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MIR ABU AL-QASIM NAMAKIN: A Critique of his Career and Achievements

Mir Abu al-Qasim Namakin, the progenitor of the Qasimkhani and Mirkhani Sayyids of Sind, who in the subsequent years of his career blossomed into a seasoned soldier, shrewd commander, astute administrator, prolific writer and an enlightened builder, was the first person of his family to set foot on Indian soil. He traced his origin to a distinguished branch of Husayni Sayyids of Harat whose main task was to look after the Shrine of the eighth Shi'i Imam, 'Ali al-Rida¹ (d. 203/818) at Mashhad in eastern Iran. The rise to power of Shaybani Khan Uzbek² in 906/1500-1 in Central Asia, heralded an era of strife and turmoil which lasted for a long time. An empire builder cast in the mould of his ancestor, Chingiz Khan, Shaybani overran Samarqand, Bukhara, Tashqand and Farghana in quick succession and gradually brought the whole of Khurasan under his sway. In 913/1507-8 he wrested Harat from the weak hands of the imbecile and mutually warring descendants of Sultan Husayn Bayqara,³ but within a span of three years in 916/1510 lost it to his sworn enemy the Safawid dynast Shah Isma'il⁴ in a fierce battle in which he was killed and his body was hacked to pieces to be dispatched to different parts of the Safawid empire. His head was stuffed with straw and sent to the Ottoman Sultan Bayazid II (886-918/1481-1512) at Constantinople, his skull was converted into a drinking-cup as a trophy of war for the vindictive conqueror,⁵ and a hand was conveyed by a special messenger to Aqa Rustam Ruzafzun, the ruler of Mazandaran, who had boasted of his alliance with him on a previous occasion.⁶ The fall of Harat to the Shi'ite Qizilbashs was certainly a bitter pill to swallow for the overwhelmingly Sunni populace of this beleaguered city and brought in its wake an unprecedented wave of religious persecution. Until the middle of the 10th/16th century the entire region of Khurasan, and especially Harat, was several times almost alternately harried by the Uzbek and Qizilbash hordes. The frequent fanatic outrages of the contending parties against the people of the opposite sectarian denominations,⁷ constant uncertainty and persistent threat to life and property resulted in a huge exodus of the local population. Included in this uninterrupted stream of refugees was one Mulla Mir Sabzwari,⁸ a man of scholarly background as is indicated by his title,⁹ resident of Bujaq,¹⁰ a dependency of Harat, whose future generations were destined to rise to the highest glory under the Mughul Emperors of India. Like numerous other displaced persons, Mulla Mir and his dependants also trekked to the south-eastern marches of the erstwhile Timurid kingdom of Harat. When his caravan reached the outskirts of Qandahar, the Mulla suddenly passed away.¹¹ Thereafter what befell his family, friends and relatives who accompanied him on this arduous journey is now difficult to ascertain. All that can be established on the basis of the *Dhakhirat al-Khwanin* is that the Mulla's son, Mir Abu al-Qasim at some stage travelled to Kabul and entered the service of Mirza Muhammad Hakim¹² (d. 993/1585), the half-brother of Akbar who ruled virtually as the king of that territory.¹³ The tiny

principality of Kabul, however, proved too small for the realization of the dreams of the exuberant Abu al-Qasim who, either impelled by his spirit of enterprise or forced by some developments at Kabul, or because of both, moved farther afield and waited upon Akbar, at Lahore,¹⁴ who in due course bestowed upon him Bhera and Khushab, in the Punjab, as *jagir*.¹⁵ The grant of these important frontier outposts in the direction of Kabul with whose ruler Akbar's relations were certainly far from cordial, to somebody who had only recently emigrated from that kingdom was in sharp contrast to the cautious policy of Akbar¹⁶ and his successors in similar situations and as such, spoke volumes for the trust Akbar reposed in the loyalty and talent of this new emigre to his court. Though the circumstances of the Mir's defection to the rival court might also have contributed to this extraordinary favour, yet there is little doubt that he was fully conversant with the tact and finesse which were an essential part of court life and etiquette. Taking advantage of the proximity of his *jagir* to the Salt Range in the Sind Sagar Doab, to emphasize his faithfulness to Akbar, the Mir presented to him a cup and a plate¹⁷ and some other utensils¹⁸ and thus made a subtle allusion to the fact that he would remain loyal to his salt.¹⁹ The shrewd monarch also reciprocated in the same light-hearted manner and favoured him with the nickname of *Namakin*,²⁰ an appropriate acknowledgement of his noble sentiments and the ingenuity with which he had exhibited them to the Emperor. Henceforward the cognomen of *Namakin* became an inseparable part of Abu al-Qasim's name.

After the consolidation of his power at the centre, Akbar looked forward to extending the boundaries of his empire to the sea and for a number of reasons Gujarat, which had been under the sway of Humayun for a short time, seemed just an ideal place to start with his expansionist programme.²¹ It is in connection with this campaign that for the first time Mir Namakin's name is seen in the Mughul chronicles. Akbar departed from Patan on his way to Ahmadabad on 7 Rajab 980/13 November 1572. As he approached Chotana it was brought to his notice that Sultan Muzaffar Gujarati was wandering in a distracted state in that vicinity. The Emperor immediately dispatched Mir Khan Yasawul and Farid Qarawul to investigate the matter and hot on their heels sent Mir Namakin and Karim 'Ali for the same purpose. However, in the meantime, Mir Khan discovered Sultan Muzaffar, who was hiding in a corn-field, and presented him before Akbar.²² The available sources shed no light whatsoever on the subsequent activities of Mir Namakin, but presumably he participated in various expeditions associated with Akbar's campaign for the conquest of Gujarat and returned to Fathpur Sikri with the royal entourage on 2 Safar 981/3 June 1573.²³

