



THE LIFE OF SHIVAJI MAHARAJ FOUNDER OF THE MARATHA EMPIRE

Homepage: <http://www.gathacognition.com/book/gcb20>
<http://dx.doi.org/10.21523/gcb4>



Chapter 11

The Tragedy of Afzul Khan, 1659

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Published Online

17 March 2018

The Bijapur government had been waiting with patience. Fort after fort, district after district had passed from their inert grasp into the grip of the Maratha warrior. Their feudal vassals were being seduced to defection, the zealous Mores of Javli had paid for their loyalty with death and ruin, the Sawants of Wadi had been seduced from their allegiance to their traditional suzerains, the province of Kalyan dissevered for ever from the Bijapur monarchy, and their Abyssinian admirals beset on all sides and all but forced to withdraw from the Konkan. These events were too serious each of them to be lightly passed over, but taken together they would have roused to action the most lethargic government that ever bore sway in any part of India. It is said that no less than forty of the Bijapur fortresses were by this time in Shivaji's hands.¹ The government had seen all, heard all, but had not moved. One remedy indeed they had tried. They had incarcerated Shahaji. They had hoped to tame the son by threatening the life of the father. They had hoped in vain. They had not fully counted upon Shivaji's resourcefulness. They had yet to fathom the depths of his diplomacy. They were bitterly undeceived. Their attempt had recoiled on themselves. It had drawn Shivaji into a league with

1. Modak's History of Bijapur.

Originally published in 'The Life of Shivaji Maharaj: Founder of the Maratha Empire', 1921.

Adopted from the Marathi work by **K. A. Keluskar**.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.21523/gcb4.1814>

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their Mogul spoilers and given the support of the imperial authority to his excesses. They had served him as a shield against the wrath of Bijapur. He had become the Mogul, poniard in the bosom of the Adil Shahi State. Once more after the liberation of Shahaji, they had tried to entrap the quarry they dared not bring to bay, but they had been signally disappointed in Baji Shamraj. Then the Mogul cavalry had suddenly invaded their land and drenched it with blood. The peace at last made with the Moguls and the absorption of Aurangzeb in the fratricidal war in the north allowed them now to breathe freely for a while. This interval of peace with the Mogul emperor they hoped to turn against Shivaji.

Ali Adil Shaha II then held the sceptre at Bijapur. He was a mere youth, without experience, about twenty-one years of age. His mother, famous among native historians under the popular name of the *Badi (Bari) Saheba* or the queen dowager, carried on the affairs of state in person with the assistance of the able minister, Khawas Khan. One day calling all her ministers and generals to an audience, she ordered them to put the state armies in motion and capture the rebellious Shivaji alive and at the conclusion of her harangue inquired who would take the glorious task upon himself. No one offered to risk the undertaking. They had heard enough of Shivaji's valour to feel that it was better to keep well out of his way. They all dreaded a rencontre with him.² But there was one amongst them in whom vanity outweighed his discretion. This was Afzul Khan.³ He was elated with pride. What a noble chance to play the hero! He would not flinch or waver. Let the queen but give the word, he would make Shivaji dance to the tune of his sword. This language of bravado filled the queen dowager with elation. She knew he was a general of high eminence in the state. She presented him with robes of honour and bade him start on his campaign with 12,000 horses and a goodly number of infantry with a suitable complement of artillery, rockets, and war material in charge of a camel corps.⁴ It is said that the provisions and war-material were plentiful enough to have lasted for three campaigns. Besides these forces Afzul Khan

2. Sabhasad, 3; Shedgaonkar, 24.

3. He is said to have originally belonged to the caste or profession of a cook-shop keeper, *bhatari*, and to have risen to greatness and the rank of a commander by his talents. His name is said to have originally been Abdulkhan. He is referred to by this name in some of the bakhars and, powadas i. e. the ballads of Maratha minstrelsy.

4. The figures are variously given. Grant Duff mentions 5000 horses and seven hundred foot. Chitnis puts down the whole invading army at 30,000, while Chitr Gupta exaggerates the number to 70,000. The powadas limit the number to 12,000 horses. The English *Factory Records*, Rajapur, give the strength of his army as 10,000 horses and foot, and it is said that because this number was so small, the queen told Afzul Khan to pretend friendship with Shivaji, and seize or slay him by treachery.

was provided with a corps of two or three thousand Mavalis. These he had entertained knowing well how indispensable they were for a campaign in the Maval regions, especially as Shivaji's fighting force was chiefly recruited from these people. But what a world of difference there lay between Shivaji's Mavali militia inspired by the highest feelings of loyalty and patriotism and the Mavali soldiers of Afzul Khan hired for a soulless enterprise! But it was not for Afzul Khan to discern this difference.

At the very outset let us take notice of the spirit of bravado in which Afzul Khan had undertaken this enterprise. In open durbar he had boasted that he would bring back Shivaji alive, a captive in chains. The dowager queen had besides instructed him to effect the *capture* or *murder* of Shivaji by "pretending friendship" and rousing hopes of the sultan's pardon.⁵ He hoped to succeed in this heavy task by tampering with the loyalty of Shivaji's Mavali deshmukhs⁶ and by a policy of striking terror among the Marathas.

Afzul Khan crossed the Krishna with his troops, and forcing his marches with great rapidity arrived at the ancient temple of Bhavani at Tuljapur, where he temporarily encamped his army. Learning that this temple was sacred in the eyes of the Marathas, the Bhavani of Tuljapur being indeed the guardian patroness of certain leading families of the Maratha nobility, and in particular of the Bhonsle family, he desecrated the temple. The original stone image of the goddess, which was considered the more sacred, was concealed by the priest under water. But the larger image of the deity was seized and ground to powder between mill-stones!⁷ Breaking up his camp, Afzul Khan made for Pandharpur, polluting the temple of Mankeshwar on the way. This was a circuitous way that Afzul Khan had taken, urged to the step, it is said, by the fact that the straight road over the mountain ghats was rendered impassable to an army by the heavy rains. Having encamped on the Bhima, he resolved to destroy the historic temple of Vithoba at Pandharpur. But the hereditary priests of the temple concealed the image and the affrighted citizens deserting house and home fled for safety to the neighbouring forests.⁸ Afzul wreaked such vengeance as he could on the shrine and turned his march to Poona, reducing such of Shivaji's forts and possessions as lay right on his line of march.

