

## SITUATING *BAHARISTAN-I- SHAHI* AMONG PERSIAN CHRONICLES OF KASHMIR

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### ABSTRACT

*Historiography is an art as well as duty. The famous trend which has been used from past to the present is based on aim to please someone or to defend faith, beliefs, culture or ideology of a particular group of people. It creates the chaos in the field of this art and in this confrontation it becomes impossible to get acquaintance with the real past. Obviously this is unjust with human conscious as well as with this art. Persian chronicles of Kashmir were not free from favouritism but to some extent they differ from the rest. Among them "Baharistan-i-Shahi" occupies very important place, as it went against the tradition and got recognition of being the first chronicle which shows boldness against the ruling authority. This paper seeks to examine its position among Persian chronicles of Kashmir and explore the way it deviates from the rest.*

**Keywords:** *Baharistan-i-Shahi, ideology, Kashmir, Persian Chronicle, recognition.*

Kashmir from very beginning has been a cradle of intellectuals, poets, scholars, Sufis, literatures and historians. Being a seat of learning, it occupies the first position in Indian sub-continent where history writing was adopted as an art. It is *Rajatarangini* of Kalhana which is considered to be the first reliable and valid chronicle of Kashmir written in Sanskrit. Although we find some traces of other chronicles written before it but unfortunately passage of time have pushed them to the back. Kalhana completed his celebrated chronicle in Luakika 4255 corresponding to 1149 A.D which had a great impact on historians like Jonaraja, Srivara, Prajyabhata and Suka. They all recorded the events of rulers in Sanskrit.

With the advent of Islam, historiographical scenario also changed. After short period of time, Sanskrit was replaced by Persian and Persian became the official language of the court but patrons of learning like Sultan Zainul abidin worked for preserving the rich cultural heritage of Kashmir by starting a bureau of translation for translating Sanskrit works into Persian. Kalhan's *Rajatarangni* was translated during this very period.

It is daunting task to find the exact number of chronicles of Kashmir which have been written in Persian from early times to the present day. However, Research and Publication Department of J&K preserved as many as thirty works in Manuscript. The most primitive among these is *Tarikh-i- Kashmir* of Syed Ali bin sayed Mohammad in 1579 A.D and recent one is *Tarikh-i- Kabir* written by Gulam Mohi-ud-din in 1900 A.D. Among these chronicles *Waqi'at Kashmir* by Muhammad Azam Dedamari, *Tarikh-i- Kashmir* of Pir Gulam Hassan Kuihami and *Baharistan-i- Shahi* by some anonymous author, gained a great importance due to their style, authenticity of records(to some extent) and publicity. Histories written in Persian language in Kashmir as compared to others are very readable narratives usually in a simple and clear style. This is because they were

generally unconnected with courts, and rulers. Another reason was that the Persian was not their 1mother tongue, so they preferred to use simple language.

Chronicles of Kashmir in Persian language, except *Baharistan-i- Shahi* follow the same traditional norms, and records show the reputation of ideology and events in identical approach. *Baharistan-i- Shahi* seems unique in its approach, ideology and style. It enjoys the same status in the chronicles of Kashmir as *Muntakhab –ul-tawarikh* of Mullah Abdul Qadir Badayuni in chronicles of Mughal Court in India. Almost all other chronicles of the Mughal court were written in favour of kings because without their consent recording of events was impossible. The main drawback of Indian Persian histories is that a historian wrote for his own interests. K.N Pandith saye "In the East, particularly in Iran, a historian wrote at the behest of a ruler, a prince, a minister or a power courtier or feudal lord. In a few cases, the historian would himself be a minister or an influential person close to the ruling circle"(K.N.Pandth,vii). So, they naturally adopted rhetorical approach to please their patrons than out of their intellectual curiosity. We also notice the praise of kings, princes and courtiers and negligence of their faults and mistakes in the Persian histories of Kashmir but not due to connectivity with the court or relation with royal family rather because of angularities of their character, views and ideologies and because of unpropitious circumstances.

