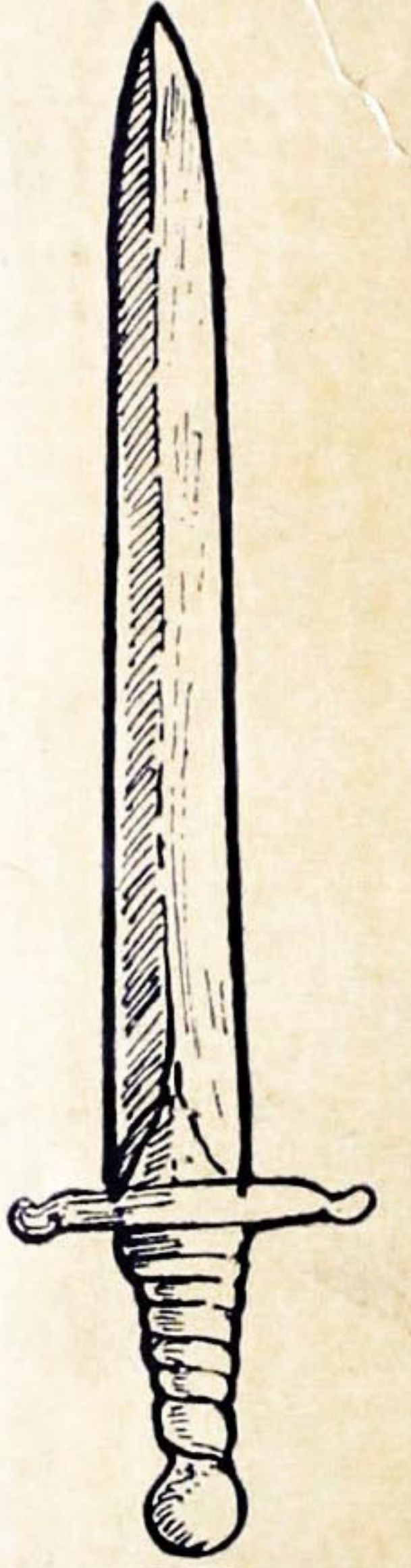


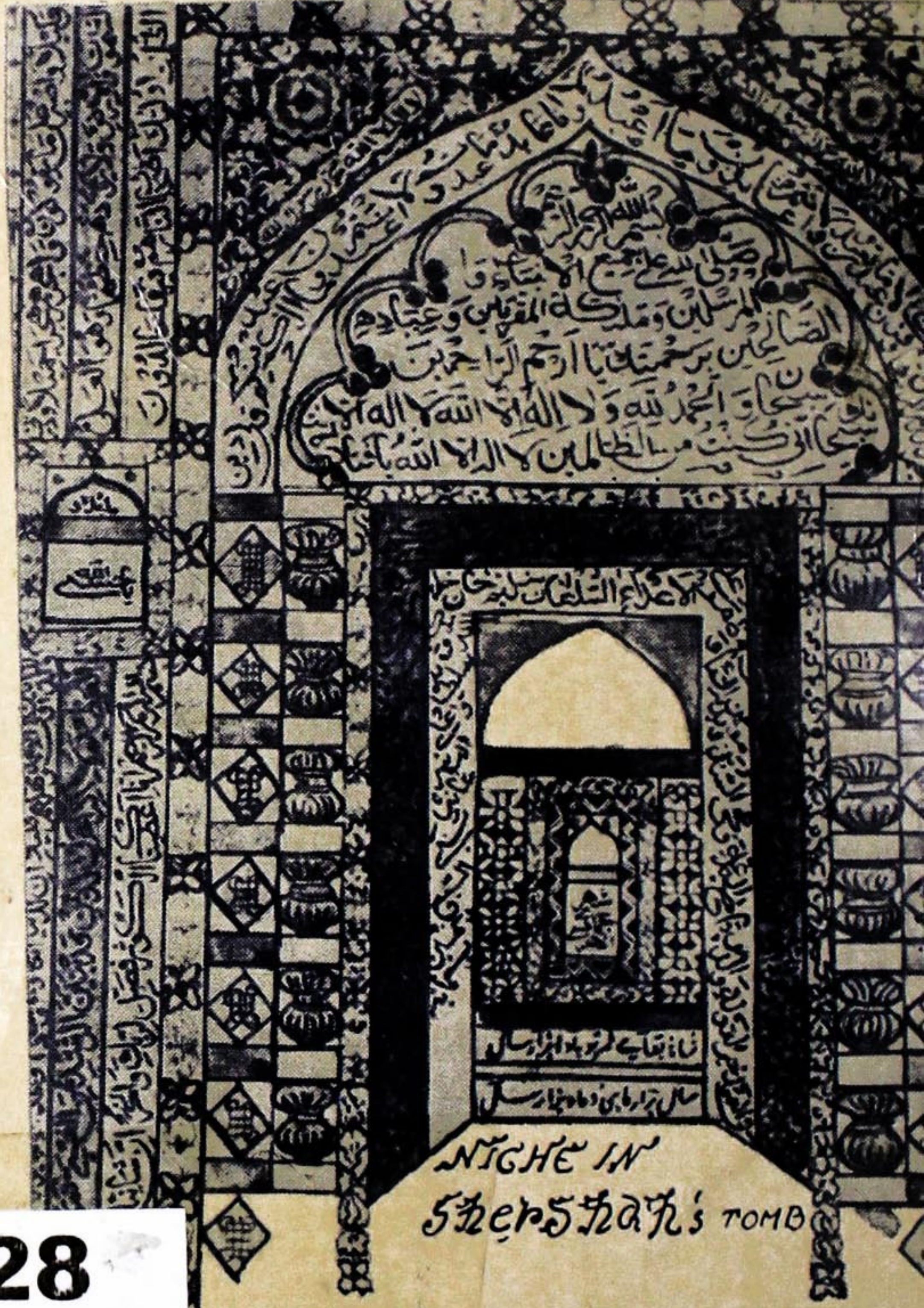
# The Decisive Battle

OF

# SHER SHAH



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# DECISIVE BATTLES OF ŚER ŚAH

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JANAKI PRAKASHAN

Chowhatta, Patna-4

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## FOREWORD

I have great pleasure in commending the work of Shri B. P. Ambashthya to the consideration of the students and scholars of Medieval India. It is a study in depth of the three battles of Sūrajgarha, Chaūsah and Bilagrām which represent the three successive stages in the rise of Śēr Śāh from the position of a commoner to that of a king. Shri Ambashthya has carefully fixed the sequence of events and has analysed the basic authorities for this purpose. He has scrutinised every bit of available evidence on the subject and has arrived at conclusions which correct the errors of early writers on Śēr Śāh, like Prof. Qanungo and Dr. S. C. Mishra. Nor has he, in this context, ignored the works of Dr. Avasthi, Dr. S. K. Banerji and Dr. Ishwari Prasad who have dealt with the career of Humāyūn. Indeed, this was inevitable because the achievements of Śēr Śāh were not only made at the cost of the second Muḡhal emperor, but they form a glorious interlude in the otherwise tragic history of the first half of the sixteenth century. Credit should be given to Shri Ambashthya for having decisively fixed the date of the battle of Sūrajgarha and for having presented a convincing picture of military manoeuvring at the battles of Chaūsah and Bilagrām. While differing from the earlier writers, Shri Ambashthya has argued his contention with force of facts.

Allahabad,  
10.7.72.

B. P. SAKSENA  
Formerly Head of the Department  
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and the President of the Indian  
History Congress.



## P R E F A C E

In this book an effort has been made to evaluate the three successive decisive battles of Sūrajgarha (Oct., A.D. 1530), Chaūsah (June 26, A.D. 1539) and Qanaūj (May 17, A.D. 1540) which constitute three mile-stones in the study of the rise of Śēr Śāh from a commoner to the height of imperial glory. The scholars in the past have studied the said battles but in isolation and not in their co-relationship. In fact, they form the three rungs of a ladder in the phenomenal rise of Śēr Śāh from a commoner to a king. Each is a corollary to the other.

The battle of Sūrajgarha has never been studied in its depth and the scholars in the past have confined themselves to the Persian sources only in its evaluation. The Muḡhal and the Afghān chroniclers are very deficient in their accounts on this battle and fail to present a cogent and consistent picture. The Khyāt of Bodhrāj, available in Rājasthānī Hindī script in the Khūdābakhś Library at Paṭnah, and composed in the 17th century, throws a flood of light on the early career of Śēr Śāh, when he was the son of a petty jāgīrdār at Sahsarām, a period of his life which has remained in obscurity, and enlightens us on his earliest extant close relationship with the house of the Ujjainīyahs at Bhojpūr in Śāhābād district of the State of Bihar. This Khyāt for the first time lets us know in detail the strength of the various columns of the Afghāns and the Ujjainīyahs in the battle-field at Sūrajgarha, the role of the Ujjainīyahs in the fight there, and the well-merited recognition of the bravery of Mahārājah Gajpatī who led his Ujjainīyahs followers in this battle.

Another problem associated with the battle of Sūrājgarha is its dating. Conflicting dates have been advanced by a number of scholars. An effort has been made to resolve them and its date has been fixed in Oct, A.D. 1530, based as it is on the deductions drawn from a number of historical postulates.

An effort has also been made to evaluate the significance of the battle of Sūrajgarha in its proper historical perspective.



The battle of Chaūsah which is a logical sequel to the battle of Sūrajgarha in the historical analysis, forms the second stepping-stone in the study of the imperial career of Śēr Śāh. A study of facts leading to this battle in the light of the original source materials has been drawn up at first. Thereafter the findings of a number of scholars on this battle under various sub-heads have been studied in all their thoroughness and their errors have been brought to the surface in the light of the testimony of the Persian chronicles after a careful and critical sifting of the matters pertaining to the facts in issue. Finally, the picture that emerged out of the examination on the battle of Chaūsah, has come to be appended towards the close of the treatment on the subject.

The battle of Qanaūj, loosely called as it is, forms the third and the last mile-stone to give a final seal of legality, as to make Śēr Śāh the *de jure* emperor of Hindustān. Evaluation of the facts leading to the battle of Qanaūj, based as they are on the critical sifting of evidences drawn from the Persian sources, has been made first. Thereafter the findings of various scholars on the subject have been critically examined and their shortcomings have been suitably pointed out. The factors leading to the defeat of emperor Humāyūn in the battle of Qanaūj have been evaluated and views of a number of scholars on the matter have been critically examined. Finally, the significance of this battle has been dealt with towards the close of the treatment on the subject.

I will find my labour amply rewarded, if it receives its dues, for whatever worth it is, in the world of scholarship.

Dated, Patna,  
The 6th January, 1973

B. P. Ambashthya

## PROLOGUE

A number of eminent scholars have exhaustively dealt with the life and exploits of Śēr Śāh but hardly any of them has made a clear analysis of the battles of Sūrajgarha, Chaūsah and Bilgrām in their proper perspectives. In fact, they make their successive stages in the rise of Śēr Śāh from commoner to king; one is the natural corollary of the other.

To evaluate their co-relationship in the light of the chain of events culminating in the assumption of royal title by Śēr Kṇān, it is necessary to have a clear conception of the political forces which were at play in eastern India in A. D. 1526, the year of destiny both for Bābur, the founder of the Muḡhal empire, and for Śēr Kḥān, the regenerator of the Afḡhān hegemony. It was in this year that he was promoted to the position of a noble in the Nūḡhānī court, which event synchronised with the overthrow of the Lodī dynasty and the expulsion of the Afḡhāns from the western regions of northern India. The vanquished had to abandon Dehlī and Āgrah and they retreated towards the east where they rallied round sultān Muḡammad Nūḡhānī to challenge the authority of the Muḡhal intruder and, if possible, to throw him out of the country bag and baggage.

Thus the centre of politics shifted from the west to the east, particularly after the debacle at Khanūā, which wiped off the glory of Rānā Sāngā and his power. To distract the attention of the invader, sultān Maḡmūd, the last scion of the Lodī house, having lost his refuge in Rājputānah, arrived in the

east but he rendered confusion worse confounded in the politics of this region. Nor can the name of sultān Nuṣrat Śāh of Bangāl be omitted in this context, because he had fixed his eyes on South Bihār which lay within elbow's reach from the frontier of his kingdom that extended to Mungēr. His strategy was to play off the Afghāns against the Muḡhals and then to gradually slice off the Nūḥānī kingdom and in the end to swallow the whole of it. This sinister design of the Bangāl ruler did not remain a secret to Śēr Kḥān who foiled it decisively. His power and influence was gradually rising in the Nūḥānī court, particularly after the death of sultān Muḥammad Nūḥānī who was succeeded by his minor son, sultān Jalāl-ud-dīn Nūḥānī, then a lad of a few winters. The astute Sūri chief played his cards with a masterly hand<sup>7</sup> and outwitted both his Nūḥānī master and the ambitious sultāns of Bangāl, namely, Nuṣrat Śāh and Maḥmūd Śāh. In short, the year A. D. 1526 witnessed the working of pentagonal forces in the east. In this crisis there were no clear-cut and defined channels of power-politics. In fact, the entire political situation was in a melting-pot. It is in the background of these five forces and their inter-actionism that the three decisive battles of Sūrajgarha, Chaūsah and Bilgrām near Qanaūj may be correctly studied.

The battle of Sūrajgarha, fought near the confluence of the Gangā and Kīūl river in October, A. D. 1530, marked the fulfilment of Śēr Kḥān's long cherished desire of establishing his defacto and unquestioned sway over the Nūḥānī kingdom of South Bihār. It aimed as much at the destruction of sultān Maḥmūd of Bangāl as at Nūḥānī master,

sultān Jalāl-ud-din. It drove the latter into wilderness for all time to come and it decisively scotched the menace of Bangāl viper. Nay, it provided to Śēr Khān a fresh spring-board to embark on a career of aggression against the sultān of Bangāl. The battle of Sūrajgarha is a glowing tribute to Śēr Khān's astute diplomacy. He successfully pulled the chestnut out of fire in the face of a number of competing rivals. The battle of Sūrajgarha is significant from another point of view also. It marks the culmination of the duel between Śēr Khān and the ruler of Bangāl which began with the battles of Lolpūrā (near Śaikhpūrah) and Hājipūr, fought respectively in October-November, A. D. 1529, and January, A. D. 1530. If the battle of Lolpūrā was the manifestation of direct clash between Śēr Khān and the sultān of Bangāl, the battle of Hājipūr was primarily directed against Makhdūm 'Ālam (Āālam) who was governor of Hājipūr, on behalf of Bangāl sultān. And much to the advantage of Makhdūm 'Ālam (Āālam) and Śēr Khān, Makhdūm 'Ālam (Āālam) changed the sides, turned against his master and joined Śēr Khān.

The battle of Sūrajgarha has another relieving aspect also. It finally confirmed the predominance of Śēr Khān over Bangāl sultān whose sun in the power-politics of Eastern India was definitely setting. It enhanced the power and prestige of the Sūr chief and prepared the ground for the acquisition of the fort of Chunār a few months after (Nov.-Dec., A.D. 1530). He lured Lād Malakah into the net of his diplomacy by promising to marry her. It is also a fact that Śēr was persuaded to take this step by her well-wishers' the three turkmān brothers, who convinced her that

Śēr Khān alone would be able to protect her from the impending troubles. The acquisition of the fort of Chunār made Śēr Khān so powerful that even sultān Maḥmūd Lodī, the last scion of the Lodī dynasty, had to take him along with him to fight the battle of Do-rāh (Daurah). But he betrayed his fellow Afghāns by coming to a secret understanding with Humāyūn. Sultān Maḥmūd Lodī faded into oblivion and Śēr Khān now towered high in the Afghān camp. Only he could take up cudgel with the Muḡhals, for the revival of the Afghān supremacy.

If the battle at Sūrajgarha in October, A.D. 1530, made Śēr Khān master of the Nuḥāni kingdom of South Bihār and gave him the title of ḥazrat 'ālī (áālī), the battle of Chaūsah on the 26th June, A. D. 1539, not only consolidated all the gains that had hitherto come within his grasp, but it also legalized his status. He assumed the title of ḥazrat-i-'ālī (áālī). To proclaim it, he issued farmāns from the very field at Chaūsah, to the various ruling chiefs in the country. He now became the defacto and dejure monarch of Bihār and Bangāl. The battle of Chaūsah is, therefore, a corollary to the battle of Sūrajgarha.

The battle of Bilgrām near Qanaūj on the 17th May, A. D. 1540, was the capping stone to the process that had started nearly ten years back in the field of Sūrajgarha. It drove Humāyūn ultimately out of Hindūstān; the unfortunate emperor, after wandering in Rājputānah and Sindh for about a year or so, was compelled to migrate to Persia; and now the Sūrī monarch extended the sphere of his power to the Punjāb in the west and Mālwah in the south. If the battle at Chaūsah made Śēr Khān the monarch

of Bihār and Bangāl, the battle of Bilgrām made him the emperor of Hindūstān. Thus the three successive battles of Sūrajgarha, Chaūsah and Bilgrām near Qanaūj form a logical sequence of the one to the other.

As to the source-materials bearing on the subject, it may be pointed out that what are available in Persian are the works of Muḡhal historians or of Afḡhān chroniclers. They may be classified either as the accounts given by eye-witnesses or as chronicled by such persons who were nearest in point of time to the events recorded. Amongst the Muḡhal historiographers, the first to invite our attention is Jaūhar. He gives an eye-witness narration of the battles of Chaūsah and Qanaūj and the details of the events leading to them. As such, his evidence is of special importance. But he was merely an ewer-bearer of emperor Humāyūn and not the historian. He had not maintained notes of events as and when they had occurred. He summed up his narrations in his book tazkīrāt-ul-wāqi'āt in A.D. 1587, forty-eight years after the death of Humāyūn. Evidently he had to depend solely on his fading memory, which led to vagueness and at places to confused sequence of facts. Nevertheless, his testimony possesses a value of its own.

The next chronicler was Mirzā Ḥaidar who actually participated in the battle of Bilgrām on behalf of Humāyūn. He has given an eye-witness narration of the fight in his book tārīkh-i-raśīdī. Despite all its authenticity, it suffers from certain inaccuracies at places.

Among the Muḡhal historians, Abul Fazl is of the highest importance because of his monumental

work akbarnāmah. He was an accomplished man of letters and all-round genius. He had a keen desire for recording the truth. Being an official chronicler of the imperial court of Akbar, he had additional advantage of access to all official and trustworthy records drawn from various sources. In short, Abul Fazl's akbarnāmah, so far as it deals with the transactions of emperor Humāyūn with Śēr Khān Sūr down to A.D. 1539 and onwards, is an account written nearest in point of time and its factual accuracy can not be easily challenged. But the rich literary ornamentation and linguistic embellishment which characterise his work, makes it difficult for a student of history to extract the dry bones of facts from the jungle of metaphors.

Nizām-ud-dīn's *tabaqāt-i-akbarī*, Badāyūnī's *muntakhab-ut-tawārīkh* and Firištah's *gulšan-i-ibrāhimī* are other sources. Although strictly speaking, they too are not contemporary authorities, because they were also composed in the reign of Akbar; still they are very close to the period of the relevant events. They provide valuable information.

Amongst the Afghān chroniclers, mention may be made of Ábbās Sarwānī's *tārīkh-i-śēr śāhī*, Ábdullāh's *tārīkh-i-dāūdī*, N'amatullāh's *tārīkh-i-khān-i-jahān lodī wa makhzan-i-afghānī*, Rizqullāh's *wāqīat-i-mustāqī*, Ahmad Yādgār's *tārīkh-i-salāṭīn-i-afāghīnah*, and Kabīr's *Afsānah-i-Śāhān*.

*Tārīkh-i-śēr śāhī* was written by Ábbās Śarwānī at the behest of emperor Akbar. Its author was a relative of Śēr Śāh and had the benefit of gathering first hand information from the very lips of some of the most trustworthy Afghān chiefs who had participated in the struggle of Śēr Khān Sūr against

emperor Humāyūn. As such, *tārīkh-i-śēr śāhī* may be deemed to be as good as a contemporary account. Abdullāh's *tārīkh-i-dāūdī*, N'amatullāh's *tārīkh-i-khān-i-jahān lodī wa makhzan-i-afghānī* and Aḥmad Yādgār's *tārīkh-i-salāṭīn-i-afāghīnah* have added new information on the subject, which is not available in *tārīkh-i-śēr śāhī*. Rizqullāh's *wāqī'āt-i-muštāqī* and Kabīr's *afsānah-i-śāhān* have skipped over the subject in a few lines.

Apart from these well-known Persian sources, there is also a work in Rājasthānī Hindi script and which has so far remained untapped. It was found in the shelves of the *Khudābakhś* Library, Paṭnah. It is a *khyāt*, composed by Bodhrāj who belonged to Pūgal in Bīkānēr State. He was a contemporary of Mutā Nain Sinh, the author of the famous *khyāt*, and the Prime Minister of Jodhpūr in the second-half of the seventeenth century. To compile a history of the Parmārs of the nineteen states, viz. Abū, *Chandrāvātī*, *Dāttā*, *Santrāmpūr*, *Rēwārs* of Gujrāt and *Mēwār*, the Parmārs of *Mūlī*, *Bijolliā*, *Srīnagar* and *Bhojpūr* etc, Bodhrāj laid under contribution a variety of materials and he spent 37 years of his precious life in this pursuit. To collect the basic material for the history of Parmārs, he had to visit different places and it was in this connection that he came to Jagdīspūr (Dist. Śāhābād, Bihār) where he collected materials from some of the direct descendants of Parmārs during his six-months stay there in V. S. 1719 (1663<sup>1</sup> A.D.). It throws new light on the early career of Śēr Śāh, particularly that phase of it when, after getting disgusted with his father Ḥasan, he proceeded to Jaūnpūr and on the way he met with prince



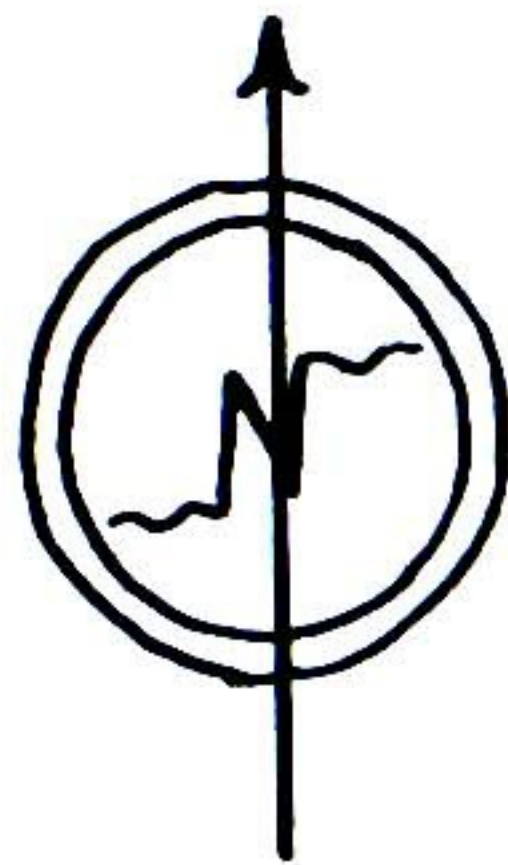
Bādal, the son of the Ujjainīyah chief of Bhojpūr. This event occurred in a jungle where the latter had gone on hunting. Incidentally it may also be mentioned that Bādal too was intensely dissatisfied with his father because of domestic discord. Thus two kindred souls met each other. Indeed Bodhrāj is the first to refer to the role played by the Ujjainīyahs of Bhojpūr in the historic fight that Śēr Khān had fought against Ibrāhīm, the general of the sultān of Bangāl, at Sūrajgarha. He gives a clear picture of the various events of the battle.

Among the secondary sources, mention may be made of the doctoral theses on Śēr Śāh presented by K. R. Qanungo<sup>2</sup>, S. C. Mishra and on Humāyūn by S. K. Banerjee, R. S. Avasthi and a monograph by Ishwari Prasad. These writers have mostly drawn their inferences from the Persian sources mentioned above, but conclusions of the present writer are materially different. These secondary works have been amply scrutinised in course of the discussions at the proper places.

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#### FOOT NOTES

1. Translated into English by the author, J. B. R. S., XLVII, pts. 1-4, A.D. 1961, p. 420-421.
2. A revised edition of his work was published in A. D. 1965, wherein the author has incorporated his new findings, but they do not materially affect the basic aspects.



Sultangunj

*References*

*Royal Army*

- Infantry* X
- Artillery* +
- Cavalry* Δ
- Engineers* □

*Afghan Army*

- Division I* ●
- Division II* ⊙
- Cavalry* ⊕



## BATTLE OF SŪRAJGARĤA

When the battle of SūrajgarĤa was fought, has not been precisely mentioned in any of the source works. It is only on the basis of circumstantial evidence that the modern scholars have fixed the same, but they are not unanimous about it. Qanungo<sup>1</sup> places it in A. D. 1534; Avasthi<sup>2</sup> fixes it in A. H. 937 (August, A. D. 1530); Mishra<sup>3</sup> says that it occurred in ṣafar-rabī'a, A. H. 937, (October, A. D. 1530); Ishwari Prasad<sup>4</sup> and Banerjee<sup>5</sup> have placed it in A. D. 1537 and 1529 respectively. Thus the dates suggested by these scholars fluctuate between A. D. 1529 and 1537. But it is possible to come to a reasonable conclusion with regard to the date of this battle, if we take into account certain important events which by common consent had preceded and followed it. And for this, we have to look to Ábbās<sup>6</sup> first. In the context of Śēr Kĥān's participation in the battle of Do-rāh, he writes : "When sultān Maĥmūd (Lodī) came with these nobles into Bihār, Śēr Kĥān found it impossible to offer any resistance, as they possessed so considerable a force, and he himself was not held in sufficient repute among the Afghāns to admit of such an attempt. He was, therefore, necessitated to present himself before sultān Maĥmūd. The Afghāns portioned among themselves the kingdom of Bihār, but the king said to him : When I get possession of Jaūnpūr, I will give to you the kingdom of Bihār which you conquered after defeating the army of the king of Bangāl". This decisively points to the fact that the defeat of

the army of the king of Bangāl at Sūrajgarha and the consequent passing of the kingdom of Bihār into the hands of Śēr Khān, must have preceded the battle of Do-rāh.

Then we find that the three turkmān brothers induced Lād Malakah, the widowed wife of Tāj Khān Sārangkhāni, the custodian of the fort of Chunār, to marry Śēr Khān as the best measure of shielding her hold against all possible future mischief<sup>7</sup>. This they would have done, only when Śēr Khān had exalted himself to some measure of pelf and power. And this could have happened only after the battle of Sūrajgarha which eclipsed for all time to come the prestige of the sultān of Bangāl in the power-politics of the east. In other words, the battle of Sūrajgarha was fought before the fort of Chunār came into the hands of Śēr Khān by marriage. This, therefore, fixes the lower limit of the date of the battle of Sūrajgarha.

The upward time-limit of the dating of the battle of Sūrajgarha is conditioned by a definite date 8th ramzān, A. H. 935 (May 16, A. D. 1529<sup>8</sup>), when Dūdū, the mother of the minor sultān Jalāl-ud-dīn Nūḥānī of Bihār, had died. Her death proved a boon in disguise for Śēr Khān, because it removed all checks to the phenomenal rise of his prestige in the Nūḥānī court where he acted as a regent to the minor sultān Jalāl-ud-dīn Nūḥānī. The Nūḥānī nobles had tolerated Śēr Khān so long as Dūdū, the lawful owner of the Nūḥānī kingdom of South Bihār, was alive. But once she had been removed by the hand of death, the Nūḥānī nobles found themselves under no obligation to obey Śēr Khān any longer because they were growing apprehensive of his

power. The ruler of Bangāl who was a friend of sultān Muḥammad Nūḥānī, the husband of Dūdū, had, on the whole, refrained from putting his covetous design of annexing South Bihār so long as she was alive. But now he found an opportunity to send a force under the command of Quṭb Khān against Śēr Khān in South Bihār on the pretext of protecting the interest of minor sultān. But the game did not succeed and Quṭb Khān was killed in the encounter with Śēr Khān at Lolpūrā, 10 or 12 miles south-east of Śaikhpūrah in south Mungēr. This is confirmed by Ábbās, Ḥasan, and Ábdullāh<sup>9</sup>.

Ábbās<sup>10</sup> further records that as Makhdūm 'Ālam (Áālam), the Bangālī governor of Ḥājīpūr, had not assisted late Quṭb Khān in the fight with Śēr Khān, with the result that it had led to Quṭb Khān's death in the encounter, the Bangāl sultān sent an army against Makhdūm 'Ālam (Áālam). Makhdūm 'Ālam (Áālam) was killed in the subsequent battle that appears to have been fought at Ḥājīpūr. This battle of Ḥājīpūr appears to have followed soon after the battle of Lolpūrā<sup>10a</sup>, say within a few months.

Ábbās<sup>11</sup> then remarks that the relations between Śēr Khān and the Nūḥānī nobles in the court of sultān Jalāl Khān Nūḥānī had started deteriorating fast. The huge wealth and equipages of the Bangālī army which fell into the hands of Śēr Khān, consequent upon the death of Quṭb Khān, the Bangālī general, in the battle at Lolpūrā and which he had kept with himself to the exclusion of all other Nūḥānī chiefs, greatly embittered the latter's relations with him. What added fuel to the smouldering fire of the Nūḥānīs against Śēr Khān was passing into his hands the immense treasure of Makhdūm 'Ālam

(Áālam), the Bangālī governor of Hājīpūr. Makhdūm 'Ālam (Áālam) was a friend and an ally of Śēr Khān and he had given to the latter all his wealth on an understanding that it was to be returned to him if he came back alive from an armed encounter with his master, the sultān of Bangāl, who had sent a force against him. But if he met with his death, Śēr Khān was to retain the wealth for good. As Makhdūm 'Ālam (Áālam) was slain in the battle, Śēr Khān appropriated this entire treasure to himself. This exasperated the already disgruntled Nūhānī chiefs and they planned to kill him. Having failed in their design, they finally advised sultān Jalāl-ud-dīn Nūhānī to go over to the ruler of Bangāl, recognize his suzerainty and then with his aid free the kingdom of Bihār from the tutelage of Śēr Khān. The minor Nūhānī chief agreed and acted accordingly. The result was the battle of Sūrajgarha. Ábbās<sup>12</sup> writes that Ibrāhim Khān, the Bangālī general, who fought at the battle of Sūrajgarha with Śēr Khān, was the son of Bangālī governor Quṭb Khān. The sultān of Bangāl had, perhaps, appointed him as the leader of the Bangāl army, hoping that the son would avenge the death of his father. It thus becomes quite apparent that the battle of Sūrajgarha was preceded by the two battles of Lolpūrā and Hājīpūr which were fought sometime after May, A. D. 1529. My own findings are that the battles of Lolpūrā and Hājīpūr were fought sometime towards the close of A. D. 1529 and beginning of A. D. 1530 respectively <sup>12a</sup>.

Soon after the battle of Hājīpūr, a plot was hatched in the palace of the Nūhānī sultān to kill Śēr Khān<sup>13</sup>. This might have taken some months. When

the conspiracy failed, the Nūḥānī sultān Jalāl Khān and his associates took refuge with the sultān of Bangāl. This they would have done sometime by the middle of A. D. 1530<sup>13a</sup>. The sultān of Bangāl appears to have sent his force under the command of Ibrāhim Khān, the governor of Mungēr, against Śēr Khān and this could have followed only after the rains, at the earliest towards the close of September, A. D. 1530, and which ultimately resulted in the battle of Sūrajgarha, fought in C. October, A. D. 1530<sup>14</sup>. The other two events which took place after the battle of Sūrajgarha—the acquisition of the fort of Chunār by marriage and the battle of Do-rāh—are dated, according to my findings, in November-December, A. D. 1530<sup>14a</sup> and October, A. D. 1531<sup>14b</sup> respectively. All these dates, dealing with the battles of Lolpūrā, Hājīpūr, Sūrajgarha, Do-rāh, and the acquisition of the fort of Chunār by Śēr through marriage, have been discussed in detail in a sister volume entitled “Fresh Light on Śēr Śāh”, and hence they need not be repeated here.

Nor do Ábbās<sup>15</sup>, Niẓām-ud-dīn<sup>16</sup>, and other Afghān chroniclers mention the name of the Bangāl sultān who had sent the army against Śēr Khān and which fought the battle at Sūrajgarha. Firīstah and the authors of riyāz-us-salāṭīn<sup>17</sup> and tārikh-i-mansūrī<sup>18</sup> which deal with the history of Bangāl, suggest that the Nūḥānī king took shelter with sultān Maḥmūd, the successor of Álá-ud-dīn Fīroz Śāh, the son and successor of Nuṣrat Śāh. Perhaps relying on these authorities, Qanungo<sup>19</sup> says that he was sultān Maḥmūd Śāh with whom Jalāl Khān Nūḥānī took refuge. Erskine<sup>20</sup> and Banerjee<sup>21</sup> are inclined to think that he was Nuṣrat Śāh.



Neither Fīriśtah nor riyāz-us-salāṭīn or Qanungo is correct in the assumption that the Nūḥānī sultān came to Maḥmūd Śāh. The earliest mention of Maḥmūd Śāh is in an inscription found in the village Dhorail in District Dīnājpūr. It records the month of madhū, sākā 1455 (A. H. 940 = A. D. 1533<sup>22</sup>). This is preceded by an inscription of Fīroz Śāh, dated 1st ramzān, A. H. 939 (March 27, A. D. 1533<sup>23</sup>) in a ruined mosque at Kalūā. It, therefore, follows that Maḥmūd Śāh could not be the Bangāl sultān to whom sultān Jalāl Khān Nūḥānī went or who sent his forces for the battle of Sūrajgarha. He could only be Nuṣrat Śāh whose earliest and latest dates known from inscriptions are A. H. 926 (A. D. 1520<sup>24</sup>) and A. H. 938 (A. D. 1531-32<sup>25</sup>) respectively. He was alive in A. H. 939 also as he is known to have sent his envoy Malik Murjān to sultān Bahādur Śāh of Gujrāt in A. H. 939<sup>26</sup>.

### LOCATION OF THE BATTLE FIELD

Ábbās<sup>27</sup> gives us a significant information about the place where the battle was fought. He says, "Having collected a large force, and made every preparation, and having gained the good will of his whole army, he (Śēr Khān) placed the country of Bihār in his rear, and proceeded against the army of the king of Bangāl<sup>27a</sup>, fortifying his position with an earthen circumvallation<sup>27b</sup>". This unmistakably shows that the battle was fought somewhere in the territory of Bangāl or in its vicinity. There are proofs to show that Mungēr was then the headquarters of the Bangāl officer with Kiūl as the natural boundary between the Nūḥānī kingdom of

South Bihār and the Bangāl territory<sup>28</sup>. This indicates that Śēr Khān would surely have encamped on the western bank of the river Kiūl, leaving open his line of retreat to the town of Bihār (modern Bihār-śarīf), should the need for such an eventuality arise. Śēr Khān, therefore, appears to have fought the battle between Mungēr and the Kiūl river. Unlike Humāyūn, Śēr was a man of foresight and not an unimaginitive soldier to fight with a river in his rear.

Abul Faḏl<sup>29</sup> dispels all haziness on the location of the site, when he states : “He (Śēr Khān) fought a battle at Sūrjgaṛha<sup>30</sup> which is the boundary between the territories of the ruler of Bangāl (and of Śēr Khān ?) and won a victory”. The fact that Śēr had held up for some time a much numerically superior Bangālī force, well equipped with cavalry, artillery and elephants, in such a place where he could not be bypassed as he was vigilant enough not to allow the enemy to make a detour of the Kharagpūr hills, nor could he be forced to fight a pitched battle till he, at his own initiative, had lured Ibrāhim to come out in the open, indicates that this Afghān war-lord had caught Ibrāhim Khān, the Bangālī general, in some tight corner which was proving a bottle-neck for the latter. Such a place, according to map, could only be Sūrajgaṛha<sup>30a</sup> and no other in the region.

The avowed objective of the expedition, fitted out from Bangāl, was to conquer the kingdom of Bihār and to effect the restoration to power of Jalāl Khān Nūḥānī. The Bangāl army, therefore, appears to have marched by the old highway from Gaūr to Bihār that passed via Sūtī, Udhūānālah, Rājmaḥal, Kahalgāon, Bhāgalpūr, Sulṭānganj and Mungēr to

Sūrajgarha and which runs close to vicinity of the southern bank of the Gangā, keeping parallel to the track of N. E. Railway from Telīah-Garhī onwards to Paṭnah. On this road lies the narrow plain of Sūrajgarha, about five miles wide in A. D. 1773-1781, when Rennell drew the map of Bihār and Bangāl, and about 25 miles west of the fort of Mungēr, surrounded by the Gangā on the north and the hill-terrain of Kharagpūr on the south. This was the most suitable and ideal place, from the point of view of military strategy, for a general to fight a war of defence by sitting on the fence against a larger army advancing either from the direction of the east towards Bihār or from the west towards Bangāl. Without crossing the river Kiūl at Sūrajgarha, the army going to the west from the east could remain always locked up in the bottleneck there, deprived of the freedom of its movement. Śēr, therefore, judiciously selected the narrow plain of Sūrajgarha as the proper place for encampment on the western side of the Kiūl river. Ibrāhim Khān also found it convenient to encamp on the eastern side of the Kiūl river, because the Ganges afforded protection to the right flank and the left was protected by the terrain of Kharagpūr hills, the rear having been rendered completely immune from the surprize-attack by the fort of Mungēr and the front well-protected by the outer works of defence which included within its perimeter a small fort of Sūrajgarha, east of Kiūl. The encampment of Śēr Khān on the western side of the Kiūl river placed him in a position where he could not be surprized or his rear overtaken unless the enemy made a wide and circuitous detour around the Kharagpūr hills,

and that too unnoticed.

The military logistics involved in the situation also suggest that the battle had been fought at Sūrajgarha. Ibrāhīm Khān, the son of Quṭb Khān who had been slain in the war with Śēr a year earlier, was appointed the leader of the second expeditionary army of Bangāl to teach Śēr a lesson and avenge the death of his father. The fort of Mungēr became the main base of operations against Śēr Khān's kingdom of South Bihār. Ibrāhīm's army was far superior in numbers and military equipments. It comprised numerous infantry, cavalry and elephants and a powerful park of artillery. It had the advantage of a strong flotilla of boats which could bring forth the supplies and carry the troops to any place beyond Mungēr westward right up to Baksar. On the other hand, the core of Śēr Khān's army consisted mainly of a cavalry force and infantry with a sprinkling probably of a few elephants, some matchlockmen and a small light artillery. Śēr could not hope to stand a siege in the brick fort of Bihār which was devoid of any natural protection either of the hills or rivers. It was his military foresight which brought home to the mind of Śēr Khān that he could not afford to allow the invading army with Jalāl Khān and the Nūhānī deserters to enter the Bihār territory, where the supporters of Jalāl Khān might frustrate his game, if he were to follow his old tactics of dodging and retreating. He, therefore, made up his mind to carry the war into the enemy country, by keeping Bihār in his rear to maintain his supply-line intact. For this, no place could be more suitable than the strategic plain of Sūrajgarha.

### DETAILS OF THE BATTLE

A collective analysis of Bodhrāj's narration<sup>31</sup> and the Persian chronicles of Ábbās, N'āmatullāh, Ábdullāh, Aḥmad Yādgār and Niẓām-ud-dīn indicate that when the Afghān forces came face to face with the Bangālī forces in the plains at Sūrajgaṛha, Śēr Khān noticed that Ibrāhīm Khān, the Bangālī general, had made the fort of Mungēr to be the chief centre of his supply-line. To protect it, he had posted troops all along the southern-bank of the Gangā, extending from the fort of Mungēr in the east to the plains of Sūrajgaṛha in the west<sup>31a</sup>. Thus he had entrenched himself in a strongly advantageous position there. This convinced Śēr Khān that fight or retreat both meant disaster for the Afghāns. And so he resolved to play a waiting game and took up his position in the mud fort which he had built around his army.

Ábbās<sup>32</sup> writes, "Śēr Khan, keeping under the shelter of his entrenchments, skirmished everyday; and in spite of all their endeavours, the army of Ibrāhīm could not inflict any injury on his (Śēr Khān's) forces, on account of the earthen embankments. The Afghāns behaved with great gallantry, and repelled the endeavours of Ibrāhīm Khān's army to penetrate their entrenchments." This shows that by this time Ibrāhīm Khān with his forces had been lured by Śēr Khān to come out in the open. In other words, he had come over to the western side of the Kiūl<sup>33</sup> river where the Afghāns lay encamped. He was now face to face with Śēr Khān, with a small distance intervening between the two. Ibrāhīm Khān now found it necessary to obtain an

additional supply of arms and equipments as the the Bengālī forces had not fared well in the day-to-day desultory skirmishes with Afghāns. Accordingly, he wrote to his master for sending the same. He informed that “Śēr Khān has taken up a fortified position<sup>34</sup> . . . .”. Śēr Khān, receiving the intelligence of it, summoned his Afghāns together and decided to arrange for the battle immediately, “for it behoves us not to delay<sup>35</sup> . . . .as reinforcements will soon reach them<sup>36</sup>”. Śēr Khān, thereupon, sent his vakīl to Ibrāhīm Khān, asking him to be ready for the fight on the next morning. His proposal was immediately accepted by the Bangālī general who thought that “on the day of battle the Afghāns would be no match for them<sup>37</sup>”.

Ábbās<sup>38</sup> further writes, “When one watch of the night yet remained, Śēr Khān arranged his forces, and brought them out of their entrenchments; and after the morning prayers, he himself came out and said to his chiefs, ‘In the enemy’s army there are many elephants and guns, and a great force of infantry; we must fight them in such a manner that they shall not be able to preserve their original order’. I have thought of a stratagem by which to defeat the Bangālīs. I will draw the greater part of my forces behind the cover of that height which we see, but will retain for the attack a small number of experienced and veteran horse (meaning cavalry men who have seen action on several occasions)”, and “they would be detailed for preparing the path of defeat for the enemy . . . .by charging and turning back after discharging one volley of arrows<sup>38a</sup>. Ibrāhīm Khān . . . .would think that the Afghāns are taking to flight which would tempt him to pursue

them, leaving behind his artillery and foot-soldiers. He would push forward with all expedition which would throw his rank and file into confusion<sup>38b</sup>. I will then move out with the troops which had been concealed behind the eminence (hill), and would deliver a surprise attack on the enemy. The Bangāl cavalry, deprived of the support of artillery and infantry, by itself would (be) unable to cope with the Afghān horses”.

Bodhrāj<sup>39</sup> adds that “just before the dawn had set, Śēr Khān posted one division, consisting of 3,000 Afghāns, and 2,000 Ujjainīyah followers of mahārājā Gajpatī, the Ujjainīyah chief of Bhojpūr, as vanguard<sup>39a</sup> of the Afghān forces against the van of the Bangālī army; he then posted another division of troops to serve as a support<sup>39b</sup> to the Afghān vanguard in the field. And finally with a contingent of five thousand troops he withdrew from the field towards the east under the cover of darkness and took up his position behind a hill<sup>39c</sup> which lay close to the field, so as to escape the notice of the enemy<sup>40</sup>”.

The disposition of Bangāl troops, according to the unanimous evidence of Ábbās<sup>41</sup>, N'amatullāh<sup>42</sup>, Ábdullāh<sup>43</sup>, Aḥmad Yādgār<sup>44</sup>, and Niẓām-ud-dīn<sup>45</sup>, in the battle-field on the eve of the combat was so planned as to throw their infantry, cavalry artillery and elephants in a single file<sup>45a</sup>.

