

CENTRAL ASIAN IMPACTS ON KASHMIRI LITERATURE & CULTURE IN MUSLIM ERA

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Abstract

Kashmir is famous for its scenic beauty and its mountains have a special geographic importance. Although it is landlocked but situated at the north of India and close to the heart of Asia, “Central Asia”, the celebrated valley of Kashmir in the point from where the central Asian landscapes begin. The two most outstanding geographical and physical factors governing the entire region of central Asia, outer climate and forbidding terrains—meet the travelers to the north right from the foot of Zoji and Burzil passes situated less than a hundred kilometers from the capital city of Srinagar. On stepping through the mountainous routes and hilly passes towards northern west, jubilant sceneries along with great gloomy and bleak wastes of the historical terrains of Central Asia. The Geographic profile of Kashmir is much resembled like the geographical features of Central Asia and from the early settlers to pre-1947, there is a great link and interconnectivity between Kashmir and Central Asia which made multiple lingual, religious, ethnic, commercial and cultural ties between these two regions. From the dresses and food preferences to the collective social traditions and trade, there is huge similarity between these two regions. This paper is an attempt to reveal those relationships which were overlapped by the circumstances and time axil.

Key Words: Central Asia, Persian, Culture, Food and Dress similarity, common customs, civilizational uniformity.

Kashmir, in terms of its beauty most beautiful, fabulous scenic hilly terrain by possessing magnificent climate, awesome weather and heart touching cultural heritage. The main reasons in the beauty of Kashmir are the mighty mountainous ranges which joint together in the Gilgit Baltistan and snowcapped peaks and hills which make its land fertile with greenery and it most often resemble with its neighboring lands like Iran, and other Central Asian States.¹ The links of this land with its northern west regions is the popular ethnic study in modern era in accordance with mobilization and globalization of people with trade, tour and racial linkages. GMD Sufi explicitly explains the beauty of Kashmir as this heavenly land and surrounded plains comprises upon all those aspects which are preliminary foundation of those evidence of early settlers in South Asia. As for Kashmir, the primary evidence is the Himalayan-Ice-Age era has been forthcoming.²

The Jammu and Kashmir and Central Asia have close socio-economic and cultural ties since remote times, even, there are great mountains barriers of Karakorum and Hindukush. Warikoowrites about cultural ties as, Bruzahom is the place where Neolithic was evidenced as like Gufleral: tools and devices of stones which can be described as axes, needles and chisels etc. are very much similar to the those remains explored at Tesma and Tashkent. By discovering Terracota tiles in the terrains of Harwan near Srinagar duplicating the figures in Central Asian Republics (CARs) linked with ethnicity, cultural preferences like style of dresses and having Kharosthi numeral nearly 2500 years ago. This phenomenon testifies to the Central Asians (Cas) significant contribution

¹Prithivi Nath Kaul Bamzai. Kashmir and Central Asia. Light & Life Publishers, 1980. P. 1,10 &64.

²Sufi, GMD. Kasheer. Vol. II. Lahore: University of Punjab. 1948. P. 324

imprinted in Kashmiri culture.³ The advent of Islam in Central Asia dragged the people intention towards Hindu rules of Subcontinent and Kashmir.

With the passage of time the induction of Turks and Central Asians in armies of Indian and Kashmiri Hindu rulers made the connection closer and closer which further extended in trade and economy. In these ties, Kashmir is located next to this land prevails the trade relations and other adventures from Central Asians which is stated that were partially responsible for the percolation of Muslim practices in Kashmir. The dimensions of social, economic and cultural linkages between these two regions expanded time to time specifically in the era of Zainul Abidin who not only maintained friendly relations with Central Asia but also adopted same sources of income and industrial trends to upgrade the socio-economic conditions of Kashmir and to acquire sustainable development. The craftsmen from various parts of Central Asia particularly from Kashgar, Bukhara and Samarkand who came during Zainul Abidin reign, fully facilitated and encouraged by the King. This facilitation resulted into the teaching and transferring of skills in domestic industries as carpet weaving, shawl weaving, pottery, wood carving, namda, gabba etc. and soon Kashmir acquired dominance in these arts and industries. Zainul Abidin also sent Kashmiri delegates in Central Asia region who got training in the art of book binding and paper machie so that these industries may be settled in Kashmir.

