

Life Story of Maharana Pratap

August 2017

Savior of Liberty and self-respect, 'Hindua Suraj' - Maharana Pratap

*'Shesha naag sir sehas paye, dhar rakhi khud aap,
Ik bhala ri nok pai, thay dhabi partap!'*

– Ram Singh Solanki

Meaning:

Shesh –the remainder, that which remains when all else cease to exist.

Naag - Serpent.

Shesha Naag is said to hold the planets of the universe on his hoods. He has to use his thousand hoods to protect and stabilize the unstable earth. But, Oh Pratap! You stabilized and protected the entire motherland, solely on the tip of your spear.

Where the Snake God held the Earth on its thousands of heads; there, Oh! Brave Maharana Pratap, you have not only held your land on the tip of your spear but also used the strength of your spears to protect it.

Maharana Pratap was the hundred and fourth heir of the great Sun dynasty 'Suryavansh'. The Kings of erstwhile India were divided into two dynastic categories namely 'Suryavanshi' and 'Chandravanshi' based on the Sun and Moon Gods respectively. Mythological texts and manuscripts also refer to these two dynasties in which the 'Suryavanshi' Kings hold greater significance. This 'Suryavansh' dynasty was later known as 'Rughavansh' dynasty tracing its ancestry to 'Surya' the Sun God. The incarnation of Lord Rama, destroyer of the malevolent demon Ravana also occurred in the 'Suryavanshi' dynasty and it is believed that the Kingdom of Mewar originated from Luv, the elder son of Rama.

This dynastic tradition continued with the birth of the popular King Guhaditya/Guhil in 568 CE and the dynasty was thus referred to as 'Guhilvansh'/'Guhilot' with 'Rawal' as its title.

Born in village Sisoda Rana Hamir Singh became the Maharana of Mewar in 1326 CE. In order to keep the name of Sisoda alive, Hamir Singh's dynasty came to be known as the Sisodia dynasty and he attained the title of Maharana. Maharana Pratap became the fifty fourth custodian of Shree Eklingnathji, the ruling Deity of Mewar.

Rajasthan owes its rich history to the glorious tales of its brave-hearts. These heroes put up valiant fights to keep the soil safe from foreign invaders. One such hero who faced the enormous Mughal forces was the fearless Maharana Pratap. Pratap's lifelong struggle for freedom against Akbar was an inspiration not only for the people of Rajasthan but for the lovers of independence and liberty across the country.

In the year 2015, on the occasion of the four hundred and seventy fifth birth anniversary of Maharana Pratap, the Chairman and Managing Trustee of Maharana Mewar Charitable Foundation, Shriji Arvind Singh Mewar announced the publication of this calendar of 2016 in association with the Maharana Mewar Historical Publication Trust in memory of the great

Maharana Pratap and other brave-hearts. It honors the courage and dedication they displayed to protect their land.

Maharana Pratap was one of the very few rulers whose life was nothing like that of a King. Instead he is remembered as an institution upholding the virtue of independence and liberty. He often rejected tempting gifts and offers from various powerful rulers maintaining his self-respect and the dignity of his land. The Suryavanshi pride in him often took the tough path to the extent of choosing death over the dishonor of his nation's culture and civilization.

Birth:

Maharana Udai Singh II of Mewar (r.1537-72) was married to Jaiwanta Bai (Jaiwanti Kanwar), daughter of Pali's Songara Chauhan Akheraj and granddaughter of Rao Randhir Songara. On 9 May, 1540 CE Maharani Jaiwanta Bai gave birth to Pratap at the Fort of Kumbhalgarh. Pratap proved to be very lucky for his father. Maharana Udai Singh defeated Banbir with the help of his loyal soldiers and established his rule over the entire territory of Mewar with Chittorgarh as his capital.

Childhood and Education:

Being the eldest son of Maharana Udai Singh it is certain that there must have been no dearth of love and care in the bringing up of Pratap, also known as 'Kika' during his childhood. Most of his childhood was spent between Chittorgarh and Kumbhalgarh. His chivalry, understanding and management of scriptures etc. are proof of the fact that he must have received very high standards of Princely education including political and religious subjects. Earning success in various military campaigns during his teenage years can also be attributed to the training he received in his youth. Thus it can be assumed that he had accomplished the art of Horse riding, use and understanding of weapons and scriptures, military management, war tactics etc. all, during his youth.

During his youth, Pratap defeated the Chauhans of Vagarh on the banks of river Som and added the territory to Mewar. Thereafter, in 1562 CE he went on to capture the entire territory of Chappan including Godwar.

His father, Maharana Udai Singh was highly enamored by his youngest Queen Bhatiyani, Dhir Kanwar. Therefore, he had special affection for the Queen's son, Jagmal. The Queen seized this opportunity and convinced Maharana Udai Singh to proclaim Jagmal as his successor while Pratap was ordered to leave the Chittorgarh fort and settle below in the foothills. Keeping the 'Suryavanshi' dignity alive and following the example of Lord Rama, Pratap accepted his father's orders and left the fort with a few loyal Rajputs. He would share the food supplies sent to him from the Palace with his loyal companions.

Mewar's mountainous jungle territory was inhabited by the 'Bhil' tribe living separately according to their clans. Bow and arrow was their prime weapon that they used for protection as well as food. Along with being popular for their bravely, loyalty and strength they were also

known for their unrestrained dedication towards their leader. Disguised as a regular villager, Pratap built solid contact with these 'Bhils' dwelling in the forests and this helped him a great deal in the future.