In accordance with the plan<sup>46</sup> which had been drawn up by Śēr Khān, the rear of the Afghān army advanced towards the enemy, and after discharging a volley of arrows<sup>46a</sup>, they turned round and feigned retreat<sup>46b</sup>. The Bangāl cavalry, seeing the rear of the Afghān forces retreating, broke up their ranks,

left their artillery and infantry behind and marched ahead to fall upon the vanguard of the Afghān forces<sup>46c</sup>. In the course of the onward march, the elephants of the Bangāl army got mixed up with the cavalry, creating immense confusion. In the meanwhile 3000 Afghāns and 2000 Ujjainīyahs which constituted the vanguard of the Afghān army, bravely faced the repeated charges of Ibrāhīm Khān till mid-day. After this the Afghāns retreated backward according to plan. The object of this move was to draw away the Bangāl cavalry from the firing range of their artillery and to detach it from its infantry. As expected, in second-half of the day the Bangāl cavalry advanced forward, leaving their infantry and artillery far behind. The moment Śēr Khān saw it, he, being convinced that the Bangāl cavalry, when deprived of support of their artillery and infantry, would be ineffective against Afghān horsemen, at once appeared at the head of five thousand cavalry which had been lying in ambush and dashed against the Bangāl horsemen. The move un-nerved the Bangālīs and they became paincky. Now the Afghāns who had feigned retreat, turned round and effected a junction with Śēr Khān. Then they attacked the Bangāl army on all sides<sup>46d</sup>. But the latter rallied and stood their ground and two armies closed on each other. A contested battle ensued in which ultimate triumph came to the arms of Śēr Khān. Ibrāhīm Khān, the Bangālī general, was slain at the hands of the Ujjainīyah chief, mahārājāh Gajpatī<sup>47</sup>, and Jalāl Khān Nūḥānī, the grandson of Daryā Khān Nūḥānī of Bihār, escaped from the field half-dead.

All the camp-equipments, elephants and artillery



of the Bangāl army fell into the hands of the Afghāns and the Ujjainīyahs. Śēr Khān was much pleased to see the bravery of mahārājāh Gajpatī<sup>48</sup>. All the spoils of war, comprising of elephants, horses and other equipments, which had fallen into the hands of mahārājāh Gajpatī, were allowed to be retained by him. Śēr Khān tied with his own hand the bejewelled sword round the waist of mahārājāh Gajpatī in recognition of the services rendered in the battle of Sūrajgarha. He bound on his arm a jewelled armlet, gave him a string of pearls to be worn round the neck, fixed a bejewelled kalaghī in his sirpech (head-dress), gave him a horse, head-to-foot dress and a sword for prince Bairīsāl and conferred Baksar as jāgīr upon him.

### SIGNIFICANCE

The battle of Sūrajgarha substantially augmented the meagre resources of Śēr Khān by giving to him a large park of artillery, numerous elephants and horses. It relieved the long standing wants of his soldiers, besides rendering the country of Bihār safe and immune from the recurring bite of Bangāl viper.

From the point of view of net gains, this battle stands in striking contrast to those fought with Quṭb Khān, a year earlier at Lolpūrā near Śaikhpūrah. The debacle at Sūrajgarha was no doubt a logical corrolary to the fight at Lolpūrā. The success at Lolpūrā had acted as a more powerful stimulus to Śēr Khān and his followers than the subsequent and more significant victory at Sūrajgarha. The strategy and tactics of Lolpūrā were

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applied at Sūrajgarha also. Both the battles were defensive in character. Their aim was to save Bihār from the aggrandisement of Bangāl sultān Nuṣrat Śāh. But whereas the battle of Lolpūrā was a mere stroke of arms, a random feat of military dash, in the battle of Sūrajgarha the prestige of a kingdom was at stake. Decisive success confirmed Śēr Khān's superiority over the ruler of Bangāl; it legitmised his position and raised him high in the estimation of his followers. He now became one of the topmost leaders of the Afghāns in India. Those who had previously scoffed at the lack of blue-blood in his veins, were now dazzled with his glorious victory at Sūrajgarha and never again did they raise their little finger or speak against his competence and ability as a general. The resounding success at Sūrajgarha made Śēr Khān the undisputed master of the entire South Bihār, extending from Karamnāsah in the west to Kiūl in the east. It also probably brought within the sphere of his influence the Bangāl territory of North Bihār<sup>49</sup> lying to the east of the Gandak at Hājipūr.

On the other hand, the defeat at Sūrajgarha marked the beginning of the end of the Husainī dynasty of Bangāl. But it was not the death-knell of the Bangāl power as is presumed by Qanungo<sup>50</sup>. The sultān continued to remain as powerful in Bangāl as ever, and Śēr did not dare cross the frontier at Telīah-Garhī in pursuit of his victory. It was not this disaster, but it was the tragic murder of Nuṣrat Śāh and usurpation of power by the incompetent Maḥmūd Śāh which occasioned tumults and turmoils, leading to the down-fall of the

Husainī dynasty. And yet it can not be denied that Sūrajgarha did finally scotch the ambitions of the ruler of Bangāl vis-a-vis Bihār and that it closed once for all the political career of Jalāl Khān Nūhānī.

The battle of Sūrajgarha, great as it was as a decisive military achievement, was still greater in its far-reaching political consequences. But for the victory at Sūrajgarha, "the nondescript Śēr Khān would never have come out of the veils of his obscurity to enter into a race for acquiring an empire with crowned heads like Bahādur Śāh of Gujrāt and Humāyūn Bādśāh."

We do not know the reactions of the Muḡhals to this victory of Śēr Śāh. Possibly they did not look at it with much of concern, partly because the scene of action was in an area which was far away from the Muḡhal territory and partly because they soon became absorbed in the more serious development at the capital occasioned by the fatal illness of Bābur who died on December 26, A. D. 1530.

#### FOOT-NOTES

1. Sher Shah, 1965 ed. p. 132.
2. Humayun, p. 248, 1967 ed.
3. The Political History of the Sur Dynasty, p. 63, typed thesis, B. H. U. L.
4. Humayun, p. 114, 1956 ed.
5. Humayun Badshah, p. 190, 1938 ed.
6. E and D, IV, p. 547; Imam-ud-din's reconstructed text of T. S. S., pp. 86-7, Vol. I, gives the following :—

چون سلطان بهامراء مذکورین در ملک بهار آمدند شیرخان را نیز ضرورت شد که مخالفت بهامراء مذکورین که جمعی کثیر و لشکر بیسار بودند نکند و شیرخان در میان افغانان که اعتبار بیسارند اشتند مخالفت نتوانست کرد، در ملازمت سلطان محمود آمد و ملک بهار را افغانان قسمت کرده گرفتند - و شیرخان را گفتند

کہ چون ملک جرنپور از مغل خواہیم گرفت ملک بہار ترا خواہیم داد کہ تو بنگالیان  
رازدہ بدست آوردہ بودی - بیچ دغدغہ رانجا طر خود راہ ندھی -

7. Abbās, E and D, IV, pp. 344-5.

8. Memoirs of Bābur, III, p. 664, says, "On April 16, A.D. 1529, a person came from Dūdū and her son....letting me know that they were coming." Then it further records on p. 676, "On May 16, 1529, Daryā Khān's grandson (Jalāl Khān Nūḥānī, Dūdū's son) came and waited on me." Having once referred to the start of Dūdū, Bābur does not say anything about her arrival. It appears that Dūdū probably died during this interval (April 16—May 16, A. D. 1529), according to A. S. Beveridge in the foot-note there.

9. T. S. S., All. University MS., p. 62; Daulat-i-Sēr Sāhī, B. H. U. MS., p. 17, and T. D., All. Univ. MS., p. 154—p. 156; Mishra, The Political History of the Sur Dynasty, an unpublished thesis, p. 52, B. H. U. L.

10. E and D, IV, p. 333—p. 334.

10a. Mishra, The Political History of the Sur Dynasty, p. 54, f. n. 1.

11. E and D, IV, p. 333—p. 339.

12. T. S. S., All. Univ. MS., p. 76; Mishra, the Political History of the Sur Dynasty, p. 61; E and D, IV, p. 338 wrongly write Quṭb Khān as Quṭb Sāh.

12a. Mishra, The Political History of the Sur Dynasty, p. 50, also writes that Quṭb Khān, the Bangālī general and the governor of Mungēr, set out, under the order of Bangāl sultān by rabī'a I or rabī'a II, A. H. 936 (i.e., late in A. D. 1529), to fight the battle of Lolpūrā with Sēr Khān. On p. 64, f. n. 4, Mishra, however, records that the attack of Bangāl forces on Makhdūm 'Ālam (Āālam) had come to pass in April-May, A. D. 1530.

13. Abbās, E and D, IV, p. 334-p.338.

13a. Mishra, The Political History of the Sur Dynasty, p. 64, f. n. 4, writes that the flight of Jalāl Khān Nūḥānī to Bangāl sultān followed in July, A. D. 1530.

14. Abbās, E and D, IV, p. 339-342; Mishra, The Political History of the Sur Dynasty, p. 64, also writes that the battle of Sūrajgarha followed in safar-rabī'a I, A. H. 975 = October, A.D. 1530.

- 14a. Avasthi, Humayun, 1967 ed., p. 248-p. 249, f. n. 78, writes that Śēr Khān acquired the fort of Chunār by marriage in the year A. H. 937, preferably near about the death of Bābur (Dec. A. D. 1530).
- 14b. Qanungo, Sher Shah, p. 98, 1965 ed, gives the date of the battle of Do-rāh as C. September, A. D. 1531.
15. T.S.S. All. Univ. MS., 84 ff; E and D, IV, p. 338; see also T. A., Cal. text, p. 296; T. D., A. U. MS, p. 158; Dorn, p. 97; Avasthi, Islamic Culture, Vol. XVI, No. 2, April, A. D. 1942, p. 199, f. n. 2.
16. Lakhnau Text, pp. 223-4, pt. 1 and 2; cf. Avasthi, Islamic Culture, Vol. XVI, No. 2, April, A. D. 1942, p. 199, f. n. 3.
17. Bib. Indica. Edition, Calcutta text, p. 139; cf. Avasthi, Islamic Culture, vol. XVI, No. 2, April, A. D. 1942, p. 199, f. n. 5.
18. R. A. S. B. MS., fo. 81 b ff. Its author is Ālī Bilgrāmī; cf. Avasthi, Islamic Culture, Vol. XVI, No. 2, April, A.D. 1942, p. 199, f. n. 4.
19. Sher Shah p. 132.
20. History of India, vol. II, 1854 ed., p. 127.
21. Humayun Badshah, p. 39, 1938 ed.
22. Indian Historical Quarterly, Vol. VII, 1931., pp. 17-18.
23. J. A. S. B., 1872, p. 132 and p. 332.
24. Epigraphia Indo-Moslemica, 1911-12, p. 7.
25. Epigraphia Indica, Arabic and Persian Supplement, 1951-52, pp. 26-27; J. A. S. B. 1874, p. 308.
26. Firištah, Lakhnau Text, Pt. I and II.; cf. Avasthi, Islamic Culture, Vol. XVI, April, 1942, No. 2, p. 200, f. n. 8.
27. E and D, IV, p. 339.
- 27a. The particular MS of Ābbās, Persian text, p. 92, consulted by Qanungo, Sher Shah, p. 138, f. n. 1, writes to the effect "..... vilāyat-i-bihār rā pas-pušt dādah rū-bar-rū-i-bādsāh-i-bangālah śud wa giridi-i-laśkar khūd qil'ā-i Khām az gil sākht". Here it seems that the scribe has omitted the word 'faūj' before 'bādsāh-i-bāngālah', for Ābbās elsewhere says : 'The bādsāh of Bangāl....gave Ibrāhīm Śāh, (Khān), son of Quṭb Khān, a force to accompany Jalāl Khān.' So it is clear that Śēr came face to face with Ibrāhīm Khān and not with the king of Bangāl. The

I. O. M. S. of T. S. S., p. 38, sets at rest the discrepancy in the MS of Qanungo, as it clearly records 'rū-barū-i-laśkar-i-bādśāh-i-bangālah' (رودی لشکر بادشاه بنگالہ).

27b. The reference to Kachchah or earth work i.e., mud fortifications around Śēr's camp has misled Stewart, the author of the History of Bengal, p. 77, to write; 'He (Śēr Khān) was obliged to shut himself up in the fort of Bihār, the fortifications of which were composed of mud. The Bangāl army advanced and surrounded the fort....' But it is wrong, since Abul Faḏl's Āin mentions Bihār as a town with brick fortifications. (Qanungo, Sher Shah, p. 138, f. n. 1).

28. A treaty of Bārḥ had been concluded between sultān Sikandar Lodī and the then ruler of Bangāl which had fixed Bārḥ as the frontier of the Bangāl kingdom in the west (vide Prof. Askari, Bihar in the time of the last two Lodī Sultāns of Delhi, J. B. R. S., Vol. XLI, pt. II, 1955, Sept., p. 363). It appears that Śēr Khān had probably acquired some new territory from Bangāl after the defeat and death of Quṭb Khān in the battle of Lolpūrā a year earlier (Qanungo, Sher Shah, p. 138). This meant that the western frontier of the Bangāl kingdom had now shrunk further from Bārḥ to the Kiūl river; and it was hemmed in by the Kharagpūr hills, which alone could be the natural boundary further east of Bārḥ between the Bangāl kingdom and the Nūḥānī kingdom of South Bihār.

29. A. N. trans., I. p. 328, 1907 ed., Calcutta. This victory of Śēr Khān can be no other than that scored over the force of Ibrāhīm Khān, the Bangālī general, as we have already noticed in the previous year Quṭb Khān, father of Ibrāhīm, having fought a battle with Śēr Khān at Lolpūrā near Śaikhpūrah and in which he was slain.

30. Beveridge opines that in the statement of Abul Faḏl Sūrajgarha was a slip for Telīah-Garhī in Santhāl Parganah (A. N., trans., I, p. 328, 1907 ed., Calcutta). But he did not realise that Sūrajgarha itself had its own strategic importance. It was here that sultān Muḥammad 'Ādil Śāh Sūrī and Bahādur Khān of Gaūr had fought near a nālah which was only about a kos from Sūrajgarha and was about 12 kos from Mungēr towards Paṭnah i.e., west of Mungēr (T.D., E and D, IV, p. 508). This nālah is the tiny Kiūl which at present flows immediately

past Sūrajgaraha. It was here that Dārā's army was held up by Śūjā (Śūjaá) and similarly the army of Mīr Jumlā was also held up here (Sarkar, Aurangzeb, Vol. II, p. 136 and p. 240, 1912 ed.).

30 a. Sūrjgarha, it may be pointed out, is now a town in the sub-division of Mungēr, situated on the southern bank of the Gangā, at a distance of six miles from Kiūl railway station and about 25 miles from Mungēr (Monghyr District Gazetteer, L.S.S.O' Malley, 1926 ed., p. 263).

31. J. B. R. S., Vol. XLVII, pts. 1-2, 1961, p. 435, and f. n. 84.

31a. Ibid, for phase I of the battle of Sūrajgarha.

32. E & D, IV, p. 339.

33. Qanungo, Sher Shah, p. 140.

34. T. S. S., E. & D., IV, p. 339; T. K. J. L., O. P. L. M. S., fos. 177-8; T. D., O. P. L. MS., fo. 127; T. A., 1936 ed., Calcutta trans., II., pp. 154-5; T. S. A., Bib. Indica text, ed., 1929, pp. 181-2. They all agree that Śēr Khān before fighting a pitched battle, had shut himself up in a mud fort which he had built round his army and everyday sent out detachments to give battle and rout the enemy's forces, till at length Ibrāhīm Khān was forced to ask for reinforcements from his master. It was this news of the solicitation of fresh reinforcements which led Śēr Khān to make up his mind to fight a pitched battle with Ibrāhīm Khān before the supplies could reach him.

35. Qanungo, Sher Shah, p. 141, writes : "Śēr acted wisely. It would have been folly to hesitate and delay action. Śēr could not oppose the landing of the Bangāli troops further up the Gangā, which would have led to the danger of his being taken in the rear, or compelled him to evacuate his present position, and this would have meant the release of the pent-up army of Ibrāhīm to rush on Bihār like a destructive flood. This was a contingency which no cavalry leader, however brilliant, could meet successfully by his guerrilla tactics. Śēr laid his plans carefully and executed them with a grim thoroughness. To have flung his cavalry in repeated charges on massed infantry, behind a barrage of artillery fire and the protection of numerous elephants, would have been suicidal. Śēr solved the problem as every cavalry leader before and after him—from William the conqueror to

Jaswant Rāo Holkar—had done, by luring the enemy away from his unassailable position by a feint”.

36. E & D, IV., p. 340.

37. Ibid. p. 339.

38. Ábbās, E & D, IV, p. 341.

38a. Ábbās, MS. 93-99; cf. Qanungo, Sher Shah, p. 141. see f.n. 46 infra.; E & D, IV, p. 341.

38b. Ábbās, E & D, IV, p. 341.

39. J. B. R. S., Vol. XLVII, 1961, p. 437; see also f.n. 84 there for a supplement to Bodhrāj's account in the light of other Persian chronicles. So far, it was here the pre-dawn as the time for the postings of the Afghans in the field.

39 a. Ibid. for phase II of the battle of Sūrajgarha.

39 b. Ibid for phase II of the battle of Sūrajgarha.

39 c. Ibid for phase II of the battle of Sūrajgarha.

40. That the army of the Afghāns was divided into three divisions, is also supported by T. S. A (Bib. Indica. text, pp. 181-2, 1939 ed.), which writes that Śēr Khān divided his force into three division; one of it was left in the mud fort which had been raised by Śēr Khān there; the second one was sent to face the enemy; and the third one, consisting of 4,000 sawārs, was under the personal command of Śēr Khān who took up his position behind the hills so as to escape the notice of the enemy. But the other chroniclers viz., T. S. S. (E & D, IV, pp. 339-42), T. K. J. L. (O. P. L. MS. fo. 177-fo. 178), T. D, (O. P. L. MS. fo. 127) and T. A. (trans., II, pp. 154-5, 1936 ed.) say that Śēr Khān had divided his forces only into two divisions, one of which was put in front of the Bangālī forces, whereas the second one was concealed behind a height. T. S. S. and T. A. further record that the second division which was concealed behind a height, was under the personal command of Śēr Khān.

41. T. S. S., E & D, IV., p. 341-2.

42. T. K. J. L., O. P. L. MS., fo. 177-fo. 178.

43. T. D., O. P. L. MS., fo. 127.

44. T. S. A., Bib. Indica text, 1939 ed., pp. 181-2.

45. T. A., 1936 ed., trans. II, pp. 154-5.

45 a. J. B. R. S., Vol. XLVII, 1961, p. 437 ff for the second phase of the battle of Sūrajgarha.

46. The plan of the battle of Sūrajgarha as drawn up by Śēr



Khān, is based upon a collective study of Bodhrāj, Ábbās, N'amatullāh, Ábdullāh, Aḥmad Yādgār and Niḏām-ud-dīn. As regards the strategy adopted by Śēr Khān in the battle of Sūrajgaṛha, T. K. J. L. (O. P. L. MS. fo. 177-fo. 178), T. D. (O. P. L. MS., fo. 127), and T. S. A. (Bib. Indica text, 1939 ed., p. 181-p. 182) are unanimous in their statements, that Śēr Khān posted a part of his men in front of the enemy, and concealed a body of picked men behind a height, and instructed his forces which lay in front of the enemy, to make a feigned retreat as soon as the Bangāl army started hurling arrows on them so that the Bangāl cavalry, in order to pursue them, might move out of their artillery fire. They acted exactly as instructed and as soon as the Bangāl cavalry advanced, leaving artillery behind, Śēr Khān appeared at the head of the force which had been concealed behind the height and put the Bangāl forces to flight. Jalāl Khān Nūḥānī escaped from the battle field half-dead and the equipages of the Bangāl army fell into the hands of Śēr Khān. T. S. S. (E & D, IV, pp. 339-342) and T. A. (1936 ed., trans., II, p. 154-p. 155), fully agree with the aforesaid version of Ábdullāh, N'amatullāh and Ahmad Yādgār about the strategy adopted by Śēr Khān in the battle of Sūrajgaṛha, with only this difference that according to Ábbās and Niḏām-ud-dīn it was the Afghān forces posted in the front of the enemy which first discharged a flight of arrows on the Bangāl army and then made a show of retreat, with the result that Bangāl cavalry came out of the line of their artillery while pursuing the apparently fleeing Afghāns, and this ultimately led to the defeat of the Bangāl forces and the death of Ibrāhīm Khān, the Bangālī general. The versions of Ábbās and Niḏām-ud-dīn appear to be more trustworthy.

46 a. J. B. R. S., Vol. XLVII, 1961, p. 437 ff for phase III of the battle of Sūrajgaṛha.

46 b. Ibid., for phase IV of the battle of Sūrajgaṛha.

46 c. Ibid., for phase V of the battle of Sūrajgaṛha.

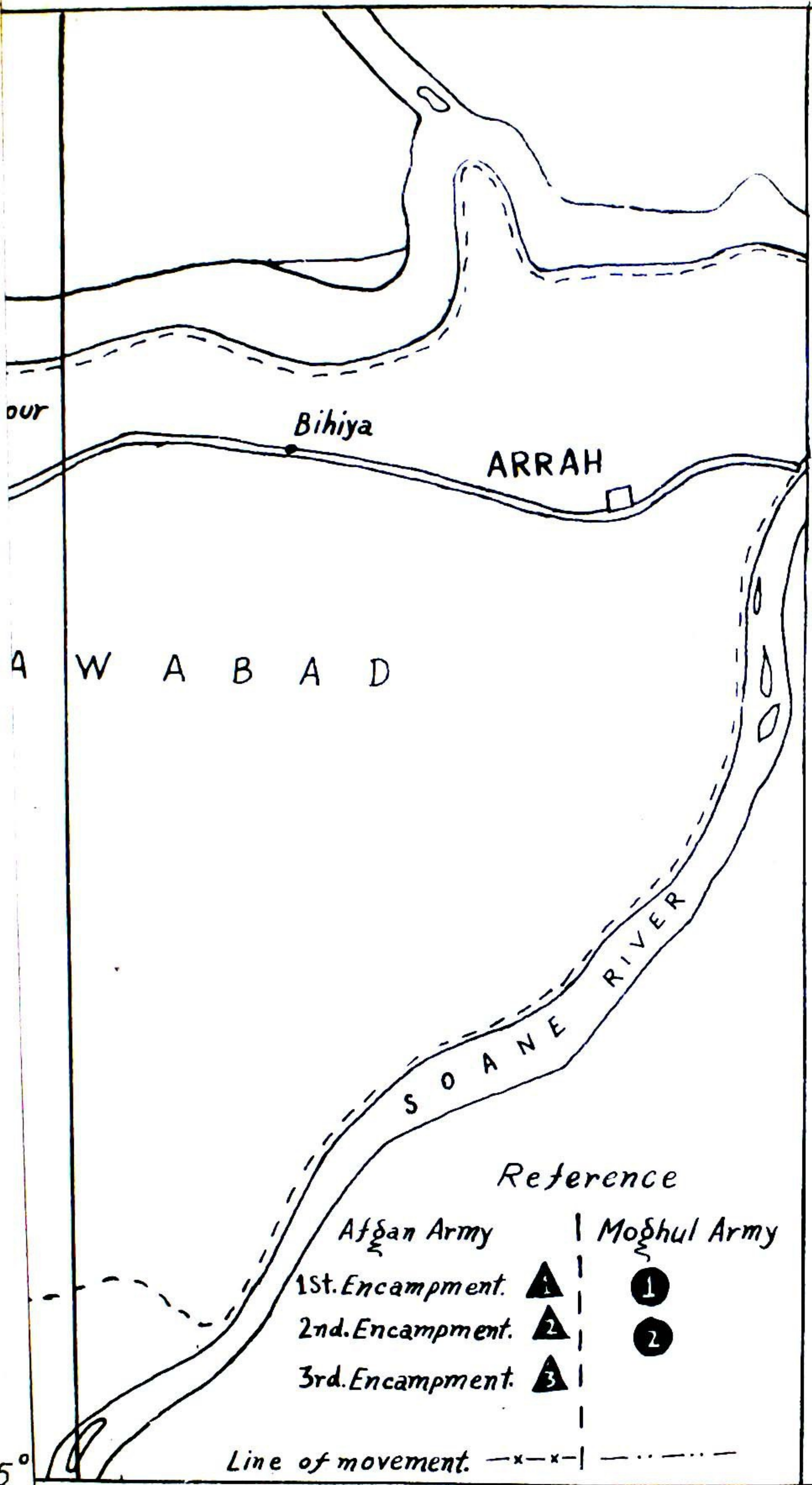
46 d. Ibid., for phase V of the battle of Sūrajgaṛha.

47. J. B. R. S., Vol. XLVII, parts 1-4, 1961 p. 438.

48. Ibid. J. B. R. S. p. 438.

49. Mishra, The Political History of the Sur Dynasty, unpublished thesis B. H. U. L., p. 66.

50. Sher Shah, p. 142, 1965 ed.



Reference

- |                    |  |             |
|--------------------|--|-------------|
| Afghan Army        |  | Mughal Army |
| 1st. Encampment. ▲ |  | ①           |
| 2nd. Encampment. ▲ |  | ②           |
| 3rd. Encampment. ▲ |  |             |

Line of movement. -x-x- | -...-

Drawn by S.K. Kaviraj.



## THE BATTLE OF CHAŪSAH<sup>1</sup>

The battle of Sūrajgarha made Śēr Khān the undisputed master of Bihār. He now started on a career of aggrandisement against the kingdom of Bangāl, and began to swallow the chunks of its territory in his gluttonous bits after bits. By A. D. 1537 he laid his siege for the second time to the fortress of Gaūr and thus rendered the position of the Bangāl Sulṭān extremely critical. Humāyūn, now realising the gravity of the situation in the east, left Āgrah in July, A. D. 1537, and, after occupying Chunār by close of March or beginning of April, A. D. 1538, he marched to Gaūr, reaching there by September, A. D. 1538. By that time Śēr Khān had removed the Bangāl treasures to the fort of Rohtās and Humāyūn had thus been outwitted. After a stay of three months, he left Gaūr in January, A. D. 1539, and reached Chaūsah by 3rd week of March, A. D. 1539.

Now in the words of Abul Fazl<sup>2</sup>, "Emperor Humāyūn came face to face with Śēr Khān at the village of Bihīyah<sup>3</sup> which was a dependency of Bhojpūr (Śāhābād district, Bihār). There a black river, called the Karamnāsah (text Kānbās<sup>3a</sup>), flowed between the two armies. The army of emperor Humāyūn made a bridge over it and crossed it (i.e., went over to the western bank of the river Karamnāsah which flows there from the south to the north and ultimately falls into the Gangā there<sup>3b</sup>). The brothers of Humāyūn who possessed resources, did not come to the aid of the emperor, despite

admonishing letters sent to them in the west”.

Badāyūnī<sup>4</sup> records “Śēr Khān seized the head of the road, and, being aware of the distress of (imperial) army, placed between it and his own army a canal (meaning the river Karamnāsah) which joined the Gangā. Owing to the rains, the canal was quite full of water and for three months, Śēr Khān encamped against the king”. A careful study of Badāyūnī’s version creates an impression quite different from what has been recorded by Abul Fazl. According to Badāyūnī, it appears that Śēr Khān who had seized the head of the road, that is the road passing to Ágrah in the west, which Humāyūn was traversing, had encamped himself on the western bank of the river Karamnāsah which separated him from the Muḡhal camp that lay on the eastern bank of the river Karamnāsah. But a comparative study of A. N. and tazkirāt-ul-wāqi’āt<sup>5</sup> however, clearly shows, as pointed out before, that emperor Humāyūn had crossed the river Karamnāsah and encamped on the western side of the river, whereas Śēr Khān encamped on the eastern side of the Karamnāsah. Abul Fazl’s statement is authentic and exact and so it is to be followed here. Being a court historian, he had all the records at his disposal, and by training, he was an accomplished chronicler. Moreover, his version finds corroboration from Jaūhar’s account. Jaūhar very significantly states that when emperor Humāyūn reached Chaūsah and was busy with his encampment (on the western side of the river Karamnāsah), he saw a dust of storm coming from the east which, on enquiry, was reported to have been caused by the arrival of Śēr Khān and his army. This

supports Abul Fazl's version that while emperor Humāyūn encamped on the western side of the river Karamnāsa, flowing by the village of Bihīyah, Śēr Khān who was coming from the east encamped on the eastern side of this river.

Ābbās<sup>6</sup> records that Śēr Khān marched from Rohtās and selected an advantageous place, a large village, with a stream of water intervening between himself and the emperor, and entrenched himself there. The stream was barely twenty-five yards wide. Here Ābbās supplements Jaūhar in more than one way. Firstly he says that the rival armies encamped on each of the two banks of a rivulet and this could never be a big river like the Gangā. Secondly the breadth of the river was twenty-five yards wide.

Nāmatullāh, quoted by Elliot and Dowson<sup>7</sup>, says, "Śēr Khān pitched his own opposite the royal camp, at a village Śatayah<sup>8</sup> between Jhūsa (Chaūsa) and Baksar, so that both armies were encamped on the same side of the Gangā. There was a small stream flowing between the two camps, of which the banks were so steep that it could not be crossed except at the usual ford (makhzan-i-Afghānī MS., p. 212; Dorn. p. 118)"

In this context Aḥmad Yādgār<sup>9</sup> provides us with strange information. He is, however, inaccurate in the geographical location of Śēr Khān's camp. He writes that Śēr Khān pitched his camp at a distance of one karoh on the other side (i.e., the northern bank) of the river Gangā. The definite statements of Jaūhar and Abul Fazl regarding the camp of Humāyūn and Śēr Khān on the western and eastern side of the Karamnāsa river plainly discredit

Aḥmad Yādgār's version. And yet the information supplied by Aḥmad Yādgār to the effect that Śēr Khān pitched his camp at a distance of one karoh, is interesting. It means that the encampment of the Afghāns was at a place which was one karoh away from the eastern bank of the river Karamnāsah; and this is very significant.

It is thus quite clear that Humāyūn came face to face with Śēr Khān in the village of Bīhīyah which was then a dependency of Bhojpūr, and which probably then lay at a distance of about 2 to 3 miles or so in the direction of N. W. of the present Chaūsah Railway station (Eastern Railway) on the eastern side of the river Karamnāsah. The village of Bīhīyah was thus situated somewhere in the vicinity of the angular junction formed by the Karamnāsah and the Gangā. At present in all probability, it lies either in the bed of the Gangā or somewhere in its riparian tracts to the north of the Grand Trunk Road<sup>9a</sup> which runs parallel and quite close to the southern bank of the Gangā. The village Bīhīyah must have existed between Chaūsah on the west and Baksar on the east as recorded in Makḥzan. Humāyūn, however, went over to the other side (i.e., western side) of the river Karamnāsah which flows from the south to the north there and lay encamped there, whereas Śēr Khān who was coming from Rohtās by taking a long and circuitous route, came to village Bīhīyah and encamped at a place on this side (i.e., eastern side) of the river Karamnāsah in the easterly direction at a distance of one karoh or about 2 miles from its bank.

Another striking point that deserves notice here is that whereas Ábbās records that at the time of

encampment the breadth of the river Karamnāṣah was only twenty-five yards, Badāyūnī says that the two armies were separated by a canal (meaning the river Karamnāṣah) which joined the Gangā (as the river Karamnāṣah flows there from the south to the north), and, owing to the rains, was quite full of water. This leads us to determine the central issue of the timing of the respective encampments of Humāyūn and Śer Khān in the field of Chaūsah.

It would be convenient here to fix up the time-schedule for various events that followed in the course of the journey of emperor Humāyūn from Āgrah to Gaūr and of his return journey from Gaūr to Chaūsah. After the fall and occupation of Champānīr in July, A. D. 1536,<sup>10</sup> and the subsequent flight of sultān Bahādur, the Muḡhal emperor was almost free from the Gujrāt campaign. So he hastened to Āgrah to deal with the rebellions of Muḡammad Sultān Mirzā and his son Ulugh Mirzā<sup>11</sup>. Badāyūnī's<sup>12</sup> statement that Humāyūn began the siege of Chunār on 14th ṣafar, A. H. 943 (2nd August, A. D. 1536)<sup>12a</sup>, is, therefore, manifestly wrong. Humāyūn stayed at Āgrah for about a year<sup>13</sup> i.e., till July, A. D. 1537<sup>14</sup>. Fīriṣtah<sup>15</sup> categorically states that Humāyūn undertook his campaign against Śer Khān in the east on the 27th July, A. D. 1537<sup>16</sup>, when he marched towards Jaūnpūr, and then came to Chunār where he remained busy with its siege for six months. Jaūhar<sup>17</sup>, Nāmatullāh<sup>18</sup> and Ābdullāh<sup>19</sup> only record that the siege of Chunār lasted for six months. The march of Humāyūn from Āgrah to Jaūnpūr and thence to Chunār would have taken a period of 2 months or so, to the utmost in the normal course; and in that case



the siege of Chunār would have begun towards the end of September or beginning of October, A. D. 1537, and would have lasted for six months i.e., till the close of March or beginning of April, A. D. 1538<sup>20</sup>.

After concluding the siege of Chunār which had lasted for six months (end of September or beginning of October, A. D. 1537—the close of March or beginning of April, A. D. 1538), Humāyūn came to Banāras<sup>21</sup> where he stayed<sup>22</sup> for sometime and from there he marched to Rohtās and Bharkunḍah<sup>23</sup> in Bihār where Śēr Khān was reported to have been present. Humāyūn soon after returned from Bharkunḍah to Manēr where he met sultān Maḥmūd of Bangāl and came to Paṭnah, while on his march to Gaūr, at a time when the rainy season had just set in<sup>24</sup>. The rains normally break out in Paṭnah by the close of June or beginning of July. Hence Humāyūn reached Paṭnah by the end of June or beginning of July, A. D. 1538. Firištah<sup>25</sup> records that Humāyūn proceeded towards Bangāl in the early part of A. H. 945<sup>26</sup>. Humāyūn then proceeded to Kahalgāon via Mungēr and Bhāgalpūr, meeting with the resistance of Saif Khān on the way and devising measures to counter-act the Afghān menace at Mungēr and Bhāgalpūr. Thus he could have reached Kahalgāon by the close of July or beginning of August, 1538. He encamped at Kahalgāon and sent a Muḡhal force with Jahāngīr Qulī Bēg and others to wrest Gaṛhī from Jalāl Khān, the son of Śēr Khān Sūr. They met, however, with reverses at the hands of the Afghāns and Humāyūn then tried to hasten from Kahalgāon to Gaṛhī but could not do so because of the heavy

downpour at Kahalgāon. Finally the news was brought to him that Gaṛhī had been vacated by Jalāl Khān. Upon this, the Muḡhal emperor proceeded to Bangāl. All this took about a month or so during which emperor Humāyūn was forced to remain encamped at Kahalgāon<sup>27</sup>. Thus Humāyūn entered Gaūr in September, A. D. 1538. He stayed at Gaūr for three months<sup>28</sup>.

Humāyūn, therefore, started from Gaūr towards Āgrah in January, A. D. 1539. Abul Faḏl<sup>29</sup> records that by the time emperor Humāyūn undertook his return march from Gaūr towards Āgrah in A. D. 1539, the country was under water because of the excessive rains and the rivers were tempestuous and hence not a fit season for campaigning. The emperor, however, decided to return, as it was deemed necessary for the preservation of the empire. It should be borne in mind here that Bangāl gets rains in winter also i.e., in the months of December-January. These are caused by the moisture-laden wind from the Bay of Bangāl which strikes against the hills of Assam. Bihār is also not left unaffected. Hence the statement of Abul Faḏl about the heavy rains in Bangāl at the time of departure of emperor Humāyūn from Gaūr towards Āgrah does not appear to be wrong or improbable. Then again it was not the least strange for Humāyūn who was overconfident of his the military superiority in comparison with that of the Afghāns, and who always underrated the meance of the latter, to have moved more leisurely, and to have taken about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  months or a little more in travelling from Gaūr to a place that lay opposite to Mungēr on the northern bank of the river Gangā and from thence to Chaūsa via

Mungēr, Paṭnah and Manēr. He kept himself to the south of the Gangā in anticipation of an armed conflict with the Afghāns. Thus Humāyūn reached Chaūsah, most probably, by the third week of March, A. D. 1539. Here he remained encamped for three months<sup>30</sup> face to face with Śēr Khān which meant that the period of encampment of emperor Humāyūn at Chaūsah continued till the 3rd week of June, A. D. 1539. He was ultimately routed there at the hands of Śēr Khān in a surprise attack on the 26th June, A. D. 1539.

Thus, Humāyūn arrived at Chaūsah by the 3rd week of March, A. D. 1539, when the river was at its lowest ebb because of the dry season. Hence the statement of Ábbās that the breadth of the river Karamnāsah was then 25 yards only, appears to be correct. This happens even now in the month of March. But during the rains the river Karamnāsah gets swollen with water and presents a dreadful sight and hence Badāyūnī is also equally correct where he described it to be quite full of water in rains.

During this period (3rd week of March-3rd week of June, 1539 A. D.) of the encampments of the Muḡhals and the Afghāns on the western and eastern sides of the river Karamnāsah respectively, some skirmishes occurred between their pickets and a number of brave men were killed on both sides<sup>31</sup>. It was during this interval, when the two rival forces of the Muḡhals and the Afghāns were confronting each other, that Humāyūn one day sent Mullā Muḡammad Ázīz<sup>32</sup>, who was an old friend of Śēr Khān, as his envoy to the Sūrī chief. When he came to Śēr Khān, the latter was busy with a spade in his

hand raising the fort and the entrenchment. As soon as Śēr Khān saw Mullā Muḥammad Āzīz, he washed his hands and then caused a tent to be pitched and listened to the message of the emperor brought by him. In reply, Śēr Khān said that while emperor Humāyūn himself wanted war, his army did not; he, on the other hand, never desired a war but his followers did. It was now for the emperor to act as he wished. Emperor Humāyūn sometime after (say, after a month of fighting had probably followed i.e., in the 3rd week of April or so, A. D. 1539) sent another envoy, Śaikḥ Bāyīzīd, to Śēr Khān, exhorting the latter to give up his fox-like methods, and cross the river (i.e., Karamnāsah) and have a pitched battle<sup>33</sup>. Śēr Khān, thereupon, pleaded that he was an insignificant individual, whereas the emperor was an exalted person who could afford to cross the river if he so desired. Nāmatullāh<sup>34</sup> appears to concur with Aḥmad Yādgār here, when he writes that Humāyūn sent a messenger to Śēr Khān with these words, "what purpose is served by collecting such a huge force and soldiers".

Śēr Khān, thereupon, sent Śaikḥ Khalīl, one of the descendants of Śaikḥ Farīd ganj-i-śakar, who was the spiritual guide of Śēr Khān, to emperor Humāyūn and made overtures of peace to him, representing that he was willing to surrender to Humāyūn's representatives the whole country of Bihār as far as Gaṛhī with the exception of Bangāl<sup>35</sup> and would then have the Khuṭbah read and coin issued in the name of the emperor. Ābbās<sup>36</sup> now records that emperor Humāyūn, on receipt of this submission of Śēr Khān, agreed to give him the kingdom of Bangāl, but on a condition that whereas he

had transgressed his limits and had encamped himself in the face of the emperor on the other side of the stream, he should show his respect to the emperor by retreating and leaving the passage of the river free to the emperor. When the emperor had crossed, he would undertake two or three marches in the pursuit of Śēr Khān and then turn back and would then finally conclude peace with him. Śēr Khān agreed to these conditions, and leaving the river free, retreated probably by another one karoh or so i.e., 2 miles in the direction of further east and then southward. The emperor, bridging the river, crossed it with his entire camp, army and his family, and pitched on the further side. This meant that Humāyūn's encampment was now pitched on the eastern bank of the river Karamnāsah, at a place which lay at a distance of two to three miles or so in the direction of North-West from modern Chaūsah railway station, in the vicinity of the angular junction of the Karamnāsah and the Gangā. Thus the respective forces of emperor Humāyūn and Śēr Khān now camped on the same side (i.e., eastern side) of the river Karamnāsah and the two were separated by a distance of about 2 karohs from each other. Aḥmad Yādgār<sup>37</sup> also agrees with Ábbās so far as it concerns the re-crossing of the river (Karamnāsah) by emperor Humāyūn. By this time about two months (3rd week of March-3rd week of May, A. D. 1539) had already elapsed, and the rains had set in, writes Jaūhar<sup>33</sup>. The camp of Śēr Khān was under water. Consequently he changed his ground and encamped on the skirts of a hill at a distance of 3 or 4 karohs in the direction of south-east from his previous encampment which

lay at a distance of about two karohs<sup>38a</sup> from the eastern bank of the river Karamnāsa. This meant that the new encampment of Śēr Khān now stood somewhere along the western side of the southern course of Thorā Nadī, to the further south of its junction with Konch (Kochān) Nadī (of modern Atlas). Thorā Nadī, it should be borne in mind, flows into the Gangā at a place, 5 miles east of Chaūsa and 3 miles west of Baksar. However, it widened the distance by about 5 to 6 karohs between the Muḡhal forces and the Afghān forces that now lay on the same side (eastern side) of the river Karamnāsa. Śēr Khān, now to disarm and deceive the Muḡhals, further withdrew all restraints on the supply of the grains to the Muḡhal camp<sup>38b</sup>.

Emperor Humāyūn now in his turn sent back Śaikh Khalīl who was also equally held in great respect by him as his ambassador to Śēr Khān, to urge him to march by regular stages back to Rohtās and to delay nowhere, stipulating that the emperor, after making some marches in his pursuit, would turn back and would then formally assign to Śēr Khān the charge of Bangāl, as agreed before, by issuing a farmān in his favour<sup>39</sup>. Śaikh Khalīl pressed Śēr Khān to accept these terms in the presence of emperor's men. Śēr Khān accordingly did it but only outwardly<sup>40</sup>. Śēr Khān then bestowed upon Śaikh Khalīl valuable gifts and thus captivated his heart. In the private talk that followed between the two, Śēr Khān solicited his honest opinion whether he should fight a war with the Muḡhals or not, reminding him that the Afghāns held Śaikh Farīd Śakar-ganj, his ancestor, in great veneration. This put the Śaikh in a quandary, as he

was then the envoy of emperor Humāyūn; but ultimately he, keeping in view the high moral precept to speak the truth even to the enemy if the latter solicited advice, gave counsel to Śēr Khān to fight with emperor Humāyūn, as his army was without necessary provisions and was in great distress and that emperor was soliciting for peace out of necessity and that he would break it very shortly. Śēr Khān now resolved to give a fight to the Muḡhal emperor, despite the terms of peace concluded.

Śēr Khān who had already sent for Khawāṣ Khān, was now anxiously awaiting his return from an expedition against Mahārath Chēro<sup>41</sup>. As soon as Śēr Khān heard the triumphant return of Khawāṣ Khān from the expedition against Mahārath Chēro, he at once proceeded with his forces in full array in the afternoon on Saturday in the month of muḡarram, A. H. 946<sup>42</sup>, to receive him. After this, he made up his mind to fight with the Muḡhals. He resorted to stratagem with a view to making a surprise attack on the Muḡhals who had been then lulled into a sense of safety, consequent upon the conclusion of peace. He ordered the whole of his troops to arms, giving out that Mahārath was approaching fast to attack them. After marching three to four kos<sup>42a</sup> from his encampment on 23rd June, A. D. 1539, he returned, saying that the spies had reported that Mahārath was yet at a distance<sup>43</sup>. Next day (24th June, A. D. 1539,) Śēr Khān again arrayed his army and moved out and marched several kos and then returned saying that Mahārath had not been visible that day also. His feints had the desired effect. The Muḡhals were thrown off the guard. They thought

that these marches of Śēr Khān were really directed against Mahārath Chero and were not aimed against them.

