

# **THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL STUDIES**

## **Sadaat Barha's Relation with Rajputs During the Early Eighteenth Century**

**Salma Bano**

CAS, Department of History Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh India

**Abstract:**

*In this paper an attempt has been made to assess Sadaat Barha's relation with Rajputs in the light of Ibrat Namah, written by Mirza Mohd bin Mutamid Khan and other contemporary sources of early eighteenth century. It is a very useful primary unpublished Persian source containing information from the last year of Aurangzeb's reign to the deposition of Farrukh Siyar. I try to focus the relation of Sadaat with Rajputs mainly Raja Jai Singh and Maharaja Ajit Singh. This paper also covers the informations such as the secret agreement made between Saiyed Husain Ali Khan and Maharaja Ajit Singh, Raja Jai Singh's expedition against Churaman Jat, key role played by Ait Singh in dethroning Emperor Farrukh Siyar and reasons for not having good relation between Sadaat Barha and Jai Singh. It also contains details for the pinnacle of their power and their end.*

**Keywords:** Saiyed Abdullah Khan, Saiyed Husain Ali Khan, Ibrat Namah, Raja Jai Singh, Vjai Singh, Maharaja Ajit Singh, Rana Amar Singh, Farrukh Siyar, Budh Singh, Muhkam Singh, Churaman Jat, Munim Khan, Jajau.

The early decades of eighteenth century witnessed far reaching changes in the political set up of the country. The imperial court under the Later Mughals was divided between the Iranies, Turanies and Hindustani parties, consisting of Rajputs, Afghans and others. The third group who come into prominence in Later Mughal period was largely depended on the Indian support. The important nobles of this group were two brothers Saiyid Abdullah Khan Barha and Saiyid Husain Ali Khan Barha often referred to as the Sadaat Barha.

Studies on relation with Rajputs have always aroused great interest of scholars, therefore a considerable research have been conducted on these aspects. However an important aspect on Sadaat Barha's relation with Rajputs, have been overlooked by scholars. In the present paper an attempt has been made to assess Sadaat Barha's relation with Rajputs in the light of *Ibrat Namah* and several other sources. *Ibrat Namah* is an important primary source of early eighteenth century, it is written by Mirza Mohammad bin Mutamid Khan. It is one of the eye witness and unbiased original Persian work. It has very useful account from the last year of Aurangzeb to the deposition of Farrukh Siyar. It also contains valuable information about the leading nobles of that period.

The Saiyid brothers, the Saiyid Hasan Ali Khan and Saiyid Husain Ali Khan were the sons of the Saiyid Abdullah Khan Barha alias Saiyid Miyan who during the reign of Aurangzeb held the faujdari of Nandair in Deccan. The Saiyids of Barha claimed their descent from Saiyid Abul Farha who had migrated from Madina to Wasit in Iraq. Sometime afterwards he along with his twelve sons came to India and settled down in the *Sarkar* of Sarhind, between Meerut and Saharanpur. Later they have become known as Saiyid of Barha<sup>i</sup>. From the time of Akbar, the men of this clan of Saiyids were famous as military leaders and by their bravery had acquired a traditional right led the vanguard (*harawal*) of the imperial troops. Their custom was to fight on foot in Indian fashion.<sup>ii</sup>

During the eighteenth century the prominent Rajputs were Raja Jai Singh of Amber, Maharaja Ajit Singh of Marwar and Rana Amar Singh of Mewar. When Mewar lost her long pre-eminence prestige owing to her fruitless struggle with Mughals, her place was taken by Amber and Merwar. Jai Singh and Ajit Singh played a prominent role in the politics of the court. Their help was always required by the Emperor and Saiyids equally. During the reign of Aurangzeb, the elder brother Abdullah Khan<sup>iii</sup> was a faujdar of Sultanpur while the younger Husain Ali Khan was appointed in Ranthambore and Hindaun Bayana.<sup>iv</sup> In the battle of Jajau<sup>v</sup>, Saiyids were on the side of Bahadur Shah. One of their brothers, Nuruddin Ali was killed in this battle and both these brothers were also wounded<sup>vi</sup>. As reward of their service they received a rise of 1000 mansab each. On the recommendation of Azim-us-Shan, Abdullah Khan was appointed as governor of Allahabad and Husain Ali as deputy governor of Bihar. Before the battle of Jajau, Azam Shah had granted the Ajit Singh and Jai Singh the title of Maharaja and Mirza, rank of 7000/7000 and governorship of Gujarat and Malwa. Jai Singh sided with Azam Shah against Bahadur Shah but abandoned him during the battle.<sup>vii</sup> Ajit Singh joined neither side. Vijay Singh (Chimaji) the younger brother of Jai Singh had joined Bahadur Shah.<sup>viii</sup>

