

Kashmir's Arabic And Persian Accounts :A Study

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History is not only a record of past events but also an ongoing journey. In its womb nurse so many political, social and cultural waves that to name them all is near Impossible . These waves either strength the growth of language, culture and values .The history of a particular regions language also speaks of the origin and evolution of the cultural history of that region. Same wise the eternal beauty and charm of the valley of Kashmir must have fired the imagination of the ancient bards inspiring them to compose panegyrics and ballads in its praise and admiration . It is a historical fact that in Kashmir as in the Indian subcontinent Persian has in many ways enjoyed dominance over Arabic .If on the one hand Persian has been the official language as well as the language of art ,science and culture of Muslim rulers of India for nine centuries on the other it has had the same status in Kashmir for almost six centuries .Though with the advent of Islam in Kashmir in the 14th century and its subsequent development and expansion over here the real beneficiaries ought to have been Arabic language and literature because the basic source of Islam thought and scholarship ,The Quran and Hadith ,were primarily in Arabic .It was Persian which attracted the attention of newly converted Kashmiri Muslims .The popularity of Persian in Kashmir did not however, prevent many Kashmiri scholars from showing interest in Arabic. They did not merely confine themselves to interpretation of and derivation from Arabic books; They constantly wrote books and references in Arabic as well in Persian. These books and references on Kashmir, though brief, are, nevertheless, of historical significances and cannot be overlooked in any serious study of Kashmir's past history or geography.

Introduction:-

Indo Arabic Relations: The intensive interaction between the India and the Arab world was dynamic, diverse and multi

dimensional .However, the impact of this interaction was very much visible and lasting in the domain of culture and thought the main aim of my research paper is to focus on the cultural exchanges between India and Arab world and the civilization affinities that existed for several centuries ,the cultural linkages in the past ,in fact ,have brought these two regions more close to each other and provided the base to maintain the relationship of similar sort in the contemporary times ,India remained a melting pot for the worlds culture and civilization. Culture and the civilization are the two sides of a same coin .Most of the discussions then tend to confuse culture with civilization and civilization in inevitably with religion. these discussions then prepare ground for identifying the essence of culture in terms of civilization clash. Quit unfortunately these civilization clash theories never believe in an inter civilization dialogue and exchange of cultural goods between two civilizations .So, there is need for understanding culture and civilization that travel beyond the contemporary civilization debate. In short we can say that civilization is a collection of lived practices that enables a society to make sense of its existence. Culture ,on the other hand ,refers to a set of values ,customs ,beliefs ,practices which constitute the way of life of a specific group.

Early Arabic Report on India : The first extant Arabic report on India was prepared by the envoy of Yahiya b Khalid al Barmaki 805 AD the wazir or the Abbasid Caliph Harun al Rashid. The illustrious family of the barmaks occupied high government positions during the early Abbasid period and reached the zenith of their power during the reign of Haroon AL Rashid .Yahiya bin Khalid became the de facto ruler of Islamic kingdom from 786 -803AD,for the caliph was primarily occupied with wars on the frontier with Christian Byzantium's It was believed by some Arabic writers that the barmaks were originally Iranians and were the head priests of fire temple of Naubahar near Balkh .However sayyid salayman nadvi has convincingly proved that Navubahar was not a Zoroastrian fire temple but a Buddhist temple (Nova –Vihara) and that Barmaks were Indians. During the Caliphate of Othman when the Balkh conquered by the Muslims, the head priest of the temple went to the capital and became a Muslim. This however displeased the people of Balkh and he was

deposed and his son was treacherously murdered; only a young son saved. His wife then escaped to Kashmir with the young son where the boy was given training in medicine, astronomy and other Indian science. Later they returned to Balkh, one is tempted to think that the family originated from Kashmir, for in time of distress, they took refuge in the valley. Whatever it be, their Indian origin is undoubted and this also explains the deep interest of the Barmaks, in later years, in India, we know that they were responsible for inviting several scholars and physicians from India to the court of the Abbasids.

The report as contained in Gardizis Zayn al -Akhbar describes the various arts skills and scientific achievements of the Indians and deals in detail with the various castes, beliefs and religious practices. Gardiz's report was based on the lost work of al -jayhani, entitled al-masalik wa mamalik, who had probably used the fuller text of ibn khurdadhbih's work al -Masalik wal -Mamalik which is not extant, "the people of India" says Gardeizi "are skilful, clever and shrewd. They make good and subtle things. From their midst come many sages, especially in the province of Kashmir.

The author of Hadud ul Alam (the regions of the world) written in Persian gives a different picture of Kashmir. He describes Kashmir as a large and pleasant land with numerous merchants. Its king depend on the raja of Qinnauj. It possesses many idol temples on which the Hindus come on pilgrimage.

