

The Story of Solṭān Khwājah ‘Ali

They say that after the death of Seyyed Ṣadroddin, Solṭān Khwājah ‘Ali succeeded his father, attaining such a spiritual state that his fame in matters of asceticism and perfection and discovery of the knowledge of the Unseen spread to the very horizons. He gathered many disciples, who called him “Solṭān ‘Ali the Black-Clad (*siyāh-push*)” because he wore a black cloak most of the time.

It was in the time of Solṭān Khwājah ‘Ali that Amir Timur Kurgān proclaimed from the East his campaign of world conquest.¹ Starting from Bokhārā, he determined to seize all of Khorāsān. When he got to the shore of the Oxus, though, he accidentally dropped his whip into the river. Taking this for a bad omen, he reined in to a halt.

“O prince, why don’t you go on?” asked his amirs.

“Things have gone wrong for me,” replied Timur. “That was my lucky whip, and it has now left my hand. I’m not taking another step until I have it again.”

“What!” said the amirs. “Don’t let such a thought enter your mind! How is the whip going to return to your hand from this river?”

“Would that I hadn’t thought of it,” said Timur, “but if I don’t get this whip back, I’m not doing another thing.”

The story goes that after they had stood by the shore of the Oxus for an hour, the eye of the Ṣāheb-qerān² fell upon a man who appeared from the direction of Mecca. When Timur got a good look, he saw a black-clad dervish walking on the surface of the river. The dervish approached Amir Timur and said, “Why are you standing here?”

“O sir,” replied Amir Timur, answering with a couplet, ““Since it is clear, what need for explanation? My whip has fallen into the water, and I want it back.”

The gentleman in black plunged his hand into the the river, retrieved the whip, and gave it to Timur. Timur kissed it and touched it to his eye, then said: “O prince, what kind of man are you? What is your name? Tell me!”

The dervish said: “You will see me twice more: Once in Sar-e Pol, in Zarqān, and once in Ardabil. My tomb shall be in Jerusalem.” Having said this, he disappeared from view.

¹ The story of Timur and Khwājah ‘Ali and the uses to which it was put in Safavid Iran are examined in detail in Horst, *Timūr und Höǧā ‘Alī*.

² “Lord of the Auspicious Conjunction,” the title by which writers often refer to Timur.

Those who were with the Šāḥeb-qerān said, “What kind of man was that, who brought your whip out of the water and gave it to you?”

Timur said, “Did you see him too?”

“Yes,” they replied.

“I didn’t know what kind of man he was, but I will surely see him again.”

Amir Timur then crossed the river and proceeded on the road to Khorāsān. When he reached Andijān, old Bābā Sang Kuhi the dervish was there. The Šāḥeb-qerān asked after him and, having learned where he was and being on a search for a spiritual teacher, he went and saw him. Now when Timur saw Solṭān Khwājeḥ ‘Ali on the Oxus, he had recognized him as his teacher; he had seen so much perfection in him that he was searching for him, hoping to see him again. When he saw Bābā Sang Kuhi, he was astonished, for this man did not have what he sought. For this reason, he just greeted him, and they stood there looking at each other.

They say that when Bābā Sang Kuhi’s eye fell on the Šāḥeb-qerān, he pointed to his own breast. Seeing this, Timur praised him, and ordered that several villages give their crops to him each year, and after him to his sons, as a pious endowment. Bābā Sang Kuhi’s progeny are honored; they live in Andijān. Timur knew that Khorāsān is the heart of the earth; it was the sign of Khorāsān that Bābā Sang Kuhi had made by pointing to his breast.

Timur then bade Bābā Sang Kuhi farewell and departed. In a short time he had conquered Khorāsān from the kings of Ghur.³ After that he turned toward ‘Erāq.⁴ When he had conquered it as well, he turned his ambition to Fārs and eventually arrived at Zarqān. There he was told that cattle and camels were shying on the bridge, and that no matter how much their owners beat them, they would not cross over.

Amir Timur went to the bridge, where he saw a dervish. He greeted him. The dervish returned his greeting. When Timur went forward, he saw Solṭān Khwājeḥ ‘Ali the Black-Clad wearing his black cloak. Although he had seen him before, and although Solṭān Khwājeḥ ‘Ali had said, “You will see me in Zarqān,” Timur did not recognize him.

