

# **Perspectives on Kashmir**

**HISTORICAL DIMENSIONS**

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***Gulshan Publishers (Regd.)***

**GOW KADAL CHOWK  
SRINAGAR KASHMIR**

**First published 1983**

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*Price : 100-00 (One hundred only)*

*Distributors : Sheikh Mohammad Usman and Sons, Exchange Road, Gow Kadal Chowk, Srinagar Kashmir.*

*Published by : Meraj-ud-Din for Gulshan Publishers  
Gow Kandal, Shrinagar at  
Shri Composing Kendra  
Yadav Printing Press, DELHI-6*

**To the Memory  
Of  
My Mother  
a paragon  
of  
virtue**

**Stories first heard at a mother's knee are never wholly forgotten,—a little spring that never quite dries up in our journey through scorching years.**

**Giovanni Ruffini**



## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I am grateful to the authorities of the Islamic Culture Board, Hyderabad, and the Institute of Historical Studies, Calcutta for permissions to reprint previously published material. In particular, I should like to express my gratitude to Professors Maqbool Ahmed and Mushir-ul-Hasan for their valuable suggestions; Dr. Imtiaz Ahmed for his first lesson in sociology; Dr. Rattan Lal Hangloo for playing host to me during my stay in New Delhi ; Dr. Abdul Majid Mattoo and Dr. M. Ashraf wani for drawing my attention to some valuable source material; and Mr. G. Sarwar for typing the manuscript. I also wish to thank Prof. A. Q. Rafiqi, Mssrs. Z. L. Jalla, Mohammad Saleem Khan and Mushtaq Ahmed Kaw. A word of thanks is also due to Professor Wahid-ud-Din Malik, Vice-Chancellor, Kashmir University for help which, in all my work, has become habitual. I owe a similar debt to the Chancellor, of our University, Hon'ble B.K. Nehru for constant encouragement and 'best wishes' for my academic pursuits.

But above all, my sincere thanks are due to Allah who has given me courage to work in spite of troubles.

(Mohammad Ishaq Khan)

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August 13, 1982.



## **ABBREVIATIONS**

- A.S.B.** Asiatic Society of Bengal.
- C.C.A.S.** Centre of Central Asian Studies, Kashmir University.
- G.R.** General Records (of Jammu and Kashmir Archives).
- J & K** Jammu and Kashmir.
- J.R.A.S.** Journal of Royal Asiatic Society.
- J.K.A.** Jammu and Kashmir Archives.
- N.A.I.** National Archives of India.
- R.P.B.** Research and Publication Department Library, Srinagar. (All manuscripts of the Library have recently been shifted to the Library of Centre of Central Asian Studies, Kashmir University.)





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# Introduction

The present work is composed of papers written at various times. While some of these were published in the learned journals, others are revised versions of the papers presented at seminars in the country and abroad. The purpose of bringing them out in the present emended form is mainly to stimulate further research on topics of vital importance pertaining to Kashmir history. The aim is not to take up these topics for discussion with a view to arriving at conclusive interpretation. As a matter of fact, a humble beginning has been made to focus attention of scholars on such problems as need fuller investigation at the level of historical reconstruction in research.

Though a narrative style has been adopted in the second chapter, it opens to the reader's view an important watershed in Kashmir history *viz.*, the Mughal conquest of Kashmir in 1586. It will be seen that long before the advent of the Mughals Kashmir was well known as a centre of great learning and culture. The Mahayanist Doctrine of Buddhism was born and developed in Kashmir. The fact that Buddhism spread in Central Asia as a result of the activities of Kashmiri teachers in the Kushan period is too well known to merit any special mention here. As regards Kashmir's contribution to the Sanskrit learning, it was enormous. For centuries Kashmir was the home of great Sanskrit scholars and at least one influential form of Hinduism, Saivism, found "some of its eloquent teachers on the banks of the Vitasta." During the Sultanate period (1320-1586), Kashmir gave a new dimension to the Islamic mysticism (*Tasawwuf*) in the form of the *Rishi* movement started by Shaikh Nur-ud-Din Wali. It is due to the influence of his ideas that the orientation of an average Kashmiri Muslim is *Sufi* to a remarkable degree. The *Sufi* concern for human brotherhood beyond

the bounds of the closed religious group has always been important to the Kashmiri Muslims as it is in our own days.