5. Factory Records, Rajapur, 10th October 1659, quoted by Prof. Sarkar, *Shivaji* p. 69.

6. Jedhe Chronology, pp. 182-183.

7. A powada describes how the idol was broken, the temple converted into a mosque, and further polluted by cow-slaughter.

8. However the powada, already referred to, speaks of the breaking of the image of Vithoba and the drowning of that of Pundalik.

Shivaji was at Rajgad when his scouts brought word of the impending descent of Afzul Khan, with the avowed purpose of seizing him alive and carrying him as a prisoner in chains to celebrate his triumph through the streets of Bijapur. Upon this Shivaji held a conference with his chiefs and nobles, whose opinion was that the Khan should be hemmed in within some narrow defile and Shivaji should keep his forces ready under the protection of the fortifications of Pratapgad pending the invasion of the Khan. There was also another opinion expressed by a minority of the chiefs in council, who held that there was little prospect of success in a conflict with the Khan's armies and advocated peaceful overtures with the Bijapur commander. Shivaji did not disguise his contempt of this proposal, expressing his want of confidence in the good faith of the Adil Shahi government or of its general and declaring that they could not afford to trust any offer of friendship from men who were incapable of forming a true conception of peace and good-will. He hoped to meet them on the field of battle. He would beat them on their own ground. He would make them abate their insolence!

Now tradition has it that while his mind was racked with these cares and depressed with the weight of the responsibility hanging on his actions, he had a vision of the goddess Bhavani of Tuljapur whose temple had just then been desecrated. The goddess bade him be of good cheer, for his was to be the hand that would compel Afzul Khan to expiate these atrocities. His campaign would be crowned with glorious success. Such was the dream. Shivaji roused himself from his slumbers, performed his morning ablutions and had his mother awakened in order to communicate to her the dream he had just experienced. At dawn when the civil and military officers gathered to his levee he expounded to them his dream, exclaiming that when the great goddess herself was to stand by his side, what did he reckon the force of a mere mortal like Afzul Khan? By the divine blessing he had found a way to put Afzul Khan's army to utter rout and confusion. The courtiers present declared it was too serious an enterprise and its miscarriage was bound to have a tremendous recoil on the people of Maharashtra. Observing the embarrassed looks of his adherents, Shivaji declared with animation that talk of conciliation was vain and would lead inevitably to ruin. An open fight and fair field was the only salvation for them. Death or victory, either was welcome. He would welcome a death which stood for glory; but to surrender, to whine and to die — this was alike inglorious and unprofitable. He for one was resolved to fight to the death. If the war ended in victory, he would say, all's well that ends well. But should it prove otherwise, he looked to his followers to guard his little realm and maintain the renown of the Bhonsle name, under the instructions of his mother.

With his heart thus steeled to do or die, Shivaji gave immediate order to move his camp to Pratapgad, and entered the ladies' apartments to communicate his final plans to his mother. Prostrating himself reverently, as was his wont, at the feet of his mother, he described to her the resolution he had formed. Mother and son were overwhelmed with the tenderest emotions at this crisis. Both knew the gravity of the situation and the small probability of success. But the brave matron faced the situation without faltering and putting aside all the softer emotions roused in her breast, she nerved herself to cheer on her son, after a great mental struggle. Laying her hand proudly upon his head she poured out her blessings and expressed her conviction that by his valour and heroism, she might earn the satisfaction of having given birth to a hero. Having received his mother's blessing Shivaji set out for Pratapgad.

Apprised of Shivaji's movements Afzul Khan diverted his march from Poona to Wai, desecrating the temple of Shambhu Mahadev at Shingnapur on his line of march. At Wai the Khan found himself in the midst of his fief-lands. He encamped his army with great caution. From this base he wrote to the Mavali chiefs and the Adil Shahi zemindars to flock to his standards.⁹ Chief among these were the Khopdes, the rivals of the Jedhes for the deshmukh rights over Bohidkhore. Kedarji Khopde seems to have joined Afzul Khan already before; and on receipt of this order Khandoji Khopde of Taluka Utroli hastened to join him at Wai. Similar orders were received by Kanhoji Naik Jedhe along with the other deshmukhs, already when Shivaji was at Rajgad. The Jedhe chief and others went to Shivaji at Rajgad on receipt of these orders. Shivaji told these men to join Afzul Khan, if they cared for their estates and their lives, after receiving some guarantee of protection. But they swore obedience to Shivaji and at his advice removed their families for better protection to Talegaon (Dhamdhare). Among those who refused to obey Afzul Khan's call were the Jedhes, the followers of Bandal, Haibat Rao Silibkar, Fasalkar, Marne and Dhamale, and the deshmukhs of Maral.¹⁰

Afzul Khan was quite taken aback by Shivaji's posting himself on the inaccessible cliff of Pratapgad, for he well knew of the difficulties of a march in that direction, and knew at the same time the risks of a battle with Shivaji, in a place which was very disadvantageous for the manoeuvring of his forces. His idea was to contrive some plan to lure the Maratha prince from his vantage-ground. By various pretences and overtures of friendship he hoped to throw him off his guard, arrest him in person and take him in triumph to Bijapur.

9. Rajwade, XV, 393; XVII, 31.

10. Jedhe Chronology.

When Afzul Khan reached Wai, Shivaji appointed Vishwas Rao Nana Prabhu of Muse Khore in the Maval country to the important duty of reconnoitring his camp and observing the number and quality of his forces. Vishwas Rao used to wander night after night in all parts of the hostile camp in the disguise of a fakir, and send information to Shivaji. The result of this scouting sufficed to prove to Shivaji the magnificent preparations of Afzul Khan and the costliness of a victory, supposing that victory itself was assured. He concluded, therefore, that he must tread his path with circumspection and make up by stratagem for the inadequacy of his forces. Could he not hit upon some plan so as to conserve his resources in money and in men and withal cause Afzul Khan's fury to recoil upon himself? Shivaji's courtiers encouraged him in this preference of policy above rashness. Having at last made up his mind, he assumed an attitude of humiliation and sent word to Afzul Khan that he would be the last man to think of challenging comparisons with such a distinguished general as he was, and that he had now no other desire than to sue for peace and pardon from the authorities of the Bijapur government. He had affronted that government in the grossest manner possible and doubted how far he could secure pardon even though he presented himself before them in sackcloth and ashes. He, therefore, craved this favour that Afzul Khan might with his well-known magnanimity condescend to intercede for him with the Bijapur durbar. Should he consent to do so and procure his pardon he would consider himself to have been especially favoured by fortune. He was ready to put himself entirely at his mercy, relying on the generosity and greatness of his soul. He now repented of his folly and would restore to the Bijapur state all the conquests, he had made. He only wanted to be assured of the royal pardon.