When Solṭān Khwājeḥ ‘Ali spotted the Šāḥeb-qerān, he jumped up and threw a stone at him. It hit Timur on the chest. He threw another stone; it hit Timur on the shoulder and made him writhe with pain. He threw a third stone,

3 By this is probably meant the Karts of Harāt (643–791/1245–1389), who traced their origins to the Ghurid dynasty.

4 This term occurs frequently in the text. It refers to the western part of Iran, not the modern (Arab) country of Iraq.

which hit him on the other shoulder. Unable to bear any more, Timur said, “O dervish, I swear to you by God, that’s enough! The prediction⁵ has come true!”

Soltān Khwājeh ‘Ali tossed the fourth stone aside and said, “O Şāḥeb-qerān, three climes are in your power; this stone was the fourth. If you hadn’t sworn an oath, I would have thrown it too, but you didn’t accept it. Now go, for of the four climes of the world, you have three.”

When the Şāḥeb-qerān heard this, a sigh arose from his heart. He said, “Throw the fourth stone—I’ll offer my own eye as the target!”

“It’s too late for that,” said the dervish. “Don’t say another word, for the auspicious moment has passed.” Then he turned and went under the bridge. Timur did not follow him, but went to the top of the bridge. Just then his amirs arrived and said, “We haven’t seen anyone.”

Amir Timur said, “I swear to God, that was the very dervish in the black cloak that I know! He said himself, ‘You will see me one more time.’” Comforting himself with this good news, he turned toward Anatolia.

In Anatolia, Timur’s men captured Soltān Anas,⁶ the Qayşar of Rum, in battle and brought him before him. Timur made him swear an oath, then said, “Tell me what you were intending for me; if God had aided you and you had captured me, what would you have done with me?”

The Qayşar replied, “O prince, since you made me swear by God to tell the truth, I was thinking that I would take you, tie a stone to your belly, and throw you in the sea at Constantinople.”

The Şāḥeb-qerān said, “In my heart, this is what I intended: With God’s help, I would capture you and have you brought to me; then I would rise and take your hand and give you a place at my side. I would have a three-day feast for you, and on the fourth day I would give the country of Rum back to you and return to Torkestān. Since my intention was good, you became my prisoner, and now I will act according to my intention.”

Then he pardoned the Qayşar, placed a royal crown on his head, and levied a tribute on him. Then he left Morghāb in the direction of Georgia.⁷

Some time thereafter, the news arrived that the kings of Badakhshān had come from Torkestān and were attacking Samarqand with a great army. Timur thus left the Caspian region and set off in haste for Torkestān. When he got there, Timur’s local officials were in dire straits, but he punished the aggressors and headed for Bokhārā.

5 *ḥadith*. It is not clear what Timur is referring to.

6 *Sic*; by this is meant Soltān Bāyazid I, whom Timur captured at the Battle of Ankara in 1402. (*Qayşar* is one of the titles of the Ottoman Emperor, derived from the Latin *Caesar*.)

7 The text here has “Torkestān,” but both the Chester Beatty Library manuscript (fol. 11a) and Shokri’s edition (*Ālamārā-ye Şafavi*, 22) have “Gorjestān,” which makes more sense.

After capturing the Qayṣar and levying a tribute on him, Timur went to Egypt, conquered it, and placed his sons on the throne there. When word reached the Qayṣar that Timur had gone to Bokhārā, he was glad, and he seized the opportunity to raise an army and invade Egypt. This news reached Shāhrokh Mirzā, who immediately sent messengers to Torkestān. When they presented this news to the Ṣāḥeb-qerān, he once again left and headed for Constantinople via the Qepchāq steppe. When he got there, the Qayṣar had gone to Egypt with his army.

Timur fell upon the city of Istanbul and did much killing and plundering; then he seized the Qayṣar’s treasury and set off after him. It happened that the Qayṣar’s army had surrounded Cairo, and Shāhrokh Mirzā was in a difficult situation. Timur ordered them to blow the battle-trumpet. When Shāhrokh heard the sound, he looked and saw the battle-standard of his father. He ordered that the gates of Cairo be opened and came out with ten thousand men.

“What has gotten into this son of a Mongol?”⁸ said the Qayṣar.

His officers replied, “Apparently his father has come.” The Qayṣar let out a cry and turned his reins so as to get away, but Timur gave no quarter; he captured the Qayṣar and the Anatolian leaders,⁹ killing many people and capturing almost a hundred thousand. He clapped them all in chains and turned back to Iran.

