

## Sho'ayb Āqā is Killed by Solṭān Aḥmad Sāru'i; Moḥammad Karahi Rebels, Solṭān Aḥmad is Killed, and Yazd is Captured

When Solṭān Morād, fearing Shāh Esmā'il, fled Yazd for Harāt, Khwājeh Solṭān Aḥmad Sāru'i, his vizier, took control of Yazd. Then, Esmā'il handed that city over to Ḥosayn Beg Laleh, who in turn made Sho'ayb Āqā its governor. His Majesty ordered Shāh Taqioddin Moḥammad Eṣfahāni to go to Yazd and try to turn Solṭān Aḥmad Sāru'i back from his position of rebellion and contrariness and bring him back to obedience.

Shāh Taqioddin did his job well, laying firm foundations of reconciliation between Solṭān Aḥmad and Sho'ayb Āqā. Solṭān Aḥmad made a binding promise that in his entire lifetime he would not stray from the path of devotion to Shāh Esmā'il, and he placed himself in obedience to Sho'ayb Āqā. Sho'ayb Āqā then took his place at the head of the government of Yazd and began to manage city affairs.

After a short while, though, Solṭān Aḥmad broke his pledge; he and a group of men ambushed Sho'ayb Āqā in the bath and killed him, and he took over the city as an independent ruler. News of this reached Moḥammad Karahi, who quickly left Abarqu for Yazd. He entered the city in the middle of the night, seized Solṭān Aḥmad Sāru'i, and killed him. He took control of the city and raised the banner of sovereignty. To make a long story short, he was so overcome with love of rank that he forgot his obligation to the Shāh and crossed the line of disobedience and rebellion.

When the news of his insubordination reached the royal hearing in Sāvōjbolāgh, Shāh Esmā'il set off with his army in the month of Rajab to conquer Yazd. Then Moḥammad Karahi, who had assumed total independence in Yazd, sent someone to Shāh Ne'matollāh with the message, "Give your daughter to me, and you shall have twenty thousand Karahi slaves like me."

Shāh Ne'matollāh replied, "The decision lies with her mother. If she deems it acceptable, what objection can I raise?"

When this answer reached Moḥammad Karahi, he said to his men, "Go and bring our blessing to Shāh Ne'matollāh. Tell him 'You are right; I should have just taken the girl by force, marrying her after you begged me to so and did me many favors. You are making these kinds of excuses because I have shown respect to your descent from the Prophet!'"

Hearing this message, Shāh Ne'matollāh grew fearful, saying, "Heaven forbid that he do such a thing!" So he sent someone to Moḥammad Karahi to say: "We

have not given you an answer; we have just said the decision lies with the girl's mother. In truth, she is the one to talk to about this."

Moḥammad Karahi was happy to hear this hopeful news. He ordered that all the goldsmiths of Yazd get together to make golden wares for the girl. The next day he dispatched the elders of the Karahi clan to Shāh Ne'matollāh, telling them to obtain the permission as was done in those days, by bringing the golden wares, securing the consent of the daughter, and sealing the marriage.

Shāh Ne'matollāh, at a loss, fell into thought. Then he said to the elders, "By the grace of God, you have everything you wanted. Even if the gold is still being prepared, we shall still want it. In the end, though, we want a one-month delay to arrange everything and have the marriage. Then Moḥammad Karahi will be our son."

Upon receiving this reply, Moḥammad Karahi thought to himself, "I must be patient." But some slanderers came to him and said, "It's not a given that he will give his daughter to you, and as for this delay he has asked for, it is just to give the Qezelbāsh army time to come. Don't give it to him! If in the next two or three days you seize his daughter, so much the better; Shāh Ne'matollāh will take your side. If you do not, you will have the Qezelbāsh army to deal with."

Moḥammad Karahi got up and went to the house of Shāh Ne'matollāh, saying, "O Shāh, why do you not accept me as your slave and turn your daughter over to me in marriage? If you are going to give her to me, good. If not, do not do anything to rebel against me."

Shāh Ne'matollāh was again astonished; he said, "There is no wrongdoing in what we have said! Everything requires patience. You must have patience until everything is prepared."

Moḥammad replied, "I will come again in three days, and I want the girl then."

Shāh Ne'matollāh pleaded with him and got him to agree to ten days. But when Moḥammad left and Shāh Ne'matollāh went back inside his house, the girl's mother saw him all distressed and asked him the reason. He told her the story from beginning to end.

That woman said, "On the first day he asked for the girl, why didn't you send someone to the Pādeshāh of Iran? For that prince comes to the aid of all who beseech him." Shāh Ne'matollāh realized that she was right, and that very minute he wrote a petition and sent it to His Majesty the Shāh.