Marriage and Family:

Poet Shymaldas mentions eleven Queens of Pratap in 'Veer Vinod' of which the first one was Ajabdeh Panwar. Various historians have also made a mention of his children - seventeen sons and five daughters, in their respective texts. Though there is no single vote on Pratap's family it is safe to assume that he had a full and complete family life. Most historians settle at the version that he was married to Ajabdeh Panwar at the age of seventeen – eighteen years with who he had his first child, Amar Singh on March 16, 1559.

Mewar – Mughal Struggle:

The loss of Chittorgarh brought various changes in Rajputana. The Mughals had already established strong contacts with the Chandrawats of Rampura and the Hadas of Bundi. The rulers of Idar and Dungarpur also accepted Akbar's supremacy after he defeated Gujarat. Akbar's arrival in Nagaur on November 15, 1570 CE led to Marwar and Bikaner accepting the Mughal supremacy as well. By the time Maharana Pratap sat on the throne, all the territory northeast and southeast of Mewar was under the possession of the Mughals. At this point Maharana Pratap had only two options. He could either accept Akbar's supremacy and work for the Mughal Empire like all other Rajput Kings or he could stay independent and walk on a path full of struggle and difficulties his entire life. He chose the latter. Even though he found himself alone in this effort to protect the independence and liberty of his land, he did not accept Akbar's supremacy.

Maharana Udai Singh's Death:

Even before losing Chittorgarh Maharana Udai Singh had moved to Gogunda with his family. Ancient tailings of Maharana Udai Singh's residence can be seen in the foothills of the Dhauliya Mountains of Gogunda till date. Maharana Udai Singh passed away on February 28, 1572 on the day of the festival of Holi, while residing here. His last rites were held near the pond of Gogunda, close to Rana village. A cenotaph in his memory stands at that place.

Coronation:

As per Maharana Udai Singh's wish, Maharani Dheer Bai Bhatiyani's son Jagmal ascended the throne after him. He was therefore, not present at Maharana Udai Singh's last rites following the age old tradition that a Hindu King does not attend funerals. On realizing this wrong done with Maharana Pratap, Raja Ram Singh Tanwar of Gwalior and Songara Man Singh, Akhirajot consulted all other nobles present there and held a discussion on this matter as well as on the matter of mighty Akbar. This detailed discussion resulted in a majority decision that they would help Maharana Pratap gain his rightful place. Soon after the cremation they went to Gogunda where the 'Raj-Tilak' (coronation) of Maharana Pratap was done by Rawat Krishnadas of Salumbar and Rawat Sanga of Devgarh. This was followed by the nobles entering the Royal

court and physically replacing Jagmal with Maharana Pratap. They held Jagmal by the hand, lifted him and said “your place is in front of the throne”. This offended Jagmal deeply and he immediately stormed off to accept Akbar’s supremacy in revenge. In return Akbar gave him a portion of Jahajpur estate.

On Thursday, February 28, 1572 CE Pratap sat on the royal throne of Mewar in Gogunda. The mourning period of Maharana Udai Singh’s demise was on in the Palace due to which no celebrations could take place. Therefore, following tradition, Pratap went on a hunt during this period. When he moved from Gogunda to Kumbhalgarh his coronation was celebrated according to traditions with much pomp and show.

Situation of Mewar:

After completing thirty two years of age Maharana Pratap was finally called the superpower of Mewar and the custodian of Shee Eklingnathji. However, he had seen many ups and downs in life from a very young age and was prone to struggles. His shrewd stepmother and angry father rendered him homeless at a very tender age and the troubles he inherited cannot be worded easily.

The constant threat of Sher Shah Suri’s attack, improvement in Mewar-Bundi relations, battle of Harmara with Haji Khan, the inevitable need to establish the city of Udaipur at the age of nineteen are just a few of the many situations that had great impact on Pratap’s life. While Udai Singh was alive, the idea of a new prospective capital from the point of view of safety was made a reality in the ‘Girwa’ valley ensconced within the Aravalli mountain range.

However, the incident that brought about a big change in Pratap was in 1568 CE when almost all of Mewar’s fertile land had been captured by the Mughals including the historic fort of Chittorgarh. Even though the Mughal military power was strong the brave heroes of Mewar did not fall short in comparison when it came to the protection of Chittorgarh in February 1568. Brave warriors such as Jaimal, Patta and many others sacrificed their lives to protect their land.

The brave women of Mewar conducted a big ‘Jauhar’ (self-immolation of Rajput women by jumping in fire while facing defeat at the hands of the enemy) and embraced death to protect their dignity. In spite of the outstanding courage exhibited by Mewar’s brave-hearts Akbar ordered the heart wrenching execution of the children, women, aged and helpless people who had survived at the Chittorgarh Fort.

In 1569, exactly a year after the defeat of Chittorgarh, the strategic Fort of Ranthambore also slipped out of Maharana Udai Singh’s hands. With the help of a few surviving and loyal nobles Maharana Udai Singh resided in Dholiya and Rana, neighboring villages of Gogunda. His demise in 1572 CE is also attributed to his defeat at Chittorgarh.

Mewar during the Time of Pratap:

Ascending the throne under such uncertain circumstances gave rise to the obvious question in Pratap's mind – what should be his future policy towards the Mughal Empire? Should he also accept their supremacy like the other Kings or should he protect the glorious reputation of Mewar and the sacrifices of his ancestors and choose the tough path even if it means he will have to struggle his entire life.

