CHAPTER III

INDO-PERSIAN CULTURAL RELATIONS FROM THE
EARLIEST TIME UPTO THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Persia has always been the land of culture and light from the time immemorial. Also, it has always been a source of inspiration to the people of India for many centuries in the past. India and Persia, being adjacent countries, have both from the remotest past, a common ground of cultural activities of the different branches of the Aryans and hence, have maintained a fairly regular interchange of cultural values, which have moulded their mutual lives in social, intellectual and religious spheres. The beginning of the trade intercourse between India and other Asian and European countries go back to very ancient times. "The Phoenicians, the Polenics, the Selucids, the Greeks, the Romans and also the Arabs had trade contacts with India. Thus it became possible for the Persians to start trade activities with India via Obollah at the confluence of Tigris and Euphrates." It helped neighbouring the people of these two countries to come into close contacts tradewise and also, "due to certain circumstances they sometimes staback in their places of trade-doings and thus helped the people of both the countries to settle in both the countries

1. Devare, T.N. : A Short History of Persian Literature, p. 1
2. Tarachand : Influence of Islam on Indian Culture, p. 29
respectively." Among the peoples and races in whose contact India's life and culture was influenced, the oldest and the most persistent have been the Iranians. Indeed the relationship precedes even the beginning of Indo-Aryan civilization, for it was out of some common stock that the Indo-Aryans and the ancient Indians diverged and took their different ways. Iran like India was strong enough in the cultural foundation to influence even her invaders and often to absorb them.

It is believed that during the stone age the Indians and the Aryan forefathers were either living in the north pole or in the central Asia and after some wandering they came and settled down in what may be termed the Indo-Iranian original home. It was situated in the Pamir region or more probably in the plains of the Oxus and Jaxartes. Their ancestors lived together for sometime in the plains of Oxus valley using a common language which afterwards was divided into two branches as Indic and Iranian and which in course of centuries developed in comparative isolation as Sanskrit and Persian. From the third millennium down to the middle of the second century, the Aryans who, as an undivided ethnical group, lived in the vast plains of the Oxus and Jaxartes, the land Eranvej of the two rivers Vahvi-Datiya Ranha.

3. Ghosh, B.K.: The History and Culture of Indian People, (ed), R.C. Mazumdar, p. 218
4. Nehru, J.L.: The Discovery of India, pp. 112-113
5. Ibid
It is quite clear that the Aryan principalities appearing about 1400 B.C. in Mesopotamia and Syria were, "the successful creation of a group of Condottiers and their troops who had detached themselves from the main body, while the wandering tribes passed through eastern Iran towards India."

Their ancestors migrated into Punjab and their existence were found in the Vedic period and while coming to India they left the Iranians in possession of the wide belt of territory from Bactria to Media down to the Indian frontiers. These people "probably had a common language and culture, making allowance for tribal traits and distinctive features in them." The undivided Indo-Iranian must have passed a long time in their central Asian common home, for here grew up a specific Indo-Iranian culture and religion that may be reconstructed at least partially, by comparing the Veda with the Avesta. "The grammatical forms of the language of Rig Veda and the roots of verbs in the Avesta show that they have a common ancestors. Some common words and expressions of primary relationship such as 'matru' in Sanskrit and 'madar' in Persian or 'pitru' in Sanskrit and 'pidar' in Persian illustrate this affinity."

It is evident that before the occupation of the Iranian plateau by the tribes from the Indo-Iranian original home, the high land was the seat of a culture that was probably matriarchal.

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7. Iran in the Ancient East, p. 192
8. Indo-Iranica : Vol. XX, No. 2, June 1967, p. 2
The people worshipped snake gods like the primitive non-Aryans of India. It is very probable, therefore, that, the pre-Aryan culture of North-West India and Iran were of the same spirit and origin.  

