CHAPTER - 1

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND - A SHARED PAST
India and Iran whose people belong to the same racial stock, share many things in common. They are Eastern, Asians and originate from the same race. Besides their political, economic and regional relations, they also have such deep-rooted strong cultural relations that we will hardly find parallel to that somewhere else.\(^1\)

These relations go back in history to several thousand years. If we trace the history and go to the origin of these two nations, we will find that they are Aryan and come from the same origin. There was time, when they lived together and had the same culture.\(^2\) We can find the elements of common culture in the ancient civilizations of both the nations. In the earliest chapters of the Vedas, we find the word ‘Asoura’, that has been mentioned with particular reverence. The same word is pronounced in Persia as “Ahura”. This is because; the letter “S” of Indian languages always changes into “h” in Persian. Words like Som and Sindh have changed in Persian as Hom and Hind.\(^3\)

Both Iran and India had the same civilization. The tribes and clans of both the nations have separated like two branches from the same trunk of a tree. The one which migrated towards the plateau was named Iran and the

\(^1\) Ali Akbar Soboot, Historical Relations between Iran and India, Phoenix Vol.1, Embassy of Iran, New Delhi, 2005
\(^2\) Ibid
\(^3\) Maryam Pouya, Indo-Iranian Relations, India and Iran, Seminar, Mysore, 2004
Chapter-I Historical Background

A Shared Past

Other settled down in the region was called Hindustan. Both the nations preserved their heritage after their separation and also developed it independently in their homelands. They also exchanged their views by binding cultural ties with each other.

According to the recent findings, the modern human species arrived in India through Iran during the long period of 100,000-35,000 years. We have also evidence of the arrival of Homo Sapiens Neanderthalensis (the Neanderthal Man). The Neanderthal skeletal remains are found in Palestine, Syria and Iran about 60,000 years ago. In Western Iran the Neanderthal fossils were recovered from two sites, at Shanidar (60,000 years ago) and at Bisitun. The Neanderthal man had evolved himself in Western Europe out of Homo erectus sometime before 200,000 years ago and survived there until 30,000 years ago. His expansion into West Asia and Iran up to the borders of India took place probably 50,000 years ago.

A major change for the human society came with the Neolithic Revolution with features of agriculture and pastoralism. This change occurred first in the arid zone, extending from Egypt to the Indus basin. From the existing evidence, agriculture first appeared in the Jordan valley in West Asia around 10,000 B.C. Wheat, barley, pulses and flax began to be cultivated. Pastoralism came soon after the first domesticated animals were

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4 Unous Jafari, Historical Relations between India and Iran, Phoenix, Embassy of Iran, ‘tr’ New Delhi, Vol, No.2, New Delhi, May 2005.
6 Ibid
7 Ibid. See also, Peter Bogucki, The Origins of Human Society, Oxford 1999.
sheep and goat. In Western Iran, the domestication of these animals began around 7000 B.C.\(^8\) We have also further evidence of this in several other areas like Baluchistan, and Turkmenistan. Mehrgarh in Baluchistan gives evidence of goat domestication in around 5500 B.C. Once this technique of domestication of animals has been mastered, it could spread to other areas. The domestication of buffalo in India\(^9\) was another example for this development. According to Irfan Habib, there is little doubt that it was essentially the diffusion of agriculture across the Iranian Plateau that triggered the Neolithic revolution in the Indus basin.\(^10\)

The Neolithic phase of agriculture and pastoralism was followed by the growth of towns and settled life. This was a kind of urban revolution, based on larger production of agricultural surplus and the development of various craft techniques, such as the use of potters' wheel, the making of burned bricks, copper and bronze metallurgy, wheeled cart etc. The Indus civilization had certain\(^11\) craft techniques similar to that of Mesopotamia, but by and large, it had an indigenous growth. In Sistan on Iran's border with Afghanistan, we have recent discoveries of *Shahr-e Sookhta*\(^12\), which throw light on the progress of civilization in both Iran and India.

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\(^8\) See David Harris (ed.), *The Origins and Spread of Agriculture and Pastoralism in Eurasia*, London, 1996.
\(^10\) Irfan Habib, *A Shared Heritage...* cited above, p. xii.
\(^11\) Ibid.
\(^12\) Ibid.
According to R.S. Sharma, close contact between Iran and India appeared in the third millennium B.C.\(^\text{13}\) This was the period when Indus Culture and Mesopotamia came closer via Iran. Trade played a crucial role in Indus Valley and the decline of trade itself is considered to be reason for the fall. In fact, several archaeologists mention about these contacts in their writings.\(^\text{14}\)

The works of Andropov M.S. (Dravidian Languages, Moscow, 1970).

Benveniste E., (Indo European Language and Society, London, 1973) are significant as far as they throw light on the linguistic affinity, particularly between the Dravidian languages and the proto-Dravidian language of Elam and Brahui.\(^\text{15}\) It has been shown very clearly that the Dravidian language has been linked with the Elamite language of Iran. The Elamites had developed a script closer to that of Sumerian by the latter half of the fourth millennium B.C. The language found in the inscriptions of Elam of the 3\(^\text{rd}\) millennium B.C. is connected with the Dravidian language. According to Mac Alpine both the Elamite and the Dravidian languages belong to the same language group and in his opinion this showed the existence of a Proto-Elamite Dravidian language. He also states that the Brahui language found in Baluchistan is derived from the same language family.\(^\text{16}\) It is significant that the proto-Elamite Dravidian language has only


\(^{14}\) While H.D. Sankalia speaks about Iranian Influence in the Deccan chalcolithic potters and also in the pottery of Rajasthan and Sindh, S.R. Rao talks about Elamite influence on Indian tools, seals and ceramics. Sharma, Ibid.

\(^{15}\) See Intronov M.S. Dravidian Languages, Moscow, 1970.

\(^{16}\) Ibid.
one word for brick. This is significant because bricks were used on a large scale in Indus valley and Harappan cultures. It would be worthwhile to investigate whether burnt bricks originated in Elam and travelled to other areas including the Indus area. In fact after the decline of Indus culture, burnt bricks were not found in northern India until 300 B.C. Even in the later Vedic literature, only mud, bricks are mentioned. In fact, the spread of Proto-Dravidian language or Brahui from South Western Iran to the Indian sub-continent presupposes the movement of the Elamite people. These movements were made possible because of the continuous long distance trade and other contacts between the Harappan and the Elamite people during the third and second millennium B.C.

Aryan Stock

In the second millennium B.C. several centres of culture in Central Asia contributed to the formation of the Aryan culture. The Andronovo and BMAC cultures seem to be important in this context. They first developed in the Sintasta River east of the Southern Urals. Around 17th century B.C. the Sintasta cemetery shows the earliest light horse drawn chariots in the central Asian steppes. Recent discoveries have revealed five caves containing remains of the chariots with those of ten spoke wheels and their horses. It may be noted that the Mitanni who spoke the Indo-Aryan language in upper Mesopotamia (1400 BC) was the masters in chariotry.

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19 Ibid.
According to Fair service, the pastoralists who moved to the Indian borderlands came from Bacteria-Margiana Archaeological complex, which saw the genesis of the culture of the Rgveda.\(^\text{20}\)

According to several archaeologists people migrated from the Bacteria Margiana. Archaeological Complex (BMAC) to southeastern Iran, southern Afghanistan, Ghandhara and\(^\text{21}\) the Quetta regions. The burial assemblages including artifacts and ceramics suggest the movement of people, from the oases of both Bacteria and Margiana to the periphery of the Indus valley. Hilbert, a leading scholar hesitates to associate with the movement the introduction of the Indo-Aryan languages, which seem to imply both\(^\text{22}\) –Indo-Iranian and Indo-Aryan speeches. Another scholar, Giorgio Stacul suggests earlier cultural waves from Iran and Afghanistan in the Swat Valley before 2000 BC.\(^\text{23}\) Climatic changes were considered to be the main reasons for these migrations. Bitter cold and dry climate turned agriculturists into pastoralists and forced them to migrate to warmer and rainy regions.

**Rgveda and Avesta – Two Ancient Texts**

The First chapter of the vendidad or the handbook of the Parsees enumerates sixteen holy lands created by Ahuramazda which were

\(^\text{20}\) Ibid.
\(^\text{22}\) Hiebert Frederick T., "South Asia From a Central Asian Perspective" in George Erdosy (ed.). The Indo-Aryans of Ancient South Asia, 1977, pp. 200-02.
rendered unfit for the residence of men (i.e., the ancestors of Iranians) on account of different evil things created therein by Angora Mainyu, the devil of the Avesta. The first of these lands was Airyana vaejo, through which flowed the rivers of Ranha and Vahvi Datiya. This land was the cradle of the Aryans or Indo-Europeans according to Avesta. Though it is not directly mentioned in the Rgved, the Indo-Aryans knowledge of it is implied by the fact that the rivers Ranha and Vahvi Datiya flowing through it are mentioned in the Rgveda as Rasa and Susartu. The Vedas and the Avesta fully agree on the causes which led to the migrations of the Aryans from their original homeland (Airyana Vaejo) of Avesta.²⁴

The search for Aryans is a quest as old as the Indological Studies. In the late 18th century William Jones was overawed by linguistic similarities between Sanskrit and the modern European languages. The establishment of the Asiatic Society in Calcutta in 1784 and the publication of the Asiatic Researches gave a tremendous spurt to the quest for the commonality between India and Europe. For more than a century, the field was almost a monopoly of the linguists. However, with the publication of the Aryans by the renowned Marxist archaeologist V. Gordon Childe in 1926, the enquiry was greatly diversified and the archaeological approach to the problem came to be increasingly recognized.

Both Avesta and Rk Samhita (RgVeda) belong to the family of Indo-European languages. The Avesta and the Rk Samhita (RgVeda) are considered to be the most archaic and oldest texts of the Iranians and the Indo-Aryans. There are similarities which galore in the structures of both Avesta and Rgveda. Both the texts have their “early” and “younger” layers. In Avesta, the Gathas and the Vendidad would respectively correspond to the layers. In the RgVeda on the other hand, of the ten Mandalas (books), the first and the tenth are recognized as relatively later compositions. At a general level it is often argued that the language of Gathas is comparable in antiquity to that of the Rgveda and that the Indo-European elements in Gathas have stylistic and doctrinal parallels in the Vedas.

The geographical area of the Avesta is almost exclusively eastern Iran but it does have some references, which indicate the presence of proto Indo-Aryans in northern central Iran bringing them within striking distance of the Near East. These are references, which occur from time to time in the Avesta to the Mazanan (a territory between the southern shore of the Caspian sea and the Alburz mountain range) territory. However, in the case of RgVeda, with its two-stage development in mind, it seems more likely that the composers must have had a shifting locale. More so, when the overall nomadic pastoralism, constituted the most arresting milieu of the people of the text.

According to some recent findings the archaeological remains of the Puras of the dasas mentioned in the *RgVeda* may be seen in the circular structures at Dashli-3 in the Amu plains rather than in the Harappan Settlements. In fact, Wheeler once called Inidra, the *RgVedic* hero was the destroyer of Harappan Forts.\(^{28}\)

Similarly, the *Soma* cult of the *RgVeda* and the *Haoma* cult of the Avesta are very significant and central to the problem of the Indo-Aryans. The archaeological traces of this ritual drink\(^{29}\) are seen in the remains at Togolok-21 in Margiana (South Eastern Turkmenistan).

