



## The unconquerable Warrior Peshwa Bajirao - I

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### ABSTRACT –

Today we will talk about the great Hindu warrior who has left such an indelible mark in history only in his tenure of less than 20 years that his name has become immortal for centuries, the person who in his 20th year of age handled the sources of Peshwai and have fought more than 40 wars in a tenure of 40 years and have won all, that is, who has always been "invincible". Whose war is being taught by a nation like America as a curriculum to its soldiers. What would you call such a 'Paramveer' warrior. Let us discuss the heroic story of Bajirao Ballal on the basis of all these sources.

### The early life of Baji Rao

Bajirao was born in a Chitpawan Brahmin family on 18 August 1700 AD at village Dubere Sinnar, Nasik . His father's name was Balaji Vishwanath, and his mother's name Radhabai Barve. His father served as a Peshwa to the Chhatrapati Sahu I. He also had two sisters and a younger brother, Anubai, Bhiubai and Chimaji Appa.

Baji Rao had a very close relationship with his brother Chimaji. They both used to play and train with each other. Shivaji and Ghorpade were the inspiration of Baji Rao, and he was trained as a warrior by his father. The basic education of Bajirao Peshwa included writing, reading, and learning the Sanskrit language as he was born in a Marathi Brahmin family. Bajirao also had interest in joining the military, so he used to accompany his father on various military operations.

His father, Balaji Vishwanath died in 2nd april 1720. After his father's death, Bajirao Peshwa was appointed as the Peshwa by Chhatrapati Sahu on 17th of April 1720. At this point in time, Bajirao was just 20 years of age. The Mughal king Muhammad Shah captured the Maratha territories at that time. Baji Rao asked Chhatrapati Sahu to launch an attack on the Mughal emperor to defend their territories. Pant Pratinidhi Sripatrao, who was a very important officer, was opposed to Bajirao. Maratha feudatories were also unruly, which was harmful to the central authority.

Bajirao tackled various challenges as a newly appointed Peshwa. Several senior ministers of Chhatrapati Sahu as Pant Pratinidhi Sripatrao, who was a very important officer, was opposed and jealous of Baji Rao because Bajirao was too young and got appointed as the Peshwa before them. Even after facing these challenges, Bajirao appointed various young people like Ranoji Shinde, Malhar Rao Holkar, Fateh Singh and the Pawar brothers as commanders under him.

These young men were not part of any Deccan sultanate or the members of the Deshmukh clan. Baji Rao had been assisted a lot by the Purandare family. The Purandare family was a very close relative of the Bhat Peshwa family.

By the time of his appointment, the Mughal emperor Muhammad Shah had upheld Maratha claims to the territories held by Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj at his death. A treaty gave the Marathas the right to collect taxes (chauth) in the Deccan's six provinces. Baji Rao convinced Shahu Maharaj that the Maratha Empire had to go on the offensive against its enemies to defend itself. He believed that the Mughal Empire was in decline, and wanted to take advantage of the situation with aggressive expansion into North India. Baji Rao compared the Mughals' declining fortune to a tree which, if attacked at its roots, would collapse. He is reported to have said:

*Let us strike at the trunk of the withering tree and the branches will fall off themselves. Listen but to my counsel and I shall plant the Maratha flag on the walls of Attock.*

## The military conquest of Bajirao

### The Nijam - Battle of Palkhed

By the time of Bajirao's appointment, Mughal emperor Muhammad Shah had in 1719 recognized Marathas right over the territories possessed by Shivaji at his death. The treaty also included the Maratha rights to collect tax ( Chauth and Sardeshmukhi ) In the six provinces of Deccan. Bajirao believed that the Mughal Empire was in decline and wanted to take advantage of this situation with aggressive expansion in north india. The biggest obstacle in front of Peshwa Bajirao in Deccan was Nizam. who was sometimes the Wazir of the Mughal Empire, sometimes the general and sometimes the Subedar.

