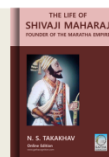




THE LIFE OF SHIVAJI MAHARAJ FOUNDER OF THE MARATHA EMPIRE

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Chapter 25

Renewed Wars with Bijapur and the Moguls, 1674-1676

N. S. Takakhav

Professor, Wilson College, Bombay.

Editor

Kiran Jadhav

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We have already described in a previous chapter how Shivaji had made his reconciliation with Aurangzeb by prudent relations with Khan Jahan Bahadur, the subhedar of the Deccan, who had forwarded to the imperial presence Shivaji's memorial for a peace, drafted in the conciliatory style which characterised his relations with the Moguls, while giving up nothing that was of practical advantage to him. The Mogul arms had been rusting for some time, but it was not to be expected that the armistice would be anything but of short duration. It was no pleasant news to Aurangzeb when he heard of the solemnities of Shivaji's coronation and the realization of the great Maratha's ambition, the formal re-establishment of a Hindu sovereignty in the south. He found fault with the continued neutrality of his subhedar and suspected that he was acting in collusion with the Maratha leader. Soon afterwards Diler Khan of Guzerat marched into Shivaji's territory upon a campaign of invasion. The Peshwa Moropant advanced against him, but instead of confronting the forces of Diler Khan, made a diversion into the Mogul territories, conquering one station after another. Moropant recovered possession of Aundh and Patta which had fallen into the hands of the Moguls. While Moropant was thus keeping the Moguls busy in the south, Hambirrao, the commander-in-chief of Shivaji's forces, ascended the ghats near Surat and dividing his forces into different bands sent them to ravage the Mogul dominions in different directions. One of these bands crossed the Narbada, entered the district of

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Broach, and levied heavy war contributions upon the inhabitants. The result of these movements was that Diler Khan had to call away his forces from Shivaji's territories for the defence of his own province.

On the retirement of Diler Khan, Moropant lay encamped at Kalyan with a force of ten thousand men. He beat off a large body of Kolis and Bhils from Dharampur, who had invaded the Kalyan district at the instigation of the Moguls and opposed the Maratha march northward. From the camp at Kalyan Moropant sent his envoy to the Portuguese at Bassein to demand a quarter of the revenue of all their territories around Bassein. This demand of a quarter, or to give it its more famous Marathi name, *chauth* of the revenue on the Portuguese government seems to have been made by Shivaji now for the first time. By the treaty made on a former occasion with the Portuguese, the latter had undertaken to supply Shivaji's government with guns and ammunition every year and they had hitherto fulfilled the terms of that agreement. Religious persecution was at its height in the Portuguese territories around Bassein. Many Hindu families were forcibly converted to Christianity. To those unconverted the alternative was the prospect of constant interference with their civic and religious liberties. The report of this persecution was the cause why the Hindu king levied the *chauth* contribution upon the Portuguese government. From the information now available it can only be inferred that the Portuguese government could not at this moment have dismissed Moropant's envoy with a summary refusal. For there is no record of hostilities on this occasion between Moropant and the Portuguese, nor were the latter in a position to challenge the encamped forces of Moropant to a decision on the field of war. Moropant, on the other hand, is not reported to have caused any damage to the Portuguese territories. It, therefore, stands to reason that the Portuguese government must have devised some sort of expedient to temporize with the Maratha.

While Moropant thus lay encamped at Kalyan, right opposite to the island of Salsette, the Abyssinians at Janjira had much reason for anxiety, nor were they very much cheered by the report that came soon afterwards that Shivaji was about to descend in person to the coast by the western ghats. The Abyssinian fleets lay at anchor near Bombay harbour. The Abyssinians were afraid that the Marathas might not hesitate to set their fleet on fire, and hastened to remove it to a safe port with great precipitation. On the other hand at Surat the news of Moropant's encampment at Kalyan awakened similar apprehensions, and the prospect of a fresh invasion of that prosperous town appeared more immediate by reason of the near presence of Hambirrao's light horse in the territory around Broach. Surat seemed to be menaced from two directions simultaneously by two Maratha armies.