Bahiristani-i-Shahi is actually an account of the political events of Kashmir from the time of incursion of Zulchu in Kashmir in 1332 A.D /727 A.H to 1614 A.D /1023 A.H, the year when Sayyed Adul-Ma'ali , the second son of Sayyid Mubarak proceeded to Tattah in Sind to assume charge of his jagir, conferred upon him by Mughal Emporer Jahingir.It was started in 994A.H and took almost thirty years to complete. Charles Pierre Henri Rieu a great orientalist has given a brief account of Manuscript of Baharistan-i-Shahi which is preserved in British Museum of London. He writes:

The work begins without any preface, after a short account of the Hindu period in which the dates of Hijrah from A.H 531 downwards are frequently given; it enters upon fol. 11b upon the Mohammadan period which occupies the rest of the volume. There is after fol. 41a lacune extending from the death of Zainul abidin A.H 873 to that of mirak Hassan A.H 893.The narration becomes very full for the later period, especially from the death of Ali Shah A.H 986, fol. 11a to the end The last events recorded are the appointment of Haider Malik Chadura to the Govt of Kashmir, the death of raja Man Sing A.HA 1021, and the departure of Syed Shah Abdul Ma'ali for his jagir in Tattah, A.H 1023. ( Rieu 297)

The date of completion of this chronicle is 1614 A.D/ 1023 A.H expressed by the chronogram Nameh Shahan Kashmir (نامہ شاہان کشمیر). The historical works written before *Baharistan-i-Shahi* were lost. Three histories are invariably mentioned in this connection: those of chronicle of Mullah Nadri, Qazi Ibrahim and Hassan Qari. In their absence *Baharistan-i-Shahi* enjoys the status of being the first fully detailed History of Kashmir. It differs from other Persian chronicles of Kashmir in many aspects. The most important issue which gives special status to this historical work is approach towards the Mughal rule in Kashmir.Its considers Mughal occupation of Kashmir as an act of malice while as others termed Mughal occupation as blessing of God. In the context of Bahsristan-i-Shahi it seems that its author resembles love the independence and considers living under the patronage of Mughals worse than slavery. According to him, those who struggled against the Mughals in

Kashmir invasion were patriots and who supported them were traitors, but reverse is the case with others. Author of *Baharistan-i-Shahi* boldly praise the local rulers as well as people of Kashmir and also narrated the brutalism of Mughal governors, soldiers and officials. Here I am quoting Mutch Bhavan episode in which one of the officials of Yusuf Khan who had been assigned military duties in Parganas of Dachhanpara and Khovurpara. He had made solemn promises and commitments to a group of local soldiers who had entered in his service; he collectively brought them Mutch Bhavan spring under the pretext of recording their identity and put them all to the sword. In this way the blood of Muslims was shed like the flowing water of Mutch Bhavan spring. He describes this brutal incident of Mughal officer in this way:

محب علی کہ ہ یکی از خدمت خاران مرزا یوسف جہت فوجداری پرگنہ دچھن پارہ و کھاور پارہ متعین بود۔ جماعہ از سپہان این دیار بخدمت او رجوع آوردند۔ او در میان عہد و پیمان معتبر بایمان نمود۔ در چشم ہ مچھ بون بہ بان ہ نوہ نویسی ہم را جمع گردانیدہ بقتل رسانیدہ از خون مسلمانان جوئی های خون چون آب چشم ہ مچھ بون جاری ساخت ہ خود را از برای حطام دنیای دون بہ عذاب جاوید اخروی مغلوب و سرنگوں گردانید (ص ۴۲۹)

The author of *Baharistan-i-Shahi* gave proof of bravery at other places also. He recorded the events which were against the government of that time and described the facts without caring for his life. He exposes the Yusuf Khan's malice and openly recorded that killing of Kashmiri nobles by Mughal Governors. He narrated that Bahram Nayak along with his son was poisoned. Saif Khan Baihaqi, Ali Khan of Dachinpara, Ibrahim (Ibeh Shetan), the brother of Haider Chak were deprived of their eyesight under various pretexts and Lohar Chak Qurchi was sentenced to death. Mirza Yusuf Khan was greatly fascinated by the environmental beauty of Kashmir. As a result, he began to implicate the nobles of that land in false and fabricated cases and in this way he got an excuse to kill few of them every day. The text presents it:

ن پارہ و بعد از آن بہرام نایک را مع فرزندان بہ زہر ہلال جان ستان از دار فنا بہ دار البقا رسانید۔ سیف خان بیہقی و علی خان دچ ابراہیم ایبہ شیطان برادر حیدر چک را چشمان از حدق ہ بر آوردہ نور باصرہ معطل گردانیدہ و لوہر چک قرچی را نیز بہ عذر و بہانہ بموقف سیاست آوردہ بقتل رسانید۔ چون محبت فضائی دلگشای و دوستی ہوائی دل افزائی ممالک کشمیر در دل یوسف خان با قضیٰ بغایت غالب بود۔ لاجرم ہر روز برخی از اعیان آن دیار بہ ہر حیلہ و بہانہ ہموارہ در معرض سیاست در آوردہ ہلاک و معدوم می گردانید (ص ۴۳۰)

The author of *Baharistan-i-Shahi* also gives detailed account of treaty which was signed between Yusuf Shah and Raja Bhagwan Das in which Yusuf Shah was deceived by Imperial court. This deceit shocked Raja Bhagwan Das and made an attempt to suicide. According to this treaty, if Yusuf Shah would pay homage to Emperor Akber and present himself in front of him he would continue as the ruler of Kashmir and nothing would be reduced from his power and authority. Bhagwan Das wrote the agreement and handed over it to Mirza Qasim to be delivered to Yusuf Shah. It was planned that Yusuf Shah would join the Raja without delay and without consulting his son. Yusuf Shah did so and Raja Bhagwan Das headed towards the court of Emperor Akbar with Yusuf Shah. Although Yusuf Shah showed utmost sincerity and faithfulness but luck as well as promises of Raja Bhagwan Das both deserted him. Ultimately he was imprisoned for two and half years. Unfortunately on some grounds some of the famous Persian chronicles of Kashmir ignore this event rather

changed the narration by saying that Yusuf Shah was captured and imprisoned by Raja Bhagwan Das and sent to imperial court. Examine the quote of most famous history of Kashmir "waq'at Kashmir":

و چون به پکلی رسید یوسف شاه رامبوس ساخت در پیش گاه خلافت اکبر پادشاه رسانید

(محمد اعظم دیده مری، ص ۹۸)

The most important thing about this text is that its author was the contemporary of Mughals emperors and was eye witness of invasion and occupation of Kashmir by Them. After consulting this history one can easily understand that its author had poetic taste and was fully acquainted with Arabic. Despite these features some recent authors like Ghulam Rasool Bhat highlighted some shortcomings of this history and termed its author a liar and an enemy of a particular faith ( Bhat 42,43). He also pointed out the mistakes which took place in conversion of dates from Hijra to Lukika. The name of the author of this text is not evident which to some extent affects its status but in text we find a verse in which he used Tahir his name or pen name. At another place he mentioned his great grand fathers name as Mullah Husam-ud-din and praised his clan. The couplet is here in which he mention his name /pen name:

بہ میراث او از علی ولی است

چون طاهر غلام علی است

(ص ۲۸۵)

## CONCLUSION

This implies the fact, how much author of *Baharistan-i-Shahi* was honest in recording events in their factual form. The author was a real patriot of his motherland and considered the Mughal occupation of Kashmir as a sign of insult for whole nation. It seems that he was from an intellectual clan and got familiarity and due to this reason he did not mention his name. He wrote this chronicle on stake of his life so it is understandable that one who writes against the ruling authority would conceal his name. As an outcome we can say that the *Baharistan-i-Shahi* enjoys high status in Persian chronicles of Kashmir due to its bold attitude, its unbiased approach and its authenticity. It is only this text which to some extent made all other Persian histories suspicious and hopefully this suspension opens the doors for research in the field of Kashmir history.

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