir Mannu himself. The real cause of the non-payment of the Shah's dues was a change in the intentions of Mir Mannu, brought about either by discomfiture of the Shah of Khurasan or by patriotic feeling of Kaura Mall (4: p.115). And also we can say that, when Mir Mannu, received the news that Ahmad Shah Durrani had been defeated in Khurasan and had lost his army on large scale, Mir Mannu thought that after this, Ahmad Shah Durrani won't be able to expedite towards Punjab, in this case he decided not to send the promised annual tribute of the Chahar Mahal to Kandahar.

Not getting his dues, Ahmad Shah left Kandahar for Kabul from where he dispatched an advance army under Jahan Khan and Abdul Samad Khan to march upon Punjab. At the same time, Ahmad Shah Durrani wished to make an attempt to solve the problem through negotiations. He, therefore, sent Haroon Khan as an envoy to Lahore to collect the arrears. Haroon Khan met Mir Mannu on 10th October 1751 and impressed upon him the desirability of making an immediate payment of dues. But Mir Mannu did not accept and detained Haroon Khan in Lahore.

Ahmad Shah Durrani left Kabul on September 21, 1751 and arrived at Peshawar. Shah was at Peshawar, while Jahan Khan had moved from Attock to Rohtas. When Mir Mannu found that the Shah's advanced army under Jahan Khan had already entered his territory and that the Shah was not very far off, he recruited a large number of new men including two hundred horsemen who had come from Kashmir with Mahdi Quli Khan and Shams-ud-Din Yasawal. Mahdi Ali Khan and Adina Beg Khan had come from Sialkot and the Jullundur Doab respectively. Kaura Mall had also arrived from Multan and was getting in touch with the Sikhs with a view to enlist their support. (4: pp. 116-117) By the time Ahmad Shah Durrani reached the frontier area, he once again sent a message to Mir Mannu at Lahore and asked for the revenue dues of four Mahals which had not been sent during the last three years. But Mir Mannu rejected his demand because Mir Mannu thought himself strong enough to meet Ahmad Shah Durrani. Finding preparation complete, Mir Mannu crossed the river Ravi and took up his position at the bridge of Shah Daula, 22 miles above Lahore on the Ravi. He appointed Evaz Khan as the deputy governor of Lahore. Ahmad Shah Durrani cleverly dashed towards provincial capital. He cut into the rear of Mir Mannu, crossed the river Ravi by the ferry of Gahzipur in the middle of January 1752, and reached Lahore, via Niaz Beg. He encamped near the tomb of Shah Blawal. Jahan Khan, on the other hand, marched slowly towards the city by the direct route.

On receipt of the information that Ahmad Shah had crossed the Ravi and arrived in the neighborhood of Lahore, Mir Mannu hurried back to Lahore, and after some fighting, entrenched himself under the city wall. In the absence of heavy guns, Ahmad Shah found it extremely difficult to storm the city or to run the risk of a general action. Mir Mannu, on the other side, was deficient of a strong mobile force and could not sally out to engage the Afghans in the open. Ahmad Shah Durrani besieged the town and decided to reduce Mir Mannu to capitulation by starvation. The siege continued for four months, and the whole country around Lahore within a radius of about 50 miles was laid waste. Owing to long campaign, Mir Mannu's trenches became extremely unhealthy and full of foul and poisonous stench. The supply of water in the wells had been exhausted, while no food or fodder was available in the city. As a result, grain became extremely dear and fodder became so scarce that houses and huts were pulled down to feed the horses and other animals with the thatch of their roofs. Mir Mannu had, evidently been expecting reinforcements from Delhi. But the Prime Minister, Safdar Jang, was an arch-enemy of Mir Mannu. He would rather see him ruined than help him against the Durranis. He, therefore, took no action, no reinforcements came from Delhi. (4: pp. 118-125) At this time, Mir Mannu summoned a council of war to draw up a plan of his military operations. But soon, he came to know that his friends and supporters were divided among themselves and were guided by dissimilar motives. Bhikari Khan advocated peace at all costs, while Adina Beg Khan was of the opinion that it was time to quit the entrenchment and meet the enemy in open ground. Raja Kaura Mall was opposed to this advice, he observed that the viceroy's troops were mostly raw levies, who were no match in the field for the hardy veterans of the Shah, that the country for a wide space around had been

