
A STUDY OF RELATIONS BETWEEN RAJA NAHAR SINGH OF BALLABGARH & THE EMPEROR BAHADURSHAH II

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Abstract: The main objective of this research paper is to study the correspondence that took place between Raja Nahar Singh of Ballabgarh and the Emperor Bahadurshah II & vice-versa. Correspondence from 14 May 1857 to 7 September 1857 which was made from Raja Nahar Singh to the Emperor Bahadurshah II and vice-versa has been taken into account. This research paper is based mainly on primary sources lying at National Archives of India (NAI), New Delhi. Besides some secondary sources have also been used to complete this research paper. It is matter of fact Raja Nahar Singh had to fight against his enemies at the Mughal *Durbar* and local people who embezzled money & ruined the state. But he enjoyed considerable goodwill in the populace of Ballabgarh. After examining the correspondence, it seems that Raja Nahar Singh treated the Emperor as his leader, overlord, master, but interestingly all along and at the same did not ignore his own interests. He wrote 13 letters to the Emperor. The exchange of correspondence was mostly one sided from Raja Nahar Singh to the Emperor. Raja Nahar Singh enlisted cavalry & infantry to protect the road from Delhi to Ballabgarh and sent gold *mohars*, but could not appear in Delhi. Because of helping the enemies/Rebels, Raja Nahar Singh was put under the trial by the European Military Commission headed by Brigadier General Chamberlin. Raja Nahar Singh was declared a rebel and hanged till death on 9th January 1858 in *Chandni Chowk*, Delhi. From the study of records lying at National Archives of India, New Delhi and State Archives & analysis of circumstances, it reveals that Raja Nahar Singh by heart & soul was closer to the cause of Rebels and the Emperor.

Key-Words: *risaldar, thanadar, thanas, tehsils, sepoy, chowki, gujjurs, meos, mohars, nazar, id-ul-fitr, maunds, atta, vakil, hakim, diwan, jamadar, daroga, bagh-i-angoori, islam, pandit, chandni chowk.*

The main objective of this research paper is to study the correspondence that took place between Raja Nahar Singh of Ballabgarh and the Emperor Bahadurshah II & vice-versa. Correspondence from 14 May 1857 to 7 September 1857 which was made from Raja Nahar Singh to the Emperor Bahadurshah II and vice-versa has been taken into account. This research paper is based mainly on primary sources lying at National Archives of India (NAI), New Delhi. Besides some secondary sources have also been used to complete this research paper.

On 14th May, the Emperor Bahadurshah II ordered in writing to Nawab Abdur Rahman Khan of Jhajjar, Bahadur Jang Khan of Dadri, Akbar Ali Khan of Pataudi, Raja Nahar Singh of Ballabgarh, Hasan Ali Khan of Dujana and Nawab Ahmed Ali Khan of Farrukhnagar to attend the royal courtⁱ. Raja Nahar Singh responded on 20 May and promised that after making efficient managements and provisions against all the refractory and rebellious elements, he would in person wait upon in the Emperor's court. He sent Kalander Bux Khan, *risaldar*, with cavalry and infantry to obey the orders of the Emperor.ⁱⁱ

Bahadur Shah II on the same day ordered Raja Nahar Singh to dismiss the services of *thanadar* appointed by him.ⁱⁱⁱ Raja Nahar Singh responded on the very next day by saying that the officers had been dismissed and that His Majesty's nominee had been appointed. The Raja then requested the Emperor to issue an order that these men may obtain admission.^{iv}

On 22nd of May Raja Nahar Singh stated that the management of the road between Ballabgarh and Badarpur, and also between the Badarpur and the Delhi gate of the city had been managed and he fixed *thanas* and *tehsils* in the district of Pali in the towns of Palwal and Fatehpur. The Raja complained that some people were trying to destroy his good name, and to create dissension between his soldiers and that of His Majesty's. The Raja also begged the Emperor for taking his services into consideration and to issue strict orders to those on duty at each gate of the city that they should in no way hinder or quarrel with his servants, otherwise our arrangements would suffer and it will be very difficult to maintain the good governance of the area.^v