While his two ministers were thus engaged in two different theatres of war, Shivaji himself had not been inactive. The Maratha hosts were streaming continually down the ghats and regiment after regiment was arriving to swell the ranks in Moropant's cantonment. The objective of these gathering hosts crowding together in the camp lines at Kalyan was for a time kept secret. When the numbers under Moropant's standard had accumulated to twenty-five thousand, Shivaji left Raigad for the Konkan, with the ostensible object of personally inspecting the arrangements of Moropant's camp. None could fathom the real object of Shivaji's sudden march to the Konkan. The fact is that the Mogul hosts had mustered at Junnar to the number of forty thousand, and it was no secret that their object was to force their way into Shivaji's territory on a fresh campaign of invasion. The king was rightly informed about these movements of the enemy, and the mysterious gathering of the Maratha squadrons at Kalyan was a movement in anticipation of the Mogul attack. No sooner did Shivaji come down to Kalyan than he took the command of his forces and before the enemy could have so much as a suspicion of his plans, his dust-stained squadrons were scouring the plain of Junnar. A fierce battle followed, in which the Moguls were completely routed, suffering on the field ten times the number of Shivaji's casualties. The Moguls fled confusedly in all directions. Shivaji's troops divided themselves into columns and pressed the pursuit with vigour. A number of Mogul horses and a quantity of useful war material fell into the hands of the pursuers. The conquering hosts destroyed and plundered the Mogul territory they passed through in pursuit of the fugitives. The chase continued as far as the town of Brahmapuri. The market-towns on the way yielded a good deal of booty to the pursuing conquerors. Piquets of cavalry were stationed on the great trade route to Surat to intercept the merchandise and bring it down to the Maratha camp.

It was, however, not so easy to carry the fort of Shivneri, which overshadowed the town of Junnar and which after the cavalry engagement Shivaji had proceeded to besiege. One assault was tried after another. Still the fort continued to elude his grasp. Two of Shivaji's men planned a stratagem, which was to climb up the ramparts in secret and throw the gates open. But the garrison discovering the stealthy attempt in time killed the treacherous assailants, rolling down upon their heads huge stones from the fortress walls. This success became a revelation of strength to the garrison who determined to pursue this method, hurling stones and rocks on the siege-lines below. In this way Shivaji lost many men and the remainder lost heart and began to flee away. The Moguls were emboldened at the panic they had caused among their assailants, and with great animation set up a pursuit. But the pursuit proved more disastrous than they had bargained for. For the flight of the Maratha

soldier was merely guerilla warfare. Retreat and fighting followed by turns and the fugitives rallied and turned upon their unwary pursuers again and again. These tactics made a thorough rout impossible, as the Moguls now discovered to their loss. However Shivaji had enough experience of fort-fighting to see that it was up-hill work to lead his rallied forces to a fresh assault upon Shivneri. He, therefore, ordered a retreat to Raigad.

On his return to Raigad Shivaji learnt that Mahomed Khan, the subhedar of Phonda had taken advantage of his campaign at Junnar to break the former treaty and again acknowledge the hegemony of the state of Bijapur, and to show his zeal in the service of that government, he was molesting Shivaji's out-posts in the military stations on that side of the western ghats. Shivaji was now resolved to teach a severe lesson to the governor of this fort. He prepared a large army which he conducted in person and laid siege to the fort of Phonda. The garrison held out relying on the strength of their fortifications.¹ Shivaji made many assaults without success. At last Shivaji ordered mines to be laid under the fortress walls, which being simultaneously exploded, a large breach was made in the rampart and a considerable loss was inflicted upon the garrison. Shivaji carried the breach and a fierce encounter took place within the walls of the fortress. The governor of the fort fell in the general melee, and with his death the garrison lost heart and surrendered. A Mahomedan officer on Shivaji's side named Ibrahim Khan distinguished himself by the impetuosity of his attack on this occasion. Shivaji complimented him on his bravery and appointed him to the command of this fort. This was the first occasion on which a Mahomedan in Shivaji's service was appointed to the position of a havaldar or governor of a garrisoned fort, his usual practice being to confer these positions of trust on responsible Maratha officers. This promotion bears eloquent testimony to the confidence Shivaji reposed in the loyalty and devotion of this Mahomedan commander. The governorship of an important fortress, and that too on the frontiers of his dominions, could never have been conferred on an ordinary individual (May, 1675).²