Afzul Khan took all this in serious earnest. It seemed to him natural that Shivaji should bate his pride and proclaim his readiness to surrender. He thought nothing else could be expected of him when confronted with such a general as himself. That surrender he thought now depended entirely on his movements. But Shivaji must first be dislodged from the impregnable position he occupied. By promises of pardon he might attain this object. With this view he deputed Krishnaji Bhaskar¹¹, a Brahman well-versed in the arts of diplomacy, to proceed on an embassy to Shivaji's camp, having tutored him at a private interview how he was to conduct himself with Shivaji and lure him

11. According to the version of some of the bakhars Afzul Khan was the first to send an envoy, without any message from Shivaji, and this seems to be the view taken by Prof. Sarkar. Grant Duff gives the name of the Khan's envoy as Pantaji Gopinath; Chitragupta gives it as Dattaji Gopinath and the Shivdigvijay mentions a second envoy, Govindpant, from the Khan. In the Mahad copy of Sabhasad's bakhari the name of this celebrated envoy is given as Pantajipant. The Shedgeaokar bakhari calls the Khan's envoy Dattaji Bhaskar.

to his ruin. The ambassador received instructions to re-present to Shivaji that he should repose in Afzul Khan the same confidence he did in his father, remembering that the Khan was a comrade in arms to Shahaji; that the Khan had great affection for Shivaji, and he expected him to reciprocate his feelings, that in view of the bravery and services of Shahaji, Shivaji's past career would be forgiven and forgotten; and the Khan would undertake to procure for Shivaji a modest principality in the Konkan, with permission to retain the fortresses he had captured and a military grant or *saranjam* for the maintenance of an army corps. Lastly Afzul Khan would undertake to reconcile Shivaji with the sultan and procure for him all the honours and privileges of a trusted nobleman of the Adil Shahi court. With these honeyed messages Afzul Khan urged upon his ambassador to use all his arts to induce Shivaji to come to a personal conference dispelling all fears and jealousy from his mind, and if after all this persuasion he declined to accede to this proposal, to prepare him to receive a private visit from Afzul Khan himself.

Learning that the Khan's envoy was coming to him with proposals of such import, Shivaji descended from his fort to meet the honoured guest half-ways and receiving him with cordial welcome brought him with all due pomp and ceremony to his citadel. A durbar was soon held for the purpose of giving a public audience to the Khan's envoy, who delivered the message he was charged with. Shivaji in reply expressed his gratitude for the Khan's kindly intentions and declared that the restoration to him in jahgir form of however small a territory could not but give him great satisfaction. After all he was but a vassal of the sultan, and as such had cleared the country of refractory chiefs and nobles, established peace and good government, repaired old fortresses and erected new ones, raised a militia force of no mean ability, and added in a variety of ways to the fortunes of the state. All this would now come unto the sultan as an unearned increment and make him acknowledge Shivaji's services to the state. As to Afzul Khan, Shivaji looked upon him as his father. He would come to pay his respects to him with the greatest affection and good will in the world. These things passed in the public durbar, and after its dissolution the envoy and his party went to take their rest in their appointed quarters.

Shivaji had so arranged it that the camp appointed for the residence of the envoy-in-chief, Krishnaji Bhaskar, should be a little apart from the quarters of the rest of the members of the diplomatic mission. This was done with the premeditated object of conducting secret conversations with the head of the mission. Shivaji no doubt expected to be able to interview the ambassador in the privacy of his apartment and induce him to come over to his side. On the night after the durbar, when all had gone to rest and all around was still and silent, Shivaji came secretly to the tent of the envoy and rousing

him from his sleep addressed himself to him in a persuasive strain, submitting that his ambitions were not selfish. He adjured Krishnaji to remember that he belonged to the sacred Brahman caste, the repositories of the Hindu learning and religion. To the glory of that learning and religion and the preservation of every Hindu interest his life's labours were dedicated. He had a clear call from above. He was but the passive executor of a divine mandate, for the spirit of Bhavani inspired his acts and bade him go forth to protect Brahmans and kine, chastise the violators of temples and shrines, and slay the bigots of Islamic intolerance. Humble as he was he had taken upon himself this sacred task and had thus far carried it forward. But the holy cause would never succeed without the sympathy and support of noble and learned Brahmans like Krishnaji. A Brahman of his lofty spirit could not but be greatly distressed at the wreck of Hindu religion and society. The gods and the preceptors of their holy cult were alike the objects of a relentless and inexorable persecution. Scarcely a vestige of the purest forms of Hinduism remained in all the land of Hindustan. Heresy and persecution prevailed throughout the land. His heart must bleed over these acts of religious violation and vandalism. Shivaji was a humble but conscientious beginning to the task of restoring happiness to this land of blasted honour and blighted glory. This work of revival was a noble work. It could only succeed with the help of noble spirits like Krishnaji. Would he not join him in retrieving the fortune of Hinduism? This honeyed speech quite changed the man. His religious pride was touched. The flattering attentions and inspiring words of the warrior won him over from his allegiance. He reflected that here was a man who had staked all his worldly fortunes upon the deliverance of his country's religion from bondage. Moreover he was possessed of all those qualities that were essential to the attainment of his noble object—courage, valour, enterprise. All his exploits had been invariably crowned with success. His name was already a household word in thousands of admiring Maharashtra families. Was it not desirable and certainly more meritorious from the point of view of his religion that he should participate in this prince's glorious triumphs? Such thoughts crowded upon his mind and he finally announced to Shivaji his determination to espouse his cause and swear allegiance to him. After this exchange of promises and pledges he took Shivaji into his confidence and revealed to him the real object of his diplomatic mission. It was no less than a trick to delude Shivaji into a surrender on promises of pardon and protection, lure him to an interview so that he might be seized, and then taken in irons to Bijapur and paraded in the bazaars of the capital as a prisoner of war to grace Afzul Khan's treacherous triumph. This revelation made, it was proposed to let the Khan proceed with his projects and cherish his hopes of the impending capture of Shivaji, Krishnaji Bhaskar was to continue playing the role of a zealous envoy and induce the Mahomedan chief to approach Pratapgad for his

treacherously planned interview, and when he had come within, his power Shivaji was to fall suddenly upon him and surprise his panic-stricken forces. Having thus checkmated Afzul Khan's plots, Shivaji returned warily home.