In the Indian sub-continent, the archaeological counter parts of the *RgVedic* cultures appear not in the mature Harappan culture, but in the borderland cultures of the Swat and Gomal valleys, the Pirak complex in the Baluchistan. It emerges clearly in South Central Asia in the Bactria-Margiana Archaeological Complex and in the cultures of South Tajikistan.\(^{30}\)

**Religious Practices**

Regarding information on the pre-Zoroastrian religions we do not have very clear data. We have to rely heavily on the Zoroastrian sources themselves. Similarly in India also many of the non-Vedic beliefs have not left records of their own for independent study. For example, in India there

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\(^{29}\) Ibid.  
\(^{30}\) Ibid.
are no texts on the Ajivikas by the Ajivikas themselves. Therefore, one has to depend heavily on the Brahmanical and non-Brahmanical works to delineate the history of the Ajivikas in India. These sources are hostile to the Ajivikas.\textsuperscript{31}

The similarity of the two Aryan peoples (Indo-Aryans and the Iranians) is seen most clearly in matters of religion mythology and cults. Both the Vedas and the Avesta contain allusions to earlier hymns and singers. The term Apurvyam in the Vedas and Apaourvimin the Avesta talk about singers who were without precedent (literally outstanding).

One can notice a common heritage in the names of abstract concepts such as the leading religion-philosophical concepts of Indo-Iranian rta, Vedic rta, Avestan asa-, Old Persian divine order based on truth. Similarly\textsuperscript{32}, cult terms such as Vedic yajna, Avestan yasna and Indo-Iranian yazna are significant. This was a sacrifice with emphasis on animal slaughter. Vedic Mantra is similar\textsuperscript{33} to Avestan Mathra, which is priestly utterance. Avesta provides information on a large number of pre-Zoroaster deities of Iran, both those celebrated in the yashts and those otherwise referred to. This gives a fair idea about a wider list of gods and religious practices in Ancient Iran.

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid.
When one reads Rgveda, one gets a fairly wider pantheon of Indo-Aryans. The only significant female deity in traditional Iranian religion was Ardvi Sura Anahita, the strong underfiled Waters, source of all waters on earth, and of the cosmic ocean. She has been variously been identified as the cannanite Anat, the Anatolian Anaitis and the Mesopotamian Ishtar. Ahura Mazda, the creator of all, has entrusted herewith watching over his work, from her comes all fertility.

The Indo-Aryan cattle rearers often offered meat to their gods and in return asked for cattle wealth so that their practice of sacrificing cattle and eating meat might continue. Hence animal sacrifice became an integral part of proto-Indo-Aryan Iranian religions. This reflected a prominent position of cattle within the society and economy of India and Iran alike. There is no ambivalence in the prime position of cattle in the early Rk Samhita (RgVeda) and the Gathas of the Avesta. However, some scholars have argued that referenced to cattle should be taken metaphorically.

Animal sacrifice to Samhita (goddess of waters and fertility) of 100 horses, 1000 cows, 10,000 sheep is repeatedly attested in the Zoroastrian hymn to this deity. But Zoroaster himself condemned the cattle sacrifice.

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34 Ibid.  
35 Ibid.  
As far as the animal sacrifices in the *RgVeda* are concerned, that of horse is obviously very conspicuous. It became a major sacrifice (*Asvamedha*) in subsequent times. The horse was sacrificed either independently or with other animals in areas between the Black and Caspian seas from about\(^{37}\) third-fifth millennium B.C.

Ritual drinking of soma by the Rg vedic people and the Hoama by the Avestan people has been mentioned already. Soma is the name of a god, a plant and the hallucinogenic juice squeezed from the plant. Wondrous praiser of Soma infuses the verses of the Rk Samhita (*RgVeda*) with lively depictions of kinetic ecstasy. *RgVeda* used to connect the growth of plants with moon\(^{38}\) (*Soma*) and hence it was named *Soma* the king of plants. The ninth Mandala of *RgVeda* deals with *Soma* only.

Further Contacts

We have evidence from 400 BC that Indian soldiers were recruited in the Persian army as mercenaries. For example in the battle of Gangemala (331 B.C) and Arbela 330 B.C. the Indians in the Persian army had fought against Alexander. The region of North West India and Punjab was an important source of recruiting soldiers for the Persian chiefs. The evidence of Panini bears testimony to the fact that Vahikas were divided in to different war-like clans and as mercenaries they lent their services to any one who

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\(^{38}\) S.S. Bhawe, The Soma Hymns of the *RgVeda*, Baroda, 1957-62.
paid for them. While the Indian soldiers had visited Greece in the Persian army, the Greek mercenaries too had reached India in Darius's army. Fatigued from continuous battles and away from home, many of them appear to have chosen to settle in India. At Nyasa in the Swat valley, one such Greek/Persian settlement existed.  

In fact, from the 6th century B.C. to 4th century B.C. the Persian Empire made possible the exchange of ideas between diverse types of people.

Persia also acted as a centre for the movement of Indian literature, particularly fables to Greece. The exchange of ideas also became possible through the presence of Indian and Greek doctors in the Persian Empire. Hippocrates's (433 - 460 B.C.) Manaal Gynaiketa mentioned the Indian formula for the dentifrice.

Even during the Achaemenid era, there existed lot of misconception about India. Indian areas that were included in the Persian Empire were considered to be the eastern end of the world. Beyond the Indian satrapy was thought to be continuous desert or ocean. Furthermore there existed a view that India was joined with Ethiopia. Interest in marvels such as fabulous races and animals miraculous objects, idealization of the

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40 Ibid.
41 J. Filiozat, The Classical Doctrine of Indian Medicines (traus) by D.R. Channa From the French, Delhi, 1949, pp. 254-55,-263.
Chapter-I

Historical Background – A Shared Past

land fertility of the soil, abundance of gold etc., could be noticed in the Greek writings produced during the Persian hegemony. Sky lax, the very first author on India, who was in the service of Dariu’s, had established this tradition. Ktesias of Knidos, the protégé of the Persian king Artaxerxes Mnemon had left everyone behind him in the narration of such spicy material.

The disintegration of the Achaemenian Empire on one side and the rise of the Mauryan Empire on the other side in the aftermath of Alexander’s invasion, circumstantially favoured the inauguration of an imperial art of Pataliputra marked by the use of stone, which was an experience hitherto unknown. The absence of monumental stone art in India till the Mauryan period is thought to be on account of the absence of adequate technical knowledge. Marshall, wheeler, Percy Brown and Nihar Ranjan Ray and many others argue that this technical know-how was introduced to the Indian craftsmen by the Persian or perso-Hellenistic master craftsmen, who had been uprooted upon the defeat of the Achaemenians by Alexander. They sought refuge in the Mauryan Empire.

Persian influence is visible in nearly every aspect of Mauryan art and architecture. The pillared hall at Kumrahar, the use of stone for pillars and

\[42^\text{UP Arora, India vis-à-vis Egypt, Ethiopia in the Classical accounts, Greco-Arabica Athens, 1982, Vol.1, pp. 131-40.}\]
\[43^\text{Ibid.}\]
\[44^\text{J. Marshall, the Monuments of India, Cambridge 1922, Vol. 1, pp.562-63.}\]
\[45^\text{Percy Brown, Indian architecture, Bombay 1942, pp. 10-11.}\]
\[46^\text{N.R. Ray, History and Culture of the Indian People Vol. I. The Age of Imperial Unity, R.C.Majumdar (Ed.) Bombay, 1951, pp. 508-09.}\]
columns; some human figures on grounds of facial features, head dress etc., and the various art motifs, rope molding pattern on ring stone and the lion designs have been traced to Iran. The discovery of a pillar capital of Persian Apadana at the palace of Pataliputra indicates absorptions. Similarly, the discovery of Charlotte-label Mauryan inscriptions from Karnataka\(^7\) and Baragaon in Ganga valley are proof of a definite presence of northwestern craftsmen in the South and mid-India. The inscriptions at Baragaon in Kharoshti refer to Perso-Greek names.

In fact, it was the combined Greece-Persian art which had influenced the Mauryans Daniel Schlumberger, an expert on the question of Bactrian art, is convinced that the reason\(^8\) why historians find it difficult to separate the Greek from the Persian elements in Mauryan sculpture, is that those two elements had already merged in Bacteria. It was the combined Greco-Persian art of Bacteria, which influenced the Mauryans. During the period of Parthian King Gondo-Phernes we come across further spread of Iranian and Greek influence in India. It was during the region of the Parthian ruler Gondo Pherner that St. Thomas\(^9\) one of the twelve apostles of Christ said to have visited India. In the Acta Thomas, the oldest text dealing with the St. Thomas mission, the field of the apostles' work was reported to be Indo-Iranian border or northwestern India. There the apostle was reported to

\(^7\) Paul Le Valley 'Greek Influence on Indian Sculptured as early as Alexanders' Campaign Yavanika, Bareilly 2000, 1996, pp. 3-27.
\(^8\) Ibid.
\(^9\) W.R. Philips, the Connection of St. Thomas, the apostle with India, Indian Antiquary, 1903, 32.
have\textsuperscript{50} converted an Indian King named Gudnapher and later becoming a martyr in the kingdom of Mazda – the northern neighbour of the king of Gudnapher, who may well identified with the Parthian chief Gondophernes. However, according to the South Indian tradition, St. Thomas arrived at Crangannore (Muziris) in Kerala and converted people of several Brahmin villages to Christianity. He is said to have\textsuperscript{51} arrived via the Arabian sea with the help of Jewish-Persian traders.

Iranian civilization reached its zenith under the Sassanians. The Sassanians were great patrons of arts, letters and sciences. Shapur I (241-72 A.D.) had commissioned the translation of numerous Greek and Indian works dealing with medicine, astronomy and philosophy. Indian books on grammar and horoscopy\textsuperscript{52} together with the Almagest of Ptolemy were included among the holy books during his reign. The Sassanians’ chief Khusru Anoshirvan (531-79 A.D) also like Shapur I, had patronized the scholars. One of the 1209 Greek, Persian and Indian physicians of Anoshirvan was Barzoe. He was impressed and set about translating their books of wisdom and instruction, one of which was the Panchatantra under the title \textit{Kalila and Dimna}.\textsuperscript{53}

\textbf{Iran and Indian Christians}

Cosmos Indicopleitus, a Greek monk from Alexandria and author of the Christian topography informs us about the Christian Church of Persian

\textsuperscript{50} J.F. Fleet, St. Thomas and Gondaphernes, Journal of Royal Asiatic Society, 1905, p 225.
\textsuperscript{51} P.J. Tholmas, the South Indian Tradition of St.Thomas, Royal Asiatic Society, 1924, pp. 203-23.
\textsuperscript{52} R.A. Jaimbhoy, Foreign Influence in Ancient India, Bombay 1963, pp. 153-55.
\textsuperscript{53} Ibid.
connections, well established on the Malabar Coast and Sri Lanka by the early 6th century. He reports that Christians of Sri Lanka had a presbyter appointed from Persia. Likewise, the bishop residing at Kalliana (Kollam Quilon)\textsuperscript{54} in Malabar was also of Persian stock. The Indians were ‘Persians’ i.e., Nestorian Christians, who had declared their independence of the Greek hierarchy, and in 489, officially adopted the Nestorian interpretation of Christian doctrine. It was through Iranian empire under the Sassanian that Indian ascetic ideals traveled westward and influenced Christian monasticism. Clearly the two most powerful elements in the shaping of classical Christian thought, were Christian monasticism and the early (4th century Christian Fathers. It was during the 3rd century that the founder of Manichaeism, Mani said to have visited India, where he had come into contact with Buddhism and other mystic religions. Mani was thought to be of noble birth and like Zoroster, the Buddha and Jesus claimed to have been sent by god to fulfil what had been previously revealed.\textsuperscript{55}

His doctrine was a religion of redemption in which dualistic myth provided a rationale for an ascetic ethic. It is believed that the Manicheans were the first to initiate Indian ascetic practices.