Nizam takes place in the Deccan region where He established Asafjahan dynasty in 1724 Hyderabad is declared independent by the Nizam and the Nizam rebels against the Mughals. The Nizam did not pay taxes to the Marathas who used to collect chauth and sardeshmukhi. Sambhaji II was the king of Kolhapur, who was the grandson of Shivaji, there was a dispute between him and Chhatrapati Shahu about the state, on which Nizam said that Sambhaji II says that give me Chauth and Sardeshmukhi and on one side Peshwa on behalf of Chhatrapati Shahu It is said that tax me, in the event of this doubt, I will not pay tax to anyone. In fact, it was a ploy of the Nizam to lead to a war between Shahuji and Sambhaji. But with Bajirao's prudence, Bajirao had convinced Sambhaji II, but whenever the Nizam refused to give Chauth and Sardeshmukhi.

after which In May 1727, Baji Rao asked Shahu to break off negotiations with Nizam Asaf Jah I and began to organize an army. After the monsoon was over, Bajirao called all his troops from Karnataka and proceeded towards Aurangabad for this campaign. Bajirao, using his mind trick and strategy, caught the Nizam's forces before they could withdraw from Hyderabad and near Palkhed and brought them to the bank of a marshy river, forcing their forces to surrender. There is no other option left. Nizam sought help from Sambhaji II but Sambhaji II refused to help Nizam as he did not want to enmity with Bajirao Peshwa. Finally, on March 6, 1728, at a place called Mungi Shegaon, the Nizam and Bajirao I signed a treaty under which Chhatrapati Shahu was declared the Chhatrapati of the Maratha Empire. Nizam also allowed Bajirao to collect sardeshmukhi and chauth in the Deccan. This victory of Bajirao was a great victory and with this he started expanding the entire Maratha Empire once again and his influence spread throughout South India. Bajirao defeated the Nizam without fighting a war only under his mind and strategy, this shows Bajirao's great mind and being a great general.

### Malwa Campaign and war

In 1723, Baji Rao organised an expedition to southern Malwa. Maratha chiefs, including Ranoji Shinde, Malhar Rao Holkar, Udaji Rao Pawar, Tukoji Rao Pawar and Jivaji Rao Pawar, had collected chauth from several parts of the province. To counter Maratha influence, the Mughal emperor had appointed Girdhar Bahadur governor of Malwa. After defeating the Nizam, Baji Rao again turned his attention to Malwa. He consigned a large army in October 1728 to his younger brother, Chimaji Appa, and aided by his trusted generals Udaji Pawar and Malhar Rao Holkar. The Maratha force reached the southern bank of the Narmada River on 24 November 1728. The following day, they crossed the river and encamped near Dharampuri. Marching rapidly northwards, they crossed the ghat near Mandu and halted at Nalchha on 27 November. The Mughal forces, led by Girdhar Bahadur and his cousin Daya Bahadur, hastily prepared to oppose them on hearing that the Maratha army had begun to climb the ghats. Girdhar Bahadur believed that the Marathas, thinking that the pass near the Mandu fort was well guarded, would climb the ghat near Amjher. He and his army marched to Amjhera and took up a strong position there. Since the Marathas did not appear there, he suspected that they climbed near the Mandu fort and set out for Dhar on 29 November 1728. Girdhar Bahadur found Maratha horsemen coming towards him. In the 29 November Battle of Amjhera, Chimaji's army defeated the Mughals; Girdhar Bahadur and Daya Bahadur were killed. The Mughal forces fled, and their camp was plundered. Eighteen elephants, horses, drums and other loot were taken by the Marathas.

### Campaign against Mughals for Bundelas and relation with Bundekhand

In Bundelkhand, Chhatrasal rebelled against the Mughal Empire and established an independent state. In December 1728, a Mughal army led by Muhammad Khan Bangash attacked him and carried off his fort and family. As a result, Chhatrasal took the help of Bairoa. This was the time when King Chhatrasal was on the verge of defeat after a long war against the Mughals. Peshwa Bajirao was their last hope. Chhatrasal wrote this letter to Bajirao in Bundeli language,

*Jo Gati Graah Gajendra ki, so gati bhai hai aaj  
Baji jaat Bundel ki, Baji rakho laaj.*

That is, our condition has become like that of an elephant whose leg has been caught by the crocodile. The game of Bundelvansh is now getting out of hand. Bajirao, come and keep our shame.

King Chhatrasal was 79 years old when he wrote this letter. But reaching this old age, his bravery had already been recorded in Indian history. He had built a vast empire during his five decade long reign. He was the only ruler to build such a huge empire on his own without any inheritance on the land of Bundelkhand.