In public conversations with Krishnaji during the days that followed Shivaji continued his professions of submission, and it was definitely agreed that Afzul Khan should advance to Javli for a conference where the terms of the alliance between the two parties should be finally settled. On Shivaji's side, his envoy, Pantaji Gopinath, was to accompany Krishnaji to confirm this proposal and represent Shivaji's views before Afzul Khan. This minister was one of Shivaji's intimate circle. Before despatching him upon this mission, Shivaji explained fully to him in private conference how Krishnaji Bhaskar, while continuing to play the part of Afzul Khan's envoy, had really been won over to his views and had vowed to advance his interests.¹² Gopinath was instructed to represent to Afzul Khan that while Shivaji fully admitted that it was his duty to come to Afzul Khan and pay his respects to him, his natural timidity and fear of the Mahomedan camp prevented him from complying with these essentials of diplomatic etiquette. He had no courage to come to Wai to meet Afzul Khan. But as he looked upon him with the affection of a father, it would be extremely kind of him to comply with his request to approach nearer to Javli where he undertook to come and meet the Khan at an interview. As to his encouraging him in his difficulty and promising to intercede in his behalf with the sultan and arrange to admit him again to the Adil Shahi court, this was only an index of the greatness of his soul. Afzul Khan's approaching Javli without hesitation would be considered by Shivaji a proof of his good intentions towards him. In this fashion Gopinath was to acquit himself of this mission, taking heed to be prodigal of compliments and watchful not to excite suspicion. Without betraying any anxiety as to the Khan's intentions he was to probe minutely into his thoughts and report on the discipline and equipment of his forces. Shivaji bade farewell to Afzul Khan's ambassador with many marks of honour, presenting him with embroidered robes, a set of pearl earrings, bracelets and locketts, a fine Arab horse, and a gift of 5000 pagodas. Gopinathpant was also suitably honoured and sent with a fair retinue befitting his rank.

On his return to Afzul Khan, Krishnaji Bhaskar informed him that Shivaji was ready to meet him to tender his submission but hesitated to come to Wai, where he feared treachery. Shivaji's envoy had accompanied him in order to communicate his reply, if the Khan would graciously grant him an

12. Sabhasad omits the account of the secret meeting between Shivaji and Krishnaji Bhaskar given by Chitnis.

audience. The audience was granted and Gopinathpant had an opportunity to represent Shivaji's proposal. Krishnaji Bhaskar commenting on this proposal urged upon his master to agree to these terms, and pointed out that the Khan was sure to succeed in his aim. By marching up to Javli and advancing so far at Shivaji's request, he would disarm his suspicions, lure him to a meeting and get him easily into his clutches. The Khan objected that Javli was a difficult region for the deploying of his army and what guarantee was there that Shivaji meant no harm? Upon this Krishnaji assured the Khan that for his part he was convinced that there was nothing sinister in Shivaji's proposal and asked him not to entertain any doubts on that head. He urged on the Khan not to lose the opportunity that had in so unforeseen a manner presented itself and contended that Afzul Khan might advance with all his army to Javli, where there was ample room to canton his troops and no difficulty in the supply of water and forage. Afzul Kuan's fears of an advance into the defiles of Javli were gradually dispelled and he was confirmed in the plan of marching into the enemy's stronghold ostensibly to bring about an interview with the Maratha leader and seizing upon him by force under that pretence. Satisfied with the assurances of his envoy, Afzul Khan ordered the camp to be moved for a march to Javli and in the hope of somehow or other securing the arrest of his opponent, he agreed to waive his former demands and humour Shivaji by granting all the concessions asked for. Having formed this resolution he wrote to Shivaji that he was coming down to Javli and Shivaji himself in his turn should descend from the fort of Pratapgad for the conference.

On the receipt of this final reply from the Khan, Shivaji summoned a council of his nobles and veterans and asked their opinion. They all concurred in expressing their loyalty and readiness to carry out any task their master might choose to entrust to them. They were prepared to lay down their lives for their chief. Shivaji then conferred with Jijabai,¹³ who advised him to act in concert with his friends, reposing his confidence in Providence. For herself she had no fear but that now as formerly his auspicious enterprise would be crowned with the success it deserved. Armed with these reassurances Shivaji proceeded to make his plans.

To ensure the implicit confidence of Afzul Khan in his professions of humility, Shivaji took every precaution to render the Khan's march as easy and unobstructed as possible. The ascent up the ghats was made less toilsome by cutting down the brushwood and thickets and cutting new paths. An open space was made ready for cantoning the Khan's troops by clearing away the

13. According to Sabhasad, Jijabai was at Rajgad, but Chitnis and the author of the Shivdigvijay say that she was at Pratapgad.

trees and shrubs. Outposts of soldiers were stationed at intervals on the Khan's line of march under direction of competent civil officers whose instructions were to supply every want of the Khan's forces, and make ample arrangements for the supply of their meals. The path cleared for the Khan's march was, however, prepared so cleverly that a dense growth of trees and brushwood obstructed the view on either side of the route beyond a certain distance. All by-paths and cross-ways were closed up by huge trees cut down across the glades.

Shivaji unfolded his secret counsels to Netaji Palkar, Moropant the Peshwa and Tanaji Malusare. Netaji Palkar was ordered to bring up his battalions from the Konkan immediately to the ridge of the ghats and maintain a close ambush under cover of thick foliage, a little to the east of the fort of Pratapgad. This was a precaution against a possible movement of part of the Khan's army in that direction. Moropant, a veteran general, received orders to loiter about the precincts of that prepared clearing where Afzul Khan's grand army was to encamp, and remain under cover of the shady trees to watch events. Raghunath Ballal was to be Netaji's lieutenant, and Trimbak Bhaskar, lieutenant to Moropant. A bugle was to give the signal for Netaji to advance and burst upon the hostile bands emerging on the heights, while on the discharge of five cannon shots from the fort Moropant was to make an onslaught on the army encamped in the vale of Javli. They were to be on the alert and booty was to be no consideration with them. While making these preparations without the fort, Shivaji had the fort itself placed in siege order, with a sufficient garrison and adequate equipment of guns and ammunition, food-stores and provisions all under his personal supervision. All accesses to the fort were closed. Every tower in front of the fort was manned with a defence force of a hundred men and half as many men formed the defence complement to each battlement in the rear. Besides a large number of warriors was drawn up in the passages leading to the main entrance, group by group, and these were ordered, on the signal of a trumpet blast after Shivaji's descent from the fort, to come forward gradually in little groups of one or two thousand and station themselves at fixed distances from each other, so that the outermost group would be within an arrow-shot from the place of the meeting and the last group would be at the portals of the fortress. A picked band of veterans was to escort Shivaji up to almost the very place of the conference.

