

Diwan Kirpa Ram

A Renowned Persian Historian of Dogra Period

Diwan Kirpa Ram belonged to the well reputed family of the great Diwans of Eminabad, well known all over the northern India by reason of their close association with the Jammu and Kashmir State. Sir Lepel Griffin says "they have from the commencement of Maharaja Gulab Singhs reign practically monopolised the office of Diwan or Prime Minister, and are therefore responsible for much of the good or evil repute attachment to the rule of the Dogra in Kashmir."¹

The family assumed a historical character when its ancestor Rai ugarson of Bikaner become Peshkar or sacratry to the Emperor Babur (1526-30 AD) once he accompanied the emperor on a visit to Punjab, and merrying amongst the Kanungo Khattris of Eminabad in the Gujranwala district, settled there. One of his discendant, Bisham Das under Sardar Mohan Singh Sukarchakiya (1774 AD) father of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.²

Grandfather of Diwan Kirpa Ram, Diwan Amir Chand was a visionery Persian, by his royal attachment to Gulab Singh's interest, he become very popular³ when Gulab Singh was granted as Raja of Jammu by Maharaj Ranjeet Singh. Diwan Amir Chand became Madar-ul-Maham or Chief Minister of Jammu⁴. Diwan Jawala Sahai was followed by his father Diwan Amir Chand as he was eldest son. He also did good job with Gulab Singh.

1. Griffin, Chiefs, p.131.
2. Abid, p.131.
3. Gulabnama, p.117
4. L Griffin and Famaillies of Notes, p.131.

Due to the stroke of paralysis Diwan Jawala Sahai, handover the Diwanship to his elder son Kirpa Ram and he hold this office till his death 1876.⁵ He born in 1832 at the age of 24 he was officialy declared as Diwan of Darbar by Maharaja Rambir Singh in 1850 and also honoured by the gift of precious khilat and on attractive pen case.⁶ He is very close to the British authorities like his father, and loyal to his master and state required it.

Kirpa Ram received his first honour in 1850 when Maharaja Gulab Singh met Lord Dalhousi, the Govenor General of India at Wazirabad. Kirpa Ram was one of those who receive Khilats from British Governor General. After the completion of one year as Maharaja Rambir Singh as Maharaja, a terrible fire broke out on 1856, in Shergari offices at Srinagar. All the revenues and civil records, the Tosha Khana and the treasury were completely gutted. According to Tarikh-e-Hassan the treasury were 21 lack rupees⁸. Diwan Kirpa Ram arrived from Jammu and salvaged the whole treasury from the cinders. He also recompiled the civil and revenue record from Sadar office record. during the great famine of Kashmir in 1862. He play a vital role to stamp out the famine.⁹ He was also appointed as Governor of Kashmir and served one and half year here in Kashmir.

Diwan Kirpa Ram died at an early age of 44 in 1876. Tarikh-e-Hassan narrates about his versatile qualities. "He was a versatile genius and scholar, statesman and politician possessed of refined etiquetee, and incomparable in munificence.

”مرد بخندان و عالم و فاضل و مدبر و موقر و مہذب الاخلاق بود۔ و در جو دو سخا ہمتیا“¹⁰
 و از روی لطافت و نزاکت طبیعت خود دیوان کرپا رام را اختیار جزو کل کشیدہ دیوانہ و کشادہ امور جہان نہائی بطور
 او گذاشت۔ و دیوان موصوف نہایت نیک سیرت و عالی ہمت بود کافہ نام از خواص و عام در دام

5. Griffin, p.132
6. Gulabnama, p.408.
7. Ibid, 410
8. Tarikh-e-Hassan, p.837
9. Ibid, p.848.
10. Ibid, p.860

احتمالات آورده ایام حکومت در نیک نامی ستوده فرجامی بسر برود با استشاره یکدیگر برای ارتسام انتظام حکومت در جموں و کشمیر صوبه داران با تدبیر مقرر کردند و در ممالک محروسه و وزارتها و تحصیلیات مشخص فرمودند. در محکمہ جات سرکار انگریزی جانجا و سپای ہوشیار فرستادند۔ و با دولت انگلیسہ رابطہ متابعت و مہاسبت مستحکم نمودند و در مدارات و خدمات آنها با قسسی انخابت کوشیدند و در میان شہر ہا و دہات برای داو ری مخلوقات عدالتہا نصب کردند۔ و دانشوران نامدار از اصهار و بلاد انتخاب کرده بر مدارج مناصب مزین و گماشتند و افواج خود را بر کث و کالم با مقرر کرده جرنیل و سینارلس مشخص نمودند۔ و در میان شہر و دولت با شفاخانہ جات معمول شدند و در مدرسہ ہای شاستری و فارسی در جموں و کشمیر جاری کردند و کتابہای علمی را ترجمہ با کنانیدند۔ و راہ ہای آمد و رفت مسافران را امرمت افزودند۔ و برای آمد و رفت صابان انگریز بہر منزل و بہر مکان کہ فروگاہ ایشان بود بنگلہ با تعمیر کردند۔ و شکار ماہیان در ہر جامع فرودند و در امور جہا دہانی بچنان امن و امان واقع شدہ کہ سر موسی یکسی نقصان مالی و جانی نمی رسید۔¹¹

Sir, Lepel Griffin says, "that he was strightly less conservative then his father, and was zealous in encouraging education, establishing hospitals, opening up thoroughfares, introducing silk and other industries, and improving revenue collection. But his death at an early 44 prevented his undertakings from being brought to the satisfactory finish.