foraged and wasted, and the distress for provisions was no less in the Durrani camp than in their own, that in twenty days more the hot weather would set in, when the northern troops of the Shah would find the sun and wind intolerable in the plains, and hence would be compelled to retreat or to attack them in their lines to disadvantage.^(9: pp.132-133) Though the opinion and advice of Kaura Mal was certainly wisest and fair, but Mir Mannu decided to launch attack on Afghans. On 5th March 1752, when Mir Mannu's troops came out of their trenches, they were fiercely attacked by the Afghans on all sides. A severe scuffle ensued in which Mir Mannu lost the day, though he had fearlessly faced the Abdali. The Durrani king was so much struck by Mir Mannu's boldness, frank manners and noble bearing, that he embraced him as a true soldier, called him his own son, granted him the title of Farzand Khan Bahadur and reinstated him as his governor of the Punjab.^(4: pp. 125-136)

Treaty between Mir Mannu and Ahmad Shah Durrani and its ratification by the Mughal Emperor (1752 A.D)

In the treaty concluded between Mir Mannu and Ahmad Shah Durrani, it was stipulated:

1. That the provinces of Lahore and Multan were to be considered as annexed to the Afghan Empire of Ahmad Shah Durrani.
2. That Mir Mannu will remain the governor of these provinces on behalf of the Shah Durrani.
3. That the internal administration was in no way to be interfered with, only the surplus revenue was henceforth to be sent to the Afghan Emperor, 'and the final orders in the highest questions were to be taken from him'.^(4: pp. 138-139)

Ahmad Shah Durrani settled the affairs of Lahore and then sent his envoy, Qanlandar Beg, to Emperor Ahmad Shah of Delhi for the cession of the Punjab. The Emperor granted audience to the envoy in the Diwan-i-Khas on the 13th April, 1752, and dismissed him by putting his seal to the treaty thus losing the most important frontier provinces of the Mughal Empire.^(4: p. 168)

Conquest of Kashmir

Ahmad Shah Durrani was in Lahore while he received the news of unsettled state of Kashmir. One of the defendants of Kashmir, Mir Muqim, sought shelter in Lahore and appealed to Ahmad Shah to send an expeditionary force to Kashmir.^(4: pp. 141-143) Thereafter, Ahmad Shah Durrani dispatched a strong detachment to conquer Kashmir under Abdullah Khan Aishak Aqassi (Dewan Begi), who easily overpowered Abdul Qasim Khan, the Mughal viceroy of the province. Ahmad Shah Durrani appointed Khawaja Abdullah Khan the Governor of Kashmir and Sukh Jiwan Mal as his Deputy. Ahmad Shah Durrani after this, returned to Afghanistan.^(7: P.168)

After the conquest of Kashmir, Shah left for Kandahar via Multan. By the terms of the treaty, the province of Multan had been left under the administration of Mir Mannu. Maharaja Kaura Mall, the governor of Multan, on his return to Lahore to fight against Ahmad Shah Durrani, had left its government in the hands of his *naib*, Shakir Khan, the eldest son of Nawab Zahid Khan Saddozai. While the war with the Shah at Lahore was going on, he dismissed Shakir Khan and appointed Khawaja Husain in his place. This was also distasteful to the Shah, who, on his arrival there, ordered him to be replaced by his own nominee, Ali Muhammad Khan Khakwani, the lease holder of Dera Ghazi Khan.^(4: pp. 143-144) Mir Mannu ruled over the Punjab in

the name of the Durrani King though practically independent for a year and a half till the time of his death 1753. Sukh Jiwan Mal also owed nominal allegiance to Ahmad Shah Durrani, and the Abdali seldom interfered with them as long as he was sure that they maintained peace and order in their provinces. Hence no new changes were introduced in the administration, and the old system of the Mughals prevailed.