On the reduction of Phonda, fort, Shivaji brought the neighbouring country under his complete sway, and to perpetuate his hold upon these parts he had two additional forts built, Bhimgad and Pargad, and strongly garrisoned them against the enemy. The Marathas then pushed into the district of Sunda, capturing several hill-forts. Ankola, Shiveshwar and Kadra (Kodra) fell in rapid succession. The governor of the fort of Karwar would not

1. Siege of Phonda, from 9th April 1675 to 6th May 1675 (Prof. Sarkar: Shivaji, p. 325- 27).

2. Jedhe Chronology, p. 192.

surrender the citadel. Upon this Shivaji gave orders for the town of Karwar to be committed to flames. There were a few English merchants, representatives of the East India Company, who were treated with deference. Their factories were not interfered with. The whole territory upto the boundaries of the province of Kanara were brought under Shivaji's flag. The sovereignty over parts of Kanara was then vested in the dowager Rani of Bednor and Shivaji did not think it fair to her sex to invade her dominions. But the princess sent a petition with the usual nazar offerings and solicited his help against her ministers and relations, who were usurping her authority.³ In response to this petition Shivaji willingly detached some of his forces to bring succour to the distressed princess, who was soon delivered from her unhappy predicament.

While Shivaji was thus operating in the district of Phonda, two Maratha nobles in the service of the Bijapur government, Nimbalkar of Phaltan and Ghatge of Malwadi, subdued all the military out-posts maintained by Shivaji between the forts of Panhala and Tattora and expelled his soldiers from these parts. The territory around these forts was recovered and restored to Bijapur. Thus on his return to the ghats after the successful campaign in the south, Shivaji had once more to recover these out-posts and territories and, to prevent the possibility of similar events in future, Shivaji erected a chain of fortifications between Panhala and Tattora. The new forts thus created were Vardhangad, Bhushangad and Sadashivgad. Not that these forts were exceptionally strong, but their situation near one another contributed very materially to the security of the territory around them.

Meanwhile Hambirrao, the chief commander, had carried on a vigorous offensive in Guzerat. He had gathered an immense booty in these wealthy parts of the Mogul dominions and was now preparing to retreat with his spoils. Diler Khan watched his movements. Hambirrao's great object was to elude the Mogul army and make good his retreat to the south with the spoils of his conquests. The Khan was however soon upon him and gave chase with great vigour. It was however to no purpose. Hambirrao eluded the pursuit and brought home to Raigad all his booty in safety. Diler Khan had to return disappointed. On the close of the rainy season Hambirrao again entered the Mogul territory and repeated his onslaughts. No Mogul commander came forth to challenge him. For the Mogul and Bijapur powers were again involved in mutual hostilities, and this circumstance was very favourable to Hambirrao's designs.

3. The principal of these chiefs was Timayya who was the minister and commander of Bednore at Shivaji's first invasion, the Rani being the queen-regent and guardian of the infant prince. (*Vide* Chitnis 70).

The affairs of Bijapur were then conducted by Khawas Khan. When he saw the Mogul arms concentrated against Bijapur, he proposed a treaty to Khan Jehan on the basis that the young Adil Shahi king should continue to reign on the footing of a feudal relation with the Mogul power, and the minor king's sister, Padshah Bibi, be given in marriage to a son of Aurangzeb. But this treaty was not approved of by the leading nobles of the court, who conspired against Khawas Khan and put him to death. The leader of the conspiracy was Abdul Karim,⁴ who now seized the reins of government into his own hands and prepared for hostilities with the Moguls. Khan Jehan took the field in person and came down upon Bijapur. Many skirmishes followed, in most of which the Adil Shahi arms were crowned with success. With these signs of Mogul failure before him Diler Khan proposed terms and the armistice soon gave place to a ratified treaty. By this time Shivaji had established his undisputed sway over the Konkan regions overlooked by the ghats. The Moguls and the Abyssinians had at times carried on desultory wars over these territories, but had never proved themselves equal to wresting them permanently from his iron grasp. The Moguls looked with envious eyes upon the fair provinces of Coorla, Kalyan and other parts bordering on the frontiers of the Portuguese territory near Bombay. When Khan Jehan came down upon the Konkan and began tentative incursions, Shivaji got him cheaply out of the way at the price of ten thousand pagodas. Pleased with this argument of corruption and gold, the venal Khan transferred his mimicry of war to his old theatre above the ghats. But the Abyssinian chief had no such hankering for gold. He put his naval squadrons in motion and began a campaign of systematic depredation on the coast towns and villages owing allegiance to Shivaji. He descended upon Vengurla, plundering or burning everything that came in his way. The Dutch had a factory at the town, which, though attacked by the Abyssinians, is said to have been defended with great bravery by the European factors.