Diwan Kirpa Ram was good scholar and historian of a noble language i.e. Persian. Two books are very important inspite of these he wrote many Farmons and other official documents because the official language of the Dogra was Persian but Diwan Kirpa Ram paid his serious attention regarding this language on literary aspects.

Gulzar-i-Kashmir

A concise history of Kashmir, chapterization is based on topography, products, trade etc. It was written in 1864 published from Lahore in 1870-71.

Gulabnana:

It is a biography of Maharaja Gulab Sing compiled in

11. Story, Persian Literature, p 686.

1865. But it was published in 1870 from Srinagar and another edition was issued from Jammu 1919. But at present there is no availability of these editions but the edition could not consult all the manuscripts it has some mistakes literary as well as historically. So there is a need of hour to reedit this renowned history of Jammu and Kashmir.

Madinat-al-Tahqiq

In addition to above two books he wrote a pamphlet of 26 pages entitled Madinat al-Tahqiq which is regarding the difference of certain Hindu practices critically by Muslims. He was printed at Sialki in 1877.1

Gulab Nama

It is a well known work of Diwan Kirpa Ram which is biography of Maharaja Gulab Sing. According to the preface of the text it completed on 1876. General preface containing 12 folio pages and a foreword in Arabic and another in Persian by Sayyid Bakir Husain alias Mir Nawab Lakhnavi. It covers about 8 pages and bears date of writing as 23rd Sawan (1933 Samvat) it also includes six chronograms on the date of the compilation (1932 Savmat) and three on the date of the publication of the Gulabnama, two give the Samvat year 1933 and one the year 1876 AD. These chronograms were composed by Munshi Sayyid Ismail Hussain "Manir" of Rampur. There are three additional chronograms on the date of publication (1933 Bikrmi) by Munir's 'Shajra" Sayyid Abu Mohammad "Badar".

The text was published from Tuhfa-e-Kashmir press Kashmir. It covers 420 pages in folio size. But page No 68, 69 have been used twice so it has only 418 pages and 12 pages of general preface. Another beautiful edition of the Gulabnama was published from Ranbir Prakash press Jammu. In 1919 AD this year does not occur in the edition which retain in title page the date 1932 Bikrami. It has 429 folio pages of the text and 12 pages of general preface.

This Persian work, primarily a biography, purports to be a

general history of Jammu from the very ancient times 1857. The year of Maharaja Gulab Singh's death. It begins with a prologue containing the praise of the Almighty Allah and the object of the compilation of the Gulab Nama. It followed by philosophical disquisition on the origin and accidental nature of the universe, mentioning regarding old history of Jammu e.g. Raja Mal Deve and successors, culminating in an account of Maharaja Ranjeet Dev before taking in hand the biography of Maharaja Gulab Singh. Another theme is related to the horoscope of Maharaja Gulab Singh.

Gulabnama is a biography of Maharaja Gulab Singh, a great soldier-politician and diplomat who started his career as a petty commander and become a Maharaja of an independent country. After the death of Maharaja Gulab Singh Diwan Kirpa Ram take this opportunity to compile this work in 1857 AD. Maharaja Gulab Singh had desired to write about his achievement but due to the unwant of time and other responsibility Diwan could not touch this work.

Ultimately Maharaja Ranbir Singh offered this responsibility to Kirpa Ram at Bijbehara Gulab Singh's last wish that he would compile it after his demise and the Diwan was inspired to undertake the compilation, he had to depend on other sources of information.

The information given by Kirpa Ram in Gulabnama are more authenticated and trustworthy because he did deep research on every information. The main source of information was the oral history and tradition who were still alive during the writing of this book about the writing of Gulabnama Abid says for a long time I enquired from the granders of his family and the wise and truthful old persians, and the youngestern full of zeal and of noble character and from reliable servants and have put all this in black and white. Most of the anecdotes have reached my ears from the late highness who remembered many incidents and events since early childhood on account of his keen memory, I verified several incidents from

Diwan Sahib, my revered fathers, saratched out all the doubts and suspicious by the pen of certainty.¹²

When Kirpa Ram wrote the Gulabnama his uncle was alive, as Kirpa Ram and whole his family was closely associated with Gulab Singh so he got lots of authentic information by his family members besides this oral history. Kirpa Ram documentary and literary evidence was also available to Kirpa Ram. He also consult the another Persian history of Jammu. Raj Dershni by Lala Ganesh Das Wadehra.¹³ Rouzat-us-Safa for the history of Jammu before Gulab Singh. Many Parvanas and latters treaties and agreements were also within acces in original, the copies of most of which he had given verbatim in his work. Rehtasak says about the Gulabnama that during the lifetime of Gulab Singh, he provided the important documents diaries to Kirpa Ram to compose this work, and also assisted him about some verbal information, similar information given by another to his father and grandfather who had both been Diwan of Gulab Singh.