On the 25th June, A. D. 1539, in the morning Śēr Khān assembled all his chiefs and in his address to them he catalogued all the services which he had rendered to the emperor on various occasions in the past, saying that in return for all of them he received only ingratitude<sup>44</sup> from him. He then sought their counsel to break the peace that he had concluded with emperor Humāyūn to which the latter had agreed out of sheer helplessness and which he was bound to break at the earliest opportunity. All of his chiefs concurred with him. He then asked which of them was brave enough to take the lead in storming the Mughal camp. Khawāṣ Khān offered himself and, duly assisted by Śēr Khān's soldiers and elephants, he left with his contingent at about ten o'clock in the day in a particular direction. The order was then given to the Afghān nobles to array their followers without delay and when the entire Afghān force turned up in full arms, they proceeded another two or three karohs<sup>44a</sup> from their encampment, as if, in the pursuit of Mahārath, in the direction of Rohtās<sup>44b</sup>. This meant moving away from the camp of the Mughals by 7 to 8 karohs, as the previous encampment of Śēr Khān's forces lay at a distance of about five to six karohs from that of the Mughals. Here it was that Śēr Khān was joined in the night of 25th June, A. D. 1539, by Khawāṣ Khān who had been loitering since morning in the upper reaches of the eastern bank of the Karamnāsah. Meanwhile Humāyūn, in accordance with the terms of the pact concluded with Śēr Khān,



took two to three marches from the eastern bank of the river Karamnāsah in the direction of the S. E. towards modern Chaūsah Railway Station. He kept himself close to the bank of the Karamnāsah while feigning pursuit of Śēr Khān<sup>44c</sup>, which meant going in the direction of the south from the north by about two karohs or three miles. Thus the actual distance between the encampment of emperor Humāyūn on the eastern bank of the river Karmnāsah at Chaūsah and that of Śēr Khān who had gone further south of Chaūsah by keeping himself to the east of the Karamnāsah in the direction of Rohtās, finally stood at about 4 to 5 karohs only i.e., 8 to 9 miles in the night of the 25th June, A. D. 1539, before Śēr marched to launch his surprise attack on the sleeping camp of the emperor Humāyūn at Chaūsah at about an hour or two watches<sup>44d</sup> before the break of the morning of the 26th June, A. D. 1539. Śēr Khan's movement on the 25th June had confirmed the Muḡhals in their faith that no danger now lay ahead of them from the Afḡhāns who were at the moment marching in the pursuit of Mahārath, after which the Afḡhāns would retrace their steps towards their homes in accordance with the pact concluded earlier. It was a little before mid-night (on the 25th June, A. D. 1539) that Śēr Khān unfolded his plan<sup>44e</sup> (of surprizing the Muḡhals) to all the Afḡhān chiefs. He exhorted them to deliver an attack on the imperial forces and put them to rout<sup>45</sup>. The Afḡhāns willingly accepted the order.

On the night of the 25th June, A. D. 1539, it was the turn of Muḡammad Zamān Mirzā to keep vigil, but he proved negligent and this provided to Śēr Khān an opportunity for delivering a surprize attack

on the sleeping Muḡhal forces<sup>46</sup>. Śēr Khān divided his army into three bands; first was led by Śēr Khān himself, the second by Jalāl Khān, and the third by Khawāṣ Khān. Thus it was a three-pronged attack on the Muḡhal camp<sup>47</sup>. The attack on the rear of the imperial camp was led by Śēr Khān himself<sup>48</sup>. A great commotion arose in the imperial army<sup>49</sup>. It was struck with panic and became completely disorganised. The royal troops had no time even to buckle their saddle<sup>50</sup>. By the time emperor Humāyūn came to know about the surprize attack of the Afḡhāns, most of his forces had been put to sword and slain, while he himself was busy with reading the Holy Qurān<sup>51</sup>.

On hearing the uproar, Humāyūn ordered to make an enquiry into the matter<sup>52</sup>. His followers soon brought to him the news of the surprise attack by Śēr Khān<sup>53</sup>. Humāyūn at once got on the saddle to give a fight<sup>54</sup>. Three hundred soldiers collected round him. They saw an elephant of the enemy coming in their direction. Emperor Humāyūn cast his glance on Mir Buzkā and his two sons, namely, Gurg Ālī and Tatā Bēg, one of whom held the emperor's double barrellled gun and the other held the royal spear. They were noted for their valour; but even they had now no heart to take up the fight and kept their head bowed down, as the scale had turned against the emperor by that time. Seeing this, Humāyūn snatched away the royal spear from the hand of Gurg Ālī and, running towards the elephant, pierced into its forehead so deeply that he could not extricate it, despite all exertions. In the meanwhile the Afḡhān archer on the elephant shot an arrow, striking the emperor's hand. The emperor

called his followers to renew the assault, but to no avail. The Afghāns by that time had overwhelmed the Muḡhal army.

When the emperor had got on the horseback to give a fight to the Afghāns as noted above, he had ordered Bābā Jalāir and Qūch Bēg who had come near him to go quickly and escort the queen Hāji Bēgam<sup>55</sup> to him. They met with their death at the door of the queen's apartment. Mīr Pahālwan Badakhśī and many others were slain around the enclosure of the queen. The queen could not come out of the tent and fell into the hands of Śēr Khān.

Meanwhile a follower of emperor Humāyūn moved forward, seized his bridle, and said, "There is no time to be lost. The entire army has been put to rout"<sup>56</sup>. The emperor was prevailed upon to move to the bank. He found the bridge broken<sup>57</sup>. Humāyūn, finding no way out, plunged his steed into the river Karamnāsah, but soon got separated from his mount in the mid-stream. He was about to be drowned, when, with the aid of inflated leather bag offered to him by Nizām, a water-carrier, he managed to reach the other side of the river<sup>58</sup>. After landing safely on western bank of the river Karamnāsah, the emperor asked the water-carrier his name and the latter replied that he was called Nizām. The emperor called him Nizām aūliyā and promised that he would rule for half a day sometime after. Muḡammad Zamān Mirzā, maūlānā Muḡammad Parghalī, maūlānā Qāsim Ālī ṣadr, maūlānā Jalāl of Tattah and many other officers and learned men were drowned into the river. Emperor Humāyūn, accompanied by Mirzā Āskarī and others, rapidly proceeded towards Āgrah.

The above facts, gleaned from contemporary and later sources, have been interpreted variously by K. R. Qanungo, S. C. Mishra, R. S. Avasthi, Ishwari Prasad and S. K. Banerjee<sup>58a</sup>.

### THE FIRST ENCAMPMENT

Qanungo<sup>59</sup> thinks that the Muḡhal and Afghān forces for the first time came face to face, while they encamped respectively on the eastern and western sides of Thorā Nadī which flows into the Gangā at a place, 5 miles east of Chaūsah and three miles west of Baksar. He visualises<sup>60</sup> that Śēr Khān had already chalked out a calculated plan to bar the advance of the Muḡhal army in the direction of Chunār. In between the river Sone and the river Karamnāsaḥ at the Chaūsah ferry, there was no strategic position sufficiently strong enough to check this advance of the Muḡhal army to Chunār. Śēr's plan was, therefore, to gain time on the way, so that his main army might cross the Karamnāsaḥ near Chaūsah and take up its position on the opposite (i.e., western) bank to bar the passage of the Karamnāsaḥ against the Muḡhals. He thinks that Śēr Khān was not very sure of his strength to meet the Muḡhal army in a pitched battle, because a more numerous army than he could collect had met with their doom at Pānīpat and Khanūā, and at Mandāsor. So he first obstructed the Muḡhal advance somewhere near Bhojpūr (better known as Bhojpūr-Bīhīyah to distinguish it from Bhojpūr near Qanaūj) and with due caution put between himself and the advancing Muḡhal columns a "swampy-rivulet (i.e., Thorā Nadī) heard to be ahead

by Bābur and by-passed by him ten years before in April, A. D. 1529, when he was camping at Chaūsah on his eastward journey to Baxar and Bihīyā". He suggests that Humāyūn's march could not have commenced from Bihīyāh proper, which lies twenty miles east of Bhojpūr (or Bhojpūr-Bihīyāh). Most probably he (Humāyūn) started from Baksar and it is not surprising that the Muḡhal cavalry which was clad in full armour and was in regular battle array, and was accompanied by the slow-moving artillery in their rear and had been under the constant threat of surprise, could not traverse before the afternoon more than three miles as far as the bank of Thorā Nadi. Qanungo quotes Ábbās to say that in breadth the river is only twenty-five yards at its mouth; and then he refers to the makhzan to say 'Śēr Khān pitched his own camp opposite the royal camp at a village called Śatāya (Var-Śuyā; Dorn, I, p. 118) between Jhūsa (Var-Chaūsah) and Baksar, so that both armies were encamped on the bank of the Gangā. There was flowing a rivulet between the two camps, the banks of which were so steep that it could not be crossed except at the usual ford'<sup>60a</sup>. Blaming the modern scholars for not locating the stream between Chaūsah and Baksar, Qanungo holds that they have made attempts to locate the stream in the opposite direction, i.e., west of Chaūsah. In support of this accusation, he points out: "A cloud of dust raised by the hoofs of Śēr's cavalry could have been discerned, only across a stream of twenty-five yardsbreadth and not from Chaūsah near the mouth of the Karamnāsah, over a distance of not less than three miles of thickly wooded country of hard soil." Further he adds that

the Karamnāсах is not so narrow, and it is more than 25 yards in breadth even where it comes out from the cluster of the Mirzāpūr hills. Objecting to Jaūhar's statement that Śēr raised a cloud of dust from the east, Qanungo says that if the encampment was on the bank of the Karamnāсах or the swampy Thorā Nadī, the cloud of dust could only be from the west. He thinks that the cloud of dust from the east could never have upset Humāyūn; as his own army was following from the east behind him and according to the earlier report Śēr was in his rear. So emperor's surprise and doubt could have been occasioned only when he found the Afghāns, instead of his Jaūnpūr troops, coming from the west. Qanungo thinks that Jaūhar's maśriq (east) was a mistake for maḡhrib (west).

Since no fighting took place the next day, nor was there any attempt made to cross the rivulet, Humāyūn reached Chaūсах without any mishap. Qanungo postulates that Śēr had meanwhile crossed over the Karamnāсах and pitched his own camp close to the banks of the Gangā and the Karamnāсах at their confluence in order to bar Humāyūn's path. So the place of encampment of Śēr Khān in his opinion lay to the north of modern G. T. Road and very near the Gangā.

Qanungo<sup>61</sup> in his latest edition of "Sher Shah" has modified his earlier views that "Śēr Śāh held up for two months and a half the army of Humāyūn from his first position on the bank of Thorā Nadī, and that when his camp was flooded here, he moved to the western bank of the Karamnāсах (See Sher Shah P. 188)". He admits that the mistake was due to his close adherence to the accounts of Ábbās,

who says that all the fighting and negotiations took place on the bank of the stream of twenty-five yards breadth near Chaūsah, which could be none other than this Thorā Nadī. So he tagged on the details given by Jaūhar to the narrative of Ábbās. He now feels that this was unwarranted; because Jaūhar, undoubtedly a better authority than Ábbās, is quite explicit that all the fighting and talk of peace began only after Humāyūn had reached Chaūsah without any fighting. Besides, his visit to the locality convinced him that no large army could be held there even for a week. He realizes that though Thorā Nadī at its mouth answers faithfully to the description of Bābur's Memoirs and of the makhzan, a few miles up it becomes a dry sandy nālah, which offers no great obstacle.

Despite the fact that Qanungo<sup>62</sup> revised his views and corrected some of his mistakes, some incoherences are still left in his version. He holds that Humāyūn and Śēr Khān came face to face for the first time near Bhojpūr-Bihīyah, when their encampments lay on the eastern and western banks of Thorā Nadī respectively. While he has correctly realised that the long drawn-out confrontation of Humāyūn and Śēr Khān with their respective forces could not be possible on the two opposite banks of Thorā Nadī, and that it could be possible only on the banks of the Karamnāsah river which flowed by Chaūsah, he still tenaciously asserts that Humāyūn and Śēr Khān came face to face with each other for the first time on the banks of Thorā Nadī which flows five miles to the east of Chaūsah and three miles to the west of Baksar. But this contention can not be sustained. Neither the Muḡhal nor the

Afghān chroniclers confirm the conclusion arrived at by Qanungo.

A careful study of Ábbās and N'amatullāh<sup>63</sup> who have described the stream and its prominent features, suggests that (i) the banks were so steep that it could not be crossed except at the usual ford, (ii) it was 25 yards in width, (iii) that it was also full of mud and mire which we find true even today. These three features of stream accord more closely with those of the river Karmnāsah and not with Thorā Nadī. The eastern and western banks of the Karamnāsah even today are very steep and hence very difficult to cross, both in ascent and descent. The portions of the bed which come out after the water has receded in the summer, are full of mud and mire. In summer i.e., in the months from March to May, the width of the river at places remains 25 to 30 yards only. On the other hand, Thorā Nadī does not have steep banks, although in summer its width also is reduced to 25 yards only, and it is full of mud and mire. But what positively goes against the identification of the stream with Thorā Nadī is the fact that a few miles up it becomes a dry sandy nālah which offers no great obstacle. It is useless from the point of military strategy. It is impossible to imagine that on its two banks the respective forces of emperor Humāyūn and Śēr Khān could have confronted each other for a couple of months. In fact Qanungo is not sure of his own identification, as he<sup>64</sup> says at a subsequent place : "At any rate, whether it be on the bank of the Karamnāsah, or on the Thorā Nadī, Śēr could not raise a cloud of the dust from the east". But we need not indulge in any speculation in view of the



clear statement of Abul Faḏl<sup>65</sup> that Humāyūn and Śēr Khān came face to face with each other in village Bīhīyah which was a dependancy of Bhojpūr and where a black river called the Karamnāśah flowed between the two armies.

Further Qanungo contends that (i) Karamnāśah is not so narrow and measures more than twenty-five yards in breadth even where it emerges from the gorges of the Mirzāpūr hills; (ii) and that a cloud of dust raised by the hoofs of Śēr's cavalry could have been discerned only across Thorā Nadī and not from Chāūsah near the mouth of the Karamnāśah, over a distance of not less than three miles of thickly wooded country of hard soil. But such a contention is preposterous because, as stated above, the width of the stream of Karamnāśah at many places in the summer season shrinks to 25 to 30 yards. The cloud of dust raised by the hoofs of Śēr's cavalry could have been discernible not only across the stream of Thorā Nadī, 25 yards wide, but it could also be very well seen from Chāūsah near the mouth of Karamnāśah even over a distance of three miles. As for his subsequent contention that the area (around Chāūsah) was a thickly wooded country of hard soil which prevented the visibility at a distance, it is not warranted by the topography of the locality which is a plain and hard soil but not wooded.

If we assume that Humāyūn and Śēr Khān came face to face with each other on the banks of the Thorā Nadī, the question arises as to how Śēr Khān then managed subsequently to slip across the Karamnāśah and reach his own encampment there, in order to bar Humāyūn's path ? The stream was

only twentyfive yards wide and that too a few miles up, it turned into a dry sandy nālah which could offer no great obstacle, while Humāyūn with his forces lay gazing and watching all movements of Afghāns.

Again Qanungo is wrong, when he assumes that Śēr could not raise a cloud of dust from the east as Jaūhar says, but only from the west. The reasons advanced by him to explain the cause of emperor's surprise at the sight of the cloud of dust rising from the west, are based upon his selection of two distinct pieces torn from their context and then combining them together in order to give credence to his view. The first was the information that the Muḡhal emperor had previously received indications that Śēr with his army was advancing from the east; the second one was Humāyūn's expectation that the Muḡhal troops from Jaūnpūr would arrive from the west. He has combined these two distinct pieces of information to explain the cause of Humāyūn's surprise. Certainly the cloud of dust was one of them, because he thought that it had been raised by his own troops coming from Jaūnpūr. But the real cause of Humāyūn getting upset was two-fold; firstly he could never imagine that Śēr Khān with his forces was so close behind his rear, although he had full knowledge that a band of some followers of Śēr Khān had been following him in the rear from Manēr onwards and had been causing immense trouble to his soldiers. Secondly Humāyūn, despite being conscious of all handicaps and shortcomings of his forces, had over-estimated the superiority of his Muḡhal army in relation to those of Afghāns, and could never think that Śēr Khān would be bold

enough to appear in full strength with his followers and come face to face with him.

A close study of Jaūhar<sup>66</sup>, Abul Fazl<sup>66a</sup> and Ahmad Yādgar<sup>67</sup> shows that Humāyūn with his forces reached Bīhīyah (a dependency of Bhojpūr) where he crossed the river Karamnāsah, and where he was busy with pitching his encampment on its western bank, when a cloud of dust was seen rising in the east. Soon after Śēr Khān and his army came in sight and it encamped at a distance of one karoh from the eastern bank of the river Karamnāsah.

Another issue raised by Qanungo demands a notice. This relates to Mua'id Bēg's so-called wrong advice to Humāyūn for the postponement of an immediate attack on Śēr in the afternoon, when he had just arrived at Chaūsah and his Afghāns and their horses were tired and jaded and when they had come within the striking distance of the less tired Muḡhals. Qanungo<sup>67a</sup> holds that Mua'id Bēg gave sound advice on this occasion and which Humāyūn wisely acted upon, as the two armies were then camping on the opposite banks of a muddy stream and any immediate attack then on the Afghāns across the muddy stream was exactly what Śēr wanted the Muḡhals to attempt in order to place them in the predicament 'of the elephant in the mire'. It may be further added that while accepting Mua'id Bēg's suggestion, Humāyūn was quite conscious that his forces were in a sad plight because of the enervating climate of Bangāl and also because they had suffered considerably on the way due to the hot pursuit by the hostile Afghāns. Further, the Muḡhal army had arrived at Chaūsah only a few hours before the appearance of the Afghāns there, and the soldiers

were busy pitching their camp; everything was, therefore, in disarray. In such a situation, to launch an attack immediately on the Afghāns simply because they were thoroughly tired and jaded, would have been thoroughly indiscreet, particularly when Humāyūn was expecting a reinforcement from Āgrah. Moreover, for launching an attack on the Afghans, it was necessary for the Muḡhals to cross over to the eastern side of the Karamnāсах which was full of mud and mire. Also the step involved much risk, as the Afghāns were at a short distance of only one karoh from the eastern bank of the river.

### PROLONGED CONFRONTATION

(I) According to Qanungo<sup>68</sup>, Humāyūn, marching from the bank of Thorā Nadī, reached Chaūсах without any mishap and encamped on the eastern bank of the Karamnāсах. Śēr Khān had in the meanwhile slipped across the Karamnāсах and encamped on its western side close to the river and near its confluence with the Gangā to bar Humāyūn's path, and which now lay to the north of modern G. T. Road. Śēr Śāh's tactics upto this stage were primarily defensive. His aim was to prevent the Muḡhals from crossing the Karamnāсах, and to detain them in their existing position till the outbreak of monsoon which would augment their misery. For Humāyūn, the road across the Karamnāсах was the only outlet for marching to Chunār. After two and a half months of confrontation of the rivals on the opposite banks of the Karamnāсах, the rainy season set in. A heavy downpour

flooded the camp of Śēr Khān, which he had pitched in this low-lying area close to the Gangā, for, he had to watch the ferry on the Karamnāsah and had also to keep an eye on possible Muḡhal reinforcements which might come from Banāras and Ghazīpūr and would cross the Gangā at this point. Subsequently he moved his main camp higher up on the western bank of the Karamnāsah, 6 miles south-west of Chāūsah, keeping himself within the striking distance. The site of this new encampment of Śēr Khān, according to Qanungo, was Saer Chauparband of the Survey Map of India, which might be identical with Chūpā Ghaṭ, between which spot and Chāūsah the battle between Śēr and Humāyūn was fought. Śēr's original camp was about two miles W. N. W. of Chāūsah. He retreated about 8 miles to pitch his camp at Chūpā Ghaṭ (Saer Chauparband) on the western side of Karamnāsah. Thus the story of the alleged retreat of Śēr for two stages as said to have been demanded by Humāyūn according to Ábbās and the Makhzan, but uncorroborated by Jaūhar, might have its origin in the distorted version of this incident of marching eight miles further south-west along the western side of Karamnāsah. Therefore Qanungo's narration clearly shows his basic misinterpretation of the situation that while Śēr encamped with his forces on the western side of the Karamnāsah, Humāyūn encamped on its eastern side. Abul Fazl is clear on this issue. He says that Humāyūn crossed the Karamnāsah and encamped on its western bank, while Śēr encamped on its eastern bank. This closes all doors for speculation. Then again how could Śēr move his main camp higher up on

the western bank of the Karamnāsah and at the same time continue to keep himself within the striking distance without, probably, abandoning altogether the old site which was 2 miles W. N. W. of Chaūsah and had become overflowed. Even if we accept the explanation of Qanungo, for a minute, that floods subside as rapidly as they cover riparian tracts, how could Śēr Khān have managed to retain the old site and get shifted his camp to a new site, 6 miles south-west of Chaūsah. The inconsistency is too glaring to be overlooked here.

(II) In the opinion of Mishra<sup>69</sup>, by the time army of the Mughals had reached Manēr, the Afghan squad had become very active, though they concealed themselves very carefully. But those operations did not seriously interfere with the progress of the Mughal army. The Afghān did not come in the open and the emperor crossed the Karamnāsah without any obstruction. He marched further onward and crossed the Gangā probably near modern Zamāniah, then called Madan-Banāras, nearest on the route to Banāras. From this stage, the events now took a completely different turn. The moment the emperor had crossed the Gangā, Śēr Khān who had been unobtrusively following him, now came into the open and threatened the Mughals. This enkindled the wrath of Humāyūn who, in spite of the objection of his nobles and the unprepared state of his army, gave orders to recross the Gangā. The Mughal army recrossed the Gangā and followed the Afghāns again to the east. Finally the Afghāns encamped on the eastern bank of the Karamnāsah, while the emperor stopped on the left i.e., western bank of this river. Śēr Khān's strategy, which he

had formulated before his coming to Chaūsah, was two-fold. In the first instance, he intended to allow the emperor to pass to Āgrah, postponing the final struggle as long as possible. When the emperor had moved westward, he would fall upon Jahāngīr Qulī Bēg, reoccupy Gaūr and thus set at naught the achievements of the emperor's costly eastern campaign. After this, the entire Mughal territories in the Gangetic belt could fall into his hands speedily. In such a situation, it would become impossible for the emperor to crush his power in a single battle. Secondly, if the emperor took the initiative to fight a war, his attitude would depend upon the ensuing circumstances and the emperor's movements. If he had to fight, his best efforts would be to obtain the highest of return at the minimum of cost. To gain this objective, he would have no scruples in resorting to a surprise or treacherous attack, for to him duplicity was just a means to an end. He had already sounded his chiefs at Rohtās who had shown their readiness to follow his orders whatever they might be; and then had set out from Rohtās towards Chaūsah. Śēr Khān in the meanwhile had accredited his envoys to the emperor to negotiate for a peace. Probably he desired to avail himself of the last chance of coming to terms with the emperor, as he was still diffident of his ability to face the Mughals successfully. Moreover, he was keen to gain time, to gather all his forces and particularly to call back Khawāṣ Khān who had been then busy in his campaign against Mahārath Chēro. The opinion of Mishra that emperor Humāyūn crossed the Karam-nāsah, while coming from Gaūr, and then crossed the Gangā also at modern Zamāniāh (Madan-

Banāras), which was the nearest place enroue to Banāras, is based on Abul Fazl But it has been shown that Abul Fazl's<sup>70</sup> statement is here not correct.

As to Śēr's strategy as elaborated by Mishra, it may be pointed out that Ábbās<sup>71</sup> clearly writes that Śēr Khān had exhorted his nobles at Rohtās to fight the emperor Humāyūn who was, under the stress of the situation, taking no notice of the Afghāns and was hurrying to Āgrah because of the deplorable state of affairs in his army occasioned by his long stay at Gaūr and also because of the outbreak of seditions at Āgrah. It was only when his nobles had agreed to obey him unconditionally that Śēr Khān marched from Rohtāṣ and came face to face with the Muḡhals at Chaūsah. This unmistakably lays bare the mind of Śēr Khān and his final decision to settle the issue with the Muḡhal emperor by a regular fight at Chaūsah, as the situation then was most favourable to him, whereas it was highly disadvantageous to the Muḡhals. Thus the first assumption of Mishra that Śēr's strategy was to allow the Muḡhal emperor to proceed unhindered to Āgrah and then nullify the fruits of his costly eastern campaign by occupying Gaūr, does not bear scrutiny. His second assumption, relating to the attitude which Śēr Khān was to adopt in case of the initiative for war coming from the side of Humāyūn, is only partially correct. But the point to consider is : Was it in those circumstances possible for Humāyūn to take the initiative for war with the Afghans, particularly when his army was tired and his mind was assailed by doubt and fear.

Mishra's further assertion that after Śēr Khān



set out with his forces from Rohtās for Chaūsah, he had sent his envoy to the emperor to negotiate for a peace, is also not borne out by the authorities. It was only after the Mughals and Afghāns had confronted each other for a considerable time on the opposite banks of the Karamnāsah that the drama of the exchange of envoys was enacted. In this, the initiative came from the emperor who sent his two envoys on two different occasions to Śēr Khān, viz., Mullā Muḥammad Āziz and Śaikh Bayizīd. But he did it for quickening the pace for a pitched battle and not for negotiating a pact. Then again Mishra's rationale behind the despatch of Śēr Khān's envoy to the Mughal emperor is self-contradictory. On the one hand he says that Śēr Khān wanted to conclude peace because it would be the best chance for him to solve amicably his quarrel with the emperor, the more so because he was yet diffident of his power to face the Mughals. On the other hand, Mishra states that while sending his envoys to Humāyūn, he probably intended to gain time to collect all his force together. He particularly wanted to call back Khawāṣ Khān who had been deputed against Mahārath Chēro. All this indicates that Śēr Khān was preparing to fight the Mughals and had little desire of coming to terms with them. How could he be diffident and confident of his strength to face the Mughals at one and the same time. He can not be accused of confused thinking. His was a cool and calculating mind.

(III) Ishwari Prasad<sup>72</sup> says that by the time emperor Humāyūn arrived at Chaūsah, Śēr Khān had also arrived there quickly and "pitched his

camp directly in the emperor's path at a village called Bihīyā to the east of Chaūsā at Baksar". He adds, "Bihīyā now lies on the Eastern Railway, 382 miles from Calcutta in the Śāhābād district". "Both the armies", he writes "were on the same side of the river Ganges, but between them flowed a small stream called the Karmnāsā, of which the banks were so steep that it could not be crossed except at the usual ford". According to his usual plan, Śēr Khān entrenched his camp and made it secure by throwing up formidable earthworks. But as he had arrived at the place almost simultaneously with the arrival of the imperial army, his preparations for the battle were far from complete. Qāsim Ḥusain Sulṭān advised for an immediate attack upon the Afghans, as they were still tired of a long march, having covered about thirty-six miles that day; but Mua'id Bēg countered it by saying that the attack should be deferred for the next day, and, as ill-luck would have it, his advice was once again accepted by the emperor to the great dis-satisfaction of his more prudent counsellors. Ishwari Prasad asserts that if the emperor had followed the sound advice rendered by Qāsim Ḥusain Sulṭān, the history of India would have been different. But the emperor decided to cross the Karamnāsah; a bridge was built over it, and the army safely encamped on the other side without any fighting. From April to June, Śēr Śāh and Humāyūn confronted each other. The emperor could neither force an action, nor could he cross the river in face of the enemy.

Qanungo<sup>73</sup> has commented on the above statement of Ishwari Prasad, that although it is based on fragments of evidences of good authorities like

Abul Fazl, Ábbās, and Makhzan etc., it is a historical puzzle. He points out : "There is only one river of the name of Karmnāsā that flows till today at a short distance west of Chaūsā. If Humāyūn's army crossed 'The Karamnāsā' and encamped on the other side in April, A. D. 1539, where did Śēr hold up Humāyūn for two months and where was the necessity for Humāyūn's army to cross the Karmnāsā again to force its path westwards" ? But Qanungo has not appreciated the situation with regard to Humāyūn's march towards the west in direction of Chunār, when Śēr Khān lay encamped on the eastern bank of the Karmnāsah. and from where he was closely watching the movements of the imperial army. As to the necessity for Humāyūn's army crossing the Karmnāsah again, the Persian sources clearly allude to the circumstances in which Humāyūn crossed the river Karamnāsah and came over to its eastern bank. He did it only after coming to an understanding with Śēr Khān. While criticising Ishwari Prasad, Qanungo asserts : "If Śēr, after a day's hard ride of 36 miles, had barred 'The emperor's path at Bīhīyā' to the east of Chaūsah, how could the Karmnāsah that flows a few miles west of Chaūsah, come in between the two armies. Ishwari Prasad has chosen to calculate the distance of Bīhīyah as 382 miles from Calcutta, but not from Baxar and Chaūsā; because in that case the tiny stream of 25 yards' breadth would have turned out to be some other river than the Karmnāsā". But it may be pointed that all these inconsistencies have arisen because of the failure on the part of scholars to locate correctly the position of the village Bīhīyah. Ishwari Prasad

has located it near Baksar whereas Qanungo has mistaken it to be no other than the place where Bīhīyah Railway station now stands. Abul Fazl has indicated the location of this place. Both according to Muḡhal and Afḡhān chroniclers, village Bīhīyah was a dependancy of Bhojpūr. So it ought to have existed somewhere to the north of G. T. Road and very near the Gangā, probably at about a distance of 2 to 3 miles in the direction of north west from present Chaūsa Railway station on the eastern side of the river Karmnāsah, and most likely in the close vicinity of the angular junction formed by the fall of the river Karmnāsah into the Gangā or somewhere in the present bed of the Gangā or in its riparian tracts. On this basis, we can easily explain how the river Karmnāsah which then flowed close by the village Bīhīyah, kept the Muḡhal forces separated from the Afḡhān army.

The other charge of Qanungo against Ishwari Prasad for the latter's calculation of the distance of Bīhīyah from Calcutta, is based on his own notion about the tiny stream of 25 yards' breadth being the Thorā Nadī. But this assumption is untenable. The statements of Ábbās and Námatullāh contradict it. They clearly refer to Karamnāsah and not to Thorā Nadī. Qanungo further says; "Bīhīyā lies on the direct road from Buxar to Árrah. (Memoirs of Bābur, p. 662, f.n. 2). If Śēr and Humāyūn came face to face at the village of Bīhīyā... a dependency of Bhojpūr, how could a black river called the Karamnāsā flow between the two armies. (See Akbarnāma, p. 342, quoted by Dr. Ishwari Prasad)". This confusion is due to the identification of Bīhīyah of medieval historians with the modern Bīhīyah

railway station. The name has remained but the location has shifted during the long period of time.

Qanungo then quotes Makhzan (E & D IV. p. 370, f. n. 1) which says: "Śēr Khān pitched his own opposite the royal camp, at a village called Śātāya (Dorn p. 118, Śūyā), between Jhūsah (Chāūsah) and Buxar (Dorn does not refer to this name p. 118), so that both armies were encamped on the same side of the Ganges. There was also a stream flowing between the two camps; the banks of the stream were so steep that it could not be crossed except at the usual ford; Dorn adds, 'without a ferry, and the bed of it was so filled with mud and clay, that the men as well as horses and camels stuck in it'. Here the guards of both armies encamped". Qanungo then refers to S. K. Banerjee and credits him for having correctly surmised Bihīyah in place of the doubtful Śātāya or Śūyā. But the accuracy of this finding of Banerjee, he says, "depends absolutely on the identification of the muddy stream (the Makhzan) which was, according to Ábbas, twentyfive yards in breadth". On this basis, he has emphasised his own identification of the river i.e., Thorā Nadī which flows five miles west of Chāūsah and 3 miles east of Baksar. Qanungo writes that "whereas Banerjee is comfortably vague on this point, Ishwari Prasad, by accepting the name of the Karamnāsā river on the authority of Abul Faḏl, and ignoring other important clues about the location of the stream between Chāūsā and Bihīyā, has misled himself". But here again, it is Qanungo who is misled when he says that there is a Bihīyah which is 20 miles east of Bhojpūr on the eastern bank of the Thorā Nadī. This Bihīyah, according to him, can not be the place

where Humāyūn halted on the particular day, when he came face to face with Śēr Khān. He then says that from Bābur's Memoirs it transpires that Bābur had visited Bhojpūr which lay on the other side (eastern side) of this "smallish, swampy stream", meaning thereby Thorā Nadī. "So Humāyūn's place of halt", according to Qanungo, "was not Bīhiya proper, but another well-known place Bhojpūr-Bīhiya, so named as to distinguish it from Bīhiya parganah of Bhojpūr near Kanaūj".

So Humāyūn made a halt at Bhojpūr-Bīhiyah on the bank of Thorā Nadī, according to this learned scholar. But it may be pointed out here again that Thorā Nadī could never be a proper place of encampment for the Muḡhals and the Afghāns from the military point of view. On the other hand, the river Karamnāsa which conforms to all the three traits recorded by makḥzan and Ábbās,<sup>737</sup> was the stream referred to by them. Moreover Bhojpūr and Bīhiyah (i.e., Fathpūr-Bīhiyah) are the two distinct maḥāls subsisting side by side in the map attached to the article on Bihār by Beames<sup>74</sup>. How could then Bhojpūr-Bīhiyah be accepted to be so named as to distinguish Bhojpūr of Bīhiyah parganah from Bhojpūr near Qanaūj, when both Bhojpūr and Bīhiyah are two distinct and separate maḥāls or loosely called parganahs. How could Bhojpūr which was itself a parganah then, be attached to Bīhiyah which was another parganah? One parganah can not be attached to another parganah. As a matter of fact, Qanungo himself has fallen into the same error for which he has criticised Ishwari Prasad.

While Qanungo has thus totally failed to grasp at the real fact, Ishwari Prasad has come closer to

the truth when he has observed, on the authority of Abul Fazl, that between Muḡhals and the Afḡhāns there flowed a small stream called the Karamnāsah. But he also had been led astray, when he says that "as soon as emperor Humāyūn reached Chaūsā, Śēr Khān also appeared simultaneously on the spot with a great force to try conclusions with the Muḡhals and he pitched his camp directly at a village Bīhīyā to the east of Chaūsā at Buxar, where a small stream called Karamnāsā, with its steep bank difficult to be crossed over, flowed between the two opposing forces, although they were on the same side of the river Ganges". But how could village Bīhīyah where Śēr Khān camped, exist at Baksar? Village Bīhīyah had no separate existence of its own; it was a part and parcel of Baksar which then itself was a village. How could one village incorporate another village? Secondly, if village Bīhīyah lay to the east of Chaūsah, as far east as Baksar, as assumed by Ishwari Prasad, how could the river Karamnāsah flow between the Muḡhals and the Afḡhans as has been stated by him in the subsequent line? We all know that the river Karamnāsah flows to the west of Chaūsah and not to the east of Chaūsah. Thus Ishwari Prasad has landed himself into an island of irreconcilability and clear inconsistencies. Bīhīyah actually stands, as shown before, near the river Karamnāsah at its confluence with the Gangā.

Further, the narration of Ishwari Prasad creates an impression that by the time Humāyūn and Śēr Khān had arrived at the specified place, they were on the same side (eastern side) of the river Karamnāsah, and hence Qāsim Ḥusain Sulṭān

proposed to Humāyūn to attack the weary Afghāns, a suggestion which was rejected by the Muḡhal emperor at the instance of Mua'īd Bēg. Then a bridge was constructed on the river Karamnāsah and the Muḡhals crossed it and went over to its western bank. But how could the Muḡhal forces throw the bridge on the river Karamnāsah and manage to cross it at a time when all their activities were watched so closely by the Afghāns who lay at a very short distance and who could have very well made a sally on them, the moment the latter attempted to cross the river ? Actually Humāyūn, on reaching Chaūsah, crossed the Karamnāsah and went over to its western bank where he was busy with throwing encampment, when Śēr Khān too with his forces came to the place and pitched his camp on the eastern side of the river Karamnāsah.

Banerjee<sup>75</sup> records, "Emperor Humāyūn, on reaching Chaūsah, crossed the river Ganges and went over to the other side (in modern Ghazīpūr). In the meanwhile Śēr Khan also arrived at Chaūsah on the western side of the river Karamnāsah and encamped to the south of the Ganges. Noticing the arrival of the Afghāns, Humāyūn who had been greatly disgusted with the persistent guerrilla tactics of the enemy, decided to put an end to further annoyance by engaging them in a pitched battle, and he accordingly recrossed the Ganges and came over once again to this side of the Ganges (in south Bihār) and encamped on the eastern side of the river Karamnāsā. Śēr Khān, whose heart must have rejoiced at this foolhardiness of the king, receded some distance in order to make the landing of the Muḡhals easy. It speaks of his chivalry that he did



not try to attack Humāyūn while the latter was crossing the river. Probably Śēr Khān hoped for a complete victory and hence he refrained for the present from inflicting any injury".

Qanungo<sup>76</sup> has rightly scoffed at the above absurd suggestion of Banerjee, when he says, "According to Dr. Banerjee, Humāyūn, after having crossed the Ganges to the other bank, i.e., into Ghāzīpūr district, took it into his head to recross the Ganges to be caught between the Ganges and the Karamnāsā near their junction at Chaūsā. Śēr was all the while loitering innocently behind the Muḡhals, and in chivalry and self-confidence (according to Dr. Banerjee) seeing the tāmāsā of Humāyūn's crossing and recrossing the Ganges at Chaūsā, giving every facility to the emperor to do so without inconvenience. Unfortunately, neither to medieval nor to modern writers is Śēr known to have ever been chivalrous to his equals in power among men, though he did not quarrel with women and children."

Apart from improbability of Banerjee's versions so sarcastically put forth by Qanungo, it may be pointed out that the evidence of the medieval chroniclers does not support or corroborate his opinion. None of them records this crossing and recrossing of the Gangā by Humāyūn at Chaūsāh. On the other hand, Abul Faḡl, whose testimony is worthy of much evidence, writes to the effect that emperor Humāyūn, on arriving at Chaūsāh, crossed the river Karamnāsāh and went over to its western bank, while Śēr Khān, in his journey from Rohtās, came face to face with the Muḡhals in the village of Bīhīyah and encamped to the east of the river

**Karamnāsah.**

(v) Avasthī<sup>77</sup> postulates that on arriving at Chaūsah, emperor Humāyūn crossed the river Karamnāsah by a bridge especially constructed for the purpose. This took place in about the beginning of zī-q'adah, A. H. 945 = March, A. D. 1539. "The imperialists had not yet encamped themselves on the western bank of the river Karamnāsa, when Śēr Khān also arrived with his Afghān forces from Rohtās and encamped on the eastern bank of the same river. In this period of the long-drawn encampment of the Muḡhals on the western bank of the Karamnāsā (their encampment having been prolonged for months together, March-May, A. D. 1539), Humāyūn received the disturbing reports of the developments in Agrā relating to the declaration of independence by his brother Mirzā Hindāl who caused Śaikḥ Bahlol, the agent of the Muḡhal emperor, to be murdered there, the arrival of Mirzā Kāmran at Agrā from the Punjāb and the subsequent winning over of Mirzā Hindāl to the path of rectitude by Mirzā Kāmran, and their ultimate failure to turn up with a force to the aid of the Muḡhal emperor at Chaūsā. In the meanwhile, there arose a very difficult situation in the Muḡhal camp. There was already a scarcity of food and fodder in the camp of the Muḡhal forces which became all the more bad, because Śēr Khān's men had been obstructing their flow into the imperialist's camp. The arrival of Bēg Mīrak from Chunār and Bābā Jalair from Jaūnpūr with their reinforcements at Chaūsā in the camp of the Muḡhals still more worsened the food and fodder situation and they now became all the more scarce and dear". He further writes that "Śēr Khān's policy

which had at first remained defensive for long, greatly injured the Afghān cause. In the first instance, Humāyūn had gone out of Śēr Khān's trap unhurt and was now lying camping on the western bank of the river Karamnāsā. Secondly, South Bihar had, no doubt, escaped the onslaughts of the Muḡhal attack but only for a short while, as only in one days' march the emperor could have arrived in the fort of Chunār which he could have used as the base of his operations against Śēr Khān. This step would have further made Humāyūn capable enough to gain back the country north of the Ganges and ensure his hold over the 'No man's land'. But the emperor committed the Himalyan error by not proceeding to the fort of Chunār immediately. He probably did not like to quit the river bank without having a satisfactory solution of the Afghān problem. Śēr Khān was also equally anxious to arrive at some sort of peace with the Muḡhals. Negotiations, therefore, began in between emperor Humāyūn and Śēr Khān. Śēr Khān proposed that the whole of Bangāl and Bihār extending upto fort of Chunār in the west be given to him and he would then read the Khuṭbā and caused the coin to be struck in the king's name". Avasthi has argued here that the demands of Śēr Khān were very exorbitant as compared to those made by Śēr Khān on a previous occasion, when he was ready to surrender Bihār to the emperor if only Bangāl was given to him. But he then adds that we must bear in mind that Śēr Khān was then only the master of south Bihār, but now the Sūr hero had to his credit the accomplishment of the conquest of more than half of the Muḡhal empire and as such if Śēr Khān laid

down the terms related above, it was neither "strange nor unreasonable". Humāyūn agreed, though, reluctantly, to Śēr Khān's terms. But he then advanced a "very strange condition" and that was that he asked Śēr Khān to "leave the passage of the intervening stream" and thereby enable him and his troops to "cross the Karamnāsā by a bridge". He also demanded that on the arrival of the imperialists on the eastern bank of the rivulet, Śēr Khān and his Afghān troops should pay their homage to him by turning their backs and allowing themselves to be pursued for some distance by the Muḡhals. Avasthi is not sure whether Humāyūn, while advancing the said condition, was prompted by vain consideration or he really meant foul-play; but Śēr Khān, probably to entrap the Muḡhals, conceded the demand of the emperor. To disarm further the emperor's suspicion and convince him of his good faith, Śēr Khān withdrew his hand from intercepting the convoys of the grains to the Muḡhal camp. To a great extent, we feel inclined to agree with Avasthi, so far as his suggestion with regard to the encampment of Humāyūn on the western bank of the Karamnāsah vis-a-vis the encampment of the Afghans on its eastern side is concerned. We may also agree with him so far as it relates to the scarcity of food and fodder in the Muḡhal camp, and further deterioration in their supply. But it is difficult to agree with his views in labelling Śēr Khān's policy as defensive in character in the earlier phase of his confrontation with the Muḡhals and which, according to him, enabled Humāyūn to escape unhurt to the western side of the Karamnāsah. Here it is to be noted that Humāyūn had to

remain encamped on the western bank of Karmnāsah per force as Śēr Khān had stationed himself with his forces on its eastern side and had been watching all activities of the imperialists which had rendered it impossible for them either to proceed to the west or to take recourse to war at their will. This forced encampment of the Muḡhals on the western bank of the Karmnāsah had been proving very uncomfortable for them who were then extremely short of food and fodder. But it is difficult to understand if this forced encampment of the Muḡhals on the western bank of the Karmnāsah which was brought about by Śēr Khān's policy of long term encampment on the eastern bank of this river, had injured the Afḡhān cause in any manner, for it has been already shown that this encampment of the Muḡhals on the western side of the Karmnāsah had deprived the Muḡhals only of the benefit of freedom of action so far as it pertained to their move to go unmolested to the west in the face of the Afḡhāns watching all their activities from the eastern side of this river. In this set-up the subsequent sub-structures that Avasthi has built up with regard to the desirability of the advance of Humāyūn from Chaūsah to the fort of Chunār in the west in one day's march and the subsequent utilisation of this fort by the Muḡhal emperor as the base of his onslaughts on Śēr Khān and as a spring-board for re-establishing his hold over the country north of the Gangā which was a "No-Man's land", fall to the ground.

Avasthi's assumption that Humāyūn could cover the distance from Chaūsah to the fort of Chunār in one day, is unworthy of credence. It was physically

impossible, when it is remembered that 77 miles separated the two places from each other. Then again, we know that, by the time emperor Humāyūn had left Gaūr for Chaūsah, Śēr Khān had established his hold over the entire region as far as Qanaūj<sup>78</sup>, with the partial exception of the forts of Chunār and Jaūnpūr which were still holding out but they were closely invested. In such a situation, it would have been unthinkable for Humāyūn to have used the fort of Chunār as base for his operations against Śēr Khān, or for establishing his hold over the country north of the Gangā, which was a "No Man's land". Chunār had been completely isolated both in the east and west, because the surrounding region had come under the domination of the Afghāns. It had become difficult, if not an impossible task, for the Muḡhal emperor to sustain his supply-line of reinforcements from his capital at Āgrah to the fort of Chunār intact, even though the routes to the Muḡhal capital via Arail, Karah, and Kālpī were open. In the light of these facts, Avasthi's lamentation over the failure of Humāyūn to proceed from Chaūsah to the fort of Chunār which would have yielded him the fancied benefits, is a mere figment of imagination. And his conception that Humāyūn probably did not like to quit the bank of the river Karmnāsah without satisfactorily solving the Afghān problem also, does not explain correctly the real import of the situation. As stated before, it was not for the emperor to decide to leave for Chunār, because his activities on the west of the Karmnāsah were being closely watched by Śēr Khān from his encampment on the eastern side of this river. Humāyūn had no other alternative

except to continue his encampment on the western bank of the Karmnāsah with a view to settling accounts with the Afghāns, before he could move to the west.

Avasthi's view that Śēr Khān was equally anxious to arrive at some sort of peace with the Muḡhals, is not supported by evidence, for Ábbās<sup>79</sup> emphatically states that Śēr Khān had left Rohtās with his followers towards Chaūsah with a firm resolve to fight the Muḡhals.