The Punjab as a part of the Afghan Empire

Mir Mannu died on the 3rd November 1753. The Mughal emperor Ahmad Shah bestowed the governorship of the provinces of Lahore and Multan upon his own three year old son, Prince Mahmood Shah, and quite fittingly appointed Muhammad Amin Khan, the two year old son of Mir Mannu, as his deputy. The actual power, however, was vested in Mir Momin Khan of Kasur, an old friend of Mir Mannu. At the same time, the governorship of Kashmir was given to another prince, Taleh Saeed Shah, with Itazad-ud-Daula (a son of the Emperor's maternal aunt), a boy of fifteen or sixteen as his *naib*.¹The above appointments, however, lasted only for four days, and on November 17, Wazir-ul-Mumalik Mir Nizam-ud-Din Intizam-ud-Daulah (the brother of Mir Mannu), who had replaced Safdar Jang in March 1753, was appointed absentee *subedar* of Punjab. Intizam-ud-Daulah, on his own behalf appointed Mir Momin Khan and Bhikari Khan as his deputies and Adina Beg Khan as the *naib faujdar* of Doaba Bist Jullundur on November 21.^(4: pp. 156-158)But without the approval of Ahmad Shah Durrani to whom the Punjab had been virtually ceded by the treaty of March-April 1752, the above appointments could not be considered as finally settled. Therefore, the two deputies, Momin Khan and Bhikari Khan, sent letters with the seals of Muhammad Amin Khan, the child viceroy of the Punjab to Ahmad Shah Durrani. The Shah was pleased to confirm, on his own behalf, Muhammad Amin Khan in the government of the Punjab and appointed Mir Momin Khan his deputy on February 3, 1754. At the same time, the appointment of Mir Mannu's son was also confirmed by Delhi. Since the latter was still a child, his mother Mughlani Begam took the control of the province.

Soon after, Qasim Khan, the *faujdar* of Patti in the Majha or the central territories, entered into friendly relations with the Sikhs and with their help, thought of marching upon Lahore and then, with added resources and forces, of attacking the Mughal capital of Delhi and establishing himself there. But he failed in his attempts. His soldiers handed him over to Mughlani Begam, who threw him in prison. Khwaja Mirza Jan of Eminabad and Adina Beg Khan of Doaba Bist Jullundur were other aspirants to the government of the Punjab. They were just waiting for a chance. Then there were the Sikhs. With the death of Mir Mannu, they began returning to their villages, from which they had been driven off and kept out on during the last four decades. In this disturbed state of affairs, Mughlani Begam ruled for about seven months, when towards the end of May 1754, her grandson, Muhammad Amin Khan died. Although Mir Momin Khan had officially succeeded Muhammad Amin Khan in the government of Punjab and received the robe of honor from Emperor Alamgir Sani in September 1754, yet the real power was in hands of Begam. At this stage, Khawaja Mirza Jan who had waited for a chance, arrived at Lahore and assumed its government without any serious opposition. Qasim Khan was set at liberty and the Begam was kept in confinement.² But Mughlani Begum was not the woman to

¹ The Afghani governor of Kashmir Khawaja Abdullah was killed by his deputy Sukh Jiwan Mal. And he surrendered Kashmir province to Delhi.^(1: p.55)

²Bhikari Khan was imprisoned by Mughlani Begam while he was trying to occupy the government of Punjab during 9-12 January, 1754. ^(4: pp.159-60)

surrender her authority so easily. She wrote secret letters to Imad-ul-Mulk Ghazi-ud-din, the prime minister at Delhi, and to Ahmad Shah Durrani at Kandahar. At the same time, she deputed her maternal uncle, Khawaja Obedullah Khan, the younger brother of Khan Bahadur Nawab Zakariya Khan, son of Abdul Samad Khan, to the Durrani to secure his help in her reinstatement.

Ahmad Shah Durrani sent Sardar Jahan Khan's brother, Mullah Aman Khan at the head of ten thousand horses and foot drawn to Lahore to reestablish the government of Mughlani Begam and to arrest and dispatch, as a captive, Khawaja Mirza Jan. Mullah Aman Khan accompanied Khawaja Obedullah and soon they reached Lahore. Khawaja Mirza Jan was arrested by Mullah Aman and Mughlani Begam was installed as the *subedar*, with Khawaja Obedullah Khan as her deputy. But the above appointment had short life. Because after the arrangement of affairs of Lahore, Mullah Aman Khan, returned to his country. There, then began conflict between the deputy and *subedar*. They tried hard to reduce the power of each other or even to finish each other. They even collected troops against each other. But before the conflict could assume larger proportions, peace was concluded between them through the mediation of Mir Momin and Hadi Khan, the Afghan envoy in Lahore. Khawaja Obedullah Khan was allowed to continue in the government, while Begam was sent to the house of her mother.^(4: pp. 159-165)