But two decades later, in 1728, Nawab of Allahabad and Mughal general Mohammad Bangash attacked Chhatrasal's son Jagatraj. Chhatrasal had

become old. His sons were running their kingdom separately. Jagatraj sought help from his father to save the princely state. Chhatrasal immediately sent the army and war goods, but it was not easy to compete with 73 thousand soldiers of Bangash. King Chhatrasal had defeated Bangash twice before, but now the aged king was unable to show the same prowess on the battlefield. One by one the big forts were slipping out of the hands of the Bundelas. When King Chhatrasal and his family were taking refuge in the fort of Aznar, Bangash's army attacked them. Chhatrasal left there and reached his last fort Jaitpur, but Bangash's army kept on marching indiscriminately. A long war went on in Jaitpur. Thousands of soldiers were killed on both sides. King Chhatrasal and his sons were injured in the battle between Bangash and Bundelas. The situation became such that once Chhatrasal's wife Rani Dev Kunwar herself descended to lead the army in the battlefield. King Chhatrasal called upon many Hindu kings to come together, but who would hate the Mughals! Seeing defeat near, King Chhatrasal started talks with Bangash about the agreement. On the other hand, Bangash sent a message to the Mughal court to send his demands. He was so sure of victory that he sent back a large contingent of the army. Holi was near. At the same time, Raja Chhatrasal put forth the demand of Bangash to go to Suraj Mau and live with his family until the terms of the agreement were decided. Bangash was in a frenzy of victory, he was convinced that there was no danger to him from King Chhatrasal. He let Chhatrasal go with his family.

On March 12, 1729, three days before Holi, completely relaxed Bangash received such a news that his senses were blown away. He came to know that Maratha Peshwa Bajirao is fast moving towards Jaitpur and is only 11 kos away. Bajirao was coming towards Jaitpur because of the same letter that Raja Chhatrasal had written to him for help. Bajirao, known for moving at a rapid pace, and his army had already reached very close before Bangash could get a clue. Bajirao surrounded Bangash's army from all sides and first stopped the logistics of his army. Due to lack of food and drink, there was chaos in the Bangash camp. Many soldiers started running away leaving Bangash. Bangash surrendered in May 1729.

After this victory, the aged Chhatrasal treated the young Peshwa Bajirao with affection and respect like his own son. While dividing his kingdom, he gave one-third of his kingdom to Bajirao along with his sons. It is said that he had also married his daughter Mastani to Bajirao. After the death of King Chhatrasal, when his memorial was built at Dhubela, the expenses were borne equally by his sons and Bajirao.

#### **Gujarat- Battle of Dabhoi**

After consolidating Maratha influence in central India, Baji Rao decided to assert the Maratha right to collect taxes from the wealthy province of Gujarat and sent a Maratha force under Chimaji Appa there in 1730. Sarbuland Khan, the province's Mughal governor, ceded the right to collect chauth to the Marathas. He was soon replaced by Abhay Singh, who also recognized the Maratha right to collect taxes. This irked Shahu's senapati Trimbak Rao Dabhade, whose ancestors had raided Gujarat several times and asserted their right to collect taxes from the province. Annoyed at Baji Rao's control of what he considered his family's sphere of influence, he rebelled against the Peshwa. Two other Maratha nobles from Gujarat, Damaji Rao Gaekwad and Kadam Bande, also sided with Dabhade. After Girdhar Bahadur's defeat in 1728, the Mughal emperor had appointed Jai Singh II to subdue the Marathas. Jai Singh recommended a peaceful agreement; the emperor disagreed, replacing him with Muhammad Khan Bangash. Bangash formed an alliance with the Nizam, Trimbak Rao and Sambhaji Maharaj II. Baji Rao learned that Dabhade and Gaikwad had made preparations for an open fight on the plain of Dabhoi with a force of 40 thousand, while Baji Rao's numbers hardly reached 25 thousand in all. Baji Rao repeatedly sent messages to Dabhade to solve the dispute amicably in the presence of Chatrapati Shahu Maharaj. But Dabhade was stiff and stubborn, disagreeing Baji Rao's proposition, therefore on 1 April 1731, Baji Rao struck at the allied forces of Dabhade, Gaekwad and Kadam Bande. The Dabhade was seated on elephant and Baji Rao was on horseback. But during the battle, a bullet pierced Trimbakrao's head and he died on the spot. Later it was discovered that the shot that killed Dabhade was fired by Dabhade's maternal uncle Bhau Singh Thoke. Baji Rao resolved the dispute with Sambhaji Maharaj II on 13 April by signing the Treaty of Warna, which demarcated the territories of Shahu Maharaj and Sambhaji Maharaj II.