Akbar's departure for Gujarat coincided with the death of Sulayman Kararani, the Afghan ruler of Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa and the news of this occurrence arrived in the Imperial camp when the Emperor was well on his way to Gujarat. Although a large number of nobles counselled Akbar to turn his reins to the eastern provinces, he preferred to press on with the Gujarat campaign. Mun'im Khan Khan-i Khanan was, however, directed to take necessary measures for the annexation of those regions to the Mughul empire.²⁴ Sulayman was succeeded by his elder son, Bayazid who in sharp contrast to the policy of appeasement successfully followed by his father towards the Mughuls over a

number of years, assumed all the insignia of royalty and ordered the recitation of *khutba* and striking of coins in his own name. Though the Bengal nobility soon supplanted him with his younger brother Da'ud, the policy initiated under his reign was not at all modified.²⁵ In fact, emboldened by the enormous military might Sulayman Kararani had bequeathed to his sons, Da'ud went even a step further and occupied the fort of Zamaniya²⁶ on the frontiers of Jaunpur. The hostilities which ensued this incident lasted for almost four years, during which Akbar personally supervised the reduction of the forts of Hajjipur and Patna in 982/1574.²⁷ This was followed a few months later by the famous battle of Tukaroi²⁸ between the Afghans and the Mughuls. Included in the left wing of the Mughul army,²⁹ Mir Namakin, together with other generals, played a crucial role in turning the imminent Afghan victory into a disastrous defeat for the enemy.³⁰ The smouldering embers of Afghan disaffection, nevertheless, continued to flash intermittently until finally Da'ud was captured and decapitated on 15 Rabi II 984/12 July 1576³¹ and with that Mir Namakin's association with the war efforts came full circle. The court chronicler Abu al-Fadl, quite naturally, does not mention him by name at the turn of every event, but the available references in the *Akbar Nama* leave little doubt about the significance of his contributions. He seems to have generally served under the command of Raja Todar Mal, and barring the mishap in the surprise attack of Junayd Kararani,³² a cousin of Da'ud,³³ on the Imperialist troops, the Mir fully justified the confidence placed in him by his colleagues and superiors. Nevertheless, a vague remark of Shaykh Farid Bhakkari suggests that sometime during this protracted warfare against Da'ud a golden elephant-chain was found in the Mir's house, as a consequence of which he suffered a setback in his frequent access (*qurb*) to the Emperor.³⁴ The author of the *Ma'athir al-Umara'* also, like numerous other extracts from the *Dhakhirat al-Khwanin*, of Shaykh Farid Bhakkari, without any acknowledgement, reproduces the above remark.³⁵ However, without attributing any motives to the aforementioned authorities, in the absence of any corroborative evidence in the relatively more contemporary sources, such as the *Akbar Nama*, the *Tabaqat-i Akbari*, or the *Muntakhab al-Tawarikh*, and particularly bearing in mind the glowing and unconditional tribute paid by Akbar to the Mir at the time of the latter's subsequent appointment to Bhakkar, to the effect that "right from the beginning of his service until the time of the issuance of this *farman* every assignment that was entrusted to him, he accomplished it to the august conscience's satisfaction,"³⁶ all that can be surmised is that either Shaykh Farid was misinformed, or, if there was any basis for such a report, the Mir succeeded in clearing his name honourably before long.

In the wake of Akbar's important administrative and financial reforms which were grossly mismanaged by his officers and greatly detested by his nobles, and as a direct consequence of a shift over the years in his religious beliefs and policies which in the eyes of his opponents and the orthodoxy verged on apostasy, when his court, and especially the eastern provinces of Bengal and Bihar became a hotbed of seditious conspiracy, intrigue and armed insurrection, and the possibility, though a remote one, of his ambitious half-brother, Mirza Muhammad Hakim, supplanting Akbar on the throne of India seriously stared in the face of the Emperor,³⁷ the gallant Mir Abu al-Qasim Namakin is once again seen stalking across the bloody scene in Bengal. Here he served in

the Imperial army which inflicted a crushing blow on Ma'sum Khan Frankhudi, one of the chief rebels.³⁸ Similarly, subsequent to two successive inroads of Mirza Muhammad Hakim's generals into the Indian territory³⁹ and then the Mirza's own abortive attempt at taking Lahore by storm,⁴⁰ when Akbar finally mustered and led probably the greatest army of his entire career⁴¹ against the ruler of Kabul, at a time when the line of distinction between the loyal and the otherwise in the Imperial camp had become extremely blurred,⁴² the Mir in consonance with his brilliant record of fidelity to his master, was one of the outstanding generals who were chosen to spearhead the royal march upon Kabul under the command of Prince Murad.⁴³ These men, supported by dedicated troops, after a stubbornly fought battle victoriously entered Kabul and stamped out the Mirza's rebellion once and for all. As far as the significance of the successful culmination of this campaign against Mirza Hakim is concerned, V. A. Smith has aptly remarked that now "Akbar could feel that he had put all enemies under his feet, that his life and throne were secure, and that he could do what he pleased in religion and all other matters of internal administration. The success of the Kabul expedition gave him an absolutely free hand for the rest of his life, and may be regarded as the climax of his career. His power was now established so firmly that he was able to take extraordinary liberties with his people and defy criticism with absolute impunity."⁴⁴

Consequently upon Mirza Muhammad Hakim's death on 16 Amurdad 993/7 August⁴⁵ 1585 when Kabul became a province of the Mughul empire,⁴⁶ the need for restraining the vigorous spirit of independence of the Afghans, particularly the Yusufza'is, who inhabited and virtually controlled the highway to and from Kabul, became all the more imperative. During Akbar's last march to Kabul some of their chiefs had waited upon the Emperor and promised to behave in the future. One of these latter, Kalu by name was shown great consideration by the Emperor and was even inducted into Imperial service. The Yusufza'is, however, soon resumed their predatory activities and Kalu escaped from the court. He was, however, recaptured at Attock and sent back to court, but he again fled to his home country and assumed the leadership of the Afghans.⁴⁷

During his sojourn at Rawalpindi, on 9 Day 994/30 December 1585 the Emperor on the one hand dispatched Zayn Khan Kuka to chastise the Yusufza'is and conquer Swat and Bajaur, and on the other, entrusted Isma'il Quli Khan, Abu al-Qasim Namakin, Ra'i Ra'isingh and others, with the important task of subduing the refractory tribes of Baluchistan.⁴⁸ The Baluchs submitted after a brief resistance and on 19 Farwardin 994/8 April 1586 the victorious Mughul army under the command of Isma'il Quli Khan waited upon the Emperor at Attock and produced before him such Baluch chiefs as Ghazi Khan, Chita, Bahadur Khan, Nusrat Khan and Ibrahim Khan.⁴⁹ The Emperor honoured them with robes and horses and restored them to their respective territories.⁵⁰ This coincided with the adoption of large-scale punitive measures against the Yusufza'is, who though initially chastised by Zayn Khan Kuka, had inflicted a crushing blow on the Imperial troops and killed as many as 500 men including Raja Birbar, a boon-companion of Akbar. The shock was so astounding that Akbar dispatched Prince Murad at the head of an expedition against the Yusufza'is.⁵¹ However, the Prince was later replaced by Raja Todar Mal, who in due course gave his place to Raja Man Singh⁵² and himself returned to court.