There are many other arts which also developed in the consequence of such cultural linkages and mutual interconnectivity between Kashmir and Central Asia. This argument is further strengthened by introduction of social, cultural, trade and economic reforms along with land-to-land contacts and interaction

³Kulbhushan Warikoo. Central Asia and Kashmir: A Study in the Context of Anglo-Russian Rivalry. Gian Publishing House, 1989. pp. 91,98 & 210.

developed by Mirza Haider Daughlat, moreover, he also encouraged the Central Asian dress styles and codes, food preferences in Kashmir.⁴ Mirza Haider Daughalat also developed the artslikeinnovational music and made popularity of latticed-window-work and multipleinstruments for music in Kashmir. The Mughals also contributed a lot to the enrichment of the natural beauty of Kashmir. They added a lot in the architecture by built up the mosques and other monuments on the structures of Central Asia and Persia, which became the symbol of Kashmiri culture. During the Afghan rule, Kashmiris had impressively frequent relations through ancient conventional route which was stated used by Shah Hamdan i.e. Srinagar-Muzaffarabad-Peshawar-Kabul road. Yefremov, a Russian, visited Kashmir and he was much impressed during his tour by the fineness and purity of Kashmiri shawls and described them highly valuable commercial article and declared “commercial people” to those who are associated with this industry.⁵

From different witnesses, it becomes clear that the people of both areas met their dresses and food requirements indigenously. The long and loose homemade colon garment (Phiran) worn by Kashmiris has been compared to Russian peasant shirt. During the first quarter of the 19th century, a traveler from Russia, Agha Mehdi Rafailov made couple of trips of Kashmir and lavished praises in such words, “beautiful, green and fertile land of Kashmir abounding in horticulture and people of this land mentioned as healthy, beautiful, cunning, and

⁴D. N. Dhar. Artisan of the Paradise: Art and Artisans of Kashmir, from Ancient to Modern Times. Delhi: Himalayan Research and Cultural Foundation, & Bhavana Books and Prints, 1999. P. 34.

⁵Vanina, Eugenia. “Of Russian Spies and Itinerants: Different Perspectives on Eighteenth Century India.” India International Centre Quarterly, vol. 24, no. 1, 1997, pp. 32–47.

practical but extremely hospitable. The circulation of such account in Russia not only gave an idea of the people of Kashmir to the Russian people but also paved the way for future bilateral intercourse by identifying the routes of communication between these two regions".⁶ With the introduction of the Islamic mode of government and the Persian as court language in Kashmir under the Sultanate a large number of Persian and Turkish words got assimilated into Kashmiri language. The patronage extended by Zainul Abidin to artists and paid utmost attention towards creativity, innovation and also placed kind pats to those scholars who were busy in diffusion and interpretation of alien literature. There is reasonable quantity of such literary work and illustrated manuscripts in Kashmiri language and Persian present in many international and Kashmiri museums and libraries indicated the past glory of the region of Kashmir.

The Kashmiri artists acquired the fame in wood carding, door and windows square based panel making known as paniras, special central Asian wood craft khatam bandi which was ornamented ceiling, paper mâché work was done on kalamdans, flower vases and other many things. Bricks and wall designs also prepared by wood and stone carving, handicrafts like namdas, carpets, shawls and many other embroideries item were prepared on the Central Asian and Iranian pattern in the valley and surrounding areas of Kashmir. This art was at its peak when artistic signboard was hoisted and displayed in the crowded areas of Kashmir. These arts further extended in tombs, zayarats and takyas by the polished tiles as in Madin Sahib. The painted ceiling, doorways of wood and

⁶<https://erenow.net/common/thegreatgamepeterhopkirk/10.php> and also in Musa Khan Jalalzai, Road from Afghanistan to Central Asia [sic], Institute of Current Affairs, 1992. P. 81

stone carved and latticed windows are still present in Srinagar. These were the reflection of construction and decoration of Samarkand, Khiva and Bukhara.⁷

Kashmiri shawls were the symbol of beauty and artistic skill of Kashmiri artists and demanded in all continents of the world. Kashmiri merchants in Europe and America introduced low-cost shawls with needle embroidery. There are many names like Khawaja Yousaf and Ali Baba who took Kashmiri products in the many parts of the world and introduced Kashmiri products during 19th century. The flow of Kashmiri artistic products encouraged large scale production even though these shawls were used in the gift's exchanges between the rulers of the different States. In current research, the discovery of certain manuscripts of Kashmiri origin in various libraries of Leningrad, Uzbekistan, Iran, United Kingdom, Tajikistan and other parts of the world showed mastery and skillful work of Kashmiri artists in calligraphic and miniature painting work.