Avasthi's further assertion that Śēr Khān offered to read the Khuṭbah and issue the coin in the name of emperor Humāyūn, if he was given the whole of Bangāl and Bihār extending upto the fort of Chunār in the west, needs a critical appraisal. He has himself confessed that these demands of Śēr Khān were very exorbitant. But he does not think them to be unreasonable, as Śēr Khān was on the previous occasion only the master of South Bihār, but now he had to his credit the occupation of more than half of the Muḡhal empire. But Avasthi is not correct in his assessment of the situation. He has over-looked the fact that by the time emperor Humāyūn had arrived at Chaūsah, his hold over Bangāl through the appointment of Jahāngir Qulī Bēg as its governor and his hold on Bhāgalpūr, Mungēr and Paṭnah in South Bihar was completely intact. Chunār and Jaūnpūr, although besieged by the Afghāns, were still in the hands of the Muḡhals. It, then, does not stand to reason to presume that Śēr Khān with the occupation of Banaras, Bahraich and a few places that lay in the areas extending upto Qanaūj, was in possession of more than half of the Muḡhal empire, or that his

position was so improved as to have justified him to have demanded from emperor Humāyūn the whole of Bangāl and Bihār, extending upto Chunār as the price for peace.

In this context two considerations must be borne in mind, firstly, the unshakable resolve of Śēr Khān to fight with Muḡhals when he had left Rohtās with his followers for Chaūsah<sup>80</sup>; and, secondly, the desire of Humāyūn to retain Bihār at all costs, of which Śēr Khān was fully aware<sup>81</sup>. Therefore, any proposal for peace and the conditions therein put forward by Śēr Khān was not intended to be honestly implemmented by him. The object was to cover up his treacherous plan to take the Muḡhal emperor completely unawares for a final show-down. Knowing, as he did, that Humāyūn would on no account part with Bihār, it would have been preposterous for Śēr Khān to have put forward a demand which was to be forthwith rejected. Moreover, it would have defeated his two-fold objectives of gaining time and lulling the Muḡhals into a false sense of security with a view to launching a surprise attack on them and thereby inflict on them a crushing defeat, a phenomenon which actually occurred at Chaūsah. Śēr Khān, therefore, in his feigned peace-parleys with Muḡhal emperor at Chaūsah, would have in all probability made a request for Bangāl only to be ceded to him.

Avasthi has further stated that the conditions that Humāyūn had laid down, while accepting the peace-terms of Śēr Khān, were promoted either by his vanity when he asked for the passage across the Karamnāsah to its eastern bank in order to make a feigned pursuit of the Afḡhāns, or that he



meant foul play. In fact, treachery was unknown to Humāyūn. On the other hand, he attached much importance to his imperial dignity and so it would be correct to say that it was this consideration which prompted him to make a show of pursuit of the Afghāns. It would compensate the diminution which had come about in the prestige of the imperialists because of the audacity of the Afghāns who had decided to come to the eastern bank of the Karmnāсах and who encamped straight in the face of the Muḡhals who had been camping on the western bank of this river. Avasthi, however, is right, when he says that Śēr Khān accepted this strange condition of the Muḡhal emperor, because he clearly foresaw that if the latter crossed over to eastern bank of the Karamnāсах, he would be completely entrapped. In other words, he was courting his own disaster with the surging waves of the river Gangā in the north, and the overflowed Karamnāсах in the west. But Avasthi is vague with regard to the date of Humāyūn's arrival at Chaūsah. He mentions March, A. D. 1539. He has missed the fact that zi-q'adah, A. H. 945, commenced on March 21, A. D. 1539, and closed on 19th April<sup>82</sup>, A. D. 1540. As such, at the earliest the date could be placed in the last week of March, A. D. 1539.

### RECROSSING OF KARAMNĀSAH BY THE MUGHALS

(1) Mishra<sup>83</sup> has stated that Śēr Khān, while setting out from Rohtās towards Chaūsah, had sent his envoys to the Muḡhal emperor to negotiate for a peace. In reply, Humāyūn said that he had taken

exception to the breach of etiquette that Śēr Khān had committed in encamping directly in front of the imperial army; and as such his proposal could only be considered, if he signified his loyalty by removing his camp and retreating two or three stages back, thus allowing the Mughals an undisturbed passage across the Karamnāsa. Śēr Khān willingly obeyed emperor's command, as by this move he improved "the chances of a possible peace or profitable surprise attack". He, therefore, marched east to Bīhīyah where he pitched his camp. The emperor crossed to the eastern bank of the Karamnāsa and encamped at Chaūsa, and surrounded himself with earthen ramparts. Negotiations were resumed, as the armies set up their camps. Emperor Humāyūn, realising his inability to crush Śēr Khān outright in the situation in which he was placed, decided to negotiate with the Afghāns for peace and acted accordingly. No doubt, he desired to crush the Afghāns once for all, but for the time being he had to keep them engaged until help came. "A withdrawal at this late stage could not but have one interpretation only and that was that Humāyūn, so sensitive to a fancied insult implied in the march on the south Gangā bank, could not admit the imputation of defeat attributed to a retreat in face of enemy resistance". He, therefore, held on his camp on the eastern bank of the river Karamnāsa, though his route to Āgrah was entirely free. Śēr Khān, on the other hand, was hoping "either to snatch a profitable peace which would absolve him from the hateful necessity of fighting or to risk such an engagement" as would ensure victory. He was fully aware of the emperor's difficulties which

increased rather than decreased as days passed by so long as he lay inactive. "In this situation a stalemate began at Chaūsā, punctuated by mutually misleading overtures by which both parties were endeavouring to get the better of the other". Śaikh Khalīl was sent by emperor Humāyūn as envoy to Śēr Khān for negotiating peace terms which were to the effect that Śēr Khān was to retreat stage by stage to Rohtās, while the imperial army would follow him. This was a face-saving device which implied that Śēr Khān was fleeing before the emperor. During this pursuit, Humāyūn was to grant Śēr Khān the farman for Bangāl, where afterwards he was to retire, leaving the rest of the lands in the hands of the Muḡhals. Śaikh Khalīl conveyed the terms to Śēr Khān and urged on him to accept them. But if the proposition of Mishra is accepted, it would have to be explained as to how could the chances of a possible peace be ensured or improved if Śēr Khān accepted the demand of the Muḡhal emperor to retreat two or three stages backward. It would mean the retreat of the Afḡhāns towards the east to Bīhīyah, enabling the Muḡhals to cross the Karamnāsah and come over to its eastern bank. It would also mean that by accepting the condition of emperor Humāyūn, Śēr Khān created a happy climate conclusive to peace. But real facts unfold a different story. It is well known that Śēr Khān had left Rohtās for Chaūsah with the object of fighting the Muḡhals. So this retreat of Śēr Khān towards east to Bīhīyah in compliance with the demand of the Muḡhal emperor, instead of improving chances of a possible peace, would have favoured a surprise attack on the Muḡhals who, by

crossing over to eastern bank of the Karamnāsa, were being lured into the trap spread out by the enemy. They would be caught in the fork formed by the angular junction of the Karamnāsa and the Gangā with all the doors of escape to the north and west towards Āgrah finally closed on them. Nor could they have turned towards the east and the south, because a march in these directions could never have led them to Āgrah. On the contrary, a flight in the south which was infested with jungles and hills and had been the abode of the Afghāns, would have thrown the Muḡhals into the jaws of death, while a flight to the east, with no prospect of succor or aid from Āgrah, would have exposed them only to privations and untold sufferings with no way out of survival, as all the routes to Āgrah in the west had been cut off by the Afghāns.

Then again, the statement of Mishra that Śēr Khān, in accordance with the wishes of emperor Humāyūn, retreated two or three stages towards east to Bihīyah, is not supported by any evidence. Bihīyah of Mishra here can not be the Bihīyah recorded by Abul Faḡl, as the latter chronicles that Humāyūn and Śēr Khān came face to face in the village Bihīyah, a dependency of Bhojpūr, where the river Karamnāsa flowed, on the western bank of which the Muḡhals had been camping while on its eastern side the Afghāns had been camping. It has been shown above that the geographical location of Abul Faḡl's Bihīyah is at a distance of about 2 to 3 miles in the direction of N. W. from present day Chaūsa railway station on the eastern side of the river Karamnāsa, and in the close vicinity of the angular junction formed by the fall of the Karmnāsa

into the Gangā<sup>84</sup>. Bīhīyah, as understood by Mishra, in all probability meant the better known Bīhīyah where a Railway Station stands today and which lies 20 miles east of Bhojpūr. But this could never be the place where Śēr K̄hān retreated by undertaking a march of 2 to 3 stages in accordance with the desire of emperor Humāyūn as is evident from the topography of the area and the tenor of the narration of the events. If Bīhīyah of Mishra be taken to stand for Bhojpūr-Bīhīyah as is stated by Qanungo in his revised edition of "Sher Shah"<sup>85</sup>, it would mean extending to Mishra the benefit of a finding which was not in existence at the time when he wrote his thesis on Śēr Śāh, although this will bring him much nearer to the truth.

Mishra's further descriptions of the events, subsequent to the crossing of the Muḡhals to the eastern bank of Karamnāśah at Chaūsah—the retreat of Śēr K̄hān by two or three stages further towards east to Bīhīyah and process of negotiations between the Muḡhal emperor and Śēr K̄hān—are permeated with sentimental reasoning which is absolutely untenable. He says that Humāyūn, being very sensitive to a fancied "insult implied in the march to the west for Āgrā along the south Gangā bank", could not bear even the allegation of defeat which the enemy's resistance would have implied. He, therefore, decided to stay on the eastern bank of the Karamnāśah, though his route to Āgrah was entirely free. He was waiting for the expected help from Āgrah. But this is not the whole truth. The fact is that Humāyūn had to stay on the eastern bank of the Karamnāśah, because it was not possible for him to march to the west in face of vigilant Afḡhān forces. Nor is

Mishra's statement that Śēr Khān was waiting to snatch peace, confirmed by the available evidence; he had come from Rohtās with his mind made up to fight. Mishra is, however, correct, when he says that Śēr Khān was prepared to risk an engagement which would ensure for him a complete victory.

(ii) Avasthi<sup>86</sup> writes, "Humāyūn agreed, though reluctantly, to the terms of peace offered by Śēr Khān". The Mughal emperor, after this, put forward "a strange condition" that Śēr Khān was to leave free the passage across stream, to enable him and his troops to cross over to the eastern side of the Karamnāsah by a bridge. Accordingly he retreated and encamped at a more strategic place at the distance of about six or eight miles, detaching some men and artillery behind, and leaving the passage of the river free. This seems to have set at rest the apprehensions of the Muḡhal emperor who forthwith ordered the construction of a bridge over the river Karamnāsah. On its completion at about the close of muḡarram, A. H. 946 (June, A. D. 1539), Humāyūn crossed the river with his entire ḡaram, army and baggage, and encamped on the same side (i.e., eastern side) where Śēr Khān lay. In other words, Humāyūn cantoned himself in the very jaws of disaster with the surging waves of the river Gangā in the north, the overflowed Karamnāsah in the west and the army of Śēr Khān in the east. It is clear that Avasthi glossed over the various stages in the withdrawal of Śēr Khān from his original encampment on the eastern side of the Karamnāsah river to the subsequent sites where he had to canton his troops on different occasions under changing situations. He has also omitted to record these

respective distances and directions and has contented himself only with a general and sweeping statement. It has been shown, on the basis of the relevant original authorities, that Śēr Khān's first encampment lay at a distance of about one karoh or about two miles in the easterly direction from the eastern bank of the river Karamnāsah at a place which lay to the north of modern G. T. Road and very near the Gangā, most probably at a distance of about 2 to 3 miles or so in the direction of north and slightly west from modern Chaūsah Railway Station on the eastern side of the river Karamnāsah. It was situated somewhere in the vicinity of the angular junction formed by the fall of the river Karamnāsah into the Gangā. The next site of Śēr Khān's camp came about, when he concluded peace with emperor Humāyūn. In accordance with the terms of the peace, he left the passage of the river free and retreated by another one karoh or so i.e., 2 miles further east and then southward. Humāyūn then came over the eastern bank of the river Karamnāsah and encamped at a place that lay about a karoh or 2 miles, slightly west of the original or the first encampment of Śēr Khān, the geographical position of which has already been clearly shown in the map (plate No 6). The third site of Śēr Khān's encampment was at a distance of 3 or 4 karohs in the direction of south-east from his second encampment which lay at a distance about two karohs from the eastern bank of Karamnāsah. This widened the distance between the Mughal and the Afghān armies by five to six karohs on the same side of the river Karamnāsah. The fourth stage in Śēr Khān's movement occurred on the 25th June, A. D. 1539

(8th şafar, A. H. 946), when, feigning pursuit of Mahārath Chero, he marched another two to three karohs in the direction of further south which meant getting away from the imperial camp by another 7 to 8 karohs.

By that time, Humāyūn had also shifted the site of his original encampment on eastern bank of the Karamnāсах. In accordance with the terms of the peace with Śēr Khān, he advanced two or three marches from the eastern bank of the river Karamnāсах, S. E. towards modern Chaūsah Railway Station, by keeping himself close to the bank of the river Karamnāсах, while making a feigned pursuit of Śēr Khān. It meant moving towards the south from the north by about two karohs or 3 miles. Thus the actual distance between the encampment of emperor Humāyūn on the eastern bank of the river Karamnāсах at Chaūsah and that of Śēr Khān who had gone further south of Chaūsah by keeping himself to the east of the Karamnāсах, now stood at about 4 to 5 karohs or eight to nine miles in the night of 25th June, A. D. 1539. This included the mileage covered by the feigned pursuit of Mahārath Chero by Śēr Khān on that date.

Hence Avasthi's sweeping generalisation that 6 to 8 miles intervened between the encampment of emperor Humāyūn and those of Śēr Khān till 25th June, A. D. 1539, appears to be hasty and arbitrary. What renders his calculation of distance all the more untenable, is his assumption that Śēr Khān marched another 5 miles in the direction of south on the night of the 25th June, A. D. 1539, in pursuit of Mahārath Chero. This, in effect, would prolong



the distance by about 13 miles, leading to the absurd conclusion that Śēr Khān covered a total distance of 9 miles by the shortest route in the last watch of the night of 25th June, A. D. 1539, as subsequently stated by Avasthi. He says that last quarter of night had to pass before Śēr Khān was enabled to launch a surprise attack on the sleeping Mughals at Chāūsah in the early morning of the 26th June, A. D. 1539.

Moreover, it transpires from his narration that by the time Humāyūn had concluded the terms of peace with Śēr Khān, the latter retreated by six to eight miles, leaving the passage of the river free, enabling Humāyūn to cross the Karamnāsah to its eastern bank. But the real fact is that Śēr Khān, after the conclusion of peace with Humāyūn, shifted his encampment for the second time from the original site which was at a distance of one karoh from the eastern bank of the Karamnāsah; that he had retreated by another karoh which involved the shifting of his encampment by 2 karohs or 3 to 4 miles from the eastern bank of the Karamnāsah. Certainly the distance did not measure six to eight miles as recorded by Avasthi.

Presuming that Śēr Khān retreated six to eight miles, as is stated by Avasthi, to leave the passage of the river Karamnāsah free for Humāyūn to cross to its eastern bank, how could he then have left some men and artillery behind? This would have defeated the very object of leaving the passage of the river free, and Muḡhal emperor Humāyūn in that case would never have attempted to cross the Karamnāsah to come over to its eastern bank. He would have surely noted something fishy in Śēr

Khān's move of leaving some troops and artillery behind.

Lastly, Avasthi speaks of the dangerous situation in which Humāyūn had placed himself after his arrival on the eastern bank of the Karamnāsa, for it drove the Muḡhal emperor in the jaws of disaster with the surging waves of the river Gangā in the north, Karamnāsa in the west, and the army of Śēr Khān in the east. This view is perfectly correct, only with this modification that Śēr Khān's forces then lay in the direction of south-east and not wholly east.

### ŚĒR KHĀN'S MOVEMENT

After the preliminaries for peace negotiations had been concluded, Humāyūn came over to the eastern side of the Karamnāsa. Now, in the opinion of Mishra<sup>87</sup>, Śēr Khān was forced to shift from Bīhiyah because his camp had been flooded by a sudden downpour in May, and he had encamped some-where across Thorā Nadī within three or four kos (six or eight miles) south or south-east of the Muḡhals. He thinks that this new encampment was of great strategic advantage to Śēr Khān. He also maintains that at this time things were going from bad to worse in the Muḡhal camp. All supply lines to the Muḡhal camp had been cut off by the Afḡhāns and no aid was forthcoming from Āgrah. Thus there was every chance of Śēr Khān to win an easy victory. Śēr Khān, fully realizing the helpless situation of his adversary like a shrewd bargainer, raised his demand to include Bīhar and all the territories upto Chunār in the revised proposals which he put before Śaikh

Khalīl to be sent to the emperor. After full deliberations, the emperor rejected them.

Śaikh Khalīl continued to stay in Śēr Khān's camp for the purpose of further negotiations. By exploiting the Śaikh's Afghān sentiments, Śēr Khān was enabled to get information about the perilous situation of Humāyūn to the effect that the latter was short of equipment and horses, that he was receiving no help from Āgrah and that he was making peace with Śēr Khān without any intention of abiding by it. And so in the opinion of the śaikh, it was better for Śēr Khān to make war on the emperor than to conclude peace with him. But in the opinion of Mishra, the attitude of the śaikh did not amount to betrayal of the royal cause as it was in a moment of weakness in an after-dinner conversation that he was inveigled into trap by the wily Afghān chief. Soon after he felt remorseful of what he had done and immediately intimated to the emperor that Śēr Khān meditated treachery and that he had given leave to Khawāṣ Khān to depart earlier with his troops, and so the emperor should be on his guard.

It is difficult to agree with Mishra's assumption that Śēr Khān's second camp lay further east at Bīhīyah (i.e., present Bīhīyah Railway Station) for the reasons already discussed earlier. He is equally mistaken about the site of Śēr's subsequent encampment. It was actually 5 to 6 kos i.e. 10 to 11 miles further south-east of Chaūsa and not then three or four kos (six or eight miles) south of Chaūsa as assumed by him.

His assumptions with regard to Śēr Khān's new demands and their rejections by Humāyūn and the further stay of Śaikh Khalīl in the Afghān camp, all

militate against the developments that soon followed. If emperor Humāyūn rejected the new demand of Śēr Khān which alone could have made peace possible, how could then his apprehension from the side of the Afghāns be allayed? In that case, it would be difficult to explain what the Muḡhal and the Afghān chroniclers have recorded about Humāyūn and his Muḡhal army. According to them, the Muḡhals had shed off all the apprehensions from the side of the Afghāns with whom they had entered into an avowed peace and were enjoying the sweet sleep in the early morning of 26th June, A. D. 1539, when Śēr Khān opened a surprise attack on them.

### SURPRISE ATTACK OF ŚĒR KHĀN AND AFTER

All the scholars agree that the battle of Chaūsa was fought on the eastern side of the Karamnāsa and to the south of the Gangā. But they differ in details.

(i) Qanungo<sup>88</sup> says that before Śēr Khān surprised the Muḡhals on the early morning of the 26th June, A. D. 1539, he had recalled Khawāṣ Khān's division which was operating against Mahārath Chēro. Khawāṣ Khān joined his master, and, in obedience to the suggestion of Śēr Khān, he circulated the report among the troops that Mahārath Chēro had taken up a post which the spies could not ascertain. This was done with a view to lulling the Muḡhals into a sense of complacency with regard to the movements of the Afghān troops and then to defeat them by surprise. Śēr Khān made all possible

exertions to create this impression on army of the Muḡhals. On the pretext of putting his troops in motion against Mahārath, everyday he covered a distance of three miles. Then he returned to his base and circulated the news that he was disappointed in the quest of the enemy. His manoeuvre which he repeated for five or six days, succeeded in creating the desired effect and the Muḡhals began to believe that his backward and forward marches were in quest of Mahārath.

In the night of the 8th ṣafar, A. H. 946 (25th June, A. D. 1539), Śēr Khān finally marched at least another five miles southwards from his last encampment at Saer Chaūparband, to conceal his movement from the Muḡhal pickets. Khawāṣ Khān had been loitering in the upper reaches of the western bank of the Karmnāsah river, as any crossing of the river was doubly inadvisable, because this might arouse the suspicion of the Muḡhals and they might by a sudden move intercept the division under Khawāṣ Khān from rejoining his master. As pre-arranged, after the departure of Khawāṣ Khān on the 8th ṣafar, A. H. 946. (25th June, A. D. 1539), in the morning, Śēr moved his army from the main camp in the night of 8th ṣafar and Khawāṣ Khān who had been loitering in the upper reaches of the western bank of the Karamnāsah river, came and joined him at mid-night. The combined forces crossed over to the eastern bank of the Karamnāsah river some five miles south of the vast Muḡhal encampment which then lay in the fork between the Gangā in the north and the Karamnāsah in the west. Śēr and Khawāṣ Khān, who had kept it the top secret to themselves, planned a surprise-attack with consummate skill. The

Afghān cavalry, with Khawāṣ Khān's division as the spearhead of attack, rode out due north under the cover of darkness. In the pleasing coolness of the early dawn of the 26th June, A. D. 1539 (9th ṣafar, A. H. 946), the Muḡhals were slumbering carelessly, when all of a sudden the Afghāns fell upon them. The Muḡhals had no time even to put on armour and seek safety in flight. The battle-drums were no doubt beaten at the order of emperor Humāyūn and 300 men gathered about him. But the task was an uphill one; and everything was lost by that time. To save the emperor from capture, one of his soldiers seized the reins of his horse and led him off from the field towards the Gangā. He urged his horse into the river; but, on being thrown off its back, he was on the verge of drowning, when he was rescued by a water carrier Nizām with the aid of his inflated leather bag.

What Qanungo has said above, is based on his assumption that the Afghān army was always on the western side of the Karamnāsah. But as we have seen earlier, it was not so. Even if we assume what Qanungo believes, Śēr Khān would have been at a distance of 11 miles from the encampment of Muḡhals on the fateful night of 25th June, A.D. 1539. The Muḡhal encampment, according to him, was on the eastern side of the Karamnāsah at Chaūsah and Śēr Khān's latest encampment was at Chupā Ghāt, six miles south-west of Chaūsah on the western side of the Karamnāsah. Further, Śēr Khān had marched another five miles southwards to conceal his movements from the Muḡhal pickets. There Śēr Khān was joined by Khawāṣ Khān and then the combined forces crossed over to the eastern bank of

the Karamnāsah. This necessarily means that Śēr Khān was at least 11 miles south of Chāūsah. It is quite evident that Qanungo is wrong in his calculation, when he says that Śēr Khān and Khawāṣ Khān crossed the river to its eastern bank some five miles south of the Muḡhal encampment. It is patent that in his anxiety to reconcile the time-factor with the distance, he has made this arbitrary assumption. According to his calculation, the Afghān force would have taken two hours to cross the river to come over to the eastern side. This would leave only three hours left before the dawn. Was this period sufficient to traverse five miles for launching a surprise attack on the Muḡhals ?

Qanungo thinks that the feigned march of Śēr Khān against Mahārath lasted for five or six days. Perhaps he has forgotten the explicit mention by Ábbās<sup>89</sup> and Jaūhar<sup>90</sup> that the mock campaign against Mahārath Chēro lasted only for three days<sup>91</sup>.

Qanungo has followed Jaūhar<sup>92</sup> and Abul Faẓl<sup>93</sup> in suggesting that Humāyūn plunged his horse into the Gangā at Chāūsah ferry to escape his arrest at the hands of the Afghāns. But he has failed to scrutinize their evidence carefully. Both of them speak of a bridge on the Gangā which, according to them, had been constructed by the Muḡhals. But it is well known that by the end of June, the Gangā gets swollen in a big way and the throwing-up of a bridge to span its width which stretches into miles together, is an impossible task. There is another incongruity, when Jaūhar says that Humāyūn, on reaching the bank of the Gangā, first got the bridge smashed and then plunged his steed into the river where he was soon thrown off its back and was

about to be drowned when he was saved by Nizām, a water-carrier, with his inflated leather bag. But this does not stand to reason. No sane person would ever order the demolition of a bridge prior to his crossing the river. Even if Humāyūn would have ordered that the bridge should be destroyed, with a view to preventing the enemy from pursuing him, he would have done so, only after he had crossed the river. According to Abul Fazl, by the time emperor Humāyūn, after his defeat and rout at Chaūsah, reached the bank of the Gangā at Chaūsah ferry, he found the bridge demolished by the Afghāns, which appears to be more likely. But by the end of June, the span of the Gangā becomes so wide that it defies the throwing-up of any bridge. So Abul Fazl's statement is not worthy of credence.

On the other hand, Karamnāsah can be spanned by a bridge, even when its bed is overswollen in rains. In view of those facts, it would be reasonable to assume that Humāyūn, after his rout, plunged his steed into the Karamnāsah and not in the Gangā.

(II) About Śēr Khān's movement, Mishra<sup>94</sup> has visualised that Śaikh Khālīl, on the earnest entreaties of Śēr Khān, advised him to attack the Muḡhals immediately, and not to conclude a peace with them. The advice of Śaikh Khālīl tipped the balance and led Śēr Khān to decide for a war. He then proceeded to veil his military preparations and circulated a report in the army that Mahārath was approaching to attack the Afghāns and the latter were, therefore, exhorted to get ready. Taking his cavalry and elephants, Śēr Khān marched five or six miles in the direction from which the mythical Mahārath was



supposed to be coming. He then returned to the camp, declaring that the jungle chief had not appeared that day. The manoeuvre was continued for two or three days with the sole objective of allaying the suspicions of the Muḡhals that would have been aroused by the movements of his forces. Finally, Śēr Khān decided for attack, and at midnight he summoned his chiefs and exhorted them for a surprise attack on the Muḡhals, a proposal which his followers readily agreed to. He then asked them to get ready nearly four hours before day-break, when the army as usual would march towards Mahārath. The army started at the prescribed time and it had gone half-way towards the supposed Mahārath. i.e., by 2 to 3 miles, when Śēr Khān unfolded the real objective to his Afḡhān followers and charged them to uphold the Afḡhān honour. The Afḡhān army was composed of 3 divisions; one was led by Śēr Khān, the other by Khawāṣ Khān and the third one by Jalāl Khān. Khawāṣ Khān was asked to spearhead the attack.

The Imperial army, says Mishra, had been misled by the manoeuvres which Śēr Khan had made and had left protection of its vantage point which it had had in its first encampment on the eastern bank of the Karamnāsh at Chāūsah. It had advanced forward in the feigned pursuit of the Afḡhāns and was this night encamped two or three stages from its original site. The night-watch of the Muḡhal camp had been entrusted to Muḡammad Zamān Mirzā, but he proved criminally negligent in his duty. The Afḡhāns now launched their assault on the Muḡhal army which had been still asleep by the cool breeze of the early summer

morning. The Afghāns swooped down upon the rear of the sleep-benumbed Muḡhāl army. Khawāṣ Khān led this attack. The surprise-attack on the Muḡhals proved a complete success. It opened from three sides viz., east, south and west, thus leaving the north as the only possible course of flight. By this time, the Afghāns had reached the Gangā in the north also and were sedulously engaged in destroying bridge, and, after procuring boats, they sallied forth and killed the helpless fugitives. It is a fact that emperor Humāyūn too, before his flight, ordered the destruction of the bridge, but that was on the Karamnāsaḥ. The emperor then crossed the Karamnāsaḥ in the pasage of which he might have shared the fate of his soldiers, had a water-carrier not obligingly carried him over a maśq. He then proceeded to Āgrah by keeping himself along the southern bank of the Gangā by way of Karah-Mānikpūr and Kālpī. Āskarī and a few soldiers joined the emperor on the other side of the Karamnāsaḥ and they then proceeded towards Chunār immediately.

There can be no two opinion about the success of the manoeuvre of Sēr Khān and his attack on the sleeping Muḡhals. But it is difficult to agree with Mishra in the details which he has visuālied about the operations. Firstly, according to him, the distance between the Muḡhal camp at Chaūsah and that of the Afghāns that lay to the south and slightly east of Chaūsah, prior to the 25th June, was about six to eight miles. But by the 25th June, A. D. 1539, Humāyūn had advanced two to three stages from his original encampment at Chaūsah in the feigned pursuit of the Afghāns. In other words,

he had moved two to three miles of marches further south of Chaūsah. Thus the distance between the camps of the Mughals and the Afghāns shrank to about 5 miles to 6 miles. Mishra then says that on the night of the 25th June, A. D. 1539, Śēr Khān with his forces moved another 2 to 3 miles further south in the feigned pursuit of Mahārath. This meant that the total distance between the Mughals and the Afghans was 8 to 9 miles at the mid-might of the 25th June, A. D. 1539. To this extent, Mishra is quite correct. But he has failed to properly calculate the time and distance in the fateful operation. He believes that Śēr Khān asked his forces to get ready nearly four-hours before the day-break, when the army as usual was to march towards the Mahārath. This meant that Śēr Khān traversed a distance of 11 to 12 miles (two to three miles of the feigned pursuit and then the return and the distance of 5 to 6 miles between the encampment of the two forces) within these four hours. But this is quite impossible in view of the fact that an army with its heavy equipments could only be expected to march utmost 2 miles or 1 kos an hour. At this speed, Śēr Khān would have required at least 5 to 6 hours to reach the Mughal army. The day breaks on 26th June at about 5. 12 A. M. and the surprise-attack on the Mughal camp had taken two watches (about 48 minutes) before the day-break, i.e., at about 4.24 A. M. As such, Śēr Khān ought to have undertaken his march at 10.24 P. M. on the night of the 25th June, so as to be able to traverse the distance of 11 to 12 miles within 5 to 6 hours. But according to Mishra, Śēr Khān began his march 4 hours before the day-break in the direction of Mahārath i.e., at about 1.24

A. M. But Ábbās is explicit on this point, when he says that Śēr Khān with his forces left his camp a little before mid-night and this could never be construed to mean 1.24 A.M. "A little before mid-night" could indicate utmost sometime beyond 10.00 P. M. and behind 12 P. M.

Secondly, Mishra thinks that on the fateful night emperor Humāyūn was encamping at a distance of two to three stages i. e., 2 to 3 miles south or south-west from Chaūсах. But this is not correct. The first encampment of the Muḡhal emperor, after crossing over to the eastern side of the Karamnāсах, was at a place which was probably two to three miles from the bank towards the north-west of the present Chaūсах Railway Station. He was most likely in the close vicinity of the confluence of the Karamnāсах and the Gangā which lay to the north of present G. T. Road and very near the Gangā. From here, Humāyūn marched in the direction of south-east towards the present Chausah Railway Station in the feigned pursuit of the Afḡhān. Thus Humāyūn was encamped somewhere in the environs of the present Chausah Railway Station in the night of the surprise attack.

Thirdly Mishra has quite correctly plotted the three pronged-attack of the Afḡhān forces on the Muḡhals. But he has not indicated the directions from which each of the three leaders launched the attack. Since Muḡhal army lay encamped towards the south-east, its rear was by the side of the eastern bank of Karamnāсах. i. e., towards the west and its front lay in the direction of the south and the centre lay by the east, while the north was bound by the swollen Gangā. Thus it appears that

Khawāṣ Khān attacked the front from the south; Jalāl Khān assaulted from the east and Śēr Khān jumped on the rear from the west.

Lastly, what Mishra says about Humāyūn's defeat and rout at Chaūsah, his plunging of the steed into the Karamnāsah and the help of Nizām, the water-carrier, in saving him from meeting with the watery grave, is quite consistent. But what he has said, leads to the presumption that the Mughals had built two bridges, one on the Gangā and the other on the Karamnāsah. But this finds no corroboration from any source. There could have been only one bridge and that was on Karamnāsah. It was impossible to bridge the swollen Gangā in the month of June, when its breadth runs into miles. Humāyūn was not so foolish, as Mishra has taken him to be by suggesting, that he demolished the bridge before plunging into the river. Had he demolished the bridge, he would have first crossed it. But for this, he had perhaps no occasion. It seems that bridge collapsed by itself under pressure when Humāyūn, followed by army, tried to pass through it.

(III) According to Avasthi<sup>95</sup>, when emperor came over to the eastern side of the river Karamnāsah, Śēr Khān managed to gather from the saintly simplicity of the imperial envoy, Śāikh Khalīl, authoritative confirmation of private information and conjecture that the Mughal army was short of equipage, horses and cattle and that the emperor's brothers were rebellious. This confirmed Śēr Khān in his resolve to attack the Mughals. The arrival of the Mughal emperor on the eastern side of the river Karamnāsah tempted Śēr Khān to scrap off the treaty recently arrived at. He, therefore,

issued urgent summons to Khawās Khān whom he had sometimes back sent against Mahārath Indradaman of Jhārkhand. On Khawās Khān's arrival near about ṣāfar I, A. H. 946 (May 30 A. D. 1539)<sup>96</sup>, Śēr Khān chalked out a plan of mock-campaigns against this Chēro Mahārāna of Jhārkhand. He conducted them for about six days after which he was glad to find that his device had secured two advantages. Firstly, it kept his army in readiness to engage the foe in the battle at any moment; secondly, it had lulled the Mughāl army into a peaceful and care-free repose. Besides, it gave to Humāyūn the additional satisfaction that he was faithfully implementing the terms of the new agreement including the clause of retreat (to Rohtās). All this rendered Humāyūn so care-free and easy at heart that he became heedless of the malafides of the astute Afghān adventurer. On the seventh day, Mu'id Bēg suggested to the emperor to cross the river bank to go over to its western side; but the emperor carelessly deferred it for the following day. Nor did Humāyūn attach any importance to the message of Śaikh Khalīl from the Afghān camp, cautioning him to be on his guard. During the last watch of the night, preceding the morning of ṣāfar 9, A. H. 946 (June 7, A.D. 1539)<sup>97</sup>, Śēr Khān as usual started on a mock-campaign against the king of Jhārkhand. Having covered a distance of about five miles, the Sūr here halted and told his Afghān followers that the real purpose of his mock-campaign was to throw the Mughals off their guard with the belief that the operations were intended against another enemy. He further pointed out that it was a high time to commence their onslaughts upon

their sleeping foe. Śēr Khān than proceeded to deliver his attack upon the enemy from three sides, east, south, and west, leaving the north to be blocked by the Gangā. Accordingly, the Afghān army was divided into three flanks—one led by Śēr Khān himself, the other by Jalāl Khān Sūr and the third by Khawāṣ Khān. This having been done, Śēr Khān Sūr swooped down upon the Muḡhal camp at about sunrise on Sunday, ṣafar 9, A. H. 946 (June 7, A. D. 1539). While the Afghāns were about to unsheathe their swords to create a terrible scene of carnage, the Muḡhals were sunk in a drunken sleep. Muḡammad Zamān Mirzā, whose turn it was to keep vigil that night, was wrapped up in care-free repose. All of a sudden, each of the three sides vibrated with a sound, like that of a thunder discharged by the cannons of the Afghāns. The imperialists got awake but were in utter confusion; and it was now too late, for the Afghāns have already descended upon them. The Muḡhal emperor was now placed in a perilous situation. The enemy began to surround him, while his own men were not inclined to cooperate with him. Humāyūn even then remained unruffled, although he was wounded in his arm. At this, one of his loyal followers seized the bridle of his horse and urged upon him the advisability of retiring from the field. Humāyūn reluctantly agreed, and accompanied by his elephant, Girdbāz, he spurred his horse towards the river bank. At his arrival on the eastern bank of the river Karamnāsaḥ, he found that *the Afghans had taken possession of the bridge, and that his men were trying to fly through it to save their lives.* Humāyūn observed this spectacle, and, in order

to prevent the destruction of his troops and make them rally round his standard, he ordered his elephant-driver to drive Girdbāz over the bridge and bear it down by its enormous weight. The bridge was broken down. But this did not improve matters; it rather rendered the position of the imperialists still worse. The Afghāns began to pour into the river by boats to block the passage. Seeing now no way out, Humāyūn urged his steed into the stream, but the current proved too strong for him and soon after unhorsed him. Just then Humāyūn got hold of Nizām's distended leather bag and with its help swam across to the western bank of the river Karāmnāsah from where he proceeded to Āgrah.

Avasthi gives a three-fold argument in support of his contention that Humāyūn crossed over to the western bank of the river Karamnāsah from where he marched to Āgrah. He says that in the first place all the authorities state that the bridge had been constructed over the intervening stream and that, having despaired of all chance of a success, Humāyūn proceeded towards the bridge, but, finding it broken, he urged his horse into the water. Abul Fazl<sup>98</sup> refers to it. Badāyūnī<sup>99</sup> is more clear than Abul Fazl about it. Nizāmuddīn refers to آب جوسه which can not be the river Gangā. Secondly, Gulbadan says that from Chaūсах Humāyūn fled to Chunār and thence to Arail where, with the help of Rājā Bīrbhān, he forded the Jamunah and proceeded through Karah and Kālpī to Āgrah. Since Chunār and Arail were and are situated on the southern bank of the Gangā, it can be said that Humāyūn crossed the river Karamnāsah and



resumed his journey to Āgrah along the southern bank of the Gangā. Thirdly, after Allāhābād the river Gangā, having been joined by Gaūmtī and other tributaries, becomes very voluminous and wide, so much so that some years later one finds that one of the special elephants of Akbar got drowned near Chaūsah<sup>100</sup>. The construction of a bridge over the river at this place, and that too during the rains, seems difficult, if not utterly impossible. The escape of Humāyūn, Āskarī, Yadgār, Naṣīr, and other five hundred imperialists through the flooded Gangā at Chaūsah alike appears a difficult proposition. It appears most likely that the imperialists crossed the river Karamnāsah. There was nothing new in the behaviour of Śēr Khān, if he scrapped off the treaty that was concluded just a few days before. His character is full of such deceitful events from the very beginning of his life. But what gives credit to Avasthi, is his correct grasp of the movement of Humāyūn after his rout which led him to cross the Karamnāsah and fly to Āgrah, via Kaṛah and Kālpī by keeping himself all along the south of the Gangā. But he has miserably failed in his calculation of the dates of different events. For instance, he has equated 8th ṣafar, A. H. 946, with June 6, A. D. 1539, when Mu'īd Bēg suggested the emperor to cross over to the western side of the Karamnāsah, and 9th ṣafar, A. H. 946, the date of attack, with 7th June, A. D. 1539, whereas, according to Indian Ephemeris, the said two dates fall on 25th and 26th June, A. D. 1539<sup>101</sup> respectively. Similarly he has reckoned 1st ṣafar, A. H. 946<sup>102</sup>, the date of the arrival of Khawāṣ Khān at Chaūsah, to fall on the 30th May, A. D. 1539, while it was actually the 18th

June, A. D. 1539<sup>103</sup>.

Avasthi, while speaking of the surprise attack of Śēr Khān, says that during the last watch of the night, preceding the morning of safar 9, A. H. 946, Śēr Khān started his usual mock-campaign against Mahārath Chēro, and went five miles forward and then returned, covering 9 miles (14 miles in all) in ābout 24 minutes (one Ghari or watch) before the dawn; but this would be a feat of physical impossibility.

The mock-campaign of Śēr against Mahārath Chēro, according to Avasthi<sup>104</sup>, lasted for six days. In this, he has followed Nāmatullāh. But as has been pointed out earlier on the authority of Ābbās<sup>105</sup> and Jaūhar<sup>106</sup>, it lasted only for three days.

Lastly, Avasthi says that in his flight, Humāyūn caused the bridge on Karamnāsah to be dismantled by the heavy-weight of his elephant Girdbāz to prevent the mopping up of his troops and to make them rally round his banner. But he has failed to realise that when everything had been lost in the wake of the surprise-attack, how could Humāyūn have expected his followers to rally round him, particularly when every one was on the run to save his own life? Moreover the bridge had already gone into the hands of the Afghāns, by the time Humāyūn reached the bank of the river Karamnāsah. Even if it was not so, the demolition of the bridge prior to the crossing would have meant closing all avenues of escape for the emperor himself.

(IV) In the opinion of Ishwari Prasad<sup>107</sup>, Humāyūn crossed the Karamnāsah by a bridge which was specially built for the purpose and encamped on its western side. Śēr Khān encamped

on the eastern side of this river. While Śēr Khān strengthened his fortifications on every side, Humāyūn wasted his time in sending express after express to Agra for reinforcements and supplies. The Muḡhal army was in a wretched plight, and there was no prospect of speedy termination of this misery, for the enemy with whom they had to deal, was vigilant and brave, and he was unscrupulous. It was impossible to move forward or to change position without courting disaster. From April to June, Humāyūn and Śēr Khān confronted each other, according to the learned scholar. The emperor could neither force an action upon the Afghāns who knew well that his situation was becoming daily desperate, nor could he cross the river in the face of the enemy. As the Muḡhals were, however, faring better in the perpetual skirmishes with the Afghāns, which had been occurring at Chaūsah during this prolonged period of confrontation, both the parties became inclined in favour of the idea of compromise. Both the camps were, therefore, actively negotiating for a settlement. The terms of peace were accordingly agreed by both the sides, according to which Śēr Khān was to possess whole of Bangāl as well as his jāgīr in Bihār, and was to retain the fort of Chunār and he was in return to recite the Khuṭbah and strike coins in the emperor's name. In order to safeguard the imperial prestige, it was further agreed that Śēr Khān would retreat by two or three days of march and Humāyūn would make a show of pursuing him. Humāyūn, therefore, became assured of the peace and naturally imagined that there would be no fighting. Both the camps prepared to break up, and Śēr Khān sent off his best troops on two or

three days of march along the road to Bihār. Suddenly, however, he recalled them, and at a day-break on June 26 he attacked the imperial camp on every side. The Afghān force was divided into three sections. One was led by Śēr Khān himself, the other by his son Jalāl Khān and the third by his trusty general Khawāṣ Khān. The Muḡhal army was carelessly scattered about the camp and the soldiers were arranging to return to Āgrah. The emperor himself had no knowledge of the designs of the Afghāns and Muḡammad Zamān Mirzā was utterly negligent in keeping watch. Taken utterly by surprise, charged on flank and rear, and cut off from their natural line of retreat by the seizure of boats on the river bank, the Muḡhal army became involved in utter ruin, and Humāyūn, swept from the field, attempted to swim his horse across the Gangā. He owed his life to a water-carrier Nizām who helped him with his inflated maśk and he could thus manage to go over to the other side of the Gangā. Meanwhile the slender bridge had been broken down by the pressure of fugitives and the Afghāns were patrolling the river with spears and matchlocks, slaying the fugitives without mercy.

The above narrative of Ishwari Prasad is sketchy and glosses over most of the important details and developments. It is full of inconsistencies. It appears that Humāyūn continued to maintain his camp on the western side of the river and there he was routed. If it was so, it is difficult to understand how could Śēr Khān send his best troops on two or three days of march along the road to Bihār and then could recall them suddenly to launch the attack on the Muḡhals. It would involve the Afghāns

crossing the Karamnāsah to its western side. In that case, the Muḡhal would not have failed to take notice of the Afḡhān movements, however lulled into sleep they might have been. Ishwari Prasad has, however, rightly grasped the reasons for Humāyūn's failure to proceed to Āgrah when he was encamped on the western side of the river. It was impossible for him to move forward or to change his position without running the risk of courting disaster.

(v) Banerjee<sup>108</sup>, following the foot-steps of Qanungo, has said that Humāyūn encamped on the eastern side of the Karamnāsah river, while Śēr Kḡhān encamped on its western side. The two armies, according to him, lay facing each other for 3 months from April to 26th June, A. D. 1539. In this period of their prolonged confrontation Humāyūn made attempts to settle his quarrel with Śēr Kḡhān which the latter also reciprocated, and several emissaries were sent from each side to one another to bring about peace. Humāyūn was willing to surrender to Śēr Kḡhān both Bihār and Bangāl, provided the latter read the Kḡhuṭbah and struck the coin in the name of the Muḡhal emperor; but the insistence of Śēr Kḡhān to retain the fort of Chūnār, in addition to Bihār and Bangāl, stirred up the emotion of the Muḡhal emperor who refused to part with the fort of Chūnār on the sentimental ground that the acquisition of this fort represented the first fruit of his Bangāl campaign which he was not ready to forsake. After the break-up of the negotiations, Śēr Kḡhān resolved to attack the Muḡhals and this too by stealth. Fortune also smiled on Śēr Kḡhān. The rains set in and the Muḡhals, held up between the two rivers, the Gangā (on the north) and

Karamnā<sup>s</sup>ah (on the west), found themselves flooded in the ground that they had chosen for their encampment. There seemed no escape from it. Now Śēr Khān commanded the situation and he was sure to take the fullest advantage of any attempt made by the Mu<sup>gh</sup>als to shift their camp.