The old cultural link between pre-Aryan Iran and the pre-Aryan India, being strengthened as a result of the migration of the Aryans into these two countries, was mainly responsible for the Vedic Aryans of India to maintain an active cultural relation with their brethren in India. The story of the civilization of the east lies in the story of the Indo-Persian cultural relationship and this is more so because, the legendary history of both the places reveal that, the people used to profess the same faith and used to speak the same language. This statement is more fool-proof from the fact that Zoroaster used to preach Vedic religion in Iran. The inhabitants of Iran and India in those days were known as Aryans and those living in Iran west of Sind called themselves Aryans but termed as Persians by the Greeks as the Greek had to encounter with them in the province of Fars. India has been termed as 'Sapt Sindhu' of the Vedas comprising the Punjab and Sind. It is, therefore, significant that the term 'Hindu' was given to Indians by the Iranians and the Iranians were termed as

12. Iran in the ancient East : pp. 11, 177
Parthavas and Pahlavas by the Indians and it was the Greek subsequently who gave the term as India and Persia.

In the earliest days the term as Aryans must have been connected both the group of Aryans of Iran and India. The former were well-established in the fertile delta of Sindhu and Saraswati in the Punjab with their boundaries meeting in Gandhar (Qandahar). They have been referred to as 'Parasikas' or 'Parashus' in the Vedic classics. "The two peoples turned their backs upon each other due to territorial ambitions and political rivalry and the bond of racial and cultural affinity became lose as it were and these two branches of the Aryans became arch rivals and thus in course of time, they developed their distinctive civilisations apparently without the least mutual influence although in language, culture and religion, their similarity in the earliest period was little short of identity, when later in history, under the Achaemenians, Greeks, Bactrians and Sakas, the Iranians and the Indians were forced to meet as citizens of the same empire, they met as complete strangers, not as cousins of the same family." 15

"The geographical barriers also helped in their differences of mutual bond and thus helped them in their pursuit of expansion of their empire in two different directions. But this is not enough of a reason to show why there was complete cessation of cultural contact between Iran and India even as early as Rigvedic age."

15. Ghosh, B.K. : The History and Culture of India, pp. 218-219
The Iranians who had retained a distinct memory of the Indo-Aryan culture, who must have developed their own distinctively Indian Rigvedic culture about 1500 B.C., but it is difficult to get away from the idea that the silence maintained by the Vedic Indians on Iran and the Iranians was partly intentional, for some of the geographical names proves beyond doubt that the period of immigration had not been so long as to have completely obliterated all memory of the land they left behind. The names like Rasa, Sarasvati and Bahlika must have been brought to India from Iran by the Aryans and applied to two Indian rivers and one Indian province. The reticence maintained by the Vedic Aryans about immigration from Indo-Iranians was, therefore, atleast partly identical, for otherwise, it would seem that those parts of the Rigveda in which possible or probable Iranian names occur, were already composed in Iran." Therefore, the ancient Aryan culture of Iran was hardly distinguishable from that of the ancient Aryan culture of India, as both of them were derived from one and the same Indo-Iranian culture.

In the evolution of the culture of the world, Persia was the most prominent country which has not only influenced but has also served as an efficient intermediary for the transmission and exchange of various cultural ideas between the countries. The Persians have been the oldest and most persistent to leave an impact on Indian life and letters.

17. Ghosh, B.K. : The History and Culture of India, pp. 218-219
Throughout the ancient history, Persian influence was predominant but it is uncertain how far the sphere of power and authority in India may have extended prior to the times of the Achaemenian period. They lived for quite sometime together and formed their own cultural identity which they carried along with them at the time of their transmigration and in course of time the same people turned out to be two different races with or without any identical similarities. Yet their mutual relationship persisted in the later period. Existence of religious connection between these two countries can be inferred from a legend of a Brahmin sage Changranghach who wrote a strong letter to the ruler of Persia denouncing the Persian religion. He was invited to the Persian court for the exposition of the faith but was converted to the new creed and sent back to India to convert his country men.

The story of Prince Isfandiyar is another very notable example to cite about the religious connection between India and Iran during the time of the Achaemenian rule. It is said that once he requested an anonymous Emperor of India to change his faith and accept Zoroastrianism. In about 7000 B.C., it is said that many Indians travelled to the middle east for getting vivid knowledge of the place and the people and those

18. Ghosh, B.K.: The History and Culture of India, p. 119
19. Devare, T.N.: A Short History of Persian Literature, p. 2
20. Gorekar, S.N.: Influence of Persian on Indian Life and Literature (Thesis), Bombay University, 1966 p. 32
who undertook this sort of adventure were Hindus. May be because of this reason, during Xerxes reign in about 480 B.C., many Hindus hold high ranking offices in the army of Xerxes. But the political rivalry and territorial ambition gradually broke down the hands of the social and cultural activities of the people of these two countries and split them into two separate nations. This split led them to shift their boundaries and it became a common feature of Indo-Persian history and it continued till the time of Alexander's invasion of India when the cultural relation between these two adjoining nations were totally broken off. The building up of a dam in the river Tigris by the Persian stood as another setback in the sweet relationship of the two nations and it remained so for about two centuries, i.e. from about sixth century B.C. to fourth century B.C. That is why when Alexander started his far east campaign, there was virtually no commercial relation appeared to have flourished and Persia was completely cut off from India in all other spheres.