Gold or silver embroidered skull cap popularly known as Kallpush in Kashmir and used both by Hindu and Muslim ladies, was akin to the Kallpush (skull cap) used by the Uzbek men. Though its use in Kashmir presently limited to being the hear dress of elderly ladies, Kallpush still forms an essential ingredient of bridal dress of Kashmiri Pandit ladies. Similarly, the head gear of the Tajik women called Qasaba is typical of the village women in Kashmir, where too it is known by the same name viz, Qasaba. To quote a modern Kashmiri writer, "the chapan of a Central Asian, the choga of Gilgit, the goatskin overall of a Ladakhi and loose long phiran of a Kashmiri belong to same parent

⁷Kulbhushan Warikoo. Central Asia and Kashmir: A Study in the Context of Anglo-Russian Rivalry. India: Gian Publishing House, 1989. P. 94

stock”.⁸ A 20th century traveler in Central Asia found the use of Kangri Manqal universal amongst the Turkmens, Kirghizs, and the Pamirs, respectively. Sufi also argues that the wooden box like Kangri also used by the Italian army which might be possible as a case of cultural transmission from Central Asia to Europe and Kashmir.⁹ The same practices are till prevalent among the Kashmiris to warm up their bodies. These regions resemble as both drink same tea in the same type of cup (piyala), residents of both regions are rice eaters and vegetable lovers. Their utensils are remarkable same, for example Samavar used for green tea and Kehwa, proudly used in Kashmir and Central Asia.

According to a British traveler, “the popularity of batch dancing in Central Asia had a parallel in Kashmiri folk dance where male dances still amuse the audience. The music instruments of other regions of Central Asia used in Kashmir like Rubab, Santur, flute (bansari), musical pipe (surnai), sarangi and tumbak-anari are also used in Kashmir. Both in Kashmir and Central Asia homes were covered with mud roofs which were often used as the ground for planting poppy and lilly flowers. Now in modern times the mud roofs have been replaced into tin roofs.

The fruits which we found in Central Asia also present parallel in Kashmir. Similarly, Chinar the famous shady tree is peculiar only to this region. Apart from such common sociological and ecological traits which act as the binding link between the two peoples, the present-day Kashmiri society has assimilated its Central Asian connection in other forms too. The Central Asian trends of surnames relating to profession and Sufi sects also adopted in Kashmir.

⁸Kallah, K.L. (1996). *Cultural Heritage of Kashmir*. Anmol publications, New Delhi, 1st edition, p 63.

⁹Sufi, GMD. Kasheer. Vol. II. Lahore: University of Punjab. 1948. P. 376

Now Kashmiris used surnames instead of their tribal and castes like Naqashbandi, Mujaddadi, Hanfi, Qadi, Chishti, Akhun, Peerzada, Kashghari, Beg, Arbi, Gani, Mughal, Mirza, Turki, Bukhari, Baba, Jillani, Qazlibashand Qureshi. The tradition of surman was still alive in Kashmir and represents the Kashmir-Central Asian ethnic and cultural linkages.¹⁰

The Jammu and Kashmir census report of 1911 records the population of Turks, Begs, Bukharis, Mirzas, Qazlibashis, Akhuns, Babas, Naqashbandis, and Qadiris then living in this state as 2407, 6831, 9237, 1336, 48, 17436, 11267, 35 and 262 respectively.¹¹ Those Kashmiris who used to trade with Kashgar or act as accountants of Turkey merchants in Kashmir, receive the suffix of Kashgari (s) and Turkey (s) respectively. Several Kashmiri Pandit families bear these surnames even today.¹² The Naqashbandi families played a vital role to maintain close contacts with Central Asia through their mureeds (followers), they had been remained in an active social, socio-political and socio-religious interactions with both regions. During the 19th century, the Naqashbandis constituted a close cultural and emotional link between Kashmir and Central Asia. The British mission's enroute to Central Asia would make it a point to secure the letters of recommendation from Naqashbandi brothers for their numerous disciples in Turkistan so as to facilitate their travels and adventures in the forbidden land. Similarly, the Central Asian pilgrims during their transit journey to Srinagar enroute to Makkah or back homes would not miss their appointments with their

¹⁰Stanley W. Toops 2004. "The Demography of Xinjiang". In S. Frederick Starr (ed.). *Xinjiang: China's Muslim Borderland*. Routledge. pp. 256–257.