Having secured this strategic superiority, writes Banerjee, Śēr Khān next tried to put the Mu<sup>gh</sup>als off their guard, for they were strongly protected by the two rivers and it needed great skill on the part of the Af<sup>gh</sup>āns to cross over and then attack them. Śēr Khān, therefore, thought of a novel plan to attack Mahārath Chēro, who used to descend from his hills in the Śāhābād district and harass the tenants round about and even close the door to Gaūr and Bangāl. The trick succeeded and the Mu<sup>gh</sup>als were thrown off the guard. On the 25th June, A. D. 1539, Śēr Khān collected his men and gave out that he was proceeding to fight the Chēro chief. This news spread in the Mu<sup>gh</sup>al camp and the Mu<sup>gh</sup>al emperor was now all at ease. After mid-night, Śēr Khān came back with his army and surprised the Mu<sup>gh</sup>als in their sleep and thus gave a rude shock to their sense of security.

The plan of the battle of Chaūsah presented by Banerjee (plate No. 5) shows that the the respective armies of the Mu<sup>gh</sup>als and the Af<sup>gh</sup>āns lay encamped on the same side of the river Gangā, i.e., to the south of it and on opposite side of its tributary the Karmanā<sup>s</sup>ah, and they were protected on the flanks by the rivers, the Af<sup>gh</sup>āns being more secure than their enemies. The Af<sup>gh</sup>āns lay to the west of the Karamnā<sup>s</sup>ah, whereas the Mu<sup>gh</sup>als lay to its eastern bank. The Chēro lands lay to the south of the

Karamnāsah. Śer Khān's movements were so well-timed that almost simultaneously the three divisions commanded by Śer Khān himself, by Jalāl Khān, his son, and by Khawāṣ Khān, the captor of Gaūr, attacked the Muḡhal camp. Jalāl Khān attacked the Muḡhals in the front from the south which was nearest the town of Chaūsah; Śer Khān launched assault on the flank or side of the enemy from the east and Khawāṣ Khān went round the Muḡhal camp and stable, to the banks of the Gangā and demolished one of the bridges. By these skilful tactics, Śer Khān completely surrounded the enemy before they could awake to the situation. The Muḡhals found themselves completely hemmed in, and the bridges either broken or in the possession of Khawāṣ Khān's men. As the rainy season had set in, the rivers had widened, obliterating all traces of the ford that lay near the Muḡhal camp. Even the Karamnāsah tributary was unfordable. The Muḡhals were ultimately put to rout and defeat, and met either with the mass-scale slaughtering or a watery grave in their attempts to cross the river. Humāyūn himself, on reaching the bank of the Gangā and finding no way out, attempted to cross the river on the back of an elephant, but the current was so strong that he was dislodged from his seat. Providentially a water-carrier, Nizām, helped him with his leatheren water-bag and the Muḡhal emperor managed to go over to the opposite bank near Bīrpūr (in Ghāzīpūr district) and he then rapidly rode to Chunār.

In visualising the events that occurred between the two armies, Banerjee has repeated the fallacy to which Qanungo had been the victim viz., that Śer

Khān was on the western side of the Karammāsa, whereas Humāyūn was on the east. He has committed a number of other identical mistakes also. Since they have been discussed earlier, they need not detain us. What is most interesting in Banerjee's account, is that it was the camp of Humāyūn which was flooded by the rains and this is against the evidence of the contemporary chroniclers. It is not clear on what authority Banerjee suggests that Śēr Khān crossed the river on the very fateful night. Equally interesting is his imagination that Humāyūn attempted to cross the flooded Gangā on an elephant. But it is clear from the statement of the chroniclers that he attempted to cross the river on the back of a horse.

### FINAL OBSERVATION

Having thus processed the contemporary materials about the battle of Chaūsa between Humāyūn and Śēr Khān and the views of the modern scholars thereon, it seems necessary that whole picture should be recapitulated with proper and necessary assessment of all what has been said above. When emperor Humāyūn reached Chaūsa, he came face to face with Śēr Khān in the village of Bihīyah, a dependency of Bhojpūr, through which the Kāramnāsa flowed according to Abul Fazl.<sup>109</sup>

Since by nature Karamnāsa is a river which always remained confined into its bed and never left its course and ever remained where it is now, we should look for Bihīyah by its side and nowhere else. This has proved a pitfall for many scholars. Bihīyah was to lay at a distance of about 2 to 3 miles or so in



the direction of N. W. from modern Chaūsah Railway Station (Eastern Railway) on the eastern side of the river Karamnāsah. It would be situated somewhere in the vicinity of the angular junction formed by the then fall of the river Karamnāsah into the Gangā. In all probability, it lay somewhere either in the present bed of the Gangā or in its riparian tract, and to the north of modern Grand Trunk Road.

In this village of Bihīyah, the river Karamnāsah flowed between the camps of the Muḡhals and the Afḡhāns, separating the one from the other. Humāyūn who had crossed the Karamnāsah, encamped on the western side of this river in its fork with the Gangā, whereas Śēr Khān encamped on its eastern side in the easterly direction at a distance of one karoh or about 2 miles from its bānk at a place, which lay to the north of modern G. T. Road and very near the Gangā. The site of this place fell in the area of the said village of Bihīyah which, according to the loose statements of chronicles, lay between Baksar on the east and Chaūsah on the west.

2. Negotiations for peace started between emperor Humāyūn and Śēr Khān during the period of their respective encampments on the western and eastern side of the river. As regards the terms of peace, it is alleged that Śēr Khān wanted to retain Bangāl and Bihār up to Chunār in the west. But as has been pointed above, he would not have laid down such a condition, as he was well aware of the weakness of Humāyūn for retaining Bihār and Chunār. However, it seems that it was finally agreed that Humāyūn would retain the whole of

Bihār as far as Gaṛhī in the east and would allow Śēr Khān to retain Bangāl. In return for it, the Afghān chief would read the Khuṭbah and strike the coins in the name of the Muḡhal emperor. It was also stipulated that Śēr Khān would show respect by retreating and leaving the passage of the river free to the emperor, so that the latter might be able to cross the river Karamnāsah and come over to its eastern side from its western bank and, that on coming over to the eastern side of the Karamnāsah, the Muḡhal emperor would advance two or three marches (about 2 to 3 miles) in the feigned pursuit of Śēr Khān and then turn back and would finally conclude peace with the Afghān chief.

Śēr Khān agreed to those conditions and, leaving the passage of the river free, retreated probably another one karoh or so i.e., 2 miles further east, and came near to Lachmīpūr on the western bank of Thorā Nadī and then he turned south along its bank (see plate No. 6). The emperor, throwing a bridge across the river, crossed Karamnāsah with his whole camp and pitched it on the other side, meaning that his encampment now stood on the eastern bank of the river Karamnāsah at a place which lay at a distance of two to three miles or so in all probability to north-west from modern Chaūsah Railway Station, most likely somewhere in the close vicinity of the angular junction formed by the then fell of the river Karamnāsah into the Gangā and which now lies to the north of modern G. T. Road and very near or inside the present course of the Gangā. Thus the respective forces of emperor Humāyūn and Śēr Khān encamped on the same side (i.e., eastern side) of the river Karam-

nāsah and the two were separated by a distance of 2 karohs or 4 miles from each other.

3. By the 3rd week of May, A. D. 1539, an early downpour of rains flooded the camp of Śēr Khān which compelled him to shift his ground. He now encamped on the skirts of a hill at a further distance of 3 to 4 karohs at a place to the further south of the junction of Thorā Nadī and Konch (Konchān) Nadī, and along the western side of the Konch Nadī (of modern Atlas) in the direction of the south-east from his previous encampment which was near Lachmipūr at a distance of about 2 karohs from the eastern bank of the river Karamnāsah. This Konch Nadī (of modern Atlas) joins Thorā Nadī towards the north, and the Thorā Nadī finally flows into the Gangā at a place, 5 miles east of Chaūsah and 3 miles west of Baksar. It should be further noted here that the aforesaid hill stands to the west of Konch village and is known today as Babhnī hill. This widened the distance by about five to six karohs between the Mughal force and the Afghān force which were encamping on the same side (eastern side) of the river Karamnāsah.

4. Śēr Khān, in the feigned pursuit of Mahārath Chēro on the 23rd and 24th June, A. D. 1539, went further south-west i.e., towards the eastern side of the Karamnāsah river by another march of three to four karohs from his last encampment on the skirts of the Babhnī hills. to which he had shifted after his previous encampment, which lay at a distance of 2 karohs from the eastern bank of the Karamnāsah, had been flooded by rains. On both the days (23rd and 24th June, A. D. 1539), he

returned to his base i. e., the last encampment on the skirts of Babhnī hills as said above, giving out that Mahārath was still at a distance.

5. Humāyūn, in the meanwhile, in accordance with the terms of peace concluded with Śēr Khān, had advanced two to three marches from his encampment which, as stated before, lay on the eastern side of the Karamnāsah river at a place which was at a distance of 2 to 3 miles in the direction of N. W. from modern Chaūsah Railway Station, probably somewhere in the close vicinity of the angular junction formed by the then fall of the river Karamnāsah into the Gangā and which now lay to the north of modern G. T. Road and very near or inside the present course of the Gangā. This meant Humāyūn moving in the direction of the south from the north by about two karohs or 3 miles i. e., arriving near the modern Chaūsah Railway Station, a position which he held on the 25th June, A. D. 1539.

On the 25th June, A.D. 1539, Śēr Khān had also advanced, another two or three karohs in the pursuit of Mahārath in the direction of Rohtās towards south-west by keeping along the eastern bank of the Karamnāsah river. He arrived at the out-skirts of the Babhnī hills which stood at the distance of about five to six karohs from the first encampment of the Muḡhals on the eastern bank of the Karamnāsah which, as shown before, lay somewhere in the vicinity of the angular junction formed by the then fall of the river Karamnāsah into the Gangā and which now may be located to the north of modern G.T. Road. This meant that the Afḡhāns were removed by about six to seven

karohs from the first encampment of the Mughals. As the Muḡhal emperor had by the 25th June, A.D. 1539, shifted his first encampment and had arrived in the vicinity of modern Chaūsah Railway Station, consequently the distance between the Muḡhals and the Afḡhāns was shortened by about two karohs or and it now stood at about 4 karohs i.e., about 8 to 9 miles. This was the actual measure of the distance between the Muḡhals and the Afḡhāns on the night of the 25th June, A.D. 1539, when Śēr Khān turned in the direction of the Muḡhals to launch a surprise-attack on them in the early morning of the 26th June, A.D. 1539.

Khawāṣ Khān had left the main camp of Śēr Khān on the 25th June, A.D. 1539, at about 10 o'clock in the day and had gone in the direction of south-west along the eastern side of the Karam-nāsah river where he had been loitering in its upper reaches till the main force of Śēr Khān appeared there in the night and which Khawāṣ Khān soon joined as pre-planned and then the whole Afḡhān force turned round at 11.45 P.M. or i.e., just a little before mid-night of the (8th Śāfar, A.H.946, the 25th June, A.D. 1539) under the supreme command of Śēr Khān. Śēr Khān covered the distance of 8 to 9 miles in four and a half hours, marching at the pace of one karoh or two miles an hour in order to enable himself to surprise the sleeping Muḡhal camp at about 4.25 A.M, i.e., in the words of Námatullāh, two watches (48 minutes, before the day-break at 5. 13 A.M.)

In this surprise-attack, as the Muḡhal camp lay in the direction of south-east, Khawāṣ Khān attacked the front from the south-east, Jalāl Khān launched

the assault on the side from the east, whereas Śēr Khān attacked the rear from the north-west.

Humāyūn, after losing the battle at Chaūsah, plunged his horse into the Karamnāsah and not in the Gangā as is stated by Abul Faḏl and followed by some of the modern scholars. He was about to be drowned by the swift current of the river, when Nizām, a water-carrier, helped the emperor with his inflated leather bag to go over to its western bank. He then proceeded to Āgrah along with a handful of survivors who could effect their escape from Chaūsah.

#### FOOT-NOTE

1. 9th ṣafār, A. H., 946, vide A. N., trans 1., p. 344, 1907 ed., Calcutta. Beveridge has, however, wrongly calculated 9th ṣafar, A. H. 946, to fall on the 7th June, A. D. 1539. I. E., V, p.280, makes 9th ṣafar, A. H. 946, equivalent to 26th June. A.D, 1539.

2. A. N., trans., I, pp. 342-3.

3. H. Beveridge, A. N., trans. I., p. 342 ff, f.n. 1, has wrongly identified village Bihīyah with Fathpūr-Bihīyah on the basis of the article "On the Geography of India in the Reign of Akbar", published in J. A. S. B., 1885, part I., Vol. LIV, p. 181, by J. Beames. The latter has confined himself to the discussions on the political geography of the province of Bihār and its administrative divisions and subdivisions as they stood in the time of Akbar and their present-day identifications. The map of ṣubah Bihār, according to the Āin, in A. D. 1582, as published in this article of Beames, clearly shows that Fathpūr-Bihīyah then constituted a maḥāl in sarkār of Rohtās and was surrounded by the maḥāls of Ārrah and Panwār in the east and on the west by the maḥāl of Bhojpūr which included Baksar. As such, village Bihīyah which was a dependency of Bhojpūr where Humāyūn and his force came face to face with Śēr Khān and his Afghān forces as recorded by Abul Faḏl in A. N., trans., I, pp. 342-3,

and where, according to this Muḡhal chronicler, a black river called Karamnāsah flowed between the two armies, cannot be identified with Fathpūr-Bīhīyah. The river Karamnāsah never flowed through Fathpūr-Bīhīyah, which lay far to the east of Karamnāsah whereas the Karamnāsah river even today, as in the past, flows in its traditionally long-held channels, quite close to the west of present-day Chasūah Railway Station and the village of Chaūsah itself. Moreover, how could village Bīhīyah, a dependency of Bhojpūr, so unmistakably recorded by Abul Faḡl, be identified with Fathpūr-Bīhīyah which was a distinct maḡāl by itself. The Karamnāsah now separates Bīhār from U. P. Námātullāh in his book *makhzan-i-afḡhān*, as quoted by E & D, IV, p. 370, f.n. 1, has recorded the name of the place of the encampment of Humāyūn and Śēr Śāh as the village Śatāyah (سَاتَايَا) which I have identified with Bīhīyah (بِيهِيَا). This Afḡhān chronicler has, however, clearly recorded that this village of Śatāyah (i.e., Bīhīyah) was situated between Jhūsa (Chaūsah) and Baksar and that there was a small stream flowing between the two camps, of which the banks were so steep that it could not be crossed except at the usual ford. This description of the stream quite fits in with that of the river Karamnāsah which has got a very steep bank even today and it is difficult to be crossed. To me it appears, therefore, that village Bīhīyah, a dependency of Bhojpūr as recorded by Abūl Faḡl, was situated in between Baksar on the east and Chaūsah on the west and most probably slightly to the north-west of Chaūsah, but definitely on the eastern side of the river Karamnāsah somewhere at a place which then lay in the vicinity of the angular junction formed by the then fall of the river Karamnāsah into the river Gangā there and which in all probability lies either in the present bed of the river Gangā or somewhere in its riparian tracts to the north of modern G. T. Road. I feel even emboldened to say that the then village of Bīhīyah was situated at a distance of probably about two to three miles or so in the direction of north-west of the present day Chaūsah Railway Station as would be evident from my subsequent findings on the subject here. Now the next question for our consideration is the identification of the geographical location of village Bīhīyah as recorded by Abul Faḡl. At present there does not exist any

such village known by the name of Bīhīyah in the north-west of Chaūsa or on the eastern side of the river Karamnāsa. It is most likely that this village Bīhīyah which existed at the time of emperor Humāyūn, might have been erased out of its existence altogether in the course of the last more than four centuries through the normal process of frequent inundations occasioned by the floods of the two rivers, the Karamnāsa and the Gangā. Since the village of Bīhīyah lay in the riparian tracts of the aforesaid rivers, namely, the Karamnāsa and the Gangā, it is not the least unlikely that it was wiped out of the existence completely.

3a. Since according to Abul Faḏl, this ferry lay near the royal encampment, we may accept Mrs. Beveridge's interpretation (Memoirs of Bābar, III, pp. 659-660) and identify Kanbās of the Calcutta Persian text of A. N., I., p. 158, with the Karamnāsa river which joined the Gangā near Chaūsa.

3b. A perusal of A. N., trans. I, p. 342, suggests that Humāyūn first crossed the Karamnāsa by a bridge specially constructed for the purpose and then crossed the Gangā while proceeding on his way to his capital at Āgra. It was then that he received the intelligence of Śēr Khān's arrival. This meant that Śēr with his forces came face to face with the Muḡhals and he was then on the south side of the Gangā. This ignited the wrath of Humāyūn who recrossed the Gangā in a fit of fury at the audacity of the Afḡhāns, to teach them a lesson, much against the advice of his nobles as the Muḡhal army was then very tired of the marches and was without equipage. He then pursued the Afḡhāns, came to the western bank of the Karamnāsa and finally crossed over to its eastern side. Abul Faḏl's version does not appear to be correct in so far as it relates to the crossing and recrossing of the Gangā by Humāyūn. In the perilous condition in which Humāyūn was then placed, no man, however impulsive, could have recrossed the Gangā and exposed himself to unnecessary risk, at a time when the road to the west was open and there was no one to bar his path and the situation then demanded his earliest presence in his capital. Abul Faḏl is correct only to the extent that Humāyūn, on reaching Chaūsa, crossed the Karamnāsa and went over to its western side. A study of the account of Jaūhar (All.



Uni. Ms., p. 33-4; c.f. Avasthi, Humāyūn, p. 321, 1967 edition), an eye-witness, shows quite plainly that the imperialists had not yet fully encamped themselves on the western bank of the river Karamnāsah, when Śēr Khān also arrived with his Afghān forces from Rohtās and encamped there. Jaūhar puts it thus :—

روز چهارم لشکر یزاق پوشیده سوار شدند - یکپاس روز گذشته بود که  
بچوسه رسید—از جانب (رهتاس) لشکر شیروخان با یلغار کرده رسید لشکر مغول  
نزد قلع گل ساخت ..... قاصد در ماه لشکر از آنجا مقابل بودند -

A critical appraisal of Jaūhar and A. N. establishes the fact that Humāyūn encamped on the western side of the Karamnāsah, and Śēr Khān encamped on the eastern side of this river which flowed through Bihīyah.

4. M. T., trans. I, p. 459, 1898 ed., Calcutta.

5. T. W., O. P. L. Ms., p. 17.

6. T. S. S., I. O. Ms., p. 115; E. & D., IV, p. 369 & p. 370.

7. E. & D., History of India as told by its own Historians, IV, p. 370, f.n. 1.

8. Śātāyah (ساتآه) is a mistake for Bihīyah (بیہیہ), caused by the carelessness of the scribe in so far as it involves projecting the small Śūsa of the letter bē (بہ) of Bihīyah (بیہیہ) to a bit larger stroke as to make it look like Śēa (سہا) and thus read it as Śātāyah (ساتآہ). It is not uncommon in Persian to come across this kind of vagary in writing because of the tradition of loose dottings and absence of strokes on the head of the letter in śikastah and nīm-śikastah writing. The O. P. L. Ms. of tārikh-i-khān-i-jahān lodī wa makhzan-i-afghānī, fo. 186 ff, however, does not contain Śātāyah which is found in a particular Ms. of Nāmatullāh's makhzan-i-afghānī consulted by Elliot and Dowson. It may be pointed out that Nāmatullāh is an improvement upon the statements of Abul Fazl and Ábbās in one way. Nāmatullāh locates the place of encampment and the intervening stream with greater precision by saying that they were situated in between Chaūsah and Baksar.

9. T. S. A., p. 196, A. S. B. Publication.

9a. Qanungo, Sher Shah, p. 200, f.n. 2, 1965 edition, also writes that Śēr's original or first camp lay to the north of

modern G. T. Road and very near the Gangā. By modern G. T. Road, one means the most ancient Gangetic valley route.

10. First week of şafar, A. H. 943, vide A. N., trans., I, p. 312.

11. A. N., trans., I, p. 321, ff.

12. M. T., trans. I, p. 456.

12a. 14th şafar, A. H. 943, falls on 2nd August, A. D. 1536,. See I. E., V, p. 275, 1922 edition.

13. T. A., trans., II, p. 61, 1936 edition.

14. şafar, A. H. 944

15. T. F., p. 216, Nawal Kishore Publication, 1884 edition, Kānpūr.

16. 18 şafar, A. H. 944, vide T. F., p. 216; I. E., V., p. 277, writes 18th şafar, A. H. 944, to fall on the 27th July, A. D. 1537.

17. T. W., O. P. L. Ms., p. 12

18. T. K. J. L., O. P. L. Ms., fo. 183a

19. T. D., O. P. L. Ms., fo. 132

20. Stewart in his translation of tazkīrat-ul-wāqi'āt, p. 12, has, however, recorded that Humāyūn arrived within ten miles of Chunār on the day of śab-i-barāt i.e., 14th śabān, A. H. 945 = 5th January, A. D. 1539, vide I. E., V., p. 280. But this on the very face of it is wrong, as the six months siege of Chunār began towards the end of September or beginning of October, A. D. 1537, and was concluded by close of March or beginning of April, A. D. 1538.

21. See Appendix "A" for a detailed study on Humāyūn's inscription at Dhāmēk near Sārnāth where he had stayed.

22. E. & D., IV, p. 362.

23. Ibid.

24. A. N., trans. I, p. 333.

25. T. F., Nawal Kishore publication, 1884, p. 216

26. A. H. 945 commenced on 30th May, A. D. 1538, and came to a close on 18th May, A. D. 1539, vide I. E., V., p. 278 and p. 280.

27. T. W., O. P. L. Ms., p. 14; T. S. S., I. O. Ms., p. 111

28. T. W., O. P. L. Ms., p. 14; T. A., trans., II, p. 163; M. T. trans., I, p. 458; T. K. J. L., O. P. L. Ms. fos. 185b-186a;

T. S. S., I. O. Ms., p. 112

29. A. N., trans., I, p. 340.

30. M. T., trans., I, p. 459; T. W., O. P. L. Ms., p. 17, however, records it as two months.

31. T. W., O. P. L. Ms., p. 17.

32. M. T., trans., I, pp. 459-60.

33. T. S. A., Bib. Indica text, p. 196.

34. T. K. J. L., O. P. L. Ms., fo. 186b.

35. M. T., trans., I, p. 460; T. A., trans., II., p. 164; T. K. J. L., O. P. L. Ms., fo. 186b; T. D., O. P. L. Ms., fo. 135b; T. W., O. P. L. Ms., p. 18, however, records that Śēr Khān agreed to come to terms with emperor Humāyūn, provided he was given Chunār. I personally feel that Jaūhar is wrong here, because he himself has stated (T. W., O. P. L. Ms., p. 13) that Humāyūn, while marching to Bharkundāh, had sent Ḥusain turkmān as his envoy to Śēr Khān with overtures of peace which stipulated that if he gave Bangāl and Rohtās to emperor Humāyūn, the latter would give Chunār or Jaūnpūr or any other place desired by him. Śēr Khān had even then refused to part with Bangāl. Hence how was it possible for Śēr Khān who was in a much superior position in the field of Chaūsah to have agreed to come to terms with emperor Humāyūn if Chunār could only be given to him, for it would have then meant that Śēr Khān was agreeable to part with Bangāl and Bihār in favour of the Muḡhal emperor.

Likewise Aḥmad Yādgar (T. S. A., Bib. Indica text, p. 197) has also erred, when he writes that Śēr Khān would have concluded peace with emperor Humāyūn if the latter gave him the country of Bihār and the fort of Chunār. Ábbās (E & D, IV., p. 362) has clearly recorded that Humāyūn had in view the objective of getting hold of Bihār. This Śēr Khān knew well and he was, therefore, ready to hand over Bihār to the emperor if he was given Bangāl. This had occurred even on an earlier occasion also, when emperor had come upto Banāras only on his way to Bangāl. Thus Śēr Khān could never have asked emperor Humāyūn in the field of Chaūsah to give him the country of Bihār, as he knew well the passion of the emperor. Moreover, if Bihār and Chunār had been assigned to Śēr Khān under the terms of the peace at Chaūsah,

it would have meant that Bangāl would have remained in the possession of the imperialists and that meant that the Muḡhals would have then remained in the rear of Śēr Khān's territories. The latter, being far-sighted, could never have accepted this, for possession of Bihār and Chunār by Śēr Khān under the terms of the peace here would have sandwiched Śēr Khān on both sides by the Muḡhal territories, as beyond Chunār in the west there lay the Muḡhal territories, while Bangāl in the east would have then constituted the kingdom of the Muḡhals. T. F., Nawal Kishore text, p. 217, writes that Śēr Khān agreed to conclude peace with Humāyūn, if the former was allowed to retain Bangāl and Rohtās. So far as the ceding of Rohtās to Śēr Khān by Humāyūn as recorded by Fīrīstah goes, he is wrong here in his statement in view of the fact that Rohtās even then had been a part and parcel of Bihār which was passionately sought for by emperor Humāyūn for himself, a fact which Śēr Khān knew perfectly well as noticed before and which he was ready to concede to the Muḡhal emperor, and hence the story of the demand of Rohtās by Śēr Khān in the field of Chaūsah does not appear to be tenable.

36. T. S. S., I. O. Ms., pp. 115-6.

37. T. S. A., Bib. Indica. text, p. 197.

38. T. W., O. P. L. Ms., p. 17.

38a. Steingass in his Persian-English Dictionary writes that one karoh consists of about two miles.

38b. See f. n. 45; Jaūhar (All. Univ. Ms. 34; I. O. Ms., fo. 35 ff); Avasthi, Humāyūn, a typed thesis, All. Univ. Lib., p. 354.

39. T. S. S., I. O. Ms., pp. 116-8.

40. M. T., trans., I., p. 460 and T. F., Nawal Kishore text, p. 217, record that the agreement was ratified by an oath on the Divine word and thus Humāyūn's mind had been put in perfect ease from the side of Śēr Khān.

41. T. S. S., I. O. Ms., p. 113, and p. 188 ff; T. K. J. L., O. P. L. MS. fo. 187 ff. Here there is one thing that deserves our notice and that is reading of the name "Mahāratha". I am grateful to late Avasthi for his new reading which, according to him, is Mahārāna Indradaman and not Mahāratha. Avasthi has written in his typed thesis "Humāyūn" (All. Univ.

Lib., p. 356, f. n. 150,) the following which deserves the full reproduction here :—“Ábbās names him as ‘Mahāratha’ and calls him a Chēro Chief (Ábbās, All. Univ. Ms., 149). Tārīkh-i-khān jahān lodī (O. P. L. Ms., 186b ff) calls him rājah ‘Mahārānah’. T. K. J. L., I. O. Ms., calls him ‘Mahāratah Chēro’.

خواصخان که بر سر مهارتیه چیرو تعیین بود بحضور طالببیده و این مهارتیه چیرو  
وقتی که شیروخان را مهمی پیش آمد..... از جبال و جنگل خود برآمده عالی  
پرگنه را آزاری رساند -

The Tārīkh-i-dāūdī (All. Univ. MS., 168) also writes مهارتیه (Mahāratha). Ahmad Yādgār is more detailed than others. On folio 117a (Buhar Ms.) of his work tārīkh-i-salātīn afāghīnah, he says :—“Śēr Khān sent Khawāṣ Khān against the rājāh of Jhārkhand (خواصخان را با چهار هزار سوار براجہ جہا رکھند) and instructed him to seize and capture the elephant, Śyām Sundar by name, then in possession of the rājāh. The elephant was an extraordinary creature. It was white in colour, never threw dust on its head and none could face him on the day when it was drunk. Subsequently after, on folio 120b, Ahmad Yādgār further tries to explain the above. He says, “(Prior to the debacle of Chaūsah) having patched up a treaty with Humāyūn, Śēr Khān made preparations to retire to Bihār. He deferred his actual start, pending the arrival of Khawāṣ Khān who had gone against rājāh Indrāon (or Indrāvan)”.

“Thus we are left to identify two words ‘Mahāratah’ and ‘Indrāvan’. Of these, the word ‘Mahāratah’ (مہارتیہ) seems to be a mistake for ‘Mahārāna’. The mistake seems to have crept in through the reproduction of the copyists and the flexibility of the script—the ‘alif’ (ا), after ‘re’ (ر), having been joined to ‘nah’ (نہ). The name اندرون seems to be ‘Indra Dawan’ (‘dāl’ having been left by slip) of ‘Indra Daman’. Thus the whole name seems to be Mahārāna Indradaman. He belonged to Chēro tribe who were aboriginal people, having been a dominant tribe before the advent of the Aryans and later on in the Muslim period occupied Śāhābād district. The Afghān chroniclers state that the Chēro king dominated in ‘Jhārkhand’. The author of tārīkh-i-khāndān-i-taimūriyah (O. P. L. Ms., fo. 264 b ff), more definitely than others, describes the geographical limits of this region by saying: ‘The name of this hilly forest area, extending from Udessah (Orissa) to Mālwah is Jhār-

khand. This forest abounds in elephants and supplies them to the whole of Hindustān. The vast hilly tract is ruled by two hundred rājahs of consequence. The emperors of Hind know them and content themselves by taking khirāj from them.' It appears that Mahārāna Indradaman was the most powerful of these two hundred chiefs of Jhārkhanda and was probably their leader. Professor Hodivala (*Studies in Indo-Moslem History*, p. 456), however, identified 'Mahāratah' with 'Bhārat' which seems to be far-fetched". Despite the fact that Avasthi has said that the correct reading is Mahārāna Indradaman, I have stuck to the reading of Mahāratha (مهراثا) as being a corrupt form of the word Mahārathī which means a valiant warrior.

42. T. K. J. L., O. P. L. Ms., fo. 187b records Saturday in the month of muḥarram, A.H. 946, which, in my opinion, would fall on 27th muḥarram, A. H. 946 = 14th June, A. D. 1539, being the most probable date to fit in with the context of events.

42a. Qanungo, *Sher Shah*, p. 203, records it as 3 miles, while he quotes Ábbās who writes as four kos. Mishra considers it as 5 to 6 miles.

43. The first day of this pretended march of Śēr Khān against Mahārath Chēro would have fallen on the 23rd June, A. D. 1539, according to the reckoning based on the version of Ábbās (*T. S. S., I. O. Ms.*, p. 118—p. 119), as we know that the battle of Chaūsah occurred on the 9th ṣafar, A. H. 946 = the 26th June, A. D. 1539.

44. See *T. S. S., I. O. Ms.*, pp. 119-121, for the graphic description of services rendered by Śēr Khān to emperor Humāyūn on various occasions in the past and the latter's repeated acts of ungratefulness in their return. See also *T. W., O. P. L. Ms.*, p. 18.

44a. See f. n. 45 for the narration of Aḥmad Yādgār.

44b. See f. n. 39.

44c. See f. n. 36.

44d. *T. K. J. L., O. P. L. Ms.*, fo. 188a; *T. S. A., Bib Indica* text, records that it was only after the first two watches of the night had elapsed that Śēr Khān led a surprise attack on the Mughal forces. It was actually when only two watches of the night had remained that Śēr Khān launched his surprise-

attack on the Muḡhals as shown in the foot note No. 45 below on the basis of Námatullāh's work T. K. J. L., O. P. L. Ms. Ábdullāh in his work T. D., O. P. L. Ms, fo. 135a, puts the time of the surprise-attack of Śēr Khān on the camp of Humāyūn at sun-rise. This does not seem to be correct, as it would be inconsistent with the very plan of surprise-attack. Badāyūnī, M. T., trans., I. p. 460, Niẓam-ud-dīn, T. A, trans., II., p. 164, and Abul Faẓl, A. N., trans, I., p. 343, record the time as the morning only; Jaūhar, T. W., O. P. L. Ms., p. 18, however, correctly records the time of the surprise-attack by Śēr Khān on Humāyūn's camp as "very early morning" and this comes much closer to the truth. Steingass in his Persian-English Dictionary has recorded that one watch consists of 24 minutes. The earliest time for sun-rise, in the longest day on 21st June, would be 5.13 A.M. Thus the surprise attack of Śēr Khān on Muḡhal camp would have followed at about 4.25 A.M. i.e., 2 watches before the day-break on the 26th June, A D. 1539. Now the question that has to be determined is with regard to the time that Śēr Khān would have left his camp in the direction of the Muḡhals to make a surprise-attack on them. We have seen above that Śēr Khān lay at a distance of 8 to 9 miles south of Chaūsah where the Muḡhals had encamped themselves on the night of 25th June, A. D. 1539. Śēr Khān with his forces would have left his camp at about 11-45 P.M., a little before mid-night, and in that case he would have covered the distance of 8 to 9 miles in 4½ hours, marching at the rate of 1 karoh or 2 miles an hour, in order to be able to surprise the sleeping Muḡhal camp at about 4.25 A.M. i.e., two watches (48 minutes) before the day-break on the 26th June, which came to pass at 5.13 A.M.

44e. E. D., IV, p. 373.

45. From Ábbās, T.S. S., I. O. Ms, p. 118 ff, it appears that this pretended march of Śēr Khān's army to a few karohs against Mahārath Chēro and its return to their encampment was repeated on two consecutive days. Námatullāh, (T. K. J. L., O. P. L. Ms., fo. 187 a), however, writes here, that for three days Śēr Khān made a show of marching (against Mahārath Chēro) in the direction of Paṭnah, to be followed each time by return to his encampment and every time on the occasion of commencing

his march he caused it to be proclaimed aloud with a view to dinning it into the ears of the Mughals so as to assure them about the Afghān movement. But Śēr Khān, according to Námatullāh, was doing all this in order to gain time for the return of Khawāṣ Khān and as soon as Khawāṣ Khān arrived, he effected his junction with the latter and resolved finally to fight with the Mughals. As the latter had remained ignorant of Śēr Khān's design, they mistook the movement of the Afghān forces on the fateful day of the 25th June to be Śēr Khān's movement towards Bihār (as usual against Mahārath Chēro). Only two watches of the night had remained, when Śēr Khān made a treacherous attack on the Mughal camp. T. S. A. (Bib. Indica text p. 197 ff) records that, after concluding peace with emperor Humāyūn, Śēr Khān withdrew the restrictions on the supply of the grain to the Mughal camp and this disarmed the Mughal emperor of distrust for Śēr Khān. Śēr Khān now started carrying his equipages to Bihār. After some days, Khawāṣ khān came and the Afghān forces of Śēr Khān, on the very day of the arrival of Khawāṣ Khān, proceeded two or three karohs farther away from the imperial camp of the Mughals, with the idea of ultimately launching a surprise-attack on the Mughals sometime after the mid-night. T. D., O P. L. Ms., fo. 135 b, T.A., trans., II., p. 164, and T.F., Nawal Kishore text., p. 217, record nothing beyond the fact that after the conclusion of peace, the imperial troops became free from anxiety and erected a bridge over the river Chaūsah; and in the early morning of Saturday, A. H. 946, Śēr Khān made a surprise-attack on the imperialists and the latter were put to rout and destroyed. T. W., O. P. L. Ms, p. 18, records that after the conclusion of peace between Śēr Khān and emperor Hūmāyūn, Śēr Khān summoned his principal chiefs and asked if any of them was brave enough to storm the Mughal camp. Khawāṣ Khān offered himself, and, duly assisted by Śēr Khān's soldiers and elephants, he went away with his contingent at about ten o'clock in the day. Śaikh Khalīl informed emperor Humāyūn that Śēr Khān might prove false to the peace, as Khawāṣ Khān had gone away with his entire force at 10 A. M. and so that emperor was to remain watchful. This shows the stead-fastness of Śaikh Khalīl for the cause of Humāyūn, despite the honest advice that he gave to



Śēr Khān when he was asked to tender it. Emperor Humāyūn however, took no notice of it and on the next day in the early morning Khawāṣ Khān delivered the surprise-attack on the sleeping Mughal camp. Abul Faḏl (A. N. trans., I., p. 343) writes that Śēr Khān sometimes sent influential men to emperor Humāyūn for peace and sometimes cherished wicked desire. At length, he dectetfully and fraudulently left a body of infantry and insufficient men, together with his artillery, while he himself marched two stages to the rear and then encamped there. Owing to the utter negligence shown by Muḥammad Zamān Mirzā in the night when it was his watch, Śēr Khān, taking advantage of it, made a night-march and presented himself at the rear of the camp.

46. A. N., trans., I., p. 343 ff.

47. T.W., O. P.L.Ms., pp. 18-19, says that the surprise-attack was led by Khawāṣ Khān only. But T. S. A., Bib. Indica text, pp. 196-203, also writes that attack on the Mughal camp was launched on three sides by Afghāns. A. N., trans., I., p. 343 ff., also clearly records the three-pronged attack of the Afghāns on the Mughal camp.

48. A. N., trans., I, p. 343. Here a question turns up for consideration, viz., the different directions from which Śēr Khān, Jalāl Khān and Khawāṣ Khān respectively led their assaults on the Mughal camps at Chaūsah. It has already been seen above that Khawāṣ Khān with his forces had left Śēr Khān's camp at ten o'clock in the day on the 25th June, A. D. 1539, in a particular direction. He had been secretly instructed to take the lead in storming the Mughal camp. Śēr Khān himself then advanced two to three karohs, in the direction of south, towards Rohtās. A little before mid-night, Śēr Khān unfolded his plan to the Afghān chiefs, asked to get ready for making a surprise-assault on the Mughals, and exhorted them forcefully for it. As pre-arranged, writes Qanungo ( Śher Śhah, p, 204 ), Khawāṣ Khān joined Śēr Khān at mid-night of 8th ṣafar, A. H. 946 ( the 25th June, A. D. 1539 ). Abul Faḏl, A. N., trans. I., p. 343, has clearly recorded that Śēr Khān attacked the sleeping Mughal camp at Chaūsah from the rear; Khawāṣ Khān who was charged with forming the spear-head of the attack, luunched frontal assault (Qanungo, Sher Shah, p. 204. Mishra,

The Political History of the Sur Dynasty, a typed thesis, p. 135); and Jalāl Khān then naturally attacked the middle of the Mughal camp. As Khawās Khān was to take the lead in storming the Mughal camp, there is nothing inconsistent if he made a frontal assault. As the Mughal army at Chaūsah lay encamped in the direction of south-east, the rear of the Mughal camp lay by the side of the eastern bank of the Karamnāsah i.e., towards the north-west, whereas its front lay in the direction of the south-east and the centre lay by the east while the north was bounded by the swollen Gangā. Thus Khawās Khān attacked from the south-east while Jalāl Khān launched the assault from the east, and Śhēr Khān attacked the rear from the north-west. Thus not only could he square with all eventualities, but could also close the path of escape for the Mughal forces by plunging themselves in the Kāramnāsah in case of their rout and defeat.

49. T. W., O.P. L.Ms., p. 19. At the appropriate place look for a detailed discussion and a critical examination of the battle of Chaūsah and the various plans of it as given by a number of scholars, namely, Dr. Qanungo and Dr. S. C. Mishra, in their respective works on Śēr Śāh, and Dr. S. K. Banerjee, Dr. R. S. Avasthi, and Dr. Ishwari Prasad in their respective monographs on Humāyūn. I have finally drawn up a plan of the battle of Chaūsah according to my reading of the original and secondary source-materials.

50. A. N., trans. I., p. 343.

51. T. K. J. L., O. P. L. Ms., fo. 188ff.

52. Ibid.

53. Ibid.

54. T. W., O. P. L. Ms., p.19.

55. A. N., trans. I., p. 343 ff.

56. T. W., O. P. L. Ms., p. 19.

57. A. N., trans. I., p. 344; Jaūhar, T. W., O. P. L. Ms., p. 19, has wrongly recorded here that emperor Humāyūn ordered the driver of the elephant which was known as Girdbāz to break the bridge and it was accordingly broken; he then plunged his steed into the river and got separated from the horse. This does not explain how emperor could have broken the bridge prior to crossing the river. Even if he would have ordered the bridge to be demolished with a view to

preventing the enemy from pursuing him, it could have been possible only after he had crossed the river and not before that. But even that contingency is ruled out in view of the fact that when he plunged his steed into the river (Karamnāsah) and got separated from it in the mid-stream and was about to be drowned, Nizām, a water-carrier, came to his rescue and saved him with the aid of his inflated leather bag. Hence it becomes absolutely clear that by the time emperor Humāyūn came to the river, he found the bridge broken, as it had been already demolished by the men of Śēr Khān (vide T. S. A., Bib. Indica. text, p. 200); T. K. J. L., O. P. L. Ms., fo. 188 a, records that when emperor Humāyūn arrived at the bridge, the heavy rush of his followers who had followed the master in their effort to escape, led to the breakdown of the bridge and most of them fell into the river. But this version of Nāmatullāh may be discounted in the face of the clear statement of Abul Faḏl, a very trustworthy and accurate chronicler, which shows that emperor found the bridge already broken when he came to the bank. Abul Faḏl is corroborated by the additional details on the subject by Aḥmad Yādgar, as recorded before.

58. A. N., trans., I., p. 344; Jauhar, T. W., O.P. L. Ms., p. 19.

58a. Qanungo, Sher Shah; Mishra, The Political History of Sur dynasty; Avasthi, Humayun; I. P., Humayun; Banerjee, Humayun, Badshah.

59. Qanungo, Sher Shah, pp. 196-211.

60. Ibid.

60a. E. & D., IV., p. 370, f. n. 1.

61. Qanungo, Sher Shah, p. 199, f. n. 1.

62. Ibid, pp. 198-200.

63. E.& D., IV., p. 370, f. n. 1.; Dorn, p. 118; cf. Qanungo, Sher Shah, p. 209.

64. Qanungo, Sher Shah, p. 199.

65. A. N., trans., I., pp. 342-3.

66. T. W., O, P. L. Ms., pp. 15-19.

66a. A. N., trans., I., pp. 342-3.

67. T. S. A., Bib Indica text, p. 196 ff.

67a. Sher Shah, p. 199, p. 200.

68. Sher Shah p. 200 ff.

69. Mishra, The Political History of the Sur Dynasty, pp. 125-39.

70. A. N., trans., I., pp. 342—3; see f. n. 3b.

71. E. & D., IV., pp. 369-70.

72. I. P., Humayun, pp. 125-32.

73. Sher Shah, p. 208, p. 211.

73a. E. & D., IV, p. 370., f. n. 1

74. J. A. S. B., 1885, part I.

75. Humayun, pp. 223-34.

76. Sher Shah, p. 211.

77. Humayun, pp. 347-61.

78. Qanungo, Sher Shah, pp. 192 ff.

79. E. & D., IV. pp. 369-70.

80. Ibid.

81. Ibid, p. 362.

82. I. E., V., p. 280.

83. The Political History of the Sur Dynasty. pp. 125-139.

84. Qanungo, Sher Shah, p. 200, f. n. 2, also supports my finding on the site of Bihīyah when he says that Śēr's original camp lay to the north of modern Grand Trunk Road and very near the Gangā.

85. Ibid, p. 198 and p. 10.

86. Humayun, pp. 347-61.

87. The Political History of the Sur Dynasty, pp. 125-39.

88. Sher Shah, pp. 203 ff.

89. I. O. Ms., pp. 118-9.

90. T. W., O. P. L. Ms., p. 18.

91. Since the battle of Chaūsah was fought on the early morning of the 26th June, A. D. 1539. the three preceding days of the mock-campaign were the 23rd-25th June.

92. T. W., O. P. L. Ms p. 19.

93. A. N., trans., I, p. 344.

94. The Political History of the Sur Dynasty, pp. 125-39.

95. Humayun, pp. 347-61.

96. I. E., V., p. 280, writes that 1st şafar, A. H. 946, falls on the 18th June, A. D. 1539, and not on the 30th May, A. D. 1539, as recorded by Avasthi here.

97. I. E., V., writes that 9th şafar, A. H. 946, falls on the 26 June A. D. 1539.

98. A. N., Cal. text., I, p. 158 and p. 159.  
 99. M. T., Cal. text., pp. 350-1.  
 100. A. N., Cal. text, III., p. 94.  
 101. I. E., V., p. 280.  
 102. This date is based on Námatullāh, T.K.J.L., I.O.Ms.,  
 fo. 112a.  
 103. I. E., V., p. 280.  
 104. Humayun, p. 357, f. n. 152.  
 105. T. S. S., I. O. Ms., pp. 118—9.  
 106. T. W., O. P. L. Ms., p. 18.  
 107. I. P., Humayun, p. 125, p. 132.  
 108. Humayun Badshah, p. 223-p. 224.  
 109. A. N., trans., I., p. 342.