The relationship between these two countries, however, was restored during the Parthian period (B.C. 253 to A.D. 235). The Parthian rule in Persia on the one hand and the Buddhist predominance in India on the other hand, initiated once again the revival of the cultural affinity between the two countries. The Parthians who were the patrons of art and architecture, came in contact with the Buddhist monks in India and obviously, the

influence of this contact is clearly described in a number of rock temples in the district of Western Maharastra. Harpharan of Abulama, the sculptor of an inscription in the Karli caves, is believed to be a Parthian and the Buddhist sculptures in the caves of Nasik, Karli and Bada bear a resemblance to those of Persepolis and Susa in general design and pillar structure.

It is universally acknowledged that the Indo-Greek and the Indo-Parthian rulers of the north-west India and Afghanistan were the carriers of Graeco-Persian culture to India. The Persepolis inscriptions offers striking parallels in the Indo-Persian epigraphic documents. The Kharosthi style writing from right to left in the Ashoka and post Mauryan epochs proves incontestably that India and Persia closely collaborated down to the Indo-Scythian period. Again, the Saranath pillar of Asoka at Visangara near Sanchi in the extreme south of Gwalior, bearing an inscription in Sanskrit, gives the glimpses of the process of Indianisation of the Greeks and their absorption of Indian culture. As a result of the, "deep, natural and neighbouring affinity that existed between the Indian and the Persians, one of the Governors of Asoka in 269 B.C. was the Persian Tushap." One noteworthy factor in respect of the affinity and influence on each other can be cited with the word 'Satrap'. This Indian form of the old Persian word Ksatrapavan

22. Devare, T.N.: A Short History of Persian Literature, p. 3
24. Ibid
continued to be the title of the provincial Governor of India until the fourth century of the Christian era. The practice of this word could be found in the inscription of the Indo-Scythian epoch and lasted till the collapse of the Andhras in the South and the Kushanas in the North India. Similarly, the coins of Vasudevan depict him dressed like Shapur I while on the obverse there is a Sassanian altar. "A Kushana princess was married to Hormuz II and the great king Grumhatas with his war elephants enabled Shapur II to recover Amida in A.D. 360 from a Roman garrison."

At the time of the Sassanian rule from the beginning of the second quarter of the third century A.D. to the end of the first half of the seventh century (A.D. 226 to A.D. 656), Hira was a trade centre and it helped the Persians to mobilise in the Indian markets. In course of time as a natural consequence, Persian trade activity reached its zenith in the middle of the sixth century A.D. The geographical positions of Persia and India made it possible to have frequent communication between these two countries which was not confined to trade only but in course of time, cultural activities also started for the greater benefit of both the countries. It is, therefore, natural that the Persian influence on India appears to be stronger and have a greater modifying control over the northern part of India than that of India on Persian territories. Thus people inhabiting the frontiers of both the countries were

influenced by the culture of both the countries, so much so that the adjoining countries such as Greek, Parthian, Persian had their share of influence on the inhabitants of these frontier lands. Time and again, this influence depended on the political situation of the bordering countries. Any hostility slowed down the pace of this mutual influence. "It may be recalled that the political activity in India was primarily determined by the adventure of the central Asia peoples who had assimilated the Persian culture and civilization before reaching Indian soil and consequently, their successive immigrations into India were but a number of waves of Persian influence which was absorbed and eliminated time and again in the homelands of Indian culture and environment." Again, the culture of the Scythians, the Bactrians, the Greeks and the Turks offered a great many opportunities for the Indian cultural expansion. These along with the "indigenous ideas and attitudes mixed with Persian thoughts and traditions, formed the composite culture of India."  