Trimbak's son, Yashwant Rao, was appointed as Shahu Maharaj's senapati. The Dabhade clan were allowed to continue collecting chauth from Gujarat if they deposited half the revenue in Shahu Maharaj's treasury.

#### **Siddis Campaign**

The Siddis of Janjira controlled a small territory on India's west coast. They expanded their rule to a large part of central and northern Konkan. After the death of Siddi chief Yakut Khan in 1733, a war of succession broke out among his sons; one, Abdul Rehman, asked Baji Rao for help. Baji Rao sent a Maratha force led by Sekhoji Angre, son of Kanhoji Angre. Baji Rao signed a peace treaty with the Siddis. He allowed the Siddis to retain control of Janjira if they accepted Abdul Rehman as the ruler; they were also allowed to retain control of Anjanvel, Gowalkot and Underi. The Marathas retained Raigad, Rewas, Thal and Chaul.

The Siddis launched an offensive to regain their lost territories soon after the Peshwa returned to Satara, then Baji Rao dispatched a force to prevent them from taking over Raigad Fort in June 1734. Chimnaji made a surprise attack on a Siddi camp near Rewas on 19 April 1736, killing about 1,500 (including their leader, Siddi Sat). In June 1736, Baji Rao dispatched a force under Yesaji Gaikwad, Dhanaji Thorat and Sidoji Barge to gain the control territories like Gowalkot. On 25 September, the Siddis signed a peace treaty which confined them to Janjira, Gowalkot and Anjanvel.

#### **Battle of Delhi**

In the Battle of Azmera, the Marathas had confirmed their supremacy in Malwa by defeating the Mughal Subedar, but it was necessary to give a message to the Mughal court to completely subjugate Malwa, and therefore Bajirao marched towards Delhi with the army. The strength of Bajirao's army was around 50 thousand. Soon the Maratha army had reached the Yamuna river, 40 miles away from Delhi. Bajirao's military leader Malhar Rao

