

The Royal Banners Head for Diyārbakr, and Shāh Esmā‘il Does Battle with ‘Alā’oddawleh Dhulqadr

Now when Solṭān Morād escaped from Shāh Esmā‘il’s prison, he went to ‘Alā’oddawleh Dhulqadr. When ‘Alā’oddawleh heard he was coming, he sent his sons and some of the Dhulqadr commanders out to meet him. Having met him, they brought him to the court, where Solṭān Morād beheld an old man as tall as a tower, wearing a crenellated crown and sitting atop a golden throne. Solṭān Morād prostrated himself. ‘Alā’oddawleh was pleased at this deference, since, he thought, this was the rightful king of Iran. ‘Alā’oddawleh welcomed Solṭān Morād and ordered that a seat be brought out for him. He sat down, and ‘Alā’oddawleh treated him kindly and asked about his situation.

Solṭān Morād tore at his breast and cried, “I seek justice from Shaykh-oghli, who has uprooted the house of Ḥasan Pādeshāh!”

“Do not grieve,” ‘Alā’oddawleh replied. “Since our family owes a great deal to Ḥasan Pādeshāh, we shall raise you to eminence. Moreover, we had wished to bequeath our daughter to Alvand Pādeshāh, but since he has been killed, we shall give her to you.”

Solṭān Morād prostrated himself again, and ‘Alā’oddawleh ordered that a time be fixed for his daughter to be pledged to Solṭān Morād. After that, he commanded the Dhulqadr and Torkmāns to prepare for a military review. When everyone had come together for the review, they counted a hundred and twenty thousand men. Solṭān Morād gathered this army and headed for Ādharbāyjān.

Meanwhile, Shāh Esmā‘il had left Moṣul and made the journey to Tabriz. From there he sent out spies in all directions to ascertain whether his enemies were approaching. Some spies returned from Diyārbakr with word that ‘Alā’oddawleh Dhulqadr had given a hundred and twenty thousand men to Solṭān Morād, who was on his way to Ādharbāyjān.

His Majesty ordered the Qezelbāsh troops to ready themselves to move out. With twelve thousand lion-hunting Qezelbāsh he set off for Diyārbakr. When they reached the fortress of Barjuk, which was under the control of ‘Abdāl Solṭān the Torkmān, Esmā‘il ordered that a letter be sent to ‘Abdāl Solṭān which said:

“Since the glorious royal banners have arrived at this fortress, let its leader come out, accept the Twelver sect, and curse the enemies of the faith, rather than place hope in the loftiness of the fortress; your obedience will profit you

in this world and the next. If you come to kiss our royal foot, we shall elevate you to high station. If not, you know what will happen.”

When ‘Abdāl Solṭān got the letter, he sought out his elders and nobles, asking them, “What do you advise?”

They replied, “We are your attendants; whatever you command, we shall obey it.”

‘Abdāl Solṭān said, “I know how to obey better than how to fight.” So he received the Ṣafavid embassy with kindness and respect, saying, “I am a slave of that royal household, and in the morning I shall bring tribute and come to kiss the dust of that heavenly court.”

The embassy returned to Shāh Esmā‘il and reported what had happened. The next day ‘Abdāl Solṭān came out of the fortress, his sword hanging from his neck,¹ with many gifts of jewels and countless items of tribute. These he brought to the world-sheltering court, where he kissed the royal foot. Shāh Esmā‘il ordered that they remove the sword from his neck and place it on his belt. He praised ‘Abdāl Solṭān and gave him a robe of honor, and also honored many of his amirs. Then he said, “We are entrusting control of this fortress to you; you had better get busy with governance.”

‘Abdāl Solṭān said, “I desire to be in the victorious royal stirrup, with my head under the hoof of His Majesty’s steed.” Shāh Esmā‘il was pleased at this and brought him along to Diyārbakr. They stopped two days’ distance from there, for Solṭān Morād and his army had also reached the same place.