The commercial exchange between Hormuz of Persia and Calicut on the Western coast of India through the ocean dates back earlier than that of any political relationship between Persia and India. This relationship was both cultural and materialistic and they took pride in the long and present cultural relations and affinity between the people of both the countries. "The earliest connection of Persia with India

28. Ibid
was prehistoric dating from the time of the first arrival of the Dravidians who were, according to Sir Richard Temple, immigrants to India from the west via Persia. This fact is substantiated by the infiltration of words into the languages of India. Many words from Elamite, Accadian, Sumarian and Behu, spoken at the delta of the Tigris and Euphrates are found to be used in the Dravidian language of the South. The Sassanian king Ardeshir Babakab (A.D. 226 to A.D. 240) to Behramgur (A.D. 420 to A.D. 440) had always aspired to have good relations with India. Even the latter visited the court of Raja Shrangal of Qanauj and his daughter was married to Behramgur whose progony was known as Gardhbhil Rajputs. Shrangal knowing Behramgur's fondness for poetry and music, despatched with him twelve thousand luri minstrels to Iran and the place where they settled in that country is called Luristan.

The Sassanian rule in Persia synchronized with the Gupta rule in India (A.D. 308-A.D. 544). It was the period of classical Sanskrit learning and Golden age of Hinduism in India. From the point of view of literature, religion, art, architecture, commerce and colonial development, this period is undoubtedly the most important in Indian history. It was in this period, that occult science was very popular in India and many people

29. The Indian Antiquary: Vol.XLIX, Bombay 1920, p. 96
30. Modi, J.J.: The Influence of Iran on Other Countries, p. 22
32. Panikkar, Sardar K.M.: A Survey of Indian History, p. 79
from Persia came to India to acquire knowledge in the science. The Sassanian king Behramgur came to India to practise and acquire this branch of occult practices. Other Sassanian kings like Anushirwan (A.D. 531-A.D. 578), Khusraw Parwiz (A.D. 591-A.D. 620) had contact with Chalukya king of Badani of South India. The fact that modern lores are the most musical of the present day Iranians, thus supporting the tale about the distant ancestors of Iran were Indian origin as these lores were the Indian origin. Apart from this, "the late Dr. Jivaji Modi, the late Mr. Shahrab Bulsara and others have contributed articles in the journals of K.R. Cama Oriental Institute of Bombay and elsewhere showing that several paintings in fresco on the walls of certain caves in the Western coastal regions of the Indian peninsula depict court scenes in which Sassanian Persian ambassadors are discernable by their peculiar dresses.". Beside this, "the Sassanians were specially interested in the political and practical philosophy of their counterparts in India." They were also interested to know the original plans of immortal life as was envisaged by their Indian scholars of that time. In South India, inscriptions and scripts in Pahlavi language are found in the old Christian crosses. It is said that these Syrian-Christians of South India are really the descendants of Persian-Christians who had settled there in former times.

34. Modi, J.J. : The Influence of Iran on Other Countries, p. 32
They were called Syrian just because they observed liturgy on the Syrian church and conducted their church service in the Syrian language. Thus the Northern, Western and Southern Indian peoples had direct cultural contacts with Persia during the Sassanian regime.

Buddhism being a great religious force, swept over the whole area from Japan to Caspian sea through Indo-China in the east and Persia and Tartar plains in the West. The missionary movement of the Buddhist monks in the regime of Asoka and later of Kanishka gradually extended beyond the borders of India, Persia and central Asia. Corresponding to the regime of Asoka in India (B.C.269-B.C.232) at the time Parthian period in Persia, Buddhist monks from Nepal and Gangetic basin, spreaded far into the region of Balkh and central region of Oxus and brought with them the teaching of Buddhist religion and philosophy. This cultural regeneration was responsible for bringing closer the tie of mutual interest. The exclusiveness of the Hindus of India was changed by the bread and catholic sympathies of the Buddhist missionaries and India came to be culturally knitup with her sister nations on the Asiatic continent in the early Christian era. The impact of the Buddhist philosophy and religion was of such intensive, not only Buddhist monastries were built but a good section of people from priest class were also attracted towards this religion. The ancestors of the famous Barmaki (Pramukha) family of ministers at the Abbasid