The Sultanate period in Kashmir is generally known for the cultural achievements in the fields of arts and crafts, architecture, calligraphy, music, literature, poetry and painting. But more than that it was marked by the emergence of regional and culture personality consciousness; the two great Kashmiris of this period, Lalla Ded, a Hindu *yogini*, and, Shaikh Nur-ud-Din Wali, a Muslim saint may be described as the fountain-heads of the ideology which in our own times is beginning to develop in the form of *Kashmiriyat*. The reason why the concept of *Kashmiriyat* could not grow fully and remained dormant until the dawn of the present century may be explained in terms of misrule and oppression which marked the greater part of Kashmir history from the end of the sixteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth century.

It was the Mughal conquest of Kashmir in 1586 which ultimately brought about the decline of a high standard of culture that Kashmir had achieved under the Sultans of Kashmir. Why wasn't there any intellectual activity of a creative nature during the Mughal period in Kashmir? Why did the Kashmiris become ease loving and lose the martial qualities? How is it that the Chaks whose number was considerable and who not only fought the Mughals to a finish, but proved themselves to be the great patrons of Kashmiri culture, disappeared suddenly from Kashmir's ethnic history? How is it that the once dominant Muslim ruling families of the Magres, Dars, Rainas and Bhats took to agriculture after the Mughal occupation of Kashmir? How far did the Kashmiris identify themselves with the Mughal culture? Did the Kashmiri lose his personal identity as a result of the Mughal conquest? What was the reaction of the dominant sections of Kashmir society, other than the ruling class of the Chaks, to the Mughal occupation of Kashmir? Why did Kashmiri poetry or literature not develop under the Mughals? Why were Kashmiris not recruited in the

Mughal army ? Did the Mughal rule bring about any salutary reforms in the field of revenue administration ? What was the composition and character of the nobility in Kashmir under the Mughals ? Unfortunately, all these and other questions that have a close bearing on the Kashmiri of today have seldom received the attention of historians.

One of the main results of the Mughal invasion of Kashmir, however, seems to have been the gradual rise of the Kashmiri Pandits to key posts in administration. The revenue collectors of the Mughals were mainly the Kashmiri Pandits. Pandit Tota Ram, for instance, acted as the *Peshkar* in the reign of Akbar. Pandit Chandra Bhan served as a Personal Secretary to Prince Dara Shikoh. During the Afghan rule in Kashmir again the Pandits rose to very high positions. Pandit Nand Ram Tikku rose from a humble position to the high office of the *Diwan* of Kabul. There were several other Pandits who shot into prominence during this period. "Almost every business and occupation in the service of the higher orders under Pathan Governors," wrote Baron Hugel, "was transacted by Brahmins."<sup>1</sup> An important consequence of this development was that from this period onwards the Kashmiri Pandits began to play a crucial role in the political affairs of Kashmir. Pandit Birbal Dhar, who held a very high office under the Afghan rulers, was instrumental in bringing about the down-fall of his Afghan patrons and the eventual establishment of the Sikh rule in Kashmir in 1819. The Pandits extended a warm welcome to the Dogras when they spread their tentacles in Kashmir after ousting the Sikhs from power in 1846. During the Dogra rule the Kashmiri Pandits acted as Prime Ministers, governors, heads of departments, Maharaja's secretaries, members of the *Durbar*, the State Council and the *Prajha Sabha*. More than 90 per cent of the posts in the revenue, educational and other departments of the State were monopolised by the Kashmiri Pandits. They were so well entrenched in the administration that the Dogra rulers found it impossible to displace

\* Aurangzeb was, however, willing to recruit Kashmiris in his army.

them. Thus, when Maharaja Pratap Singh, began to shower favours on the Punjabis, the Pandits raised the issue of *mulki* and non-*mulki*. The Pandit agitation started over this question resulted in the appointment of the State Subjects Definition Committee soon after the accession of Maharaja Hari Singh in 1925. The definition arrived at by the Committee was accepted by the new Maharaja in 1927. It was thus by forcing the government to define a genuine State Subject that the Pandits succeeded in showing exit to the Punjabis in the State service and thereby continued their monopoly of the services.