¹¹Abdul Rashid, Farah Sultan. 2021. Know Your State Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh. India: Arihant Publications Ltd. P. 393

¹²Downie J. M, Tashi T, Lorenzo FR, Feusier J. E, Mir H, Prchal JT, Jorde LB, Koul PA. 2016. A Genome-Wide Search for Greek and Jewish Admixture in the Kashmiri Population. *PLoS One*. 4;11(8):e0160614.

Naqashbandi pirs in Kashmir and would often stay with them. One of the sons of Muhammad Naqashbandi was married to a Turkestani bride while other has taken Kashmiri brides.¹³

In 19th century the slave trade Chitral and Central Asia lent yet another dimension to the social interaction between these two regions. It could be summarized that the human interregional transportations for pilgrims and trade, culture and art exchanges from Central Asia to Kashmir like books, shawls, textile, kokandi silk, bukharanrumals and coral formed ingredients were the resembling ties between Central Asia and Kashmir.¹⁴ The religious institutions in Bukhara attached the Kashmiri scholars who went there to acquire knowledge about Islamic theology. Those Kashmiris used to travel as a Central Asia in pursuit of Knowledge even as 19th century, is indicated by the account of vombery who visited Central Asia in 1863. This was likelihood of Muslim Sufi named Buland Shah who had traveled widely in Bukhara and Turkestan being a Central Asian by birth. He must has taken his adobe in Kashmir, later, Kashmir scenic beauty lured the famous Uzbek poet, Furqat (1858-1909) too in the late 19th century. Furqat after spending some time in Kashmir migrated to Yarkand to spend his last days there. One of his poems, "In Kashmir" was published by the Tashkent paper "Turkistan ViloyatiningGazeti during 1897-97. On his part Maharaja Ranbir Singh played a key role in promoting the cause of cultural exchange between Kashmir and Russian Central Asia. He was the first Dogra ruler who established direct liaison with Russians in Central Asia by sending

¹³Prithivi Nath Kaul Bamzai. 1980. Kashmir and Central Asia. India: Light & Life Publishers. P. 10 &64.

¹⁴Ibid

trusted emissaries carrying messages of the goodwill and friendship.¹⁵ He continued to maintain such relations throughout his lifetime by keeping a host of agents stationed in Russian Turkestan to keep him informed about the developments in the quarter and also to convey him the message from the Russians if any.¹⁶

Keen interest was evidenced in Kashmir affairs in Russian Central Asia, a Russian officer P. I. Pachino, as early as 1867 collected tales about Kashmir as told by Kashmiris from numerous Kashmiris living or visiting Tashkent and published the same in Russian language.¹⁷ It is, therefore, but natural that occupying a favourable geographical position as Kashmir does, both the Indian continent as well as Central Asian influences should have been responsible for the development of this lofty culture. The study of this development and the assimilation of their influences throughout the ages is as fascinating as well as useful.

From the remotest times Kashmir has been a seat of learning and art. Kalhana writing about his native land places learning at the top of the list of things for which Kashmir was famous. No scholar in India was considered well accomplished unless he had received a thorough schooling in one of the ashrams or universities of Kashmir and closely associated himself with the learned scholar of the “Land of Sarda”. Huene Tsang writes, the people of Kashmir loved

¹⁵Vigne, G. T. Travels in Kashmir, Ladak, Iskardo, the Countries Adjoining the Mountaincourse of the Indus, and the Himalaya, North of the Punjab. Narrative of a Visit to Ghuzni, Kabul, and Afghanistan. Henry Colburn, publisher, Great Marlborough Street, 1842. P.

¹⁶Singh, Bawa S. The Jammu Fox: A Biography of Maharaja Gulab Singh of Kashmir, 1792- 1857. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1974.