As a true Rajput and brave warrior, Pratap decided to take the tough path. He started by organizing the wounded fragments of Mewar with Kumbhalgarh and Gogunda as his centers. Soon he gained control over the Chappan territory of Mewar. The 'Bhil' clans dwelling separately in the forests were all united and made to form a strong group in the army. Soldiers were deployed in the valleys of the Aravalli range and the undulating terrain of Godwar region.

With a far-sighted vision and keeping in mind future hurdles he strengthened his army at the Sirohi and Gujarat borders, organized the locals and gradually started resettling the locals from the Chittorgarh – Mandalgarh regions that came under Akbar to his side. Pratap's general psyche and the relationships built with the 'Bhils' during his father's reign came in great use at this point. This is how Pratap used his childhood and teenage experience to establish a newer and stronger Mewar.

The Arrival of Mughal Representatives in Mewar:

The news about Mewar's new and orderly reinvention was a big blow to Akbar. His diplomatic plans on the expansion of the Mughal Empire would be greatly jeopardized if Mewar attained the strength to confront him. His prime policy was to somehow win Pratap's confidence and bring Mewar on his side to protect his ambitions and Empire. With this in mind he sent his trusted minister Jalal Khan Korji to Maharana Pratap. However, Pratap only met Jalal Khan cordially and gave no further importance to him or his message.

Man Singh's Arrival in Mewar:

When Akbar was returning from Gujarat in 1573 CE Man Singh of Amber was sent with the Mughal army to convince and bring back with him any King from Idar, Dungarpur and Udaipur etc. who agreed to accept the Mughal supremacy. Though Man Singh succeeded in convincing the King of Dungarpur, his visit to Udaipur was futile. Maharana Pratap came to Udaipur from Gogunda to host Man Singh. He met him cordially and showed respect. However, in spite of Man Singh's strong urge, Pratap refused to bend before Akbar.

When Man Singh was to depart, Maharana Pratap invited him for a meal at the beautiful Udai Sagar and though Man Singh accepted the invitation and reached on time the Maharana was not to be seen. On enquiring he was informed by Kunwar Amar Singh that the Maharana was suffering from a stomach ache. Man Singh understood the situation. The Maharana also sent a message for him that if he decides to revisit with his army they will be nicely tackled in Malpur and if Akbar came along then they will be tackled wherever they are seen. Man Singh was

deeply offended and he immediately returned to narrate this incident to Akbar. Post his departure, Pratap got that entire spot dug out cleansed with holy water and got the food supplies thrown into the lake.

Thereafter, Akbar failed at repeated attempts to convince Pratap to change his mind. He sent Bhagwandas of Amber in September 1573 CE and Raja Todarmal in December 1573 to Maharana Pratap but to no avail. Akbar was deeply upset with Maharana Pratap's continued absence at his royal court when various other mighty Kings would be present as they had accepted his supremacy.

Battle Preparations:

Lover of independence and liberty, Maharana Pratap knew by this point that a war was inevitable. He started strengthening his army at strategic points and hilly terrains as well as moving people from the plains to the mountains. Agriculture and farming was brought to a complete halt. Pratap himself completely renounced all imperial luxuries. His loyal nobles rendered unconditional support and helped boost his morale in these testing times. Meanwhile all locals, forest dwellers, 'Bhils' etc. were also being prepared for the war.

After waiting for about two years for Pratap to accept his supremacy, Akbar finally decided to wage a war. On March 7, 1576 Akbar arrived in Ajmer and decided to deploy his army to capture Maharana Pratap with Kunwar Man Singh of Amber as his Commander-in-chief. Thus an army of about five thousand soldiers including the likes of Mirbakshi Aasaf Khan, Gaji Khan Badakshi, Sayed Ahmed Khan, Mahatar Khan, Al Badauni, Man Singh's paternal uncle - Jagannath Kachawah, cousin - Khangar, younger son - Madho Singh, Rao Lunkaran was mobilized from Ajmer to Mewar on April 2, 1576. However, Akbar remained in Ajmer itself.

Maharana Pratap's defending army was also almost ready by this time. The warriors leading this army included Gwalior's dismissed Ruler Ram Singh Tanwar and his three sons - Shalivahan, Bhawani Singh and Pratap Singh, Man Singh Songara, Ramdas Mertiya, Dodiya Bhim Singh, Jhala Bida, Jhala Man Singh, Rawat Krishnadas, Rawat Sanga, Rana Punja of Merpur, Purohit Gopinath, Purohit Jagannath, Prihar Kalyan, Bhachawat Mehta Jaimal, Mehta Ratanchand Khetawat, Mahashani Jagannath, Chanan Jaisa and Keshav, Bhama Shah and Tarachand etc. The army also included Pathan Hakim Khan Sur and his men.

Figures of both the armies differ according to different historians. However, the account given by Badauni who was present in Akbar's army suggests that - of the five thousand soldiers present in Akbar's army there was a mix of Hindus and Muslims, most of the Hindus being Man Singh's Kachwaha Rajputs. On the other hand Maharana Pratap's army consisted of a mere three thousand Horsemen. However, Badauni does not make a mention of the 'Bhils' who were present in big numbers using bows and arrows and the others carrying out odd jobs on the battlefield.