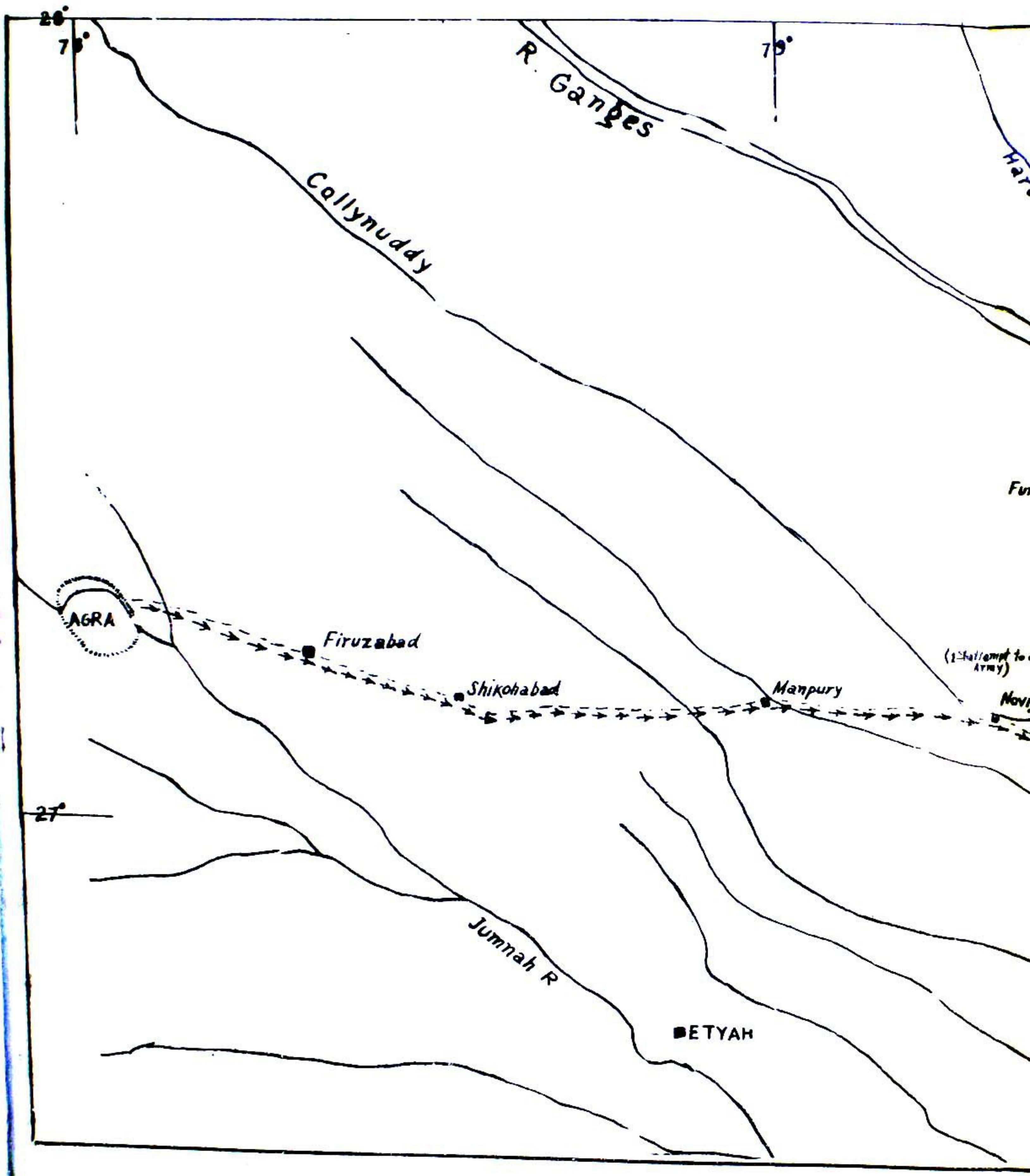
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B  
Showing

Road -----  
Cart track .....  
Route followed by Mughal army →→→→→  
Route followed by Afghan army →→→→→

Note:-  
This map is based on J. Rennell's atlas of Bengal 1781 A.D.





## BATTLE OF QANAŪJ

Jaūhar<sup>1</sup> is the only chronicler, both among the Muḡhal and the Afḡhān historians, who gives us a clear and detailed account of the flight of emperor Humāyūn from the field at Chāūsah to Āgrah in A. D. 1539. He writes that after suffering unexpected defeat on the 26th June, A. D. 1539, Humāyūn hurried for Āgrah. Shortly after, he received the report that Barmazīd Gaūr was pursuing him from behind (i.e., from the east) and that Śāh Muḡammad Afḡhān was barring the road. This perturbed Humāyūn and his tiny band of followers. At length, Rājah Bīrbhān (of Arail) offered to deal with Barmazīd Gaūr who was coming from the east and requested the emperor to move on to Āgrah and deal with Śāh Muḡammad Afḡhān, if the latter obstructed his march. But Śāh Muḡammad could not muster up his courage and retired. Emperor Humāyūn managed to reach Kālpī, from where he resumed his march and reached Āgrah. On hearing the arrival of emperor Humāyūn, Prince Kāmrañ came out in haste to pay his respects. Humāyūn alighted from the horse and took Kāmrañ into an affectionate embrace.

The activities of the emperor, after his arrival at Āgrah, are recorded by Abul Faẓl<sup>2</sup>, Niẓām-ud-dīn<sup>3</sup>, Badāyūni<sup>4</sup>, Fēriśtah<sup>5</sup>, besides Jāuhar<sup>6</sup>. All of them say that Niẓām, the water-carrier, who had saved him from drowning in the Karamnāsah, came to the court for the redemption of his promise made to him. Humāyūn fulfilled his word of honour and



seated him on the throne for half a' day<sup>7</sup> and whatever orders the water-carrier made during this period were carried out. This made Mirzā Kāmran critical of Humāyūn.

But the emperor took all possible steps to conciliate his brothers and nobles who had earlier rebelled against him. Then he exhorted them to gird up their loins to defeat Śēr Khān and his followers who had treacherously attacked and routed him. His war-lords responded to the call and rallied round him. Humāyūn now addressed himself to the task of collecting and reorganising his troops.

Kāmran proposed that he should be permitted to lead his Punjābī troops to deal with Śēr Khān and avenge the disgrace inflicted upon the Muḡhal sovereign, while the emperor should rest at the capital. But Humāyūn refused to do so, saying that as Śēr Khān had treacherously defeated him, he would go in person to teach the Afḡhān leader a lesson. This benumbed the enthusiasm of Kāmran. He became indifferent and wanted to return to Lahore. Humāyūn tried his best to change his brother's mind and wasted some precious months<sup>8</sup> in this fruitless task. Kāmran proved impervious to all appeals. He not only left for Lāhore but took his troops also with him. This departure of Kāmran for Lāhore proved to be turning-point in the rise of Śēr Khān, as it inspired him with fresh determination and paved the way for the ultimate downfall of the Chaghtāi power.

After the defeat of the Muḡhals at Chaūсах<sup>9</sup>, Śēr Khān declared himself to be a sovereign and assumed the tittle of Śēr Śāh Sulṭān-i-'ādil. He then sent Jalāl Khān with a force against Bangāl. A

contest followed between Jalāl Khān and Jahāngīr Qulī Khān who had been left in Bangāl as its Muḡhal governor. As the Muḡhal officers in Bangāl failed to co-operate with Jahāngīr Qulī Khān, the latter failed to withstand the Afḡhān attack, and had to effect a hurried retreat and take refuge with the local land-lords. They, however, betrayed Jahāngīr Qulī Khān and he was slain in or about rabīā-ul-ākhir, A. H. 946 (August-September, A. D. 1539).

Having finally subjugated Bangāl, Śēr Khān started re-establishing his hold on the country in the north and east of the Gangā<sup>10</sup>, i.e., the modern North Bihār. This was easily achieved, because the entire region till recently had been in his possession. The Afḡhān hero next turned his attention to slice away the portions of the Muḡhal empire which was now confined to narrow tracts in between the Gangā and the Jamunah.

Like Bahādur Śāh of Gujrāt, Śēr Śāh also resolved to open a three-fold offensive against the emperor.<sup>11</sup> This scheme was based upon the principles of checks and balances. The initial step was to cross the Gangā in a bid to occupy Qanaūj. Śēr Śāh anticipated a battle with the Muḡhal emperor who, he expected, would advance towards Qanaūj to expel the Afḡhāns from that region. To distract the attention of the enemy, Śēr Śāh planned simultaneous attacks upon several fronts of the Muḡhal territory which would render it impossible for Humāyūn to concentrate his energy and resources at one point.<sup>12</sup> Accordingly, he directed his son Quṭb Khān to descend upon Kālpī and Iṭāwah and, after subduing that region, to march into the Muḡhal capital from the south. At the same time the potentates of

Gujrāt, Māndū, Rāisēn Sēwās, and Bījāgadḥ were asked to descend upon Āgrah from the side of Gwāliar, Bīānā and Dēhlī (i.e., west and north). The two attacks were to be properly coordinated.<sup>13</sup>

There is no doubt that the plan was very clever, but it was executed in haste.<sup>14</sup> Without being sure of the response<sup>15</sup> and cooperation of the rulers of Mālwah and Gajrāt, Śēr Śāh proceeded on his march against the Muḡhal emperor. In about śawwāl, A. H. 946 (February-March, A. D. 1540),<sup>16</sup> he crossed the Gangā and occupied Qanaūj, while his son Quṭb Khān Sūr proceeded to attack Kālpī and Iṭāwah.<sup>17</sup> Help from Mālwah and Gujrat<sup>18</sup> was anticipated.

We can not definitely say about the measures taken by the Muḡhal emperor to meet this crucial situation. The versions of the Afḡhān historians suggest that Humāyūn at first marched to repulse Śēr Śāh's attack on Qanaūj, but shortly after, probably on receiving the intelligence of Quṭb Khān's advance, he retraced his steps to Āgrah.<sup>19</sup> The Afḡhān historians state further that (after his return) Humāyūn sent Mirzā Hindāl and Mirzā Āskarī towards Chandērī.<sup>20</sup> But the Muḡhal historians say that Humāyūn preferred to remain at the capital,<sup>21</sup> probably hoping that the extirpation of Quṭb Khān Sūr would lead to the extermination of other Afḡhān forces in the field, a strategy which had succeeded to counter-act Bahādur Śāh's triple offensive, when Tātār Khān Lodī had been repulsed. Taking into account both the versions, it may be concluded that the Muḡhal emperor probably attempted to foil Śēr Khān's play by sending two detachments—one, led by Mirzā Āskarī and Mirzā Hindāl, was to keep within proper limits<sup>22</sup> the menace from Mālwah and

Gujrāt; the other under the command of Yādgar Naṣīr Mirzā, Iskandar Bēg, and Qāsim Ḥusain Sulṭān was to bar Quṭb Khān's advance towards Āgrah. The measures proved to be effective. The princes of Mālwah failed to cooperate with the Afghāns. They could not coordinate their movements with those of Quṭb Khān who was defeated and killed probably at Chandrāwar near Kālpī.<sup>23</sup> Quṭb Khān's head was sent as a trophy to the Muḡhal capital.<sup>24</sup> With the defeat and death of Quṭb Khān Sūr, the entire plan of Śēr Khān ended in smoke. He left the western bank of the Gangā<sup>25</sup> and encamped on its eastern side, somewhere opposite Bhojpūr (near Qanaūj). Humāyūn, on the other hand, considered his victory over the Afghāns as a good omen to march against Śēr Khān.<sup>26</sup>

The emperor commenced his march with ninety thousand horses<sup>27</sup> and a large park of artillery from Āgrah in the direction of Qanaūj on 7th zīqádah, A. H. 946<sup>28</sup> (March 16, A.D. 1540), to give a fight to Śēr Khān. At Abhaipūr<sup>29</sup>, he reviewed and mustered the troops. He conferred on all his nobles and officers the horses, robes of honour and other marks of distinction, omitting nothing to rouse their spirits and encourage the soldiers for the ensuing campaign. He continued his march stage by stage enroute to Qanaūj.

From the narration of Abul Faḏl it transpires that after Humāyūn had arrived at Bhojpūr<sup>30</sup> in a week's time<sup>31</sup>, he encamped on the western side of the Gangā, whereas Śēr Khān was already encamping then almost opposite<sup>31a</sup> on the eastern side of the river. Being intensely keen and eager to avenge his earlier defeat and retrieve his honour, the emperor

decided to cross the Gangā at Bhojpūr and go over to its eastern side to fight the Afghans.<sup>32</sup> He, therefore, became busy with making a bridge<sup>33</sup> over Bhojpūr ferry. But after the bridge was ready, the emperor gave up the idea of crossing the river and proceeded by liesurely pace to Qanaūj, probably owing to a number of reasons. In the first place, the elephant Girdbāz had broken the bridge and Humāyūn most likely considered it fruitless attempt to repair it in the face of Afghān resistance. Secondly, the Muḡhals of the royal vanguard who had gone over to the other side of the river, had not fared well against the Afghāns.<sup>34</sup> This, in all likelihood, had led the Muḡhals to refrain from crossing the river in order to avoid engaging the enemy in its own territory.<sup>35</sup> Thirdly, as rājah Vīr Bhānū of Arail was to join the emperor,<sup>36</sup> it probably led the latter to wait till the rājah's arrival. But the most important consideration was that Qanaūj held the key to the direct routes for Lakhnaū and Avadh, the centres of great strategy in the trans-Gangetic region. By crossing the Gangā at Qanaūj, Humāyūn could fall upon these places very easily, and thus regain possession of the entire region. He, therefore, marched toward Qanaūj. And the Muḡhal army managed to arrive in vicinity of Qanaūj <sup>36a</sup> in the last week of the month of zīqádah A. H, 946.<sup>37</sup> Śēr Khān was already present near Qanaūj, encamping on the eastern bank of the river Gangā.

Śēr Khān also marched along the eastern bank of the Gangā and encamped<sup>37a</sup> on the crossing just opposite Qanaūj. The two armies, facing each other from the opposite banks of the Gangā<sup>38</sup>, lay camping

for about more than a month.<sup>39</sup> Probably, Humāyūn did not want to repeat the bitter experience that he had at Bhojpūr in his effort to cross the river. So he thought it better to wait till the arrival of Vīrbhānū of Arail with his troops.

The failure of Humāyūn to cross over the Gangā at Bhojpūr<sup>40</sup> ferry coincided with the departure of Mirzā Kāmran to Lāhore along with those who accompanied him out of regards for their own well-being.<sup>41</sup> When Humāyūn arrived near Qanaūj, he noticed some spirit of demoralisation in his camp. In the words of Mirzā Ḥaidar,<sup>42</sup> an eye-witness, "Everybody began to desert and the most surprising part of it was that many of those who deserted did not go over to Śēr Khān and so could expect no favours from him. An excited feeling ran through the army and the cry was 'let us go and rest in our homes'. Most of Kāmran's auxiliary forces also abandoned him (Humāyūn) and fled to Lāhore."

The desertion on a mass scale naturally made the Muḡhal emperor panicky, as he had only two alternatives left now, viz., either to continue on the western bank of the Gangā and passively watch the thinning down of his forces and court ruination without fighting, or to stop desertions by crossing the river and engage Śēr Śāh in a quick fight on the eastern<sup>43</sup> bank. Humāyūn consulted his nobles and, on the advice of man like Mīr Fakhr Ālī<sup>44</sup>, he decided to cross the river. He rightly thought that the step would close the road to Āgrah which would stop desertions and the army would have to fight with its back to the wall.<sup>45</sup>

Just at this moment Śēr Khān received the news of Khawāṣ Khān's triumph over the Mahārath

Chēro.<sup>46</sup> He at once summoned the victorious general to join him at Qanaūj. As soon as Khawāṣ Khān had arrived in neighbourhood of Qanaūj, Śēr Khān wrote to the emperor: "I have for sometime entrenched myself here. Now the choice lies with the emperor. If he condescends to cross the river, he may fight with me on this side, or if he wishes, I may cross the river and fight with him on that side".<sup>47</sup> Since Humāyūn had already resolved to cross the river Gangā and go over to its eastern side, he readily accepted the offer and wrote to Śēr Śāh: "If you retreat some miles from the water-side, I will cross the river and give you a straight battle". Śēr Śāh did as desired and retreated about ten to twelve miles<sup>48</sup> further south to allow the emperor an undisturbed crossing over the Gangā. The emperor ordered a bridge to be thrown over the river near Qanaūj.<sup>49</sup> After its completion, he crossed the Gangā on probably muḥarram I, A. H. 947 (May 8, A. D. 1540), and encamped<sup>49a</sup> on its eastern bank.<sup>50</sup>

Despite the advise of his lieutenant Hamīd Khān Kākar to attack the Muḡhals while they were crossing the river, Śēr Khān desisted from taking such a step<sup>51</sup>—an instance of chivalry which does not seem to have been devoid of strategical consideration, viz., firstly Khawāṣ Khān had not till then arrived at Qanaūj; secondly Śēr Khān did not wish his contemporaries to get the impression that he had won the throne of Hindustān by treachery. He thought that foul play would diminish his prestige and would take away the pre-eminence he was likely to acquire by virtue of his victory over the Muḡhals. Proper reply to Pānīpat could only be a

Qanaūj, and not a Chaūsah.

When Śēr Khān saw that the Muḡhal emperor had crossed the river, had come over to its eastern bank and encamped there, he permitted some of his ambitious troops to fight with their Muḡhal counterparts in daily skirmishes which followed. As Humāyūn had committed the blunder of encamping at a low-lying land near the river, it was soon flooded by unexpected heavy rains in May, rendering it difficult to remain there. It became absolutely necessary for the Muḡhals to move to a higher ground; otherwise it was apprehended that their army would sink into mud and mire. To save itself from such a tragedy, it was suggested to shift to a rising ground where flood waters would not reach, but it lay just opposite the enemy. Mirzā Ḥaidar was sent to reconnoitre and he found a suitable place situated further south.<sup>52</sup> It was decided to move thither fully accoutred. At first, the army was to move on 10th muḡarram, A. H. 947 (17th May, A. D. 1540), for about half a day<sup>53</sup> and then to come back to the original spot. The process was to be repeated on the next day (11th muḡarram, A. H. 947 = 18th May, A. D. 1540) also. With the front forming the cover, the rear was to move to the new ground. The entire movement was to be in full battle-array lest the Afḡhāns should be so tempted as to deliver a surprise-attack.

By this time, Khawāṣ Khān had arrived and joined Śēr Khān.<sup>54</sup> Śēr Khān was now fully equipped. He rightly realised that if the plan adopted by Humāyūn materialised, it would lead to a long-drawn-out confrontation. And so he decided to give a battle to the Muḡhals on the very first day



of the Muḡhal manoeuvring i. e., 10th muḡarram, A. H. 947 (May 17, A. D. 1540).<sup>55</sup>

Humāyūn drew up his army on 10th muḡarram, A. H. 947 (17th May, A.D. 1540), in fighting order for the purpose of shifting to the new side. The centre<sup>56</sup> was led by emperor Humāyūn himself. He was assisted on his left by 27 amīrs, all of whom carried the tomān-o-tūḡh. Amongst them was Mirzā Ḥaidar, the author of tārikh-i-raśīdī, and his 400 chosen men adept in war-fare and used to fighting. Fifty of them were mounted on steeds, accoutred with armour. Mirzā Ḥaidar was stationed just by the left of the emperor so that the right of Mirzā Ḥaidar was close to the left of the emperor. The centre was supported by 700 cannon-wagons, each drawn by four pairs of bullocks. Each swivel-gun was capable of discharging a (stone) ball of 500 miśkāls in weight. In addition, there were other cannons<sup>56a</sup> also, each drawn by eight pairs of bullocks. They discharged the shots of molten brass, each weighing 500 miśkāls and costing 200 miśkāls of silver. Each shot could strike anything within the distance of a farsang i.e., a league. These gun-carriages which covered the centre was fastened with chains. They were under the charge of (a) Muḡammad Kḡhān Rūmī, (b) the sons of Ustād Ālī Qulī, (c) Ustād Aḡmad Rumī, (d) Ḥusain Kḡhalāfat. Mirzā Hindāl led the fore-centre; Mirzā Āskarī commanded the right wing, while Yādgār Naṣīr Mirzā and Qāsim Ḥusain Kḡhān were in the charge of the left wing.

The centre<sup>57</sup> of the Afḡhān army was led by Śēr Śāh himself, assisted by (a) masnad-i-ālī (áālī) Āzām (A,azam) Humāyūn Sarwānī, (b) masnad-i-ālī (áālī)

Īsā (Áīsā) Khān Sarwānī Kakboor, (c) Quṭb Khān Lodī, (d) Hājī Khān (Jāloī), (e) Buland Khān, (f) Saif Khān Sarwānī, (g) Bijlī Khān Sarwānī and others. The fore-centre was led by Jalāl Khān, (the son of Śēr Śāh), assisted by (a) Sarmast Khān, (b) Habiat Khān Niyāzī [who got the title of Āzam (Aázam) Humāyūn in A. H. 950] and all other Niyāzīs, (c) Jalāl Khān Jāloī. The strength of the Afghān force in the fore-centre was of 3000 men. The right wing of the Afghān force was in the charge of Mubāriz Khān, Bahādur Khān, Rāi Husain Jalwānī, Tāj Khān Karārānī and Sulaimān Khān Karārānī. The left wing of the Afghān had two subdivisions: the extreme left was led by Ādil (Áādil) Khān, son of Śēr Śāh, Quṭb Khān and others; whereas other subdivision of the left wing was led by Khawāṣ Khān, Barmazīd Gaūr and others.

When the two forces came face to face in their battle-array<sup>57a</sup>, the first to move was Mirzā Hindāl, the leader of the fore-centre of the Muḡhal army, against Jalāl Khān, the son of Śēr Śāh, who was leading the fore-centre of the Afghān. It resulted in the discomfiture of Jalāl Khān and he fell from his horse in a hand-to-hand fight which ensued. But four of the Afghān chiefs held the ground, in spite of the reverses. According to Ábbās, three of them were Jalāl Khān, Miān Áyūb Kakbūr Sarwānī, and Ghāzī Mujlī. Meanwhile the left wing of the Muḡhal army, led by Yādgār Naṣir Mirzā and Qāsim Husain Khān, drove back the right wing of the Afghāns led by Mubāriz Khān and others to their centre which was under the command of Śēr Śāh. Now Khawāṣ Khān who led one out of the two left wings of the Afghāns and Ādil (Áādil) Khān who

led another column of the extreme Afghān left wing, jointly fell on Mirzā Áskarī who commanded the right wing of the Muḡhal army and defeated the latter and compelled him to retreat. Khawāṣ Khān was assisted by Barmazīd Gaūr and others; whereas Ādil (Áādil) Khān was aided by Quṭb Khān (Bānēt) and others.

The left wing of the Muḡhal army, led by Yādgār Naṣīr Mirzā, as seen before, had driven the right wing of the Afghān army, led by Mubāriz Khān and others, back to their centre. When Śēr Śāh found, writes Ábbās,<sup>58</sup> his right wing broken, he wanted to march to its aid. But he was dissuaded to do so by Quṭb Khān Śāhū-Khāil, lest his men should think that the Afghān centre had broken down. Śāhū-Khāil exhorted Śēr Śāh to deliver a straight charge on the' army. Śēr Śāh's division, therefore, marched straight against the left wing of the Muḡhals, which was under the command of Yādgār Naṣīr Mirzā. He defeated it and pushed it to the centre. He then drove away the Muḡhal fore-centre which was under the command of Mirzā Hindāl and was pitted against his son i.e., the discomfited Jalāl Khān.<sup>59</sup> The two columns of left wing of the Afghāns, headed by 'Ādil Khān, a son of Śēr Śāh, and Khawāṣ Khān respectively, in the meanwhile, repulsed the Muḡhal troops led by Mirzā Áskarī, and drove him towards centre. Meanwhile Śēr Śāh's right which was under the command of Mubāriz Khān and which had been routed, rallied round and marched against the Muḡhals who were now encircled on all sides by Afghāns.<sup>60</sup> Humāyūn attacked Afghāns twice and threw them into confusion<sup>61</sup>; but in the end he was decisively defeated.

The Muḡhal commanders were not sincere to the cause of their master, and the emperor's brothers were lukewarm in their loyalty to him. They, therefore, did not fight with zeal and single-minded devotion. Therefore they were easily thrown back. Another factor that led to the defeat of the Muḡhals in the battle, was the vast multitude of servants and slaves who had accompanied their war-lords in the field.<sup>62</sup> Mirzā Ḥaidar records that every amīr or wazīr in the Muḡhal army, whether he be rich or poor, had his ḡhulāms. An amīr of note had 100 retainers and followers and 500 servants and ḡhulāms on the day of battle. But they rendered no assistance to their masters, nor could they control themselves. During the struggle the slaves who were everywhere, were unmanageable. When they lost their masters, they were seized with panic and blindly rushed about in terror. So it became impossible for the Muḡhal soldiers to hold their ground. The ḡhulāms pressed upon them from the rear and in impact the latter drove the centre towards the chains which fastened the chariots and the soldiers fell upon the others. Those who were behind pressed upon those who were in the front. Their jolts broke asunder the chains and the men who were posted near chains were pushed back. The few who remained behind, fell out of order, so that all formation was disrupted.

What accelerated the defeat of the Muḡhals, was the unwise compliance of the emperor with the advice of Mirzā Ḥaidar to loosen the chains of the carriages of the guns which formed a barricade in front of the centre, to let the fugitives pass from the right.<sup>63</sup> The chains were accordingly loosened

and fugitives rushed across the lines of the carriage. This threw everything into confusion, and the general panic sealed the doom of the Muḡhal. Mirzā Ḥaidar<sup>64</sup> writes that 40000 Chaghtāi forces fled before 10000 men of Śēr Śāh and met with their defeat.

When the Chaghtāis took to flight, the distance between their position and the Gangā was about a passang (farsang) i. e., a league or 12000 cubits. All the amīrs and braves fled for safety to the river. The Afghāns pursued them, and the Chaghtāis, having no time to throw off their armour and coats, plunged into the river. Many illustrious amīrs were drowned, and those who survived, did as they liked.

When the Muḡhal emperor came out of the river, he had nothing on his head or feet. Out of 1000 retainers, only eight persons survived and the rest were drowned. The total loss of the Muḡhals may be estimated from this fact alone.

According to Jaūhar<sup>65</sup> and Nāmatullah<sup>66</sup>, Humāyūn mounted on a white elephant and crossed the flooded Gangā. He found the western bank very steep, and, with the help of Śams-al-Dīn Muḡammad and others, managed to scale over to safer ground. Without losing any more time, he took a horse from Tardī Bēg, one of his nobles<sup>67</sup>, and galloped towards Āgrah, in the company of Mirzā Ḥaidar Duḡhlāt. Āskarī, Hindāl, and Yādgār Naṣīr joined him later one after another.

Mirzā Ḥaidar<sup>68</sup> says: "The Chaghtāis were defeated on this battle-field, but not a man, either friend or foe, was wounded". This statement is most surprising. Qanungo<sup>69</sup> has rightly pointed out: "that so far as the centres of both armies were concerned, not a

man, friend or foe, received a scratch, as they had no occasion even to come to grips. But the same was not true of the Muḡhal right and left wings where the fight was pretty evenly contested, though for a short time... There is a vein of frustration and bitterness running through the whole narrative (of Mirzā Ḥaidar) that under-rates the soldierly qualities of all Muḡhal commanders, among whom were Mirzā Hindāl and Mirzā Āskarī, and their old uncle Yādgār Naṣīr Mirzā—men who had already distinguished themselves on several occasions against the Afḡhāns and the Gujrātīs.. The battle could not be a bloodless one, though the Gangā no doubt took a heavier toll of lives than the pursuing Afḡhān swords”.

Now in concluding the story of the battle of Qanaūj, it seems necessary that a few points raised by the modern historians be assessed in their perspectives.

(I) According to Avasthi,<sup>70</sup> the disposition of the Muḡhal and the Afḡhān armies in the battle-field was as follows :—“Humāyūn..arrayed his forces in fighting order. Seven hundred and twenty-one gun-carriages with chains stretching in between them, and five hundred gunners commanded by Ūstād Ālī Qulī, Ḥusain Kḡhalīfa, Ustād Aḡmad Rūmī and Muḡammad Rūmī were stationed behind the main trench in front of the centre.<sup>71</sup> Mīr Tardī Bēg and Mu’id Bēg led the imperial van<sup>72</sup>. The right wing was in charge of Mirzā Āskarī<sup>73</sup>, while the right centre was led by the emperor and Mirzā Ḥaidar Duḡhlāt. The left flank was commanded by Yādgār Naṣīr Mirzā and the left centre was in the charge of Hindal<sup>74</sup>. The Afḡhān van consisted of about three thousand

strong troops under Khawāṣ Khān and 'Īsā (Áīsā) Khān Niyāzī.<sup>75</sup> The right was commanded by Jalāl Khān Sūr and Jalāl Khān Jālū, assisted by Mubāriz Khān, Bahādur Khān and the Niyāzīs<sup>76</sup>. The Afghān left was led by Ādil (Áādil) Khān Sūr, Quṭb Khān, Rāi Husain Jalwānī, Barmazīd Gaūr and others<sup>77</sup>. Śēr Śāh himself commanded the centre<sup>78</sup> and the most prominent among them who constituted his division, were Āzam (Aázam) Humāyūn Sarwānī, 'Īsā (Áīsā) Khān Sarwānī, Quṭb Khān Lodī, Hājī Khān, Buland Khān and Sarmast Khān.<sup>79</sup> Behind these fighting units, Śēr Śāh also stationed two other flanking divisions<sup>80</sup> to deliver surprise-attacks upon the enemy from the rear. In addition to all this, the Afghān position was further fortified by the deep trenches on both eastern and western sides<sup>81</sup>."

The above description is very confused. While plotting the position of the Muḡhal forces, he has relied on a much later work of Námatullāh and has ignored Abul Faḡl. He says that Mīr Tardī Bēg and Mu'īd Bēg led the imperial van; while according to Abul Faḡl, Mīrzā Hindāl led the fore-centre<sup>82</sup> i.e., the van of the Muḡhal forces. In giving the account of gun-carriages, he has assumed that they were commanded by Ustad Ālī Qulī Khān himself, while the fact is that it was led by his sons as mentioned earlier. Then again, he has assumed without any reason that the right centre was led by emperor and Mīrzā Haidar Duḡhlāt, and the left centre by Mīrzā Hindāl. But he has contradicted himself, when in a long foot-note (No. 111) he has accepted that Hindāl was stationed in the right-centre. But in same foot-note he has committed another mistake, when he says that Jalāl Khān was

in the left centre of the Afghān army. He again contradicts himself, when he s̄ays that the right wing of Afghān was led by Jalāl Khān Sūr. He has accepted the version of Ābbās<sup>83</sup>, without critically analysing the same.

His statement that the right centre of the Muḡhal was led by emperor and Mirzā Haidar Duḡhlāt, is deduced from the extracts of tārikh-i-raśīdī as quoted by Abul Fazl. He has not cared to consult the tārikh-i-raśīdī which was used by Elias and Ross in their edition and translation of the work. He has dismissed the discrepancy by simply saying that it differs from the copy used by Abul Fazl. But is it not likely that Abul Fazl, while citing that work, confused the description inadvertently by inserting the word "the left-centre". Or it is also not unlikely that the text used by Abul Fazl was faulty. In the copy of tārikh-i-raśīdī<sup>84</sup> used by Elias and Ross, the author clearly states : "the emperor had posted the author of this work (Mirzā Haidar) to his left". As such, his right flank should be on the emperor's left. In the same position he had placed a force of chosen troops. "On my left my retainers (400 in number) were stationed". These words of Mirza Haidar unmistakably show that he was just to the left of the Muḡhal emperor in the centre.

Avasthi, while placing Mirzā Hindāl in the left-centre, has made a contradictory statement as pointed out above. He has also put something in the mouth of Abul Fazl which he never said. The words of Abul Fazl are *الغمار قول* (left fore-cuntre) which Avasthi has equated with *خوب جای* (advantageous position i.e., left to the emperor at the centre)



of Mirzā Haidar. Thus he has confused the position of Mirzā Hindāl.

About the disposition of the Afghān army in the battle-field at Qanaūj, Avasthi has accepted the version of Ábbās without any critical evaluation of the same. He has interspersed in it other details provided by Abul Fazl. Consequently, he has produced a most hybrid picture. He says that the right wing was led by Jalāl Khān Sūr and Jalāl Khān Jālū. This is based on the version of Ábbās<sup>85</sup>, but, without assigning reasons, he has omitted the names of Tāj Khān, Sulaimān Karārānī and others as given by Afghān chronicler. On the other hand, he has mentioned the names of Mubāriz Khān, Bahādur Khān and the Niyāzīs on the basis of Abul Fazl.<sup>86</sup>

So far as Avasthi, by combining the statements of Abul Fazl and Ábbās, has concluded that Mubāriz Khān and Bahādur Khān in association with all the Karārānīs faced Naṣīr Mirzā and Qāsim Husain who formed the left wing of the Muḡhal, he is quite consistent. But he is guilty of a serious error, when he fails to take notice of what Abul Fazl has said subsequently, viz., the first encounter followed between Jalāl Khān Sūr and Mirzā Hindāl. As Mirzā Hindāl formed the fore-centre of the Muḡhal army, Jalāl Khān would naturally have formed the fore-centre of the opposite party. Without appreciating this fact, he has uncritically accepted Ábbās.

Further he writes that the Afghān left was led by Ādil (Āādil) Khān Sūr, son of Śēr Śāh, Quṭb Khān, Rāī Husain Jalwānī. This is also based on the testimony of Ábbās<sup>87</sup>. But he adds the name of Barmazīd Gaūr which has been pulled out from the chronicle of Abul Fazl.<sup>88</sup> He omits the name of

Khawāṣ Khān, the most important man in the column. Perhaps he has done so just to reconcile the version of Ābbās with that of Abul Fazl by making Ādil (Āādil), the leader of the left wing of the Afghāns, to face Mirzā Āskarī of the right wing of the Mughals. Likewise Avasthi, on the authority of Ābbās,<sup>89</sup> states that Śēr Khān commanded the centre and the most prominent among those who served him in the centre were Āzam (Aázam) Humāyūn Sarwānī, 'Īsā (Āīsā) Khān Sarwānī, Quṭb Khān Lodī, Hājī Khān, Buland Khān, and Sarmast Khān, but he omits, without any reason, the names of Saif Khān Sarwānī and Bijlī Khān and which are clearly mentioned by this Afghān chronicler. Then again, Avasthi has included the name Sarmast Khān among those serving Śēr Khān in the centre, against the explicit statement of Abul Fazl.<sup>90</sup> Sarmast Khān was serving Jalāl Khān Sūr in the fore-centre of the Afghān army. Mirzā Haidar has stated that Śēr Khān came out with five divisions, but Avasthi accounted for only three divisions. Finding it necessary to account for the remaining two divisions, he has suggested that Śēr Khān stationed them behind the fighting units to inflict surprise-attack upon the enemy from the rear. But the fact of the matter is that all the five divisions were posted in the field. Of them, out of two divisions, one was on the extreme left and the other was on the extreme right; the third division lay in the centre, the fourth lay by the side of the centre, whereas the fifth lay behind the centre. This will be clear from the plan No. 2 of the battle.

With these inaccuracies in plotting the positions of the Afghāns and the Mughals in the battle-field,

Avasthi has naturally led himself into inconsistencies in the details of the warfare.<sup>91</sup>

(II) The second scholar, S. C. Mishra,<sup>92</sup> who has written on the subject, has described the events thus : "Next day, the 10th of muḥarram, A. H. 947/ 17th May, A. D. 1540, the plan was carried out. Artillery was posted in the van and leather chains stretched between them in true Muḡhal style.<sup>93</sup> Behind this cover, the entire Muḡhal army drew up. Mirzā Hindāl was, however, posted outside this line as an advance-guard. The emperor held the left, while Mirza Ḥaidar the centre-left; Mirzā Áskarī commanded the left flank of the army and Yādgār Naṣīr Mirzā with Qāsim Ḥusain Sulṭān held the right. It is not known how deep this formation was, but it shielded a confused agglomeration of retainers and slaves with their back to the Gangā. Śēr Khān divided his army into five divisions; Khawāṣ Khān led the van which was posted, like Hindāl's division, outside the deep trenches which shielded the Afḡhān positions. The centre was commanded by Śēr Khān himself and he had with himself the most prominent of his chiefs—Haibat Khān Niyāzī, 'Īsā (Áīsā) Khān Sarwānī, Quṭb Korī, Sarmast Khān and others. The right wing was led by Jalāl Khān, the son of Śēr Khān, supplemented by Jalāl Khān Jālū; and the left was entrusted to Ādil (Áādil) Khān, another son of Śēr Khān, Ḥusain Khān Jalwānī and others. Finally a reserve force, posted some distance back, completed the Afḡhān dispositions".

Here it may be pointed out that Mirzā Ḥaidar, as shown before, was just to the left of the Muḡhal emperor in the centre, but not in the centre left as

has been done by Mishra. As against the clear statement of Abul Fazl<sup>94</sup> that Mirzā Āskarī led the right wing of the Muḡhals, Mishra places him on the left flank. Ignoring again Abul Fazl's clear statement<sup>95</sup> that Yādgar Naṣir Mirzā and Qāsim Ḥusain Sulṭān led the left wing of the Muḡhals, Mishra has placed them in the right wing. Similarly, writing about the position of the Afḡhān forces, he has written that Khawāṣ Khān led the van of the Afḡhāns against the clear statement of Abul Fazl<sup>96</sup> that Khawāṣ and Barmazīd confronted Mirzā Āskarī who commanded the right wing of Muḡhals. This clearly means that the two generals were leading the left flank of the Afḡhāns.

Writing about Śēr Khān and his chiefs in the centre, Mishra wrongly names Quṭb Khān Lodī as Quṭb Kori<sup>97</sup> and associates Sarmast Khān with Śēr Khān, whereas Sarmast Khān was, according to Abul Fazl,<sup>98</sup> with Jalāl Khān leading the fore-centre of the Afḡhāns. Then following Ābbas uncritically, he has placed Jalāl Khān Sūr and Jalāl Khān Jālū in the right wing of the Afḡhāns, whereas both of them led the fore-centre as pointed out before.

He has again erred by placing Ḥusain Khān Jalwānī with Ādil (Āādil) Khān Sūr in leading the left flank. Mubāriz Khān and Ḥusain Khān Jalwānī along with others were, according to Abul Fazl,<sup>99</sup> opposing Yādgar Naṣir Mirzā and Qāsim Ḥusain Khān, the leaders of the left flank of the Muḡhals. As such, his place could be in the right of the Afḡhāns.

Lastly, Mishra has assumed that a reserve force of the Afḡhāns was posted some distance back. This he has done to account for the five divisions

recorded by Mirzā Ḥaidar and Abul Fazl.<sup>100</sup> But the accompanying Plate No. 2 would show that there was hardly an occasion for this extra-rear division. All the five divisions are properly accounted for in their postings in the said plate.

(III) Qanungo<sup>101</sup> has got his own version with regard to the respective positions of the Afghāns and the Muḡhal forces in the battle-field. True to the tradition of a pioneer in the field, he has based his account of the disposition of the Muḡhal divisions, on a critical examination of the narration of Mirzā Ḥaidar, an actual participant in the battle on behalf of the Muḡhal emperor, and of Abul Fazl. But despite all this, he has erred in saying that Yādgār Nāṣir Mirzā and Āskarī commanded the right and the left wing of the Muḡhal army. Abul Fazl<sup>102</sup> says that Āskarī led the right, whereas Yādgār Nāṣir Mirzā held the left wing. With this material error, the whole picture goes out of its even keel.

While describing the disposition of the Afghān army in the battle-field, Qanungo has implicitly relied on Mirzā Ḥaidar as regards the number of Afghān troops without critically assessing the truth. He has further supplemented his account with servile adaptations from Ābbās. Had he critically examined Mirzā Ḥaidar and Ābbās in the light of what has been written by Abul Fazl and had he taken into account the short-comings<sup>103</sup> of Mirzā Ḥaidar, he would have been able to give a more reasonable picture.

(IV) With regard to the respective positions of the Afghān and the Muḡhal forces in the battle-field, Ishwari Prasad<sup>104</sup> writes, "Śēr Śāh marshalled his attack in six divisions; there was an advance guard

of 300 men and five divisions of 1,000 men, each arranged apparently in the traditional order of the right, left, centre, flanking parties and reserve. The van was led by the redoubtable Khawāṣ Khān. The right was commanded by Jalāl Khān, Tāj Khān, Sulaimān Khān Kirānī, Jalāl Khān Jāloī and others; the left by Ādil (Āādil) Khān, son of Śēr Śāh, Quṭb Khān, Rāī Husain Jalwānī, Barmazid Gaūr with other officers and in the centre was Śēr Śāh himself with his chosen generals such as Haibat Khān Niyāzī entitled Āzam (Aázam) Humāyūn, masnad āli (Āālī) Īsā (Āīsā) Khān Sarwānī, Quṭb Khān Lodī, Hājī Khān Jāloī, Sarmast Khān, Yūsuf Khān Sarwānī and many other generals of distinction and proved valour... The Muḡhal army was similarly arranged; the left was led by Yādgār Naṣīr, the right by Āskarī, and Mirzā Hindāl was in charge of the vanguard. The emperor posted himself in the centre and to his left was stationed Mirzā Haidar who had left us an account of the battle. The matchlockmen were placed between the centre and the van and trenches were dug for protection. To the left of Mirzā Haidar were posted his 400 chosen warriors, many of whom were tried veterans and fifty were horsemen well-equipped with armours. Between him and the river (juībār of Mirzā Haidar, i.e., a stream) there was a force of 27 amīrs, all of whom carried the tuḡh (banner)".

In his statement about the disposition of the Afghāns in the battle-field, Ishwari Prasad has accepted the version of Ābbās without critically examining it in the light of the more trustworthy chroniclers like Abul Fazl and Jaūhar. He has undoubtedly used Mirza Haidar, but not very

satisfactorily. For example, though Mirzā Haidar unmistakably refers to only five divisions of Śēr Śāh, he had added one more division without citing any authority. Even in accounting for the five divisions, the learned scholar has out of his imagination created flanking parties and reserve which do not find mention in any authority. The van of the Afghāns, according to Ishwari Prasad, was led by Khawāṣ Khān. But as shown before, Jalāl Khān Sūr was the leader of the fore-centre, whereas Khawāṣ Khān and Bārmazīd Gaūr led the left wing.

Ishwari Prasad states further that the left which was led by Ādil (Āādil) Khān, son of Śēr Śāh, contained Rāī Husain Jalwānī and Barmazīd Gaūr. But it would be clear from the plan (Fig II) that Rāī Husain Jalwānī was in the right wing of the Afghāns, led by Mubāriz Khān and others; whereas Barmzīd Gaūr was associated with Khawāṣ Khān in one out of the two left wings of the Afghāns, the other left wing having been led by Ādil (Āādil) Khān himself, Quṭb Khān and others. Again, while recounting the names of distinguished Afghān generals who served Śēr in the centre on the authority of Ābbās,<sup>105</sup> he has, without any reason, dropped the names of Buland Khān, Bijlī Khān and Saif Khān Sarwānī. On the other hand, he has inserted the names of Yūsuf Khān Sarwānī about whom no mention is made by Ābbās, Abul Faḍl, Mirzā Haidar, or Jaūhar. He has also put in there Sarmast Khān who was actually with Jalāl Khān Sūr in the fore-centre.

