

## **“Silsilat Al-Salatin” On the History of Relations of Bukhara Khanate and India in the XVII - Early XVIII Centuries**



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**ABSTRACT:** The article highlights the relations between Bukhara Khanate and India during Ashtarkhanids' period. Particularly, the role of a valuable manuscript “Silsilat al-Salatin” written by Haji Mir Muhammad Salim from Ashtarkhanids discloses political negotiations between the two countries, their attempts to strengthen the relations, the activities of ambassadors and the purposes of their missions. Besides, the correspondences of the rulers and the issues raised in them have been studied. Main focus is drawn to the comparison of information in “Silsilat al-Salatin” with other sources and the outcomes on the study are given in the article.

**KEYWORDS:** “Silsilat al-Salatin”, correspondences, embassy, relations, Bukhara, India, Iran.

### **INTRODUCTION**

The manuscript called “Silsilat al-salatin” (“Genealogy of Sovereigns”) that was written in 1143 / 1730-31 in India by a native of Central Asia Haji Mir Muhammad Salim, who was one of the representatives of Ashtarkhanid royal family, enriches the number of such works. The work is extremely important to disclose the issue and it remained unknown to majority of researchers until recently. It has not been studied specifically either in our country or abroad. It was briefly mentioned in a well-known bio-bibliographic reference book “Persian Literature” by an English orientalist Ch. A. Storey [24:1149. Pakistani scholar Riyaz al-Islam, describing “Silsilat al-salatin” as the best and most detailed work on the history of Turan, noted that one should be careful with the data of the manuscript concerning Indo-Turanian relations, since the author was a native of the Ashtarkhanids (1009 / 1601-1170/1757) that were the ruling dynasty in Bukhara Khanate [21:250-251].

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The history of political relations between Bukhara Khanate and Baburid India in the XVII - early XVIII centuries is reflected in the manuscript sources compiled both in Central Asia and in India. First of all, it must be acknowledged that there are no special works devoted to the issue. Information about this is scattered in numerous manuscripts and works such as “Babur-name” by Zahir ad-Din Muhammad Babur (888 / 1483-937 / 1530), “Akbar-name” by Abu al-Fazl Allami (958 / 1551-1011 / 1602), “Muntahab at-Tawarih” by Abd al-Qadir ibn Muluk-shahi Badauni (d. 1024/1615), “Abdallah-name” by Hafiz-i Tanish ibn Mir Muhammad al-Bukhari (written between 992/1584-998 / 1590), “Jahangir-name” by Mirza Salim Nur ad-Din Muhammad Jahangir (976 / 1569-1037 / 1627), “Bahr al-asrar fi manakib al-akhbar” by Mahmud ibn Wali (written between 1044 / 1634-1050 / 1640-41), “Zafar-name-yi Shah-Jahani” by Abu Talib Kalim Hamadani (d. 1061/1651), “Shah Jahan-name” by Abd al-Hamid Lahori (d. 1065/1654), “Amal-i Salih al-Mousumba Shah-Jahanname” by Muhammad Salih Kambo-yi Lahori (d. 1085 / 1674-75), “Alamgir-name” by Muhammad Kazim-Munshi (d. 1092/1681), “Ma'asir-i Alamgiri” by Muhammad Saki Mustaidkhana (d. 1136 / 1723-24), “Tarih-i Mukim-khani” by Muhammad Yusuf-Munshi (completed after 1116/1704), “Nuskha-yizibayi Jahangiri” and “Hatirat-i Mutribi” by Mauland Mutribi Samarki (born in 966/1559), etc [7: 47-57, 65-72, 82-87, 137, 150-155, 165-173; 27: 75-86].

### **THE OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

- To explore the role of “Silsilat al-salatin” to study the history of Bukhara - Indian relations;
- Analyses of the correspondences of rulers of the two countries on the study;
- Investigating strategic purposes of strengthening the relations between the two countries.

**MAIN PART**

A more serious study of the manuscript began in recent years Uzbekistan by B.A. Akhmedov. He pointed out the most valuable aspects of “Silsilat as-salatin” on a number of issues, including international relations [6:30-35; 7:101-110]. The English orientalist J. Burton wrote about the “objectivity and documentary substantiation of the materials of the work”, who used “Silsilat al-salatin” to cover the political activities of Ashtarkhanid Nadr Muhammad Khan (the supreme Bukhara khan in 1051 / 1642-1055 / 1645) [10:24].