Subsequently, when Man Singh was also ordered to proceed to Kabul, the command of the campaign was entrusted to Isma'il Quli Khan, and distinguished commanders, such as Madhu Singh, Sa'id Khan Gakhkhar, Mir Abu al-Qasim Namakin, &c., were sent to accompany him.⁵³ The measures taken by Isma'il Quli Khan and his companions coupled with the scarcity of food and outbreak of some mysterious disease among the Afghans, reduced the latter to severe straits and Afghan chiefs Sultan Quraysh, Bustan, Kalu and Sultan Bayazid, came out of the hill country and pleaded with Isma'il Quli Khan for his intercession with the Emperor on their behalf.⁵⁴ Nevertheless, this partial success of the Mughul arms failed to drive home the advantage of peace with the Mughuls to the vast population of the sturdy Yusufza'is spread over a considerable part of the difficult hill terrain spanning the region between Kabul and the Indus. To make matters more confused the Raushana'iyya⁵⁵ leader Jalala fled from Tirah and took refuge with the Yusufza'is.⁵⁶ This sparked off a series of new military initiatives against the latter. Akbar ordered Zayn Khan Kuka to march upon Swat and Bajaur from Kabul. The Imperial troops stationed at Jamrud and Bangash were put on the alert against the possibility of Jalala's flight through those parts and Isma'il Quli Khan was ordered to proceed to Qibla Ayazi from Ohind and keep an eye on Ashanghar.⁵⁷ Sadiq Khan was dispatched from court to take up position in the plain of Swat and a body of troops under the command of Jagan Nath was rushed to reinforce Zayn Khan.⁵⁸

Sadiq Khan's arrival at the war front offended Isma'il Quli Khan who left unattended the path to Tirah and returned to court.⁵⁹ His departure however had no ostensible effect on such fellow commanders as Mir Namakin, because when Asaf Khan was sent to take the place of Isma'il Quli, it appears, their services were also put at his command. Meanwhile Jalala fled towards Kabul and his family was delivered up to the Mughuls by the Afghans.⁶⁰ This was followed by the conquest of Bajaur by Zayn Khan Kuka, who shortly afterwards, with the help of Jagan Nath and Asaf Khan, established Mughul control over Swat. After the fall of Swat Asaf Khan took leave to return to court and from Malakand went off his post. Mir Namakin was also about to follow suit when the Afghans led by Muhammad Bahri and Malik Asghar launched a surprise attack on Sarobi. The Mir who was soon joined by Shir Khan, fought manfully and inflicted grievous loss on the Afghan adventurers.⁶¹

Towards the close of Amurdat 997/August 1589 when Akbar on his way back from Kashmir was just about to enter the valley of Mastang, the Mir arrived from Swat, together with the rebel Yusufza'i chief Kalu, who in desperation had sought asylum with him, and waited upon the Emperor near the tomb of the latter's favourite pigeon-fancier Khwaja Sandal, and did his homage. Thanks to the good offices of the Mir, Kalu who had a long record of flouting Mughul authority was spared his life and sent to prison⁶² and the Mir, it seems, once again returned to Swat or thereabouts.

On 15 Farwardin 1001/4 April 1596 the Mir returned from his *tuyul* somewhere in the north-west and obtained the privilege of an audience with the Emperor.⁶³ Shortly before him, the Khan-i Khanan 'Abd al-Rahim Khan had also returned from Sind with Mirza Jani Beg Tarkhan, the vanquished ruler of Thatta.⁶⁴ Consequently, the regions of Multan and Bhakkar which had till then been in the *jagir* of the Khan-i Khanan in order

to facilitate his campaign against the lower Sind, were now distributed by the Emperor between Mirza Jani Beg Tarkhan and Mir Abu al-Qasim Namakin. The Tarkhan chief received a *mansab* of 3,000 and was appointed the governor of Multan,⁶⁵ while the *sarkar* of Bhakkar, except for the *parganas* of Darbela, Kakri, and Chanduka, which were already in the *jagir* of Mir Ma'sum Bhakkari,⁶⁶ passed under Mir Namakin as his new *jagir* and he was also made responsible for the maintenance and defence of the fort of Bhakkar. Besides, all the *jagirdars* of the area, and of the surrounding regions, were instructed to extend all possible help to the Mir in his efforts to crush refractory elements.⁶⁷

It was during his stay at Bhakkar that Mir Namakin, together with Sayyid Baha' al-Din Bukhari, the *tuyuldar* of Uchh, Bakhtiyar Beg, the *iqta'dar* of Siwistan, Mir Ma'sum, and other soldiers from the province of Multan, was ordered to lead a punitive expedition against the Panni Afghans of Siwi. Siwi was a frontier outpost which lay on the route to Qandahar whose possession had developed into an issue of honour and prestige between the rulers of two mighty empires of Asia, Iran and India. Hence its strategic importance from the Mughul point of view could hardly be overestimated. Traditionally, it was a dependency of Bhakkar, but encouraged by the weakness of the successive *jagirdars* of Bhakkar, it had gradually slipped out of the Mughul control. Sayyid Muhammad Mir 'Adl reasserted the Mughul authority through a successful expedition led by his son in 984/1576,⁶⁸ but this phase did not last long. In 997/1588-9, Shiruya Sultan made a half-hearted attempt to recapture the town and for this purpose sent an army under the command of his son, Muhammad Husayn Beg, but the latter sustained heavy losses and the entire campaign ended in a fiasco.⁶⁹ This further emboldened the Afghans, who were henceforth living in virtual independence from the Mughul rule. A distinguished veteran as Mir Namakin was of numerous actions against the hardy Afghans and Baluchis during the last more than one decade, there could have been scarcely any better choice than him to chastise these turbulent creatures. To start with, the Mir exacted a submission from the *zamindars* of Ganjaba and other chiefs of that region, such as Darya Khan and Da'ud and then pushed on towards Siwi where he arrived on 3 Isfand 1003/22 February 1595. The Panni Afghans came out with a strength of 5,000 men to fight, but after a short engagement they were defeated. Consequently, they shut themselves up in the fort of Siwi, but as soon as the Imperialists set about opening the fort by force, the garrison came to terms and made its submission.⁷⁰ Mir Namakin imposed a fixed seasonal tribute on the Afghans and it was realized from them even as late as 1044/1634-5.⁷¹ The successful execution of this campaign not only stamped out a possible source of concern in a sensitive border region, but also convinced the wavering Safawid prince, Muzaffar Husayn Mirza, of the untenability of his position *vis-a-vis* negotiations with the Mughul officials for his defection to India.⁷²