At the foot of the fort where there was an open space near a battlemented tower was fixed the place for the conference between the two leaders. A spacious and magnificent pavilion was erected here for the purpose, with a grand couch of state in the centre and two or three smaller seats on the dais. A silken cloth lined the ceiling, with borders formed of strings of pearls

and the divan was spread with cushions and carpets of various shapes and designs.

When all was ready word was sent to the Khan to start for Javli. He set out with his troops by the ghat of Radtondi (the “tearful” pass, so called from the steep ascent) where a path had been prepared on purpose. He came without his guns and heavy encumbrances, though this is contradicted by some chronicles. Descending the Radtondi ghat, Afzul Khan halted near the village of Par on the Koyana. The ascent that followed greatly harassed the Khan’s followers, and the Pathan mercenaries in his army were heard to say that Shivaji was a rogue and no one could probe the depths of his cunning and subtlety. It was not a good sign as to how things would fare with them after all this ascent. The echoes of these complaints often reached Afzul Khan’s ears. But he was strangely infatuated. So sure was he of out-witting Shivaji and making him a prisoner that he paid no attention to the hazards he was running. Shivaji did all in his power to make the Khan persevere in the fatuous course he was pursuing. At every halt tents, pavilions, camp equipments and all manner of provisions were officiously kept in readiness. These zealous attentions served to keep the Khan continually in good humour. Yes! Shivaji was off his guard, so thought the doting invader. The Maratha chief was absolutely without suspicion of his evil intentions. He would walk straight into his trap and be exhibited as a captured fool to the people of Bijapur! Such were the Khan’s thoughts.

On his arrival at Javli, the Khan despatched Krishnaji Bhaskar up the fort to announce his arrival and summon Shivaji to the conference without loss of time. With this message the envoy went up the fort and delivered his instructions to Shivaji in presence of the assembled durbar. The formal business done, Shivaji had a private audience with the envoy, when Krishnaji declared that true to his compact he had brought the Khan to Javli. Now it was only left to him to bring the leaders together to a conference. The further development of the plan rested entirely in Shivaji’s hands. He must now make use of all his resources. It was then decided that the conference should come off on the third day from that date. Krishnaji was to work upon the mind of the Khan and induce him to present himself at the pavilion with only two companions, and Shivaji was to give an undertaking to the same effect. The rest of the soldiers on either side should stand off at a distance. Krishnaji promised to obtain Afzul Khan’s assent to these conditions and left the fort. On his return, Krishnaji communicated the conditions of the conference and further represented that Shivaji’s timidity was without example, and he did not yet quite trust the Khan’s assurances. Krishnaji then suggested that Afzul Khan should agree even to this condition as his main object was now on the point of fulfilment. Afzul Khan was eager to trap Shivaji. He shirked no

conditions and gave his immediate consent to all these proposals. He sent his trusty officers to inspect the place of the meeting. They reported that the pavilion lay in an open plain, and there were no forces in covert.

At last the fateful hour arrived. The Khan set forward with 1,500 of the pick of his army. The crafty Krishnaji intervened representing that if Afzul Khan were to proceed with all that cavalcade, Shivaji's fear and distrust might be re-awakened, and he might not even be induced to descend from his fortress. Then he applied the soothing balm of flattery. "You, a pillar of strength to the Adil Shahi state, are a cavalier of renown! Shivaji is but as a rush in comparison with your prowess. Why, oh, Khan! so much ado to snare such a simpleton?" He then asked him to attend the pavilion with one or two attendants like Shivaji.¹⁴ The Khan approved this plan and detailed his soldiers to wait in detachments along the way, and having stationed a fair number of soldiers within an arrow-shot of the pavilion proceeded in a state palanquin to the conference. He was accompanied by two attendants, along with a redoubted veteran soldier named Said Banda and the envoy Krishnaji Bhaskar. All he now wanted was that Shivaji should, in terms of the agreement, present himself at the conference. He felt sure he would straight make a prisoner of him, without the least resistance. What was the puny Shivaji before Afzul Khan? So sanguine was he of success and confidence in his strength that he was merely attired in such a vest and cloak as it was the custom to wear when attending a public office. Clad in a flowing robe of thin muslin, he carried no other weapon than a sword. The Khan reached the pavilion, seated himself in the audience hall long before Shivaji's arrival and sent his envoy to the fort to bring down Shivaji. From him Shivaji learnt that Afzul Khan was accompanied by an expert veteran, and sent word to him that he did not dare to come down to the conference unless he appeared in the hall with no other companion than a single attendant. Upon this Afzul Khan bade Said Banda stand at a distance.

Meanwhile Shivaji having made all arrangements to meet the worst that might occur, had his bath and went through the usual ceremonial rites. He then addressed his prayers to the goddess Bhavani, the guardian deity of his family, and it is said that such was the fervour of his devotion on this occasion, that he had an afflatus of the divine spirit and became possessed by religious frenzy.

14. The powada above referred to states that Moropant and Shamrajipant, Shivaji's ministers, who had been sent to conduct the Khan to the place of meeting protested when Afzul Khan set out in a palanquin with 4000 horses, and requested him to station his men at a distance as also to put down the palanquin away from the place. According to Sabhasad, Pantaji Pant (i. e. Gopinathpant) protested against Afzul Khan's taking such a large retinue, not the Khan's envoy, Krishnaji.