¹⁷Lamb, Alistair. Tibet in Anglo-Chinese Relations, 1762 – 1842. Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, new series, v. 80, (1958), part 2.

learning and are well cultured since centuries learning has been held in greatest respect in Kashmir. This tradition continued till as late as the time of Alberuni who accompanied with Mahmood Ghaznavi to India. He says that Kashmir is the high school of Hindu sciences. From here went forth accomplished teachers and missionaries who risking their lives, traveled through high mountain passes and long and desolate desert tracks to carry the torch of learning and culture to the far-off concerns of Central Asia, Tibet and China.¹⁸

The History of Kashmir is traceable for back as over four thousand years. Kalhana, a learned Brahman of the 12th century, was the first who wrote a clear announcement of the historic event of the region. His famous book “the Rajatarangni (River of Kings)” in Sanskrit verse is the first main source of information. The tribal chiefs ruled the land of Kashmir in all 21 dynasties including the Mouryans, Kushanas, Huns, Tartars, Tibetans, Mughals, Afghans, Sikhs and Dogras till 1947. As a concern about Islam, the Islam entered Kashmir peacefully through the Muslim Sufis and Arab traders who traveled around the world primarily for their trade and secondary for their religious obligations as preaching of Islam. Following the Islamic principles and teachings their trade spread up to India, China, Central Asia and the land routes of Kashmir developed into important trading centers in this east-west trade which was carried through the famous Silk route. There was another trade route which passed through Kashmir via Zoji La to Central Asia and Tibet which was an important trade route between ancient times through which the caravans laden with different items, obviously traveled through Kashmir to enter China and Central Asia. During their stay in different countries, they preached the basic principles of their

¹⁸Khan, M. Saleem. The History of Jammu and Kashmir 1885-1925. Srinagar: Gulshan Books. 2002.

religion Islam which known as earliest phase and initial stage of Islamization when a new religion was introduced in this region after seven centuries of Buddhism and thousands of years of Hinduism, however, after the establishment of establishment of Islamic dynasty in Kashmir, Islam flourished through town to villages in the ever-quickest mode.¹⁹

In 711, when Sind was conquered by Arab Muslims led by Muhammad Bin Qasim after defeating Raja Dahr, the Hindu ruler of Sind and his son Jaysuria fled to Kashmir in company of a Syrian Muslim HameemBinSameh, who considered the first Muslim to set foot on the soil of Kashmir in the light of history of written scripts. Hameem obtained great honor and regard from the king of Kashmir. Hameem began preaching Islam and soon his preaching made numerous converts.²⁰

During the reign of Sahadeva, the three foreigners: Abdul Rehman Bulbul Shah, Renchan Shah and Shah Mir were resided in Kashmir and all of them were closely studying the situation of Kashmir. Hazrat Abdul Rehman Bulbul Shah came from the Central Asia for the propagation, preaching and to teach Islam in Kashmir which indicates a fair quantity of Kashmiris were embraced Islam from time to time and settled in the valley of Kashmir. He recognized as pir; a Islamic religious preacher in mystical approach and very famous in Srinagar and its around. Renchan, a Tibetan prince fled from his own region and entered in Kashmir through Zoji La as a political refugee. Ram Chand, the Chief Minister and also Commander-in-Chief of Raja Sehadeva received him and gave him

¹⁹Kaul, Gwasha Lal. A Historical Survey of Kashmir Through the the ages 5000 BC to 1960 AD. Srinagar: Gulshan Books. 2009.

²⁰Fida Muhammad Hussain, Syed. Kashmiriyat. India: Srinagar. Gulshan Publishers. 2009
P.37

shelter and employment. Shamir or Shahmir, an immigrant of Swat tribal territory along with Afghanistan border also came to Kashmir. Renchan took the advantage of insurgency after the Zulchuloot attacked on Srinagar while Sehadeva ran away to Kishtawar, the space of kingship of Srinagar was filled by Renchan but it turned into the unsettled due to the violent plundering of Mongol. Such situation offered a tempting opportunity for the bold Renchan Shah to play decisive role in the history of Kashmir in the absence of Raja Sehadeva, he found. Ram Chand, the only strong rival to the throne, Renchan killed Ram Chand and became the ruler of Kashmir on 1320.

This act was always a state of confusion whether to show the King his emotional and religious affiliation in a radical religious society but Shamir who was appointed as Prime Minister, prepared him to leave the decision to the chance. It was agreed that he would adopt the religion of that person whom he would see the following morning. Luckily, on the next morning, Renchan's eyes fell on Sharfuddin Abdul Rehman Bulbul Shah, a Central Asian Sufi Saint who was on the mission of propagation of Islam who was the follower of Shah Nehmatullah Farsi who belonged to Suharwardia order of Islamic Sufism. On the preaching of Bulbul Shah, Renchan Shah embraced Islam and declared his Islamic name as "Sultan Sadruddin" and became first Muslim ruler in Kashmir.²¹ The King set up a gathering place for the new converts at the bank of river Jhelum and is known as Bulbul-Lankar, there was sitting place of Bulbul Shah and first mosque in Kashmir was constructed.