The Mir also proposed to bring under effective control the tract of Kich-Makran, which though traditionally a part of Sind professed only nominal loyalty to the Mughuls. But, since this region bordered on the Safawid provinces of Kirman and Sijistan, and was in close proximity to the port of Hurmuz,⁷³ Akbar, according to Yusuf Mirak, in deference to his friendship with Shah 'Abbas I did not allow this scheme to be put into operation.⁷⁴ Nevertheless, the Shah did not reciprocate these sentiments and as soon as

the opportunity offered itself he brought the ruler of this region under his vassalage without any compunction.⁷⁵

According to Shaykh Farid Bhakkari⁷⁶ during his first tenure at Bhakkar, the Mir was accused of the oppressive treatment of the peasants and *arbabs* and he was transferred from Bhakkar. The aggrieved parties followed him to court and appealed for the redress of their grievances. Mir 'Abd al-Hayy, the *qadi* of the royal camp, issued summons to the Mir, but the latter failed to appear before the *qadi*. The *qadi* reported the matter to the Emperor who ordered the Mir to be tied to the foot of an elephant and paraded through the city. Meanwhile, the Mir, in consultation with Shaykh Ma'ruf, the *sadr* of Bhakkar, paid some money to the plaintiffs and persuaded them to go back to Bhakkar as soon as possible. The following day the Mir appeared before the Emperor and complained against the *qadi* that the latter was trying to harrass him on the basis of some baseless charges. The *qadi* tried in vain to produce the plaintiffs in support of his summons. Thereupon Akbar decreed the preparation of descriptive rolls of complainants before their appearance in the Imperial court in future.

The picture of Mir Namakin that emerges from the aforementioned incident is not only diametrically opposed to the image of an extremely noble and conscientious man that one conjures up from his own writings,⁷⁷ but also flies in the face of the overwhelming evidence provided by his son in favour of his being a far-sighted, sagacious and considerate administrator.⁷⁸ Nonetheless, coming as it does from the pen of someone who counted himself among the Mir's pupils it cannot be brushed aside lightly.

The wheel of defensive and offensive military operations that went into motion with Akbar's departure for the Punjab in 994/1585-6 had two basic objectives, that is, to overawe 'Abd Allah Khan Uzbek and to keep a close watch by the Emperor on all the prospective theatres of war which spread from Kashmir to Baluchistan⁷⁹ and stemmed from what A. K. Srivastava⁸⁰ terms Akbar's "quest for scientific frontiers". A tribute to the practical genius, military prowess and inexhaustible physical energy of Akbar, the realization of these goals, except for the failure to completely eradicate the Afghan hostility towards the Mughuls which continued to be a perennial source of concern even to the successors of Akbar, kept the indefatigable monarch constantly on the move away from the capital of Agra for about thirteen years. During all this period Mir Namakin was engaged like an effective cog on the rim of this wheel of territorial aggrandizement in the advancement and protection of Imperial interests in different campaigns. In this connection he not only extensively criss-crossed some sectors of war, but also went back and forth between places as far apart as Siwi and Kashmir. Finally, on 26 Aban 1007/17 November 1598 when Akbar turned his attentions towards Agra, at the first stage of his journey on 30 Aban/21 November Mir Namakin returned from Kashmir and paid his respects to the Emperor.⁸¹ Neither Abu al-Fadl, nor any other authority throws any light on the purpose and date of the Mir's visit to Kashmir. Akbar himself returned to Lahore on 3 Adhar 1006/24 November 1597⁸² from his third visit to Kashmir which had lasted four months and thereafter spent one whole year at Lahore before heading for Agra on his way to Ahmadnagar. Did Mir Namakin accompany the Emperor in his journey to Kashmir, was he summoned to that northern summer resort later on, or was he sent to

Kashmir on some special errand subsequent to the Emperor's return to Lahore? Contemporary annals are reticent on all these points. Nevertheless, on 9 Day 1007/30 December 1598⁸³ when the royal tents were pitched in the vicinity of Thanesar, Akbar once again confirmed the *iqta'dari* of Bhakkar⁸⁴ on Mir Namakin and the latter retraced his steps to that region. Before long he was transferred from Bhakkar, and given the *sarkar* of Sihwan, except for the *parganas* of Kahan, Juneja and half of Khitta, as his new *jagir*.⁸⁵

On the death of Mirza Jani Beg Tarkhan in Bahman 1009/January 1601 Akbar sent a dress of honour to his son Mirza Ghazi Beg and conferred on him the ancestral *jagir* of Thatta.⁸⁶ However, when the latter delayed his appearance at the Mughul court for a long time, the governor of Multan Sa'id Khan⁸⁷ was directed to initiate military proceedings against him.⁸⁸ Accordingly, while Sa'id Khan cantoned his army in the *pargana* Darbela, Mir Namakin was ordered to assist him in the operation.⁸⁹ The Mir advanced upon Nasrpur with a substantial body of troops and sent a message to Mirza Ghazi to expedite his departure for the court. The Mirza in turn advised Namakin to return to Sihwan where he subsequently joined him. Mir Namakin escorted the latter to Sitarja, a dependency of Bhakkar, where Sa'id Khan was then encamped.⁹⁰ Thence all the three proceeded to Agra where on 14 Mihr 1013/6 October 1604 they waited upon Akbar.⁹¹

