**BAHADUR SHAH ZAFAR-**

Zafar's father, Akbar II had been imprisoned by the British and he was not his father's preferred choice as his successor. One of Akbar Shah's queens, Mumtaz Begum, pressured him to declare her son, Mirza Jahangir, as his successor. However, The East India Company exiled Jahangir after he attacked their resident, in the Red Fort,[2] paving the way for Zafar to assume the throne.

Bahadur Shah Zafar ruled over a Mughal Empire that had by the early nineteenth century been reduced to only the city of Delhi and the surrounding territory as far as Palam. The Maratha Empire had brought an end to the Mughal Empire in the Deccan during the 18th century and the regions of India formerly under Mughal rule had either been absorbed by the Marathas or had declared independence and become smaller kingdoms.[3] The Marathas installed Shah Alam II in the throne in 1772, under the protection of the Maratha general Mahadaji Shinde and maintained suzerainty over Mughal affairs in Delhi. The East India Company became the dominant political and military power in mid-nineteenth-century India. Outside the region controlled by the Company, hundreds of kingdoms and principalities, fragmented their land. The emperor was respected by the Company, who provided him with a pension. The emperor permitted the Company to collect taxes from Delhi and maintain a military force in it. Zafar never had any interest in statecraft or had any "imperial ambition". After the Indian Rebellion of 1857, the British exiled him from Delhi.

Bahadur Shah Zafar was a noted Urdu poet, having written a number of Urdu ghazals. While some part of his opus was lost or destroyed during the Indian Rebellion of 1857, a large collection did survive, and was compiled into the Kulliyyat-i-Zafar. The court that he maintained was home to several prolific Urdu writers, including Mirza Ghalib, Dagh, Mumin, and Zauq.

After his defeat, he said:

Ghaziyon mein bu rahegi jab tak iman ki Takht London tak chalegi tegh Hindostan ki.

As long as there remains the scent of faith in the hearts of our Ghazis, so long shall the Talwar of Hindustan flash before the throne of London.

https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/life-style/food-news/from-babur-to-bahadur-shah-zafar-this-is-what-the-mughals-loved-eating/photostory/75476498.cms?picid=75476622

he loved eating ‘Sohan ka Halwa.’ However, towards the later part of his life, he could barely eat anything solid. “His son Mirza Qaimur Bahadur used to lace his paan (beetel leaf) with tiger hair powder so that he could kill him. While that did not happen, his ability to eat solid was, however, curbed.”

“It is written,” says Dehlvi, “whenever Zafar would sit down to eat and dip his spoon in kheer (porridge), it would be announced to the people outside that he had begun his meal and subsequently almost 300 kgs of rice would be handed out to beggars everyday.”

“He was very fond of patang bazi (kite flying), as well”, says Dehlvi, adding, “Whenever he became agitated or worried, he would go to the banks of Yamuna behind the Lal Quila (Red Fort) and would spend hours flying kites.”

Dehlvi finally says that according to a few very old texts that are very rare, once the British had recaptured the Red Fort, Bahadur Shah Zafar, along with his retinue had gone to Hazrat Nizamuddin Aulia Dargah, where he gave up the relics of Prophet Mohammed that he had, “It is written that he died in the langar there and his people wept at the state of the Mughal emperor. From there he went to Humanyun's tomb where he was arrested by Major Hudson.”

Zafar, says Dehlvi, would go on to face several charges. “Zafar was tried and found guilty on four counts -- Aiding the mutinies of the troops, encouraging people in waging war against the British, assuming the dominion of Hindustan and causing murders of a number of Christians.”

In the autumn of 1837, Akbar Shah II, the titular emperor of India, was on his deathbed. His original heir, the irascible Jahangir Bakht, had died a few years ago after overdosing on cherry brandy while in exile in Allahabad, paving the way for the ascension of the king's eldest son, Abu Zafar, as crown prince.