Iran and India – Technological Exchanges

The noria derived from the Arabic naura is an interesting water lifting device. In it the buckets or pots are attached to the circumference of a

\textsuperscript{54} Cosmos Indicopleustes, The Christian Topography of Cosmos, an Egyptian monk (tr.) by J.W. McCrindle, New York, 1897, III, 178-79

\textsuperscript{55} Jean Sedlar, India and the Greek World Totowa 1980, p.183
wheel, collecting water at the bottom and discharging it at the top. Needham has traced back its origin provisionally to India in the 4th century B.C.\textsuperscript{56} Irfan Habib has convincingly argued that the turning wheel referred to in the \textit{Chulavagga Nikaya} (A.D.350) could be identified with \textit{arahatta-ghati-yantra} (machine attached with water pots). In the Indian context, the term \textit{arahattaghati-yantra} has been referred to in \textit{Amarakosa}, an early Sanskrit lexicon\textsuperscript{57} of possibly fourth or eighth century A.D., as \textit{uddhatanam-ghati-yantram salilodvahanam prake}. (By moving ghatiyantra, water flows from the well).

The noria did not involve any gearing mechanism. Gearing mechanism remained confined to the Persian Wheel (saqiya). Babur was the first who noticed its functioning in India.

Iran being the land of several languages like Persian, Pashto, Baluchi and Kurdish, also had contacts with several countries including India. In fact, India and Iran’s relationship dates back to pre-historic times. During the historic period we find India and Iran had not only trade contacts but also some scientific contacts and exchanges also. India gained lot of scientific knowledge from West Asian countries.

According to Needham and Prof. Irfan Habib, India had invented a water-lifting device and this was found in Arabic.\textsuperscript{58} This was called as \textit{Naura} in Arabic, which meant the Snorter or water-lifting device. Prof. Irfan

Habib refers it to as a turning wheel where pot-chain was added a little later.\(^5^9\) It was in fact, buckets or pots attached to the circumference of collecting water at the bottom and discharging it at the top. This has also been referred to in Amara Kosha, as early Sanskrit lexicon of 4-8\(^{th}\) Century A.D.

It was at Muqaddasi in 1000 A.D. who made a mention of Norias in Iran especially near the River Ahwaz.\(^6^0\) This Noria had already reached Iran by first century B.C. itself.

Iran was famous for its Persian wheel – Saqiya and this had gearing mechanism unlike noria. India received this Saqiya, with right-angled gearing from either Iran or Iraq later than thirteenth Century.

India came into contact with spinning wheel. This was brought by Iran. This was a Chinese invention and was first diffused in Central Asia and Iran. Iran had become familiar with the spinning wheel as early as twelfth Century.\(^6^1\) In India it was only during the Sultanate period that it was heard. The spinning wheel’s arrival in India must have increased the productivity of the Spinner almost six fold. Thus Iran contributed greatly to the furthering of the textile production by providing the spinning wheel to Indian textile technology.

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\(^6^0\) Ahmad Y. al-Hassan and Donald R. Hill — Islamic Technology — An Illustrated History, (Cambridge), 1986, p. 41.
\(^6^1\) Irfan Habib. Medieval Technology: Exchange between India and the Islamic World, pp. 203-04.
Another technique that came to India from Iran was probably the draw-loom. Here the term for draw-loom was destgah-i-naqshbandi in thirteenth or fourteenth century A.D. This draw-loom meant where more harnesses were attached for a closure control of the warps. Fancy weaves could be achieved by adding more harnesses to the loom. Even Abul Fazl gives reference to this draw loom being brought to India from Iran.

Another important contribution made by Iran to India was the carpet weaving. This formed one of the major breaks in the textile craft. This was during the Sultanate period. Akbar took great care and pain to foster this art. Experienced workers were appointed to make different varieties of carpets in the imperial workshop. This soon spread all over India. Earlier this carpets weaving was brought to India by some Persian immigrants but better techniques were used only later. In 16th century Persian weaving technique and tools were imported. Likewise India had provided Iran with two very important inventions for processing cotton, that is, the cotton gin and the cotton carders bow.

During the Mughal period lot of interaction took place especially during Humayun and Akbar's time. It was actually Humayun who brought exodus of scholars, poets, nobles and also soldiers with him. During Akbar's

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63 Vijaya Ramswamy – Notes on the Textile Technology in Medieval India with Special reference to South India.
time several Iranian emigrants flocked into his Empire, as they could not tolerate Safavid Sultans. A number of Iranians were given very important position in Humayun's court. Mention can be made of Bairan Khan, Afzal Khan and Khwaja Abdul Majid etc. During Akbar's period also this trend continued.

Akbar also came under the influence of Sufi doctrine and had a leader Sheikh Mubarak who was a Sufi advocate. Iranian influence was felt not only in the religious field but culturally also. Iranian architecture and Persian paintings to left behind a great mark on Indian architecture and paintings.

The period from 1571 to 1580 is quite important for the development of Akbar's religious ideas. During this period, he went through several experiments so as to satisfy his own search for spiritual truth and understanding. This period also coincides with large-scale immigrants from Iran. Hakim Abul Fat'h of Gilani and Hakim Nuruddin, two sons of Maulana Abdul Riazh Gilani, came to India and found patronage under Akbar. Their father had been tortured to death by Shah Tahmasp who suspected them to be Sunnis. By his intelligence and good manners, Abul Fat'h soon became a close companion of Akbar and exercised considerable influence at the court. By 1575 Shaikh Mubark's son Abul Fazl was also admitted to the Court.

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The arrival of the Ishraqis and Nuqtavis appears to have caused some resentment among the orthodox section at Akbar's Court. Budauni\textsuperscript{67} himself a representative of the orthodox section, alleges that Abul Fazl and Hakim Abul Fath turned Akbar away from Islam.\textsuperscript{68} Elsewhere, he complains that Ali Akbar Herati a Nuqtavi, impressed upon the Emperor that he, and he alone, was the 'promised man' who was to appear, in accordance\textsuperscript{69} with a numerical values of the letters comprising the word 'Shakhs', in the year 990 A.H. 1582.

Akbar's interest in ibn `Arabi' went on increasing as the time passed. He began to listen attentively ibn Arabi's writings on Wahdat al-Wojud (unity of existence). Ibn Arabi's idea that all that is not part of divine reality is an illusion, in turn, led Akbar to the notion that all religions are equally illusory, but must be tolerated in the State of Sulh-e kul (absolute peace). Akbar's letter to Shah Abbas to treat all people kindly suggests that he was here asking him to stop persecuting those who held Ishraqi and Nuqtavi ideas. The famous Mahzar of 1579 shows some elements of Ishraqi and Nuqtavi influences in that it holds Akbar as a specially chosen individual, being Imam-e Adil, mujtahid and Padeshah-e-Islam.

Akbar was now in search of an ideology that could raise him to a much higher position, so he looked more deeply into ibn Arabi's teachings.

\textsuperscript{67} Badauni II, p. 211.
\textsuperscript{68} Ibid., p. 198.
\textsuperscript{69} Ibid. pp. 286-87.
Shaikh Tajuddin was a Sufi and was regarded as pantheist among Sufis, second only to ibn Arabi. Akbar used to meet him regularly and listened whole night to his Sufi trifles and to his explanations of some verses of the Quran.

Abul Fazl considered that ibn Arabi’s thought could be used to justify the tolerance of reason as of other dissentient and contradictory elements.\(^7\) The adoption of Sulh-e Kul, directly invoked ibn Arabi’s philosophy. Its higher forms were Muhabbat-e-Kul (absolute love). For the ruler Sulh-e Kul meant a policy of tolerating all religious differences. Pursuing this principle, Akbar began to hold discussions with leading men of all religions.\(^7\) Abul Fazl says “Broad indeed is the carpet (world) which god has spread and beautiful the colors which he has given in it”. Abul Fazl further refers to the couplet that the lover and the beloved are in reality one\(^7\) By 1580 Akbar appears to be well set in pursuing policy in which not only were all religions tolerated, but all kinds of religious views had equal access to him. That is why Monserrate, a Jesuit missionary in Akbar’s Court stated that ‘he (Akbar) cared little that in allowing every one to follow his own religion, he was in reality violating all religions”.

**Architecture**

Persian architects and artisans were brought to India to design and construct palaces and forts, mosques and public buildings. The Taj Mahal

\(^7\) Akbar Nama, III, pp. 271-73.
\(^7\) Ainil, p. 171.
Chapter-I Historical Background

A Shared Past

("the soul of Iran incarnate in the body of India", according to M. Grousset, the French savant), Fatehpur Sikri and Humayun Tomb are among the finest examples of the synthesis of Indo-Iranian style in architecture. Beginning with Qutab Minar, the Iranian influence is visible. The arcuate forms, domed structures, plane and smooth walls, slender polished pillars and spacious halls with squinches and stalactites were Iranian.\textsuperscript{73}

The Indian architecture of the medieval period was greatly influenced by Iranian architecture. These influences could be noticed in the style, idiom and the structure. These influences becoming more significant after the establishment of the Mughal Empire in India. The Mughal architecture borrowed extensively from those of Delhi Sultanate, Sharqi, Gujarat, Malwa, Bengal and Rajasthan styles as well as from West Asia. A large number of Iranian architectural\textsuperscript{74} features are perceptible in Indian architecture. Since the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate in the 12\textsuperscript{th} Century. The first monumental Sultanate structure, the Qutb complex, comprising the QuwwatuI Islam mosque, the Qutb Minar and the Alai Darwaza, reflect Iranian concepts and origin. The Quwwatul Islam Mosque follows the Saljuqid Iranian plan of the four-aiwan courtyard mosque, with certain modifications.

The Iranian impact on the Indian architecture was much more forceful after the establishment of the Mughal empire. A study of the Mughal

\textsuperscript{73} Tara Chand, Indo –Iranian Relation, New Delhi:1954, p.11

\textsuperscript{74} See Jose Pereira, Islamic Sacred Architecture: A Stylistic History, New Delhi, 1994, pp. 4-5.
architecture reveals that the Mughals who considered they to be the heirs of the Timurid tradition, borrowed heavily from the Iranian style, which had developed under the Ilkhanids, Timurids and Muzaffarids. When Babur marched into India, he brought along with him two Iranian architects, Ustad Mir Mirak Ghiyas of Herat and ustad Shah Mohammad Khurasan. In fact, much of the Synthesis of the Iranian style with the Indo-Muslim style of architecture in India took place only till the reign of Akbar. The reign of Shah jahan is marked by the heavy influence of indigenous styles on Mughal architecture.

Idiomatically and axiom orphic ally, one of the most important marks of Iranian influence on the Mughal architectural tradition was the chaharbagh, the four quartered paradisical garden with its intersecting water channels lined with walkways, platforms, water chutes, tanks and fountains, flower beds fruit bearing trees and foliage. These chaharbagh gardens were to become the standard setting for the Mughal tombs.

In these gardens the focus was the centre marked by the construction of a large platform. Typical examples of funerary gardens from the Mughal period are Humayun’s tomb at Delhi, the tombs of Akbar and Mariam at Sikandara (Agra), the Tomb of Etemadud Daulah at Agra, and the tomb of Jahangir at Shahdara, Lahore. In the Taj, the focus war shifted from the centre to the periphery, namely, the riverfront, where the

75 Babermama (tr.), A.S. Beveridge, New Delhi, 1970, pp. 343-642.
76 Lish Golombek, From Tamerlane to the Taj Mahal, pp. 43-50.
Mausoleum was constructed. Further enhancement of the riverfront was provided by constructing octagonal bastions planked by a mosque (West) and Mehman-Khana (east) in the corners.\textsuperscript{77}

The \textit{chaharbagh} was first introduced in India by Babur who constructed a number of them at Agra and nearby places. One of the earliest gardens on the \textit{chaharbah} pattern to be laid out by Babur was the \textit{Bagh-e Fath} situated between the lake and ridge at Fathpur Sikri.