36. Devare,T.N. : A Short History of Persian Literature, p.4
37. Ibid
court were the custodians of the Nava Vihara of Balkh. This
Nava Vihara was a great Iranian Buddhist Vihara or monastery
and the ancestors of the Barmakites were the 'para-maka' or
Pramukhs or Dean of its monastic chapter. The name of the town
Bukhara is a Turkish adaptation of the Buddhist word Vihara,
for there had been many Buddhist shrines in the region of
Balkh and Bukhara during and before the advent of Islam into
Persia." The archeological survey of Sir Aurel Stein in central
Asian region carried on in A.D. 1908, have laid bare ruins of
several cities peopled by the Indians 2000 years ago. Numerous
Buddhist stupas, shrines and monasteries, images of Buddha,
Ganesh, Kuber and other Brahmanical Gods, coins with Indian
legends and many Buddhist coronical works and manuscripts and
shorter records and documents written in Indian languages and
Indian alphabets have been unearthed." With it, it can be
concluded that there was a good impact of Indian cultural
exchange in those areas of central Asia about 2000 years ago.
It gives ample evidence of Indianisation of areas which were
the out of the way colonies during those period. "Even as late
as the seventh century A.D., when Hiuen Tsang passed through
central Asia on his way to and back from India, he noted the
dominence of Buddhism and Indian culture over that wide area."

38. Devare, T.N.: A Short History of Persian Literature, p. 4
40. Luniya, B.N.: Evolution of Indian Culture, p. 311
41. Ibid; p. 312
As central Asia was the nerve centre of all activities between India and other countries of Asia and Asia-Minor, Persia gained experience of the rich heritage of the Indian sub-continent and the mutual contact and influence left a mark which paved the way for a greater cultural contact in course of time.

Before the rise of Islam, Buddhism being one of great religious forces, covered not only the people and place of the time, but it left a deep rooted mark which was one of the richest factors of Indo-Persian cultural relation. Thus before the rise of Islam in central Asia, Indian culture and civilization predominated there and it is said that the Mongol leader Chengiz Khan was a Buddhist."

Undoubtedly Asia was the original cradle of the human race although the original place of abode could not yet been ascertained as to which region of Asia was first inhabited by mankind. Anthropologists have assigned each one of the different races of Asia with region as their first place of abode, such as Arabia to Semites, central Asia to Aryans and Africa to Hamites. "In spite of the fact that scholars have speculated a great deal on this subject and worked out different hypotheses based on the Old Testament, traditions and ethnological factors, theories of racial origin still remain speculative." During the time of Sumarian civilization about 5000 B.C., there existed a country known as Magan'the land of

42. Luniya, B.N.: Evolution of Indian Culture, p. 312
43. Usha, A.S. : Arabia and its Early Contact with India, p. 46
the ships to the Sumerians on the Persian gulf along the Arabian coast. The inhabitants of Magan were mostly sea-farers and Magan having a strategic position, played a considerable role in diffusing the Sumerian culture in and around it including India. In course of time these people migrated to other places and they came to be known as Babilonians, Assyrian, Phoenticians and Hebrews of history. Arabs being the earliest sea-farers and Arabia having the central position of international location amidst three countries, naturally had an advantage of developing upon herself the role of a commercial intermediary among the countries and they were responsible for the shipments of merchandise goods to the different parts of Africa, Europe and India. "According to the ethnologists, the Dravidian of India were not jungle dwellers but a civilized people having a higher culture of the Sumerian type. They entered India thousand of years ago from north-western Asia. The Sumerian and Elamite languages have much resemblance to the Dravidian languages and these three languages seem to be early representatives of the Caucasian linguistic group."

Thus, the Arabs, who penetrated the virgin coast of the Western India for a permanent settlement with business in mind, established a firmed foot on the soil of India. It were the Arabs, the immediate successors of Phoenecians, who dared to