Word of the arrival of the Ṣafavid army was sent to ‘Alā’oddawleh. When he got the news, he sent a letter to Shāh Esmā‘il which said:

“We have heard that you are a man and bear a trace of the men of this world. Now you have emerged and taken Iran from the family of Ḥasan Pādeshāh. Since you are part of this lineage and not an outsider, such ruthlessness is not right. If you become as brothers with Solṭān Morād and divide the territory you possess into two parts between you, no enemy will be able to threaten you. I have eighty thousand men of the Dhulqadr and will be your ally; if you need troops, let me know and I will help you. Peace is better than war. But if you ignore and reject my advice, I will teach you a lesson that will serve as an example to other louts.”

When the letter was ready and ‘Alā’oddawleh was about to send someone to deliver it, his son Sāru Aṣlān said, “O father, I will go to the court of Shaykhoghli as an emissary. If possible, I will serve you by taking care of him through combat right there, otherwise I will come back with his response.”

¹ This image recurs frequently in these pages; it was a custom signifying surrender (Floor, *Safavid Government Institutions*, 277).

‘Alā’oddawleh thought to himself, “Perhaps he can take care of this business and get us off the hook.” So he sent Sāru Aṣḷān as his emissary, accompanied by twelve thousand men. When they got near the Shāh’s royal encampment, the news was delivered to Shāh Esmā’il that “Sāru Aṣḷān, the son of ‘Alā’oddawleh Dhulqadr, is coming as an emissary along with twelve thousand mounted men.”

“That ignorant boy is clearly up to something,” said Shāh Esmā’il. He ordered the Qezelbāsh to take up arms and saddle their horses in preparation.

Sāru Aṣḷān arrived at the royal court and saw a young man seated at the entrance who could have inhaled him and his whole army at one go. He ordered his troops to stay mounted and remain outside as he entered the court with forty men. When his eye fell upon Shāh Esmā’il, he saw a face like a lion’s, and he fell to the ground in prostration that very instant. A chair had been set up opposite His Majesty, and Sāru Aṣḷān sat down. As soon as he had recovered his composure, he presented the letter to be read out.

Shāh Esmā’il said, “Bring our blessings to your father, and tell him this: Rulership has been severed from the family of Ḥasan Pādesihāh and has passed to his daughter’s son. Calamity befell them, and it will also afflict anyone who gets too close to them. We have made our emergence on behalf of Almighty God and the Rightly-Guiding Emāms in order to scour the world clean of the people of tyranny. If Solṭān Morād pronounces the words ‘There is no God but God and ‘Ali is His Friend,’ we shall make him our partner in faith and power and divide all the territory we have accumulated into two portions with him. And if you, ‘Alā’oddawleh, also partake in this, you shall be in the security of Almighty God and keep your hereditary land as well as that which you have conquered yourself, and we shall have no quarrel with you. If not, though, the disaster which befell the house of Ḥasan Pādesihāh will overtake you as well.”

When Sāru Aṣḷān heard this, he began to quake from head to toe; his very soul felt trapped in a cage, and he could not say a word in reply. He obtained leave from the Shāh and departed.

When he reached ‘Alā’oddawleh, he was asked, “What happened? What was Shaykh-oghli’s reply?”

“O father,” he replied, “something extraordinary has happened to me, and I have laid eyes on a wonder of gallantry. It would be best if you treat this youth with courtesy, for I was shown the utmost hospitality.” And he related what he had seen.

‘Alā’oddawleh said, “O my son, you were not afraid of Shaykh-oghli, were you?”

Sāru Aṣḷān replied, “If you had seen what I saw, you too would have been afraid.”

At this 'Alā'oddawleh grew angry and left. He then ordered his forces to join with those of Soltān Morād and gave orders that the war-drum be beaten at once.

When word of the approach of 'Alā'oddawleh reached the royal encampment, Shāh Esmā'il ordered that his own war-drum be beaten, and the two armies began to prepare for battle.

Half the night had passed when Esmā'il said to Ḥosayn Beg Laleh, "Tonight I want to walk around in the Qezelbāsh camp." He and Ḥosayn Beg Laleh set off touring the camp market. At the door of every tent they stopped at, they saw Qezelbāsh youths engaged in luxurious enjoyment and preparing their implements of war, and however much His Majesty expected to hear his men saying they needed things, he never did. He gave many thanks, saying, "Praise God that no one is lacking for anything!"

