

INTRODUCTION

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"Among the many people and races who have come in contact and influenced India's life and culture, the oldest and most persistent have been the Iranians..." "Few people have been more closely related in origin and throughout history than the people of Iran and the people of India..."

Jawaharlal Nehru

In the light of this excerpts from the *Discovery of India*, it is clear that there have been very firm and close relations between Iranians and the Indians who belong to the same Aryan stock. The though contents of the *Gathas* the sacred scripture of the ancient Persians and the hymns of the *Vedas* each other in a considerable degree. Besides, the events recorded in the *Vedas* fill in the gaps of the records of past history of ancient Persia. The cuneiform script of the rock inscriptions of Persepolis and the characters of the letters of Sanskrit script clearly indicate that both are derived from the same origin.

This apart there are several words of Indian origin in the *Shahnama-i Firdausi* and many Persian myths constitute the part of Indian culture. The number of Persian dictionaries compiled in India is larger than those prepared in Persia. Both Persian paintings, particularly belonging to the Herat School and Persian architecture influenced India, as is perceptible in the Mughal period. Many other factors proved conducive to the creation of a new art, language, culture and literature as a result of the amalgamation of Indian and Persian cultures. The best example is the Urdu language and its literature.

The Persians, even in pre-Islamic period were not oblivious of Hindustan. For the prosperous trades it was the land full of merchandise, specially spices.

Those in quest of peace paid visit to the birthplace of the Buddha, whose followers had carried his teaching even to the remotest parts of Transoxiana. The Persian sages came to this soil in search of the water of eternal life which they found in the literature of this country and carried with them the stories of the *Panchtantra*, which was first translated into Pahlavi and was christened as *Kalila-O-Damna* and it was later rendered into Arabic, Persian and afterwards into several European languages. Even today, this country, in spite of its industrial and technological progress and advancement has retained its spiritual character and is therefore, an abode for those who are in search of *Shanti* (peace, and tranquility of the mind).

Coupled with these were the invasions of the Kushans in pre-Islamic days and these were followed by those of Turks of several dynasties. After the Mongol invasion over Persia, many Turk dynasties sought refuge in this sub-continent and established their rule here. These invaders were also accompanied by sages and savants who gave a new outlook on life in the form of Sufism.

After the havocs wrought by Chingiz and Timur, Babur burst upon the scene of Hindustan in the 16th Century A.D., which paved the way for the establishment of Mughals' region over this Sub-continent. By that time the mystic order of Sheikh Safiuddin had assumed the complexion of a political movement and Shah Ismail had established the Safavid dynasty which lasted for about two hundred fifty years.

Besides the Safavid order of the Sufis, or many other mystic orders sprang into being like Sarbedarans, Hurufids, Nuqtavids and Nurbakhshid. All of them were the products of the Mughals and Timur's oppression over the Persians and all of them basically aimed at eradicating oppression and execution and finally throwing off the tyrannical yoke of Timur and his descendants, though these movements, too, turned political.

The Safavis, though united the country and established their strong rule over it by creating sectarian differences, but as they were extremely deficient in the knowledge of Islam, they caused irreparable loss to this religion in the later centuries.

The Safavids in the very beginning declared themselves to be the staunchest supporters and advocates of Shiism, with the result that many Muslims of the Sunnite sect were forced to migrate from their home-land and take refuge in some neighbouring country. Those who came to Hindustan were received warmly, particularly by Akbar who was much above the sectarian prejudices.

This catholicity of Akbar made his empire the cradle of Persian art, culture, literature and many schools of philosophy. This is also an established fact that the Safavids were Turkish speaking people and exhibited an unprecedented zeal in patronizing Shiism. This attitude of this made the Persian literature suffer grievously. The Mughals were also Turks and spoke Chaghtai Turkish dialect, but in spite of that they patronized Persian literature created the office of poet-laureateship and conferred the titles of poet laureate on many Persian poets.

