

Brief-History from point of view of Local Bakhtiari Khan.

As a result of their successful participation in the seige of Qandahar, Ali Saleh Khan was given a Farman (Royal decree) from Nader Shah, giving him the title SARDAR (commander) or Sepahdar in-fact and that of Khan. This is the first time the leaders are entitled to use this term. Up till then leaders were called Agha. The Farman, gave or confirmed Ali Saleh as leader of all the Bakhtiari. This is rather equivocal since the newly appointed Khan was in no position to "rule" over much more than the Zarraswands and the other Duraki tribes.

He was also given the title deeds to land - to all of Pusht Kuh Bakhtiari. This stretched up almost to Fereidan - the large fertile area controlled by the Chahr Lang tribes, - from Chahha Khorup to Dashtak.

One of the lieutenants of Ali Saleh Khan, a Shahmorwand (section of the Osiwand taifeh) was also awarded with grant to the village of Alikuh. This individual was famed for his ferocious yell which gave him the nickname Zarzaru - the noise a donkey makes. This village is still inhabited by the Shahmorwand and has been superbly cultivated. At no time were the later powerful Duraki Khans able to wrest this fertile and rich village from the hands of the Shahmorwand. When the rest of Osiwand land in the summer pastures was "stolen" by the Duraki Khans, Alikuh stayed on the strength of the Farman from Nadir Shah, written on deerskin, and kept by the Sheikhs who look after the shrine at Alikuh.

'Abdal, Ali Saleh's son inherited all this land on the death of Ali Saleh. Abdal in turn had 4 sons who inherited from him :

Haiyullah - who succeeded his father to leadership

He inherited the villages of Rustami, Kaj, Ardal and Naqun.

Farajullah Khan got Dashtak : Mehti Qoli - Ruhgir, Chagha Khast

Zohrab - Chehr Az. (above Naqun).

Haivullal ( Habib Ullah) ruled after the death of his father. The major opposition to his position came from Assad Khan, the Bakhtiariwand leader who caused much trouble with the Qajars, raiding as far as Tehran. Shortly after this time, Layard stayed with the Chahr Lang chief, Mohammad Taqi, whom he represents as being most powerful of the Bakhtiari chiefs. He does make the point that the Chahr Lang were more settled - in Malamir area and in Fereidun. He characterises the Haft Lang as exceedingly lawless, and more nomadic. Certainly at the time he was there the Haft Lang were split among themselves vying for power.

Haivullah's sons were Jafar Quli Khan and Qalb Ali Khan.

Farajullah's sons were Elias Khan and Hassan Khan. )major sons.

When Haivullah died (killed?) his sons were too young to take over the leadership, and as is the common form of succession, the leadership went to his brother Farajullah's son, Elias, .  
 to his brother Farajullah's trust as it were for Haivullah's son Jafar. Jafar However was killed by the men of Jafar Qoli Bakhtiarwand, the son of the above Assad Khan. The Duraki Khans fought the Bakhtiariwand bitterly in revenge. avenged by Qalb Ali Khan and Elias Khan. ( see later) Elias Khan went to Terhran to be confirmed as leader of the Bakhtiari.

This point marks the gradual emergence of the Duraki Khans as the dominant group in all the Bakhtiari. Before they did so however, they had to oppose the might of a concerted Bakhtiari attack, Chahr Lang and thier Haft Lang enemies alike.

Their are many tales and songs about Elias Khan, who is regarded as a hero today, though stories about him often conflict. There appears to a fusion between Husain Quli and Elias in some of these mythic stories/

Elias Khan and his cousin Qalb Ali avenged the murder of Jafar Quli which is reputed to have taken place in 1836. This part of the history is rather confused The revenge for Jafar Qoli went on for several years. Many of the Khans were killed and the Bakhtiari territories in Qaleh Zarass and Andeka were taken from them. A number of marriages with the females of the Khans families were contracted to seal the defeat.



However the entire Bakhtiari attacked the forces of Qalb Ali Khan and the sons of Jafar Quli Khan - Husain Quli and his brothers. Their fortress at Chaqha Khor was the scene of the pitched battle in which a reputed 100 of the Khans family defended themselves against 9000 united Bakhtairwand, Babadi, Chahr Lang forces. This is called the Jang e- Noheza Nohezar - the fight of the 9000. Some say that Elias Khan was among the defenders, but other sources say that Elias was already dead by this time. I suspect the latter is ~~not~~ correct.

The forces opposing the Duraki Khans were led by one Agha Nadallah - one of the chiefs of the Babadi Bab group. He was in fact a Raki leader from the Oulad -e- Tahmas Khan, the most wealthy and powerful of the Babadi at that time. Agha Nadallah's saddle and bridle were all heavily embossed with gold. By an "act of god" say the Duraki tribesmen now, Agha Nadallah was killed at the beginning of the battle and his horse captured. Meanwhile the women of the Duraki were making bullets for the Duraki riders. Agha Nadallah's horse was stripped of its saddle and sent back to the opposing forces, closely followed by all the Duraki/. The combined forces fled before this onslaught and the Duraki chased them right up the valley as far as the village of Baba Haidar and into Babadi territory. The tale continues that in Nadallah's territory there is a Tang - or ravine ( probably Tang Gazzi, which was filled with the slaughtered bodies of the enemies of the Duraki, and their animals. The Duraki destroyed the property of their enemies. Many of the leaders of these groups opposing the Duraki were put to death, and the women married.

There is a strong suggestion that the lands of the Duraki were at this point consolidated. The Bakhtairwand were removed from Andeka and this territory given to the Mowri and the Qandali - who as a result never were given or allowed to participate in the rewards that came later to the Bakhtiari Khans and selected taifehs when the Bakhtiari emerged on to the national scene.

There is a story about Elias Khan concerning the legitimacy of his rule which reveals the internal tension among the tribes for positions of power and leadership. The legitimate heir to chiefship was in fact Jafar Qoli and then following that his eldest son - Husain Quli Khan. Husain and his brothers were still young when Jafar Qoli was murdered by the Baidarwand, and their cousin ruled in his stead.

Elias is supposed to have gone to Tehran to get his position as leader confirmed by a Farman from the Shah. This he did and duly returned to the mountains as the undisputed leader of the Duraki and with the crushing of the opposition from other Haft Lang groups, plus the prior crushing by the central government of Mohammed Taqi Khan, ruler of the Chahar Lang the scene for the rise of the Duraki was set. However members of the Zarraswand considered that Elias was not treating the sons of Jafar correctly. I think that this story in fact concerns Qalb Ali Khan, a certain Mullah Ali, of the Ahmad Khosrovi section of the Zarraswand went to the Khan (Elias or Qalb) saying that a village should be given to the sons of Jafar to cover their expenses. Elias is supposed to have scornfully suggested that the young sons of Jafar should go into the mountains to cultivate. When Elias returned with his written farman, Mullah Ali had united the Zarraswand behind him, went to Elias and asked to see the written Farman from the Shah, renewing his Khanship. On being shown the Farman, he struck out the name Elias and substituted that of Husain Quli Khan, the legitimate heir. The Zarraswands forced Elias to accept this which he is supposed to have done.

The leadership of the Bakhtiari in fact appears to have also rested with Qalb Ali Khan, Jafar's brother. Qalb Ali is mentioned by Layard as a quiet, innocuous leader - a brilliant horseman and fighter, but peaceable. In debt to the government and his tribes (Haft Lang) unruly.