Ordinarily, Abu Zafar would have been the first-choice heir, but there was one problem: he possessed neither a passion for administration nor a desire for power – he was a mystic munshi, with no inclination towards governance of the lands his family ruled, but in name.

"bahadur shah zafars worst years were queen victoria's best"

when he was six years old, Zafar would have borne witness to the blinding of his grandfather Shah Alam at the hands of Ghulam Qadir

the North Western provinces were taken over with the annexation of Sindh in 1843, Punjab was annexed in 1849 and by 1856, Awadh and the Deccan too were taken over.

Meanwhile in Delhi, Zafar struggled to contain his palace. His eldest son and crown prince, Dara Bakht, had been a calming influence on the family, but he died in 1849, and Dara’s successor Prince Fakhru died seven years later. This left the brash 15-year-old Jawan Bakht as next in line to the throne.

On February 26, 1857, the 19th Regiment of the Bengal Native Infantry at Baharampur refused rifle practice, on the premise that the cartridges were greased with animal fat. One month later, the 34th Regiment in Barrackpur revolted, wounding two Company officers.

In the events that followed over the next few months, from May to September 1857, Delhi and India briefly returned to Mughal rule. After initially vacillating, Zafar later tragically aligned his fate with the cause of the rebels.

The rebels found success in early battles around Delhi, but an inexperienced administration strained to control the insurgents and the city soon descended into anarchy. As the summer wore on, the British forces reorganised and the tide of battle began to turn.

By early September, the writing was on the wall. After a brief assault, the British retook Delhi and the rebels fled back to the countryside. Zafar was captured and arrested after being promised his life.

Two rulers(queen elizabeth), ascending their thrones together, thousands of miles apart. Two distinctive characters with dramatically divergent personas: the first a confident young lady helming an ascendant kingdom, the other a mystic old man in charge of a crumbling medieval state. They were never to meet, but for decades their fortunes had been inextricably intertwined.

Zafar’s long years in exile might have helped him come to terms with his fate, but the pain was still evident in the verses he penned before his death:

I asked for a long life – I received four days

Two passed in desire, two in waiting

The days of life are over, evening has fallen;

I shall sleep, legs outstretched, in my tomb

How unfortunate is Zafar! For his burial

Not even two yards of land were to be had,

in the land of his beloved.

https://scroll.in/article/900263/how-bahadur-shah-zafars-daughter-had-to-flee-from-delhi-after-he-lost-his-empire

<https://scroll.in/article/900576/not-just-the-last-mughal-three-ghazals-by-bahadur-shah-zafar-the-poet-king>

I don’t have a script but I do have a script outline of a story I was trying to write-

**“The Last Emperor Of India”**

After I watched Jojo Rabbit I got inspired to write a similar fictional story about some historical figure of India. I then stumbled upon the story of Bahadur Shah Zafar, the last emperor of India. I was fascinated by Bahadur Shah’s story as it is very similar to a lot of kids in India. Many kids are pressurized into taking up a field they don’t really want to by their family. Bahadur Shah was in a similar situation. He never wanted to become the emperor of india. He loved writing poems but was forced to become the emperor. He was unable to do anything to stop the British from taking over Delhi as the emperor, but his biggest contribution to the freedom struggle came when he was in Rangoon doing what he loved the most- writing poems. He wrote many poems about India’s freedom struggle that inspired many. I had prepared an outline for my script but was never able to start writing it. Here is the outline:

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[**Story starts** with a small funny narration my Zafar himself]-

My father, Akbar II, died by overdosing with cherry brandy. This meant a successor was supposed to be chosen. It was my half brother, Mirza Jahangir who became the successor. He was a Mughal in true respect. Unfortunately Jahangir once attacked the British resident at Red fort(which was supposed to be our resident so fair play to him) and was exiled by the British. This meant that me, Bahadur Shah Zafar becomes the emperor of India and whatever was left of the Mughal sultanate.