On the way back, they heard a loud ruckus coming from one tent. His Majesty and Ḥosayn Beg Laleh went toward the noise and saw that a group of men whom Esmā'il had raised to high rank were sitting together drinking wine. His Majesty said angrily to Ḥosayn Beg Laleh, "You mean to tell me there is wine in my camp?"

Ḥosayn Beg Laleh replied, "They are simple Qezelbāsh; since tomorrow there will be battle, they are making the most of the night and enjoying themselves."

Shāh Esmā'il stopped to observe this gathering. Suddenly one officer turned to his fellows and said, "Tomorrow I intend to drive myself to the battle-standard of 'Alā'oddawleh, seize him alive, and bring him to His Majesty!" Another one said, "The Shāh has no need of you! By the power of the sword of the Master of the Command, he shall grant the enemy no quarter; he splits his foes from stem to sternum, and if he wishes to take them alive, he does so." Then a third one said, "We wield the swords, but the Shāh takes the glory!" The others exclaimed, "You unworthy Ṣufi! Why do you speak blasphemy? What power do our swords have? The true sword is the sword of the Shāh, which he wields like Dhulfeqār! What is a dust-mote compared to the sun?"

Hearing this, Shāh Esmā'il was incandescent with rage. He was on the verge of bursting in on that gathering to punish that unworthy Ṣufi when Ḥosayn Beg Laleh said, "It's the wine talking; they are not themselves, they're just blustering."

Esmā'il said, "Tomorrow it will be evident who wields the sword, I or they!" Then he left, fuming at the Qezelbāsh. As great men have said:

One young whelp at a gathering
 Can greatly rankle the mind of the wise.²

The next day, those two armies surged into action. ‘Alā’oddawleh took his place at the center of his troops; he gave Solṭān Morād a place at his side and sent nine of his sons to the left and right wings. He divided his hundred and twenty thousand men into five brigades and made sure they were at the peak of order. Shāh Esmā‘il, for his part, took his place at the center of his victorious army, and the banner of “Help from God and speedy victory” rose like the sun. His Majesty placed Abdāl Beg in the right wing and on the left he placed Dadeh Beg Tālesh, while in the vanguard he placed Ḥasan Beg Ḥalvāchi-oghli.

When the ranks were ready and the Qezelbāsh youths were waiting to see whom His Majesty would send into the field, they noticed that his blessed complexion was ablaze with anger. “O Qezelbāsh!” he cried. “You who sit around saying, ‘On the day of battle we fight, but the Shāh takes the glory’—well, here is the battlefield and here is the sword; whoever goes onto the battlefield, good luck to him!”

When they heard this, the Qezelbāsh were ashamed. “What liar could have said such a thing?” they asked. The commanders, chagrined, shook their heads, asking, “Who could have had the temerity to say such a thing?”

“That is exactly what he said,” retorted the Shāh.

Then the vanguard of ‘Alā’oddawleh’s army entered the battlefield, and Ḥasan Beg Ḥalvāchi-oghli set off with the Şafavid vanguard to fight. A number of men on both sides were killed or wounded, and the armies pulled back. For three days the two armies clashed on the battlefield, but neither could defeat the other.

Finally, on the third day, Shāh Esmā‘il said, “O Qezelbāsh! Now it is clear who does the fighting, me or you! You have been fighting for three days and have accomplished nothing!” He summoned Solṭān Ebrāhim Mirzā and selected two thousand men from among the Qezelbāsh, saying, “Anyone besides these two thousand men who even takes a step shall be an enemy of the house of Shaykh Şafi and unworthy to be a Şufi.” The Qezelbāsh all stood in their places without moving a muscle.

Shāh Esmā‘il entrusted himself to the God of the eighteen thousand worlds, then drew his world-conquering sword from its scabbard and charged onto the battlefield, where he killed a number of the enemy vanguard. Solṭān Ebrāhim Mirzā, too, rushed to the forefront of the army. They killed or wounded many of the enemy, who retreated in defeat to their brigade. Shāh Esmā‘il pursued

² From the *Golestān* of Sa’di (chapter 2, tale no. 5).

them, defeating the first brigade and chasing them back to the second. The marketplace of strife and chaos did a brisk business as Esmā‘il split in two everyone whom he struck with his sword. Finally, after breaking through several brigades, he drove on to the final brigade, where ‘Alā’oddawleh and Solṭān Morād were, killing and wounding as he went.