According to Yusuf Mirak,⁹² but for the sudden demise of Akbar and the subsequent reversal of orders by the new emperor, Jahangir, the Mir would have taken over as the governor of Qandahar from Shah Beg Khan,⁹³ with Bhakkar, Siwi and Sihwan as his *tankhwah jagir*. Though Yusuf Mirak was a son of Mir Namakin and had exceptional chances of getting first-hand information from his father, his statement with regard to the appointment of the Mir as the governor of Qandahar deserves to be taken with a grain of salt for a number of reasons. In the first place, the governorship of Qandahar was generally entrusted to persons of much higher *mansab*.⁹⁴ The *mansab* of the Mir, as far as we know, was not more than 700 up to the 40th regnal year of Akbar.⁹⁵ and it was only during the first year of Jahangir's reign that he was promoted to a *mansab* of 1500, original and increases.⁹⁶ Secondly, even before Mir Namakin waited upon Akbar for the last time and before his reported appointment to Qandahar, the Emperor had decreed that the *diwans* should manage the affairs of the kingdom in accordance with the advice of Prince Sultan Salim,⁹⁷ the future Jahangir, and that his seal should be affixed to the grants of the officers' *mansabs*. Apparently, the administrative changes in one of the most sensitive provinces of the Mughul empire — Qandahar — would have also had the approval of the Crown Prince. Though the possibility of Jahangir changing his mind in time cannot be entirely ruled out, such instances are generally very exceptional. Thirdly, the statement of Yusuf Mirak is not corroborated either by the *Akbar Nama*, which records the Mir's audience with Akbar, or by the *Tuzuk* where Jahangir speaks of the promotion and the appointment of Sardar Khan as the new governor of Qandahar.

Being an old servant of Akbar, Mir Namakin seems to have been quite intimately known to Jahangir who besides recording the promotion of the Mir to a *mansab* of 1500, original and increase, supplies very interesting information about the number of his children.⁹⁸ According to the *Mazhar-i-Shahjahani* when the Mir's appointment to Qandahar fell through, Jahangir sent him to some expedition in Jalalabad.⁹⁹ The Mir was

incidentally still at Gujrat,¹⁰⁰ in the Punjab, probably on his way to Jalalabad, when Prince Khusrau, who had fled from the Agra fort on the night of 8 Dhi al-Hijja 1014/17 April 1606,¹⁰¹ had been defeated by Shaykh Farid Bakhshi¹⁰² and was being hotly pursued by the Emperor and numerous grandees, tried to clandestinely cross the Chinab on the night of 28 Dhi al-Hijja 1014/6 May 1606.¹⁰³ This coincided with the arrival of Hilal Khan from Kashmir in that vicinity. The latter, together with Mir Namakin and Khwaja Khidr, blockaded the western bank of the river and after some struggle arrested the rebel Prince.¹⁰⁴ According to the *Dhakhirat al-Khwanin*¹⁰⁵ one of the sons of Mir Namakin, Mirza Kashmiri by name, was also found guilty of complicity with Khusrau and had to pay for his crime by the excision of his genitals. On the contrary, according to the *Ma'athir al-Umara'* the Emperor rewarded the Mir's contribution in the arrest of the fugitive Prince with his promotion to the rank of 3000, original and increase, and with his reappointment as the governor of Bhakkar,¹⁰⁶ but it is not true. From Gujrat the Mir went to Jalalabad and subsequently, when Jahangir on his way to Kabul from the Punjab alighted at Gharibkhana, across the Marpich Pass, on 29 Muharram 1016/26 May 1607, the Mir waited upon him.¹⁰⁷ In early Safar/ June the Emperor entrusted the *jagirdari* of Jalalabad to 'Arab Khan, and Mir Namakin was made the commandant of the *thana* of Bajaur.¹⁰⁸ How long he occupied this position, it is difficult to say with certainty. However, when the agent of Sardar Khan in Sihwan, Darwish Beg by name, died from the injuries he had sustained in an encounter with the rebellious Samejas, the region of Sihwan, with the exception of the *parganas* of Kahan, Juneja, and half of Khitta, was once again given to Mir Namakin in *jagir*.¹⁰⁹ The Mir could hardly repair the damage done to the administrative machinery of Sihwan during the tenures of his predecessors and restore the confidence of the peasants, when sometime around 14 Rajab 1017/23 October 1608 he was ordered to accompany Mirza Ghazi Beg Tarkhan, the governor-designate of Qandahar, to that region. Almost at the same time the Laka peasants of the region of Sihwan also brought an Imperial order in the name of Mir Namakin to the effect that he should recover their lands from the Sameja occupation and administer a condign punishment to the latter for their excesses against the former. The Mir proposed to send his son, Abu al-Baqa', with a strong body of troops, with Mirza Ghazi Beg to Qandahar, and himself to stay back at Sihwan and chastise the Samejas, but finally in deference to the Mirza's wishes he had to reverse the arrangement. Consequently, he proceeded to Qandahar with the Mirza, at the head of a four to five hundred strong contingent of his loyal Mughul servants.¹¹⁰ He was, however, not destined to see Sind again. A year later, when he was travelling to Sihwan, he died and his mortal remains were carried to Bhakkar.¹¹¹

Mir Namakin's Children:

Mir Abu al-Qasim Namakin had numerous children. "There are few men such as he," writes Jahangir,¹¹² "for abundance of children; he has thirty sons, and if his daughters do not number as many they must be half that number." Shah Nawaz Khan¹¹³ gives twenty two as the number of the Mir's sons, but, besides the aforementioned Mirza Kashmiri and Mir Abu al-Baqa' of whom we will have more to say presently, mentions only two of them by name: Mirza Husam al-Din and Mirza Yad Allah. The former rose to

a comparatively high *mansab* but his career was cut short by his early death. The latter was in the service of Nawwab Khan-i Jahan Lodhi.¹¹⁴ Shaykh Farid who was the *bakhshi* of the Nawwab, writes that Mirza Yad Allah was not a capable person, but still his stock with the Nawwab was very high.¹¹⁵

The identification of three more sons of Mir Namakin is reported in the *Mazhar-i Shahjahani*. Besides its author, Yusuf Mirak, the Mir's two other sons, Lutf Allah and Nur Allah, also served in Thatta under their elder brother, Mir Abu al-Baqa',¹¹⁶ who was subsequently honoured by Shahjahan with the exalted titles of Mir Khan and Amir Khan.¹¹⁷

Of the female offspring of the Mir virtually nothing is known. Nevertheless Shaykh Farid¹¹⁸ mentions one of his sons-in-law, Jamil Beg, son of Tash Beg Kabuli, who was killed in a battle against Raja Basu, of Kangra, and was buried on the outskirts of Kalanpur in a magnificent mausoleum erected by his father. The gullible Shaykh Farid writes on the authority of some 'reliable' persons that even after his death Jamil Beg continued to visit his home, as he did in his lifetime!