At the time of dispute for the Kachwahas throne between two brothers Jai Singh and Vijay Singh. Jai Singh was the elder and deserving candidate for the throne. But Emperor ordered to Husain Khan, faujdar of Mewat to establish imperial *thana* in Amber and the property of Jai Singh should be confiscated and title Mirza Raja was given to his younger brother Vijay Singh<sup>x</sup>. Jai Singh could not find even half of that<sup>x</sup>.

After the death of Aurangzeb, Ajit Singh occupied Jodhpur. Emperor Bahadur Shah marched from Ajmer to Jodhpur to punish him, hearing the news Ajit Singh was ready to submit. Emperor also accepted his submission with title *Maharaja*. He also got his *mansab* of 4000 *zat*.<sup>xi</sup> It was the desire of *wazir*, Munim Khan that both the Rajas should go with Emperor to Deccan for expedition against Mohd Kambaksh<sup>xii</sup>. Mirza Mohammad the writer of *Ibrat Namah* sharply criticizes Munim Khan and condemned his policy as "ill conceived." Munim Khan and others advised the Emperor that both the *Rajas* should be accompanied with Emperor for Deccan. Munim Khan had decided to please them with flattery and wanted to appoint his own persons in their *watan*, till the action against Kambaksh would be over. So Mihrab Khan and Mukhlis Khan<sup>xiii</sup> were appointed in Jodhpur and Mertha by the order of Emperor.

While the emperor marched to Deccan, on April 30, 1708 both the Rajas knew this plan of Munim Khan and escaped the royal camp and went to Udaipur for an agreement with Rana Amar Singh for joint action. Both the Raja first reached Mairtha and recovered Jodhpur from Mihrab Khan and Mukhlis Khan. Amber was also recovered by the *Rajas* from Saiyed Husain Khan Barha<sup>xiv</sup>. In the second battle Saiyed Husain Khan, elder brother Ahmad Sayeed Khan foudjar of Mairtha Sanghalhana, Saiyid Ghairat Khan foudjar of Narnol and Churaman with his jat troops<sup>xv</sup> jointly attacked the Rajputs but near the town of Sanbhar, Saiyed Husain Khan with his brothers were accidentally killed in this battle.<sup>xvi</sup> This success of Rajputs causes blow to imperial prestige. Mirza Mohammad says, "Had an experienced *Subehdar* been appointed with all necessary materials, Rajputs would have not been able to win back his country". He says Husain Khan Barha and others were brave and courageous men but they were newly risen nobles and did not have the confidence of people and sufficient means to deal with.<sup>xvii</sup> When Emperor knew about it, he ordered Asaf Khan that Saiyid Abdullah Khan Baraha to be appointed in Amber. But Saiyid Abdullah Khan made a number of far reaching demands. Asaf Khan did not like his demands and paid no attention. Saiyid Shujaat Khan Barha had been appointed there.<sup>xviii</sup> Mirza Mohammad says that the appointment of Saiyid Abdullah Khan was a right decision, as his bravery had been famous since his father's time. Saiyid Shujaat Khan, who was also from Barha clan but he was not as brave as Saiyid Abdullah Khan Barha and others.<sup>xix</sup> This was the main reason that Rajputs were able to control Sanbhar and Mewat also.

It was the first time in 1712 that due to their help to Farrukh Siyar, the Saiyids emerged as a powerful group and rose to dominant position in the state. In spite of their help to Farrukh Siyar in gaining the throne, Emperor never bestowed full confidence in them and continued to suspect.<sup>xx</sup>

The problem which Farrukh Siyar and Saiyid faced was of devising a suitable policy towards Rajputs, Jats, Marathas and Sikhs. Soon the Saiyids were able to establish cordial relation with others with their diplomatic skills. Husain Ali abolished *Jazia*, and also revived the grant of privileges to the Hindus just to gain their supports.