A number of other Iranian features are also encountered in Mughal architecture. Some of them like, the \textit{double-doom} (which developed in Iran during the 14\textsuperscript{th} century) and the squinches on which the dooms are raised had been introduced in India during the period\textsuperscript{78} of the Delhi Sultanate and are generally found in Tughluq monuments. The Iranian four centred as well as two-centered pointed arch was also known in India. Two other Iranian idiomatic innovations, the arch and panel articulation and the stellate vaults (\textit{the chahastaq}) based on\textsuperscript{79} cruciform domed chambers, found wide acceptance under the Mughals.

Iranian architects of the 13\textsuperscript{th} and 14\textsuperscript{th} centuries had imposed order on architectonic and decorative forms by a consistent system of articulation,
which had a five-fold relationship between arch and panel and arch and arch. In this system\textsuperscript{80}, the theme was primarily curved and arch-shaped.

In Iran and Central Asia (Trans-Oxiana) masonry buildings were constructed with ‘Post-and-beam’ (timber) porches. Two prominent examples are Aliqapu in the Maidan-e-Shah, Isfahan and Balyand Mosque in Bukhara. Porched-pillared halls raised on slender wooden pillars were known as \textit{talas} in Iran and \textit{aiwan} in \textit{Trans-Oxiana}. The use of the term \textit{aiwan} to designate pillared constructions in India took place during the reign of Akbar. Iranian architecture also initiated the expression of the aesthetics of the facade in its portal, an endeavor that was\textsuperscript{81} brought to fruition in Mughal India.

As far as the ground place is concerned Mughal mosque closely followed the Iranian axiom orphic prototypes. By the 14\textsuperscript{th} century, the Iranian architects had perfected the two and four \textit{aiwan} (open-fronted construction with a barrel vault). The form of the two-aiwan mosque was achieved by having the sanctuary chamber with a high peshtaq preceded by an enclosed open quadrangle. The entrance portal was constructed on the same axis as the peshtaq. The centrally located courtyard, which was also an indigenous idiom, was surrounded by double storied cloisters.

\textsuperscript{80} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{81} Ibid.
By the 12th century, the Four-aiwan congregation mosque with domed chamber and cloisters had been perfected in Iran. In fact, it was the Jame Masjid at Varamin (1322-26), which established the general plan for the subsequent Jame Masjids of Iran. In this type of mosques a harmonious synthesis of such traditional elements as the aiwan, the four aiwan court and aiwan dome combination was effected. The cruciform or four-aiwan mosque made its appearance in India during the Sultanat's period. Under the Mughals it is first encountered during the reign of Jahangir, but it became popular during the reign of Shah jahan. The first cruciform mosque constructed under the Mughals appears to be the Begum Shahi Mosque at Lahore (1611-14). The second mosque on the same plan is the Wazir Khan Mosque (1634-35) again at Lahore. Later, the Jame Masjids of Agra and Shah jahanabad were also constructed on the same pattern.

Iranian architects and builders of the 14th Century had also developed a technique for providing doomed roofing to long rectangular structures. This was the technique of applying transverse arches and groin vaults.

Painting

Several Persian painters had joined the service of Humayun such as Dost Musawair, Maulana Yusuf, Maulana Darvish Mohammad Mir

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Musawair, Mir Syed Ali and Khwaja Abdus Samad greatly contributed to the evolution of the Persianized School of Indian art which matured was the Mughal school. We need to say hardly that the great masters Mir sayed Ali (Safavid School) and Khwaja Abdus Samad (Shiraz School) who are credited with supervising the earliest project at the Mughal Court, the illustration of the \textit{Hamzanama} (in 12 volumes, each containing a hundred large pictures executed on cloth), left this impress on the early Mughal school and to a great extent formulated the narrative modes of the art of book illustration in Mughal style. In this project fifty painters are said to have been employed under Mir Syed Ali and later Khwaja Abdus Samad.

The Hamzanama paintings vary considerably in style, several being purely Persian in drawing and colour. However, non-Persian elements are quite pervasive, yet none of the Hamzanama illustrators can be described as being unfamiliar with Persian painting. Persian art became more prevalent at the Mughal court as several indigenous artists worked under the tutelage of Persian master painters. Khwaja Abdus Samad was the foremost among them, becoming the teacher of many notable Indian artists. Daswant was one who received highest recognition rivaling his colleague, Baswan.

\footnote{Bayazid Bayat, Tadhkira-e Humayun va Akbar (1585) ed. M.Hidayat Hossain, Calcutta, 1941, p. 69.}
\footnote{Ibid.}
\footnote{See V. Mikorsky (tr.), Calligraphers and Painters: A Treatise by Qadi Ahmad, Washington, 1959, p. 180.}
Abul Fazl writes in his *Aini Akbari* "From the instructions they received the Khwaja pupils became masters".

*Aqa Reza* of Harat, at Jahangir’s Court, was another painter from Iran, who like Abdus Samad gave instruction in painting. The woman painter Nadira Bano is described as the pupil of Aqa Riza. Besides painters from Bukhara, Kabul and Samarqand and other parts of Central Asia were active at the Imperial Mughal Studio. The most well known among them were Farrukh Beg Musawwi of Kabul, Mohammad Nadir Samarqand and Farrukh Qalmaq who was of Mongol origin.

The development of Mughal School is credited to Akbar who showed great interest in manuscript painting under the impact of Persian book illustrated under Akbar, copies of Persian classics were made and manuscripts acquired from Persia were decorated with pictures and border paintings. Akbar is said to have received instruction in painting from Khwaja Abdus Samad while he was prince. While Abdu’s Samads’ instruction might have made Akbar familiar with the technique of the Persian painter, it was probably also the mystical feeling, which pervaded Persian art, which synchronized with Akbar’s own increasingly mystical temperament.

88 Ibid.
89 Ibid.
91 Ibid.
The surviving illustrated manuscripts of Akbar's Court exceed the short list given by Abul Fazl. Major Persian literacy works, the Diwans of Hafiz, Amir Nizamuddin Hassan, Anwari and Amir Khusrau, the Gulistan and Bustan of Sadi, the Baharistan of Jami and the Nafahat'ul-Uns, were repeatedly illustrated in the Mughal court, the trend continuing until the end of Shah Jahans' reign (1625-56) though with less enthusiasm.

In the depiction of Persian subjects, most Mughal Painters followed Persian models, and mystical feelings accordingly find expression. But the Mughal artists interpreted the Persian themes in their own way. Gradually one notices an interaction and integration of Indian and Persian art forms. Signs of these changes could be noticed even in the works executed during Humayun's time. Brand and Lowry emphasize naturalism and interaction of figures in the miniature.

These miniatures clearly differ from the more stylized composition of the Safavid School. In their opinion with this shift there evolved a coherent and dynamic mode of expression. Even the art of an orthodox Persian master painter such as Khwaja Abdu's Samad bears evidence of a shift from strict Persian conventions during his stay at the Mughal Court.

Thus the contacts between India and Iran in historical times led to migrations, exchange of technical know-how, cultural artistic and other changes. The contributions in the field of art, architecture and painting can be considered unique.

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92 S.P. Verma, Mughal Painters and their works, p. 309.
93 Ibid.
Chapter-I Historical Background – A Shared Past

Persian Language in India

We have already discussed in the earlier part about Iran’s relationship with India from time immemorial in all walks of life. When we talk of all walks of life it includes even literature, poetry, prose, religion etc. All these could be achieved through writings, though to some extent through sculpture and architecture. Now coming to language that used to excel these things was the Persian language that was used by Iran. We could find that the old Aryans who came from Central Asia and settled here spoke Old Persian and Vedic Sanskrit.

There was a racial kinship and lingual affinity between Aryans and indigenous people. In spite of the script and orthography that took place after the Arab conquest of Iran about the middle of the Seventh century A.D., Persian language continued to retain the affinity to Sanskrit.

Iran and India had lot of common thoughts and beliefs. As a result of this and Muslim rule in India, the Hindu mind naturally became aware of the importance and urgency of learning Persian, which had an immediate influence on the various vocations and on social communications and statue. Thus we could the influence of Persian language, scholars etc., on Hindu life in general.

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95 Indo-Iranica (Vol IX, No.4) p. 58.
Towards the middle of the tenth Century Abu Raihan Mohammad Al-Biruni accompanied the retinue of Sultan Mohammad of Ghazna. He studied Sanskrit and collected material for his remarkable work ‘Tahqiq Malil-Hind’ giving account of philosophy, literature, laws, customs, astrology, astronomy\(^6\) etc. Slowly social barriers came to be forgotten between the two. Persian was one such language with which the Hindus cultivated an intimate association and got adapted to the language.\(^7\) In India, Persian literary history, poetry, lexicography, epistolography, memoirs, historiography, journalism and Indology came to be translated.

Persian, which was rightly called ‘The French of India’ was chosen language of the courts, governments and also in general administration in the medieval period. This was the vehicle of exchange, especially cultural between India and Iran. The Indo-Muslim chronicles, Farmans, sanads, grants, documents, inscriptions and epigraphic and numismatic records were in Persian.\(^8\) The Hindus also adopted it for their day-to-day activities.

According to Mohammad Qasim Ferishteh, author of the Tarikh-i-Ferishteh, the Hindus were much interested in the language of the rulers of the Lodhi dynasty\(^9\) with the advent of Babur and Humayun, the Mughal monarchs, Persian became current and popular. Compared to Pathan rulers, the Mughals were less exclusive in their broad outlook and social

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\(^6\) Dr N.S.Gorekar, India-Iran Relations – Cultural Aspects (Bombay, 1970), p. 125.
\(^7\) The Muslim Review, Calcutta (Vol. III, No.3), p. 36.
intercourse and to Hindus were drawn near to the Muslims. The common meeting ground of Vedantic philosophy and scientific ideology inspired their poetic art. By the time Akbar the Great ascended the throne, the Perso-Arabic literature, which the Muslims brought with them to India, became a source of inspiration to all.\textsuperscript{100}

It must be noted here that the Persian was studied by Hindus and Muslims alike without the aid of grammar, for “there had not yet been evolved any grammatical system” by the time of Amir Khosrau of Delhi – the harbinger of the synthesis of Hindu-Muslim culture. Amir Khosrau maintained “there was no need to learn the rules of grammar of the Persian language, since every one from the bank of Indus to the seashore knew the language”.\textsuperscript{101} Moreover unlike Hindi, Persian parlance enjoyed uniformity of idiom.

Persian language became indianised when the Hindus took to the study of the language. During Sikandar Lodhi’s time (1485-1560 A.D) both Muslims and Hindus enriched the Persian language with Indian vocabulary, homely metaphors and the imageries drawn from Hindu – Muslim beliefs.\textsuperscript{102} Chandikieu, the Court poet of Prithviraja, who wrote his Rasu, could not help but use pure Persian and Arabic words like Sultan, Parwardegar (providence) for his patron.\textsuperscript{103} Maharashtarian names like Waknis (Waqay-

\textsuperscript{100} Muslim Review, p. 38.
\textsuperscript{101} Indo-Iranica (Vol. III, No.2), p. 29.
\textsuperscript{102} N.S. Gorekar, Op. Cit., p. 128
\textsuperscript{103} The Muslim Review (Vol. III, No.3), p. 37.
newis) meaning a historiographer, Kagde (Kaghazi) meaning a paper vendor, Nakhwa (NaKhuda) meaning a sailor, or Bengali names like Maulick (Malik) meaning a king or a title of honor, Kanungi (Qanune) meaning an officer whose duty is to register and expound the laws of the empire, Sircar (Sarkar) meaning a chief or superintendent or a title give by way of respect to a person; or Punjabi names like Sardar (Sardar) meaning general or a field marshall, Hazara (Hazari) meaning commander or a thousand or Kashmiri names like Saraf (Sarraf) meaning a banker or a money changer, Bakhshi meaning a pay master; or a Gujarati name like (Munshi) meaning a scribe, Zaveri (Javaheri) meaning a jeweler; or Uttar Bharati names like Bajaj (Bazzaaz) meaning cloth dealer or general merchant etc\textsuperscript{104}, were all corruptions of Persian words.