Mir Namakin's Servants:

Like his sons, Mir Namakin's servants also rose to great eminence. One of them called Khwaja Hilal, the eunuch, subsequently joined the service of Prince Salim and when the latter succeeded his father, the Khwaja was made the *Mir Tuzuk*.¹¹⁹ The town of Rangatta, six *kurohs* N. W. from Agra,¹²⁰ was in his *jagir*. Khwaja Hilal built a fort and a *pucca* inn there, and renamed it Hilalabad. "In Agra towards the Madar Gate he built a lofty mansion, and invited most of the leading officials to a housewarming feast. Sa'id Khan, who was also there, approved the building, and praised it greatly. Khwaja Hilal out of politeness said, "Take it as a *peshkash* (present)". Sa'id Khan stood up and made three salutations; and sent for his men and furniture. Hilal — who had been exalted by the Emperor's companionship—objected. Sa'id Khan's servants used force. The Emperor on hearing of the incident remarked to Sa'id Khan, "This behaviour was not worthy of your position." Sa'id Khan replied, "Long live your Majesty. Should a grey-beard like me make three salutations to a slave in the presence of a number of great officers, and shall these go for nothing. It concerns my honour. If your Majesty orders I may be killed." At last by this infidel-like ruse he succeeded in taking possession of the house."¹²¹

During his 14th regnal year when Jahangir passed through Rangatta on his way to Kashmir from Agra, Hilal Khan expressed the desire to make an offering to the Emperor. "In order to dignify him," writes Jahangir, "I took a trifle from him."¹²²

Mir Namakin's Works:

Mir Abu al-Qasim Namakin's activities were by no means confined to military campaigns and solving the conundrums of administration. He was a prolific writer, too. Two of his books, the *Munsha'at al-Namakin*¹²³ and the *Jawami'al-Jawahir*,¹²⁴ that have survived the ravages of time, sufficiently bear out his profound scholarship and eminently qualify him to a place of distinction alongside Mirza Nizam al-Din Ahmad Bakhshi and Mir Ma'sum Bhakkari. The Mir took keen interest in the welfare of scho-

lars and literati and went to great lengths to ensure a comfortable living for them.¹²⁵ He enjoyed their company and notwithstanding all his official engagements found time for the instruction of the progeny of his friends. Shaykh Ma'ruf, the *sadr* of Bhakkar's son, Farid was one of his students in poetry and calligraphy.¹²⁶

Mir Namakin's Death:

The exact date of Mir Namakin's death is not known. Out of the three chronograms on his grave two yield 1018/1609-10, while the third gives 1019/1610-11 as the year of his death. Be that as it may, he now lies at peace in his grave at his favourite Platform of Purity (*suffa-i safa*), at Bhakkar, where in his lifetime he spent many a pleasant moonlit night in the society of the social elite of his time and clime, surrounded by his worthy descendants, on top of a majestic hill whose feet are constantly caressed by the mighty river Indus which not only lends its name to the country about, but also contributes as much to its material prosperity as the ceaseless endeavours of such prodigies as Mir Namakin and his long line of illustrious offspring, to its cultural verve, vigour and vitality and to the vast variety of noble traditions and values for which the historic region of Sind stands.

NOTES

1. Mir 'Ali Shir Qani' Thaththawi, *Tuhfat al-Kiram*, Urdu tr., Akhtar Radawi, rev. and annotated by Makhdam Amir Ahmad and Nabi Bakhsh Khan Baluch, Karachi, 1959, p. 393.
2. For his early career, see Mir Khwand, *Raudat al-Safa*, Tehran, 1339 H. Sh., Vol. VII, pp. 197-201; Khwand Mir, *Habib al-Siyar*, Bombay, 1273 H., Vol. III, iii, pp. 299-303; Zahir al-Din Muhammad Babur Padshah, *Babur Nama* (Memoirs of Babur), Eng. tr. A. S. Beveridge, Delhi, 1970 repr.
3. See Mir Khwand, *op. cit.*, pp. 322-6; Khwand Mir, *op. cit.*, pp. 357-8; *Babur Nama*, pp. 327-8.
4. For his life and achievements, see Ghulam Sarwar, *History of Shah Isma'il Safawi*, Aligarh, 1939.
5. E. G. Browne, *A Literary History of Persia*, C.U.P. 1959 repr., Vol. IV, p. 65; Ghulam Sarwar, *op. cit.*, p. 63.
6. Khwand Mir, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, iv, pp. 63-4.
7. E. G. Browne, *op. cit.*, pp. 63, 94; Khwand Mir, *op. cit.*, p. 71; 'Abd al-Husayn Nawa'i (ed.), *Shah Tahmasb Safawi*, Tehran, 1350 H. Sh., p. 31.
8. Qani' Thaththawi, *op. cit.*, p. 393.
9. The word *Mulla* before its degeneration into a derogatory term, has been traditionally used as an honorific title before the names of scholars and theologians, such as Jalal al-Din Rumi, 'Abd al-Rahman Jami and Jalal al-Din Dawani in Iran, and 'Abd al-Haqq Muhaddith Dihlawi and 'Abd al-'Ali Bahr al-'Ulum in India.
10. For different transcriptions of this name, see Qani' Thaththawi, *op. cit.*, p. 393; Yusuf Mirak, *Mazhar-i Shahjahani*, ed. Pir S. Husam al-Din Rashidi, Haiderabad Sind, 1962, pp. 6-7 and n. 2 on p. 6. The correct form is, however, *Bajaq* as recorded by Yusuf Mirak in the *Mazhar-i Shahjahani*, The Punjab University MS. 7743, f. 5b. It is a village in the Anardara subdistrict of Sabzwar, 3 miles Southwest of Zikan. It is also called Kariz Muhammad Adhar Khan and is now inhabited by twenty houses of Ghuriza'i and Jiji Nurza'is. In recent maps the place is spelled Bojuk. See Ludwig W. Adamec, *Herat and Northwestern Afghanistan*, Graz-Austria, 1975, pp. 55-6.