Army Camps:

Man Singh departed with his army from Ajmer and reached Mangalwad. On receiving this update Maharana Pratap proceeded with his army from Kumbhalgarh to Gogunda where he held extensive discussions with his chieftains on the war strategy. Though the Maharana and a few young blooded soldiers desired to proceed to Mangalwad and attack Man Singh's army, they went with the decision of a few experienced chieftains who suggested that they should stay put in the mountains and fight from there. Man Singh proceeded from Mangalwad to Gogunda and set up camp in Molela village on the banks of river Banas. Thus Maharana also proceeded through the hilly terrain toward Losingh village situated about thirteen-fourteen miles from Molela. Opportunity to capture Man Singh arrived when it was reported that he had gone hunting with a few soldiers. However, the virtuous Maharana Pratap refused to take the path of betrayal and dropped this opportunity leaving both armies stationed at their respective camps for a while.

Battlefield and Military Maneuvers:

Both camps commenced the formation of their armies. At the forefront of Man Singh's army were eighty competent soldiers led by Sayed Hashim Barah. This was followed by the first row of 'Harawals' (vanguard) led by Jagannath Kachawah and Asif Khan. While Barah's Sayed were positioned on the right side of this row, Gaji Khan Badakshi and Rao Lunkaran were positioned to the left. Mahatrakha was positioned at 'Chandrawal' (rearguard). Madho Singh Kachawah and his men were safely kept as reserve force following the Chandrawals. Man Singh himself was mounted on an Elephant positioned at the center of the army. Elephants were positioned at the tail end of this formation, behind the entire force.

	Madho Singh Kachwaha with the reserve force	
	Mehtar Khan Chandrawal	
Barah ke Sayed (Right)	Man Singh mounted on an Elephant	Gaji Khan Badakshi and Rao Lunkaran (Left)
	Jagannath Kachawah and Asif Khan First row - Harawal	
	Sayed Hashim Barah Eighty competent soldiers led by Sayed Hashim Barah	

Maharana Pratap entrusted Hakim Khan Sur with the task of leading the first attack of the army. To help carry out this challenging task were – the Chundawat of Salumbar Krishnadas, Dodiya Bhim Singh of Sardargarh, Rawat Sanga of Deogarh and Ramdas Medhtya of Badnore. Leading the right side was Gwalior’s Ram Singh Tanwar with his three sons, Bhama Shah and Tarachand. Jhala Man Singh, Jhala Bida and Songara Man Singh were in charge of the left side. Holding the Chandrawal were Rana Puja, Purohit Gopinath, Purohit Jagannath, Bacchawat Mehta Jaimal, Mehta Ratanchand, Mahashani Jagannath, Charan Jaisa and Keshav. The ‘Bhil’ warriors were positioned on hillocks with bows and arrows and big stones. Mounted on his loyal Horse Chetak was Maharana Pratap at the center of his army.

	Elephants with the Royal Insignia	
	Core warriors of Harawal	
Front row: Dodiya Bhim Singh, Rawat Krishnadas, Rawat Sanga, Rathore Ram Singh, Pathan Hakim Khan Sur		
Right side - Core Warriors	Maharana Pratap mounted on Chetak, at the center	Left side - Core Warriors
Jhala Man Singh		Raja Ram Singh Tanwar
Jhala Bida (Man Singh)		Shaliwahan
Songara Man		Bhawani Singh
		Pratap Singh
	Core warriors of Chandrawal	Bhama Shah
		Tarachand
Padhihar Kalyan, Purohit Gopinath, Purohit Jagannath, Rana Punja, Mehta Jaimal, Mehta Ratanchand, Mahasani Jagannath, Charan Jaisa, Charan Keshav		
Description		
In Harawal	1. Dodiya Bhim Singh 2. Rawat Krishnadas 3. Rawat Sanga 4. Rathore Ram Singh 5. Pathan Harim Khan Sur	
Right side	6. Raja Ram Singh 7. Tanwar Shaliwahan 8. Bhawani Singh 9. Pratap Singh 10. Bhama Shah 11. Tarachand	
Left side	12. Jhala Man Singh 13. Jhala Bida (Man Singh - Badi Sadri) 14. Songara Man	
In Chandrawal	15. Padhihar Kalyan 16. Purohit Gopinath 17. Purohit Jagannath 18. Rana Punja 19. Mehta Jaimal 20. Mehta Ratanchand 21. Mahasani Jagannath 22. Charan Jaisa 23. Charan Keshav	

Initial Battle and Mughal Defeat:

The battle of Haldighati was fought in 1576 CE in the month of June three hours after Sunrise. Mewar army attacked the Mughals in three parallel divisions. An Elephant from Pratap's army marched out of the Haldighati pass, furling the flag of Mewar. Thereafter his Harawals led by Hakim Khan Sur attacked the Mughal Harawal troop from the West. The Mughal Harawals led by Hashim Barha were defeated and broken, many of their men fleeing away without standing to fight. Badauni documents that the Mewar army kept up the momentum of their charge and the Mughals crumpled under this furious assault. The Rajput warrior Lunkaran also fled from the battlefield with his troops. At that point Badauni himself asked Asaf Khan how their archers would distinguish between friendly and enemy Rajputs—the Mughal commander asked him to just continue blowing arrows for whichever side the soldiers may be killed the gain will be Islam's either way. Unable to withstand the difficulties posed by the uneven, rough and hostile terrain, laden with thorns, Mughal soldiers kept running towards river Banas to save their lives. Pratap, who was commanding the center of his army, proudly took the plunge in the challenge, displaying ecstatic techniques, attacked Gazi Khan and his troops and moved forward right in the middle of the enemy circle. Dented by Pratap's heavy slaughter, Prince of Sikri - Shekh Mansoor and Gazi Khan also fled from the battlefield. The Mughal troops who had fled earlier had crossed almost 5-6 Kms. beyond river Banas and that is how the Mughal Harawal's disappeared.