Soon after the accession of Farrukh Siyar, Raja Jai Singh, Maharaja Ajit Singh, Maharana of Udaipur and other had sent a letter of congratulation to him<sup>xxi</sup>. Ajit Singh was appointed as *subahdar* of Thatta in Sindh but he refused to obey this order of Emperor. Emperor sent Saiyid Husain Ali to Jodhpur to punish Maharaja Ajit Singh. Emperor had also sent dispatch to Ajit Singh to fight against and kill Husain Ali Khan<sup>xxii</sup>. In March 1714 a treaty was concluded between Husain Ali and Ajit Singh. In this treaty Ajit Singh agreed to give his daughter, Bai Indra Kaur in marriage to Farrukh Siyar and send his son Abhay Singh to the Mughal court with Shaista Khan. The important part of this treaty was a secret pact between Husain Ali and Ajit Singh. According to this secret agreement as soon as Ajit Singh marched to Thatta he would be appointed as *Subahdar* of Gujarat<sup>xxiii</sup>.

Since the departure of Husain Ali from the court Farrukh Siyar wanted to get rid of the Saiyids. His attention was drawn towards Raja Jai Singh. Raja Jai Singh owed for his appointment as the governor of Malwa to Husain Ali.<sup>xxiv</sup> Latter his relation with Saiyids got bitter due to more personal rather than imperial interest. The first reason was the intervention of Husain Ali in Kota Bundi disputes against his brother in law Budh Singh<sup>xxv</sup>. Husain Ali had supported Bhim Singh of Kota<sup>xxvi</sup> against Budh Singh. Jai Singh showed his hostility by refusing to pay respect for Husain Ali when he passed through Malwa for Deccan. Another reason of dissatisfaction between Raja Jai Singh and Saiyids, was the alliance of Saiyids with Jats. Emperor sent a *farman* to Jai Singh directing him to appear at imperial court. Emperor promised to restore Bundi to Budh Singh and appoint Jai Singh at the head of large army against Jats. After coming to court Jai Singh remained close to Emperor and did not make any effort to visit Saiyids. Mirza Mohd says that Saiyid Abdullah got annoyed due to this behavior of Jai Singh<sup>xxvii</sup>. He was not also consulted on this subject by Emperor.<sup>xxviii</sup> Saiyid Khan-i-Jahan was also sent to support Raja Jai Singh, but he supported Jats against Jai Singh secretly.<sup>xxix</sup> Mirza Mohd says that Raja Jai Singh showed his great effort but due to the secrete help of Saiyed Abdullah Khan, he could not succeed against Jats even after one and half year. Emperor became ready for peace settlement with Jats on the suggestion of Abdullah Khan. At that time Raja Jai Singh thought victory was within his grasp. Jai Singh resented this very much but complied with the royal orders.

September 1718 the Emperor sent Nahar Khan<sup>xxx</sup> to call Maharaja Ajit Singh. Itiqad Khan was also sent to

welcome him. But Maharaja Ajit Singh was not ready to visit Emperor without Saiyid Abdullah Khan<sup>xxxii</sup>. Next day Ajit Singh visited to Emperor with Saiyid Abdullah Khan. Emperor gave him the title of *Rajveer*<sup>xxxiii</sup> to please them. But Emperor was very sad with the behavior of Maharaja Ajit Singh. On the request of Abdullah Khan Bikaner was also conferred upon Maharaja Ajit Singh.

When, Emperor realized that the end of Saiyids was not feasible. Now Emperor tried to remove ill will between Saiyids and Raja Jai Singh by mutual visit to their house. Emperor went to Saiyid Abdullah Khan's house with Raja Jai Singh. Raja Jai Singh also got title of *Raja Raj Indra Dhiraj Jai Singh Sawai*.<sup>xxxiii</sup> In view of the situation, Jai Singh had suggested to Emperor to attack on Saiyids. But Emperor was not ready to listen to him. Raja Jai Singh left the court with Budh Singh on the order of Emperor. There was only Jai Singh, who was ready to fight with Saiyids for Emperor. It was said that departure of Jai Singh was at the instance of Saiyid Abdullah Khan.<sup>xxxiv</sup> Though Jai Singh was ordered to return to his *Watan*, he did not go beyond twenty or thirty *kos* from the city, and stayed at *Sarai* Suhail for the help of Emperor.