Syed Ali Hamdani was a great contributor in the foundation of Islamic State in Kashmir and got honored from Kashmiris as "Shah-e-Hamdan" literary

²¹Foaq, Muhammad Din. MukammalTareekh-e-Kashmir. Pakistan: Lahore, Zafar Brothers. 1932. P. 386

meaning the King of Hamdan. The great Syed also famous in Kashmir as “Ameer Kabeer” during his three visits of Kashmir. In his second visit he was accompanied with seven hundred mystical followers who came from different places of Central Asia and well familiar with art and craft along with Islamic propagation and preaching in Kashmir during the reign of Sultan Shahabuddin in the era of 1372-1384 AD. The greatness of Shah Hamdan regarding preaching and teaching Islam in Kashmir is everlasting. GMD Sufi appreciates Shah Hamdan that he emphasized on adoption Islamic teachings with its real spirit and authority. Shah’s greatness revealed that the modification process was launched from Sultan Qutbuddin who married with two real sisters; ordered to divorce one of them and he accepted it with open heart. This type of Islamic laws and tradition soon surrounded Kashmir into pious and blessing religion of Islam.²² Kashmir, could not however, for long shut its doors to the new influences and finally when in the 14th century Muslim diviners like Bulbul Shah and Mir Syed Hamdani preached Islam, a large numbers of people were embraced Islam.

GMD Sufi glorifying the struggle of Sufi saints who came from Central Asia as Renchan Shah who was the first ever Muslim ruler of Kashmir was embraced Islam on the preaching of Hazrat Abdul Rehman Bulbul Shah who also came from Central Asia. Hence the advent of Islam in the rulers palace and elite class portrayed the struggles of these Sufi Saints.²³ The conversion of the people of Kashmir to Islam was further encouraged by the arrival of Syed from Central Asia. Prominent among these were Syed Jalaluddin of Bukhara, who was known as Makhdoom JahaniyanJahangarh, Syed Tajuddin and was accompanied by

²²Muhibbul Hassan. (1990). “Kashmir – Sulatine kay ahd main”. (Pakistan: Nadeem Younis Printers, Lahore). P. 40.

²³Sufi, GMD. Kasheer. Vol. II. Lahore: University of Punjab. 1948.

Syed Masaood and Syed Yousaf, Syed Hussain Simnani who was the younger brother of Syed Tajuddin. It is also stated that these saints were sent by Syed Ali Hamdani in Kashmir for the Islamic teaching and preaching.

Syed Ali Hamdani visited Kashmir three times from 1370 to 1383 in which his second tour of Kashmir was very prominent in which he visited Kashmir along with more than 700 sadaat who are affiliated with the different professions and skill. Some of his followers visited the remote areas of Kashmir for the propagation and preaching of Islam.²⁴ It is also stated that Syed Ali Hamdani was also came in contact with Lalla Arifa who was the great Sufi poetess and Saint. Her teaching was reflected by religious, philosophical and spiritual glimpses in Nooruddin Reshi. A spiritual triangle was laid down the foundation of Kashmiri pluralist society but on the other hand the throne of peacefully propagation of Islam goes to Shah Hamdan, undoubtfully. This honour is fostered to him and his co-workers who established hospices in entire State spread the message of Islam to every nook and corner of Kashmir. So, Allama Iqbal tributed him as:

سید
السادات سالار
عجم
دست
او محترم تقدیر ام

²⁴ Zafar, Syeda Ashraf. (1998). "Ameer Kabeer Syed Ali Hamdani." (Pakistan: Al Miqyas Publications, Lahore). P.173.