The Battle Ahead:

Al Badauni further documents – in the face of such destruction Mehtar Khan stepped out of Chandrawal and using drummers made an announcement of *Akbar's arrival* with a new army to hold back abandoning soldiers. Excited Elephants from both sides locked heads. Akbar's special Elephant fought bravely with Pratap's special Elephant named Ramprasad. However, when Ramprasad's rider got pierced with an arrow and fell off, Akbar's rider swiftly sat on Ramprasad, thus capturing him. According to Badauni both sides fought so heroically that they reduced the value of human life and increased the value of respect.

Confrontation between Pratap and Man Singh:

During this time Maharana Pratap and Man Singh came face to face. Using all his stamina and skill, Pratap made his Horse Chetak stand on his hind legs and climb the trunk of Man Singh's Elephant to attack him. While Man Singh ducked and saved himself from this epic stunt it led to a severe cut on Chetaks' leg from the sword in the Elephant's trunk. In spite of suffering various blows, thereafter, both Chetak and Pratap exhibited unconditional bravery and continued fighting till they were completely surrounded by the enemy force. Seeing the situation, Jhalaman adorned Pratap's royal insignia and drew the enemy's attention by shouting "here comes Pratap". The Mughals attacked Jhalaman who was martyred after putting up a brave fight. Pratap, mounted on Chetak swiftly escaped. He was followed by two Mughal soldiers who were interjected and taken down by Shakti Singh. Deeply wounded Chetak reached Baleecha village situated 6 miles from Haldighati but could not go any further. While Pratap's loyal Chetak drew his last breath

Shakti Singh reached the village to ensure Maharana Pratap's safe exit on his Horse. 'Chetak Smarak' a memorial was erected at the very spot of Chetak's sad demise.

When Pratap returned from the battle his army was also disbanded and returned to the mountains. The Mughal army was in such bad shape that they could not even muster the courage to attack Pratap's soldiers while they were returning back to the mountains.

Result of the Battle of Haldighati:

This battle resulted in high casualties at both ends. Akbar's intention for the battle of 1576 was to completely destroy Pratap and his pride. Akbar's major resentment was Pratap's resolution to stay outside the Mughal Empire. While Akbar wanted Mewar's subjugation under the Mughal Empire, Pratap was ready to perish for independence, liberty and self-respect.

Ramdas Medhlya, Jhala Bida, Man Singh Songara, Dodiya Bhim Singh, Charan and Keshav Jaisa etc. all perished, though they were of great help to Pratap in this battle against Akbar. Pratap reached Kolyari village via Gogunda with all his wounded soldiers where they received medical help. On the other end Akbar reached Ajmer to find a dejected army and missing Mughal supremacy. This made him furious and he closed his doors on Man Singh and Asaf Khan. This confirms the Mughal defeat in the battle of Haldighati.

Struggle:

Pratap had to face various struggles for almost a decade even after the battle of Haldighati. He travelled across Khumbhalgarh, Ranakpur, Chuliya-Idar, areas of Godwar, mountains of Abu etc. to continue looting and destroying Mughal out-posts. During this time Akbar made several failed attempts to capture Pratap.

Battle of Dewair:

In 1582 around the time of 'Vijay Dashmi' Pratap attacked a Mughal out-post in village Dewair situated about 40 Kms northeast of Kumbhalgarh. Sultan Khan, the chief of that station fought a bloody battle with Pratap. When Pratap's men cut the legs of the Elephant on who Sultan Khan was mounted, he swiftly moved onto a Horse. At that point Pratap's eldest son Kunwar Amar Singh killed both Sultan Khan and his Horse with one skillful blow of his spear. The remaining Mughal soldiers ran away rendering Pratap victorious. According to Colonel Tod this successful battle is a 'Marathon' in the history of Mewar.

Campaigns Following the Victory of Dewair:

Immediately after the battle of Dewair, Pratap reached Khumbhalgarh and set up his camp. On seeing this all Mughal soldiers abandoned the Fort and Pratap reclaimed his position. After making security arrangements at the Fort, Pratap proceeded towards Jawar, capturing all Mughal out-posts along the way. He reclaimed Jawar and Chappan and went on to reclaim Chawand by destroying the terror of the Luna Rathores. Thereafter, he got Chawand developed and prepared

as the new capital of Mewar with the foundation of the Chamunda Mata temple. Adjoining the Chappan territory were two states of Banswara and Dungarpur who had accepted Akbar's supremacy. Pratap sent an army led by Rawat Bhan Sarangdevot to capture these two states. A battle took place on the banks of river Som which deeply wounded Rawat Bhan but led to the subjugation of both these states. The alliance of Kunwar Amar Singh's daughter with Rao Surtan of Sirohi put an end to their former feuds. This is how Pratap gradually regained all his military and political holdings.

Pratap's growing strength, once again became a matter of concern for Akbar. In 1584 Akbar sent an army led by Jagannath Kachwaha, the younger son of Raja Bharmal of Amber, with a new war strategy. At that time Pratap was residing in the mountains where Akbar's soldiers not only failed to capture him but also failed to find him. In 1585 Abdurhim Khan Khana (Mirza Khan) moved with his family from Ajmer to a place close to Sirohi. One day while he was away hunting, Amar Singh attacked his residence, kidnapped all women and brought them with him to the mountains. Pratap highly disapproved of this act and returned all the women back to Mirza Khan with due respect. Mirza was most touched by this gesture and left Sirohi. On the other hand Jagannath Kachawah frustrated and dejected with all failed attempts to find and capture Pratap also returned back. It was then that Akbar finally accepted the fact that it was impossible to dominate over the invincible Pratap.