Although the work of Haji Amir Muhammad Salim mainly describes socio-political history of Central Asia and Northern Afghanistan in the 16th - early 18th centuries, it also contains a lot of data on the issue of international relations in the region, in particular on the political relations of Bukhara Khanate with Baburid India. It must be noted that Silsilat al-salatin, naturally, cannot claim the authenticity of all information in it. In describing the events of the last one and a half centuries, Mir Muhammad Salim, in addition to his own information, also drew the works of his predecessors, in particular, Abu al-Fazl Allami, Hafiz Tanish al-Bukhari, Muhammad Salih Kambo-yi Lahori, Muhammad Kazimmunshi and others [7:103]. A question is naturally arisen on the issue: what is the novelty and significance of “Silsilat as-salatin” on the issue under consideration? A critical analysis of the information from the above works has shown: 1) “Silsilat al-salatin” provides a lot of authentic information including more than fifteen letters and correspondences which were exchanged between Bukhara and Indian rulers of the late 16th - early 18th centuries; 2) a detailed presentation of the internal situation of Bukhara Khanate, its relations not only with India, but also with Iran, allow us to consider Bukhara-Indian relations in the interconnection of internal and external factors.

Below we will focus on the materials of “Silsilat al-salatin”, which make it possible to fill in some gaps and clarify some issues of Bukhara-Indian relations of the 17th - early 18th centuries.

Such is, for example, the question of the restoration of Bukhara-Indian political relations after the Ashtarkhanids succeeded the Sheibanid dynasty in 1009/1601 [11:21; 2:56.59; 12:550; 7:104-106].

On the basis of sources such as “Bahr al-asrar”, “Tarikh-ialamara-yi Abbasi”, “Tarikh-i Mukim-khani”, “Silsilat as-salatin”, etc., the first Ashtarkhanid rulers of Bukhara Baki Muhammad Khan (1009 / 1601-1013 / 1605) and Wali Muhammad Khan (1013 / 1605-1020 / 1611), who were engaged in the settlement of internal affairs, could not continue these relations at least at the level of the last Sheibanid rulers, for example, Abdallah Khan (991 / 1583-1006 / 1598). Bilateral relations were resumed only during the reign of the third Ashtarkhanid ruler Imamkuli Khan (1020 / 1611-1051 / 1642). According to Muhammad Yusuf Munshi, the initiative belonged to Bukhara Khan [18:88]. In the work by I. G. Nizamutdinov that is devoted to the study of the history of Central Asian-Indian relations, it is emphasized: “Thus, such a valuable source as “Mukim Khan history”, does not only mention about the goals and objectives of the embassy to India, but even unknown names of Bukhara ambassadors... Unfortunately, we do not have this document and therefore it is difficult to say anything exactly about it [18:88].

Silsilat al-salatin contains a copy of a correspondence from the ruler of India, Baburid Nur al-Din Jahangir (1014/1605-1037/1627), addressed to Imamkuli Khan [23:189b-192a]. The study of the correspondence sheds light on some hitherto unknown aspects of Bukhara-Indian relations in the first quarter of the 17th century. So, from the message it becomes clear that a Bukhara nobleman Uzbek-Khoja traveled to India at that time [23:189b]. Firstly, the name of the ambassador becomes known by it. Secondly, Bukhara embassy had a specific task: it was to persuade the ruler of India to a joint struggle against Safavid Iran. “This proposal was accepted by Jahangir, who in his message invites Bukhara khan to jointly oppose Iran [23:191ab].

Thirdly, both sides attached great importance to these negotiations, and strict confidentiality was observed. Therefore, some details of the negotiations were clarified verbally by authorized ambassadors. In this regard, the following excerpt from Jahangir's correspondence is interesting: “In a secluded place of the blessed palace [we] arranged an audience and questioned the Khoja (Uzbek-Khoja - A.Z.) about the innermost thoughts that you told him orally [23:191b].

Fourthly, it is possible to approximately establish a more precise time of the resumption of Bukhara-Indian political relations at the beginning of the 17th century during the Ashtarkhanids. Thus, according to Silsilat al-salatin, Uzbek-Khoja returned from India accompanied by the Baburid ambassador Mir Barak, who had with him the aforementioned correspondence from Jahangir. They arrived in Bukhara after the events of the early 20s of the 17th century, when Bukhara-Iranian relations were especially aggravated in connection with the frequent raids into the Balkh Khanate by Rustam Muhammad Sultan who was the son of the above-mentioned Wali Muhammad Khan [23:187b-189b; 5:203-205]. Mir Barak departed from Bukhara to India in 1034/1625 [20:85]. If we proceed from the intensity of Bukhara-Indian negotiations and take into account the significance of their results for both states, we can assume that the first embassy of Bukhara Khanate (Ashtarkhanids) was sent to India not earlier than the beginning 20s of the XVII century [18:86-88]. This is indirectly

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confirmed by the fact that, according to Mahmud ibn Wali, the relationship between Baburid India and the Balkh Khanate also resumed not earlier than the mid-20s of the 17th century [8:287b].