On 24th of May, Raja Nahar Singh thanked the Emperor for granting permission to encamp his cavalry and infantry under the palace window. He desired to present himself in person as soon as the surroundings districts became settled, necessary arrangements to put down the rebellious characters of the village of Pali, would be made.^{vi} On 25th May, Raja Nahar Singh informed the Emperor that the arrangements up to the Delhi gate, and in the country around this district, were perfect. Now in his opinion, ten *sepoys* were necessary at the *Hanuman chowki*, also a *thanadar*, and twenty-five *sepoys* at Mahrauli, that then everything he said would be complete, and that if the Emperor approved he would do what was needful at both places.^{vii}

Raja Nahar Singh stated on dated 27 May 1857, that day and night he was engaged in the arrangements as ordered by His Majesty, but in these days bad characters and scoundrels '*Gujjurs* and *Meos*' etc. were becoming more and more troublesome and everyday threatening an attack in the villages at Faridabad and Ballabgarh. Once again Nahar Singh promised that after making the arrangements he will wait upon the Emperor.^{viii} He sent five *mohars* as *nazar* on account of the festival of the *Id-ul-fitr*. A signed order by the Emperor also shows that the 'present' was accepted. Therefore, the communication of 28th of May was under a different head of charge.^{ix} Raja Nahar Singh also sent off twenty more horsemen to the service of the Emperor.^x

On 8th July 1857 Raja Nahar Singh informed the coming of Nimach force & preparation of 700 *maunds* of *atta*, gram and other articles, food. Seventy men from one of the cavalry regiments from Lucknow reached the city, and were attached to General Bakht Khan's force.^{xi} On July 11th Mirza Ahmed, *vakil* of Raja Nahar Singh, reported that provisions were ready at Ballabgarh for 20,000 men of the Nimach

force, who were expected there in route for Delhi.^{xii}

Through a petition on 31st of July 1857 Raja Nahar Singh complained to the King about his own servants & accused them of having embezzled cash and property to the value of a lac of rupees.^{xiii} Raja Nahar Singh said that, ‘*I am standard gold faithful, and true, melt me a thousand times I shall not be found wanting*’.

In the next petition on August 5, 1857, Raja Nahar Singh informed that the illness alone had rendered him unable from presenting himself to the Emperor. Once again he presented eight gold mohars.^{xiv} The Emperor responded to the Raja’s letter on 8 August 1857 by accepting the gold mohars. He also advised Raja Nahar Singh not to neglect any of the obligations of the fidelity and devotion.^{xv}

The very next day, the Emperor again communicated to Raja Nahar Singh by saying that the mohars had been accepted because it had not been the custom of the court to return such presents. Raja should follow the path of his father and grand father and from his heart to engage in acts of devotion and zeal to the Emperor, Bahadur Shah^{xvi}. Through a petition on 14 August 1857 Raja Nahar Singh thanked the King for receiving his congratulatory present, on the occasion of *Id*. He considered himself highly honored. Regarding the anger of His Majesty, the Raja begged that his confidential agent, who for some days had been left in the background, might be again called into the presence together with the *risaldar* of his cavalry. Raja Nahar Singh concluded by saying that His Majesty’s victorious standard may wave on high and that his enemies may come to surrender.^{xvii}

On 15 August 1857, the Emperor advised Raja Nahar Singh to appoint two confidential agents who may remain ever in attendance.^{xviii} On 16 August 1857, Mirza Mughal also wrote to Raja Nahar Singh on the same.^{xix}

Then Raja Nahar Singh gave the details regarding embezzled money by his former officials:

S. No.	Name	Embezzled Money
1.	Hakim Abdul Hak, Prime Minister of the state	Rs. 1,000,000
2.	Mukta Prashad, <i>vakil</i>	Rs. 15,000
3.	Raja Lall, <i>diwan</i>	Rs. 10,000
4.	Nissar Ali, Deputy Prime Minister	Rs. 10,000
5.	Jawala Nath Pandit, treasurer	Rs. 30,000
6.	Sher Khan, ADC of Hakim Abdul Hak	Rs. 25,000
7.	Nisarudin, <i>jamadar</i> and <i>daroga</i> of Raja’s property in Delhi and Peshkar of his <i>vakil</i> .	Rs. 5,000
8.	Amir Ali, <i>daroga</i> of buildings and storerooms.	Rs. 10,000
9.	Saadat Ali Khan, <i>thanadar</i>	Rs. 8,000
10.	Mubark Ali Khan	Rs. 2,000
11.	Ahmed Mirza, contractor of the Ballabgarh villages and <i>bagh-i-angoori</i> in Delhi	Rs. 10,000
	Total	Rs. 1125,000 ^{xx}

The petition of the 22nd August 1857 from Raja Nahar Singh to Bahadur Shah Zafar, in which Raja Nahar Singh described the two-fold reasons for his non-attendance in the court in those troubled days. First that since he arrived at Ballabgarh from Delhi, he had been suffering from various bodily complaints and

ailments, external and internal. Second that lately his enemies have alienated His Majesty's kindness and good will from him, by means of their false and calumnious statements. So he was afraid of His Majesty.^{xxi}

On 25th August 1857 Raja Nahar Singh wrote to the Emperor by making professions of heart-felt fidelity, allegiance, zeal and good will.^{xxii} On 27th August 1857 Raja Nahar Singh was informed that his horses had been received and that he need entertain no fears of being molested by the victorious army.^{xxiii}

On 31st August 1857 in a petition Raja Nahar Singh described the position of road between Ballabgarh and Delhi. He also stated that he had heard that he was said to have concealed relevant information about two Englishmen and their wives and children being in touch with him. He further stated that the native, who was formerly a Christian, had been twelve years in his service. He had since discarded Christianity and embraced *Islam*.^{xxiv} In an another petition of the same date Raja Nahar Singh said that he had been honored that His Majesty had approved his attendance & said that day and night he was engaged in ensuring safe arrangements to protect the road from Delhi to Ballabgarh, he will then present himself to His Majesty in person and will obey whatever orders he may receive.^{xxv}

A petition dated 1st September 1857 from Raja Nahar Singh to the Emperor in which he requested the Emperor to put under his charge the districts of Pali and Palwal so that he could make proper arrangements for collecting revenue.^{xxvi} In a second petition, on the same day, Nahar Singh said that, '*Hakim Abdul Khan is demanding four lakhs of rupees from me for the expenses of the war.*' The Emperor replied that:

'The officer you complaint against is acting under my orders. I will certainly require the money of him and again I write to you to send me money without delay, also a contingent of 500 Foot soldiers with two field guns and five maunds of opium, otherwise I will impose a fine on you of one lakh of rupees'^{xxvii},

On 2nd September Raja Nahar Singh remonstrated against an order received from *Muhammad Bakht Khan*, Commander-in-Chief of the Emperor's army, saying that as all prisoners throughout the country had been released. Raja Nahar Singh objected & said that the prisoners were accountable to this state for frauds amounting to lacs of rupees, and have agreed to pay this money. He took the opportunity of again referring to the persons in Delhi *Hakim Abdul Hak*, *Pandit Jawala Prasad* and others who he declared accountable to him for 11 lacs of rupees, and hoped they may be handed over to him.^{xxviii}

On 7th September in a petition Raja Nahar Singh said:

'Although I do not credit this order, the man has been released; but I have suffered great loss through these soldiers, who have taken several thousand rupees from me for expenses.'

The Emperor sent a reply that he had never sent any soldier, or any such order, and that the soldiers should be arrested and punished.^{xxix}

It is matter of fact that Raja Nahar Singh had to fight against his enemies at the Mughal *Durbar* and local people who embezzled money & ruined the state. But he enjoyed considerable goodwill in the populace of Ballabgarh.

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Because of helping the enemies/Rebels, Raja Nahar Singh was put under the trial by the European Military Commission headed by Brigadier General Chamberlin. Raja Nahar Singh was declared a rebel and hanged till death on 9th January 1858 in *Chandni Chowk, Delhi*^{xxx}

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