Peace Period of Mewar:

By the beginning of 1586 CE the Mughal pressure on Mewar had relaxed and Maharana Pratap had left the hills and established himself in Chawand, the capital of Mewar where he spent the last eleven years of his life peacefully. No Mughal army was sent to Mewar during this period thus it was a period of uninterrupted peace. Pratap took advantage of this time and focused on development. Construction of palaces, stables, and 'chopals' (public meeting space), deputation of strong armed forces at places of social and cultural importance, agriculture, administration, restoration work all led to an all-round development of Mewar. Amar Singh's victories gave new strength to Maharana Pratap and together the father-duo son defied the Mughals, reclaiming various remaining territories including Udaipur, Gogunda, Mohi and Madariya.

Amar Singh fought many wars with Pratap and gained immense experience, exhibiting extraordinary skills in various military expeditions. With his self-confidence at its peak he was once able to capture five Mughal stations in one day. By 1588 CE thirty six Mughal stations as well as the Jahajpur area was captured by Mewar. Akbar was in Lahore when the news of Pratap's unending victories reached him. However, by this time the possibility of a Mewar-Mughal battle was almost over.

Demise of a Legend of the Motherland:

In 1597, Maharana Pratap sustained severe injuries during a hunting expedition that led to rapid deterioration of his health. Intuition of his approaching demise gripped him by the fear that his eldest son, though brave, might accept Mughal supremacy after his demise; and this became his major concern.

Disturbed by this concern his son and successor, Amar Singh, vowed in witness of his chieftains to not accept Mughal supremacy till his last breath. This assurance put Pratap at peace and he died at the age of fifty seven on January 19, 1597 CE in Chawand. This legendary warrior of Mewar left behind him a legacy of unconquerable struggle finally disappearing in the glorious light of the Sun.

At Lahore, Emperor Akbar was shocked and grieved to learn about the sad demise of Pratap. Dursa Adda, poet present in the royal court, read out to Akbar a verse in Dingal language in praise of Pratap:

*“Aas lego andaag, Paagh lego aannami,
Go aada gavdaye, jiko beheto ghur vami.
Navroozay nehe geyo, ne go aatasahn navalli,
Ne go jhrokha hayth, jayth duniyana dehelli.
Gehloth rana jeeti gayo, desna mund rasna desi,
Nissas muuk bhariya nayan, to mrit shah Pratapsi”*

Meaning: Oh Pratap! You have immortalized the war Horses by never sending them to the royal army (in the royal army horses were marked with a spot), you never bowed your head in front of anybody; The folklore of Rajasthan sings of your valor and glorifies you as the real hero, you stood steadfast to protect your motherland and bore the entire responsibility on your strong shoulders. You did not attend ‘Navroz’ (a Muslim celebration symbolic of rejuvenation and revitalization), nor were you ever a part of any Mughal royal camp. You never once stood under a ‘jhrokha’ (an overhanging enclosed balcony used in Akbar’s Palace for face to face correspondence with the audience). The land of Mewar resonates with your bravery, self-esteem and the courage of a super human that you were. Therefore, Oh Pratap! On your death, Akbar bit his tongue and let out a sigh of grief, his eyes filled with tears, because deep down in his heart he would always repent the fact that there was one brave Guhlot who went to his death, victorious and unbeaten by him.

In his book, ‘Jan Nayak Pratap’ Poet Ram Singh Solanki has beautifully described Pratap, in the following lines:

*“Jaab jab dharm hani husay, avtar so prabhu aap,
Paan aayo so aaye giyo, nahe aasi Partap.”*

Meaning: Whenever and wherever there is a decline in religious practice and a predominant rise of irreligion — at that time, God! You descend and manifest yourself. But Pratap was one of his kinds and never again will there ever be another Pratap on this earth, as he has attained salvation. Poet Shri Pandit Narendra Mishra of Chittorgarh has dedicated the following verse to Maharana Pratap:

*Rana Pratap nay janm liya, parvashta kay bhye bhanjan ko,
Alok purush utra bhu par, tamkay ghanghor nikandan ko.
Tha swabhimaan ka vijayi ghosh, Jiskay pran ki paripati mai,
Prtibimbit hai jiski sugandh, Haldi ghati ki maati mai.
Jisnay mewadi gaurav ki, jag mai pahechan amar kar di,
Jisnay yugdharma mewadi pagdi ki aan amar kar di.
Pran swabhimaan kay sadhak ko, arpit kavita kay shabd suman,
Woh chhand abhi tak nahi bana, kar day jo uska abhinandan.*

Cremation Site:

Maharana Pratap's cremation took place on the banks of a river near village Bhandoli situated about 2.5 Kms. from Chawand. His wives Rathore Madho Kanwar and Ran Kanwar committed 'sati', (a former Hindu custom where a widow immolated herself on her husband's funeral pyre). A cenotaph was constructed at the cremation site, by Amar Singh which remains a sacred place of homage for people, in and around that area, till date.