Fifthly, in “Silsilat al-salatin” the person who conducted the talk with Shah Jahan is shown (not with Jahangir as it was indicated in the “Mukimkhan story”) [18:88](1037 / 1628-1068 / 1657). That was Muhammad Siddiq-Khoja, the son of the Djujbar Khoja Abd al-Rahim (983 / 1575-1038 / 1628-29) [23:193a].

The sources describe the stay of Abd al-Rahim-khodja in India in detail [25:428-430; 4: 208a-214a; 14:65; 23:192b]. Unfortunately, they do not say a word about the purpose of this trip. According to the Indian scientist Saxena, Abd al-Rahim-Khoja arrived in India with a proposal to divide Khorasan between Bukhara Khanate and India, but due to the death of Jahangir, the plan was not implemented [9:186-187].

I.G.Ninzamutdinov writes: “The question of whether Khoja Abd al-Rahim brought a correspondence from Imamkuli Khan that was written to Jahangir, and whether Khoja Abd al-Rahim, as ambassador of Bukhara Khanate, made a proposal to partition Khorasan, remains, in the absence of sufficient facts, so far without an answer” [20: 86].

What does Mir Muhammad Salim report on this? For example, we read from his writings: “Since His Majesty, the merciful and magnanimous Khakan (Imamkuli-khan. A. Z.), due to the need to solve some problems in [his] state [quite] recently concluded a [peace] treaty with the ruler of Iran, in view of its innate nobility, did not want to break the promise without reason and cause and end up with him (with the ruler of Iran - A. Z.) in a state of war. And therefore, he sent a response correspondence [to the name] Nur ad-Din (Muhammad) Jahangir-padishah, embellishing [him] with worthy, in a friendly and allied spirit [with words], [and] clarifying the essence of the peace concluded with the ruler of Iran in connection with [ the need to] settle some cases in [their] state” [23:192b].

The fact that peace was achieved between Bukhara Khanate and Iran was also confirmed by the authors of “Bahr al-asrar” and “Tarikh-ialamara-yi Abbasi” [5:204-205]. Speaking about his internal problems, Imamkuli-khan most likely meant what Mahmud ibn Wali did. According to the latter, at that time “in the regions of Tashkent and Turkestan, Kazakh khans often violated peace and order” [8:108b-112b]. Thus, the question of the division of Khorasan between Bukhara and India was not raised during Abd al-Rahim-Khoja's trip to India. The purpose of his embassy was to confirm friendly relations of Bukhara with India and to explain the reasons for the sharp change in the position of Imamkuli Khan towards Iran. It is not excluded that due to the delicacy of the issue, Imamkuli Khan instructed Abd al-Rahim-Khoja to head this mission, given his great authority outside the khanate, including in India.

The relations between Bukhara Khanate and India in the 40s of the 17th century have been hardly studied. Meanwhile, in the history of Bukhara-Indian relations, this period is notable for the fact that in the summer of 1056/1646 the Baburid troops managed to seize the southern possessions of the Ashtarkhanid state including Balkh and Badakhshan, which they ruled for more than a year by the autumn of 1057/1647. In the history of the Baburid state this was the first time when the descendants of Babur managed to temporarily gain a foothold within Bukhara Khanate.

It must not be said that the range of sources on this issue is limited. The events of those years are described in a number of works to some extent [1: 430-450,660-661; 17: 354-371; 18: 97-101; 15:1136-114a]. Among them, the work of Muhammad Salih Kambo-yi Lahori claims to be the most detailed. However, his work has one significant drawback which is too tendentious illustrative of events. At one time, Ch. A. Storey described it as “a pompous story about the campaign of the army sent by Shah Jahan against the Uzbek ruler Nadir Muhammad” [24:1139]. Apparently, this circumstance did not allow researchers to evaluate the reliability of the information provided by Muhammad Salih. The same insignificant data on this issue that are found in other sources, in fact, did not bring anything new. The introduction of the materials “Silsilat al-salatin” into scientific use reveals us the answer of this question. Here we will cite only our conclusions obtained as a result of a critical study of the data of the work with the involvement of materials from other Persian-language works available to us.