[Zoom out as Bahadur Shah gets crowed the emperor]

While I was being crowed in India, my “mortal enemy” Queen Victoria was crowed as the Queen of England. She was everything I wasn’t- a confident young lady helming an ascendant kingdom while I am a mystic old man in charge of a crumbling medieval state. We were never to meet, but for decades our fortunes were going to be inextricably intertwined.

[End of monologue]

Zafar being crowed as the emperor is not liked by many including Zafar himself. He is laughed at by his own court members behind his back. Zafar finds this out and replaces the war tacticians with Urdu poets.

Zafar never had any interest in statecraft or had any "imperial ambition". One day he overhears Zinat Mahal, his favourite wife, telling his 15 year old son, Jawan Bhakt, to not become like his father. This really hurts him as Zinat was his closest wife. He goes to the Yamuna Ghat to fly kites with his close friend Ghalib. Ghalib inspires him to prove his son Jawan Bhakht, that he is no weakling by standing up against the British.

Meanwhile one of his son Mirza Qaimur tries out multiple methods to get rid of his old father so that he can ascend the throne. Unfortunately he fails every time and is told by Zafar’s coutesian and close friend Mirza Ghalib that “Zafar has a love affair with lady death and will only die when he wants to”.

[Start of another narration by Zafar of 1857 revolt]

On February 26, 1857, the 19th Regiment of the Bengal Native Infantry at Baharampur refused rifle practice, on the premise that the cartridges were greased with animal fat. One month later, the 34th Regiment in Barrackpur revolted, wounding two Company officers.

The revolters needed a leader to work under and so they did the most logical thing came to the Emperor of India, which unfortunately was me.

[End of narration]

Zafar initially rejects the offer to become the leader of the revolts but after a fight with Zinat Mahal decides to align his fate with the cause of the rebels just to impress his son Jawan Bhakht.

[In London drawing parallels between Queen Victoria and Bahadur Shah Zafar]

The rebels find success in early battles around Delhi. Queen Victoria isn’t happy about the revolt and decides to take control herself(unlike Zafar).

She takes part in the tactic formations much to the displeasure of the British Major and East India Company’s Chief who don’t like royal women interfering in wars. She overcomes this problems like a pro and is able to turn the tide of the battle.

In Delhi an inexperienced Zafar is strained to control the insurgents and the city soon descended into anarchy. Quite opposite to what happened in London.

By early September, after a brief assault, the British retook Delhi and the rebels fled back to the countryside. Zafar was captured and arrested after being promised his life. From there he went to Humanyun's tomb where he was arrested by Major Hudson.

Ghalib tells Mirza Qaimur that his father has choosen to give up, finally. Qaimur isn’t happy contrary to what Ghalib thought.

Zafar meets Zinat Mahal and Jawan Bhakht outside the courtroom just before his hearing. She calls him a coward for backing away from his responsibilities.

Zafar is exiled to Rangoon and is declared as the Last Emperor Of India. Forever going down in Indian history as a “failure”.

Queen Victoria celebrates the success of the British in London and is **labelled as the Empress of India** (end to the parallels between Zafar and Victoria)

Zafar meets a British soldier who is assigned to take care of him until his death. He befriends him. The soldier helps him discovers his passion for writing poems and encourages him to write while in Rangoon.

Zafar goes on to write poems that helps him inspire the freedom fighters of India. This ends up being his biggest contribution to India’s freedom struggle.

Years later Jawan Bhakt gets his son a copy of Zafar’s book “Kulliyyat-i-Zafar” and asks him to read it calling Zafar the bravest man he’s known as he took up the leadership of the revolt despite knowing well how badly India were positioned against the British.

Zafar grandson open the book and reads a poem by Zafar:

I asked for a long life – I received four days

Two passed in desire, two in waiting

The days of life are over, evening has fallen;

I shall sleep, legs outstretched, in my tomb

How unfortunate is Zafar! For his burial

Not even two yards of land were to be had,

in the land of his beloved.

[The End]