As this study has within its purview by and large limited to the reign of Akbar, much has been left to other scholars, who will explore fresh evenness and find out the causes which gave him to a new style in Persian prose and poetry which is at present known as *Sabh-i-Hindi* or the Indian style.

It has been mentioned above that the sectarian prejudice of the Safavids damaged the cause of Islam particularly in Central Asia, Asia Minor, Transoxiana and the Indian Sub-continent. The Islamic Republic of Iran is, however, conscious of this fact and is trying to compensate for the loss by inviting Muslims of all Schools and thoughts. It is hoped that our age would be able to see the glory that Islam had been.

This should be further added that where the Safavids caused damage, the people of that regions took refuge in Hindustan. They came with Persian, but with their own dialect. Its for this reason that Persians words were spoken with different vowel sounds. But, in this paper the Indian accent of them has been adopted and where there the entries were not found in the Persian - English dictionry of F. Steingass, the words have been written, as are spoken by the natives of that region.

As for the transliteration of Persian words into English, I am aware of different Iranian and Indian pronounciations like Najmoddin and Najmuddin for example. In most cases I have preferred to follow the Iranian mode for reasons of long familiarity and to avoid confusion in my own mind. I hope an Indian reader will excuse me for taking this minor liberty. The whole book has been divided in six chapters, the detail of which is given below:

CHAPTER I :

This Chapter consists of an introduction and three parts. In the introduction the chaotic condition of Persia has been described briefly after the death of Abu Said Khan Bahadur, the last Mughal king of Ilkhani dynasty, when the whole empire was parcelled out into small princely states and the local rulers started playing havoc.

The first part deals with the political conditions in the days of Timur, his rise, extirpation of the local rulers, his recognition as the undisputed ruler of Transoxiana, his attacks on other countries, particularly Persia, causes of these attacks and the political crises among his successors.

The second part deals with the social conditions of Persia and the after effects of Timurids devastating attacks. In this part following topics have been discussed in detail.

(i) Economic crises, (ii) disintegration of social order, (iii) deterioration of moral values, (iv) prodigality of the courtiers of Timur, (v) migration of the uprooted persons to some peaceful place, particularly towards Hindustan and (vi) uprising of some politico-religious movements by priestly class.

The third part deals with the cultural situation prevailing in the society during the reign of Timur and his successors. In the chapter one, what has been pointed out specifically is that after the Mongol invasion Persia had not yet recovered fully. In the meanwhile it met with the great devastation brought about in the wake of Timurids invasion. His successive war campaigns made

this country totally bankrupt in the fields of science and intellectual activities. Though Timur, as well as his successors developed the cities of Samarqand and Bukhara, by planting gardens, constructing magnificent buildings, and establishing religious institutions yet all this they did at the cost of other countries, and uprooting their inhabitants, like historians, men of letters, architects, artisans and religious scholars, who were brought to these two cities. But the positive side of this Vandalism was that Persian culture developed greatly particularly in the field of historiography, fine arts, miniature painting, calligraphy, architecture, and glazed tile making etc.

CHAPTER II :

This chapter also starts with a small introduction. In the beginning, the spiritual atmosphere, prevailing in 6th and 7th centuries of Islamic era (13th & 14th centuries of Christian era), has been dealt with and the fact has been pointed out, that Chingiz Khan, though a heathen, had great regard for priestly class. Timur, being a Muslim, followed the same pattern by paying great reverence to saints, priests and religious doctors. This he did, so that he could rule over his subject, who were mostly Muslims, showing himself as the great supporter of Islamic faith and after him, his successors also followed the same example. The patronage of the rulers created a peaceful atmosphere for the priests and their monasteries became the centre of consolation for those oppressed by the tyrannical acts of Timur and his successors. But some saints,

more enlightened than others, could not compromise with the ruling class and refused to tolerate their unjust deeds. To raise their voice against their tyranny, they started some politico religious movements.

