

Qarākhān Attacks Arzenjān, and Moḥammad Khān Sends Solṭān Bāyazid of Anatolia an Envoy with Women's Clothing

Qarākhān took that army across the river Barjuk, and wherever they went, the people took their sons and daughters up into the mountains, fearing the swords of the Qezelbāsh. The Qezelbāsh plundered their wealth and property and flocks and herds. When they got to within five leagues of Arzenjān, they sent word to the ruler there that Qarākhān was on his way with an ocean-like army to invade the place.

It had been two days since Salim had left. The pāshā of Arzenjān told his men to go out and tell everyone in the region to come quickly, lest the Qezelbāsh attack. Everyone who had a horse went out and spread the word far and wide that soldiers should come from the frontiers to the aid of Arzenjān; if they would remain at the foot of the fortress for a while, the army could come to the aid of the inhabitants and keep them out of danger.

When Qarākhān arrived in front of the fortress of Arzenjān, he saw that they had shut its gates tightly and filled the moat with water. He left six thousand of his men to keep watch, and sent six thousand more with Aḥmad Solṭān Qājār, telling him to go plunder Tuqāt. Aḥmad Solṭān went there and seized numerous cows and sheep and boys and girls over the course of fifteen days. After that he headed off to Diyārbakr, laden with countless prisoners and plunder.

Khān Moḥammad Khān, meanwhile, had recovered from his fever by the time Aḥmad Solṭān arrived with all that booty. The Khān took a fifth of it, and they also set some of it aside for the Perfect Guide, Shāh Esmā'il. They sent the boys of Yusof-like beauty and the girls with glowing cheeks to the court which is the center of the world, and the remainder they kept for the Qezelbāsh.

Now the people of that frontier region sent word to the Qayṣar that Qarākhān had come and shown such daring in retaliation for Solṭān Salim's raid, turning all of Arzenjān upside down. The Qayṣar cried out and rounded on Salim, saying, "You have ensnared yourself in the wrath of God—what am I going to do with you? Thanks to your evil fate, thousands of 'sons of the Solṭān' have been carried off!¹ Who knows if you will get one in ten of them out of Diyārbakr? Your misfortune has laid all of Arzenjān low."

Solṭān Salim said, "The affairs of world-rulers are such that they kill our people and we theirs, until the affair reaches its end."

¹ Probably meaning "Ottoman subjects."

Meanwhile, Moḥammad Khān had all of Diyārbakr in his power. Yet his ambition was not stirred, since he had a son-in-law's loyalty to the Shāh. Wherever that valor and that army turned, conquest and victory came out to greet them. It occurred to Moḥammad Khān that he should teach the Qayṣar a lesson, so that henceforth he would prevent his son from daring to do such things again. He sent for Morād Beg, whom he had surnamed "Solṭāni." Morād Beg came and said, "May I be a sacrifice to you! What is the lofty command?"

Moḥammad Khān said, "You shall go to the assembly of the Qayṣar of Rum. Do not worry about the wicked Salim, but present to the Qayṣar what I give you without fail. If you remain alive, come back; if you are killed, you shall achieve that which you desire, seek, and wish for, as do all Ṣufis."

Morād Beg said, "In the name of God, as the Khān orders."

"You are indeed honorable," the Khān replied.

As he had been commanded to, Morād Beg made preparations, gathering thirty brave and highly experienced Ostājlu men. After ten days he reported to the Khān with those men, all decked out in splendid clothing and bejewelled turbans.

"May God's compassion go with you," said the Khān. Then he said, "Have them bring it in!" They brought a bundle of superb brocade whose contents no one knew. The Khān told Morād Beg, "When you have entered the Solṭān's court and the feasting has ended, he will ask you for a letter. You will stand up with the bundle in your hand, go up to the Qayṣar, and say, 'The letter is in here, along with a humble little gift.' Then you will sit back down."

"As the Khān orders," said Morād Beg. He then took the bundle and set off.

Some days later, word reached the Qayṣar that an envoy was coming. Thinking the envoy was surely sent by "Shaykh-oghli," they went out to greet him. How could they suspect that Khān Moḥammad Khān had sent him! Surely none but Shāh Esmā'il Bahādor Khān had any business sending an envoy to the Qayṣar. No pādeshāhs sent envoys to the Qayṣars of Rum; rather, they dispatched messengers.² The Qayṣar who sent an envoy to Iran was Solṭān Solaymān, who sent his companion Senān Pāshā as an envoy, along with two hundred thousand *ashrafis* and numberless gifts, to commemorate the accession of Shāh Ṭahmāsp. In a word, the Anatolians never sent any other envoys to Iran or Turan. The Europeans sent an envoy, and look what news they sent with him.

² The word used in the text is *chāvush*, which Montazer Ṣāḥeb (p. 641) glosses as a Turkish word for the messenger that one sovereign sends to another of greater rank. Sending an envoy (*ilchi*) would thus imply equality between the two rulers.

Anyway, the Anatolians came out to meet Morād Beg and escorted him into the royal compound. After three days they prepared the Qayşar's court and brought Morād Beg in. No one knew yet that he was the envoy of Khān Moḥammad Khān. When the feast was cleared away, the Solṭāns and pāshās of Anatolia all sat in their places and waited to see what Shāh Esmā'il could have written. Solṭān Salim, too, waited with bated breath to see what it could be.