In fact, the Pandits were the pampered subjects of the Dogra rulers and, therefore, they formed the main prop of the government. The emergence of an extensive class of the Pandit landed aristocracy after 1846 contributed a great deal to the miseries of the bulk of the peasants who were almost hundred per cent Muslims. It is no surprise, therefore, that when in the 1930's the peasants and the other working people of the Muslim population of Kashmir rose in rebellion against some extreme forms of exploitation and oppression, they were dubbed as communalists by the Pandits. "A popular mass movement," writes Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, "especially in Kashmir with 95 per cent Muslim population, was bound to be predominantly Muslim. Otherwise it would not be popular and would not affect the masses. It was also natural that the Hindu minority of 5 per cent should not view it with favour, both from the communal and the middle-class point of view."<sup>1a</sup> No wonder, the Pandits strongly reacted to the movement; their immediate reaction was that of a rabid communal group which brought to the forefront the Hindu-Muslim problem in a vehement form for the first time in Kashmir history.

It should, however, be borne in mind that what was coming up in the Valley in the thirties was not just discontent of the urban and the rural masses; nothing indeed is more central to Kashmir's contemporary history than the upsurge of the formerly long-subordinated Kashmiri culture

of the mass of the population against the age-long domination of the Brahmans. The consequences were immediately apparent; the emerging problems of regional identity and culture personality in the thirties and the subsequent politicization of the question offer interesting insights into the dynamics of the Muslim politics of Kashmir. The evidence considered suggests that it is futile to look for a simple explanation of the origins of identity either in the historical conflict of Hinduism and Islam, or even the so-called colonial interest in Kashmir. The July uprising of 1931 may have aggravated communal tension and given Muslim belligerence a sharp political focus but it does not explain the origin of the popular movement.

The third chapter focusses on the problem of transition from the medieval to the modern period in Kashmir history. It will be noticed that the widely fashionable practice of dividing Indian history into ancient, medieval and modern is not only conventional and arbitrary but even unhistorical. The chapter brings to light the fact that although periodisation is generally found convenient by historians investigating issues of all India significance, it may prove an inconvenient tool to historians engaged in the study of regions at micro level. Thus the crucial issues raised by the regional studies are much more complex, and have to be fathomed convincingly.

In the following chapter an attempt has been made to analyse the sources of the Sultanate and the Mughal periods. As is well known, Kashmir is the only part of the sub-continent where the tradition of writing history existed even before the advent of Islam. With the foundation of the Sultanate in Kashmir many learned men from Persia and Turkistan began to pour into the Valley. They brought with them the Persian and Central Asian traditions of historiography. Thus a good number of Sanskrit and Persian chronicles were written during the Sultanate period. A careful reading of these historical records, however, reveals certain neglected truths which are relevant to our own times.

Among the Sanskrit chroniclers of the period like Jonaraja and Srivara, for example, one finds a good deal of concern for the preservation of the Brahman's identity against the onslaught of cultural forces which came in the wake of Islam in Kashmir. Did the Kashmiri Brahmans succeed in preserving their identity? Our answer to this question is a big YES. It is true that there is a remarkable affinity between Hindus and Muslims of Kashmir in their social life in some respects, yet, in many aspects of their cultural life there exist fundamental divergences between the two communities. Prof. T. N. Madan rightly points out that in Kashmir "we are faced with a situation of dual identities and of dual social orders."<sup>2</sup>

In the domain of politics the Pandits have always acted as a closed group. This is why their political role has remained reactionary particularly from the July uprising of 1931. So long as the Muslims remained in political backwater, the Pandits did not raise the Hindu-Muslim question; but with the growing political consciousness among the Muslims of Kashmir, the Pandits felt a great challenge to their age-long supremacy. They feared that any change in the *status quo* might bring about 'Muslim rule'<sup>3</sup> in Kashmir. Consequently, the Pandits who formed the only middle-class intelligentsia of the Kashmir society, directed all their energies towards safeguarding their class interests. The emergence of the Kashmiri Muslims on the political map of the sub-continent forced them to move in two directions *viz.*, communal and secular. While more than 99 per cent of the Pandits opposed the popular movement tooth and nail, an insignificant number of the Pandits like Prem Nath Bazaz decided to support the Muslims. However, the role played by the "secular" Pandits too, proved to be far from satisfactory. Bazaz, for example, was a great influence on Shaikh Muhammad Abdullah and, although the conversion of the Muslim Conference into the National Conference was brought about by the political sagacity of the latter, it was in no small measure, the outcome of the influence of Bazaz's powerful writings and his close