44. Usha, A.S. : Arabia and its Early Contact with India, pp. 60-61
take the hazardous voyage to the land of India before Islam
came into the horizon of the civilization of mankind and did
enormous business here with the indigenous people. This
practice continued for many centuries before the emergence
of Islam. "The rise of Islam forms the main criteria for the
overthrow of the Persian empire and the capture of Ctesiphon."
Once Islam covered the whole land of Arabia and its people
when they became more advanced and knowledgeable, the Arab
colonisation started afoot at various parts of India,
specially in Malabar and Mabar coasts. Beside, their net of
colonisation spreaded and concentrated in the Sind areas and
further South. Arab had their colonies in almost every part
along the western and eastern coasts and even inland towns
and capital cities of India. At these trade centres, their
population ranged between five and ten thousands and at such
places, store-houses, residences and big mosques were the
common features of the Arabs settlement. Tarachand in his
book,'The Influence of Islam on Indian Culture' has rightly
expressed that:

the contact of Muslim Arabs with south India existed
for many centuries before the emergence of Islam. But
in the 7th century when Islam infused the Arabs with
a new spirit of adventure and enterprise, their
foreign trade increased in leaps and bounds and the

45. Sykes, Sir Percy : A History of Persia, p. 41
46. Usha, A.S. : Arabia and its Early Contacts with India, p. 52
Conquest of Iran gave them the monopoly of Indo-Iranian maritime trade. Soon they had their settlement in Ceylon and on the coast of Malabar. Since they had come as peaceful traders they were welcomed by Hindu Rajas and their subjects were given full freedom not only to profess and practise their religion but also to preach and propagate it and they made full use of their freedom.47

Raja Sundara Pandye of Malabar, Hoysala Raja Battala, Kakatya Raja, Ganpaty, the Reddy chief Verma of Rajamahendry and various other rulers of the interior regions had given Arab merchants all sorts of facilities to do trade and their settlement in and around the coastal areas.

"Iran lost its national independence as well as national religion with the conquest of Iran by the Arabs." Arab invasion of Persia and subsequently the overthrow of the Sassanian dynasty resulted in the much exodus of people of Zoroastrian faith to India through the numerous ports."The end of the Sassanian rule also contributed to their(Zoroastrian) fleeing from Persia as they felt more and more terrified for the onrushing Arab conquerors." Their settlement and close contact opened a new chapter in the Indo-Persian relations. No wonder that

47. Tarachand: Influence of Islam on Indian Culture, p. 35
49. Sykes, Sir Percy: A History of Persia, p. 184
their zeal rekindled in the minds of their Hindu neighbours, the dormant divine fire had caused a stir in their religious life. The Bhakti movement, beginning with the mystic poets and culminating it in the philosophy of Ramanuja and the revival of Vedanta brought about by Shankaracharya, were both to a great extent due to the general religious awakening caused by the impact of Islam. In the early part of the Eighteenth century A.D., Arab Muslims came to Sind and established their rule over the region. It acknowledged the suzerainty of the khilafat till A.D. 861.

The settlement of the Muslims on the coastal regions from Sind to Gujarat and Kathiwar made it easy for a greater assimilation and exchanged of ideas between the indigenous people of India and the Muslim settlers. This contact had its effect on the Muslim culture in Arabia. During the time of Khalifa Mansur (A.D. 757–A.D. 774), Hindu scholars came to Baghdad and brought with them Brahmagupta's Brahmasiddhanta and Khandkhadayaka with Al-Fazari translated into Arabic with the help of the pundits. During the reign of Harun-al-Rashid, due to the encouragement received from the Barmacide ministers, many works on Sanskrit were translated into Arabic. Arabs scholars were sent to India to study medicine and Baghdad was frequented by the Hindu physicians and in course of time many

50. Hussain, S.A.: The National Culture of India, p. 74
51. Ibid
52. Ibid
books on medicine, philosophy, astronomy and astrology were translated into Arabic. As long as Sind was under the Abbasides, the work of translation from Arabic to Sanskrit and vice-versa continued.

Due to the Arab settlement in India and the long contact of Indian people with them, a considerable number of nautical, medical, mathematical and musical terms crept into most of the Indian languages which are still in vogue. Yet, except the north where the long series of Muslim invasions were felt more than any other part of the subcontinent, the Arab influence and specially the Muslim culture could not intensify that much till thirteenth century. It was at this time when thousands of Iranians fled to the Indian shores to escape the ravages of the Mongol invasions."The Western gateway at the port of Surat, Broach, Dabol and Thana had become fairly popular in the days of Arab navigation and commerce and regular trade between the ports of the Persian gulf and the Arabian sea was being conducted by Persian during this period."