### **OUTCOMES**

First conclusion. “Silsilat al-salatin” provides interesting material that reveals the essence of the internal political crisis in the Ashtarkhanid state in 1055/1645, as a result of which the practical implementation of Shah Jahan's plans in relation to Balkh and Badakhshan became possible. Thus, the head of state, Nadr Muhammad Khan, relying on the faithful emirs of Balkh [19], sought to use the contradictions among Bukharian nobility. But at the same time, he made mistakes that were fatal for himself. In particular, he came into conflict with a large feudal lord Yalangtush-biy who was a powerful emir [landlord] of Bukhara at that time [2:39-40,42,61,71; 5:47-48,105,107,109,139]. Mir Muhammad Salim, who was characterized upon as “an outstanding warrior of the arena of intrigue,” Yalangtush-biy, becoming a personal enemy of the khan, was preparing a conspiracy against him. It was he who was at the head of the preparation and implementation of the coup d'etat in the khanate in 1055/1645 [18:94-95]. Through the efforts of Yalangtush on the first day of the month of Rabbi I 1055/26 April 1645, the

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eldest son of Nadr Muhammad Khan Abd al-Aziz was declared the supreme khan in the town of Sara-yinau (in the vicinity of Ura-tepe). Nadr Muhammad Khan fled to Balkh and from there continued to fight for the throne. This exacerbation of the internal political struggle in Bukhara created a favourable condition for the Baburids to seize the southern possessions of the Ashtarkhanid state.

Second conclusion is that Mir Muhammad Salim provides additional information about Shah Jahan's preparations for the campaign against Balkh and Badakhshan, about the routes of troops from India to these areas. At the same time, five routes such as Buini Kara, Gurskiy, Aibakskiy, Badzhgakh, Kunduzskiyare described in detail, which connected Balkh with Kabul. The details of Mir Muhammad Salim's information about them are even the distances between each of the destinations on the routes (f. 230a-231a) [26:44]. This allows, in particular, to more accurately represent the military-tactical plans of the Baburids' army both during the offensive in 1056/1646, and during their retreat in 1057/1647.

Third conclusion is that the work contains a sufficient amount of information which tangles the ambiguity of Shah Jahan's policy towards the bowels of Muhammad Khan, who initially asked the Baburid ruler for support in solving internal problems. Shah Jahan, on elephants, was promised all kinds of support, in fact he was breaking his vows. According to the testimony of Mir Muhammad Salim, he, “secretly ordering Murad-Bakhsh (his son - L. 3.) to seize Balkh and Badakhshan”, considers these areas “opening the way to the conquest of Turan [23:223ab, 23:238a]. In addition, Shah-Jahan in a special correspondence to Murad-Bakhsh writes: “... now, when the alienation of the position of Sayyid Nadr Muhammad Khan reached its climax, discord and contradictions [between him and his sons], our equestrian detachment, [having experienced their] happiness, would have swept on the wings of haste to Balkh and, seizing Nadr Muhammad Khan, would send him to India, fasting which [our] innermost thoughts and light-emitting judgments would shine brightly in [their ] full splendor” [23:233b].

However, Nadr Muhammad Khan, guessing at the last moment about the true intentions of Shah Jahan, fled to Iran. Here he could count on military assistance against the Baburids, who, naturally, did not meet the interests of Shah Jahan. Therefore, the latter makes an attempt through his ambassadors to dissuade Shah Abbas II (1052 / 1642-1077 / 1666) from supporting Nadr Muhammad Khan. For this, Shah Jahan sent a special embassy to Iran, headed by Jannisar Khan [23: 233b]. In a correspondence addressed to the Shah, the Baburid ruler asks him to facilitate the departure of Nadr Muhammad Khan to Mecca [23:241a], that is, to remove the latter from Iran.

Fourth conclusion is that the information of “Silsilat al-salatin” makes it possible understand in more detail the situation in Balkh and Badakhshan during the period of Baburid rule there. Despite the difficult situation, the local population continued to fight against the invaders. And this struggle was led by authority figures. So, Mir Muhammad Salim writes that Aurangzeb, the son of Shah-Jahan, who received his father's order to defend the occupied territories from the troops of Bukhara, “having examined the inner and outer parts of the fortress (Balkh. - A. Z.), he suspected ... Khoja Abd al-Ghaffar, the son of His Holiness Salih-Khoja and Khoja Abd al-Wali were preparing a mutiny and, taking them with him, returned to the camp” [22].