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غزالی درس اللہ

گرفت

ذکر و

فلک از دوستان آ

گرفت²⁵

The manner of teaching and preaching of Islam in the Valley of Kashmir attracted the Kashmiris due to two main aspects: one was equality and equal rights of Islam and second one was the skills and professions. This was the foundation of everlasting chain of inter-region multipurpose transportation and exchange of culture, ethnicity and traditions. Mir Hamdani was succeeded who also visited Kashmir with three hundred sadats who teach the skills and spread out the peace, brotherhood and unity in entire state with art, craft and skills-based livelihood. These aspects contributed in political, social, economic and cultural change which turned into paradigm shift in Sultane's era.²⁶ It shows us the influence of Shah Hamdan in Central Asia and Persia in propagation of Islam in Kashmir and how it is also affected the cultural aspects in Kashmir, the art and literature had been changed which was rooted from thousands of years.

Ghulam Muhammad Sufi also mentioned the linkages among Kashmir, Shah Hamdan and Central Asian States as the struggle of these Sufi saints who belonged to Central Asia and connected with Shah Hamdan contributed to preaching of Islam. In return of their services nearly thirty-seven thousand non-

²⁵ Muhammad Iqbal, Allama. (1982). "Javaid Nama: Kulyat-e-Iqbal". (Pakistan: Iqbal Academy, Lahore). P. 108.

²⁶ Bamzai, P. N. K. (1962). "A History of Kashmir, Political, Social and Cultural from the Earliest Times to the Present Day". (India: Metropolitan Book Company, New Delhi). PP. 44-51.

Muslim embraced Islam in which ten thousand became Muslim on the hand of Hazrat Bulbul Shah.²⁷ So, the main sources of Islamization in Kashmir was the people and region of Central Asia which owed so much in religion, philosophy, education, arts and craft. It was still luckier that Sufism was the predominant cult which was preached by the first Islamic missionaries in Kashmir. Naturally, it found a ready and warm reception and a soil fertile enough for its rapid growth. Kashmiri scholars in Central Asia whereas Islam was arrived Kashmir by Sufi and Syed missionaries from Central Asia. Many famous scholars from Kashmir went to that region to acquire mastery of Islamic jurisprudence. Arabic grammar, logic, philosophy, theology, history, Arabic and Persian literature. There were famous scholars in the famous madrassas of Samarkand and Bukhara.²⁸

Two eminent scholars of Kashmir Sheikh Yaqoob Sarfi and Mulla MohsanFaani having their early education in Kashmir and then made an appreciable contribution to the Arabic, Persian literature and learned other branches of sciences, social studies, and provided commendable contribution in Kashmir in the fields of contemporary and modern education. While the Kashmiris who belonged to different religions like Buddhist Monks, Hindu Pandits, Christ missionaries, Muslim Scholars, writers and influential personalities remained busy in propagation of Islam comparing with the culture of India and Chinese empires. On the contrary, Central Asia was the land which had been influencing Kashmir in prospects of literature, culture, Sufi thoughts, culture and ties. In the light of the scripts and documented records, a large list of

²⁷Sufi, G.M.D. (1948). "Kasheer. Vol.I". (Pakistan: The University of Punjab, Lahore). P. 86.

²⁸Bhushan Kumar Kaul Deambi. Kashmir and Central Asia: Papers Presented at the Seminar on Kashmir and Central Asia-Cultural Contacts and Interactions, September 1-3, 1987. Centre of Central Asian Studies, Kashmir University, 1989. pp. 133,149 & 155.

travelers and visitors is present from Kashmir to Central Asia who made considerable impact on politics, geographical linkages and trade knits from Kashmir to Tibet, Khutan, Kasghar, Kabul, Iran and other parts of the Central Asia which emerged in a vivid picture of ancient coordination, cooperation and interlinks.²⁹

The region of Kashmir is directly and indirectly impacted by Persian language and Persia although it was center of Sanskrit and Hindutva. Soon after the advent of Mughal rulers in Subcontinent and Islamization in Kashmir, the Persian language became not only official but also a lingua franca in entire region particularly it became the language of religion and literature.³⁰ The poetic and religious work in Kashmir heavily impacted by Persian from 13th century in social factors also.³¹ In the 14th century during the moments of Islamization in Kashmir by early Sufi saints such as Mir Syed Ali Hamdani turned the scenario of Persian as official language of Kashmir which further developed and patronized by Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin in various kinds of literature.³² The Persian language enjoyed a superior position in the valley as prestigious language from the day of advent.