It appeared to the observers that he became the medium of an oracular assurance on the part of the deity, bidding Shivaji “ be of good cheer ; that he would triumph, thanks to her powerful protection ; that blinded by a mental gloom of her raising, the Khan had walked on unsuspecting to his doom. Let him fall a victim to her divine wrath and let the avenging victor immolate a buffalo with its brows stained with the blood of Afzul Khan!” These words — ascribed to the deity but uttered by Shivaji in a sort trance induced by the extraordinary fervour of religious enthusiasm into which, agreeably to the devotional constitution of his mind, he was probably, thrown by the tremendous pressure put upon his nervous system — were noted down by the officers present and communicated to him when he came back to his senses. He was still more elated by this prophetic assurance. Then Shivaji addressing his nobles announced to them that in going out to meet Afzul Khan he knew he was carrying his life in his hands. If the event ended in success there was nothing to fear; if the result were inauspicious they must not give way to despondency. They were to fall upon the enemy in the manner previously devised, put him to rout and defend their state. He trusted entirely to their bravery and valour. That he cared not a straw for the Mahomedan powers was due entirely to the co-operation and loyal support of the men standing before him. It was for them to exert themselves to the best of their power in order to save the glorious achievements of the past. This moment was to try their mettle. They would stand the test like heroes and win immortal renown. This was a stirring appeal and aroused in them the liveliest battle spirit. They bowed assent declaring not one of them would swerve an inch from his orders. They would lay down their lives. Their lives were not their own, having been once dedicated to his service. Their greatest honour would be a loyal death.

Having thus exhorted his companions, stimulated their national pride, and discussed further plans, Shivaji prepared to dress, for the hour of the ordeal was fast approaching. He wore the usual flowing robe in white over a mail-coat of links and a similar mail-cap under his turban. He girt himself with the waist-band and loin-cloth which Indian wrestlers and fighters habitually wear. He had a little poniard hidden under the sleeves of his right hand, and wore the sharp steel instrument called the “Tiger’s Claws” on the fingers of his left hand. Thus accoutred he again visited with reverence the temple of his guardian deity and prostrating himself at his mother’s feet entreated her parting blessing. Jijabai’s heart was full to overflowing with affection for her son, but restraining her emotion, she gave him her blessing bidding him repose his trust in the protection of his tutelary deity. She compared herself to Kunti, the mother of the heroic Pandavas of Mahabharat fame, and said that he would shed lustre on the name of Bhonsle. She asked him to avenge himself on Afzul

Khan, for the death of his elder brother Sambhaji, to which Afzul Khan had lent his countenance.¹⁵

Shivaji slowly descended down the fort, under the escort of Tanaji Malusare, Yessaji Kunk, Hiroji Farzand, Gopinathpant and about fifty other men. On arriving at the pavilion hall, Shivaji entered in company with Jiva Mahalya and Sambhaji Kavji.¹⁶ Shivaji saw the Khan and made as if he was affrighted and faltered in his movements. Krishnaji Bhaskar who was with the Khan pointed out how Shivaji was seized with terror at beholding Afzul Khan and trembled in all his limbs. He proposed that Afzul Khan might even dismiss his attendant and encourage Shivaji to approach him, as he might feel more confident to encounter the Khan when he found him alone. Shivaji advanced nearer. His attendant bore a sword in either hand, a circumstance to which the Khan made no objection. On Shivaji drawing near, the Khan raised himself from his seat and advanced two or three steps forward to meet him. He was very eager to encounter the Maratha. He felt sure that Shivaji was unarmed and would easily fall into his clutches. The reason was plain, as the Khan was a man of giant built, though Shivaji while shorter of stature was far more wiry. Krishnaji Bhaskar formally introduced them to one another. They advanced to the embrace. The Khan contrived to get Shivaji's neck under his left arm, squeezed his head under the arm-pit, and drawing his dagger attempted to drive it between his ribs. But it merely grazed the mail under his robe and caused no harm.¹⁷ Recovering from his surprise and the agony of

15. The Rairi bakhar gives the curious information that doubtful of success and fearing for his safety, Shivaji sent Brahmans laden with treasure to Kashi (Banares) and Gaya to perform his funeral rites in those holy places in case of his death, and that at the same time he made lavish largesses to the Bramans and shaved his beard, at which tears came into Jijabai's eyes, who had in consequence to be removed from his presence. As to the allusion to the death of Sambhaji, Shivaji's elder brother, *vide a foot-note* in Chapter II. It was a general belief that Afzul Khan had instigated the rebellion which led to the death of Sambhaji.

16. According to Sabhasad, Chitragupta and Shedgaokar bakhars, Shivaji was accompanied by Jiva Mahalya and Sambhaji Kavji, and this is followed by Mr. Kincaid and Prof. Sarkar. According to the powada Shivaji gave his sword into the hand of Jivaji Mahaldar and had him to attend on him. Granf Duff says Shivaji was attended by Tanaji Malusare. Jiva Mahalya was a barber by caste, (*Bharat Itihas Sanshodhak Mandal, Sammelan Vritta*, Vol. V, p. 16).

17. Grant Duff's version is that Shivaji was the first aggressor, driving deep his "Tiger's claws" at the first embrace. The general tenor of the bakhars is quite different and is followed in the text here. Modak's History of the Adil Shahi Kingdom gives a radically different version of the event, briefly to this effect: - Convinced that it was impossible for him to prevail over Afzul Khan, Shivaji made a pretence of friendship, put on a show of humility, appeared before Afzal Khan at his tent and induced him to come to a banquet at Pratapgad. When the unsuspecting guest came with a dozen or so of his followers, Shivaji's armed bands suddenly fell upon him and cut him to pieces. Modak derived his account probably from the

strangulation, Shivaji fastened the “Tiger’s Claws” upon the Khan’s abdomen. At the same time he drew out the poniard from under his sleeve, delivered thrust after thrust, and dexterously extricated his head from under Afzul Khan’s arm. The “Tiger’s Claws” pierced the Khan’s bowels, drawing out the entrails and blood after them. Afzul Khan held down the wounded part with one hand and lunged with his sword upon Shivaji with the other. Shivaji warded off the stroke, by jumping off with great agility, but the blow glanced across his head-gear and dashing it to the ground caused a slight wound. In an instant Shivaji delivered another powerful blow and tried to wrest the sword from Afzul Khan’s hand. The Khan raised an outcry of “Murder! treason! help!” which drew the soldiers on either side nearer to the scene of the tragedy. Said Banda first came up to the rescue and attacked Shivaji with his double-edged sword. Shivaji took a similar sword from Jiva Mahalya in his right hand and with his own poniard in the left began to ward off Said Banda’s blows. In the meantime Jiva Mahalya rushed upon Said Banda and lopped off from the shoulder the arm with which he brandished his long sword, so that the loyal defender of the Khan collapsed on the ground.¹⁸ Then there followed a general melee, in which the followers of Afzul Khan contrived to place him in a palanquin and bear him off.¹⁹ Yessaji Kunk and Tanaji Malusare extricated Shivaji from the melee around him and pursued the Khan’s palanquin. They came up with the litter and wounding the bearers in the legs compelled them to throw down their burden. The Khan’s head was severed from the trunk and borne off wrapped in a scarf.²⁰ Afzul Khan had a Brahman civilian of the name of Krishnaji with him. He, compassionating the fate of the ill-starred Afzul rushed upon Shivaji, sword in hand, flaming with indignation. Shivaji parried one or two thrusts and then declared that he acted upon his