Indo-Persian cultural relation will remain a farce without taking into account the contribution made by the Persian travellers who used to frequent this side of the world in pursuit of knowledge and wealth. In this respect they followed the footsteps of the Arabian travellers. Buzurg bin Shahryar who was one of the bestknown navigators, came to India before Masudi had visited India in A.H.303-4/A.D.914-5. He was famous for his work 'Ajayib-ul Hind'. It may be

53. Devare, T.N.: A Short History of Persian Literature, p. 8
54. Ibid, p. 7
noted here that Ibn Khurdadbeh, Sulaimanu't-Tajir and Abu Zaid Hassan Sirafi were the outstanding Persian travellers and geographers of the ninth century of the Christian era. 'Awfi in course of his wide travelling visited Mansura, Dibal and Khambayat and had left a beautiful account of his travels in Jawami-'ul-Hikmat. In their writings, "we get the picture of a cordial relationship that existed between the Persians and Indians of that period. Abu Raihan al-Biruni and 'Abdur-Rahman bin 'Awf of the eleventh century testify to the moral integrity and the liberty and artistic competence of the people of India. These historians of Persian nationality are treated as Arabs because they wrote in Arabic." Another notable traveller in whose writing we find the vivid descriptions of the place and time, is the famous poet Sa'adi, who is said to have visited India in A.D. 1234-35. His visit to Somnath and its description, though sceptic, is believed to be void of ambiguity and vagueness.

Though it is a fact that Mahmud of Ghazna, Shihab-ud-Din Ghori and his generals, the founders of Khilji, Tughlaq and Mughal empires, as also the 'Adilshahi and Qutbshahi dynasties were of either Turk or Mongol origin, yet prior to their arrival in India, the all pervading influence of Persian culture had more or less absorbed these foreigners in its fold.

55. Devan, F.C.: Arab and India Through the Ages, p. 131
56. Ibid, p. 133
Many of them, if not all, had adopted the Persian language, customs, conventions and mannerisms in life. The Muslim rulers of India followed exactly in manner and style the court ceremonies and administrations of justice of the Persian system in India and these Muslim rulers were racially though Turks or Mughals, they were very much Persian both temperamently and culturally. Their successors did not even know how to speak the language of their ancestors. Majority of the immigrants from Persia to India coming from the north or through the western coast, used Persian as their lingua franca. During this time of the establishment of the Ghorid dynasty, to communicate between the different units of the country, Persian got the right place at about the beginning of the thirteenth century of the Christian era. It is recorded that there have been close political and cultural, diplomatic and commercial relations between India and Persia in the Turko-Afghan period or Indian history and with the establishment of a firm and prosperous Muslim empire under the Mughals, Indo-Persian contacts entered upon a new phase.

The Timurid renaissance which flourished once again with the invasion of Samarqand by Babur in the sixteenth century, found its hold in the northern India with the establishment

57. Devare, T. N.: A Short History of Persian Literature, p. 7
58. Ibid
of the Mughal empire by him and his subsequent occupation of Delhi. Babur faced greater difficulty at the hands of the Uzbegs but the historic battle of Merv in A.D.1510 fought between Shah Ismail of Safavids and Shaibani Khan of Uzbegs was the starting point of the lasting friendship of Babur with the Safavid rulers. Among the captives of the battle, there was Babur's sister, Khanzadeh Begum who was treated with great esteem and respect. She was sent with Shah Ismail's ambassador to Babur. Babur's moral and emotional integrity, in appreciation of the gesture and courtesy, marked the beginning of the real alliance between the two dynasties, the Safavids in Persia and the Mughals in India. It was also for the first time that the diplomatic contact and military alliance brought the two Emperors closer. Babur's relation with the later Emperors of the Safavids, kept the bond of friendship intact. Babur who himself was a poet, encouraged Persian poets to throng his courts. "The great contemporary Persian historian Khwandamir was in his court." He remembered most of the Persian friends who helped him at the time of his distress, after his memorable victory at Delhi.

With the establishment of the Mughal dynasty in India.

60. Nehru, J.L.: The Discovery of India, p. 162
61. Islamic Culture: Vol. VIII, 1927, p. 463
the cultural and social contact of Persians and the Indians set a new dimension to the advantage of both the already rich cultures. There was a brisk exchange of material commodities between both the countries by the land and the sea routes. As a result, Persian carpets, silk, pearls etc were exchanged for Indian textiles, indigo and spices. Traffic was so regular that letters of credit were mainly issued and exchanged between Agra and Ispahan.