It was the Mughal Emperors right from Akbar to Shah jahan who brought Persian poetry at its greatest heights. The Safavids in Iran and the Timurids in India were on friendly terms so they encouraged a constant exchange of statesmen, scholars and poets. \textit{Isfahan} and \textit{Agra} seemed to be two quarters of the same town. With Mughal patronage, a particular style known as Sabk-i-Hindi meaning Indian style came into existence. On the poetical side, Hindu scholars of the Persian language wrote Ghazal but some had taken to writing mattnavis as well.

Manohar Lon Kiran Tausan' is supposed to be first, Hindu poet to write in Persian at Akbar's Court whose fame traveled from India to Iran.\textsuperscript{105}

\textsuperscript{104} N.S. Gorekar, \textit{India-Iran Relations – Cultural Aspects} (Bombay, 1970), p. 128.
\textsuperscript{105} \textit{Adabiyat-e-Farsi men Hinduo'n ka Hissah}, p. 38.
His poetry was more of mystic thoughts. Even Mirza Saeb; the great Persian poet of Iran, in appreciation of Tausani poetry, had included some of his verses in his bayad, a notebook.\textsuperscript{106}

Another Hindu poet in Akbar’s Court was Bhupat Rai Biragi, who cultivated the poetical art in Persian. Amir Baig has mentioned number of Persian poets in his memoir.\textsuperscript{107} A Rajput Prince who was the favourit of Akbar was well versed in Persian. The popularity of Persian language prompted the Hindu to take the study of Persian. Chandra Ban Brahman acquired one of the highest places. He wrote his valuable works the Chahar Chaman on Persian composition and its art. The ghazals of Brahman strike a very high note of rhetoric and mysticism.\textsuperscript{108}

It was under Mirza Abdul Qadir Bidil, a mystic of liberal type and poet of high caliber influenced a large number of Hindus to Persian poetry and mysticism. Many Hindus like Shiva Rama, Guru Baksh Huduri Brindabadasa Khushga, Anand Rama Mukhlis\textsuperscript{109} etc., took to Persian poetry. Ghulam Ali Azad Bilgirami’s works were par excellence. His tazkirah known as Safinah-e-Khushgu is considered to be the greatest.\textsuperscript{110}

Some of the Hindu poets who patronized Persian works and wrote book on that were as said earlier were Bhagwandasa Bismil, a pupil of Lala

\textsuperscript{107} Ibid., p. 41.
\textsuperscript{108} Ibid., p. 43.
\textsuperscript{109} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{110} Ibid.
Sarab Sukh Diwaneh, who was again a pupil of Mirza Fakhir Makin wrote a mattrnai entitled *Silseleh-e-Mohabhat* and also a poem *Lu-bat-i-Chin*.\textsuperscript{111} Likewise Hindu folklore and legends received the attention of Lala Hakim Chand Nudra't. He also translated the Bhagavad Gita in verse form and wrote a mattrnai under the title of *Zarrahi-e-Khurshid*. Lala Mustaq Rai Qudrat, along with other poetry completed the task of rendering the Ramayana and Mahabharata into Persian verse. Raja Ratan Singh Zakhmi wrote the *Khamseh-e-Ishqiyeh*, a collection of five *Mattrnavis*. He was also well versed in prose writings and translated from Sanskrit sources in Persian prose-pieces under the names of Muhiitu'l-Asrar, Gulshan-e-Marefat and Mukitu-e-Marefat.\textsuperscript{112}

In India, after the fall of the Mughal Empire, the scene of literary activities shifted from Delhi to Lucknow, Azimabad, Murshidabad and Hyderabad Deccan. In the Medieval period of Indian History Persian was the language of administration and culture throughout India. During this period, both the Hindus and Muslims devoted themselves to the compilation of Persian lexicons, and in short time, the dictionaries compiled in India exceeded those produced in Iran.\textsuperscript{113} No Persian writings, except the works of Amir Khusrau and Shaikh Faidi commands respect in Iran, but the value of Persian lexicons compiled in India have been acknowledged.\textsuperscript{114}

\textsuperscript{112} *Adabiyyat -e-Farsi* men Hindus’n ka Hissah, pp. 225-26.
\textsuperscript{113} Gorekar, p. 133.
\textsuperscript{114} Indo-Iranica (Vol. XI, No.2), p. 2.
The \textit{Miratul-Istileh} is a small but remarkable lexicographical compilation by Anand Rama Mukhlis. It contained words and expressions used by later and contemporary poets of Iran and it is based on original research and it is very good work of that period.\footnote{Ibid.}

The Bahar-e-Ajam was one of the most learned lexicons ever compiled by a single individual – Tek Chand Bahar. He also wrote the Jausahiru-e-Huruf and the Nawadiru-e-Masadia in which he tried to trace many Persian words to the early Indo-Iranian form. Another treatise by Vihari Sri Krishnadas, written at the instance of Akbar, gives a list of Persian words with their explanations in Sanskrit.\footnote{Journal of Oriental Institute (Vol. 1), p. 91.} He also dealt on grammatical structure of the Persian language. It was written for the use of Sanskrit scholars, ignorant of Persian, to enable them to have an elementary, or rather a working knowledge of the Persian language.\footnote{\textit{Indo-Iranica} (Vol. XIV. No.1), p. 27.}

The Allah-Khuda's, a rhymed vocabulary of Persian and Hindustani words by Bhagwan Dayal 'Aqil' published in Lucknow in 187 A.D\footnote{\textit{Journal of Oriental Institute} (Vol. 1), p. 91.} and the Mufidu'l – Atfal, a vocabulary of Persian, Hindustani and English in verse form by Vazir Singh in the 1874 published in Delhi were small lexicographical compilations.

From the time of the Ghaznavids in the eleventh Century to the downfall of the Mughal Empire in the eighteenth century of the Christian era,
various works on *insha* or epistles were composed and the literature in Persian or *insha* was varied, wide and rich.

Shaikh Abu’l Fadl, author of the *Insha-e-Abu’l – Fade* and Aurangzeeb Alamgir, author of *Ruq’at-e-Alamgir* were the finest exponents of Persian *Insha*, and equally good some Hindu authors like Munshi Har Kiran, Munshi Chandra Ban, Munshi Nitra Chand\(^{119}\) etc.

Several memoirs or biographies of great men, whose lives, whose actions, feelings, task in poetry etc., were written. There were Muslim scholars, Hindu scholars who wrote such memoirs in Persian especially during the Mughal period. The *Safineh-i-Khu’shgu* by Bindrebandasa, the *Gul-i-Ra’ma* by Lakshmi Narayana Shafiq, the *Anisu’l-Ahibba’* by Mohan Lal Anis Krishandas Achaldasa were notable memoirs of Hindu scholars.\(^{120}\)

Several of these writings give a list of Persian poets and especially *Hami Sheh-Bahar* by Kishandasa in 1113 A.D. *Ikhla’s deals* with the biographical accounts of the Persian poets who flourished during the time of Jahangir to the reign of Mohammad Shah.\(^{121}\) Giridhardasa Kayasth translated the Ramayana of Valmiki into Persian in 1036 and called it *Mattnavi-i-Ramain*. Madini Mal Madari Mal rendered into Persian Bhaskaracharya’s *Lilavati*, - a work on arithmetic and geometry and called it *Badai’ul-Fanun*. Rai Manu Lal Fal Safi came out with many books in Persian

\(^{119}\) S.A. Hossain, The National Culture of India (Bombay, 1956), p. 73.

\(^{120}\) *Adabiyat-i-Farsi* men Hindu’on Ka Hissah, p. 75.

\(^{121}\) *Adabiyat-i-Farsi* men Hindu’on Ka Hissah, p. 112.
on Hindu thought and medicine of which the *Golestan-i-Iran*, the *Bustane-Harat* and the *Muffarridat-i-Tibb* were well known.\(^{122}\) On astronomy Birbal himself wrote *Risaleh-i-Nojum*, *Kashfu‘l – Ulim* by Kanjihi in 1229 A.D. was an authentic work on arithmetic, geometry and allied subjects.

Abu Raihan Mohammad al-Biruni, the author of *Tahqiq Malal-Hind*, which is known as Albiruni’s India. He was a Persian travellers who had visited several places in India and has given in Persian various accounts of the lives of Indians. This book gives account of the religion, philosophy, literature, chronology, astronomy, customs, laws and astrology of India.

On the whole, the Persian language made its revolution in India. It was not only Muslims in India who patronized this but even he Hindus liked the language, learnt it and wrote poetry, prose, verses etc., in Persian.

*Several Indian regional languages* have enriched themselves by borrowing thousands of Persian words, which have become an essential part of the language and literature:

Dr. *Harder Behari*, the linguist has made a long list of those Persian words that are commonly used in Hindi language. The Ramayana is a sacred book of Hindus. Even this book is *not free from Persian words*. Dr. Sharma, the ex president of India has rightly pointed out that even the

\(^{122}\) Ibid.
metre in which this book has been composed is one commonly used by Persian poets.

A common language spoken in South India has been formed by the combination of the local language called Marathi and Persian. This happened because some of the regions of South India were either under the rule of Persian speaking people or addressed in their language the common people. Early poets of South India like Sayyid Mohammad known as Gisu Daraz (long haired) were highly under the influence of Persian and produced several books in this language. Scholars like Rajore, Professor Pator Dhan and Dr. Pathar have written books to show how many Persian words are commonly spoken in Marathi language.\textsuperscript{123}

Urdu language is called the substitute of Persian in India. This is the only language that has been highly influenced by Persian. This language has not only borrowed thousands of Persian words, metaphors, phrases and idioms but also the style of composing poetry. Whatever were the thoughts; contents and the gems of Persian poetry were transferred to India through Urdu poetry. There are several verses in Urdu in which all the words of Persian have been used, except the verbs and prepositions. Though the Urdu speaking poets had not been to part of Persia, but by studying Persian poetry and enjoying the company of Persian poets in India, they tried their best to depict Persian diction and style through Urdu poetry.

\textsuperscript{123} Younus Jafari, Historical Relations between India and Iran, Phoenix, Vol.2, New Delhi, 2005.
Mirza Ghalib was a bilingual poet. But he was of the opinion that his Persian compositions were much better than his poems that he composed in Urdu.  

Persian language, literature and culture also spread in Bengal. The Bengali language enriched itself by absorbing thousands of Persians words. Some of the scholars of the Bengali language have found more than forty percent Persian words in this language; all the words for the different parts of human body are in Persian. The names of different dishes and fruit (fresh and dry) are also in Persian. Over the past several centuries, many Persian books (in prose poetry) on different subjects have been translated into Bengali. In 1837 the East India abolished the use of Persian as the official language. Though this decision was in favour of regional languages, protests were raised in Bengal. 481 scholars of Bengal among them 199 were Hindus wrote a protest note against this decision. These protests went unheeded and Persian could not find the position that it had before. Despite this, that it remained the language of culture. Raja Ram Mohan Rai was a religious reformer among the Hindus of Bengal. He wrote his book *Tohfat ul Mowahidin* (the gift of Unitarians) in Persian. Debender Nath Tagore, father of Rabinder Nath Tagore the poet, was at that time the spiritual leader of the Hindus in Bengal. He had memorized all the Persian poems that had been composed by the renowned poet Hafiz. It is said that he started his daily

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Ibid.  

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124 Ibid.  