Morād Beg was a wise and prudent man; he said to himself, "However it may be, the Qayşar is the Solṭān of the Two Continents and Lord of the Two Seas, Servant of the Two Noble Shrines and Second Alexander; I must give him the bundle in secret, as it is not good to do it in sight of all." He stood up and placed that bundle at the foot of the Qayşar's throne, saying, "This is a gift that Khān Moḥammad Khān, governor of Diyārbakr, has sent with his petition. Let the Qayşar open the bundle in private. What happens next is in the hands of that sovereign."

When the Solṭān heard this, he realized that it was not good news. He ordered the attendant to take the bundle away. Then he dismissed Morād Beg, who exited the court and went back to where he was staying. When the Qayşar went into his private quarters and opened the bundle, he saw a woman's head-dress and mantle and veil and anklet and blouse and dress, together with a letter which read: "Let it be known to the Qayşar and his son Salim that if you do not come and fight face-to-face, you or your son, then you should sit in the harem wearing these clothes and not call yourself a man any longer!"

The Qayşar felt faint; he said, "May God have mercy on that Qezelbāsh youth, who did not open this bundle at court and did not disgrace me in view of the solṭāns and pāshās of Anatolia! I know that that crazy lord of his must have told him not to do so. God bless you, tomorrow I am going to rescue you from the grave!" He was very happy that Salim had not seen it. Then he said to his attendant, "If I hear that you mentioned this to Salim or anyone else, I will tear you limb from limb."

"How could I say anything?" replied the attendant.

When the Qayşar returned to the court, Salim asked him, "O father, what was it?"

The Qayşar replied, "O my dear, your father will tell you, but at the right time."

"Was it a letter from the Shāh or a petition from the Khān?" asked Salim.

"No letter came from the Shāh," replied the Qayşar. "Khān Moḥammad wrote a message from the Shāh in the form of a petition."

Salim said, "Don't tell me the Shāh was unaware of this envoy, that Khān Moḥammad Khān sent him on his own initiative, and that this mere servant

dared to do such a thing as have us show honor to his envoy! If that is the case, say the word, and I will go tear that envoy limb from limb!"

"No, my son," replied the Qayşar, "Khān Moḥammad Khān does not have such power; the envoy was not sent on his behalf." Salim believed him.

The next day, the Qayşar sent for the envoy of "Shaykh-oghli." A group went and said curtly, "Envoy, get up! The Solţān wants you!"

Morād Beg knew that the Qayşar was going to rip him apart. Resigned to his fate, he got up and went to the court with five of his men. When they arrived, he said to them, "If they kill me and come to kill you, put up such a fight that you redeem your own blood." Then, as he entered the court, he prostrated himself and approached the throne, facing the Qayşar such that if he issued an order for anyone to kill him, he could reach his sword and fight.

"Envoy," said the Qayşar, "sit down."

Morād Beg prostrated himself again and then sat down, looking at the Qayşar.

The Qayşar made a sign at him with the corner of his eyebrow as if to say, "Don't worry! You are of good character; you fulfilled your mission elegantly, without disgracing me." Then he said, "O envoy, go to Khān Moḥammad Khān and tell him that Shaykh-oghli had complained about my son, and Khān Moḥammad had written a petition to us as well stating that he would not take the two or three raids that the frontier soldiers had made on Salim's orders as a pretext for vengeance, but the Qayşar should prevent his son from making such raids anymore. Let it be thus. Our other attendants will keep him in line, and we will not allow him to take such actions." He also had them bring a robe of honor for Morād Beg. Then he dismissed him, saying that Salim should not find out he was leaving, lest he try to stop him.

Morād Beg put on the robe of honor, then, having been dismissed, he left for Diyārbakr. When he arrived at the court of Khān Moḥammad Khān, he related all that he had done and said and heard.

Khān Moḥammad regretted what he had done, and was worried lest the Shāh hear of it, for he would surely be upset. He was still thinking about it when Morād Beg explained how the bundle had been taken out to be opened, and thus hidden from the Qayşar's son. The Khān praised Morād Beg highly for this.

But it happened that six months later, Solţān Salim realized that his father was hiding something from him. He said to himself, "Surely Shaykh-oghli's servant sent that letter and bundle on his own initiative." He went to his father's attendant and said, "Boy, you know that my father has no other son but me, and he has become old. Tomorrow, when I become Solţān, I will make you a high-ranking pāshā if you tell me what I want to know."

The attendant said, "He didn't show the letter to me; it was in Persian script, and the Qayṣar read it, but he did not tell me what it said. When he read it, I couldn't tell whether he was wounded or happy."

"Tell me the truth," said Salim; "what was in the bundle?"

The attendant replied, "He opened the bundle himself, and put the contents in a trunk; I don't know what they were."

Salim said, "You are lying!" But no matter how much he demanded that the boy tell him the truth, he kept refusing. Finally, Salim drew his dagger and lunged at him, saying, "I swear, if you don't tell me, I'll cut your head off!"

When the boy saw that he was going to be killed, he said, "If I tell you, your father will kill me."

Salim said, "I will put you somewhere where my father cannot reach you."

So the boy told him everything. Salim handed him over to one of his own attendants, then got up and went to his father's court, where he sat angry and brooding.

"O my son," the Qayṣar said, "where have you been, and why are you upset?"

Salim replied, "How could I not be upset at your incompetence? Khān Moḥammad, the servant of Shāh Esmā'il, had no business sending you an envoy! How will we erase this dishonor?"

The Qayṣar said, "O my son, keep your voice down!"

Salim completely lost control of himself and shouted so loudly that all the officials heard, and a great tumult broke out in the court. You shall hear what Salim did to his father.