When he came to the vicinity of Ardabil, he learned that there was a dervish there, a descendent of Shaykh Ṣafi with many followers. The Ṣāḥeb-qerān resolved to see him, saying to himself, “If he possesses such perfection, he will reveal it to me, and I will honor him and become his disciple. If he doesn’t possess perfection, I will kill him, so that he doesn’t lead the people astray.”

Timur had three conditions in mind: First, that the dervish should not come out to meet him, nor even move from his place. Second, that he should present Timur with food that he had never eaten in his life. Third, that he should eat three *methqāls*¹⁰ of deadly poison and repel it from his body through the power of his spiritual state. If the dervish fulfilled these three conditions, it would be sure proof that he was a man of God.

So Timur entered Ardabil, and they brought the news to Solṭān ‘Ali the Black-Clad, saying: “The Ṣāḥeb-qerān has come!”

“Let him come.”

8 The text has *qawwālzādeh* or “son of a storyteller,” which makes little sense. Shokri (*Ālamarā-ye Ṣafavi*, 23) suggests, based on variants in other manuscripts, *mogholzādeh*, which is more logical. The Chester Beatty Library copy (fol. 11b) has the homophonous variant spelling *moqolzādeh*.

9 Literally “sultans,” *salāṭin*.

10 About 15 grams.

All the nobles of Ardabil came and entreated him, saying, "Amir Timur is a proud king; don't annoy him! It will be best if you go to the outskirts of the city and greet him!"

Soltān 'Ali answered, "We have no reason to consult with him. If he has a reason to consult with dervishes, that is good."

The nobles and people of Ardabil came again and said, "Timur is at the door of the lodge!" But Soltān 'Ali gave the same response.

Finally Timur appeared before him and approached him with a greeting. Soltān 'Ali returned the greeting and gestured as if to say, "Have a seat." Amir Timur sat down next to him and inquired about his health. An hour went by, then Soltān 'Ali ordered that food be served. They brought in a plate of rice pudding and a loaf of bread. Soltān 'Ali said, "This is the food of the poor."

"I've eaten lots of rice pudding," said Timur.

Soltān 'Ali replied, "Eat it; you've never had this before. For this is gazelle's milk, and the rice is from Egypt. I planted it in the garden of the lodge. And this loaf of bread is millet."

When Amir Timur saw the gaze of Soltān 'Ali, which he had seen before, he wanted to flutter around his head like a moth. He praised him in his heart, even though he was not being courteous to him. His belief in him increased a hundredfold, and he turned to eat. When he had finished, Soltān 'Ali said, "O amir, order them to bring the drink you prepared, the one in a crystal goblet!"

The Şāḥeb-qerān bowed his head to kiss the dervish's foot, but Soltān 'Ali stopped him and embraced him. Timur said, "God forbid that I should have behaved so boorishly, seeing how the summit of your spiritual perfection has been revealed to me!"

Soltān 'Ali made him swear an oath, and he ordered that they bring the drink. Soltān 'Ali clasped the handle of the goblet and drained it. Amir Timur gasped. He saw the dervish arise and begin to pray; then the poison came out of his body with his sweat. Timur saw that every drop of poison that dripped onto the ground burned a hole in the rug and the mat under it and turned them into ashes. The Şāḥeb-qerān bit his finger, beside himself in amazement, and watched as over the course of two hours as the dervish ejected those two [*sic*] *methqāls* of poison, which, had they been dropped into the sea, would have killed every creature in it. Then, when his ecstasy was complete, Soltān 'Ali came and sat in his place again.

Amir Timur placed his head at Soltān 'Ali's feet and said, "Purify me; overlook my fault; command me to render some service, so that I know you have forgiven my sin!"

Soltān 'Ali said, "I forgive your sin, and may God Almighty grant you success and let you conquer three quarters of the earth."

In the course of their conversation, Timur said, "Was it you who pulled my whip from the river Oxus?"

Solṭān 'Ali replied, "Yes."

"Was it you who threw those stones at me at the bridge?"

"Yes."

As the Šāḥeb-qerān recognized Solṭān 'Ali, he placed the hand of devotion on his skirt and became one of his Ṣufis. He then ordered that they write a letter to his sons, saying "We have made Ardabil and its dependencies a trust (*vaqf*) for the descendants of Shaykh Ṣafi and his threshold." He also made an inscription in his register, saying: "If someone has committed a thousand sins, let him seek refuge at this threshold, and he will be pardoned." Then he entreated Solṭān 'Ali once more to command him to perform some service for him.

Solṭān 'Ali said, "We aren't in need of created things, for our work comes from the court of the Creator himself; but turn these prisoners over to us."