Personality:

Physically, the grand and magnetic personality of Maharana Pratap was a combination of multiple traits. He was tall with a fair complexion, big eyes, handle bar moustache, traditional round face, well-built body and broad shoulders. By nature, he was kind hearted, freedom lover, initiator of patriotism and independence, brave and courageous, a skilled warrior, fiercest opponent, perfect administrator, cautious thinker and filled with unshakable confidence.

Construction and Art: Maharana Pratap had to his credit, not only distinct qualities of courage and sacrifice but also those of a patron. He contributed enormously to construction, preservation and cultivation of art and culture. The ruins of traditional historical architecture from the Pratap era stand testimony to the same. Though a major part of his life was spent on the battlefield yet he managed to establish several monuments under his direction and patronage. These monuments have become the traditional evidence of Mewar archeology. In 1585 he conquered the Chappan plains and established his capital at Chawand, on the north bank of river Chamundi, where he also constructed the Chamunda Mata temple.

The establishment of Machind, Roheda Awargarh; Harihar temple at Badrana in Jhadol district and the restoration of Jawar Mata temple in Jawar can be seen even today. The idol in Harihar temple, a beautiful fused representation of Vishnu (Hari) and Shivaa (Hara) from crown to toe is one of a kind. In this statue Shivaa and Vishnu share the same body. The ornamentation, beautification, and sculpting of the idol is an unparalleled specimen. In Addition to this, Pratap also constructed a well and a garden in village Loyana, amidst Sundha hills, 40 kms northwest of Abu. An architecturally significant well was constructed in Sadri, comprising facilities such as steps, seating arrangements, meeting and witness areas, exhibiting an ideal example of the architecture of that era.

Kumbhalgarh - Birth Place:

The historical Fort of Kumbhalgarh is situated about 80 Kms northwest of Udaipur on a hilltop 1,100 meters above sea level. Maharana Kumbha of Mewar greatly contributed to the making of this great defensive fortress that has perimeter walls, with an aggressive and hostile landscape. It has been added to the list of world Heritage sites. Maharana Pratap was born in this fort. Years later his formal traditional coronation took place at this Fort and he declared it as the capital of Mewar. The fort remained invincible until a minor Mughal invasion in 1578 which lasted only for a few months before Pratap recaptured it.

Moti Magri - the Abode in Udaipur:

Overlooking Lake Fateh Sagar from the top of Moti Magri (pearl mount) is Moti Mahal, the first abode constructed by Maharana Udai Singh in Udaipur. This is where Pratap spent the initial years of his youth, the ruins of which exist till date. Standing tall at Moti Magri is an impressive bronze statue of Maharana Pratap mounted on his loyal Horse Chetak commemorating both Maharana Pratap and the glorious years of the history of Mewar.

Gogunda - Coronation Site:

Gogunda village, the first coronation place of Pratap is situated about 35 Kms northwest of Udaipur, surrounded by the Aravalli mountain range. Near a Shiva temple in the village is a small well where the first coronation of Pratap took place. A monument was raised at that very spot to commemorate the historic ceremony. It was only after this coronation that Pratap began entering Palaces. Later, his formal coronation took place at Kumbhalgarh.

Rana Gaon - Temporary Abode:

About 2 Kms west of Gogunda, is village Rana Gaon, where the Dholiya Baawji temple is situated atop Dholiya hill. The ancient ruins can be located from the base of this hill. Popular names given to it by the locals are, 'Rani ki Maydi', 'Rana Mahal' and 'Rani Kot'. This also claims to have been one of the temporary abodes of Pratap. Unlike other places it does not boast of any extraordinary architecture; yet is considered favorable from a security angle.

Haldighati - Battlefield:

Haldighati is a mountain pass in the northwestern Aravalli range located at a distance of about 45 Kms from Udaipur. It is the site of the world famous battle of Haldighati that took place in 1576 between the Kingdom of Mewar and the Mughal army. Maharana Pratap's Horse Chetak played a pivotal role in protecting his master's life at the battle of Haldighati. Chetak was fatally wounded in this battle and died. A mausoleum to honor Chetak was raised at the site of his demise which still exists till date to remind us, of the sacrifice of this faithful Horse.

Mayra Cave – Consultation Station:

At a distance of about 11 Kms east of Gogunda is a mountainous area where currently stone mining is conducted. About 3 Kms from Bhutal village of Gogunda is Polamgara, a safe spot nested amidst mountains and popularized by the name – ‘Mayra Ki Gufa’ (cave). This area houses a number of deep, natural caves of which the Mayra cave can only be spotted from extremely close proximity. This was the spot chosen by Pratap to secure his weapons and adopt the Guerilla warfare technique during the battle of Haldighati. This area is blessed with free flowing unpolluted natural water from the mountains, through-out the year. By getting doors built at these estuaries Pratap may have possibly used this area for residence purpose. The cave consists of a spot dedicated to Goddess ‘Lokdevi’ and two cells that seem to have been used by royalties as per their architectural designs. Unfortunately today, this once significant cave is in shambles.

Kolyari – Soldiers Rehabilitation Station:

About 5 Kms south of Awargarh is village Kolyari. This is where Maharana Pratap set up camp after the battle of Haldighati with his entire army and got medical help for all his wounded soldiers.