Persian language celebrated a virtuous position in the valley of Kashmir and enjoyed literary and as well as political status for the next 500 years in Kashmir when it replaced in Dogra period with Urdu as official language. The Persian language also adorned by Ghani Kashmiri, who was heartedly admired and

²⁹PNK Bamzai. *A History of Kashmir: Political, Social, Cultural, from the Earliest Times to the Present Day*. Metropolitan Book Company, 1973. P. 106

³⁰Green, Nile (2019), *The Persianate World: The Frontiers of a Eurasian Lingua Franca*, University of California Press, pp. 9–12.

³¹Pollock, Sheldon (2003), Pollock, Sheldon (ed.), "Sanskrit Literary Culture from the Inside Out", *Literary Cultures in History: Reconstructions from South Asia*, pp. 92–94.

³²Weber, Siegfried. "Kashmir: Introduction". *EncyclopediaIranica*.

presented as an ideal by Iqbal in his famous verses. In Salatines, Chaks and particularly in Mughal era. Akbar and Jahangir highly promoted the Persian literature and historic work of Kashmir. In Afghan and Sikh era, although there was anarchy but the Persian work which was narrated by M. M. Masaoodi in his book³³. The Persian language brought harmony in Persia, Central Asia and Kashmir even though the job titles and governing posts and designations also named in Persian language as Diwan, Hakim, Namardar, jageerdar, kardar etc. while on the other hand the industrialists who came with Shah-e-Hamdan also arrived in company of Shah Hamdan.³⁴ The chain of migrations and interconnectivity and inter-journey remained continue till the lease of Gilgit and Kashmir was so prominent region which has direct trade and commercial linkages with Khutan and Kashgar.

The common language results in common traditions and customs and common traditions and customs bring people closer and closer to each other which broadly emerges into common society and culture. In this regard the Persian language not only brought the people all together. These ties deeply can observe and study in Kashmir as declaring it as "Iran-e- Sagheer" due to the dress, food, culture, religion, literature, customs, traditions, literature, way of life, language, norms, and modes of living were same between Kashmir and Iran. The decline of Persian language in Kashmir was started after the arrival of Dogra rulers in Kashmir, hence, the official scripts are still present in Persian language. In 1849, first attempt was made to highlight Dogri in Kashmir which was not succeeded

³³M. M. Masoodi. Publication date: 1996. Topics: mir, meer, hamadani, hamdani, sufi, sufism, kashmir. Collection: opensource. pp. 125-152.

³⁴Kachru, Braj B (2008). "Introduction: languages, contexts, and constructs". In Kachru, Braj B; Kachru, Yamuna; Sridhar, S.N (eds.). *Language in South Asia*. Cambridge University Press. pp. 05-16

but it opened the opportunities for the Urdu language to be common in Kashmir. Administratively and officially, it was replaced in 1889 when a language from Persian groups: Urdu was declared as an official language of Kashmir.³⁵

In the middle era between the Sanskrit and Urdu, the region of Kashmir was patronizing by Persian as literary and official language and reported 303 prominent Persian poets in Mughal era³⁶ and in Afghan era a particular effort was made by Subadar to compile a comprehensive Masnavi on the history and culture of Kashmir.

The contribution of Persian language is delicately presented with the prestigious names of Persian writers in Kashmir are Muhammad Tahir Ghani also known as Ghani Kashmiri. Who was influenced by generational relationship of Persian-Urdu in Subcontinent, prescribed as follower of Mir Taqi Mir, Ghalib while Iqbal was drawn his sketch as religious and revolutionary poet of Kashmir. If have a look on Persian prose in Kashmir then we commonly find the name of legendary Muslim scholar Sheikh Yaqub Sarfi who was a Sufi, Poet and philosopher of 16th century in Kashmir and worldwide recognized and acknowledged. Mulla Muhsan Fani was another prominent Persian writer of Kashmir and author of pivotal work entitled "Dabsatan-e-Mazahib". The list of Persian writers further extended to Habibullah Ghanai, Mirza Birab Baig Juya, Mirza Baig Akmal Kamil, Mullah Muhammad Taufiq, Muhammad Azam Deedamarri, Mulla Muhammad Hamid, Birbal Kachru Varasta including many Kashmiri Pandits in which Pandit Taba Ram Turki was still known as celebrity in Central Asia.

³⁵ Weber, Siegfried. "Kashmir: Persian Language in Kashmir". EncyclopaediaIranica. Chatterjee 2009, p. 02.

³⁶ Abidi, S. A. H.; Gargesh, Ravinder (2008), "Persian in South Asia", *Language in South Asia*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 103–120.