The historical value of the Gulabnama become more ethentic when K M Panikar sum up the vlaue of this work¹. "This work though written in a flowery style of the Persian penegyristis is none the less a remarkable historical documents as the Diwan published in it many original documents which are not now available anywhere else. Its facts and chronology are beyond dispute. This Diwan was also fully conservant with the political conditons of the Punjab at the time, and his discriptions of events are vivid and informed by direct knowledge of men and things."

The style of this biography is its stringing shortcoming. The adventurous career of the Maharaja Gulab Singh has been told in a conventional Persian diction which is highly literary as also intricate to the point of ambiguity. An essentially floral diction pregnates very sentence and every pharases, and the theme has been conveyed in a rigmarolic manner. "To a modern historian steeped

12. Ibid, p. 56.

1. Panikar K. M. "Founding of Kashmir State" P-2.

13. Gulabnama, p.68.

in scientific method of chronology the Gulabnama sounds a highly ornate historiography which abounds in the characteristic of imparting a short information in many words which are without exception wastive of expression. It is written in a highly difficult verbose and flowery language, and therefore looks like an exercise literary composition then in chronology. The narrative abounds in synonyms which are stuffed in every sentence to the point of saturation. Several discriptions are only cadenced and rymed prose pieces, very complicated and not easily comprehensible words have been levishly wasted for insignificant meaning or even for no meaning at all at such places the narrative has been reduced to a prosaic display of literary feats. At places the presentation is quite ambigious and rigmoralic.

The author quoted the short verses of great Persian master pieces like Shahnama and Sikandernama. These verses have no importance for text only to give the classical look. Author gives unnecessary and long introduction, and starts his work with a lengthy philosophical disquisition, and some style of introduction used in every title of the text. He used to start the introduction portion to discription of season, particularly to spring. The same was used by classical persian poets in Qasida writting like unsuri and Farukhi of Gazni. Moreover, he used some discription which are fine literary pieces rich in poetic imagery. But have no historical information. A fine seciman of such a compositionis to be found in p. 359 of text.

جهان رارخت نوشگفتگی دربر، ساقی روزگار از حیق انبساط دماغ افسردگان عالم را تازه و تر فرمود و عطار
صباختن بار تجمات مشکبار بر روی شگفتگان گلزار کشور گلچهرگان گلچهره خوبی را لنگانگون الطافت افر و ختند و سخن
و سوری بنظر تشمیم خوش دماغان گلشن عود قماری سوختند بلبان خوش الحان از شور مستی غزلهای رنگین سرانیدند و
قمریان کوکونو از پای سرو آزادانه شوق بر کشیدند جام نرگس از شراب لبریز آمد و لب غنچه از تبسم گلریز -

Prof Sukh Deve Singh Charak translate the Gulabnama in English in his preface he says, "author indulges in moralising in the traditional oriental fashion. He seems to contribute to the idea that a study of the great events should offer some moral to the scholar.

This attempt at moralising has been coupled with some belief in the supernatural which finds expression at several places in the work. Kirpa Ram does not lose any opportunity of describing a prophecy or any supernatureal happening which might have the effect of defying such situations where in the superstition should have full play.

Author is try to decribe all the information according to the pattern of Ain-e-Akbari of Abul Fazal when he focus on the literary language and classical touch. Like rhymed, Figures of speech and varieties or novelties, he loses the chronological data. It gives only some landmark but dates are here and there. Some informations bear only year but fail to mention the day and month of the information. After 1830 he gives his own eyewitness before this date he gives the reference of his father or grandfather.

The literary styal of this biography is also important, because the method of presentation affects have though made the next some what difficult to comprehend yet those do not minimise in any way its value as a reliable source of history also, of Jammu and Punjab. It contain lots of important information which do not find mention anywhere else also furnishes detailed date in the light of which his relation with the successors of Ranjit Singh and the British Government can be better understood. Kirpa Ram's information are very intresting and full of emotions. Gulabnama has not the informations based on imaginary but lively vivid pictures of incidents in the way they happened.

As a student of Persian language and literacy I can say that the literary style and vivid depiction of facts renders the Gulabnama a remarkable outstanding work in the Persian historical literature created in India authors shows the Abul Fazal's dictions and Babur's sincerity of honesty of narration informed with detached objective outlook. As it is the biography of Gulab Singh. But the author expresses his deep concern about Gulab Singh, rulers of Punjab and British autherity equally.