Machind – Secret Lodging:

Situated approximately 20 Kms from Gogunda, Kumbhalgarh and Haldighati is village Katar with Machind at close proximity. The village acquired its name from the holy place of Baba Matsyandre / Machinder, of the Nath sect. situated at the foothills of its outer mountains. On top of these mountains is a strong wall from the medieval times. This place is made in a unique way and stands resilient and protected till date. It is easy to spot a safety wall, square cell, the entry-exit points etc. in this structure. Evidence of an old dilapidated temple can also be seen here. Pratap is also said to have resided here for some-time. Theories also suggest that Kunwar Amar Singh’s son Karan Singh was born here. Situated at a height it can be assumed that this must have been a place of strategic significance. An 11-12 Kms long cave is also said to have been present here at some point.

Awargarh – Safe Lodging:

About 70-75 Kms from Udaipur on Jhadol road, amidst the Aravalli range, is an ancient Kamalnath temple. It is surrounded from the right and left by the Shavan Tunk and Vanar Tunk mountain ranges respectively. The name Tunk is said to have been influenced by Gujarat since this range is situated about 15 Kms from the border of Gujarat. Situated on top of these ranges at about 20 miles is a wall leading to the safe fort of Awargarh.

Although today this place is in shambles the tailings of its thick walls, leftover houses and other structures suggest that it would have been extremely beautiful and safe back in the day. Maharana Pratap, along with his army also took shelter at this fort. The space over the mountain range on the left of the fort is an open ground and the central part is a shoal. This area must

definitely be filling up with water during the rains which would then be used by its then residents. Remains of strong stone houses can be seen surrounding the shoal which may have been used by Pratap's army. On top of the right range are remains of extremely strong walls that indicate Pratap's occupancy of this area.

Ubeshwar:

Ubeshwar is situated on the mountains 16 miles west of Udaipur. An ancient Shiva temple is also sited here. Close to the temple is a slope leading to a ruin where Pratap is said to have stayed. This ruin is similar to those of Machin and Dholiya.

Zawar – House of Scriptures:

Situated at a distance of 21-25 Kms from Udaipur, Zawar has made an unprecedented contribution in the history of science and technology. The invention of Zinc and industrial mining started from this very place and spread to the rest of the world. The mountains of Zawar also produced silver and lead in large quantities. Zawar had the richest economy in Mewar for a long time. The epigraphy of manuscripts from Maharana Mewar Research Institute is also indicative of Zawar's economic contribution to Mewar.

A strong ancient fort was built in the mountains of Zawar by the Maharanas of Mewar. Maharana Pratap is said to have resided in this fort commonly known as the fort of Hiranyakashipu by the locals. It is also believed that a treasury was present here during the medieval period. Remains of walls, three strong entry doors and strong barricades stand testimony to this belief.

Centuries of metal mining in this area has created numerous caves in these mountains. One such cave is known by the name of Pratap. It is believed that Pratap used this cave to collect his weapons and consult with his soldiers although there is no written evidence to support these notions. However, Pratap's presence at Zawar fort at some point and related stories cannot be completely disregarded as being exaggerated.

Chawand – Capital of Maharana Pratap:

Situated about 60-65 Kms from Udaipur, on the Udaipur – Ahmedabad national highway number 8 is a small hamlet known as Parsad. About 12 Kms east of Parsad is the last capital of Mewar - Chawand, established by Maharana Pratap where he spent the last twelve years of his life. Ruins of the fort and the temple of Chamunda Mata can be seen till date.

Excavation of this area by the department of Indian archeological survey led to the findings of – solid bricks, lodging areas, a supposed water purification structure and a pond. The foothills of this fort may have been inhabited by locals. This is assumed due to the presence of the surface walls, mud utensils found in the neighboring areas, pieces of melted iron etc.

Currently this place has been procured by the Archeological Survey of India, a department of Indian Central Government. Pratap's last rites were performed in a small hamlet called Bhandoli, adjoining this place. A memorial commemorating Pratap was built at this place by his son Amar Singh that was later renovated by Maharana Bhupal Singh.

Evaluation:

Maharana Pratap inherited a much weaker, misbegotten and smaller Kingdom than his father Udai Singh. Therefore to fight Akbar's strong, wealthy and spread out Empire was a true challenge. Lover of independence and self-respect, Maharana Pratap, accepted this challenge with utmost competence and confidence. While Maharana Pratap was ogling at the historic horizon of his future country, the Indian soil was searching desperately for its future savior. Exactly at this point, a light was born in the form of the great Maharana Pratap to shed the dark clouds of disappointment and frustration. He challenged these dark times with his invincible character and became synonymous with the concepts of independence, liberty and self-respect. He brought life into the smallest stones of Mewar and instilled virtues of independence and self-respect in its entire people. He made them believe that they could keep the light of effort, grace and struggle burning in the strongest of storms. While the expansionist policy of the Mughals was ruthless and cruel, Pratap's retaliation was equally strong but glorious. Therefore, he fought valiantly till his last breath and the last drop of blood in this great battle of independence and liberty. He spent his entire life struggling to protect human values and protected the pride of his family and nation endlessly.

Hakim Khan Sur, Raja Ram Shah Tanwar of Gwalior, Jhala Man, Bhama Shah, etc. were inspired by Pratap and produced incomparable examples of greatness by renouncing all comforts and materialistic pleasures of life.

Mewar was also ready for every struggle that came its way to protect Pratap's promise. Even small huts had become a threat to the enemy and their guns and cannons were even answered with stones when required. Each and every person participated in Pratap's struggle, glorifying it in the count of people's war.

Pratap spent twenty two years of his life in combat with Akbar, not once compromising on the virtues of independence, liberty and self-respect. He kept the morale of his people high in spite of bearing the brunt of a constant struggle. These qualities of Pratap always rendered Akbar's every move, unsuccessful.

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