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working by reciting the poems of Hafiz. He kept these poems with Upanishads, the commentary on the Vedas. Even in 19th century, poets of Bengal used Persian poems as model for their Bengali compositions. During 20th century too many Bengali poets got inspiration from Persian literature and culture.

*Punjab* (the country of five rivers) is the compound of the Persian words Panj (five) Aab (river). Punjabi the language of this province has always been directly under the influence of Persian. It has thousands of Persian words, as do the Kashmiri and Sindhi languages, which are deeply rooted in the culture of this subcontinent.

**Science and Technology during the Medieval Period – 1200-1526 A.D**

Iran’s contribution to Indian society was felt in all walks of life. So one cannot be surprised if science and technology was also transferred to India by Iran in the medieval period. Language was no barrier then but even without proper in fracture Iranians could manage to travel to India and other countries with their scientific ideas.

Persian was the basic language of the Iranians but during the early Period they also wrote in Arabic. So the transmission of science and technology to India was not unidirectional. Indian works on science found their way to Baghdad long before the establishment of Delhi Sultanate.

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125 Minoo Salimi, *Cultural Relations between Iran and India*, Tehran, 1993

Sanskrit traditions along with Greek learning were absorbed in the Persian and Arab-speaking world. Many Persians in fact, praised Indians of their astrology, mathematics, medicine, astronomy, philosophy and Indian numerals.

Indians's image as a country of great learning continued. Masudi, who died in 957 A.D. wrote that the Persian rulers before Islam believed that at Hind (India) was a centre where philosophy and wisdom (hikma) began. Another writer of the 10th Century, ibn Faqih Hamadani, pointed out that India had a very large number of physicians, philosophers and astronomers.

With the establishment of Delhi Sultanate, the floodgates of information and technology were opened especially from Iran, which transformed Indian society in several ways. This could be seen in the field of textile production, paper, irrigation, devices, horseshoe and gunpowder.

We have seen earlier that Iran was pioneer in knowing how to use the spinning wheel and this was brought down to India. With this innovation production of cotton could be doubled and people could have good designs also.

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In addition Persian wheel as introduced in India. This was a gift of Iran to India. The Persian wheel had an oval chain of buckets to pull water from deep wells. The basis was gearing mechanism, which enabled animal power to be employed and also to control the speed and movement of the chain. *Noria* – a less refined system to raise water from the open surface was introduced. This was already there in India, but here Iran had linked it to the gearing mechanism, which provided power, and speed for the continuous and rapid flow of water for irrigating large fields was achieved in that period.

The Persian wheel with a gearing device came into general operation in the Arab, was passed on to Europe through Spain and to India through Iran.\(^{129}\) Due to this irrigational device, early medieval India witnessed a remarkable agricultural expansion.\(^{130}\)

**Paper**: Paper manufacture was actually in China long before it appeared in Iran and Central Asia. In China it was in use in the first Century A.D. but reached Baghdad much later. Paper did not reach Iran and Central Asia because of the lack of markets. When the Abbasids needed paper for Baitu-i-Hikmat, it took no time to reach there. But in India, paper came in regular use only in the thirteen century. The earliest surviving paper manuscripts in Persia are dated 718 A.D. and the earliest Indian paper was


in 1223-24 A.D. Though Al-Biruni knew the knowledge of paper, yet he could not pass paper technology to India.\textsuperscript{131}

With the establishment of Delhi Sultanate, Delhi became another Baghdad, a seat of learning, and paper came to be introduced from here.

It was during the medieval period especially during the time of Delhi Sultans that were frequent battled in India especially to drive out the Turkish invaders. They wanted their horses to move faster in their battlefield. It was then that Iran came to its rescue. It gave them the use of iron stirrups and iron horse shoe to India.\textsuperscript{132}

The iron stirrups appeared in China in the 6\textsuperscript{th} Century and reached Iran in the 7\textsuperscript{th} Century. The use of gunpowder also from West Asia and to which the Sultans made use of it to the maximum in the battlefield. In the physical sciences also, there was a cross transmission between India and Iran.

Alchemy: Alchemy a forerunner of modern chemistry, was a subject much favoured by most of the learned scholars everywhere. The most common aspiration was to turn ordinary metal in gold on create the philosopher's stone (Al-Hajar, or the preparation of the elixir Al-Iksir). In this field of course Iranians had little to offer.

\textsuperscript{131} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{132} Dr Refaqat. p. 184.
Among the Iranians whose works found their way to India was certainly one of the most famous of world scholars Abu Ali ibn Sina, well known for his works on philosophy and medicine. His work Ar-RiSalah fi'l Kimia (1020 A.D) was a short treatise on alchemy, expounding the basic ruler of the subject, particularly tincture of metals.\(^{133}\) The manuscript is available now in Khuda Bakhsh Library, Patna. There was also a long letter of ibn Sina to Abu Hassan Sahl, explaining certain so called secrets concerning the preparation of the elixir Al-Iksir. They are now preserved in Asafia, Hyderabad.

Physics: Physics was not usually treated as an independent subject. The works of several philosophers and scientists that deal with physics found way to India from Iran.

Ibn Sina's influence in the field of philosophy and science became notable in all parts of the civilized world. Seventeen of his works on physics and Meta physics are available. The two important among them are as follows: Firstly, Ar-Risalah Fil Bayan – in Asbabu’r Ra’id ua’l – Barq. This was a treatise on the causes of thunder and lightning. Its manuscripts are available in Asafia.\(^{134}\) The second one was the Ash-Shifa’ul-IIliyat. This was an encyclopedia on physical and metaphysical subject. It contains chapters

\(^{133}\) Kitabu’l Malik – Asafia Shamilat, 1916.
\(^{134}\) Dr Refaqat Ali Khan, Transmission of Science and Technology to India from Iran 1200-1526 A.D. – Seminar on Indo-Iran Relations (Mumbai 2002), p. 188.
on motion, contact force, vacuum, infinity, light, heat and specific gravity. The manuscript is available at Asafia Library.  

In various other treatises, Ibn Sina defined intellect, soul, nature, body, form, matter, fire, water, earth and heaven. 

The student of ibn Sina by name Ab'ul Hassan Bahmanyar Bin Mar Zban wrote in Arabic and his work was called Kitabul Tahsil. A large part of the work deals with logic and metaphysics and deals with cosmology. The manuscript is available at Asafia Library, Hyderabad. The author was an Iranian Zoroastrian. Many of the authors who wrote in Arabic were non-Arabic or even non-Muslims. 

Najmud-Din Abi Bakr Ali – Qazvini was a Persian astronomer who had also worked with people like Nasirud-Din Tusi. Many of his works did not reach India. An encyclopedia on logic, science and philosophy could reach the Salar Jung Library Hyderabad. This work had a detailed discussion on the rotation of the earth. He believed that the terrestrial motions would take place only in a straight line. 

Sadru’d-Din Al-Hassani Al-Hassani Ad-Dashtaki Al-Shirazi and Shamsud – Din Mohammad Al-Bukhari were great scholars of 14th and 15th

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135 Mss. State Central Library, Asafia/Tibb 10  
136 Ibid.  
137 Fal Safah – 35.
centuries but their works on physics was concentrated in Central Asia. Their works were mainly written in Arabic.

Jalalud- Din Mohammad As-Siddiqi Ad-Davani was a scholar. He was Iranian by birth and he wrote his works in Arabic. He stayed at Shiraz. He wrote on physics, metaphysics and other sciences. Two of his great books were Al-Anmudai, (is at Asafia Library) and Al-Risalah fil Bayanil-Mahiyat ul – Huwiyat. These can be traced at Bahar Library Calcutta. These are significant works on physics. His work Al-Anmudai was composed for Sultan Mahmud Begarah of Gujarat. 138 An Iranian author writing for an Indian ruler explains the intellectual communication between the two countries and the two people.

**Mathematics** : India, foremost in the science of numbers, contributed the zero, which has been considered the zenith in the enrichment of human civilization. Ibn Sina, who was a very highly learned scholar, had learnt Indian arithmetic. Works of ibn sina and other Arabic and Persian authors found their way to India. Manuscripts of their works are found all over the country. One major thing here was that in 14th and 15th centuries, number of Persian manuscripts especially on mathematics were less when compared to the Arabic but whereas in 18th and 19th centuries the number increased over taking the Arabic.

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138 Ibid.
The earliest Iranian mathematician was Abu Ali Sina, whose works on mathematics reached India very early.\(^{139}\) His student, Abul vahid Jurjani, while editing Danish Namah 'Ala'i discovered his teacher’s note on geometry. He published the notes under title Risalah dar Hendesa. They are available at Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta.\(^{140}\)

Mohammad Abdul-Karim Ad-Daji Al – Ghaznawi was a 13\(^\text{th}\) century scholar who wrote Tuhfatu’s Sodur, which dealt with geometry. The manuscripts were available at Cambridge.\(^{141}\)

Among the 14\(^\text{th}\) Century Iranian scholars mention can be made of Al-Farsi. He wrote in Arabic and his field was optics. In the field of mathematics, he like many others was a commentator who made the great classics available to commoners, and especially to students. His commentary on Al-Fawai’idul – Baha’iyyah even today is a very useful work on arithmetic, geometry, and determination of areas, volumes and inheritance. Actually these were the works by Abdullah Al-Baghdad Al-Khaddami, who lived in the first half of the Fourteenth century. Its manuscripts are available at Khuda Bakhsh Library, Patna and Salar Jung Library, Hyderabad.\(^{142}\)

\(^{139}\) Ibid.
\(^{140}\) Manuscript – Asiatic Society Library of Bengal, Calcutta.
\(^{141}\) Refaqat, p. 193.
\(^{142}\) Manuscript (Mss) = Khuda Bakhsh Library, Patna.
Most of the Iranians wrote in Arabic and this included Nishapuri who wrote *Resalah – Shamsiyah Fi’l Usul-ul Hisabiyat*. This was also a book on the elements of mathematics.\(^{143}\)

Some of the Iranian scholars wrote with the intention of helping the Indians with their work. One such author of the fifteenth century was *Al-Isfahani*. He wrote on geometry but it was written especially for the benefit of architects. His book was called *Durratu’l – Masahat*.\(^{144}\) *Mohammad Baqir ibn Zainu’l – Abdin* wrote the work *’Uyanul – Hisab*, again in Arabic dealing with arithmetic.\(^{145}\)

Iran also gave to India several encyclopedias and they covered mostly on astronomy. Here again *Abu Ali Sina*’s name stands at top. His famous *Kitabush Shifa* deals with not only mathematics but also on metaphysics, animals, plants etc.\(^{146}\) *Ghayasud-din Ali Imiran Al Hossain – Al Isfahani* wrote *Danish Nama-e Jahan*.\(^{147}\) It is an encyclopedia on sciences dealing with natural philosophy, minerals, botany, psychology, anatomy, weather, meteors etc. Another Persian author to write encyclopedia was *Qutbud-din Mohammad ibn Al-Muslihush Shirazi*. His work is entitled *’Durratu’t – Taj – Ghurratd Dubaj’*. They are now in India Office, London.

\(^{143}\) Manuscript – Azad State Central Library, Asafia, Hyderabad.
\(^{144}\) Manuscript – Salar Jung Museum, Hyderabad.
\(^{145}\) Manuscript – Azad Library, Aligarh.
\(^{146}\) Manuscript – Reza Library, Rampur.
\(^{147}\) Manuscript – Salar Jung Museum, Hyderabad.
Persians like Greek were also not lagging behind in Medicine. All classical works on medicine were written in Iran itself but in Arabic. This had started well in 10th Century itself pouring into India. Abu Bakr Mohammad ibn Zakaria A’r – Razi of Tay wrote Kitab Burus – Sa’at on incidental body disorders for Wazir Abul Qasim ibn Abdullah. He wrote Kitab’ul Hawi. Here he taken extracts from Greek and Indian works. This was translated in Latin in Venice. A book called Maqalah – Fil Aghdiyah-i-Mukhtasar was a treatise on ailments.