On the other hand Ajit Singh had supported to Saiyids with his four thousand soldiers. He remained present with Saiyids in whole incidences<sup>xxxv</sup>. It was Ajit Singh who advised the Saiyids to demand the key posts and custody of the strategic places in the fort and in the Palace for their own men. Lastly on the suggestion of courtiers, Emperor wanted to escape from fort. He wrote a note to Maharaja Ajit Singh for this plan and requested for his help. But Maharaja Ajit Singh handed over this note to Saiyids<sup>xxxvi</sup>. After deposing the Farrukh siyar, Maharaja Ajit Singh and Saiyids had decided that prince Bedardil, who was the eldest son of prince Rafi -ush -shan should be appointed on the throne. But his mother was not ready to hand over her son to Saiyids. They found Rafi-ud-darjat who was younger to Bedardil, was brought by the soldiers of Saiyids. Rafi-ud-darjat was seated on the throne holding one hand by Saiyid Abdullah Khan and other by Maharaja Ajit Singh<sup>xxxvii</sup>. Farrukh Siyar was blinded and murdered.

After the deposition of Farrukh Siyar, the power and position of the Saiyid reached its apex. Jai Singh could not challenge the power of Saiyids but he gave refuge to those who fled from Delhi. He was also ready to help the Mitr Sen's puppet prince Nekosiyar<sup>xxxviii</sup> at Agra .When Jai Singh realized lack of supports he made preparation to settle issue with the Saiyids. Saiyids also asked Maharaja Ajit Singh to start negotiation with Raja Jai Singh<sup>xxxix</sup>. Maharaja Ajit Singh met with Raja Jai Singh on November 5, 1719A.D near Amber and he was appointed as *Foujdar* of *Sorath* [surat]. Meanwhile Bhimsen annexed Bundi depriving Budh Singh of his possession with the approval of Saiyids.

Raja Ajit Singh became friend of the Saiyids. He was favoured with the rank of 7000/7000, he was given the following concessions (a) permission to take back his (Dola) daughter from the imperial *haram* and reconvert her to *Hniduism* (b) acceptance of his request for the abolition of *jaziya* (c) appointment to the *subahdari* of Ajmer and Gujarat on 15 November, 1719A.D.

As soon as the Saiyid brothers, heard reverses in Deccan done by Nizam-ul-Mulk. Husain Ali decided to March to Deccan with Emperor, leaving Abdullah in the capital. The Saiyids tried to secure the support of Maharaja Ajit Singh and RajaJai Singh. So he decided to go Deccan via Ajmer, but none come to their help<sup>xl</sup>. On September 2 Husain Ali was murdered on the way. Both Emperor Muhammad shah and Saiyid Abdullah Khan send Farman to Raja Jai Singh for help. He supported Emperor against Saiyid Abdullah in the battle of Hasanpur by sending his troops under the command of *Diwan* Rao Jagram<sup>xli</sup>. The two brothers, Abdullah Khan and Najmuddin Ali were taken captive during this battle and Abdullah Khan died two year later on 30 September, 1722 A.D.

The fall of Saiyids synchronized with the rapid ascendancy of Raja Jai Singh. From 1720 onwards till his death in 1743 he served the Mughal Empire as commander of various expeditions. In contrast to him Maharaja Ajit Singh revolted number of time.

It is amply clear from the above writing that Sadaat were successful in winning over the major factions of the court mainly Rajputs like Ajit Singh and Bhim Singh. They transformed Maharaja Ajit Singh from rebel to an ally. It was on their intervention that Churaman visited Emperor Farrukh Siyar on April 1718A.D. But, it was Husain Ali who showed the way to North to the Marathas and enabled them to see the weakness of the Empire. Saiyid followed a very tolerant religious policy, but failed to make good relation with Jai Singh. Only for their own gains, both of them seriously damaged the foundation of Imperial edifice. Moreover they set the immoral precedent of insulting and humiliating the members of the royal house, a precedent which become common practice in the years to follow.