‘Alā’oddawleh said to Solṭān Morād, “Do you see that Qezelbāsh youth and the havoc he is wreaking?”

Solṭān Morād looked and, recognizing the Shāh, said, “I have seen him many times; this young man whom you see is none other than Shaykh-oghli. There is no place for us here now; we had better follow the army in retreat.”

Shāh Esmā‘il, having defeated that army, made his way to the base of its battle-standard. Since he did not see ‘Alā’oddawleh or Solṭān Morād, he asked where they were. He was told, “When your insignia appeared, they and their men retreated.” Then His Majesty overturned the Dhulqadr battle-standard. When the Qezelbāsh saw the enemy banner thus overthrown, they leaped from their places and rushed at the enemy troops, defeating them through the grace of the Creator of the world. The army of the Dhulqadr scattered in retreat.

Seeing this, ‘Alā’oddawleh and Solṭān Morād ran away along the road leading to the fortress of Darnāgawhar. After they had left, Shāh Esmā‘il entered the camp of ‘Alā’oddawleh in glory and victory, fortune and felicity, and his victorious troops set about plundering the goods and possessions of the Dhulqadr and Torkmān armies.

When Shāh Esmā‘il had ascertained that ‘Alā’oddawleh had fled to the fortress of Darnāgawhar, he granted governorship of Diyārbakr to Moḥammad Khān Ostājlu and set off with his troops after ‘Alā’oddawleh and Solṭān Morād. He ordered Ḥosayn Beg Laleh to take two thousand men as far as the river Darnā and not to let the enemy establish a crossing. Ḥosayn Beg went and set up camp there.

Now when ‘Alā’oddawleh reached the fortress of Darnāgawhar, he told his son Sāru Aşlān to take two thousand men and go to the shore of the river Darnā to prevent “Shaykh-oghli’s” army from crossing. But when Sāru Aşlān got to the river with his army, he saw that the Qezelbāsh had already arrived and set up their encampment on the other side. So he ordered his own men to set up their camp.

Ḥosayn Beg Laleh, out of caution, assigned four thousand Qezelbāsh to patrol the shore, telling them to alert him if the enemy made a move.

After twenty days had passed, Sāru Aşlān had a dream in which he saw that it was necessary to launch a surprise night-raid on the Qezelbāsh. So in the middle of the night he had his men prepare a boat, and once across the river,

they drew the sword of vengeance and fell upon their enemies. A great tumult broke out, and the Qezelbāsh, jerked awake, were at a loss as those villains laid them low with their swords. Initially caught unawares, those four thousand Qezelbāsh soon realized that the army of Sāru Aşlān had crossed the river and were attacking their camp.

Now when Ḥosayn Beg Laleh heard the tumult, he thought: "If the enemy were on the march, surely a little bird would have told me." So he thought nothing of it. Just then, though, word arrived that Sāru Aşlān was raiding the Qezelbāsh camp, and he let out a cry. He had no choice but to jump on his horse and ride into the camp, striving mightily to get the Qezelbāsh to mount up and shouting, "Our only hope is to flee!" He thought this because many of the Qezelbāsh were wounded and many had run away; some were stupefied with panic.

The enemy was fully armed and ready for battle, and they rampaged through the camp wreaking havoc with their swords. As the Qezelbāsh prepared to retreat, they saw that the army of the Dhulqadr had surrounded them, and Ḥosayn Beg Laleh realized that it was useless to flee—the whole army was going to be killed. Nevertheless, they fought to escape until dawn broke. Ḥosayn Beg and the Qezelbāsh managed to break through one wing of the Dhulqadr forces, and they headed for the royal camp.