Resalah dar khavas - e- haywanat was a Persian translation of Galen’s work on the curative properties of the flesh of different animals. The translation cannot be traced but he lived during the period of Nasser ibn Sultan Ahmad in 914-943 A.D. A similar work was also translated by unknown person and was similar to Sanskrit work Madana Vinoda Nighastu.

Abu Bakr Rabi ibn Ahmad Al-Akhvani Al-Bukhari wrote in Arabic ‘Hedayatul Muta’ Allemin Fi’l Tib. It was an encyclopedia meant for initiating students in the study of medicine. This was the earliest work known in India and for its rarity. During this period, Iranian works on medicine continued to pour into India. There were several good physicians also during that period. They were as follows:

148 Manuscript – Khuda Bakhsh, Patna.
149 Ibid.
150 Manuscript - Reza Library, Hyderabad.
Abu Ali Al – Hossain ibn Abdullah ibn Sina (980-1030 A.D) is credited with Al – Adwiyatu – Qalbiyah written in 1020 A.D in Arabic on cardiology.\textsuperscript{151} As Skanjabin is another work on preparation of medicinal uses of oxymel, a combination of honey and vinegar, Resalah Fi Shatri'l Ghib was a works on Semi tertian fever etc.

During eleventh and twelfth centuries many physicians wrote books in Persian itself. Abu Rud Mohammad ibn Mansur ibn Abi Abdu-l-llah ibn Mansur Al – Jurjani was a famous surgeon and ophthalmologist. He was popularly called Zarin Dast. Noorul Ayan (1087-88 A.D) dealt with anatomy but his main concern was ophthalmology.\textsuperscript{152} The author had based his work on a work of Hossain ibn Ishaq (877 A.D). Hossain’s work on Ophthalmology remained lost till 1926 and it was discovered by Max Meyeshaf and was translated into German. Noorul Ayan remained the most outstanding work on this subject.

Ibrahim Al – Hossaini wrote Minhajul – Mubtadiyin, a course of medical science for beginners.\textsuperscript{153} In the thirteenth century Abu Ishaq Ibrahim ibn Ali ibn Mohammad As – Sullami Al – Misri lived in Iran as a famous physician.

Badrud – Din Mohammad ibn Bahram ibn Mohammad Ali – Qalanisi lived in the thirteenth century. He wrote Qarabadiyat, a book on

\textsuperscript{151} Manuscript – Bahar Library, Lucknow.
\textsuperscript{152} India Office, London, dated 1610.
\textsuperscript{153} Salar Jung Museum, Hyderabad.
pharmacopaeas. By 14th Century a historian by name Rashidud Dīn Khajah Aminu’d Daulah, was the author of Jame – ut – Tavarikh. He was the minister and royal physician and he also left behind him the Kitab-e-Tibb on Therapeutics.

Abu Bakr ibn usman Asfar Al – Kasani Sāidanah’s book called Kitabus Sāidanah was Persian translation of Al – Biruni’s only work on therapeutics. It contained Persian, Syrian and Sanskrit equivalents of Arabic nomenclature of drugs.

Ali ibn Al Hassan Al – Ansari lived in the middle of the 14th Century. He was a famous pharmacologist and wrote ‘Ikhtiyarat-i-Badil’. This was widely used in India. Hossain Ansari (1403 AD) compiled SehatuI Adviyah in Persian, which was a dictionary of medicaments.

Several 15th century scholars from Iran were popular in India. Syed Abu’l – Qasim ibn Syed Mohammad Al-Hassani was a physician who had migrated to India. Undoubtedly, Iranian influence on Indian works on medicine became very obvious during the Sultanate period. Besides the abundance of medical libraries in India of Iranian origin, there were also a fairly large number of physicians who migrated to India.

154 Ibid.
155 Mss. Bahar Library, Calcutta.
156 Mss. Azad Library, Aligarh.
157 Salar Jung Museum, Hyderabad.
Mansour ibn Mohammad ibn Ahmad iba Yusuf ibn Faqih Ilyas belonged to Iran but finally settled in India especially in Kashmir. He was the first Iranian to come and settle in India and wrote two books on *Kifayah-i-Mansour* and *Tashrih-i-Mansour*.\(^\text{158}\) Sa’dullah Zanjani Nizam’s *Tajrubatal-Mujarrabat-i-Ghayas Shahi* was a book on Greek medicine in the Indian context and was written in India.\(^\text{159}\)

In the sixteenth century, Abul Fattah Al-Hossaini wrote *Ahqaqu Tairubah* in Persian – a compendium of tested cures,\(^\text{160}\) taken mostly from Hakim Ali Shirazi, his guru.

Due to India’s climate and availability of herbal medicines, pharmacology and treatment were treated in Indian context. Books like Buwah ibn Khwagas Khan’s *Marda nush Shifa-i-Sikandar Shahi* work written in this context.

All we can say is that the Iranian contribution especially in the field of medicine was very great and extensive. In the all aspects, the interchange of ideas, concepts and practices were of method enrichment to both Iran and India.

\(^{158}\) Refegat – p. 203.
\(^{159}\) Asiatic Society, Bengal, Calcutta.
\(^{160}\) Ibid
**Nau Rooz is a part of the common culture of Iran and India**

The celebration of the Nau Rooz festival started in India during the rule of the Gupta’s coinciding with the rule of the Sasanids in Iran. The Nau Rooz festival, which attracted the people of India towards itself.

In addition of being a festival of happiness and general festivities, is also an occasion of compassion, kindness, justice and help.

According to the available documents, the celebration of Nau Rooz festival restarted during the period of the Mughals after a gap of about one thousand years. During the rule of the kings of this dynasty, the needy used to benefit from the charity of the wealthy during the Nau Rooz period. They used to eat from the general feasts held on this and new laws were framed. For example, Akbar the Great, during the twenty-seventh year of his rule, reconstructed the caravanserais and hospitals, banned the bird hunting and prohibited the marriage of girls below 12 years.\(^{161}\)

In the court of king Akbar, the celebrations of the Nau Rooz festival continued from the First to the Nineteenth Farvardeean, which was known as the day of Farvardegan. The walls and pillars of the palace and the court of this great king of India used to be decorated with colourful clothes of different kinds.\(^{162}\) A golden throne decorated with jewels of all kinds used to

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\(^{162}\) Ibid
be placed in the courtyard of the palace. In the night, coloured lanterns used to be lighted. All the markets were decorated with lightings.

From the time of Jahangir, because of the presence of Noorjehan, the Iranian queen of Jahangir and who was much liked by the king, the Nau Rooz festival got an altogether new hue and colour. The astrologers used to determine the colour of the year for the queen and the walls, floors, curtains, clothes and even the covering clothes of the elephants, the camels and all other domestic animals were coloured in the same colour. At the time of the change of the year, Jahangir and Noorjahan used to sit in a special palace and the arrival of the New Year was announced with the beating of the drums. After that the queen used to order to hold general feasts for the people at different places of the city.\(^{163}\)

During the period of Bahadur Shah Zafar, the last king of the dynasty, special ceremonies were held during Nau Rooz. But with the end of the Mughal rule and establishment of the British government in India, this festival gradually became extinct in this country and the lamp of Nau Rooz was kept burning in this country only by the Parsis and some people in Jammu and Kashmir and Lucknow.\(^{164}\)

For the Indian Parsis the Nou Rooz festival was the secret of civilization and culture of which they had become habitual. Because of the

\(^{163}\) Ibid

\(^{164}\) Mansour Tajeri, Indo – Iranian Cultural Relations, 66\(^{th}\) Session of Indian History Congress, Santiniketan, West Bengal, 2006
14-year stay of Humayun in Iran, they considered him as one of themselves who had mingled in their culture and identity. During the period of the Mughals a general sense of happiness and pleasure was the main feature of this festival. The sound of songs and music used to come from everywhere. Special ceremonies like firing of cannons and guns and also playing of different music instruments were held. Wearing new clothes, giving gifts, reciting praises, visiting each other and holding of special programs like awarding justice were the special feature of the occasion.

There is no doubt that in view of the common race of the two ancient people of Iran and India and their deep rooted historical, political and cultural ties, a kind of bilateral relationship and interaction did exist between them since a long time and the Nau Rooz festival is one of the same links. Though this festival has lost some of its shine in India, but still the tradition of sowing vegetables, giving and taking gifts, aabereezan and collecting fire are still prevalent in many common festivals of Iran and India and can be witnessed in many parts of this country.

According to the historians Persian Calendar and Iranian festivals have been widespread in India during long centuries.

Ghayas ud Din Tughlaq (1265-87 A.D.) was the most powerful rules of slave dynasty in India. He observed the New Year (Nau Rouz) festivities like the Persians as did the rules of the Bahmanid dynasty (1347-1527).
Zahir ud Din Babur, founder of Timurid dynasty in India, celebrated the New Year festivities in the year 933 A.H./1526-27 A.D, when he got victory over Rana Sanga, the Rajput ruler of India (he also started his war campaign against his enemies in the year 934 A.H. / 1527-28 A.D). The following verse of Babur Davvish is (wrongly) attributed to him:

\[
\text{Nou Rouz o Nou Bahar omay o Delbari Khoshast} \quad \text{Babar be aish kush ke Alam dobareh nist.}
\]

[In the springtime, during the festivities of Nou Rouz a sweet heart is pleasant. Babur, try to enjoy, because you will not be in this world again].

The Mughal ruler Akbar the Great adopted the Persian calendar of Sassanid period with its Persian names of the months and the days. The Persian festivities like Nau Rouz and Mehrgan (the festival celebrated before the arrival of autumn season) were celebrated with full pomp and show. His son and successor, Jahangir (1605-1625) also celebrated Nou Rouz with dance and musical performances. These festivities continued for twenty days. The festivities of Nou Rouz were also celebrating in camps at times when the King or Prince was traveling. Jahangir's son Shahjahan (1628-58) also celebrated these festivals while he traveled the country.

In the Ashoka hall of the President's palace, New Delhi, there are several Persian verses with Persian paintings.

The following verse is about Nou Rouz:

\[
\text{Sahra rukh-e-khod ze abr-e-now rouz beshost.} \quad \text{In dahr -e - shekaste del ze nou gasht dorost}
\]

[Against the broken heart of this world became restored. The plain washed its face with cloud water of Nou Rouz].
Cultural Relations between Iran and India in Twentieth Century

The Cultural and ethnic relations between Iran and India have a long history. There has been continuance interaction between the two peoples of Iran and India.

The following paragraphs will substantiate this fact:

- The ancestors of the Supreme Leader of the Iranian Revolution late Imam Khomeini had migrated from their original home in Nishapur in the Lucknow region of northern India towards the end of the 18th century. They settled in the town of Kintur. Imam Khomeini’s grandfather Syed Ahmad left Lucknow in the middle of 19th century on pilgrimage to the tomb of Hazrat Ali in Najaf, Iraq. Although he stayed back and settled in the town of Khumayn in Iran, he continued to be known as “Hindi”. Even Imam Khomeini used “Hindi” as pen name in some of his ghazals.\(^{165}\)

- Around the turn of the previous century (1900) an Iranian Consul based in Mumbai, India, Haj Mohammad Mirza Chaikar (Kashef os Saltaneh) brought out first tea saplings (along with some pepper, cinnamon, and turmeric bushes) to Iran from India and planted then in the north Iranian city of Lahijan. Today the area has a large number of tea plantations. Mirza Chaikar is known as the father of the tea industry in Iran.\(^{166}\)

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In the early 1900s, the first lot of Indians, predominantly Sikhs, came to the border town of Zahedan in Iran from west Punjab of the undivided India (which had a common border with Iran). Around 180 Indian families settled in Zahedan. The Indians gradually spread to the towns of Zabol, Birijand, Mashhad and Tehran. In the 1960s and 70s around ten thousand Indian professionals came to Iran. Presently, there are 150 Indian families (Sikhs, Sindhis, Hindus and Gujaratis) in Tehran, 35 families in Zahedan and 2 families in Isfahan. There are around 300-600 Indian Muslim students in the holy city of Qom undergoing theological studies.

