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A LETTER TO PESHWA MADHAVRAO I BY UNKNOWN OFFICER

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The third battle of Panipat was the greatest blow to the Maratha Empire as a whole generation of brave warriors had been destroyed. In such condition Madhavrao I became Peshwa and recover losses of Panipat war. He was one of the greatest personalities of the Maratha History. He decided not to rest until the Maratha Power was reestablished. There arose a conflict between Madhavrao I and his uncle Raghunathrao. Raghunathrao started grooming his own army. Madhavrao also decided to wage a war against his uncle.

Raghunathrao attacked Madhavrao. In this battle Madhavrao defeated and surrender himself. Sakharam Bapu was assistant of Raghunathrao. Nizam slowly started infiltrating the zones of Maratha Empire. Madhavrao defeated Nizam's army at Rakshasbhuvan on 10th Aug. 1763. This present letter gives information about Maratha Nizam relations. This letter conveys the increasing conflict between Nizam of Hyderabad and Janoji Bhosale of Nagpur. This conflict witnessed on upper hand of Nizam. It was suggested to sign an agreement between both the parties, this was the only solution. The duration of the letter is AD 1761 to AD 1772. There was no addresser or addressee referred in this letter. Date also not mentioned. This letter is written in Modi script. Language is Marathi of Medieval period. This letter is a historical document throwing light on Peshwe-Nizam relations.

The third battle of Panipat proved a landmark event, a turning point in the History of Medieval India. This decisive battle was the greatest blow to the Maratha Empire as a whole generation of brave warriors had been destroyed. In such a critical condition, Madhavrao Peshwa took charge of affairs and tried to recover from the great losses during the Panipat war. He was merely sixteen years old at the time of this ascendancy as the next Peshwa of the Maratha Empire. The Maratha Empire was on the brink of complete collapse due to their defeat at Panipat and the resultant debts. But with stoical corrage and endurance, Madhavrao Peshwa took crucial decisions and recovered from the heavy losses during the Panipat campaign. Hence, he is considered one of the greatest personalities of the Maratha History with his distinctive status and individuality.

As the Maratha Empire has lost much of its pride and glory, it was a great challenge before Madhavrao Peshwa. Over a thousands of its soldiers had died while defending the Mother land along with numerous brave knights or sardars. He decided not to rest untill the Maratha Power was reestablished. He started surmounting all difficulties gradually, and reinstated the Maratha authority over north India. In a bid to effectively manage the large empire, semi-autonomy was given to strongest of the knights. Meanwhile, there arose a conflict between Madhavrao (I) and his uncle Raghunathrao who was then the administers the discord between them increased and Raghunathrao fled to vadgaon and started grooming his own army. His men staerted looting the nearly villages for warfare which annoyed Madhavrao. He decided to wage a war against his uncle on 7th Nov. 1762, but proposed a treaty. However Raghunathrao decieved Madhavrao.

When the Maratha camp under Madhavrao was relaxed and unsuspecting of a battle, they were caught unawared as Raghunathrao attacked treacherously. Thus

Madhavrao was defeated in this war and on 12th Nov. 1762 surrendered himself to Raghunathrao near Alegaon. After the surrender, Raghunathrao decided to control all the major decisions under the assistance of Sakharam Bapu. He also decided to befriend Nizam, but this proved to be a wrong master plan as Nizam slowly started infiltrating the zones of Maratha Empire. As time slipped by, Madhavrao pointed out the gravity of the situation to his uncle. Eventually on 7th March 1763 the Peshwas, once again under Madhavrao's leadership, decided to attack Aurangabad to crush Nizam. After months of chasing, the Peshwas faced Nizams army on 10th Aug. 1763 in the battle of Rakshasbhuvan near Aurangabad. Nizam's army suffered huge losses in this war, but Nizam himself fled away. On returning, the Peshwas received a grand welcome back in Pune for their victory over Nizam.⁽¹⁾

Madhavrao I was in his seventeenth year when he succeeded his father. His uncle Raghunathrao a veteran soldier who was very fond of power, became the regent. Nizam Ali, who had practically ousted Salabat Jang from power at Hyderabad, tried to take advantage of Maratha misfortune and marched with about 60,000 troops towards Poona. The Marathas closed their ranks. Nizam Ali was defeated in a decisive battle in January 1762, but Raghunathrao, who was perhaps anticipating a struggle for power with his nephew, granted him very favorable terms. Disputes now began between the uncle and the nephew. Raghunathrao was supported by the Niazm. The Peshwa submitted to his uncle, but the unusually fine character of this young man enabled him steadily to get the upper hand. In 1763 helped his uncle to defeat the Niaam in the battle of Rakshasbhuvan on the Godavari river, but Raghunathrao again granted very favourable terms to the ruler of Hyderabad.⁽²⁾

|| Shri ||

*Aashirvad upari Niazm Ali wa Jano-
ji Bhosale yanha kalah bhari wadhla aahe ubha
yatachihi patre aali tyas Bhoslyancho patre
pathvili aahet Nizam-Ali cha Jora aahe Bho-
sale Kharab jale hatani lihitat ubhayta-
sahi tah karawya wishu yethun patre path-
wili aahet adhik kahi Lihine asle tari
Bhoslyancho patracho uttar tethun lay have
mhanun vistare lihile te te kalale ayeshas Bho-
slyakadil patre aali nahit tethunch
purvanvyaee uttar lyahave chh 11 jamadi-
lawar hi vinanti.*

The present letter also begins with the word “Shree” and gives information about Maratha-Nizam relations. The letter-writer gives blessings to the Peshwa. The letter conveys the increasing conflict between the Nizam of Hyderabad and Janoji Bhosale of Nagpur. The letter-writer had received reports from both sides, and even some letters of Bhosale had been replied back. This conflict witnessed an upper hand of Hyderabad’s Nizam over Bhosale of Nagpur. It was suggested to sign an agreement or treaty between both the parties. This was the only possible solution according to the writer of his letter. Instead of writing much in the letter it is desirable to reply the letters of Bhosale. In such a situation, there was no

message or letter from Bhosale. The reply had to be given from the same destination “chha-11-Jamadilawar”. The letter ends with a request.⁽³⁾

The duration of this letter AD 1761 to AD 1772 was the regime of Madhavrao I Peshwa. There was no addresser or addressee referred in this letter. Even the date was not mentioned. Probably, this letter was written by an officer of Thorale Madhavrao Peshwe. It is written in Modi script, which was popular at that time. The language used in this letter is of course Marathi of the Medieval times. This letter about Peshwe-Nizam relations is available for researches in the selected papers of Poona Archives records. Rumal No.1, Packet No.4, letter No.Y-496.

This, the present letter is one of the significant historical documents throwing considerable light on Peshwe-Nizam relations.

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