It happened that Ḥosayn Beg got separated as he fled. When Sāru Aşlān saw the Qezelbāsh army getting away, he cried to his men, "Don't let them escape!" and rode off to find Ḥosayn Beg. Spotting an old man in jewelled clothing fleeing alone on a swift horse, he said to himself, "Surely this is a Qezelbāsh commander!" He spurred on his horse, charged ahead, and thrust his spear into the links of Ḥosayn Beg's belt, pulling that elderly Şufi from his saddle. Sāru Aşlān was about to dismount and behead him, but as fortune would have it, a servant of Ḥosayn Beg's named Fulād Beg was nearby. Seeing his master thrown from his horse, he rushed over to help. He helped Ḥosayn Beg back into his saddle and said, "You go, and will I cover your escape; if I am killed, may you and His Majesty prosper!"

Sāru Aşlān saw a young Qezelbāsh helping the old man mount up and get away. He said, "Young man, that wasn't your father, was it?" Fulād Beg replied, "That was the tutor (*laleh*) of His Majesty the Shāh!"

When Sāru Aşlān heard the word *laleh*, he spurred his horse, saying to himself, "Who cares about this young Qezelbāsh? I have to take care of Ḥosayn Beg Laleh!" He took off in pursuit of him, but Fulād Beg shot an arrow at his horse which knocked it right off its feet. Sāru Aşlān was left standing. Fulād Beg was advancing to knock him down as well when a group of Dhulqadr soldiers arrived. They formed a ring around Sāru Aşlān, protecting him as they helped

him mount another horse. Then he said to Fulād Beg, "You have let my prey escape from my grasp; now I will punish you for it!"

Fulād Beg saw two or three Dhulqadr troops dismount at the command of Šāru Aşlān. So he hurried over to his Arabian mare, jumped into the saddle, and knocked those men off their feet. Then he sped away.

Sāru Aşlān bit his fingers in amazement, saying, "These Qezelbāsh are amazing!" Then he returned to the Qezelbāsh camp, where he entered the tent of Ḥosayn Beg Laleh. The Dhulqadr were busy plundering and dividing up the goods of the Qezelbāsh; they gave that which had belonged to Ḥosayn Beg Laleh to Sāru Aşlān.

The royal encampment had been erected some four leagues from the river Darnā. That night one of the Şufi youths went there to bring the news of the attack of Sāru Aşlān and the flight of the Qezelbāsh. The news was brought to the attention of Shāh Esmā'il right away.

Esmā'il was shocked. "God forbid that Ḥosayn Beg Laleh have been killed!" he said. That very hour he and the royal army mounted up and headed for the river Darnā. They had gone a ways when Ḥosayn Beg Laleh appeared. After kissing the royal foot, he told His Majesty about Sāru Aşlān's night-raid. Esmā'il said, "O my tutor, don't be unhappy; sometimes fighting results in victory, sometimes in defeat." Then he rode off.

When he reached the camp of the Dhulqadr, where Sāru Aşlān had seated himself in Ḥosayn Beg Laleh's tent, His Majesty ordered that the war-trumpets be sounded. He and the Qezelbāsh surrounded the enemy and, drawing their swords with shouts of manliness, they fell upon the Dhulqadr, killing and wounding a great number.

When Sāru Aşlān realized what was happening, he mounted his horse and hastened to the shore of the river, where the Dhulqadr had left their boat. A group of his men had just caught up with him when he crossed the river, scuttled the boat, and ran off to join 'Alā'oddawleh. The Dhulqadr, left behind and terrified of Shāh Esmā'il, jumped into the river and were drowned.

At daybreak, one of Sāru Aşlān's men went into the presence of 'Alā'oddawleh. There he announced a victory, and they beat the drums to signal the good news. But in the afternoon the news arrived that Shāh Esmā'il had fallen upon Sāru Aşlān and defeated him, and that many of the Dhulqadr had been killed; Sāru Aşlān had fled, and now here he was!

'Alā'oddawleh rebuked the Dhulqadr troops, saying, "What happened to your nerve? Whenever you fight, you are defeated and run away!"

After defeating Sāru Aşlān, Shāh Esmā'il prepared some boats and crossed the river Darnā with his troops, soon arriving at the foot of Mount Darnā. When they looked they saw a mountain as lofty as the inclinations of the

noble, whose peak brushed up against the celestial sphere itself. A fortress of utter impregnability had been built on its peak, with but one road leading up to it. Shāh Esmā'il regretted coming to this place, since it was in Anatolia and taking that fortress was going to be difficult.