"I am indebted to you," said Timur. Then he ordered that all the prisoners be handed over to Solṭān 'Ali. The Solṭān freed them all; many became disciples of the order of Shaykh Ṣafi and stayed in the service of Solṭān 'Ali, while many others went back to their homelands. Amir Timur was granted permission to depart and returned to his own land.

Soon thereafter, God Almighty blessed Solṭān 'Ali with a worthy son, whom he named Jonayd. He strove to have the child educated, and when he was twenty years old, he sat on the prayer-rug of orthodoxy. Solṭān Khwājeh 'Ali went to visit the house of God, and on his way back, in Jerusalem, he responded to the divine summons with "Here I am." When the news of his death reached Solṭān Jonayd, he went and buried his father there, then returned. The disciples placed the hand of obedience on his skirt, and for a long time he guided them on the path of right belief.

At the time, Iran was under the rule of Mirzā Jahānshāh Saljuqi.¹¹ He had made Tabriz his capital. When the fame of the Ṣufis of the lineage of Shaykh Ṣafi reached him, he summoned his astrologers and told them to read the stars of those Ṣufis, saying, "I hear that there is much hubbub around Solṭān Jonayd. I fear that one of the descendants of Shaykh Ṣafi will emerge, and that dominion will be severed from our dynasty and pass instead to the house of Shaykh Ṣafi. If any harm is going to come to my dynasty from these people, tell me so that we can defend against them."

¹¹ Moẓaffaroddin Jahānshāh b. Amir Qarā Yusof Torkmān, the last effective ruler of the Qarā Qoyunlu.

The astrologers said, “O prince, shall we tell you what our analysis of the stars has revealed to us, or shall we tell you that which is welcome to hear? The time is near when one of the descendants of Shaykh Ṣafi will emerge and in short order conquer all of Iran, part of Hendustān, and part of Torkestān; he will lead a rebellion and change the rite of worship, and with a shining sword overturn the whole of the country and take it into his possession. He will propagate that new rite and will progress day by day; his state will not decline until the appearance of the Mahdi; he will strike his sword in allegiance with Him, and kings will ask to be allied with him and will place themselves in his service.”

When Jahānshāh heard this from the astrologers, hatred and enmity toward the descendants of Shaykh Ṣafi took root in his heart. He ordered that a letter be written to Solṭān Jonayd which said: “When you receive my letter, you had better send your people far away from you and your attendants, scatter your followers, and hide in the corner of security, for I am distressed by these Ṣufis of yours. Do not let the temptation of ignorant agitators speak of ‘emergence’ and put dreams of rule in your heart! Why should a matter which begins easily end badly, with the blood of many thousands spilt unjustly? If you don’t listen to my words and abandon these meddlers, it will surely be incumbent upon us to drive you and your followers away.”

When Mirzā Jahānshāh’s letter reached Solṭān Jonayd, he sought out his disciples and asked, “What shall we say in response?”

“Write whatever comes to your noble mind,” they replied.

So he wrote in his letter: “May it not remain hidden from the world-adorning mind of the king of Iran that the thought of the descendants of Shaykh Ṣafi is clearly causing you unease. Be sure to put such whisperings far from your heart, for the Shayṭān of men is tempting you. Behold, I am a recluse, occupied with my followers in worship of the beneficent Lord at the tomb of my ancestors; the desire for emergence and conquest is not on my mind and has never been. If your flattering astrologers have made you afraid that one of the descendants of Shaykh Ṣafi will be the one who emerges to conquer, that man is not me; perhaps he will be one of my sons or grandsons. If the divine decree is such that one of the sons of Shaykh Ṣafi is going to emerge to conquer, then it would be inevitable even if the whole world wanted to change it. So be at peace, and leave us be; I have no enmity toward you. Don’t think about me, worry about the punishment of the Creator—you know the rest!”

When the response reached Mirzā Jahānshāh, he once more consulted with his pillars of state. They said, “Solṭān Jonayd is right; he is not one to think of world domination. Perhaps this matter will come to pass at another time.”

Two years after this, hostile people again let it be known that day by day, the Ṣufis of Ardabil were increasing in number, and if they chose to emerge to conquer, they could gather twenty thousand horsemen in Ardabil who would bring their dependents too. For the followers of the sons of Shaykh Ṣafi were everywhere, from the Maghreb to Balkh and Bokhārā. Mirzā Jahānshāh became fearful and wrote another letter, saying: "No matter how much we warn you, you don't heed us; one would think that you find great delight in this. Get up and get out of our realm or we shall come to Ardabil and destroy it, and perhaps even order a general massacre!"