Holkar crossed the Yamuna with the army and entered the Doab, the area lying between the Ganges and the Yamuna, and succeeded in taking a large part of it by destroying many posts of the Mughals. As soon as the news reached the Delhi court, the Mughal emperor Mohammad Shah immediately sent the entire army along with Saadat Khan, the governor of Awadh. The royal army was advancing with modern cannons and there were 12 thousand horsemen in front of it, while the strength of the army was around 50 thousand. Here Maratha Veer Shiromani Malhar Rao Holkar made a big mistake. They mistook the 12,000 horsemen of the Mughal army coming from the front as Saadat Khan's army whereas the entire army was many times bigger than that. Holkar had to bear the brunt of this mistake. Holkar, despite fighting valiantly, had to retreat with the Marathas and Malhar Rao Holkar retreated to Bajirao encamped in Gwalior. On the other hand, Saadat Khan went to Mathura with his army and met Khan Daura and on the way to Delhi sat down after circling the horoscope. Saadat Khan sent a message to the emperor that he had driven away the Marathas. The Mughal full of sycophants started making various things that in fear Bajirao fled south on a donkey, someone said that Bajirao ran away after saving his life as a beggar. Emperor Mohammad Shah would have become more happy with all this, but the reality was something else. On the other side, Bajirao reached Kalkaji in Delhi on March 29, 1737 with 50,000 horse riders and camped in the field of Talkatora, just four kos away from the Mughal court. When the news of looting came from nearby areas till the king, the king thought that some Rajputs might have come, they would leave in a few days, but he also sent a detective to find out in the form of a beggar. When the detective came back, he had some grains, some rotis and some red chillies, which he had received in alms. It didn't take long for the emperor to understand that Peshwa Bajirao along with the army was really standing on the border of Delhi because this was the food of the Marathas. There was chaos in the court of Delhi. There was only one person in the entire Mughal court who was thinking of fighting the Peshwa and that was Amir Khan, the military leader of the Delhi court. He had 12000 horsemen and the best cannons in the whole of India, which could have been used in defense if not in winning the fight with Peshwa Bajirao. He told Emperor Mohammad Shah that if we tried to stop Bajirao by staying inside the fort, then perhaps Saadat Khan, coming from Mathura, along with Khan Daura Khan's army would be able to defeat Bajirao. The emperor got a little confidence and agreed to fight with Peshwa Bajirao. Amir Khan's policy was completely defensive, his small mistake could cost him dearly. Historians William Irwin and Jadunath Sarkar write in their book that Amir Khan's strategy was excellent but some overzealous young military generals sabotaged the entire strategy. One of these young warlords was Mir Hasan Koka, who called Amir Khan a coward and incited more warlords to go ahead and fight. Coming to the words of Mir Hasan Koka, leaving their defensive policy, some soldiers went to fight with Bajirao with their own troops. Bajirao sent forward 500 cavalry soldiers to take stock of the coming Mughal army. Mir Hasan thought that there is only an army of 500, he will defeat it but here he made a mistake. It didn't take long for Peshwa Bajirao to understand that this is an inexperienced and very enthusiastic army. By the time Mir Hasan could understand something, Ranoji Scindia and Malhar Rao Holkar had destroyed his entire army. Mir Hasan himself was wounded and covered in dust. Now Peshwa Bajirao could attack the Mughal court at any time, but Bajirao ordered his entire army to move to Rajputana, as if a miracle had happened for Emperor Muhammad Shah. Peshwa Bajirao has given the reason for doing this in a letter written to his brother Chimaji Appa, according to Peshwa, fighting alone with the army of Saadat Khan coming from Mathura might have been difficult for the Marathas and they were too far away from their fort. Due to which it was impossible to get any kind of help, the second reason was that Peshwa did not want to disturb the people of Delhi. The reason for Peshwa coming to Delhi was to convey the message of dominance to Malwa and Marathas which had reached. Maratha with full enthusiasm army left delhi.

### **Battle of Bhopal**

Nizamul Mulk in the south wanted to keep his jagir safely, so he would go there with whomever he saw advantage in Maratha and Mughals, Peshwa Bajirao realized this, so Peshwa Bajirao said in a letter to Chimaji that if Nizam took his army and Mughals As soon as he crosses the Narmada river, take the army and stop him. Nizam also realized that Chimaji was sitting ready with the army, so Nizam did not take any step. At the same time, Muhammad Shah had understood that all his generals were useless and useless, in such a situation he only thought of Nizamulmulk of Deccan, Nizam reached Delhi court only then the emperor gave him valuable gifts and gave him the title of Asif Jahan, He was asked to take all his army and drive the Marathas out of Gujarat and Malwa and promised to give the governorship of Malwa to his son Ghazi Uddin. On the other side Peshwa was engaged in war with the Portuguese. As soon as the Peshwa got the news of the Nizam's attack on Malwa and Gujarat, he immediately crossed the Narmada with the army and moved towards the north. In December 1737, the army of Nizam and Peshwa faced each other in Bhopal. The Nizam camped in the fort of Bhopal. A Nizam had prepared a defensive strategy by gathering the entire army around the fort. Nizam made a big mistake here. Fighting in the open with India's most modern cannons and such a large army might have given him more benefits, but he got trapped because of staying in the fort. The Maratha army surrounded and stopped the logistics. After which Nizam sent his army to fight due to lack of logistics, Marathas defeated Nizam's army even in the war. Several thousand soldiers of Nizam were killed after which all the hopes were shattered. Sawai Jai Singh's army was also with the Nizam at that time, he tried to break the cordon by attacking from outside but he also failed. Seeing the worsening of the situation, Saadat Khan sent his son Safdar Khan from the Delhi court with a message to break the cordon and ensure the movement of logistics, but Peshwa Bajirao sent Holkar to stop Safdar. Holkar defeated Safdar and sent him back even before reaching Bhopal. The condition of Nizam's army imprisoned in the fort of Bhopal was getting worse due to lack of logistics, he sent a message to his son Nasir Jung in the Deccan and called for help. Nasir Jang went ahead with the army, but as per the instructions of Peshwa Bajirao, Chimaji, sitting ready, tightened the reins on Nasir Jang even before the Tapti river. Now Nizam's condition had become worse, all his hopes were shattered. He decided to retreat but the encirclement of the Marathas was such that he could not retreat more than three kilometers in a day. In the end, after getting tired, the Nizam again laid down arms and on January 7, 1739, there was a treaty of Doraha between Peshwa Bajirao and the Nizam. Sawai Jaisingh was present as a witness. According to the terms of the treaty, the Peshwa got the jagir of Malwa and at the same time he was in possession of a large area around the Chambal. Also, the Nizam had to pay fifty lakh rupees to the Peshwa as war indemnity.