association with the Kashmir leader. But it remains to be seen why Bazaz who played an important part in laying the foundations of secular nationalism in Kashmir, later turned to be an arch enemy of the National Conference. Not only did Bazaz join hands with the enemies of the National Conference after 1940, but he even did a lot of academic propaganda against Shaikh Abdullah so as to tarnish his towering public image. Whether Bazaz's role in Kashmir politics since 1931 has been that of a 'nationalist', a 'Pakistani', a 'socialist', or a 'reactionary' masquerading in the guise of a 'secularist' is a question worth studying; nevertheless, the course of development in his political thinking suggests particularly one significant conclusion—that his political role was always strong enough to induce mutual conflict in the Muslim community of Kashmir. This is not only proved by his writings but also by the fact that the Mir Waiz family of Srinagar always enlisted the support of Bazaz in order to regain the position it had lost in Muslim society of Kashmir owing to the emergence of Shaikh Abdullah. Thus, while in the pre-independence period, Bazaz supported Mir Waiz Muhammad Yusuf Shah's demand for the integration of the State of Jammu and Kashmir with Pakistan, in the Assembly elections of 1977 he pitted Mir Waiz Moulana Muhammad Farooq against the National Conference so as to pave the way for the success of the Junta Party in Kashmir. It is interesting to note that the main item on the agenda in the meetings presided over by Bazaz at the Mir Waiz's house during the elections was how to bring about the downfall of Shaikh Abdullah.<sup>5</sup>

It ought to be remembered that the National Conference was founded by Shaikh Abdullah with the hope of winning over the Kashmiri Pandits. However, it remains a fact that the Pandits attitude towards the National Conference always remained one of hostility. The exhortations of Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru to the Pandits to join the National Conference did not have any considerable effect. And even such Pandits as joined the National Conference towards the end of the Dogra rule proved themselves to be lukewarm

in their support to the party leadership. In fact, the Pandit public opinion was always moulded by the daily *Martand*, which represented the Pandit point of view in Kashmir. The *Martand* always doubted the motives of Shaikh Abdullah and not unoften, his nationalism came in for carping criticism in the paper. The paper was deferential in its tone and expected Maharaja Hari Singh to bestow favours on the Pandits for being loyal to him. The 'New Kashmir Manifesto' issued by the National Conference in 1944 also became the butt of attack in a series of articles in the *Martand*; the main reason for this opposition being that it aimed at putting an end to the feudal privileges enjoyed by the Pandit landed gentry during the Dogra rule in Kashmir.

There is yet another side to the picture. Ever since the beginning of the political movement, the Kashmiri Pandits have been constantly raising the bogey of threat to their community at the hands of the 'majority community' in Kashmir. As a matter of fact, imaginary fears continue to be expressed in the various official publications of the Pandit organizations in and outside the State. There can be no denying the fact that during the last five decades or more, the Pandit leadership has always been on the look out for an opportunity to strike a blow against the centuries old secular traditions of Kashmir. Thus as early as the beginning of political awakening in Kashmir, the Pandits not only drew closer to the policies and ideals of the Hindu Mahasabha, but they even sought the support of other Hindu communal organizations of northern India from time to time. The radical land reforms introduced by the National Conference government in 1950 were interpreted in communal terms by the Pandits and their supporters in Jammu and New Delhi. One of the main arguments raised was that the reforms were directly aimed at the Pandits. Though the Central Government was not against the spirit of the reforms, it did not approve of the manner in which the reforms were implemented. Sardar Patel's group particularly was greatly alarmed by the radicalism of Shaikh Abdullah. It is, therefore, hard to contest the view that Shaikh Abdullah's expulsion from power in 1953 was mainly the re-

sult of a conspiracy hatched by those Pandits whose interests in the land were affected by the promulgation of the Big Landed Estates Act of 1950<sup>7</sup>.

The Pandit agitation over the voluntary conversion of a Pandit girl to Islam in 1967 also bears an eloquent testimony to the fact that Pandit leaderships role in Kashmir has always been against the larger interests of the country. No less anti-national has been the role of the national press fed mainly by the Pandit correspondents; its editorials, articles and news concerning Kashmir have often looked at things with jaundiced eyes by magnifying the problems of the Pandit community. So great has been the effect of the propagandist activities of the Pandits that even a seasoned politician like Indra Gandhi was forced to remark recently that the 'minorities' are not safe in Kashmir.<sup>8</sup>

It will thus be seen that in spite of their numerical insignificance, the Pandits have not only made their presence felt in the arena of national politics but even now seem to guide the destiny of the Kashmiri Muslims. True that the politics of the Pandits is the politics of certain vested interests it has, nevertheless stood in the way of emergence of the Kashmiris as a monolithic political group. The Pandits phobia regarding their property, life and religion have only served to strengthen the revivalist and the separatist forces in Kashmir in recent years. The growing popularity of the *Islami Jamiat-i-Tulabba* among the Muslim youth may be described as a chain reaction to the onslaught of communal forces in the Kashmir politics. One need not feel surprised, therefore, why in a mammoth Friday gathering at Hazratbal recently Shaikh Abdullah felt constrained to openly criticise the inimical activities of 'Hindu communalists' in and outside the State against the Muslims of Kashmir.