But this was not acceptable to the Begam, who called help from Delhi court and readily agreed to give her daughter Umda Begam in marriage to Wazir Ghazi-ud-Din.³ The *wazir* sent Adina Beg Khan to Lahore to help Begam. Adina Beg Khan with Sadiq Beg Khan and the eunuch Nasim Khan hurriedly reached Lahore. Khawaja Obedullah Khan fled away to the safer hills of Jammu. In February 1756, Mughlani Begam once again became the *subedar* of the Punjab, with Sadiq Beg Khan as her deputy, though just for a month. Because soon, the *wazir* felt that it was disgraceful to allow her to continue to reside in Lahore with unbridled liberty of action. Therefore, in March 1756, she was made a captive by Wazir Ghazi-ud-Din, he appointed Adina Beg Khan in charge of the province in lieu of thirty lakhs rupees tribute to be paid by him annually. At this juncture, the Begam invited Ahmad Shah Durrani to march to India.^(7: p. 169) Ahmad Shah Durrani accepted the invitation. He left Kandahar in the autumn, crossed the Indus at Attock on 15th November and moved straight towards Lahore. Adina Beg Khan, the governor of the province, fled from Lahore and slipped into the waterless desert of Hansi and Hissar, because he knew that Delhi court and *wazir* would not help him against Ahmad Shah Durrani. Ahmad Shah Durrani occupied Lahore without any opposition. Jahan Khan in the meantime, occupied Jullundur Doab. The Shah granted the government of Lahore to Khawaja Mirza Jan and that of the Jullundur Doab to Khawaja Obedullah, while the hill country between the Satluj and Ravi was given to Raja Ghamand Chand of Kangra.

Ahmad Shah Durrani marched towards Delhi

Ahmad Shah Durrani not only wanted the occupation of Lahore, but also hoped to remove all fake people from Delhi court, as he did not want any threat from Delhi to Durrani Empire. Therefore, at the end of December 1756, Ahmad Shah Durrani directed Sardar Hassan

³ On the other hand, the hand of Umda Begam had also been promised by her father Mir Mannu in March-April 1752 to Prince Taimur, son of Ahmad Shah Durrani. And as she was then beseeching the Shah's help against Khawaja Mirza Jan and was later on maintained in power by his support, she could ill-afford to displease him. But the position had then changed. Obedullah Khan had been appointed the deputy governor of Lahore by the Shah himself and was being kept in power against her will, by the Durrani Resident, Hadi Khan. Therefore, she agreed to gain the help of Delhi court by marrying her daughter to the *wazir* ^(4: p. 165-66).

Khan to march upon Sirhind, with orders for Jahan Khan to reinforce him in time of need.^(8: p.143) Hassan Khan crossed river Satluj and occupied Sirhind. Jahan Khan also arrived in that city on 5th of January 1757, and then pushed towards Delhi through Karnal and Panipat. Ahmad Shah Durrani himself left Lahore early in January, crossed the river Sutlej on 10th January 1757, and marched towards Delhi. At the same time, he sent troops under Nur-ud-Din Khan Bamizai to Kashmir. Nur-ud-Din Khan Bamizai occupied Kashmir, arrested Sukh Jiwan and sent him as a prisoner to Lahore. He himself remained in Kashmir for some time.^(6: pp. 117-118) When Delhi court received the news that Ahmad Shah Durrani had crossed the Sutlej, Wazir Ghazi-ud-Din sent forces under Najib-ud-Daulah Ruhila to oppose the advance of Ahmad Shah Durrani towards Delhi, but Najib-ud-Daulah joined hands with Ahmad Shah Durrani in Karnal area. Ahmad Shah Durrani was thirty miles away from Delhi when Wazir Imad-ul-Mulk Ghazi-ud-Din, accompanied by other court leaders such as Khan-i-Khanan, Bahadur Khan Baluch and Ibadullah Khan Kashmiri met him on 19th of January. The following day (20th January), at fifteen miles away from Delhi, Emperor Alamgir Sani welcomed him and after the meeting between two Emperors, Ahmad Shah Durrani entered Delhi. Ahmad Shah Durrani retained Alamgir on the throne of Delhi and Intizam-ud-Daulah Khan-i-Khanan was appointed as new *wazir* of the Delhi court. Alamgir returned to Delhi the same evening.