(V) Lastly, Banerjee<sup>106</sup> describes the respective positions of the Afghāns and the Muḡhal forces in

the following words: "The Muḡhals had three main divisions; the centre where Humāyūn and Ḥaidar Mirza, the generalissimo, commanded; the left nearest the river was under Hindāl, and the right covering the high ground lay under Yādgār Naṣīr Mirzā. The vanguard was placed under Áskarī. There were five thousand matchlockmen placed under Muḡammad Khān Rūmī, Ustād Aḡmad Rūmī, Ḥasan Khalīfa and the sons of late Ustād Ālī Qulī. There seems to be no Muḡhal flying bodies to undertake a flank movement or any larger reserve... The Afḡhāns were divided into seven divisions. Śēr Khān himself was in the centre with a trench running in front of him. On his right were the two Jalāls, namely Jalāl Khān, Śēr Śāh's son, and Jalāl Khān Jālū, with the brave Niyāzīs under them. Similarly on the left stood Ādil (Āādil) Khān, Śēr Śāhs' eldest son, with the Kirānī Afḡhāns. The fourth and the fifth division, placed at the extreme ends, were to initiate the tulḡhāma movements of the Muḡhals and, while the battle progressed, to attempt at surrounding the enemy from the flanks and the rear. The vanguard was commanded by Khawāṣ Khān and Barmazīd Gaūr, while a division was left in reserve".

Banerjee has rightly pointed out above that Humāyūn and Mirzā Ḥaidar commanded the centre; but he is not correct, when he says that Mirzā Hindāl led the left wing, Áskarī led the van and Yādgār Naṣīr Mirzā commanded the right. Abul Faḡl<sup>107</sup> has correctly written that Mirzā Hindāl led the fore-centre, Áskarī the right, and Yādgār Naṣīr Mirzā the left. Banerjee has imagined that the Afḡhāns had seven divisions,



against Mirzā Haidar's clear statement of five such divisions only. What is the authority for Banerjee's suggestion, is not known. He has again erred in placing Jalāl Khān Sūr, son of Śēr Śāh, and Jalāl Khān Jālū with brave Niyāzis in the right as against the fact that they led the fore-centre. He is also not correct in associating Ādil (Ādil) Khān, son of Śēr Śāh, with the Karārānī Afghāns in the left wing. Ādil (Ādil) Khān, no doubt, led the left wing, but the Karārānī Afghāns, led by Sulaimān Khān and Tāj Khān, were in the right wing. He has finally erred once again, while putting Khawāṣ Khān and Barmazīd Gaūr in the van. But, as has already been shown on the authority of the various chroniclers, Khawāṣ Khān and Barmazīd Gaūr led the one out of the two left divisions of the Afghān forces. There was no such extra division of reserves in the Afghān forces as he has tried to present.

### CAUSE OF DEFEAT

Avasthi<sup>108</sup> has very ably analysed the cause of Humāyūn's defeat in the following words :—

1. "It was a grave blunder on the part of the Muḡhal emperor to have chosen low-lying site for his encampment and that too near the river-bank and close to the jaws of his Afghān adversary."

2. "Instead of making suitable amends to the matter, the emperor committed another and a still more grievous error, ( and that was that ) knowing full well that the rains had set in, he kept on dallying in his perilous position and did not deliver an immediate attack upon Śēr Khān whom he allowed

to be reinforced by Khawāṣ Khān with his newly acquired sinews of warfare. This immediately injured the Muḡhal cause.”

3. “The imperial camp had already come under water (caused by the monsoon rains) and . . . Humāyūn felt constrained to adopt a defensive attitude towards the adversary. This in its turn had a still more disastrous consequence.”

4. “In the battle that was forced upon the emperor, the imperial camp and the battle-field were the same and the camp-followers and the menial servants formed an integral part of the army. This was bound to have adverse results, for the camp-followers and other servants were not adept in the art of warfare, and the slight attack upon them was enough to bring about their onrush upon the centre. Had Humāyūn followed the policy of offensive from the outset, this confusion and muddling up might not have probably arisen at all.”

The above observations quoted are consistent, when judged from an a posteriori considerations viz., the accomplished facts of the Muḡhal defeat. But an honest and impartial study of Humāyūn's decision to pitch his camp in the low-lying land near the river bank, after crossing over to the eastern side of the river Gangā, when judged from an a priori point of view of the Muḡhal defeat that followed on 17th May, A. D., shows that the Muḡhal emperor was fully justified in doing so. The reasons are stated below :

1. It was the end of April or beginning of May, which is the hottest part of summer and when no rain is generally expected. Therefore, the emperor could not anticipate any rain at that time. It was

really misfortune of Humāyūn that an untimely shower came and upset his plans.

2. Without anticipating rains, how could the emperor think of flood in the Gangā which could inundate his camps? Conceding that he miscalculated Nature which is always unpredictable, Humāyūn was perfectly justified in his decision to pitch his camp in the low-lying land near the river bank, as it afforded certain positive strategic advantages for the security of his forces, viz., the Muḡhal encampment had the Gangā in the rear, a small stream (jūībār in the words of Mirza Ḥaidar) on the left, a trench in the front of the army. The gun-carriages were placed in their proper position behind the army and redoubts were constructed to protect the same. There was also a bridge communicating with the western bank. It was ready which was quite intact and well-guarded. All could have enabled Humāyūn "to fight" Śēr with the same tactics that gave Bābur his victory over Ibrāhīm Lodī, had not the wrath of Nature fallen upon him.

3. His new encampment was a trap to tempt Śēr to attack it. But Śēr Khān turned out to be too sly a fox to come within its range.

Qanungo,<sup>109</sup> while citing rains as the cause of the defeat of Humāyūn in the battle of Qanaūj, speaks in an identical vein, when he writes: "It is futile to find faults with the array of the Muḡhal army, or with its captains and generals. If there was any single factor responsible for Humāyūn's defeat, it was not his incapacity as a soldier, or the low morale of his army which was exaggerated a little by Mirzā Ḥaidar. It was the ill-luck of the emperor to have met with heavy down-pour in his camp in

mid-summer. But for this accident, Humāyūn would not have chosen to shift his invulnerable camp. If Śēr had led his own army for attack from a similar position and had fought with similar handicaps, the fate of Humāyūn would surely have undertaken him. The Muḡhal array was best suited to receive and repulse an attack from a stationary position; it could not catch and attack an elusive enemy. Any movement of such a multitude from its original position always affords a vigilant opponent many points of attack and surprise. Througout the course of medieval hīstory, it was only Aurangzeb who successfully led such an array over a considerable distance to fight Dārā at Sāmūgarh. The defeat of Humāyūn was a triumph for Śēr's flexible stratagey over the rigid technique of the Muḡhals."

It is worthwhile to strike a note of caution against the over-exaggeration of Qanungo who puts his faith in the pontentialities of the Muḡhal army which had assembled for a fight in the battle-field to gain a victory over the Afḡhāns. According to Mirzā Haidar, the army had been hurriedly recruited. The soldiers lacked experience in the art of warfare. Add to this, the overwhelming number of non-combatants like the ḡhulāms and the camp-followers who had out-stripped the actual combatants and created an insurmountable problem to be tackled on the day of actual fighting.

Ishwari Prasad<sup>110</sup>, while recounting the causes of the defeat of the Muḡhals, observes : "Lack of unity among the brothers marred the enterprise from the very outset. The contrast between the discipline and efficiency of the two (Muḡhal and Afḡhān) armies

explains the defeat of the Muḡhals. The Afḡhāns had rallied under a national banner and the example and courage of their leader filled them with determination and hope. Humāyūn who had bravely maintained himself in the thick of fight at Pānīpat, had deteriorated and most of Bābur's generals had either died in the natural course or left for their homes. The climate of India must have told on the health of the troops, and the soft life of Bangāl must have enervated them to a considerable extent. The improvised levies that had been hastily collected in the eastern course, were no match for the sturdy Afḡhāns who were well drilled and disciplined for the arduous duties of the battle-field. The Muḡhal army was numerically larger, . . . but in quality it was inferior to its opponents. The raw recruits who crowded the Muḡhal camp, could ill-resist the fire that was poured on them by these veteran officers and their men. The morale of the Afḡhān troops was much better than that of the Muḡhals. Treachery was rife in the ranks of the latter; officers mediated treason and intrigued with the enemy." He further adds, "Humāyūn's choice of the river line was a blunder. He ought to have remained on the western side of the stream and ought not to have crossed it, for by doing so he did not only put his troops in peril, but placed himself deliberately in a position in which defeat was bound to prove disastrous to him. Having made the mistake of crossing the river, the camping ground was not judiciously chosen and the transfer to an elevated post in the midst of a heavy rain drenched the baggage which became too heavy to carry and disorganised the army. Niḡām-ud-dīn Aḡmad (Cal. text, vol II., p. 45) rightly

observes that the heavy rain was the chief cause of the defeat of the imperial army. Unlike his adversary, Humāyūn lacked energy and quick action in moments of crisis. Śēr Śāh was undoubtedly a more capable military leader who knew how to profit by a battle. He (Śēr) grasped the weak points in an enemy's line and fully perceived the key to a tactical position. He knew when the decisive blow might be struck. He employed caution in his manoeuvres and developed plans considered and matured in advance. He (Śēr) took good care always to remind the Afghāns of the glittering prize that lay before them—the augmentation of the glory and honour of their race, besides material gain."

It may be submitted here that what Ishwari Prasad has said above, to account for the defeat of Humāyūn, is based on an a posteriori study of facts and not on an a priori study, whether it be rains or the crossing of the Gangā by Humāyūn to its eastern side. All that has been stated in criticism of Avasthi above, holds good in case of Ishwari Prasad also. As for the crossing of the Gangā by Humāyūn to its eastern side which, in the opinion of Ishwari Prasad, was a great mistake, it may be submitted that the learned scholar has based his deductions on the a posteriori postulates, when the Muḡhal defeat became an accomplished fact, and that he forgot to take into account that Humāyūn had no alternative left to him but to cross over to the eastern side of the river in order to put a stop to the desertions that had set in the Muḡhal camp prior to the commencement of the fight there.

Ishwari Prasad has further erred in saying that "unlike his adversary, Humāyūn lacked energy and

quick action in moments of crisis". Even at Chaūsah Humāyūn could not be accused of having not shown valour and courage in his fight with the Afghāns; although he might be held guilty of making some delay in his ablutions before coming out of his tents to take up cudgels with the Afghāns. But in the battle at Qanaūj, Humāyūn can not be charged with any delay to come to grips with the Afghāns. He was prompt in action, when he was in a state of preparedness. He lacked neither courage nor firmness." Avasthi<sup>111</sup>, on the authority of Ábbās<sup>112</sup> and Jaūhar,<sup>113</sup> has aptly remarked "Nevertheless Humāyūn remained firm and bravely faced the Afghān assailants with his usual dash and intrepidity. He broke two lances and was still facing odds, when a stroke from the side of the enemy removed his helmet and wounded his fore-head".

As for the observation of Ishwari Prasad that, "Śēr Śāh was a more capable military leader," it may be submitted that if the criteria to judge here be based on the maxim "Nothing succeeds like success", the learned scholar is justified in his observation. Otherwise, Humāyūn was no less a great military leader in his own right, and of this he had given ample proofs in the past in the fields of action. He is, however, correct in eulogising Śēr for grasping at the weak points in enemy's line and as to how and when to avail of it to serve his end.

Banerjee,<sup>114</sup> while accounting for the defeat of Humāyūn, has suggested a number of causes:—

(a) that Humāyūn was primarily himself responsible for meeting with defeat, as he had given the charge of the supreme command of his forces in the battle to Mirzā Haidar; that he was then

suffering from some mental disorder as becomes manifest in his reported statement to Mīr Raī'-ud-dīn about the host of supernatural darvēś that were striking at the mouths of the Muḡhal horses in the fight, and that he had committed a great blunder in not permitting Kāmraṅ to take his place as commander in the fight.

It may be pointed out that if Humāyūn reposed faith in Mirzā Ḥaidar by keeping him by his side in the centre, it did not mean that he had surrendered the charge of the supreme command to the latter. Moreover, Mirzā Ḥaidar committed only one mistake in that he ordered the loosening of the chains of the gun-carriages which ultimately disarrayed the disposition of the Muḡhals actually. But it may be noted that he issued instruction after receiving the approval of Humāyūn.<sup>115</sup>

As for the allegation that Humāyūn suffered from mental disorders as is manifest in his reported statements on the presence of the supernatural beings fighting on behalf of Śēr,<sup>116</sup> it may be submitted that the said statement of the Muḡhal emperor before Mīr Rafī'-ud-dīn was made in vindication of his case against his adversary and it has nothing to do, whatsoever, with the mental aberrations.

As for not permitting Kāmraṅ to lead the fight with Śēr and which displeased the prince and impelled him to return to Lāhore, and which, in the words of Banerjee, was a great blunder of the Muḡhal emperor, it may be said that Humāyūn here was rightly guided in his decision by a far-reaching consideration. Had he allowed Kāmraṅ to proceed to fight with Śēr, and himself stayed at



his capitāl, it would have adversely affected his position and status as an emperor. In case of the victory falling in the lap of Kāmṛān, it would have rendered him all powerful in the court-politics, and would have considerably enhanced his prestige to the utter disadvantage of the Muḡhal emperor who was already crest-fallen. It would have whetted the ambition of Kāmṛān still further. Moreover Humāyūn had his own apprehensions with regard to the competence of Kāmṛān to undertake the stupendous task of facing the shrewd and the resorceful Śēr about whom the Muḡhal emperor alone had the first hand experience in his recent encounter at Chaūsah.

As for the raw recruits of the Muḡhal army whom Humāyūn had enlisted after his return from Chaūsah to Āgrah, and who had proved to be rabbles in the fight with the Afghāns, and which Banerjee holds to be an important factor for the defeat of the Muḡhals, the learned scholar is only partially correct as he has failed to take into account the presence of the veteran warriors and leaders like Mirzā Hindāl, Mirzā Āskarī, Yādgār Naṣir Mirzā, Mirzā Haidar Dughlāt and their seasoned followers in the camp of the Muḡhal forces in the battle-field on the day of action,

As for Ishwari Prasad's observation that Humāyūn committed great blunder in crossing over to the eastern bank of the Gangā, as it resulted in the heavy loss of the Muḡhals who perished in the river in their flight after meeting with defeat, it may be submitted that this is all an a posteriori observation. The learned scholar has failed to take into account that Humāyūn rightly went over to

the eastern bank of the river to arrest the process of desertion that had already set in his camp.

Likewise, the observation of Ishwari Prasad about Humāyūn's mistake in encamping in the low-lying land near the river which was liable to innundation and flood, is equally an a posteriori postulation. No one could have expected rains in May in the height of summer. Rains normally break towards the close of June. As such, Humāyūn committed no error of judgment, if he pitched his camp in the low-lying land near the bank of the river which gave him certain positive strategic advantages.

As for the large number of ghulāms in the Mughal camp and their lack of discipline which constituted a fundamental factor for bringing about the defeat of the Mughals in the fight, Ishwari Prasad is here correct so far as it concerns a factual study of the situation.

Humāyūn in his defeat needs a more sympathetic approach at the hands of the historian. His tragedy should be carefully studied, because he was more a victim of the vagaries of nature than of his own follies. But it is most unfortunate that a historian of eminence like Ishwari<sup>117</sup> Prasad has condemned him in these words, "To the reflecting historian the battle of the Gangā is not an unmixed evil. It transferred the dominion of Delhi to men more parctical and better organised than those whom they had supplanted. He (Humāyūn) no doubt passed through the terrible ordeals with a patience and dignity worthy of his high descent. We who toil to pluck from contemporary writings the secrets of past and are conscious of the labours needed to build

up an empire, feel sympathy for him in his distress, but we can not help feeling a sense of relief at the business-like management of a large dominion by the Afghān leader who combined in himself the highest qualities of an administrator and warrior, and substituted order for chaos, discipline for inefficiency and business-like methods for the fantastic and bizarre innovations which Khawandāmīr has described with medieval picturesqueness”.

### SIGNIFICANCE OF THE BATTLE OF QANAŪJ.

“In the history of medieval India” says Avasthi,<sup>118</sup> “the battle of Qanaūj marks the close of one chapter (i. e. the close of the Muḡhal rule which had been opened by Bābur at Pānīpat) and the opening of another (i.e. the re-establishment of the Afghān sway). It completed the work of Chāūsah by transferring the sovereignty of Hindustān from the house of Bābur to that of the Śūr with Śēr Śāh as its first ‘dejure’ as well as ‘defacto’ emperor. Secondly, the battle of Qanaūj avenged the defeat of the Afghāns at the battle of Pānīpat where about a decade and a half back the Afghān cause had recoiled beyond all hopes of generation. Pānīpat had established the supremacy of the Muḡhal arms and tactics over those of the Afghāns; now by the same weapons and tactics the Afghāns scored their victory over their Chaghtāi enemies. Muḡhal defeat in the battle of Qanaūj dealt an irreparable blow to Humāyūn’s power and prestige. People now began to look down upon him as the representative of a lost cause. In consequence, we find that during the emperor’s ignominious retreat towards Āgrah

the peasants of Bhū-Gāon made hostile demonstration.....Further we find that on arrival at his capital, Humāyūn did not find his feet on secure ground. The Afghān hosts under Barmazīd Gaūr were knocking at his door and sedition had raised its head on every side. In consequence, Humāyūn's host Mīr Rafī'-ul-Dīn impressed upon him the futility of further resistance. The mīr accordingly advised his royal guest to immediately quit Āgrah and retire to the Punjāb. Accordingly, says Mirzā Haidar, Humāyūn made no tarry but ordered Mirzā Hindāl and all servants to bring out the royal household and treasures".

Out of the three-fold significance of the battle of Qanaūj as drawn by the learned scholar here, the first and the last were fait accompli and need no comment. But the second one, so far as it relates to the avenging of the defeat of the Afghāns in the first battle of Pānīpat fought about 14 years back, it is a forced deduction based on the maxim "Nothing succeeds like success".

#### FOOT-NOTE

1. T. W., O. P. L. Ms., p, 19ff.
2. A. N., trans., I., p. 344, 1907 ed., Calcutta; T. R., E. & D., V, p. 130.
3. T. A., trans., II., p. 70 ff, 1936 ed., Calcutta.
4. M. T., trans., I, p. 462 ff, 1898 ed., Calcutta.
5. T. F., Nawal Kishore Pub., p. 218, 1884 ed.
6. T. W., O. P. L. Ms., p. 20 ff.
7. This is based on A. N., trans., I., p. 345, and T. F., p. 218. But T. W., O. P. L. Ms., p, 20, says (دو ساعت) i. e. 2 hours according to Steingass, Persian-English Dictionary.

8. Tārīkh-i-Raśīdī, trans. by Elias & Ross, 1895 ed. p. 471, p. 472; T. A., trans., II., p. 71, and M. T., trans., I., p. 462 say it only 6 months.

9. Ábbās, I. O. Ms., p. 74; T. R., E. & D., V., pp. 130-131. A. N., trans, I., pp, 345-6; T. A., trans., II., p. 72 and p. 165; T. F., p. 218; T. K. J. L., O. P. L. Ms., p. 190; T. S. A., Bib. Indica, Cal., p. 155; Avasthi, Humayun, p. 357 ff., 1967 edition, Allahabad; Mishra, The Political History of the Sur Dynasty, p. 144, p. 179, p. 186 ff, a typed thesis in B. H. U. L.

10. T. S. S. (All. Univ. Ms. pp. 140-9) says that Śēr Śāh subdued Qanaūj and Kālpī as well :—

و خود تعاقب حضرت همایون نمود و کالپی را در تحت خود در آورد -

T. K. J. L. (I. O. Ms. 114b ff) says that Śēr Śāh pursued the emperor and proceeded to Qanaūj :—

بعد از جنگ صباح آن تعاقب همایون پادشاه کوچ کرده بتنوج رفت -

Kālpī can not be said to have been taken possession of by Śēr Śāh at this stage, else he would not have later on sent his son for the conquest of the same. Similarly Qanaūj can not be said to have been occupied by Śēr Śāh at this stage, otherwise later Śēr Śāh would not have desired to convert his encroachment upon it into the immediate cause of his war with Humāyūn. The Afghān historians have tried to sum up the events at one place. See Avasthi, Humayun, p. 358, f. n. 55.

11. Avasthi, Humayun, p. 358.

12. Qanungo (Sher Shah, p. 212) rightly says: "His plan as a general to prevent a complete concentration of the Muḡhal forces near Qanaūj by placing one of his divisions in the neighbourhood of Āgra, was praise-worthy." See Avasthi, Humayun, p. 358, f. n. 58.

13. T. S. S., All. Univ. Ms., p. 149; Elliot, IV, p. 378; Ábbās, vol. I, reconstructed by Imamuddin, p. 144, says :—

(شیر شاه) مسند عالی عیسی خان ککپور سردانی را بجانب گجرات و مندو فوستاد و بهکام آن دیار نوشت که من یک فرزند خود را در آن نواحی خواهم فرستاد - چون حضرت همایون پادشاه جانب تنوج توجه کند شما همراة فرزند من آمده ملک دهلی و آگره را بزنید و تاراج سازید در آن ایام در ملک مندو اجین و سارنگپور ملو خان که قام خود قادر شاه نهاده بود و سلطنت می کرد -

T. K. J. L. (I. O. Ms, 115 a ff) says the same, but gives a more detailed description of the political condition of western

India, as it existed at that time. Hodivala, *Studies*, pp. 455-56; Avasthi, *Humayun*, p. 359, f. n. 59.

14. Avasthi, *Humayun*, p. 359.

15 Qanungo (Sher Shah, 212) rightly says: "Śēr Śāh committed a grievous error by presuming on very insufficient political grounds that the princes of Mālwah and Gujrāt would side with him, and by deciding to send an army before the result of the negotiations was known to him". See Avasthi, *Humāyūn*, p. 359, f. n. 60.

16. Almost all historians state that Humāyūn considered his victory on Quṭb Khān Sūr as auspicious and forthwith marched against the Afghāns in zī-q'adah A. H. 946. From this, it may be inferred that the battle between Quṭb Khān and the Muḡhals would have taken place sometime at the end of the month of śawwāl, A. H. 946 (March, A. D. 1543), and Śēr Śāh would have launched his campaign in about the beginning of the same month. See Avasthi, *Humayun*, p. 359, f. n. 61.

17. T. R., trans., p. 472; A. N., Cal. text, I, p. 161; T. K. J. L., O. P. L. Ms., fo. 280 a ff; Tārīkh-i-Alfī, I. O. Ms., 413 b ff; T. S. A., Buhar Ms., fo. 96b ff; See Avasthi, *Humayun*, p. 359 f. n. 62.

18. Sultān Maḥmūd, the ruler of Gujrāt, was a minor and his minister Daryā Khān excused himself on pretext. T. S. S., All. Univ. Ms., 150; Elliot, IV, p. 378; T. K. T., O. P. L. Ms., p. 115b ff; Dorn, p. 124.

In Mālwah too Īsā (Āīsā) Khān failed to receive a favourable response. Ābbās (T. S. S., All. Univ. Ms., 150) says: "The rulers of Mālwah wrote in reply that when Śēr Śāh's son would come to those parts, they would not fail to assist him or serve him. Mallū Khān, however, put his seal at the head of the letter which he sent in reply. When this communication arrived, Śēr Śāh tore up the letter and put the seal in his turban". T. K. J. L., O. P. L. Ms., 115b ff, also says the same. For the proper significance of this episode and the connotation and technique of fixing seals, See Hodivala, *Studies in Indo—Muslim History*, p. 456; Avasthi, *Humayun*, p. 360, f. n. 63.

19. T. S. S., reconstructed text by Imamuddin, vol. I,

pp. 146-7, says :—

چون شیر خان شنید که حضرت همایون بادشاه جانب قنوج کوچ میکرد فرمود  
پسر خود قطب خان را بملک مندر رخصت نمود که حکام مندر همراہ گرفته  
در نواحی آگرہ و دہلی خلی اندازند و ملک (را) تاراج و ویران سازند - حضرت  
همایون بادشاه شنید کہ شیرخان پسر خود را جانب چندیری فرستاده است و ارادہ  
(آر) دارد (کہ) خلی در نواحی آگرہ و دہلی اندازد - (ہر در برآدر خورد میرزا  
عسکری و میرزا ہمدان را جانب چندیری رخصت نمود—چون) حکام ملک مالوہ  
(شنیدند کہ) میرزا عسکری و میرزا ہمدان باین حدردمی آیند) امداد قطب خان  
نکردند -

For other version, consult T. K. J. L., I. O. Ms., 115b ff;  
See Avasthi, Humāyūn, p. 360, f. n. 64.

20. Ibid.

21. T. R., trans. by Elias & Ross, p. 472; A. N., Cal. text,  
I., p. 161. They state that Yādgār Mirzā, Qāsim Ḥusain Khān  
Uzbēk who held these parts in fief (i. e. Kālpī and Eṭāwah)  
and Iskandar Khān who held the charge of Mirzā Kāmran's  
assignments in Kālpī, were sent against Quṭb Khān Sūr. See  
Avasthi, Humāyūn, p. 360, f. n. 66.

22. T. S. S., All. Univ. Ms., p. 150; Elliot, IV., p. 379;  
T. K. J. L., I. O. Ms., p. 115b; Avasthi, Humāyūn, p. 361, f. n. 67.

23. Taimūrīd chroniclers state Kālpī. T. S. S. (A. U. Ms.,  
p. 151) locates the place of battle at Chandhār near Kālpī  
(چندہار). Elliot's reading (IV., p. 379) is Chondhā. 'Chandhār'  
may be identified with 'Chandrwār' or 'Chandhār' in Iṭāwah  
district. See Avasthi, Humāyūn, p. 361, f. n. 69.

24. T. A., Cal. text., II., p. 45; Tārīkh-i-Alfi I. O. Ms.,  
413b; Avasthi, Humāyūn, p. 361, f. n. 70.

25. T. S. S., All. Univ. Ms., p. 152 says :—

(چون شیر خان شنید کہ حکام مندر با پسر اورمراقف نکردند از خصم.....)  
پریشان گشت

Śēr Śāh was lying encamped on the eastern bank at the time  
when Humāyūn arrived at Bhojpūr (A. N., Cal. text., II., p. 45),  
See Avasthi, Humāyūn p. 360, f. n. 71.

26. A. N., Cal. text, I., p. 161; T. A., Cal. Text, II, p. 45;  
T. S. S., All. Univ. Ms., p. 151, ascribes it to Humāyūn's  
insensate pride. See Avasthi, Humāyūn, p. 361, f. n. 72.

27. T. R., trans., p. 474; T. W., All. Univ. Ms. 42; A. N.,  
Cal. Text, I, 42, however, says : بالشکر اندک متوجه بیسارے از دشمن  
شدند - See Avasthi, Humāyūn, p. 362, f. n. 74. Mishra, The

Political History of the Sur Dynasty, a typed thesis, B. H. U. L., p. 150, writes that the Muḡhal army of Humāyūn this time, while on march to Qanaūj, was a heterogenous agglomeration, and, according to Mirzā Ḥaidar, had an overwhelming preponderance of non-combatant slaves and attendants over the fighting force proper (T. W., B. H. U. Ms., fol 16 a; T. R., trans., p. 474). It has been variously estimated at a hundred thousand or fifty thousand. Accompanying it was a powerful train of artillery, containing 7000 heavy guns, each drawn by four bullocks, and also a formidable force of elephants (T. R., trans., p. 474). It was a powerful army, characteristic of Indian sovereign, and was quite capable of crushing the Afḡhāns, had it only been better led, for the Afḡhāns, though they had now the resources of eastern India at their command, were inferior to it numerically.

28. T. W., O. P. L. Ms., p. 21, and T. W., trans. by Stewart, pp. 29-30; A. N., trans. I., pp. 349-50; T. S. S., E. & D., IV., p. 380-p. 381; T. R., E. & D., V., p. 131-p.135; Avasthi, Humayun, p. 362, f. n. 73, says that both Ms. of T. W. (All. Univ. Ms., 42 ff and I. O. Ms., 38 ff) clearly write the date of Humāyūn's march from Āgrah to Qanaūj as 7th zī-q'adah, A. H. 946.

29. From the narration of T. W., O. P. L. Ms., p. 21, it appears that Abhaipūr which was the first place for encampment after his march from Āgrah, appears to be situated very close to this city as it was at Abhaipūr that emperor Humāyūn gave leave to Kāmraṅ to return to Āgrah.

30. There is a Bhojpūr in sarkār Qanaūj (Jarret, II, 184). It is in Farrukhābād district, 8 miles south-east of Farrukhābād and 31 miles north-west (upstream) of Qanaūj. See A. N. trans., I., p; 349, f. n. 1; Avasthi, Humāyūn, p. 362, f. n. 75, writes that Bhojpūr is now situated on the eastern bank of the Gangā. In the time of Humāyūn, it was situated on the western bank, as is borne by Abul Faḡl, A. N., Cal. text, I, p. 163. A glance at a topo-sheet, published under the direction of Sir G. S. Burrard, Surveyor-General of India, 1918, 3rd edition, 1928, sheet No. 54, India And Adjacent country (Central India, Central Province, Gwalior, Punjab, Punjab States, Rajputana, and U. P.) shows that Bhojpūr is situated even to the western side of the Gangā at a distance of two miles from its bank and



is about  $23\frac{1}{2}$  miles to the north-west of Qanaūj in Farrukhābād district. Bhojpūr was the first place of the Muḡhal encampment.

31: T. R., trans., p. 476; Mishra, *The Political History of the Sur Dynasty*, p. 150, f. n. 3.

31a. The place was Sondī as is apparent from the Map (Figure I).

32. Avasthi, *Humāyūn*, p. 362 ff.

33. A. N., Cal. text., I., 163; T. S. C., O. P. L. Ms., fo. 62a ff; See Avasthi, *Humāyūn*, p. 362, f. n. 76.

34. Avasthi, *Humāyūn*, p. 362—p. 363.

35. A. N., Cal. text., I., 163; T. S. C., O. P. L. Ms., fo. 62a ff; while the bridge was in the process of construction, about one hundred and fifty Muḡhals swam across the river with their horses. On reaching the other side of the river, they engaged the Afḡhnās in desultory fights and in which they were probably defeated. They were followed hotly by the Afḡhāns, and they consequently fled towards the bridge which had by that time got ready. In order to prevent the Muḡhals from availing of the bridge, the Afḡhāns led the elephant Girdbāz to demolish the bridge and broke down some of its supports. Just then a cannon-ball from the camp of the Muḡhals broke the legs of the elephant... Abul Faḡl, however, does not account for the reason which led Humāyūn to give up the idea of repairing the bridge. The author of T. S. C., O. P. L. Ms., fo. 63a ff, however, says that the Muḡhal soldiers showed reluctance (خماص نمود) in crossing the river, which, in view of the circumstances related above, is quite probable. See Avasthi, *Humayun*, p. 362—p. 363, f. n. 78 and 80.

36. T. W., All. Univ. Ms., pp. 42-43, makes a very dubious statement. He says thus:—

شیر خان مقابل ایشان بود که عرض داشت راجایی اریل که نام بیور بهان داشته  
و در سطور بود که حضرت بادشاه بدولت و اقبال..... که این بنده در سعادت  
خواهد بود - حضرت بادشاه این مصلحت قبول کرد -

36a. The place is Mindygout,  $5\frac{1}{2}$  miles to the south-east of Qanaūj, as is evident from the map (Fig. I.)

37. T.S.S., E. & D., IV., p. 380 (April, A.D. 1540, zī-q'adah, A. H. 946); Avasthi, *Humāyūn*, p. 346 and f. n. 82. While fixing the dating of the arrival of emperor Humāyūn at Qanaūj in the last week of zī-q'adah, A. H. 946, (April, A. D.

1540), Avasthi writes: "Humāyūn started from Agra on zu q'āda, 7, A. H. 946 (March 16, A. D. 1540) and arrived at Bhojpūr, about 150 miles off from the Muḡhal capital (Tieffenthaler vol. 3, p. 140). The matter being urgent, the emperor would have arrived in Bhojpūr in a week. He did not stay here for long, because we are told that after one month's stay at Qanaūj he fought Śēr Śāh on muḡarram 10, A. H. 947 (May 17, A. D. 1540). So Humāyūn would have arrived at Qanaūj more than a month earlier than this date i.e. about the end of zu-q'āda, A. H. 946 H. = April, A. D. 1540."

37a. The place is Mallyne as is evident from the Map. (Figure I).

38. It would be worthwhile to take notice of the findings of Qanungo (Sher Shah, p. 228, ff., 1965 ed., Calcutta) with regard to the sites of the encampments of the Muḡhals and the Afḡhāns near Qanaūj in A. D. 1540 before the battle. He states : "For more than one month the armies confronted one another near Kanaūj. The Muḡhal army appears to have encamped with the river Ganges in front, and the old city of Kanaūj which, though once situated on the Ganges, was then about five miles off to the west—in their rear, as their base of supplies.. On the eastern bank, opposite Kanaūj, the only place of any importance which could serve as a base of operations of the Afḡhān army was Bilgrām (According to Āīn., II., pp. 178-9, Bilgrām had a brick fort; Hardoī a maḡāl; both in Sarkār Lucknow). This place lies only at a distance of about 5 miles N. E. E. in a straight line from the historical Mehdīghāt of later days situated on the Bilgrām side of the Ganges; the distance between the town of Kanaūj and the ferry of Mehdighāt being about six miles north-east. It is clear from the accounts of Abul Faḡl that Śēr's army and the flotilla were moving from Bhojpūr to a point opposite Qanaūj in a parallel direction to the Muḡhal army. Humāyūn was held up by Śēr for about a month from his original camp which was probably somewhere near the site of modern Mehdīghāt.. (When Śēr allowed Humāyūn to cross the Ganges and come over to its eastern bank,) Śēr removed his encampment, as Ābbās says, several miles back, and that brings Śēr to the vicinity of Bilgrām. There Śēr dug a trench as usual around his encampment and fortified it strongly, and

behind this he placed his artillery and matchlockmen in the correct position ready for action." Despite the meticulous care shown by the learned scholar in locating the exact side of the battle between the Muḡhals and the Afḡhāns to lie in the vicinity of Bilgrām, the fact essentially remains that he has failed in his effort here. Under f. n. 57a and 51, the exact place of the fight between Humāyūn and Śēr Khān has been shown at full length in this work to lie south-east of the crossing of the 27th parallel with 80° Longitude, somewhere midway on the Mālowpur-Bangermow road. As the battle was fought in the area of Qanaūj which is a well-known place, I have loosely designated the fight as battle of Qanaūj.

Ishwari Prasad (Humayun, p. 146 ff.) has, however, his own finding on the subject as to where was the battle fought? He writes thus: "Where was the battle fought? It is clear that it was fought on the eastern bank of the Ganges on the tract of land which is now comprised in the Hadroī district. All authorities agree in saying that after the preliminary skirmishes Humāyūn proceeded from Bhojpūr to Qanaūj and, having reached there, he decided to cross the river on account of desertions in the army. It is stated in the hadīqat-ul-aqālīm that he crossed the Ganges at Nānāmau Ghāṭ, a ferry 15 or 16 miles east of Qanaūj and encamped on the other side. Haidar Mirzā says: 'when the Chāḡhtāis took to flight, the distance between their position and the Gangā might be nearly a farsakh', which shows that the Muḡhal camp was about 4 miles from the river. This is corroborated by Fīriśtah's statement that Śēr Śāh pursued Humāyūn for nearly six miles. Crossing on the other side of the stream, Śēr Śāh destroyed the old city of Qanaūj and built a new one called Śērgaḡh in order to commemorate his victory. This is mentioned on his coins as Śērgaḡh urf Qanaūj. It is now called Daīpūr and is situated at a distance of 6 or 7 miles from Qanaūj. The bank of the river near Śērgaḡh is still steep and it appears that the spot on which Humāyūn landed was somewhere near it. A close examination of the accounts of various writers and the topography of the place leads us to the conclusion that the battle was fought on the high ground on the other side of the river opposite to that part of the bank which is between Śērgaḡh and Nānāmau Ghāṭ. Professor Qanungo fixes at

Bilgrām (in the Hardoī district) as the site of the battle. No contemporary or later writer mentions Bilgrām in this connection nor is there any tradition current among the people today about the battle having been fought there. If the battle had been fought between Bilgrām and Qanaūj, it would not have been necessary for Humāyūn to cross the river at Nānāmau Ghāṭ. It would not have been wise enough to go such a long distance and give time to the enemy who was ready for action on the other side. Besides, from Bilgrām Śēr Śāh could have crossed to Qanaūj and built the monument of victory there. He need not have gone 6 or 7 miles eastward to build a new city by devastating the old one. There are no convincing reasons in favour of Bilgrām as the site of the battle”.

The long and laboriously built-up deduction of Ishwari Prasad which has been directed here against Qunungo for his having made out that the battle occurred in the vicinity of Bilgrām, shows that the battle was fought on the high ground on the other side of the river opposite to that part of the bank which is between Śērgarh and Nānāmau Ghāṭ. The whole argument of the learned scholar with its chain of deductive reasoning is based on the authority of hadīqat-ul-aqālīm which records that Humāyūn crossed the Gangā at Nānāmau Ghāṭ, a ferry 15 or 16 miles east of Qanaūj and encamped on the other side. It may be pointed that hadīqat-ul-aqālīm is a much later work written by Murtaṣā Husain, better known as Allahyār Bilgrāmī, a Persian clerk of Captain Jonathan Scott, two hundred and forty years after the event, and its testimony alone should not be deemed to be conclusive. Ishwari Prasad should have cited more authoritative source in support of his deduction. So long as it is not forthcoming, the finding of Ishwari Prasad is not worthy of credence.

Qanungo, in his revised 1965 edition of Sher Shah, p.240 ff, comes forward with his additional arguments to controvert the aforesaid finding of Ishwari Prasad on the issue ‘where was the battle fought (in 1540)’. It is worth-while to take a full notice of his account which appears to be quite convincing in so far as it tends to be final nail into the coffins of Ishwari Prasad’s deductions on the subject. Qanungo states thus : “Dr. Ishwari Prasad has reopened the question: ‘where was the battle fought’ ?

The learned author has been at great pains to fix the site of the battle which was fought, according to him, 'on the high ground on the other side of the river which is between Śērgaḥ and Nānāmau Ghāṭ' (Humayun, p. 150), and for this reason he clings to Ábbās Sarwānī's designation 'the battle of Kanaūj'. He quotes as his authority hadīqat-ul-aqālīm for Nānāmau Ghāṭ as the place where Humāyūn crossed the Ganges. This was written by Murtaẓā Ḥusain, better known as Allahyār Bilgrāmī, a Persian Clerk of Captain Jonathan Scott, two hundred and forty years after the event. This book is available in the Nawal Kishore Press edition of A. D. 1897, of which I had a copy before me in A. D. 1920. This author follows Ábbās and calls the battle loosely 'the battle of Kanaūj'. He only adds that Humāyūn crossed the river at Nānāmau Ghāṭ. I deliberately rejected Nānāmau Ghāṭ as even a likely place for Humāyūn's crossing; because it goes against the testimony of Abul Faẓl who gives more a detailed account of the march of the Muḡhal army from Bhojpūr ferry to near Kanaūj....Ishwari Prasad puts Nānāmau Ghāṭ as 'ferry 15 or 16 miles from Kanaūj'. A glance at the atlas will show that the Ganges could never have been 15 or 16 miles east of Kanaūj. Such a distance from Kanaūj would take us further east of Bilgrām. Nānāmau of the hadīqat-ul-aqālīm is, at best, hearsay, wide of the truth....Dr. Ishwari Peasad has landed himself in a few more inaccuracies by confusing three separate issues, namely Humāyūn's alleged crossing at Nānāmau Ghāṭ, the Battle of the Ganges and the foundation of Śērgaḥ urf Kanaūj by Śēr. Our differences are as follows :—(1) Dr. Ishwari Prasad contends that Humāyūn crossed the river opposite Śērgaḥ, five or six miles down (south, from the old city of Kanaūj). 'The bank of the river near Śērgaḥ is still steep and it appears that the spot on which Humāyūn landed was somewhere near it' (Humayun, p. 150). Nānāmau Ghāṭ is still further down by about .8 miles. (The question arises as to) Why did Humāyūn choose a steep bank of the river to throw a bridge across, and that too in the dry season when the water level falls very low? Even a villager can not be persuaded to cross the Ganges where its bank is steep. My contention was and is that the Ganges was crossed several miles north of Kanaūj. The battle was fought in Harodoī district,

some-where near Bilgrām' (Sher Shah, 216, f. n). I reckon it to be north i.e. upstream from Kanaūj, because Humāyūn did not arrive at Kanaūj but near it downstream from Bhojpūr as Abul Faḏl expressly mentions. So it is hardly judicious to go against the authority of Mirzā Ḥaidar and Abul Faḏl by taking Humāyūn to Nānāmau Ghāṭ in order to accommodate hearsay recorded by an eighteenth century writer of doubtful veracity. (2) Perhaps the most interesting part of Dr. Ishwari Prasad's argument is based on a stray reference by Ábbās regarding the building of Śērgaḥ. 'Besides, from Bilgrām, Śēr Śāh could have crossed to Kanaūj, and built his monument of his victory (Śērgaḥ) there (Ibid, p. 151). He would have us believe that Śēr's first concern after the defeat of Humāyūn was to raise a monument of victory, and that too at a wrong place, where the battle was not fought, even according to Dr. Ishwari Prasad himself. This Śērgaḥ urf Kanaūj was not a victory memorial but symbolic of Śēr's weakness to build forts and name them Śērgaḥs, or change the old names of places to Śērgaḥ, i.e. Śērgaḥ urf ḥaḏrat Dehlī where no battle was fought, or Śērgaḥ urf sakkar was Bhakkar, which Śēr never visited.... Though 'the battle of Kanaūj' might pass muster in medieval times, it is positively misleading to the present generation with a better sense of geography. So it is to be corrected as the battle of Bilgrām, because Bilgrām existed in the time of Śēr and Akbar, and it exists even now, and because the battle was fought somewhere nearer to Bilgrām than to Kanaūj''

It may be pointed out that despite his weighty argument that he has produced here against the deduction of Ishwari Prasad on the issue and which appears to be quite convincing as well so long as fresh evidence to the contrary does not come, Qanungo has tumbled into an error in correcting the site of the battle as the Battle of Bilgrām. It has to be accepted with a grain of salt. For the actual site of the fight between the Muḡhals and the Afḡhans, see f. n. 57a, and 51.

39. T. K. J. L., O, P. L. Ms., fo. 191A, wrongly records that the Muḡhals and the Afḡhāns lay facing each other at Qanaūj for full four months. We know well that Humāyūn left Āgrah for Qanaūj in ziq'ada, A. H. 946 (8th March-7th April, A. D. 1540), whereas the battle of Qanaūj was fought on

10th muḥarram, A. H. 947 (17th May, A. D. 1540). Thus the total period in between the commencement of march of Humāyūn from Āgrah to Qanaūj and the day of the actual battle of Qanaūj could not be more than two months and eight days. In that case the question of the Muḡhals and the Afghāns facing each other for full four months at Qanaūj as recorded by Nāmatullāh stands nowhere. Avasthi, Humayun, p. 364 f. n. 83, while accounting for the fact that Humāyūn who lay encamped on the western bank of the Gangā at Qanaūj for a month, writes thus: "Mirzā Ḥaidar (T. R., p. 474b), Abul Faḏl (A. N., Cal. text., I., 163) and Aḥmad Yādgar (Buhar Ms., 63 ff) state that Humāyūn remained encamped on the west bank of the Ganges for more than one month (مددت ایک ماہ زیادہ). Nizām-ud-dīn (T. A., Cal. text., II, 45) and the author of tarīkh-i-khandān taimuriyā (Bankipur MS., 280A) and others, however, state that Humāyūn straightway crossed the Ganges and stayed for one month on its eastern bank. We accept Abul Faḏl's statement because it is in agreement with the statement of Mirzā Ḥaidar".

40 Gulbadan Bēgam (Humāyūn-nāmah, text. p. 44) puts it—  
 حضرت کوچ کردند و میرزا کامران بجائے خود در آگرہ ماندند - بعد از چند  
 روز میرزا کامران شنیدند کہ حضرت پادشاه پل بستہ از آب گذشتند - - از آگرہ  
 کوچ کردند -

Abul Faḏl does not say anything about the Mirzā's actual departure from Agrah.

The bridge referred to by Gulbadan can not be the one that Humāyūn constructed at Qanaūj, because that was about two months after Humāyūn's departure from Agrah, whereas the Bēgam says: "only a few days" (بعد از چند روز) after the royal advance from Āgrah. This in all probability refers to the bridge constructed at Bhojpūr, which was built only a few days after the emperor's departure from Agrah. See Avasthi, Humayun, p. 364, f. n. 86, (1967 edition Allahabad).