With the coming of Humayun to the Delhi empire, a steady team of Persian soldiers, poets, painters, physicians, scholars, administrators, accountants, engineers, mathematicians and craftsmen came to India. There was a continuous exchange of artists and literateurs during this period and a long and fruitful process of synthesis brought about an Indo-Persian style in painting, architecture and literature. The well-known Mughal school of painting is greatly indebted to Persian inspiration and technique, specially to the Baghdad school of painting of the thirteenth century. The Persian painters notably Mir Sayyid 'Ali and Khwaja 'Abdus Samad were among the founders of the Mughal school of painting in India who thronged the list of Humayun. In spirit and structure, Humayun's tomb stands as an example of the synthesis of two of the great building styles of Asia— the Persian and Indian. Another

66. Brown, Percy: Indian Paintings under the Mughals, pp. 53-54
67. Ibid, p. 92
reason why there were many Persian scholars who were attracted to India during this time of the Mughal rule, was due to the liberal patronage of Bairam Khan.

Akbar who came to rule after Humayun's death, was a great patron of letters. He showed special consideration to those Persian families who were friendly with Humayun in India at the time of his distress. Akbar with the help of Abul Fazl and Faizi attracted many Persian scholars not only from Iran but also from the courts of the Deccan empires. Persian culture blossomed in full during this period. Besides Abul Fazl and Faizi who were two preeminence scholars during this period, the Mughal school of painting achieved a great place of reckoning during this period under Akbar's liberal patronage. Vincent Smith writes, "The Mughal Emperors of India looking to Iran for the graces of civilization and it was natural that Akbar should desire to add the charms of Persian pictorial art to the amenities of his court. The wealth of the empire, its liberal and tolerant policy of administration and the prospect of profitable service attracted Persian scholars so much so that many reknown poets like Naziri Nishapur, 'Urfi Shirazi, Anisi Shamlu, Shikebi Isfahani and Zuhuri left their home for India."

68. Brown, Percy: Indian Architecture, Islamic Period, p. 55
70. Islam, R.: Indo-Persian Relations, p. 168
During the reign of Jahangir, Persian influences on the land and the people of India, attained its peak. Many Persian painters of repute joined his court. Abdur Rahim Khan-i-Khanan's liberal patronage attracted many Persian scholars, poets and men, accomplished in various crafts and minor arts.

Shah Jahan's cultured court continued to welcome Persian scholars of merit. Many Persian poets and scholars came and stayed with him. All three Amirul Umaras in succession were Persians. All the Persians who were employed by the Emperor, excelled in all branches of service, specially in civil administration and accounts.

With the coming of Aurangzeb, the decline of Persian began. The liberal patronage of the Mughal court for which it was reputed so much during the whole of the preceding centuries, which once appeared to be the ideal place for the intellectuals and the administrators alike, lived to its reputation till Aurangzeb came to the scene. To the ambitious and gifted Shi'a adventurers of Persia, India ceased to be a welcome home or a field where the highest career was open for their talent. The rigid orthodoxy and the general neglect of fine arts and belles-lettres in his reign discouraged including emigrants from Persia. Orthodox theological studies, which were high in favour in his reign, naturally excluded

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71. Brown, Percy: Indian Paintings under the Mughals, p. 75
72. Ma'asir-i-Rahimi: Vil.III,MS, p. 206
73. Islam, R.: Indo-Persian Relation, p. 169
74. Sarkar, J.N.: Nadir Shah in India, p. 5
Persians who mostly belonged to the Shi'ite sect. Thus the infusion of fresh Persian blood into Muslim society, which had proceeded uninterruptedly since the days of Babur, considered decreased, though it did not entirely ceased.

The whole of the Mughal period could boast of the tremendous enthusiasm shown by the Hindu men of letters, whose love of the Persian language and literature have earned them a place of reckoning in the Indo-Persian literary relation. The period had witnessed the literary genius of scholars who supressed their counterparts in Iran in some of the branches of literature.

Thus the Indo-Persian relation, which had so nicely been imbibed through the cultural and diplomatic relation, had a long history behind it. This relationship has brought the cultural ties so closer that, the thought of Indian culture without that of the Persian culture and its inter-mixture is just void of truth. One can not be imagined without the other. Such was the relation between these two neighbouring countries.