The Shah entered the royal fort of Delhi on Friday, 28 January. His entry into the city was proclaimed by the firing of guns. The first thing that the Shah did on the following day (January 29), was to issue a proclamation for the protection of the city.^(4: pp.180-187) Ahmad Shah Durrani received large amount of money in cash and kind from Delhi Darbar.^(3: p.85) On 30th of January, coins were struck in the name of Ahmad Shah Durrani at his mint in the Afghan camp at Delhi. Ahmad Shah Durrani married his son Timur Shah to Gauhar Afroz Bano Begam, also called Muhammadi Begam or Zuhra Begam, daughter of Emperor Alamgir Sani. The territory of Sirhind was ceded to the Shah as a part of dowry of the princess.^(4: pp.192-193) Thus, with the cession of Sirhind, the control of Ahmad Shah Durrani on the whole of Punjab was complete. As said earlier, he had already occupied the provinces of Lahore, Multan and Kashmir.

Ahmad Shah Durrani annexed the Sirhind division to his kingdom which he placed in the charge of Abdul Samad Khan. Sarfraz Khan was appointed the governor of Doaba Bist Jullundur. Buland Khan Saddozai was given the government of Kashmir. Najib-ud-Daulah his plenipotentiary (Mukhtar) was left in Delhi. He appointed Shuja Khan, son of ex-governor of Multan, as a governor of that province. On his way, he obtained from Inayat Khan, the Zamindar of Kanjapura, a sum of 20 lakhs.⁴ On his arrival at Lahore, the Shah stayed there only for short time. Ahmad Shah Durrani then installed his son Timur Shah as the Viceroy of Punjab with Jahan Khan as his deputy. An army of ten to fifteen thousand horses and foot with artillery, was left at their disposal. After these arrangements, the Shah left for Kandahar through Peshawar and Kabul.^(4: pp.214-216)

⁴ Professor Hari Gupta mentioned in his book, Najabat Khan as the name of zamindar Kanjapura ^(7: p.174).

Conclusion

Raised by his people to the highest honor and dignity of Kingship, Ahmad Shah Durrani brought together the heterogeneous Afghan nation. His greatest achievement was to free his people from the yoke of foreign domination, to raise them from the dust of subjection to the throne of independence and to consolidate the various Afghan lands into one political whole-Afghanistan. Ahmad Shah appeared on the scene in 1747. He had accumulated a huge amount of wealth which consisted of booty from foreign campaigns. He greatly extended the limits of his empire to the east by the mountains of Tibet, the Satluj and the Indus. All of which were secured to him by treaties, or by actual possession. His struggle against Mughals was successful and he defeated them many times. He became the ruler of almost whole of the Punjab in 1752. He not only added the *sarkar* of Sirhind to his dominion but also administered his conquered territories in India.

He adopted a different policy regarding various parts of his kingdom. In his dealing with Afghans and Baluches, he pursued the principle of conciliation. He tried to please and win over the people first and the chiefs afterwards. The chiefs who could not be reconciled were reduced by force and then treated kindly. The Indian provinces were kept by force alone. His attitude towards the throne of Delhi was that he does not appear to have ever intended to occupy it or to make India his home or Delhi the Capital of his empire. He evidently wished to confine his Indian conquests to the neighboring territory of the Punjab which he annexed to his dominions in 1752. He appointed a large number of officials to administer his conquered territories, though initially, he allowed the Mughal officials to continue because of their administrative experience in the local terrain. Mir Mannu, Adina Beg Khan and others, are some examples. But afterwards, he started appointing Afghan officials in Punjab and at one point of time his own son, in order to consolidate his Indian dominions. In 1757, he left his son Timur as his Viceroy at Lahore.

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