This act of Aurangzeb corresponded to one of the points of Shah Jahan's instructions regarding the establishment of new orders in Balkh and Badakhshan. It states: “To think about the establishment of order and discipline [among] the population and to clear [their minds] of the order [prevailing] under Sayyid Nadr Muhammad Khan, to ingratiate himself with his subjects” [23:238a]. As can be seen from the information provided by Mir Muhammad Salim, the occupants were especially worried about the presence of famous figures of religion, science and culture, some representatives of the ruling house, prominent emirs in Balkh who continued to stay there after Nadr Muhammad Khan fled to Iran. Being in Balkh, they could at any time inspire the local population to fight against the invaders and lead it. Therefore, by the request of Shah-Jahan, the followings were sent to India: Tayyib-Khoja, son of the famous Juybar sheikh Hasan-Khoja (982 / 1574-1056 / 1646), Khoja Zayn ad-Din Naqshbandi, Khoja Qasim Hisari, Khoja Abd al-Wahab rais Foolad Khoja, son of Sangin Khoja, a son of the aforementioned Hasan Khoja, Mirza Abd al-Latif divan, Mirza Abd al-Rauf divan, sons of Nadr Muhammad Khan Bahram Sultan, Abd al-Rahman Sultan, etc.[23:239b-240b]

Fifth conclusion is that the testimonies of Mir Muhammad Salim provide a deeper insight into Iran's involvement in this conflict. In particular, under the guise of helping Nadr Muhammad Khan against the Baburids, Shah Abbas II sent a large army to Herat region [23:249b]. However, he did not provide any practical support to Nadr Muhammad Khan, but took the position of an observer. The confrontation between Bukhara Khanate and Baburid India weakened both of them, which was in line with the intentions of the Iranian ruler in the region, in particular regarding the capture of Kandahar.

Sixth conclusion is that for a more objective assessment of the final stage of Bukhara-Indian conflict, the information given in “Silsilat al-salatin” on the struggle of Bukhara khan Abd al-Aziz against the Baburid army, which lasted until the fall of 1057/1647, is important. Mir Muhammad Salim provides new information for us about the preparation of Abd

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al-Aziz to the liberation of Balkh and Badakhshan from the troops of Shah Jahan, about the military tactical plans of Bukhara Khan in this struggle, about more than twenty important battles between Bukhara and Baburid troops, about Shah Jahan's efforts to maintain positions in Balkh and Badakhshan, about the flight of Baburid troops from these regions, about the return of Nadr Muhammad Khan to Balkh, etc. (I. 252a-2556).

Seventh conclusion is that the materials of “Silsilat al-salatin” on the situation in the region after Bukhara-Indian conflict deserve attention. Neither side achieved any significant advantages, either domestic or in foreign policy. In Bukhara Khanate, civil strife continued, in particular between Bukhara and Balkh, and for India this war cost a colossal amount - 40 million rupees. Taking advantage of this, Iran noticeably strengthened its position in the region. In 1059/1649 Shah Abbas II seized Kandahar, ousting the Baburid governor Davlat Khan from there.

“Silsilat al-salatin” also contains a great deal of other information that make it possible to judge the future condition of relations between the two countries. According to I. G. Nizamutdinov, the restoration of relations between them falls in the mid-1950s, and the initiative is attributed to Bukhara [20:91]. The author believed that the last ambassador of Bukhara Khanate under Abd al-Aziz Khan visited India in 1085/1674 [20:91; 16:49]. It can be seen in Silsilat al-salatin that Bukhara-Indian political ties were resumed after the above-mentioned conflict in 1061 / 1651, when the Ambassador of India Mir Aziz-bakhshi arrived in Bukhara on a friendly visit [23:279a]. In addition, according to Mir Muhammad Salim, in 1085/1675 Balkh ambassador Muhammad Tahir arrived at the Baburid court who was sent there in response to Baburid embassy headed by Yakkataz Khan [23:305a6; 5:194].

Information about Bukhara-Indian political relations in the 18th century sources is very rare. Therefore, the message of Muhammad Salim about the exchange of messages between Ashtarkhanid Ubaydulla Khan (1114 / 1702-1123/1711) and Baburid Bahadur Shah (1119 / 1707-1124/1712) arouses certain interest [23: 334a].

### CONCLUSION

As is seen, “Silsilat al-salatin”, due to the reliability and authenticity of its information, discloses the necessary clarity on a number of aspects of the relationship between Bukhara Khanate and India. Possessing detailed material on the foreign policy of Bukhara Khanate of the 16th - early 20th century, this work can be useful for researchers in the study of not only Bukhara-Indian relations, but also the political ties of Bukhara Khanate with Turkey and Iran.

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