11. Qani' Thaththawi, *op. cit.*, p. 393.
12. Shaykh Farid Bhakkari, *Dhakhirat al-Khawanin*, ed. S. Moinul Haq, Karachi, 1961, Vol. I, p. 198; Shahnawaz Khan, *Ma'athir al-Umara'*, Calcutta, 1891, Vol. III, p. 73.
13. See Vincent A. Smith, *Akbar the Great Mogul 1542-1605*, Delhi, 1966, 3rd repr., p. 25.
14. Qani' Thaththawi, *op. cit.*, p. 393.
15. Shaykh Farid Bhakkari, *op. cit.*, p. 198; Shahnawaz Khan, *op. cit.*, p. 73.
16. Sayyid Muhammad Ma'sum Bhakkari, *Ta'rikh-i Sind*, ed. 'Umar b. Muhammad Da'udpota, Bombay, 1938, p. 245.
17. Shahnawaz Khan, *op. cit.*, p. 73.
18. Shaykh Farid Bhakkari, *op. cit.*, p. 198.
19. For the use of the term *namakhalal*, see Nizam al-Din Shami, *Zafar Nama*, ed. Felix Tauer, Prague, 1956, Vol. II, p. 39. Also see Babur Padshah, *op. cit.*, pp. 50, 325, 397 where its antonym *namakharam* ('traitor to his salt') has been used by Babur.
20. Shaykh Farid Bhakkari, *op. cit.*, p. 198; Shahnawaz Khan, *op. cit.*, p. 73.
21. See Vincent A. Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 78-9.
22. Abu al-Fadl 'Allami, *Akbar Nama*, Calcutta, 1886, Vol. III, p. 6.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 39.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 4.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 20.
26. *Ibid.*, pp. 21-2.
27. *Ibid.*, pp. 95-101.
28. The correct name of the place is Tukra. For detail, see Jadunath Sarkar, *Military History of India*, Calcutta, 1960, p. 72.
29. Abu al-Fadl 'Allami, *op. cit.*, p. 123.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 125.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 182.
32. *Ibid.*, pp. 119-20. Cf. Khwaja Nizam al-Din Ahmad, *Tabaqat-i Akbari*, ed. B. De, Calcutta, 1913-31, Vol. II, p. 303; Mulla 'Abd al-Qadir Badayuni, *Muntakhab al-Tawarikh*, ed. Ahmad 'Ali, Kabir al-Din Ahmad, and W. Nassau Lees, Calcutta, 1864-9, Vol. II, p. 193; 'Abd al-Baqi Nihawandi, *Ma'athir-i Rahimi*, M. Hidayat Husain, Calcutta, 1924-31, Vol. I, p. 827.
33. Khwaja Nizam al-Din Ahmad, *op. cit.*, p. 198.
34. Shaykh Farid Bhakkari, *op. cit.*, p. 198.
35. Shahnawaz Khan, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, pp. 73-4.
36. For full text of this *farman*, see Mir Abu al-Qasim Namakin, *Munsha'at al-Namakin*, India Office MS., 1535.
37. See Vincent A. Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 132-3.
38. Abu al-Fadl 'Allami, *op. cit.*, p. 331.
39. *Ibid.*, pp. 336, 494.
40. *Ibid.*, p. 494.
41. R.P. Tripathi, *Rise and Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Allahabad, 1974, p. 267.
42. Abu al-Fadl 'Allami, *op. cit.*, pp. 355-8.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 518.
44. Vincent A. Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 144.
45. Abu al-Fadl 'Allami, *op. cit.*, p. 466.
46. Vincent A. Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 166.
47. Abu al-Fadl 'Allami, *op. cit.*, p. 475.
48. *Ibid.*, pp. 475-6.
49. *Ibid.*, pp. 488.
50. *Ibid.*
51. *Ibid.*, p. 485.
52. *Ibid.*, p. 487.
53. *Ibid.*, p. 492.

54. *Ibid.*, p. 495.
55. For a comprehensive treatment of this movement, see S.A.A. Rizvi, *Rawshaniyya Movement, Abr-Nahrain*, Vol. VI, pp. 62–98.
56. Abu al-Fadl 'Allami, *op. cit.*, p. 525.
57. *Ibid.*, p. 526.
58. *Ibid.*
59. *Ibid.*
60. *Ibid.*, pp. 493-4.
61. *Ibid.*, pp. 532-3.
62. *Ibid.*, p. 559.
63. *Ibid.*, p. 637.
64. *Ibid.*, p. 633.
65. *Ibid.*, p. 637.
66. Sayyid Muhammad Ma'sum Bhakkari, *op. cit.*, p. 251.
67. See above, n. 36.
68. Mulla 'Abd al-Qadir Badayuni, *op. cit.*, p. 245.
69. Sayyid Muhammad Ma'sum Bhakkari, *op. cit.*, pp. 249-50.
70. Abu al-Fadl 'Allami, *op. cit.*, p. 666.
71. Yusuf Mirak, *op. cit.*, pp. 28-9.
72. For his antecedents, see Riazul Islam, *Indo-Persian Relations*, Tehran, 1970, pp. 58-61.
73. Iskandar Beg Munshi, *Ta'rikh-i 'Alam Ara-i 'Abbasi*, Tehran, 1351 H. Sh., Vol. II, p. 958.
74. Yusuf Mirak, *op. cit.*, p. 28.
75. Iskandar Beg Munshi, *op. cit.*, pp. 861-2. During Shahjahan's reign these regions once again became under Mughul control. See Shaykh 'Abu al-Fath Qabil Khan, *Adab-i 'Alamgiri*, comp. by Sadiq Muttalibi Anbalawi, ed. 'Abd al-Ghafur Chaudhari, Lahore, 1971, Vol. I, p. 26.
76. Shaykh Farid Bhakkari, *op. cit.*, pp. 198-9.
77. See his note reproduced by Pir S. Husam al-Din Rashidi in *Tadhkira-i Amir Khani*, Haiderabad Sind, 1961, pp. 67-8 (In Sindhi) from *Gauhar-i Manzum*, an unpublished diary of Miyan Ghulam 'Ali Maddah.
78. Yusuf Mirak, *op. cit.*, pp. 108-9.
79. Abu al-Fadl 'Allami, *op. cit.*, pp. 493-4.
80. Ashirbadi Lal Srivastava, *Akbar the Great*, Agra, 1962, Vol. I, pp. 331-69.
81. Abu al-Fadl 'Allami, *op. cit.*, p. 746.
82. *Ibid.*, p. 734.
83. *Ibid.*, p. 748. *The Akbar Nama*, tr. H. Beveridge, Calcutta, 1897–1921, Vol. III, p. 1117, wrongly gives the date as 19 Day.
84. Abu al-Fadl 'Allami, *op. cit.*, p. 748. Text wrongly has Bihar. See *The Akbar Nama*, tr. H. Beveridge, Vol. III, p. 1117, n. 4.
85. Yusuf Mirak, *op. cit.*, p. 108.
86. Abu al-Fadl 'Allami, *op. cit.*, p. 783.
87. For his particulars, see Shaykh Farid Bhakkari, *op. cit.*, pp. 190-3.
88. Yusuf Mirak, *op. cit.*, pp. 111-13.
89. *Ibid.*; Abu al-Fadl 'Allami, *op. cit.*, p. 816.
90. Shaykh Farid Bhakkari, *op. cit.*, p. 190.
91. Abu al-Fadl 'Allami, *op. cit.*, p. 839.
92. Yusuf Mirak, *op. cit.*, pp. 112-13.
93. For his life, see Shaykh Farid Bhakkari, *op. cit.*, pp. 235-7.
94. See M. H. Siddiqi, *Chronology of Babur's Occupation of Qandahar and Expulsion of the Arghuns*, *University Studies*, University of Karachi, III/1 (April 1966), p. 1.
95. Abu al-Fadl 'Allami, *A'in-i Akbari*, Nawalkishore, 1893, Vol. I, p. 162; H. Blochmann, *The A'in-i Akbari*, ed. D. C. Phillott, Lahore, n.d., repr., p. 525.