The Sikh traders had built a Gurudwara in Zahedan in 1927. It is said that the town was earlier known as Dozdab (water of thieves), but was later renamed by the visiting Shah as Zahedan (town of Zahids – worshipers) after he saw the Sikhs with flowing beards. A Gurudwara was also built in Tehran in 1950. An Indian School was established in Tehran in 1952.

The Indian community built a Hindu temple in the southern port city of Bandar Abbas during Qajar period. The then ruler of the area Mohammad Khan Sa’ad-ol-Molk granted the construction permit. The property is presently with the Iranian National Cultural Heritage Organisation.167

During the inter-war years (1919-1939) cultural delegations from India and Iran visited each other’s countries. Rabindra Nath Tagore

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167 Iran Daily January 4,2000
visited Iran in 1932 and 1935.\textsuperscript{168} There is a photograph of Tagore visiting Hafez's tomb in Shiraz, which is displayed in a small library adjacent to the tomb. Tagore had meetings with cultural dignitaries of Iran. The interest that he showed in Iran and the people of that country was quite amazing for the Iranians. While visiting several cultural centers in different cities of Iran, he also visited Shiraz and the holy city of Qom. During the days when India was passing through political crisis, Tagore was very much concerned about the situation of his country. Seeing this, his Iranian friends made an augury with the poems of Hafiz at his tomb. When they opened the book of this poems, they found the following verses:

\begin{quote}
Yousof-e- gom gashte baaz aayed be Kanaa'n gham makhor
Kolbe-ye-ahzaan Shavad rouzi golestan gham makhor
\end{quote}

[Do not be sorrowful. Some day the house of grief will turn in flower garden. Do not be worried, there will come a day when Yousoph will come back to Canaan].

- \textit{Indian cinema} has a large audience in Iran. Early Iranian cinema had close links with India. Ohanian, the director of the first Iranian silent film, \textit{Abi VA Rabi}, (1929), left Iran for India and continued his academic career in Calcutta. Subsequently he returned to Iran in 1947, where he died seven years later. Abdul Hossein Sepenta, the father of Persian talkies, was born in Tehran in 1907. As a young writer and poet, Sepenta went to India in the mid-1920s to study

\textsuperscript{168} Abdul Amir Jorfi, Iran and India: age old friendship , Indian Quarterly, Oct-Dec-1994, p88
ancient Persian language and history. In Bombay, his friendship with professor Bahram Gour Aneklesaria (an expert in old Iranian languages) encouraged him to consider the new and developing medium of film. Through his adviser Dinshaw Irani, Sepenta met Ardestir Irani of the Bombay Parsi community, who made the first Indian talkie Alam Ara. Irani was the executive director of Imperial Film Company and agreed to invest in Sepenta's first Persian talkie. Sepanta also met with Debaki Bose, a pioneer of Bengali cinema who was also interested in representing his culture in a new, epic form. After an introduction to the theory of film, Sepenta started writing his script, with Ardestir Irani as technical supervisor. Irani also co-directed the film. \textit{Dokhtar-e-Lor} (The Lor Girl) [1932], the first Persian talkie to be released, \textit{was made in India} is the product of this interaction. The film was an absolute success and stayed on Iranian screens for more than two years. Imperial film Company was so impressed by the success of the talkie that they offered Sepenta production control over another film. Sepenta made four more films for Imperial Film Company in India: Ferdousi (1934), Shireen va Farhad (1934), Cheshmhaye Siah (Black Eyes) (1935) and Leyla va Majnun (1936). Interestingly, he also made one film for the East India Film Company in Calcutta. All of his films dealt with the glorification of the Old Iranian culture or the optimistic future of a modern Iran.\footnote{www.horschamp.qc.ca.}
• Apart from official level contracts between India and Iran, some cultural and academic societies in India have been rendering yeomen service in promoting Persian language and literature and building bridge of fellowship, friendship and understanding.

• Iran Society of Kolkata was founded by Dr. Mohammad Ishaque, a renowned scholar of Persian. The society was founded in 1944 with the object of promotion of the study of Persian language and literature, history and philosophy, art and sciences pertaining to Iran, and for the maintenance of a cultural liaison between the two countries so as to make the Society a center of intellectual collaboration and cultural understanding between India and Iran. The crowning glory of the Society is the publication of bilingual-English Persian — quarterly literary journal, the *Indo – Iranica*, which adorns the shelves of almost all the libraries of the university in India and abroad and engaged in promoting Iranians studies and Culture.170

• India and Iran have exchanged cultural delegations regularly and there exists a Cultural Exchange Programme between the two countries. Bharat Ratna Bismillah Khan gave concerts in Tehran in 1992. *A hall at the prestigious Bahman Cultural Centre in Tehran is named after Ustad Bismillah Khan.*171

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170 Choopra R.M, Indo-Iranian Cultural Relations through the age, Colcotta, 2002.
171 Tanmaya Lal, India and Iran, age old ties, first security of Indian Embassy in Tehran, November 2001.
Iran has two Cultural Centres in India – New Delhi and Mumbai. The first Iranian Consulate had been opened in Mumbai in the mid 19th century. As a sequel to the exchange of early visits by the leaders of Iran and India, culture house were established in Bombay (now Mumbai) in 1956 and in Delhi in 1957. In the Culture Houses, regular classes are conducted on Persian language and literature and cultural exchanges are organised by sponsoring visits to Iran by eminent scholars and teachers of Persian. The other cultural activities are holding of exhibitions on various aspects of Iran's history and culture, old books of Persian in India, specimens of ancient calligraphy in India and Iran, and arranging exchange of musicians and other artists.\footnote{Choopra R.M, Indo-Iranian Cultural Relations through the Eyes of Calcutta, 2002. Syed Farid Qasemi, Iranian press on the eve of the 21st century, Nasr, no.42, 1999, p. 119-130.}

The Iran Culture Houses, also distribute free of cost a large number of publications, including books, magazines and periodicals, to schools, collages and Universities in India where Persian language is taught.

In the early 20th century, several Iranian publications were printed in India. These included Habl-ol-Matin newspaper (published in Calcutta for 40 years), Ahang, and the sermons of Iqbalol-Dolleh.\footnote{Choopra R.M, Indo-Iranian Cultural Relations through the Eyes of Calcutta, 2002. Syed Farid Qasemi, Iranian press on the eve of the 21st century, Nasr, no.42, 1999, p. 119-130.}

The first Iranian Persian weekly was published from India. During the days when the Indians were fighting for the freedom of their country the relation between India and Iran existed. The leaders of both these countries had their contacts with each other at different
occasions. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad one of the freedom fighters that became minister of education after India attained freedom was for sometime the student of Forsat Shirazi and Haji Shaykh ul Ra’is. The latter taught him the book Hikmat ul Ishraq written by Soharvardi and is related to the philosophy of ancient Persia. During the First World War when Iran became the victim of the oppression of allied forces, he protested by writing articles and supported the cause of Iran. After sometime, when he started to write the commentary on the Glorious Quran he reveled that the term Zolqarnain (bi-cornous) that is used for Alexander the Great (356-323 B.C.) is not correct. This has been used for Cyrus the Great (d.530 B.C.) the king of Persia. *Translation of books* is one of the factors in cultural relations. Hence in the twenties century many books were translated from Persian to Indian languages and Indian treatise in to Persian.\(^{174}\)

- Some Iranian *professors of Persian* are on the faculty of the Osmania University, Hyderabad, and the Delhi University. Legendary Persian poets Hafez, Sa’di, Ferdowsi, Rumi and Omar Khayyam continue to be widely read in India. Works by Manatma Gandhi, Nehru, Tagore, Indira Gandhi, V.S. Naipaul, R.K. Narayanan and other Indian writers have been translated into Persian. There by both the Persian and Indian language and literature have enriched.

- *All India Persian Teachers Association* was established in 1977 in New Delhi. In this connection it is to be noted that more than

\(^{174}\) Tanmaya Lal, *India and Iran, age old ties*, first secretary of Indian Embassy in Tehran, November, 2001
thousand Persian teachers are teaching this language in various colleges and universities in India.\footnote{Azhar Delhavi, Persian language in India, All India Persian Teachers Association, Bayaz, Vol, No.14, New Delhi, 2005.} 

- **Indian universities** are a popular destination for Iranian students for higher studies. Several high ranking Iranian officials and professionals have studied in India. There are a large number of Iranian students (7500) studying in universities at Mumbai, Pune, Bangalore, Mysore, Hyderabad, Chandigarah and Delhi. There is a large Iranian community settled in India, including students who stayed back after completing their studies. There has been a tradition of prominent Iranian football players having played in Indian clubs and coached Indian teams.

- There have been several *high level visits* from both sides over the past five decades. Prime Minister Nehru had visited Iran along with his daughter Indira Gandhi in 1959. President Radhakrishnan visited Iran in 1963. Prime minister Indira Gandhi visited Iran in 1974. Prime minister Narasimha Rao visited Iran in 1993. On the Iranian side, President Rafsanjani visited India in 1995. The present Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic, Ayatollah Khamenei had visited India in 1981 as a member of the Revolutionary Council. His writings include “The role of Muslims in the independence struggle of India”. President Khatami visited India in 1994 as the then Head of National Library. Prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee visited Iran in April 2001.
and President Khatami was the special guest of honour for the Republic Day of India in 2003.

- A *Street in Tehran* is named after *Mahatma Gandhi* who is held in very high esteem by the common man in Iran. During his recent visit to Iran, Prime Minister Vajpayee inaugurated a *square in Shiraz renamed after Maulana Abul Kalam Azad*. A street in *Hyderabad* also is named *Imam Khomaini* near the Consulate General of Islamic republic of Iran in Hyderabad.\(^\text{176}\)

- India has welcomed the far-sighted initiative of President Khatami in calling the year 2001 as the year of *"Dialogue Among Civilisations"*. An important India-Iran seminar on this theme was held in New Delhi in November 2000. India participated at a senior level in a seminar on Dialogue Among Asian Civilisations, held in Tehran in February 2001.

It is more than half century that India is enjoying its independence. During this span, the cultural relations between India and Iran have always been cordial. The visit of the heads of both the countries has brought both the countries closer and the relations are stronger than ever. When Nehru visited Iran with his daughter Indira, he mentioned several times in his speeches that it was his earnest desire to visit Iran. Because among all the nations of the world, the Indians have been influenced by the Persian civilization more than any other civilization of the world. The soul of Persia

\(^{176}\) Hossain Ravesh, General Consulate of Iran in Hyderabad, Speech in inauguration programe, 2006
came to India, which exists in the form of Taj Mahal, the masterpiece of Persian art and architecture. The building of the Taj is a body in India in which the soul of Persia has incarnated. We should try now more than ever to popularize Persian language and literature in India. No doubt, that Persian is the language of Iranians. But, in the last few centuries this has become part of language and culture.

Thus, it is interesting and illustrative that India and Iran two nations and two civilizations had continuous contact and interaction over the centuries. These contact led to the spread of ideas across most of Asia. While India's influence Iran in several respects with its own contributions, Iran acted as both an originator of new ideas as well as a facilitator of ideas from other parts of the world, especially West Asia and Central Asia to India and via versh.