When the letter arrived, Solṭān Jonayd perused it and said to his Ṣufis, "We have to go; my ancestor the shaykh in the spirit world has said to me, 'Go to Diyārbakr, my son, otherwise this tyrannical king will reduce Ardabil to ruins.' So we must leave. Any Ṣufi who comes along is welcome, but it is up to you."

All the Ṣufis said, "Our head is under your foot; we are at your service wherever you go." So they all gathered their dependents and headed off to Diyārbakr.

At the time the ruler of that land was Ḥasan Beg Āq Qoyunlu, who was also a follower of Solṭān Khwājeḥ 'Ali. When he heard that the son of that master had gone into exile out of fear of Mirzā Jahānshāh and was heading toward Diyārbakr, he ordered that the elders of the tribe mount up and greet them two stations' distance from the city. He, too, went out one station's distance to welcome them, accompanied by his kinsmen. When he saw Solṭān Jonayd from afar, he dismounted, and the two of them embraced. He also showed great esteem for the followers of Solṭān Jonayd. Solṭān Jonayd remained as his guest for three years, during which time Ḥasan Beg gave him his sister in marriage.

After three years, Solṭān Jonayd gathered his followers and headed back to Ardabil. The news reached Mirzā Jahānshāh that Solṭān Jonayd had gone to Diyārbakr, that Ḥasan Beg had given him his sister in marriage, and that Solṭān Jonayd was now going to Ardabil with his people, having been strengthened by the power of Ḥasan Beg. Mirzā Jahānshāh therefore ordered his people to raise an army and fight Solṭān Jonayd.

When Solṭān Jonayd heard this, he gathered twenty thousand Ṣufis and disciples and set off to conquer the country of Shirvān, saying, "I am going to fight the Christians."

Word of this reached Solṭān Khalil, the king of Shirvān, who was a descendant of Anushirvān, that Solṭān Jonayd was coming to conquer Shirvān on the pretext of going to Circassia. Solṭān Khalil ordered the Shirvānis to raise an army; he also sent someone to Abulma'ṣum Khān, king of Ṭabarestān, asking for assistance. He sent five thousand men. Mirzā Jahānshāh, too, sent five thousand men from Tabriz. Thirty thousand men gathered on the shore of the river Aras, blocking the road with the intention of fighting Solṭān Jonayd. The battle

got going immediately, and many of the Şufis were killed. After much slaughter and struggle, Solţān Jonayd became a martyr for the faith¹², and his men retreated. The Şufis gathered Solţān Jonayd's body and took it to Ardabil, where they buried him. They put his noble son, who was named Solţān Ḥaydar, in his father's place on the throne of right guidance and placed themselves at his service.

When Ḥasan Beg heard that Solţān Jonayd had been killed, he girded himself with bloodlust and set out with twenty thousand Torkmāns for Tabriz. A great battle took place between Ḥasan Beg and Mirzā Jahānshāh; many people were killed on both sides until Mirzā Jahānshāh's army finally broke and turned tail. Mirzā Jahānshāh himself was captured alive and brought into the presence of Ḥasan Beg, who indicated that he should be killed. Then Ḥasan Beg sat himself on the throne in Tabriz and, having established himself there, became ruler of Iran. He summoned Solţān Ḥaydar to him and honored him greatly; he gave him Ardabil again, and strove in his upbringing, and gave him his daughter, 'Ālamshāh Begom.

Solţān Ḥaydar ruled over his followers until one night, in a dream, he saw the holy Commander of the Faithful and the Emām of the Pious saying to him: "O my son, soon a son will come forth from your loins who will go forth and abolish all heresy from the face of the earth. But you must make for your Şufis and disciples a crown with twelve notches (*tarak*)," and he showed Solţān Ḥaydar how to make it. When he awoke, he called the Şufis and enjoined each one to make such a crown and place it on his head. They called that crown the *tāj-e Ḥaydari* and nicknamed its wearers "Qezelbāsh" ("Redheads").

When Ḥasan Beg heard of this, he sent someone to Solţān Ḥaydar with the following message: "O my son, send me this garment that you have made for your disciples so I can see how it is made!"

