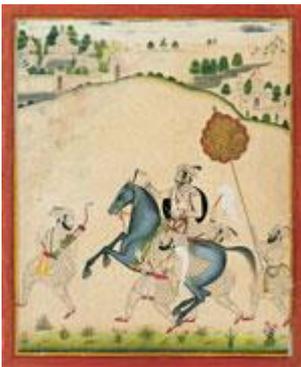


UNIT 88 – UPSC - Submission of Mewar to the Mughals

India's History : Medieval India : Submission of Mewar to the Mughals - 1615

Maharana Amar Singh I



Maharana Amar Singh I, fifty-fifth ruler of the Mewar Dynasty (r. 1597-1620); eldest of the seventeen sons of the hero Maharana PRATAP SINGH I, he succeeded his father, January 19, 1597 at CHAVAND, aged 38, and ruled for twenty-three years from Udaipur. Because Pratap Singh had insisted on quitting the comforts of Udaipur and fighting the Mughals in guerilla warfare conditions in the Aravalli Hills, Amar Singh's first job after succession was to make Udaipur the capital of Mewar once more. He had to persuade his subjects, who had followed Pratap Singh (under orders) into the wilderness, to return to the city. With the death of Mughal emperor Akbar, eight years after Pratap's demise, it was hoped that Mewar would enjoy peace for the first time in many decades. Amar ensured the status quo by not pursuing aggression against the Mughals. Although the peace was not to last, Amar pursued a vigorous programme to better the condition of his war-scarred subjects.

He remodelled his country's institutions, reassessing land holdings and distribution of fiefs, and established a new system of ranking for the nobility. He regulated sumptuary laws, those that control personal habits that offend a community's moral or religious conscience. Adding to the City Palace, he built the lower gateway, Badi Pol. Amar Singh had been his father's constant companion during Pratap's extensive campaign as a guerilla fighter. He was a faithful and loyal son and companion, yet he caused his father concern that he would not pursue independence as he had, but surrender Mewar's freedom to the Mughals (see PRATAP'S CONCERN ABOUT AMAR). Earnestly, the chiefs pledged themselves "by the throne of Bappa" that the dying ruler's fears would not eventuate. To some degree, Pratap's predictions would turn out to be correct, even though Amar Singh eventually fought many more battles than his father did.

In North India, following Akbar's death, Prince Salim succeeded as Emperor Jahangir (1605-1627). Shortly thereafter, he dismissed the peace treaty and renewed the war against Mewar with vigour. From 1605 to 1614, successive Mughal generals tried to conquer Mewar: Asaf Khan, 1606-1608; Mahabat Khan, 1608-1609; Abdullah Khan, 1609-1611; Raja Basu, 1611; Aziz Koka, 1611-1614; and Jahangir's ablest son, 32-year-old Prince Khurram, 1614. Villages and towns were sacked; crops, orchards and forests were destroyed indiscriminately; and temples were razed. Once more the people of Mewar suffered great distress. At first, Amar Singr relocated his court to Ajmer near Mewar's northern border, and mounted an overwhelming force to crush Maharana Amar Singh. Amar followed his father's example, and moved into the Aravalli jungles, while Jahangir, in a wide sweep, annexed the areas of Kapasan, Untala, Debari, Gogunda, Chavand, Bari Sadri, and finally Udaipur itself. Amar retaliated, recapturing the areas of Untala, Mandal, Badnore, and Malpura. Next, Jahangir appointed his son, Prince Parvez, commander of the Mughal army. However, Maharana Amar, flushed with his recent successes, and with the help of Punja, chieftain of Pandevi (Panawara), whose force contained fierce Bhil warriors, again routed the Mughal army in the pass near Khamnor, the scene of many bloody combats in the past, including the famous Battle of HALDIGHATI. Parvez fled the battlefield and retreated to Ajmer in disgrace. By then, Maharana Amar had fought seventeen pitched battles, but each victory had meant the loss of many more of Mewar's most experienced veterans.

In 1614, a substantial army now led by Prince Khurram (known to history as Emperor SHAH JAHAN) headed out from Ajmer to attack Mewar. He camped with his Mughal army at GOGUNDA, 36 km. northeast of Udaipur. Although Amar had tried to carry out his father's policies for seventeen years, he could muster only a handful of chieftains to meet the approaching enemy. The Mewar generals and ministers (the nobles), dismayed by the heavy odds against them and dejected by their earlier losses in the continuous battles of the past, pressured Amar into negotiating a peace treaty with Emperor Jahangir. With reluctance, the Maharana sent two of his nobles, Haridas Jhala and Shubh Karan (the Maharana's maternal uncle), to Khurram with a peace proposal. In turn, Prince Khurram sent a message to his father, Emperor Jahangir, in Ajmer, recommending there was no surer way of earning the approbation of the Maharana than by maintaining friendly relations with Mewar. The emperor agreed and issued a farman (decree) for the ratification of the negotiated terms, which were based on Maharana Amar Singh's own conditions.



The terms were:

1. Neither the Maharana nor any future Maharana would be called upon to present themselves at Court while India was ruled by a foreign power (thereby retaining the independent dignity of the House of Mewar). Therefore, the Maharana would not attend the Mughal court in person. Instead he would only meet with Khurram at Gogunda, and send his young son, Crown Prince Karan Singh, to the Mughal court- Amar had fathered two sons, Karan Singh and Surajmal.
2. The Maharana would not accept any Imperial title, nor agree to any matrimonial alliance between the two families.
3. Chittor would be restored to the Maharana on condition it would not be repaired or fortified.
4. The Maharana would provide a contingent of 1,000 horse (horsemen), whenever demanded.

The Maharana accepted the terms and, in February 1615, met Prince Khurram at Gogunda and signed the peace treaty. As noted above, Pratap Singh held fears that his son and successor might not continue the battle to regain all of Mewar from the Mughals. Perhaps his fears were realised as some chroniclers have accused Amar Singh of treachery because of the treaty. In 1616, Amar finally achieved the long dream held by his father: he regained the ancient capital of Chittor when Emperor Jahangir returned the fortress to Mewar. Also, as per the treaty, Prince Karan Singh spent two months at the Mughal court, at Jahangir's invitation. There, he and his family's recent aggressor, Prince Khurram, became firm friends; it was a friendship that was to be called upon during Karan Singh's subsequent reign.