When the ten days' term was up, Moḥammad Karahi ordered that all the nobles and judges and scholars and village leaders come together. Food was served, and he ordered that the wedding sermon be pronounced.

Shāh Ne'matollāh was despondent. He pleaded with a judge, saying, "Tell him that today is not opportune and that tomorrow is much better." Moḥammad

Karahi said, "Pronounce the sermon! It is always the opportune moment for a good deed; you are just making excuses! By God, send them to bring the girl!"

When word of this reached the members of the harem, the girl's mother sent someone to Moḥammad Karahi to tell him, "Today we are painting figures on the girl's hands and feet with henna. Be patient for today; tomorrow we shall send the girl to you." Moḥammad Karahi had no choice but to resign himself to waiting.

Shāh Ne'matollāh's servant entered Eṣfahān on the tenth day of Moḥammad Karahi's delay. When he reached the gate of Ḥasanābād, he fell down unconscious. News of this was brought to the Shāh, who ordered that he be bled. When he came to his senses, the servant produced his master's petition and told his story from beginning to end.†

Esmā'il then dictated a response thus: "God Almighty willing, our imperial majesty will enter the city of Yazd in ten days." The servant was overjoyed at this good news and made it back to Yazd in eight days. He went to Shāh Ne'matollāh and gave him the royal letter, telling him what had happened. Shāh Ne'matollāh praised the servant and rejoiced, for the Shāh was going to arrive soon.

But one of Shāh Ne'matollāh's people went to Moḥammad Karahi and said, "Why don't you take the girl? Shāh Ne'matollāh was delaying because he had sent a messenger to Shāh Esmā'il; the messenger has come back with the news that the Shāh is coming on his heels and will be here tomorrow or the day after!"

Hearing this, Moḥammad Karahi ordered his men to seize Shāh Ne'matollāh and drag his daughter by force out of the house. The elders of the tribe said to him, "Just be patient tonight and look into the matter tomorrow—if his servant really has gone and come back, do what you will, but if it is a lie, you will surely be ashamed to have acted this way!"

Moḥammad Karahi relented, realizing that if the populace of Yazd grew dissatisfied with him they would not let him live.

It happened that one of his attendants was a Qezelbāsh, a faithful Ṣufi. When he heard the goings-on, he went by night to Shāh Ne'matollāh's house to tell him what had happened. Shāh Ne'matollāh praised him, awarded him a sum, and asked him to join his retinue. That very night, he gave everything he had to the inhabitants of the neighborhood, packed up his belongings, and headed for Maybod, to the house of Khwājeh Moḥammad Qāsem Maybodi.

In the morning, the news reached Moḥammad Karahi that Shāh Ne'matollāh had fled and likely gone to Eṣfahān, though no one was sure. Moḥammad Karahi's heart burned with anguish; he went to the elders of the tribe and protested, saying, "Last night you would not let me claim what is rightfully mine.

Now how will I get it? It is gone!" He sent people in all directions to find news of where Shāh Ne'matollāh might have gone, and he eventually learned that he had gone in the direction of Maybod.

Moḥammad Karahi immediately raised five thousand men and headed for Maybod, where he surrounded the household of Khwājeh Moḥammad Qāsem. He sent someone inside to Shāh Ne'matollāh to say, "It was futile coming here without giving your daughter to us, trying to get the people of Yazd to say that Moḥammad Karahi is harassing and tormenting one of their elders! Just get up and come join us, and we will go back to Yazd."

Shāh Ne'matollāh said, "Tell Moḥammad Karahi, 'You give us no assurance as to why we should pay up<sup>1</sup> and give our daughter to you! We have brought the girl here to get reimbursed."

No matter how much Moḥammad tried to coax him out of the house, Shāh Ne'matollāh would not agree to come out. So Moḥammad ordered that the perimeter of the house be torn down, and that battle begin. The nobles of Maybod stood their ground, raining arrows and musket-shots down on Moḥammad Karahi's men and killing fifty or sixty of them. Moḥammad Karahi swore to himself that the next day he would cover his head with a shield and not stop fighting until he had taken the girl.

But when morning broke, word came from Yazd that Shāh Esmā'il would arrive there that very day. This news stunned Moḥammad Karahi, who hurried back to Yazd, abandoning his horses and tents and tent-enclosures. Shāh Ne'matollāh took possession of all these things, sending some of them as tribute to the Shāh and keeping some to present later as gifts. As for Moḥammad Karahi, when he arrived at Yazd, he prepared the towers and fortifications and waited.

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<sup>1</sup> *kārsāzi namudeh*