Solţān Ḥaydar sent a *tāj* to Ḥasan Beg Pādeshāh. When he saw it, he picked it up, kissed it, and put it on his head, telling all his sons to put it on as well. They all did, except his son Ya'qub, who refused. No matter how much his father pressed him, it was no use; he wouldn't put it on. He bound the belt of hostility toward Solţān Ḥaydar round his waist. After some time, Ḥasan Beg Pādeshāh bade farewell to life, and Ya'qub succeeded his father. He became an enemy to the descendents of Shaykh Şafi; out of an excess of jealousy and envy, he commanded that anyone who put on the *tāj-e Ḥaydari* again would have their ears and nose cut off.

When Solţān Ḥaydar heard this, he realized that Ya'qub Shāh was his enemy. So he gathered his disciples and headed for Shirvān to avenge the blood of his

¹² Solţān Jonayd was killed in 1460.

father. Yaʿqub Shāh, alerted to this, sent a messenger to Solṭān Khalil, the king of Shirvān, to say: “Solṭān Ḥaydar is coming to fight you. You know how to take care of him! Kill his followers. If you do this, I will ally myself with you by accepting your daughter in marriage.”

Solṭān Khalil responded: “If what you are saying is true, and tomorrow you won’t blame me for Solṭān Ḥaydar’s death, then send an army to put my mind at ease.” So Yaʿqub Shāh sent Solaymān Solṭān Bijan-oghli along with ten thousand men. When Solṭān Ḥaydar arrived at the edge of the Kura River, Solṭān Khalil ordered his son Farrokhyasār to write a letter to Abulmaʿsum Khān, the ruler of Ṭabarestān, asking him to send his army.

He raised five thousand troops and came. From the direction of Tabriz, too, arose a cloud of dust indicating the arrival of Solaymān Solṭān Bijan-oghli the Torkmān, en route with ten thousand men to join the forty thousand others already gathered.

When Solṭān Ḥaydar saw the Torkmān army, he said, “The sight of that dust grieves my heart, for today I must be killed.” Then the Ṣufis arrived. Solṭān Ḥaydar took his place at the center of the army; he placed Qarāpari Ostājlu on the right wing and gave the left wing to Ḥosayn Beg Shāmlu. On the other side, Solṭān Khalil took his place at the center of his army and placed Abulmaʿsum Khān on the right wing and Farrokhyasār on the left. Solaymān Solṭān Bijan-oghli was in the vanguard.

After the troops were lined up, Solaymān Solṭān went forth and sought an opponent. Solṭān Ḥaydar seized his spear and took to the field; with one blow of his spear he knocked Solaymān Solṭān off his horse and into the dust of contempt, then turned and went back into his own ranks. His disciples asked, “O prince, why didn’t you kill that man?”

“That man will be the one who kills me,” replied Solṭān Ḥaydar.

The humiliated Solaymān Solṭān got up off the ground and retreated into his own ranks. The Torkmāns said, “Solṭān Ḥaydar showed you mercy; if he had wanted to, he would have killed you.”

That shameless coward took seven thousand men and got behind the other troops. Abulmaʿsum Khān led his own men in an attack from the other direction, and the battle began to rage as those oceans of soldiery crashed into each other. Those two bloodthirsty armies¹³ surged toward Solṭān Ḥaydar; he hurled himself into the midst of those devious villains, killing nearly three hundred and sending them to hell. Suddenly Solaymān Solṭān appeared behind him

13 I.e., Torkmān and Ṭabarestāni.

and stabbed Solṭān Ḥaydar in the side with his spear. The Ṭabarestānis then surrounded him, pulled him from his horse, and killed him.¹⁴

When Solṭān Ḥaydar's disciples learned that he had been killed, they charged onto the battlefield, killing three or four hundred of the enemy, and retrieved Ḥaydar's corpse. Then they headed back to Ardabil.

As Solṭān Ḥaydar was going into battle, he had named his eldest son Solṭān 'Ali Mirzā as his successor and given him his final counsel. Now, when Solṭān 'Ali Mirzā heard of his father's death, he mourned and kept the Ṣufis by him. The people, too, turned to him for guidance.

Ya'qub Shāh was glad to hear of the death of Solṭān Ḥaydar. But fate did not show him mercy, and he soon died and went to hell. Bāysonqor succeeded him as king, and the Torkmāns all obeyed him. After two years had gone by, Aybeh¹⁵ Solṭān, who was his commander-in-chief, had a falling-out with him; he went to the fortress of Qahqaheh, released Rostam Mirzā, and declared him king. Rostam Mirzā was the grandson of Ḥasan Beg Pādeshāh.