According to Al biruni, there were all the same Kashmir scholars who made important contribution to knowledge. One such scholar was Vasurka who interpreted the Vedas and committed it to writings. Then making an interesting observation on the nature of the people, he says that avarice and greed was practiced even in scholarship and to prove his point he relates an anecdote. One of the scholars, Ugrabhuti, composed a treatise on grammar, entitled sishyahitayrititi, but out of the conservatism, the people did not accept the work, so the king (Ananadpala) who was the pupil of the author issued orders to send 200000 dirham's another presents of a similar value of Kashmir, to be distributed among those who

studied the work consequently, every one rushed to study and popularize the book and none studied any work other than this. Referring to alphabet Siddhamatrika(Sarda),he says that some people considered it to have originated in Kashmir for the Kashmir's used it .It was the most generally known alphabet and was also used in Varanasi, Madhyadesa and the country around Kanauji .He also makes an interesting observation about Kashmir's marking the single leaves of their book with figures which resembled drawings of the Chinese characters, but their meaning and significance could only be understood after long practice.

Muslim relations with Kashmir and Persian sources on Kashmir: The first Arab military expansion in India took place in 711-12A,D under the command of Muhammad b al-Qasim al thaqafi ,cousin of the governor of Iraq,hijaj b Yusuf al thaqafi 714 A.D .Consequently ,Arab hegemony was published in Sind and southern Punjab as far as Multan in the northern and al mansura, near modern Hyderabad ,Sind ,in the south ,Further Arab expansion eastwards was finally checked by the powerful Gujara-Pratiharas who are described by the early Arab writers as the greatest enemies of Islam .On the other hand the contemporary Rashtrakutas of the Deccan (753-975 AD)are described by them as friends of the Arabs. A report in the historical sources that the Arabs penetrated to kashghar is probably to be rejected .The Arab conquests of Sind and central Asia had ,however ,brought the Arabs close to the borders of Kashmir .According to Al beruns statement that Muhammad b al qasim had penetrated as far as kanauj marched through Gandhara,and on his way back passed through the confines of Kashmir. To counteract the Arab advances chandrapida ,the ruler of Kashmir and the king lalitaditya had approached the Chinese emperor for succour. However it is recorded that jaisya ,The son of the defeated king of Sind ,Raja Dahir ,accompanied by a Syrian Arab Hanim ,took refuge in Kashmir ,If we were to give any credence to this later story ,then this Arab was the first to enter the valley.

We shall now deal with the Persian works of the Kashmir as well as the Mughal and central Asian historians on Kashmir ,belonging to the early and the later mediaeval periods .One of the earliest accounts of the geography of Kashmir based on personal

observation is the *tarikhi-i-rashidi* by Mirza Muhammad Haider Dughlat. His account surpasses all the previous Persian accounts of Kashmir in detail as well as originally. It is an important valuable history of the Mughals and Turks. The author, Mirza Haider Dughlat was a cousin of Babur. He was born in 905 AH at Tashkhand, where his father was at that time governor. The *Tarikh-I-Rashidi* was written in two parts, the first *daftar* was written in 951 and 952 AH and the second in 948. In fact the second *daftar* is the first in point of the time of composition and contains the author's life-sketch. Writing style *Tarikh-e-rashidi* was similar to Babur's memories "*Tarikh-e-Baburi*. When completed, the *Tarikh-i-Rashidi*, the historical book was dedicated to Abdur Rashid Khan son of Abdur Fath Sultan Sayyid of Kashgarh. *Tarikh-e-Rashidi* is a book written in Persian language based on the political history of Mughals. Despite of having the historical nature and background, this is the book of high literary value too. Mirza Haider was no doubt acquainted with the central Asia historians like Rashid al-Din Fadl Allah, the author of *Jami-al-tawarikh-i-rashidi* and Shraf al Din Ali Yazdi, author of *Zafar-nama*. It is translated to "Book of Victories" is a panegyric book written by Sharif al Din Ali Yazdi approximately two decades after the death of its main subjects, Timur, the Turco-Mongol conqueror. Most of the poetry and texts in the beginning of Islamic Iran were panegyric, written at the demand of political and religious leaders as part of their own legacy. In this lifetime, Timur wished that his deeds would be commemorated through clear and simple language. However, the *Zafarnama* has a decent amount of hyperbolic language and panegyric sentiment, revealing that the current literary tastes of the next generation of writers prevailed over Timur's wishes. Rashid al Din Fadl Allah's account of India was according to V.V. Barthold, composed with the help of the Kashmir hermit Kamalashri. Shraf al Din Yazdi who wrote his *Zaffar Nama* in 828 used in part Rashid al Din Fadl Allah as well as Ata Malik Juwayni 681 and Vassaf al Hadrat. Mirza Haider in his description of Moghulistan, also refers to *Suwar al Aqalim* and *Tariff al Buldan*, without giving the names of the authors. Meanwhile, Shah Mir spreading the of Islam in valley which the Mirza Haider describes, he says, "was" a comparatively recent event " he makes interesting observations. Formerly, the people were all Hanafis (Sunnis) but during the reign of Faith Shah, the Nurbakhshiya order was

introduced by Mir shams al din Iraqi ,the author of Fiqh Ahwat. With the exception of a few Persian writers on Kashmir ,every one down to the 19th century seemed to have copied the general accounts from one another regarding the natural beauty of Kashmir ,it's soil and climate ,the variety of flowers ,springs and the flowing waters ,The exuberant greenery and the beauty of the buildings and the residential houses.

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