## References

1. Satish Chandra, Parties and Politics at the Mughal Court, New Delhi 1979, P. 86; W.Irvine The Later Mughals, Delhi, 2006, p p. 201-202.
2. Qasim Aurangabadi, Ahwal- ul-khwaqeen, Rotograph no 36 CAS, Department of History, AMU, Aligarh, f.103 b.
3. Saiyid Hasan Ali Khan adur Shah.
4. Satish Chandra, Parties and politics at the Mughal court, who was the eldest son of Abdullah Khan, also entitled as Saiyid Abdullah Khan Barha by the Emperor Bahadur Shah.
5. Satish Chandra, Parties and politics at the Mughal court, op. cit., p. 88.
6. The Battle of jajau was fought between prince Azam Shah and Muazzam Shah at twenty miles south of Agra; Jadu Nath Sarkar ,History of Jaipur,p.161.
7. Irvine William, The Later Mughals, op.cit., Vol i, p.34.
8. Mirza Muhammad ,Ibrat Namah Rotograph 247, CAS, Department of History, AMU, Aligarh, f. 56 a.

9. Ibid., f. 56 b.
10. Vijay Singh was weak Raja and resisted by the Jai Singh's partisans.
11. Ibid., ff.56 a- 56b.
12. Ibid., f. 57 a.
13. Mohd Kambakhsh was the eldest brother of Emperor Bahadur Shah, who crowned himself Emperor at Hyderabad .
14. Mirza mohd says that both faujdar were not liked by inhabitants of there, f. 57 b.
15. Saiyid Husain Khan Barha was the faujdar of Mewat.
16. Jadunath Sarkar, A History Of Jaipur, New Delhi, 1984., p.161.
17. Ibid., f. 58 a.
18. Ibid., f. 57 b.
19. Ibid., f.58 b.
20. Ibid., f. 58 b.
21. Yahya Khan Tazkirat-ul-muluk, rotograph no 81 CAS, Department of History, AMU, Aligarh, f. 122 b
22. Shivdas writes that Ajit Singh Rathor being full of pride on his strength had neglected to send the congratulatory letter as well as the peshkash wa nisar to the Emperor; Shahnama Munawwar Kalam, rotograph no 139, CAS, Department of History, AMU, Aligarh, f.4 b.
23. Zahir ud din malik, The Reign of Muhammad Shah, Bombay, 1977, p.33.
24. Ibrat Namah, op.cit., f. 60 a.
25. Satish Chandr, Parties and politics at the Mughal court, op.cit., p.121.
26. Emperor Bahadur Shah granted Kota to Budh Singh for the participation in the battle of Jajau.
27. Bhim Singh was partisan of Saiyid Abdullah Khan, who also wrote to Ajit Singh to support Bhim Singh by sending Tej Raj Bhandari; Balmukund, Balmukund Nama Letter Of Kingmaker of the Eighteen Century, tr Satish Chandra, Bombay, 1972, Letter No.34., p.110.
28. Ibid., f. 85 a
29. Ibid., f. 66 b.
30. Ibid., f.85 a.
31. Nahar Khan was an intimate friend of Saiyids. He played a great role to bringing Ajit Singh to their side, Ibrat Namah, op. cit., f. 96 a.
32. Emperor Farrukh Siyar conferred the title Qutb-ul-Mulk Yamin-ud-daula, Zafar Jang Sipah Salar, Yar-i-wafadar to Saiyid Abdullah Khan; Shahnama Munawwar kalam, op.cit., f 1a.
33. Ibrat Namah, op. cit., f.110 b.
34. Ibid., f. 111 b.
35. Ibid., f. 117 b.
36. Ibid., f. 117 a.
37. Shivdas, Shahnama Munawwar Kalam, op.cit., ff. 25 a- 26 b.
38. Ibrat Namah, op.cit., f. 120 b.
39. Nekosiyar was the eldest surviving son of Prince Akbar who was imprisoned in the Agra fort from the time of Aurangzeb. Now he was seated on the throne by his confidence Mitre Sen. Mitre Sen was also granted a mansab of 7000/7000, the title of Raja Birbal and raised to the office of the wizarat, Shivdas, Shahnama Munawwar Kalam, op.cit., f. 28 b.
40. Shivdas, Shahnamah Munawwar kalam, op.cit., f.32 a. for more details see V. S. Bhatnagar, Life And Times of Sawai Jai Singh, Delhi, 1974, p. 147.
41. Balmukand, Balmukund Nama, A letter of King Maker Of The Eighteen Century, tr Satish Chandra, op.cit., letter No.12, p.54.
42. ShiveDas, Shahnama Munawwar Kalam, op.cit., f. 51a.