Bāysonqor learned of these events and raised an army to go fight Rostam Mirzā. Since Rostam Mirzā had Aybeh Solṭān on his side, Bāysonqor was unsuccessful, and he fled toward Shirvān.¹⁶ Aybeh Solṭān took Rostam Mirzā to Tabriz and made him king. After Rostam Mirzā had ruled for a year, his thoughts turned to the descendants of Shaykh Ṣafi. He ordered that 'Ālamshāh Begom and her sons Solṭān 'Ali Mirzā, Ebrāhim Mirzā, and Esmā'il Mirzā be taken to the fortress of Kalāt and imprisoned. They were there for seven years.

Then Bāysonqor Mirzā, whose mother was the daughter of Solṭān Khalil of Shirvān, took the army of Shirvān and set out with the intention of fighting Rostam Pādeshāh. When Rostam Pādeshāh heard about it, he asked the Torkmāns what they thought should be done.

They replied, "If you want to defeat Bāysonqor, you must send someone to the fortress of Kalāt, free the sons of Solṭān Ḥaydar, bring them back here, and show them great respect. This is because Solṭān 'Ali Mirzā is a valiant youth, and he has thirty thousand Ṣufis for followers. You must give him twenty thousand more men and send them to fight Bāysonqor and drive him away. After that, taking care of Solṭān 'Ali Mirzā will be easy."

Rostam Pādeshāh accepted their counsel. He sent someone to release the sons of Solṭān Ḥaydar and bring them to court. When they arrived, Rostam Pādeshāh honored them greatly, saying to Solṭān 'Ali Mirzā: "What I did to you

14 Solṭān Ḥaydar was killed in 1488.

15 Consistently spelled "Abiyeh" in the text.

16 The text has "Shirāz," which does not fit with what happens next. "Shirvān" seems more likely.

is past. God willing, I will strive to make up for it, and you will be my son and you will rule Iran after me.” He ordered that Solṭān ‘Ali Mirzā be decked out from head to foot in a robe of honor, along with a crown and an aigrette and a mace and a dagger and a sword studded with jewels and an Arabian horse with a golden saddle. Then he said, “I give you the name Solṭān ‘Ali Pādeshāh—no longer will I call you ‘Mirzā.”

When the Ṣufis heard that Solṭān ‘Ali had been thus decorated, they came to him, and within six months’ time, fifty thousand Ṣufis had gathered.

Rostam Shāh then ordered Aybeh Solṭān to gather twenty thousand troops and join Solṭān ‘Ali to go fight Bāysonqor. Rostam Shāh accompanied Solṭān ‘Ali for two days’ journey and returned. Solṭān ‘Ali continued on with Aybeh Solṭān to Ardabil, and after meeting with the attendants and Ṣufis, they headed for their objective with thirty thousand men.

When Solṭān Khalil heard that Solṭān ‘Ali was coming together with Aybeh Solṭān to fight Bāysonqor, he gathered an army of his own. Bāysonqor raised thirteen thousand men and crossed the river Kura in the vicinity of Qarābāgh, seizing the road with the intention of fighting Solṭān ‘Ali. The next day Farrokhyasār, the son of Solṭān Khalil, arrived with a boundless army. The ranks of battle and strife were formed. Solṭān ‘Ali took his place in the center, gave the right wing to his tutor Ḥosayn Beg and the left to Dadeh Beg Ṭālesh, and placed Aybeh Solṭān in the vanguard. Farrokhyasār took his place in the center, gave the right wing to Bāysonqor and the left to the commander Kiyā Bahman, and placed Kiyā Bahman’s son Kiyā Malek in the vanguard, sending him and five thousand men onto the battlefield. Aybeh Solṭān responded with five thousand of his own. The two masses of men flowed into each other, and a heated battle got under way. Kiyā Malek struck everyone he encountered with his sword, toppling them and knocking them senseless. The evil eye almost befell Solṭān ‘Ali’s army, but Aybeh Solṭān threw himself into the fray. Splitting the ranks as he went, he found Kiyā Malek and finished him off with one blow of his sword. Kiyā Malek’s troops were thrown into confusion and turned tail.