Shivaji's fleet, being fitted out for the war at the ports of Vijaydurg and Rajapur, weighed anchor and put out to sea in pursuit; but though they scoured the coasts north and south in quest of the elusive enemy, the wily Abyssinians showed no trace of their presence anywhere. At length the Maratha fleet blockaded Janjira by sea, when the Abyssinian warships made all sail and hastened to the relief of their capital. This brought about an

4. Khawas Khan was the leader of the Abyssinian party and Abdul Karim Bahlol Khan the leader of the Pathan or Afghan party at Bijapur. *Vide* Jedhe, page 192, where, however, by some corruption of the text the contrary statement is apparently made that Bahlol Khan was arrested by Khawas Khan. It appears to be case of a *lapsess calami*.

engagement between the rival fleets, but with an indecisive result. The Maratha squadrons raised the siege and retired.

On the retirement of the Mogul subhedar from the Konkan, Shivaji saw the necessity of maintaining a fortified out-post in the district of Salsette,⁵ to overawe the Portuguese, his immediate neighbours in those parts, and at the same time to serve as a sort of watch-tower with such ample range that he might easily keep an eye on the movements of the Portuguese and other foes. Now the Portuguese had just such a fort named Seebon⁶ not far from Bassein, and Shivaji resolved to have a corresponding fort on his side right in front of the Portuguese stronghold. The Portuguese made many attempts to interrupt the work. But they proved abortive and the fortification works were very rapidly proceeded with.

About this time Shivaji fell ill and was confined to his sick bed for seven or eight months at Satara. This circumstance sufficed to give currency to all sorts of baseless rumours that the great king had died, having succumbed to poison administered by his son, Sambhaji, during his illness. However the report was not generally believed among the people, for this was not the first time when such mendacious tales about Shivaji's death had gone round. In his active career of well-nigh thirty years, this seems to have been the first important sickness of Shivaji. There is no previous record of such a protracted illness in his eventful life. After the stress of so many labours and adventures by which he had paved his way to the realization of his hopes, even his Herculean strength might well flag and demand peace and rest. But the rest that Shivaji wanted it was impossible to obtain. The malignant influences of the hostile powers in the Deccan were at work on all sides. He had always to maintain a vigilant watch against them. The rest that was thus long denied to him, nature exacted in this protracted illness. It was in this time of enforced inactivity that the deep-laid plans for a new campaign were evolved in Shivaji's mind, destined to be prosecuted in person, as soon as his health permitted it. This was the invasion of the Karnatic, the story of which may be held over to be told in a separate chapter.

While Shivaji was pondering over these plans at Satara, Moropant Pingle marched to Kalyan with a force of ten thousand strong. Arrived there he detached a few men, with a gang of masons and labourers to a dismantled fort called Parnel (Parner). The fort was forthwith occupied by Moropant's men and the work of strengthening the fortifications commenced in right

5. The district of Salsette in the neighbourhood of the island of Bombay, not the district of similar name in the neighbourhood of Panjim in Goa.

6. The modern Sion, still called Shiv or Sheev in Marathi.

earnest. The policy which seems to have prompted this capture and renovation of a ruined fortress seems to have been that thereby he might obtain control over the Portuguese communications with Damaun and expose to attack one of the traderoutes to Surat as well as this movement of the Mogul armies in those parts. The Portuguese government looked languidly upon this rising menace to their freedom of communication, being as incapable of resistance now, as a few months before they had been in the case of the fort in Salsette. On his restoration to health, previously to his embarking on the Karnatic campaign, Shivaji made a tour of inspection to this fortress, thus restored and equipped for such important purposes.