Basatin-i-Salatin, which gives nearly the same story. Chitragupta’s bakhar and the powada introduce other details, viz., angry speeches between Shivaji and Afzul Khan followed by a duel. The Khan was apparently angry that Shivaji should make such a show of his magnificence in the upholstering of the pavilion. This led to mutual abuse. The Shedgaokar version is that the Khan complained about it to Shivaji’s envoy, who propitiated him by replying that these costly things would eventually be surrendered to Bijapur.

18. According to Chitnis Yesaji Kunk slew Said Banda.

19. According to Sabhasad and Chitragupta Afzul Khan himself leapt down from the dais and began to run away with shouts of “Murder! treason!” at which his men rushed to the rescue, put him into the palanquin and began to take him away.

20. According to Grant Duff it was Khando Maley and other followers who cut off the head of the unfortunate Khan. Chitragupta and Sabhasad say it was brought down by Sambhaji Kavji at Shivaji’s order. The powada represents Sambhaji Kavji to have maimed the bearers and Shivaji himself to have cut off the head.

father's command not to slay a Brahman. He had better make the best of his way home. With this order he was let go.²¹

Delivered from all these dangers Shivaji reached the main gate of Pratapgad in safety. It was still an hour or two before sunset. True to the concerted plans signal guns were fired and bugles sounded. The Khan's army encamped in the low-lying plain heard the cannonade and took it for a salvo in honour of the meeting. Thus they remained unguarded and unconscious of the great event. Meanwhile following the concerted programme Netaji Palkar fell upon the 1,500 warriors who had come up in Afzul Khan's cavalcade. By this time the news of the tragic end of the Khan had spread to this chosen bodyguard. The guard was seized with surprise. The confusion became worse confounded when Netaji Palkar directed his onslaught upon them. But brave and expert veterans as they were they got the better of their panic and stood at bay. They struggled long and valorously with their Mavali assailants. At last the scales of fortune were turned against them. They had exhausted every art of defensive warfare. Then there was a head-long rush and they fled for their lives. The Mavalis pressed on in pursuit of them and cut down every Pathan they could overtake in the chase.

On another side Moropant Pingle followed up the appointed signal with a sudden onslaught on the main body of Afzul Khan's army peacefully quartered in their camp in the plain of Javli. They had not the least expectation of such a sudden charge by the hostile bands against them. Their panic was in proportion to their unpreparedness. Even thus they turned round to confront the enemy. But their defeat was a foregone conclusion, and the little resistance they made was prompted by the energy of despair. After repeated attacks they were at last driven into a precipitate rout. Shivaji's standing orders to his generals were not to put to death those who would give up their arms and surrender. Many who were wounded thus surrendered. Many took flight into the neighbouring jungles. Hiding and flying from forest to forest for some time they evaded capture. But this did not last long. They lost their way in the

21. Prof. Jadunath Sarkar on the authority of the Marathi bakhars, the *Tarikh-i-Shivaji*, the English Factory Records of Rajapur Co. concludes that Afzul Khan fell a victim to his own treachery. He thinks that Shivaji would have been considered but a fool, had he not provided against such a contingency at the hands of Afzul Khan. The late Mr. R. P. Karkaria more than twenty years ago made a defence of the version disclosed to us by the Maratha chronicles. The late Mr. Ranade in his "Rise of the Maratha Power" attempted a halting defence. A circumstance that must never be lost sight of is the fact that the Khan had made a solemn vow that he would take Shivaji alive or dead, and Shivaji had to elude his object. Besides the Khan's intrigues with the Khopdes (Rajwade XV, 302) clearly show his intention was to seize Shivaji, somehow or other. Scott Waring, in his *History of the Marathas*, 1810, defends the Marathi bakhar version of the tragedy.

tangled woods and were at length detected and seized, worn out and starving, by Shivaji's search parties.

The captives thus taken were treated by Shivaji with his wonted courtesy and generosity. They were accorded treatment befitting their rank and released with grants of money for their travelling expenses. Persons of noble rank received due honour, horses and gifts of apparel being provided for their return to Bijapur. Many a Maratha soldier in the Bijapur service observing the magnanimous bearing of the victor transferred his allegiance to Shivaji. They were retained with cordial welcome. Among the great nobles captured on this occasion was a Maratha sardar named Zunzarrao Ghatge. Between Ghatge's father and the Rajah Shahaji there had once subsisted, as Shivaji was aware, a most cordial friendship. It was, therefore, natural that Shivaji should have tried with all the persuasiveness at his command to induce Ghatge to serve under his flag. But he declined to give up his Adil Shahi master even for the cause of freedom. Shivaji with great reluctance parted company with this scion of a family with which he had a hereditary alliance. He arranged for his return to Bijapur with presents of robes of honour and of jewellery as a mark of his esteem.

In the general affray, Fazal Khan, the eldest son of Afzul Khan, was wounded and took to flight. Applying bandages to his wounds he tried to escape by a concealed flight between the thickets and brushwood. But the unfortunate man with the members of his household fell into the hands of Khandoji Khopde.²² They offered him a bribe and he volunteered to lead them in safety to Karhad along the bank of the Koyana, instead of surrendering them to Shivaji. When this was known Shivaji ordered Khopde to be executed.

Shivaji gained much booty in this defeat of Afzul Khan. It comprised about a hundred elephants, seven to eight thousand horses, a thousand camels, the entire artillery park and field-guns, about ten to twelve lakhs of rupees in specie, gold, pearls, and precious stones of the value of more than two lakhs, two thousand packages of cloth, tents, camp equipages and other material of use on a march. More important than these material gains was the accession of strength to Shivaji's army, for Marathas even from the Khan's hosts were astonished at Shivaji's bravery and generosity and willingly came over to him, company after company.