96. Jahangir Padshah, *Tuzuk-i Jahangiri*, ed. Sayyid Ahmad, Ghazipur and Aligarh, 1863-4, p. 13.
97. Abu al-Fadl 'Allami, *Akbar Nama*, vol. III, p. 839.
98. Jahangir Padshah, *op. cit.*, p. 13.
99. Yusuf Mirak, *op. cit.*, p. 113.
100. Curiously enough, Momin Mohiuddin [The Chancellery and Persian Epistolography, *Indo-Iranica*, XIX/2 (June 1966), p. 40; *Munsha'at al-Namakin*, *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, VIII/1 (January 1960), p. 91] has completely failed to understand the significance of Akbar's *farman* included in the *Munsha'at al-Namakin*, for Mir Namakin's first appointment at Bhakkar. He wrongly translates *mahal* (*parganas*) as "a village" and fails to distinguish between "Gujarat" (=Gujrat, in the Punjab) and Bhakkar, in Sind.
101. Jahangir Padshah, *op. cit.*, p. 24.
102. *Ibid.*, p. 30.
103. *Ibid.*, p. 31.
104. *Ibid.*, pp. 32-3; Shaykh Farid Bhakkari, *op. cit.*, p. 134; Khwaja Kamgar Husayni, *Ma'athir-i Jahangiri*, ed. 'Azra 'Alawi, Bombay, 1978, pp. 85, 495; Shahnawaz Khan, *op. cit.*, p. 76.
105. Shaykh Farid Bhakkari, *op. cit.*, p. 200.
106. Shahnawaz Khan, *op. cit.*, p. 76.
107. Jahangir Padshah, *op. cit.*, p. 49.
108. *Ibid.*, p. 50.
109. See Yusuf Mirak, *op. cit.*, p. 116.
110. *Ibid.*, pp. 115-16.
111. *Ibid.*, p. 120.
112. Jahangir Padshah, *op. cit.*, p. 13.
113. Shahnawaz Khan, *op. cit.*, p. 76.
114. For his particulars, see Shaykh Farid Bhakkari, Vol. II, pp. 69-116; Shahnawaz Khan, Vol. I, pp. 715-31.
115. Shaykh Farid Bhakkari, *op. cit.*, p. 200.
116. Yusuf Mitak, *op. cit.*, pp. 40, 46.
117. See Shahnawaz Khan, *op. cit.*, p. 172; Ra'i Kewal Ram, *Tadhkirat al-Umara'*, British Museum MS. Add. 16, 703 s.v. Amir Khan.
118. Shaykh Farid Bhakkari, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 395.
119. *Ibid.*, p. 192; Jahangir Padshah, *Tuzuk-i Jahangiri*, Eng. tr. Alexander Rogers, ed. Henry Beveridge, Second Edition, Delhi, 1968 repr., Vol. II, p. 103.
120. H. Blochmann, *op. cit.*, p. 352. Cf. Khwaja Kamgar Husayni, *op. cit.*, p. 12.
121. Shahnawaz Khan, *op. cit.*, Eng. tr. H. Beveridge, rev. by Baini Prashad, Patna, 1979 repr., Vol. II, part II, p. 682; Shaykh Farid Bhakkari, *op. cit.*, pp. 192-3.
122. *Tuzuk-i Jahangiri*, Eng. tr., Vol. II, p. 103.
123. For the contents of this work, see Hermann Ethe, *Catalogue of Persian Manuscripts in the Library of the India Office*, rev. and completed by Edward Edwards, Oxford, 1903, Vol. I, Entry 2064 and Momin Mohiuddin's article referred to above, no. 100. Besides the I.O. MS., another copy of the *Munsha'at al-Namakin* is preserved in the Lytton Collection (No. 3/26-7) of the Aligarh Muslim University Library.
124. Dealing with the philosophy of Islam, the work is dedicated to Mirza Muhammad Ghazi Beg Tarkhan and its only known MSS. are available in Bodleian Library. See Momin Mohiuddin's article in *Indo-Iranica*, p. 40, referred to above, n. 100.
125. Yusuf Mirak, *op. cit.*, p. 121.
126. Shaykh Farid Bhakkari, *op. cit.*, p. 200.