The first movement of this sort, came into being in Khurasan and was known as Sarbedaran movement, started by Persian Muslims. Their slogan was that they would die, but not let a single Turk or Tartar pitch his tent in their country. This movement proved a source spring for other movements like such as : Mara'shi movement, under the leadership of Saiyid Qawwamuddin Mara'shi, Hurufi movement, under Saiyid Fazlullah Naimi Astarabadi; Nuqtavi movement, under Mahmud Pasikhani, one of the disciples of Fazlullah; Nur Bakhshi movement, under Muhammad Nur Bakhsh and Baktashi movement under the guidance of Haji Baktash Wali.

Shaikh Safiuddin Ardabili was the spiritual head of the movement, called the Safavi order, which ultimately took the form of a politico-religious movement. All the above mentioned movements have been fully discussed in this chapter.

CHAPTER III :

This chapter covers the events which led to the foundation of the mystic order of the Safavids by Sheikh Safiuddin of Ardabil and the spiritual path that he cared out for his disciples. What is interesting in this chapter is how the Safavis changed their mystic order into a politico-religious movement. Though

this movement brought about internal integration and checked its political boundaries, yet as Shah Ismail Safavi was deeply under the influence of the extremely conservative Shiites of Anatolia, who lived a life contrary to the tenets of Islam, therefore, at their instigation he started to convert the Sunni Muslims on a large scale who were in majority in Persia, creating many social problems in the country.

One of the problems, the Safavis were facing, was the conflict that they had with Qizilbashi chiefs who had played very important role in bringing them to power. The Safavis had declared themselves Shia rulers of the country and had gained the favour of the clergy class, who were quite against the Sufis. This conflict between the two has been dealt with and analysed in third chapter.

The rulers of the Safavi dynasty were almost contemporary with the Timuris of Hindustan. This dynasty was founded by Zahiruddin Babur. In this chapter the relations of Safavis and Timuris of Hindustan have been discussed, upto the reign of Akbar, whose contemporary in Persia was Shah Abbas I.

CHAPTER IV :

This chapter is related to the conflicts of Safavis with the Mughals and Uzbaks". The Safavis in Persia were facing two great enemies on their borders. On its western side were Ottoman Turks while in the East were the Uzbaks. The conflicts of Safavis with both of them were based on politico-sectarian differences. This part deals with the diplomacy of Shah Abbas I to meet this situation.

The Uzbeks, with the intention of crushing the Safavid power, made cordial relations with Hindustan. This measure of the Uzbaks, became one of the factors for Safavis to strengthen their ties with Hindustan and send their envoy to the Mughal court. Akbar was angry with Safavis, because they had occupied Qandhar and the relations between the two countries had become very cold, but inspite of that he rejected the proposal of the Uzbaks to be their ally against the Safavis. Again, when Akbar recaptured Qandhar, the political relations between the two became normal and the envoys were exchanged.

CHAPTER V:

This chapter deals with cultural relations between Hindustan and Persia, which started in pre-Islamic days remained cordial during Islamic period and continued to be very friendly between the Safavis and the Mughals. The main characteristics of these cultural relations have been elaborated fully in this dissertation.

CHAPTER VI :

This chapter deals with the main factor that caused the migration of the Persians to neighbouring countries, particularly towards Hindustan. The main reason was the hospitality of the courtiers and royal patronage to the development of fine arts, music, literature, architecture etc. Some of the artists and artisans came with Humayun when he invaded this country to regain his lost empire, while others were invited when he regained the throne. These relations

which are considered landmarks in the history of Hindustan and Persia were on their zenith during the reign of Akbar. This factor also attracted many Persians to come to this country.

Besides the above mentioned facts, there were also other factors which caused the migration of the Persians towards Hindustan. They have been named as repulsive and attractive factors in this dissertation. At the end a brief account of those immigrants has also been given the achievements of whom have been recorded in the pages of history.