### **Campaign against The Portuguese**

The Portuguese had colonised several regions of India's west coast. They violated an agreement to give the Marathas a site on Salsette Island for a factory, and were intolerant of Hindus in their territory. In March 1737, the Peshwa dispatched a Maratha force (led by Chimaji) against them. Although the Marathas captured Ghodbunder Fort and nearly all of Vasai in the Battle of Vasai and gained control of Salsette on 16 May 1739 after a long siege, Nader Shah's invasion of India then diverted their attention from the Portuguese. The war trophies from Vasai included several Church bells which are found in many prominent Hindu temples in Maharashtra.

### **Family rebellion in Poona**

There was an atmosphere of unrest in Pune because of Mastani, who was married by Peshwa from Maharaja Chhatrasal's place. Bajirao had built 'Shaniwarwada' in Pune for his residence, near which he built Mastani Bhavan. In the company of Mastani, Bajirao, despite being a Brahmin, started smoking and drinking, which did not match the lifestyle of ritualistic Brahmins of that time. Mastani lived with Bajirao as his wife and had a lifestyle similar to that of a Hindu woman. But it didn't all go smoothly. The entry of Mastani, the daughter of a Muslim mother, created a terrible discord in Bajirao's staunchly conservative Brahmin family. Bajirao's mother Radha Bai, wife Kashi Bai and her two sons did not accept the companionship of Bajirao and Mastani. Bajirao's sting was ringing and everything was happening as desired. When Bajirao's mother Radhabai complained to Chhatrapati Shahu about Bajirao's fascination with Mastani, Shahuji had clearly said- 'It is Bajirao's personal matter and as long as it does not harm the Maratha Empire or Maratha interests, then Till then they will not interfere. The atmosphere against Bajirao became so bad that when the time came for the marriage ceremony of Raghunathrao and Sadashivrao, the Brahmin priests refused to perform these rites in the presence of Bajirao. This great warrior, victorious in dozens of battles and dedicated to the Maratha Empire, was finding himself helpless in family matters.

### **Decline of Maratha Surya – Bajirao death**

Bajirao could not bear the neglect of the family and the separation of Mastani. His rapidly declining health worried the whole family. In the end, a plan was made to end Mastani in prison. On 26 January, Mastani was imprisoned in Parvati Bagh, Poona. While this was going on, Bajirao Peshwa was annihilating the Nizam's son Nasirjung in a battle near the Godavari river. Meanwhile, the news of Mastani's capture left him heartbroken and his health began to decline rapidly due to his impotence in not being able to free Mastani. They were camped at Raverkhedi on the banks of the Narmada river near Sanawad in Khargone district since April 5. His health took a turn for the worse on 28 April and he died the same day at the age of 40. For 20 years, Bajirao, who spent most of the time on horseback or in military camps, died not in the Rajmahal, but in the military camp itself. The demise of Bajirao Peshwa was not only a blow to the emerging Maratha Empire, but also to the entire Indian identity. As soon as the news of Bajirao's death reached Poona, Mastani also left her body. He was buried in a small village named Pabal, 20 miles away from Poona, which was his jagir.

### **Samadhi Of Bajirao**

The place where Bajirao breathed his last is his mausoleum and at some distance on the river bank where he was cremated, there is a vedika. Nana Saheb Peshwa ordered Ranoji Shinde in November 1740 to build 'Vrindavan' in Raverkhedi in the memory of Bajirao Peshwa. In January 1751, Nana Saheb Peshwa also ordered Nashik-resident Vedmurti Digambarbhat to stay at the tomb with ten disciples for continuous Agnihotra to maintain the dignity and sanctity of this tomb. The process of celebrating his death anniversary at this mausoleum of Bajirao Peshwa (I) started in 1926 under the chairmanship of well-known historian Yadav Madhav Kale.