When Kiyā Bahman learned of this, he let out a cry and charged into battle, driving the vanguard back. Solṭān ‘Ali sent his right wing into action, and Bāysonqor also got on the move. The two armies collided; Kiyā Bahman ran away, while Aybeh Solṭān was taken prisoner. When Solṭān ‘Ali saw how things were going, he ordered the Torkmān army to turn back, then led his Qezelbāsh troops into the fray, hurling himself at the Shirvānis. Striking and smiting, slaying and killing, he plunged into their midst. At a certain moment, he spotted the battle-standard of Bāysonqor and left his own standard behind. No matter how much the Ṣufis entreated him, he wouldn’t listen; he charged up to the enemy standard, knocked Bāysonqor off his feet, and turned that standard

upside down. The Shirvāni army turned and fled; Farrokhyasār ran away to Shirvān. Solṭān ‘Ali Pādesihāh, flush with conquest and victory, seized the belongings and property of Farrokhyasār and the Shirvānis and headed off to Tabriz.

Word of this victory reached Rostam Shāh, who sent his people out to welcome Solṭān ‘Ali. He himself went as well. When he spotted Solṭān ‘Ali, he dismounted from his horse, embraced him, and kissed his forehead. After this, the two of them mounted up and rode into Tabriz. Solṭān ‘Ali was clothed in the finest robe of honor, and the Şufis, too, were treated as they deserved.

After six months had gone by, though, Solṭān ‘Ali’s good fortune had passed, and his enemies became jealous of his position; they seduced Rostam Shāh with their lies and convinced him to kill that prince and his Şufis. So he told his amirs: “Tomorrow morning I will call a meeting and summon Solṭān ‘Ali and his brothers and Şufis to it. As soon as they come in, kill every one of them. Afterwards, I will order that wherever in Iran a follower of Shaykh Şafi is found, he should be killed.”

That night, one of the nobles went to Solṭān ‘Ali and let him know what Rostam Shāh was up to. As soon as Solṭān ‘Ali heard, he gathered his own nobles and told them: “Rostam Shāh intends to kill me and all my brothers and Şufis tomorrow.” Ḥosayn Beg Laleh and Dadeh Beg Ṭalesh and Qarāpari Ostājlu and Elyās Beg all said: “May we be sacrificed for you! Why are you just sitting there? Get up! We’ll go to Ardabil; all the disciples will be there. If Rostam Shāh wants to fight, we’ll fight him, and if he can’t manage it, we shall be safely on our own.”

“Good idea,” replied Solṭān ‘Ali. “Let everyone with a good horse come with us, and those who don’t, change their headgear and follow us by a different road.” He gathered four hundred of the Şufis and left in the middle of the night.

The next day, when Rostam Shāh learned that Solṭān ‘Ali had taken all his brothers and his army and gone to Ardabil, he let out a cry and ordered Aybeh Solṭān to mount up and get moving quickly, saying, “If Solṭān ‘Ali should enter Ardabil, God forbid, it will cost a thousand Torkmān lives to take him back.”

So Aybeh Solṭān gathered five thousand men and marched off, traveling thirty-one leagues to Ardabil.

Solṭān ‘Ali looked behind him on the road and saw a great cloud of dust. He called Esmā‘il Mirzā to his side and said, “The Torkmān army has arrived, and today I shall be killed in battle. I want you to avenge my blood and that of your ancestors on the sons of Ḥasan Pādesihāh. This lot has fallen to your auspicious fortune. May it soon be that you emerge from Gilān with a world-conquering sword and with it smite unbelief from the face of the earth!” Then he took his *tāj-e Ḥaydari* and placed it on Esmā‘il’s head; he bound his own belt around the

boy's waist, then bent down and whispered in his ear the counsel he had inherited from his fathers. He ordered seven men, including Ḥosayn Beg Laleh, Qarāpari Ostājlu, Abdāl Beg, Dadeh Beg Ṭalesh, and others, to take Esmā'il Mirzā, Ebrāhim Mirzā, and Solaymān Mirzā and head for Ardabil and thence to Gilān, where they should stay with the king of Lāhijān until the time of Esmā'il's emergence.

The brothers said, "Let us be sacrifices for you; rather than let you fall into the hands of the enemy, let us give up our lives for you!"

Solṭān 'Ali refused. "Listen," he said; "if not for you, our family would cease to exist. You will be the brilliant *raison d'être* of the family." Then Ḥosayn Beg Laleh bared his head and kissed Solṭān 'Ali's thigh and stirrup; but no matter how much he pleaded, "Let me remain with you," Solṭān 'Ali kept refusing, saying only, "You be the tutor of my brothers, and with the upbringing you provide and the aid of the holy Emāms, this boy will make his emergence." Then, with a hundred disappointments, Ḥosayn Beg kissed his foot, gathered up those princes, and hastened to Ardabil.