22. Chitnis and the author of the *Shivadigvijay* maintain that Khandoji Khopde, the commander of Afzul Khan's Mavali corps, led Fazal Khan and the unfortunate Afzul Khan's family in safety to Karhad with a force of two hundred men, and that some time later Khopde having fallen into the hands of Shivaji was executed. Instead of Khopde the name Kankde is also found. Sabhasad says that among other sardars two of Afzul Khan's sons were apprehended and brought before Shivaji.

The severed head of Afzul Khan was presented to the goddess Bhavani, whose desecrated temple at Tuljapur was thus avenged. After visiting the temple of his guardian deity, Shivaji presented himself before his mother, Jijabai was overjoyed to welcome him to her arms again. Claspings him to her bosom, she congratulated him on the victory and exclaimed that the death of his brother, Sambhaji, was now avenged by his heroism. The day of his safe return from victory was indeed a red-letter day in her life. Uttering these words with maternal solicitude she went through the usual form by which Hindu matrons ward off the 'evil eye' from their children. Then turning to his companions she acclaimed them one and all for the triumph, saying the credit was due to them both for the victory and the preservation of their master's life. She loaded them with gifts in the shape of personal decorations or articles of attire in recognition of their valour.

Shivaji again descended from the fort to inspect the condition of his combatants. He arranged for the care and nursing of the wounded and encouraged them by visiting and conversing with them one and all. A comprehensive list was made of all who had fallen in the fight, and condolences were sent to their families and promises of pension, *vatans* or grants of land made to the veteran officers in their life-time were continued in their families as a hereditary right. The wounded received compensation in proportion to the seriousness of the wounds they had received, the amounts ranging from 75 to 200 pagodas each. Other favours and marks of honour were lavished in profusion upon men who indeed had nobly deserved them. The senior officers and nobles were presented with horses, rings, pearl pendants or crests, necklets and armlets, robes and head-gear embroidered with gold. There were grants of *inam* lands and revenue rights. These were graduated according to the quality of the service rendered. Many an infantry sepoy received promotion in the cavalry. Some received higher command in the army, others received special recognition in the shape of a palanquin grant, in itself no light honour. The sons of the deceased, if of mature age for the army, were at once enrolled in place of their father. These gifts and promotions were all made in presence of the whole army, with public acknowledgment of each meritorious action or warlike exploit. This had the effect of stimulating their enthusiasm and rousing the spirit of emulation among men and officers. The generous rewards made by Shivaji carried conviction to the breast of each soldier that their merit would receive due acknowledgment. Nor was Gopinathpant forgotten. He was given the village of Hivre as *inam* in perpetuity.²³

23. The Rairi bakhar says that the *inam* of Hivre (pins one lakh of pagodas) was conferred upon Shivaji's envoy Dattaji Gopinath, which is perhaps a mistake for Gopinathpant. The

At Pratapgad and other places there were great rejoicings in honour of the victory. Music was to be heard everywhere. Each private house was decorated with flags of victory, hoisted upon the verandahs. Sugar and sweets were distributed from huge panniers carried by state elephants from house to house, a time-honoured feature of a triumphal celebration with Indian rajahs. The Brahmans received noble presents in the form of *dakshina*, the poorest had alms. There were dinners and banquetings at which the Brahmans as usual figured conspicuously. Saints and *gosavis* of ancient shrines were honoured with gifts and offerings. The news of Afzul Khan's defeat and death was sent round to all friends and allies. A special messenger was sent to the Rajah Shahaji in the Karnatic to convey the tidings of victory. The event was celebrated as a national triumph. The death of the desecrator of the national shrines of Tuljapur, of Pandharpur, of Shingnapur was universally hailed as the death of a demon, and the finger of Providence was seen in his fall. A strong wave of patriotism overswept the whole country, such as it had not experienced for centuries. These feelings found vent in the stirring ballad or powada that celebrates the event. It is said that this powada was composed by the court minstrel at the express order of Jijabai. Afzul Khan's head was buried at the scene of the tragedy, and a castellated tower built on the site, to which the name was given of the Afzul *Buruz* or Afzul Tower. The sword wrested from Afzul Khan was preserved as a memento of the victory. Ascribing the victory to the propitious favour of the Bhavani of Tuljapur, it is said that Shivaji vowed to install and consecrate an image of that goddess within the battlements of Fort Pratapgad. A Brahman expert was despatched to the banks of the Gandaki, famed for their veins of stone fit for artistic carving. The stone block thus carefully selected was sent to Tuljapur and a model of the original image made at the hands of an artist. The image was installed in a court on the topmost fortification at the summit of Fort Pratapgad and a beautiful temple raised over it. Provision was made for the maintenance of the daily rites and offerings and the periodical banquets to Brahmans on auspicious days in honour of the goddess. The same festivals and periodical fairs were ordered to be held here as at Tuljapur. According to other authorities the temple was erected after the fall of the Mores of Javli.

The Adil Shahi sultan and the dowager sultana at Bijapur were shocked to hear of the tragedy of Afzul Khan and the dissipation of his grand army. It is said that when the messengers brought word of the catastrophe the sultan sprang from his throne in grief and alarm and betook himself to his bed-

Shivadigvijay says that the inam of Hivre was conferred upon Shivaji's envoy, Pantajipant. As regards the variations of the name of Shivaji's envoy, notice has already been taken in a previous foot-note.

chamber. The dowager queen gave herself to wailing and lamentation. That such a mighty nobleman as Afzul Khan should be so utterly defeated, his head dissevered from his body and carried in triumph, his forces annihilated and his camp despoiled showed a culmination of Maratha power which threw the omrahs of the Adil Shahi court into the deepest gloom. The fortunes of the Adil Shahi state seemed to totter. At any hour Shivaji might knock at their gates, at the head of his victorious legions. The capital was full of these rumours. For three days, it is said, the royal drums remained silent and the sultan and his guardian mother lost all appetite for their meals.²⁴

24. Many curious legends have gathered round the tragic fate of Afzul Khan. The most striking is the story which is told in Marshall's Bijapur, and which is related by the local guides to travellers visiting Bijapur about Afzul Khan having a premonition of his death before starting against Shivaji and having killed his 63 wives that they might not share another man's bed and buried them in the tombs which are still shown to the traveller in the ruined and deserted suburb of Afzulpura, where the Khan had his mansion (vide Shedgaokar's Bakhar).