### **Descendants of Bajirao-Mastani**

As far as the descendants of Bajirao-Mastani are concerned, till the end they kept shedding their blood to protect the Maratha Empire and Maratha pride. Bajirao's son Shamsher Bahadur was killed in the Third Battle of Panipat in 1761. Then he was only 27 years old and his son Ali Bahadur was only three years old. Ali Bahadur conquered Banda with his bravery and established a princely state there. During the Great War of 1857, on the request of Rao Saheb, brother of Nana Saheb Peshwa, Nawab Ali Bahadur II of Banda also participated. After the end of the Great War, his Banda principality was confiscated. The treasury money and the jewelery of the Begums were confiscated and Ali Bahadur II was exiled to Indore with a small pension. Even today the descendants of Ali Bahadur II are living in poverty in Indore. This is the story of Bajirao's Mastani and his children.

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### **Quotes on Bajirao Peshwa**

#### **J. Grant Duff says in the “History of the Marathas”**

“Bred a soldier as well as a statesman, Bajirao united the enterprise, vigour and hardihood of a Maratha chief with the polished manners, the sagacity and address which frequently distinguish the Brahmins of the Konkan. Fully acquainted with the financial schemes of his father, he selected that part of the plan calculated to direct the predatory hordes of Maharashtra in a common effort. In this respect, the genius of Bajirao enlarged the schemes which his father devised; and unlike most Brahmins, of him it may be truly said- he had both- the head to plan and the hand to execute.”

#### **Jadunath Sarkar says in his forward to “Peshwa Bajirao I and Maratha Expansion”**

“Bajirao was a heaven born cavalry leader. In the long and distinguished galaxy of Peshwas, Bajirao Ballal was unequalled for the daring and originality of his genius and the volume and value of his achievements. He was truly a Cavalry Hero as king- or rather as a Man of action.’ If Sir

Robert Walpole created the unchallengeable position of the Prime Minister in the unwritten constitution of England, Bajirao created the same institution in the Maratha Raj at exactly the same time.

#### **Sir R. Temple says in “Oriental Experiences”**

“Bajirao was hardly to be surpassed as a rider and was ever forward in action, eager to expose himself under fire if the affair was arduous. He was accustomed to fatigue and prided himself in enduring the same hardships as his soldiers and sharing their scanty fare. He was moved by an ardour for success in national undertakings by a patriotic confidence in the Hindu cause as against its old enemies, the Muhammadans and its new rivals, the Europeans that were rising above the political horizon. He lived to see the Marathas spread over the Indian continent from the Arabian sea to the Bay of Bengal. He died as he lived, in camp, under canvas among his men and he is remembered among the Marathas as the fighting Peshwa, as the incarnation of Hindu energy.”

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#### **Conclusion**

Bajirao was one of the best rulers of the Empire of the Marathas. He made the Maratha a strong military force that could go against the British Forces toe to toe. However, after his death, we saw a decline in the power of the Maratha empire, which was natural as Bajirao's sons were not as capable leaders as their father. It was Bajirao's innermost wish that the power of the Marathas should extend from the Arabian Sea to the Bay of Bengal in the Indian subcontinent. A famous English historian Sir Richard Carnac Temple wrote, “He died as he lived, in camp under canvas among his men, and he is remembered to this day among the Marathas as the fighting Peshwa and the incarnation of Hindu energy.” He has been described as the incarnation of Hindu energy, ceaselessly striving for 20 years to establish the Hindawi Swarajya (Hindu Kingdom). His sons continued his mission of carrying the saffron flag to the gates of Afghanistan in 1758 to the fort of Attock in the North and simultaneously marching to the Southern shores of India. He represents the creative and destructive power of Dharma as he unleashed the urge of a people yearning to be free and remains as a symbol of victory to the Hindus in modern day.

Peshwa Bajirao-I was a legend during his life time and continues to be so in his passing. His presence remains indelibly marked on the Hindu psyche as it traverses the spaces of time.

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