41. Gulbadan, text p. 45; Avasthi, Humayun, p. 365, f.n. 45.

42. T. R., trans., p. 474; Avasthi, Humayun, p. 365, f.n. 90.

43. T. R., trans, p. 474; A, N., Cal. text., I., p. 164; Mirzā Ḥaidar (T. R., trans., p. 474) observes: "As the army had taken to desert, it was judged better to risk a battle than to see it go to ruin without fighting. If the results were unfavourable,

at least, he could not be accused for having abandoned an empire without striking a blow. Another consideration was that if we cross the river, desertion would no longer be possible. We, therefore, crossed over."

Banerjee, *Humāyūn Badshah*, p. 249, characterises this step as 'Humāyūn's fool hardiness'. He says; 'If he (Humāyūn) had chosen to remain on the western bank, the loss of life at the close of the conflict must have been considerably smaller'.

We differ from the learned scholar with the submission that if 'Humāyūn had chosen to remain on the western bank', he could have only a few men left by his side to risk their lives and the emperor in that case would have most ignominiously retreated to Āgrah, with a hot pursuit by Śēr Śāh from the rear. In fact, the crossing of the river had a most salutary effect, as it gave a stop to further desertion from his army. See *Avasthi, Humāyūn*, p. 366, f. n. 92.

44. T. W., *All. Univ. Ms.*, p. 51; *Avasthi, Humāyūn*, p. 366, f. n. 93.

45. Mishra, *The Political History of the Sur Dynasty*, p. 152.

46. For an identification of the name of the Chēro ruler of Jhārkhand as Mahārāna Indra Daman, please see the proper foot-note No. 41 in it in the Chapter on the battle of Chaūsah. See *Avasthi, Humayun*, p. 336, f. n. 150. I have accounted there as to why I have preferred to call him Mahārath Chēro.

47. T. S. S., *All. Univ. Ms.*, p. 159; T. K. J. L., I. O. Ms., p. 116a ff; *Avasthi, Humāyūn*, p. 367, f. n. 96.

48. T. S. S. (*All. University Ms.*), p. 153 and Elliot, IV., p. 380, simply say 'a few karohs' (چند کاروہ). *Nāmatullāh*, however, says 'twelve karohs' or about twenty four miles. Dorn (p. 125) in his translation says it "twelve miles" which seems more probable.

There is, however, another interesting question, viz, to which direction did Śēr Śāh proceed and pitch his camp? T. S. S. (*All. Univ. Ms.* p. 153) simply says :—

شیروخان چند کرورہ گذر اب پس انداختہ ریخت

*Nāmatullāh*, T. K. J. L., I. O. Ms., p. 116a. ff, refers to it by saying :—

شیرشاہ در دیار گذاشتہ دوازده کرورہ



Thus Námatullāh is more specific than Ábbās, when the former tells us that Śēr Śāh marched behind, but this does not answer the question. Mirzā Ḥaidar gives a more definite clue. He writes that when the imperial camp, lying on the eastern bank of the river Gangā, became flooded. Humāyūn asked the Mirzā (Ḥaidar Duḡhlāt) to find out a place, which should be away from the river, but at the same in front of the enemy's position (tārikh-i-rašidī, trans., p. 475).

This shows that ěrŚŚ āh was still lying encamped by the aside of the river Gangā, else Humāyūn would not have expressly laid down both the limitations before Mirzā Ḥaidar. Śēr Śāh obviously marched to the southern direction from the original place of the encampment. See Auasthi, Humāyūn, p. 367. f. n. 98. This time the place of the encampment of Śēr Śāh was at Bāngermow. See Map. (Fig. I).

49. T. R., trans., p. 475; T. W., All. Univ. Ms., p. 43; T. W., trans., p. 21; A. N., Cal. text., I., p. 164; T. S. S., All. Univ. Ms., p. 153; Elliot, IV., p. 380; T. K. J. L., I. O. Ms., p. 116a. ff; Dorn, p. 125; See Avasthi, Humāyūn, p. 367, f. n. 9.

49a. The place is Mālowpour as is evident from Map (Figure I).

50. T. S. S., All. Univ. Ms., p. 154; Dorn, p. 125; Mishra, The political History of the Sur Dynasty, p. 153, f.n. 3.

51. Qanungo, Sher Shah, pp. 230-1, writes to the effect : "It is clear from this account that Humāyūn, having crossed the Gangā, encamped on the flat alluvial plain of the Gangā Khādar or the Kāchar (lowland), liable to inundation during the rains. This could not be a greater distance than three miles from the ferry of modern Mehdīghāt, eastward in the direction of Bilgrām. As Humāyūn did not pitch his camp later than the end of April, A. D. 1540, there was no immediate danger to the Muḡhal camp from the yearly floodings of the Gangā". The location of the encampment of Humāyūn, after his crossing over to the eastern side of the Gangā, as done by Qanungo here, is wrong, for the Muḡhal emperor crossed the Gangā at the ferry of Mindygout, about 5½ miles south-east of Qanaūj, and encamped at Mālowpur on the eastern side of the Gangā; Malowpur lay on the road to Bāngermow. This is evident from the map.

52. Mishra, *The Political History of the Sur Dynasty*, p. 154, ff.

53. T. R., E. & D., V, pp. 130-5, writes that Mirzā Haidar, its author, had drawn up this plan on the basic postulate that the Afghāns ought not to attack the Muḡhals while the latter were on the march, "as the arraying of the army (of the enemy i.e. the Afghāns) at the time of marching is contrary to sound judgment". The Persian text of the Ms. *tārīkh-i-rasīdī*, as consulted by E. & D., runs thus :—

در وقت کوچ از مقابلند که بر وقت کوچ مصاف - صاف راه -

Mr. Erskine or his Ms. makes better of this passage; but the words of the Ms. consulted by E. & D. do not admit of the interpretation of Mr. Erskine. The version of the translation of Eraskine's Ms. runs thus, "I represented that when we did march, it would be desirable to divert the attention of the enemy by engaging them in skirmishes, as it would not do to be drawn into a general action, when the army was marching to change its grounds".

54. T. S. S., All. Univ. Ms., 154; Elliot, IV, 381f; T. K. J. L., I. O. Ms. p. 116b ff and Dorn (p. 125). While on his way to join his master, *Khawāṣ Khān* intercepted the Muḡhal convoy and seized six hundred camels, mules, and a large number of bullocks that were being carried to the Muḡhal camp. See Avasthi, *Humayun*, p. 368, f.n. 104.

55. T. S. S. (All. Univ. Ms., 154, and Elliot, IV, p. 381), T. K. J. L. (I. O. Ms., p. 116b ff) and Dorn (p. 125) state that *Khawāṣ Khān* arrived near about the day of the battle and that his arrival made Śēr Śāh array his troops for engagement. See Avasthi, *Humayun*, p. 368, f.n. 103.

56. A. N., trans., pp. 351-2; T. R., E & D, V, p. 133 ff; T. R., trans. by Elias & Ross. pp. 474 6; T. W., O. P. L. Ms., p. 21, and T. W. trans., p. 30. It should be noted that Jaūhar has wrongly recorded prince Hindāl to be leading the right wing of the Muḡhals, whereas actually prince Hindāl had led the fore-centre of the Muḡhals as has been rightly shown by Abul Fazl. But Jaūhar is correct in writing subsequently that prince Hindāl lay opposed to Jalāl *Khān*, the son of Śēr *Khān*, in the battle and here he received corroboration from Abul Fazl. Jaūhar again writes wrongly that prince Āskarī

led the left wing of the Muḡhals, as Abul Faḏl records quite correctly that Mirzā Áskari led right wing of the Muḡhal forces in the battle. But Jaūhar is once again correct in writing in the subsequent line that Mirzā Áskari lay opposite to Khawāṣ Khān and other Afḡhāns and this receives corroboration once again from Abul Faḏl.

56a. T. R., trans., p. 474, gives the number of carriages drawn by eight pairs of bullock as twenty one.

57. For a graphic account of the arrangement of the Afḡhān divisions in the battle of Qanaūj, Abul Faḏl (A. N., trans., I, pp. 351-2) among the Muḡhal chroniclers and Ábbās (T. S. S., I. O. Ms., p. 133, and E & D, IV, p. 381) among the Afḡhān historians only throw light. Abul Faḏl, being more authentic in factual details, has been followed in general and preferred to Ábbās where the latter was found differing from Abul Faḏl, as Ábbās in his account has no exactness of a chronicler. On the whole, the account of the battle of Qanaūj as recorded by Ábbās is quite informative and trustworthy but for a few occasions where he has mis-stated the fact; Ábbās, for example, puts Rāi Ḥusain Jalwānī in the left wing of the Afḡhān division, whereas Abul Faḏl records him to be manning the right wing of the Afḡhān forces and I have followed here Abul Faḏl, as it fits in with the plan of the battle and the consequent action. Then again Ábbās wrongly records Jalāl Khān, the son of Śēr Śāh, to be leading the right wing of the Afḡhān division, in the company of Tāj Khān (Karānānī) and Sulaimān 'Khān Karārānī, Jalāl Khān Jāloī and others. Abul Faḏl has correctly chronicled that Jalāl Khān (son of Śēr Śāh), Sarmast Khān and all other Niyāzīs stood in front of Mirzā Hindāl. As Mirzā Hindāl was leading the fore-centre of the Muḡhal forces, in the plan of the battle of Qanaūj drawn here I have put Jalāl Khān (the son of Śēr Śāh) to be manning the fore-centre of the Afḡhān division in the company of Sarmast Khān and all other Niyāzīs inclusive of Haibat Khān Niyāzīs, Jalāl Khān Jāloī and others. Jalāl Khān Jāloī has been included here along with Jalāl Khān Sūr, the son of Śēr Śāh, as it has been recorded to that effect by Ábbās and I do not deem it expedient to distrust the narration of Ábbās here when there

is no positive evidence to show to the contrary. Tāj Khān (Karārānī) and Sulaimān Khān Karārānī have been rightly shown by Abul Faḏl to be manning the right wing of the Afghān divisions in the company of Mubārīz Khān, Bahādur Khān, Rāī Ḥusain Jalwānī and lay facing Yādgār Naṣīr Mirzā and Qāsim Ḥusain Khān who had been leading the left wing of the Muḡhals; and I have followed Abul Faḏl here as distinguished from Ábbās who has wrongly put Tāj Khān (Karārānī) and Sulaimān Khān Karārānī to be manning the right wing of the Afghān division in the company of Jalāl Khān, the son of Śēr Śāh, whereas Jalāl Khān was actually leading the fore-centre of the Afghān forces without the Karārānīs. Then again I have followed Abul Faḏl who has put Sarmast Khān and all the Niyāzīs, naturally including Haibat Khān Niyāzī also, to be manning the fore-centre of the Afghān division in the company of Jalāl Khān, the son of Śēr Śāh, whereas Ábbās has wrongly recorded Haibat Khān Niyāzī and Sarmast Khān to be manning the centre of the Afghān division under the leadership of Śēr Śāh himself. With these mistakes of Ábbās pointed out above, I have found Ábbās to be quite good in his account of the plan of the arrangement of the Afghān force in the battle-field of Qanaūj in A. D. 1540.

Another thing to be noted here is that I. O. Ms. copy of *tārīkh-i-śēr śāhī* (pp. 133-4) and the extracts from *tārīkh-i-śēr śāhī* as translated by E. & D., IV., pp. 381-2, vary slightly in details. For example I. O. Ms. copy of *tārīkh-i-śēr śāhī*, p. 133, records A. H. 950 as the year of the conferment of the title of Āzam (Āázam) Humāyūn on Haibat Khān Niyāzī, whereas E. & D., IV., p. 381, does not make mention of this date and remains content with the narration that Haibat Khān Niyāzī had been given the title of Āzam (Āázam) Humāyūn. Then again I. O. Ms. copy of *tārīkh-i-śēr śāhī*, p. 133, adds the name of masnad-i-šālī (Áālī) Āzam (Āázam) Humāyūn Sarwānī to be assisting Śēr Khān who was commanding the centre of the Afghān division; but E. & D., IV p. 381 have not mentioned his name. I. O. Ms. copy of *tārīkh-i-śēr śāhī*, p. 133, records another name of an Afghān chief as masnad-i-ālī (Áālī) Īsā (Āīsā) Khān Sarwānī Kakbūr who was assisting Śēr Śāh in

manning the centre of the Afghān division; but E. & D., IV, p. 381, writes him as masnad-i-ālī (Áālī) Īsā (Áīsā) Khān Sarwānī only. I. O. Ms. copy of tārikh-i-šēr śāhī, p. 133, writes the name of another Afghān chief as Hājī Khān to be assisting Śēr Śāh in manning the centre of the Afghān division; but E. & D., IV., p. 381, writes him as Hājī Khān Jāloī. Then again while I. O. Ms. copy of tārikh-i-šēr śāhī, p. 133, writes the name of another Afghān chief as Bijlī Khān Sarwānī who was assisting Śēr Śāh in leading the centre of the Afghān division, E. & D., IV., p. 381, records him as Bijlī Khān only. Then again while the I. O. Ms. copy of tārikh-i-šēr śāhī, p. 133, writes that on the right were Jalāl Khān, the son of Śēr Khān, who, after Śēr Khān's death, had succeeded him under the title of Islām Śāh, another Jalāl Khān who was the son of Jāloo and others, E & D, IV., p. 381, record that on the right were Jalāl Khān, the son of Śēr Śāh, who, after Śēr Śāh's death, succeeded him and was entitled Islām Śāh, Tāj Khān, Sulaimān Khān Kirānī Jalāl Khān Jāloī and others. Then again while I. O. Ms. copy of tārikh-i-šēr śāhī, p. 133, records that on the left were Ādil (Áādil) Khān, the son of Śēr Khān, Quṭb Khān Nēb, Barmazīd Gaūr, Rāi Husain Jalwānī and others, E. & D., IV., p. 381 and p. 382, write that on the left were Ādil (Áādil) Khān, the son of Śēr Śāh, Quṭb Khān Bānēt, Rāi Husain Jalwānī and others. Once again while I. O. Ms. copy of tārikh-i-šēr śāhī, p. 136, writes the names of the following Afghān leaders as Jalāl Khān, the son of Śēr Khān himself, Miān 'Ayūb Kakbūr Sarwānī, and Ghāzī Mahlī, E. & D., IV., pp. 381-2, record them as Jalāl Khān, son of Śēr Śāh, Miān Áyyūb Kalkāpūr Sarwānī and Ghāzī Mujlī.

57a. The place of the confrontation between the Muḡhals and the Afghāns seems to have been situated close to the south-east of the crossing of the 27th parallel with 80° Longitude.

58. T. S. S., I. O. Ms., pp. 78-9.

59. T. S. S., E. & D., IV., p. 382.

60. Ibid.

61. A. N., trans., I. p. 352.

62. T. R., E. & D., V., p. 134 ff.

63. T. W., trans., p. 30.

64. T. R., E. & D., V, p. 135.

65. Jaūhar, All. Univ. Ms., 44; T. W. trans., p. 21.  
 66. T. K. J. L., I. O. Ms., 117 b ff.  
 67. T. R., trans. by Elias & Ross, p. 477.  
 68. Ibid.  
 69. Qanungo, Sher Shah, p. 235 ff, 1965 edition.  
 70. Avasthi, Humayun, p. 369 ff.  
 71. Ibid, f.n. 107.; T. R. trans., p. 478; A. N., Cal. text, I., p. 165.

72. T. K. J. L., I. O. Ms. 117a, records thus :—

مقدمه موید بیگ و تودی بیگ جمعاً از امرائے عالیہ مقدار مقرر شد -

Avasthi, Humayun, p. 369, f.n. 108.

73. T. W., All. Univ. Ms., 43; A. N., Cal. text, I., p. 164; T. K. J. L., I. O. Ms., 117 a ff; Dorn, however, probably mistranslates it by saying 'left wing.' The I. O. Ms. of T. K. J. L., clearly says (میسرہ میوزا عکسری) Avasthi, Humayun, p. 369, f. n. 109.

74. Avasthi, Humayun, p. 369, f. n. 111, has come out with a long drawn-out note in his efforts to resolve the difficulty which has arisen with regard to the respective position of Mirzā Hindāl and Yādgar Naṣīr Mirzā. He says that the two Mss. of tāriḫ-i-raṣīdī as consulted by Abul Faḏl and by Elias & Ross respectively furnish different readings. The text of the passage of tāriḫ-i-raṣīdī as quoted Abul Faḏl may be translated as follows :—

'His Majesty on that day stationed me on his left so that my right was close to his left and from me upto the end of the left centre there were twenty-seven bannerets' (A. N., Cal. text., I., p. 164; compare it with T. R., trans., p. 475).

If Abul Faḏl's reading of Mirzā Ḥaidar's statement be accepted, we arrive at the following conclusions :—firstly there was a left centre in Humayun's army; secondly, the emperor and Mirzā Ḥaidar were in the same division which was situated immediately to the right of the left centre i.e., it was the right-centre.

Jaūhar does not give us the details of the position of the emperor's division, but he places Hindāl in the right flank.

دست راست میوزا هندال مع امرای مقابل جلالخان پسر شیر خان -

(T. W., All. Univ. Ms., 43).

Abul Faḏl, however, furnishes a slightly different version. He

says :—

قول بوجود شریف انحضرت امتیاز یافت و میرزا ہندال را قول جائے مقرر شد  
و یادگار ناصر میرزا جرالغار را انتظام دارند -

(A. N., Cal. text., I., p. 164).

'The centre was dignified by the presence of his majesty. Mirzā Hindāl occupied the central place (Mr. Beveridge's translation, p. 353, says 'fore-centre') and Yādgār Naṣīr the left (Ibid). By saying (جرالغار قول) Abul Faḏl means (خوبی جاے) of Mirzā Haidar. This is borne by the subsequent description of the battle as given by Abul Faḏl, wherein he says, 'Jalāl Khān faced in front of Mirzā Hindāl ...the first encounter was between Mirzā Hindāl and Jalāl Khān...the royal left wing drove back the enemy from the centre' (Ibid).

This shows that Mirzā Hindāl was stationed somewhere in the left wing and he occupied the same position as Jalāl Khān. Jalāl Khān occupied his position in right centre of the Afghān army and Hindāl, being in front of him, must have been stationed in the left centre.

75. T. R., trans., p. 476; T. K. J. L., I. O. Ms., 117a ff; Dorn, p. 126; Avasthi, Humāyūn, p. 371, f. n. 113.

76. T. W., All. Univ. Ms., 43; T. W., trans., p. 21; A. N., Cal. text., I., p. 164; T. S. S., All. Univ. Ms., 153; Elliot, IV., p. 380, T. K. J. L., I. O. Ms. 117a ff; Dorn p. 126; Avasthi, Humāyūn, p. 371, f. n. 114.

77. Ibid, Ibid, Ibid.

78. T. S. S., All. Univ. Ms., 153; Elliot, IV, p. 380; T. K. J. L., I. O. Ms., 117A ff; Dorn p. 126; Avasthi, Humāyūn p. 371; f. n. 116.

79. Ibid.

80. Mirzā Haidar says : 'Śēr Khān came out in five divisions, of 1000 each; and in advance of them were three thousand men' (T. R. trans., p. 476). Abul Faḏl also supports Mirzā Haidar; but the Afghān chroniclers furnish details of only three divisions. It is quite possible that the other two divisions might have been to inflict surprise—attacks, and were probably stationed in the rear.

This is further supported by the fact that when Mirzā Āskari's divisions were routed, the slaves of the amīrs rushed from behind. This was in all probability due to the attack of

these flanking divisions. Avasthi, Humāyūn, p. 371, f. n. 118.

81 T. S. S., All. Univ. Ms. 153; Avasthi, Humayun, p. 371, f. n. 119.

82. A. N., trans., I., p. 351.

83. E. & D., IV., p. 381.

84. T. R. trans. by Ross, pp. 475 and 476.

85. E. & D., IV., p. 381.

86. A. N., trans., I., pp. 351-2.

87. E. & D., IV., p. 381.

88. A. N., trans., I., p. 352.

89. E. & D., IV, p. 381.

90. A. N., I., p. 351 writes Sarmast Khan wrongly as Sarmat Khān here.

91. Avasthi, Humayun, pp. 371-4, 1967 edition.

92. Mishra, The Political History of the Sur Dynasty, p. 155 ff.

93. The gunners, nearly 5000 in number, were led by the sons of Ustād Ālī Qulī Khān, Bābur's artillery chief, and Muḥammad Khān Rūmī, Ustad Aḥmad Rūmī and Ḥusain Khalīfa. The leather chains were stretched between the carriages, mortars, and small-guns which were arranged for the purpose by artillery chiefs. There were nearly 700 carriages drawn by four pairs of bullocks, and twenty-one drawn by eight and when they were placed as a cover with chains between them, they must have been long enough to shield the entire army (T. R., trans., p. 474 and p. 475; A. N., text., I., 164; Mishra, The Political History of the Sur Dynasty, p. 155, f. n. 2.

94. A. N., trans., I., p. 351.

95. A. N., tran. p. 352,

96. Ibid.

97. T. S. S., E. & D., IV., p. 381.

98. A. N., trans., I., p. 351.

99. A. N., trans., I. pp. 351-2.

100. T. R., trans., p. 476; A. N., Cal. text., I., p. 164; Mishra, The Political History of the Sur Dynasty, p. 158, f.n. 1.

101. Qanungo, Sher Shah, p. 232 ff; 1965 Edition, Cal.

102. A. N., trans., I., p. 351.

103. Qanungo, Sher Shah, p. 235 ff, 1965 edition.

104. I. P., Humayun, Calcutta, p. 142 ff, 1956 edition.



105. E. & D., IV., p. 381.
106. Banerjee, Humayun Badshah, pp. 243-4, 1938 edn.
107. A. N., trans., I., p. 351.
108. Avasthi, Humayun, p. 375.
109. Qanungo, Sher Shah, p. 237.
110. I. P., Humayun, p. 147 ff, 1956 edn.
111. Avasthi, Humayun, p, 373 ff,
112. T. S. S., All. Univ. Ms., 160.
113. T. W., All. Univ. Ms., 44.
114. Humayun Badshah, p. 248 ff.
115. T. R., trans. by Ross, p. 476.
116. Ábbās, E. & D., IV., pp. 382-3.
117. I. P., Humayun, p. 151 ff.
118. Avasthi, Humayun, p. 375 ff.



## A P P E N D I X A

### HUMĀYŪN'S INSCRIPTION AT DHĀMEK NEAR SĀRNĀATH<sup>1</sup>.

Humāyūn's inscription on the tower at Dhāmēk near Sārnāth raised a good deal of controversy in its decipherment as well as on the issue as to who built it at Dhāmēk, a name by which Sārnāth of today was known in the time of Akbar. Dr. Bains Prasad very ably discussed the issue and presented his following findings on the subject.

“The small village of Sārnāth is at a distance of some five miles to the north of Benares. It is a most sanctified place in the Buddhist world where Lord Buddha gave his first sermon in the Deer Park after his enlightenment. All the great Buddhist monuments that had sprung up at Sārnāth since the visit of Lord Buddha there, had tumbled down with the passage of time, but for Dhāmēk<sup>1a</sup> tower which itself was buried under the mounds of debris and which was brought to light, thanks to the excavations made by the Archaeological Survey of India towards the close of the 18th century and which took adequate measure for its preservation”.

“The Stupa, known as Chaukhandī or the square mound has a detailed treatment of it in Oertel's<sup>2</sup> Excavation at Sārnāth.

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1. Bains Prasad, Emperor Humayun's tower at Sarnath, Bengal Past and Present, Vol. LXIII, Serial No. 126, Jan-Dec., 1943, pp. 11-17.

1a. Dnamek tower should not be confused with a lofty brick mound of solid brick work, surmounted by an octagonal building, known as Chaukhandi or Lori-Ki Kudan. Dhamek (tower) is now applied to the large-Stupa, exactly half a mile to the north-east of Chiaukhandi Stupa which is also known as Sita Ki Rasui or Sita's kitchen. Chaukhandi is due south at a distance of 2,500 feet (Fuhrer, Monumental Antiquities and Inscriptions, N. W. Provinces and Oudh, p. 215, Allahabd, 1891); cf. f. n. 1.p. 11 of the Bengal Past and Present, serial No. 126, Vol. LXIII, 1943.

2. Published in Annual Report of Archaeological Survey of India, 1904-5, pp. 60-104 (Calcutta, 1908), and Sahnī Daya Ram—Guide to the Buddhist Ruins of Sarnath, 5th edition, pp. 6-9 (Delhi, 1933). See f. n. 2. p. 12 of Bengal Past and Present, Vol. LXIII. serial No. 126, 1943.

It is also popularly known as the Laurī<sup>3</sup>-Kā Kūdān or the leap of Laurī in view of the legend that the great ahīr or cowherd Laurī at the request of his sweetheart leapt from this stupa to the Dhāmēk tower, exactly half a mile to its north-east, and was killed in the attempt. It is situated on the left side of the road to Sārṇāth, some three furlongs from the 4th milestone and has been identified with magnificent stupa about three hundred feet high, at a distance of half a mile or so to the south-west of the Monastery, recorded by the Chinese pilgrim traveller Hieun-Thsang<sup>4</sup>. Oertel, judging from the spread of its base, placed its original height at close upon 200 feet. Sherring in A. D. 1868 found its height to be 74 feet and that of octagonal building on it 23 feet 8 inches and which he stated that the latter (octagonal building) had been enacted to commemorate the ascent of the mound by Emperor Humāyūn<sup>5</sup>.

“Fisher and Hewett<sup>5</sup> gave the same dimensions for the mound and the octagonal tower on it as given by Sherring, but incorrectly added:

An inscription on the building records that it was built in the reign of Humāyūn to commemorate his ascent on the mound”.

“Oertel<sup>6</sup> (on p, 13) in his account published the inscription and its translation, and noted that the inscription is in raised Arabic characters on a stone-slab above the doorway:—

چو اینجا شاه چنت آشیانی — همایون بادشاه هفت کشور  
 برزی آمد بر تخت بنشست — وزان شد مطلع خورشید انور  
 کزیدن بنده را آمد بخاطر — غلام خانه زاد شاه اکبر  
 که سازد جای نرسوان — معلا گنبدی چون چرخ اخضر  
 نود شش سال نهصد بود تاریخ — که آمد در بنالین خوب منظور نظر -

3. Ibid, Arch. Survey, Oertel, p. 78; Sherring, The Sacred City of the Hindus, An account of Benares in ancient and modern times, p. 255 (London; 1868). See f. n. 4, p. 12 of Bengal Past & Present, Vol. LXIII, serial No. 126, 1943.

4. See Oertel, op. cit. 78; Sherring's Translation. p. 372 and Sir John Marshall's remarks, Ann. Rep. Arch. Sury. 1904-5, p. 38; See f. n. 5 p. 12 of Bengal Past & Present, Vol. LXIII, serial No. 126, 1943.

5. Fisher, F. H. and J. P. Hewett—Statistical and Historical Account of the North-Western Provinces of India, XIV, i, Benares, p. 166 (Allahabad. 1884). See f. n. 6. p. 12 of Bengal Past & Present, Vol. LXIII, serial No. 126, 1943.

6. Op. cit. p. 74; cf. Bengal Past & Present, Vol. LXII, serial No. 126, 1943, pp. 12-3.

## Translation:—

## ‘God is Great’

As Humāyūn, king of the seven climes, now residing in paradise, deigned to come and sit here one day, thereby increasing the splendour of the sun, so Akbar, his son and humble servant, resolved to build on the spot a lofty tower to the blue sky., It was in the year A. H. 986 that this beautiful building was erected”.

An exact copy of the translation was published by Nevill in the Benares Gazetteer,<sup>7</sup> while Majumdar in his Guide to Sarnath,<sup>8</sup> published by the Archaeological Survey of India, included both the Persian inscription and its English translation from Oertel with the only variation that he translated Charkh-i-Akhzar as sky instead of the blue sky. Altekar in his History of Benares<sup>9</sup> remarked :

“The visits of Humāyūn to Benares were brief and busy; yet he found time to visit the neighbouring ruins at Sārṇāth. He ascended what is now known as the Chaukhandī stupa and surveyed the extensive ruins around. What feelings were excited by men in his mind, we do not know. Akbar deemed his father’s visit to the place as an important event and commemorated it by erecting upon the stupa an octagonal tower, with a stone slab bearing an Arabic inscription recording his father’s visit to the locality. The tablet is still intact (sic)”.

Oertel’s translation of the 3rd verse is inaccurate, and apparently it was this which led him to describe that “On the top of this is an octagonal brick tower erected to the emperor Humāyūn by his son Akbar in the year A. D. 1588”. Nevill, Sahni and Majumdar have repeated Oertel’s mistakes. Altekar’s statement that the inscription on the building is in Arabic appears to be a *lapses calami* for Arabic translation.

7. Nevill, H. R.—Benares, Vol. XXVI of the District Gazetteers of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, pp. 357, 358. (Allahabad, 1909). See f. n. 7, p. 13 of Bengal Past and Present, Vol. LXIII, serial No. 126, 1943.

8. Majumdar, B.—A Guide to Sarnath, p. 45 ff (Delhi, 1937); See f. n. 8, p. 13 of Bengal Past and Present, Vol. LXIII, serial No. 126,

9. p. 32; See f. n. 9. p. 13 of Bengal Past and Present, Vol, LXIII, serial No. 126.

Oertel translated the 4th verse as:—

“So Akbar, his son and humble servant, resolved”. This is quite incorrect, as leaving aside the important consideration that no poet in the 33rd year of Emperor Akbar’s reign would have dared to describe the Emperor as *ghulām-i-khānazād* or a house-born slave of Humāyūn; there can be, therefore no question that the first two words of the verse were Govardhan banda, Govardhan the humble person— in the first half of the verse—whom the poet describes as the house-born slave of Emperor Akbar, and not as Oertel interprets it. Other important historical considerations against Emperor Akbar being accepted as the builder of the tower in A. H. 996 as a monument of his father Humāyūn’s visit are that Akbar did not visit Banāras and Sārnāth in A. H. 996 or A. D. 1588, which would be in the 33rd<sup>10</sup> year of his reign, when the Emperor had been in the Punjāb for over a year; he did not return to Āgrah till A. H. 1006 or A. D. 1598. He had, however, been in Banāras thrice previously,<sup>11</sup> but there is no mention in the official history of the reign, Abul Fazl’s *akbarnāmah* or any of the contemporary histories such as the *tabaqāt-i-akbarī* or the *muntakhab-ut-tawārikh* of his having visited Sārnāth or ordered a monument to be built in commemoration of his father’s visit to that place. Further it is hard to believe that emperor Akbar who erected such wonderful buildings at Fathpūr-Sīkrī, Āgrah, etc., should have

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10. V. Smith’s detailed chronology of Akbar’s reign in his monograph on “Akbar The Great Mogul”, pp. 457-8; *akbarnamah*, II, A. S. B. text, pp. 528-36, and Beveridge’s trans., II, pp. 806-16; T. A., De’s text, II, pp. 405-7 and trans., II, pp. 620-23 and M. T., text II, pp. 364-7, and Lowe’s trans., II., pp. 375-77; See also C. H. I., IV, pp. 137-44 for an account of the period of Akbar, spent in Northern India. See f. n. 10 p. 14 of *Bengal Past & Present*, Vol. LXIII, serial No. 126, 1943.

11. Akbar’s visits to Banāras were first in A. H. 973 vide A. N., text, II, p. 264, and Beveridge’s trans., II, p. 393; second in A. H. 975, when he ordered the place to be plundered vide A. N., text, II, p. 297 and trans., II., p. 435; and the third in A. H. 982 when on his way to Patnah, he halted for three days at Banāras, vide A. N. text, II. p. 88 and Beveridge’s trans., pp. 124-5. It is not necessary to include references to the other works here, as no additional information is to be found in any of them. See f. n. II, p. 14 of the *Bengal Past & Present*, Vol. LXIII, serial 126, 1943.

been responsible for such an insignificant building at Sārṇāth as a monument of his father's visit to the place".

The following would be a more accurate translation of the inscription:—

'Since the Emperor jannat Āśīyānī<sup>12</sup> Humāyūn, the ruler of seven Climes, came to this place one day, and sitting on the throne made the edifice the rising place of the bright sun; it has come into the mind of this humble person Govardhan, a house-born slave of Emperor Akbar, to erect as a memorial a humble edifice (by the side of) the exalted dome which resembles the blue sky. The date of the erection of this elegant building was A. H. 996 (A. D. 1587-88). From this translation, it is clear that the person who decided to erect the monument was not Emperor Akbar, but Govardhan, whom the poet describes as a house-born slave of Emperor Akbar. Govardhan or Govardhandhārī was the elder son of rājah Todarmal, the famous general and the Revenue-Minister of Emperor Akbar, and, as has been shown by Jangir Singh in his interesting paper, was probably the fief-holder of Jaūnpūr for a number of years from the 28th year of Emperor Akbar's reign, i. e. from about A. D. 1583-90<sup>13</sup>. In regard to the inscription itself, I read the first half of the third verse as (کو بردن بندہ را آمد بخاطر) and the first half of the fourth verse as (کہ سازد جایگی بہتر توک) instead of (کزیدون بندہ را آمد بخاطر) and (کہ سازد جاے نوبہ سزان) as recorded by Oertel".

"Emperor Humāyūn's visit to Banāras in commemoration of which the tower was built, is not mentioned in the akbarnāmah. In the account of the Bengāl campaign,<sup>14</sup> after a short of account of taking of the Chunār fort, it is stated that the Jaūnpūr territory was assigned to Mīr Hindū Bēg and

12. Jannat asiyani or more correctly jahānbānī Jannat āśīyānī—as is well-known—was the epithet which Abul Fazl coined for referring to emperor Humāyūn, vide A. N., Trans. I. p. 32 note 5. See f. n. 12, p. 14 of Bengal Past and Present, Vol. LXIII, serial No. 126, 1943.

13. Jangir Singh——Raja Todar Mal's son, Journal of the U.P. Historical Society, No. XV, pp. 55-64, 1942. See f. n. 13, p. 15 of Bengal Past & Present, Vol. LXIII, serial No. 126, 1943.

14. A. N., text, I, p. 151, and Beveridge's trans., I., pp. 332-3; See f. n. 14, p. 15 of the Bengal Past & Present, Vol. LXIII serial No. 126, 1943.

Chunār to Mīrak Bēg, and that Humāyūn thereafter moved forward to Patnah. Jaūhar<sup>15</sup> in his Memoirs, however, explicitly states that in A. H. 945 or A. D. 1538-9, Humāyūn, after taking 'possession of the strong fortress of Chūnār, marched towards Bengāl; when encamped near Banāras, he made particular enquiries respective of Shyr Khān'. The conquest of Benares with Chunār is only casually mentioned in Gulbadan Bēgam's humāyūnāmāh<sup>16</sup>. Bayazīd Biyāt,<sup>17</sup> on the other hand, while not mentioning the year of his visit, states that emperor Humāyūn at the time of his campaign to Bengāl built a tower near Benāres in the village known as Dāmēk (Dhāmēk); this name was apparently in vogue at the time for Sārṇāth near Benares<sup>18</sup>. His further account which is of special interest in connection with the history of the tower, is discussed later. Humāyūn's stay at Benāras is not mentioned in tabaqāt-i-akbarī, muntakhabu-i-tawārīkh, tārīkh-i-fīrīstah, and Aḥmad Yādgar's tārīkh-t-śērśāhī or tārīkh-salāṭīn-i-afaghnaḥ. Qanungo<sup>19</sup>, however, mentions definitely that after the fall of Chunār, Humāyūn 'Ordered a march towards Benares, and encamped in the neighbourhood of this city'. Erskine<sup>20</sup> only mentions his advance to Benares in A. D. 1538 without any detail. Banerji in his recent monographic History of Humayun<sup>21</sup> states

15. Stewart's translation of the Memoirs, p. 11, (London, 1832). See f. n. 15, p. 15 of Bengal Past & Present, Vol. LXIII, Serial No. 126, 1943.

16. Mrs. Beveridge's text, p. 39, and trans. p. 133 (London, 1902). See f. n. 16 p. 15 of Bengal Past and Present, Vol. LXIII, Serial No. 126, 1943.

17. Tadhkira-i-humāyūn wa akbar, edited by M. Hidayat Hosain, p. 303, (Calcutta, 1941). See f. n. 17 p. 15 of Bengal Past and Present, Vol. LXIII, No. 126, 1943.

18. The name Damek or more correctly Dhamek, probably gained vogue from the name of the old Buddhist tower of Dhamek which is still known by this name. See Oertel, op. cit, pp. 72-4 and Nevill, op. cit. pp. 349-50. The kol-i-azīm in Bayazid's account apparantly means the Naya Tal and Narokar or Sarang Tol, which are so well shown in the plan of the site reproduced as plate XV in Oertel's account. See f. n. 18, p., 15 of B. & P. & P. Vol. LXIII, No. 126, 1943.

19. Sher Shah, p. 158, (Calcutta, 1921). See f. n. 19, p. 15 of Bengal Past & Present, Vol. LXIII, Serial No. 126 1943.

20. History of India, II, Humayun, p. 142, (London, 1854). See f. n. 20, p. 15 of Bengal Past & Present, Vol, LXIII, Serial No. 126, 1943.

21. Humayun Badshah, I, pp. 203-4.

that after the fall of Chunār in March, A. D. 1538, Humāyūn captured Benāres and stayed there for some time. This is the only occasion for which there is a definite record of Humāyūn having been at Benāres. He may probably have passed near Benāres on the return-journey to Chunār after his defeat at Chaūsah on June 26th, A. D. 1539. During his earlier campaign against Śēr Śāh in A. D. 1532, he only went as far as Chunār and returned to Āgrah after the treaty of Chunār in December, A. D. 1532<sup>22</sup>.”

“From the narrative in the above noted authorities, it is certain that after the conquest of Chunār in March, A. D. 1538, Humāyūn marched to Benāres which lies some 16 miles to its north-east, and after capturing it encamped for some-time near Sārnāth which, according to Bāyazīd, was then known as Dho Dāmēk. Enpassant it may be mentioned that except for the Buddhist stupa at Sārnāth mentioned already as being known as Dhāmēk, this name is no longer in use for any village in the vicinity at the present day”.

“Bāyazīd records the fact of Humāyūn having built a covered porch or a building—at Dāmēk when he was going to Bengāl<sup>23</sup>. This is also confirmed by the poem of Mullā Fathī, which is also included there by Bāyazīd. According to this account, Emperor Humāyūn halted at Benāres, the water of which place is excellent and the climate exhilarating. Here the Emperor ordered a building to be erected for his assemblies so that they could arrange a place in it for his enjoyment<sup>24</sup>.”

22. See Banerji, Humayun Badshah, I, pp. 49, 50, See f. n. 22 p. 15 of the article in Bengal Past and Present, Vol. LXIII, Serial No. 126, 1943.

23. See Hidayat Hosain's edition of Bayazid, p. 303. The sentence there is;

صفہء کہ حضرت جنت آشیانی و قتیقہ بنگالہ رفتند سارا جت دیۃ اند

See f. n. 23, p. 16 of Bengal Past & Present, Vol. LXIII, Serial No. 126, 1943.

24- The exact verse are :—

دو بنارس مجلس آرا شد کہ هست - آب از خوب و هوایش دلکشا ساخت  
بہر بزم خود شد صفہء قا در روز سارند بہر عیش جا

Vide Bayazid, op. cit, p. 304. See f. n. 24, p. 16 of Bengal Past and Present, Vol. LXIII, serial No. 126, 1943.



“Apparently the building was erected in A. D. 1538-9. As a result of the neglect during the reigns of Śār Śāh and his successors, the building must have become dilapidated, and Bāyazīd Biyāt, who was the agent (nāib) of Khān Khānān Mūnīm Khān, had it thoroughly repaired in the year A. H. 975 or A. D. 1567-68, and the Khān Khānān came and stayed for a few days in that building<sup>25</sup>”.

“Bayazīd further adds that he had the date of renovation inscribed on a stone, and fixed the stone on to a Pipli<sup>26</sup> tree which was growing to the east of that building. Unfortunately neither the tree nor the inscription is in existence any longer”.

“The building must have again fallen into ruin by A. H. 996 or A. D. 1587-8 and it was, therefore, decided by Govardhandhārī, an official of Emperor Akbar, to erect a humble memorial in commemoration of Emperor Humāyūn’s visit and stay there in the year A. D. 1538-9.”

“In conclusion, therefore, it may be stated that from Bāyazīd’s account it appears that the village of Sārñāth which had fallen into ruin was known as Dāmēk or Dhāmēk during Emperor Akbar’s reign. Emperor Humāyūn had apparently encamped there for sometime in A. D. 1538-9, while he was proceeding to Bihār and Bengāl against Śēr Śāh Sūr. While staying there he had a tower built over the Dhāmēk stupa. This tower was fully repaired and renovated by Bāyazīd in A. D. 1567-8. Govardhandhārī had a new memorial erected in A. D. 1587-8 in place of the one which was built in A. D. 1538-9, and renovated and repaired in A. D. 1567-8. The generally accepted

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25. See Hidayat Husain’s edition of Bayazid, cited already pp. 303-4. The chronogram of the repair and rebuilding of the tower is given incorrectly in the prose account as Suffa-i-Humayun Badshah which would be  $175+380+112+318=A. H. 980$ , but the correct chronogram as given in Mulla Fathi’s verse is *suffa i-Humayun Badshah* or A. H. 975 or A. D. 1567-8. See f. n. 25, p. 16 of Bengal. Past & Present, Vol. LXIII, serial 126, 1943.

26. It was probably a Banyan—*Ficus bengalensis* Linn and not a Pipal—*Ficus religiosa* Linn—on to which Bayazid fixed his inscribed stone, even though he sates that it was Pipli tree—this is the Hindi name for the Pipal tree; See Duthie, *Flora of the Upper Gangetic Plain*, Vol. III, pt. I, pp. 150-151, Calcutta, 1915; See f. n. 26 p. 15 of Bengal Past & Present Vol. LXIII, Serial No. 126, 1943.

view that the building in question was erected by Emperor Akbar in memory of his father's visit to the place is incorrect. The simple somewhat dilapidated octagonal tower harmonises well with the ruins of the stupa on which it was erected, but it is of no architectural or artistic interest".



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## APPENDIX

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## Erratum and Corrigendum

- Jalāl-ud-dīn, p. 3, line 1, stands for Jalāl-ud-dīn.  
 'Ālam, p. 3, lines 18, 20 and 21, stands for Ālam.  
 Insert on p. 3., line 33, comma after "well-wishers".  
 Daurah, p. 4, line 6, stands for Daūrah.  
 'āli, p. 4, line 15, stands for ālī.  
 'alī, p. 4, line 19, stands for ālī.  
 Waqīat, p. 6, line 27, stands for waqī'āt.  
 Afsānah-i-Śāhān, p. 6, line 28, stands for afsānah-i-śāhān.  
 Abdullāh, p. 7, line 3, stands for 'Abdullāh.  
 1663', p. 7, line 31, stands for 1663.  
 Delete on p. 9, line 8, comma after A. H. 937.  
 Sārangkhānī, p. 10, line 7, stands for Sārangkhānī.  
 'Ālam, p. 11, lines 13, 18 and 34 stands for Ālam,  
 'Ālam, p. 12, lines 2, 9, stands for Ālam.  
 Ibrahim, p. 12, line 19, stands for Ibrāhīm.  
 Ibrahim, p. 13, line 6, stands for Ibrāhīm.  
 Sūrjgaṛha, p. 15, line 13, stands for Sūrajgaṛha.  
 N' amatullah, p. 18, line, 2, stands for Nāmatullāh.  
Khān, p. 18, last line, stands for Khān.  
Khān, p. 19, line 6, stands for Khān.  
 Insert on p. 21, line 9, comma after "this".  
 "paincky", p. 21, line 23, stands for panicky.  
 Ms., p. 33, line 25, stands for Ms.  
 Insert on p. 40, line 9, a comma before "leaving".  
 Khan, p. 44, lines 5, 10, and 34 stands for Khān.  
 Karmnāsh, p. 49, line 6, stands for Karamnāsah.  
 Khan, p. 53, lines 25 and 34, stands for Khān.

Ahmad, p. 54 line 4, stands for Aḥmad.

Chncea, p. 58 line 26, stands for chance.

Insert on p. 59, line 2, a full-stop after Abul Faẓl.

Bayizīd, p. 60, line 11, stand sfor Bāyizīd.

Ser, p. 60, line 15, stands for Śēr.

Śah, p. 61, line 29, stands for Khān.

Chaūsaḥ, p. 62, lines 24 and 25, stands for Chaūsa.

Śatāya, p. 64, line 18, stands for Śatayah.

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