The Kashmiri Pandits conception of themselves as a distinct political, religious and cultural group also seems to receive an added support from the historical literature produced by them in the modern period. In these works a

conscious attempt has been made to show that the Muslim rulers of Kashmir destroyed the temples, forcibly converted the Pandits to Islam and built mosques and shrines on the debris of the Hindu temples. Among these works Dr. R. K. Parmu's *History of Muslim Rule in Kashmir* (Peoples Publishing House, 1969) deserves special mention. Dr. Parmu who, paradoxically enough, has been commissioned by the present Government of Kashmir to write the history of the Dogra rule and the freedom movement in Kashmir is the classic example of a Pandit historian writing from the point of view of a Kashmiri Pandit. He describes the entire period of the Sultans of Kashmir as an "alien government."<sup>9</sup> To him the Sikh rulers appear to be the saviours of Kashmir since their coming to power "turned the tide of history . . . A new and revolutionary order of society and administrative system came into being." One fails to understand what Dr. Parmu means by "a revolutionary order of society."<sup>10</sup> Commenting on it, Prof. Mohibbul Hasan remarks that it "is clear that by 'a revolutionary order of society' what Dr. Parmu means is that henceforth the Kashmiri Pandits establish their domination over the rest of the population of Kashmir."<sup>11</sup> It may be added that Dr. Parmu's expression of his sentiments denotes the creation of a powerful group of the Pandit landed gentry in the Sikh and the Dogra rule in Kashmir which for over a century squeezed and fleeced the vast multitude of the agriculturists and artisans in Kashmir.

Islam's success in Kashmir as a social force has not been accepted by the Pandit historians. Most of them tend to perpetuate the false notion, on the basis of stray references in the chronicles, that Islam spread in Kashmir as a result of the "fanatical zeal"<sup>12</sup> of Mir Sayyid Muhammad Hamadani and a batch of his Sayyid followers. Dr. Parmu puts forth a strange argument that Mir Sayyid Muhammad "decided to employ all those militant methods which are associated with the title of *ghazi* (sic!)." <sup>13</sup> He even goes to the extent of saying that Islam was embraced by 'the Hindu community' mainly owing to "their cowardice and pusillanimity. Most of them cowardly embraced Islam simply to be allowed to

exist in the land of their birth, while a large number committed suicide. *When their religion, culture, life and liberty were in danger, they should have made a common cause and offered united resistance when they predominated numerically.* We are told that only the Brahmans resisted long and in consequence were tormented and tortured with the result that only a couple of thousands were left behind to preserve and maintain ancient religion and traditional culture. Other castes, who *out-numbered the Brahman community exceedingly, failed to make any sacrifice.* *It is a very sad commentary on the state of social and moral degeneration and degradation which had by this time generally set in Hindu society in Kashmir.*<sup>14</sup> (Italics mine).

It would thus follow that a highly caste-conscious Brahman historian of our own times continues to vent spleen on the "degenerated" and "degraded" Hindu ancestors of the great bulk of the present day Muslims of Kashmir for accepting Islam. There can be no better examples of communal trends in Indian historiography than those found in the works of the traditional pen-pushers (*ahl-i-qalam*) of Kashmir. Unfortunately, the Pandit historians tend to gloss over the fact that the conversion of Hindus to Islam in the Sultanate period was actually the revolt of socially oppressed people against the domination of high-caste Brahmans. Though this problem ought to be investigated fully, a few observations may be made here on the basis of a careful examination of the source material :—

(1) There is little doubt that Mir Sayyid Ali Hamadani, his son, Mir Sayyid Muhammad Hamadani and their disciples visited many villages of Kashmir to convey the message of Islam to the masses. But considering the fact that there were barriers of linguistic communication between the Sayyids and the common man in the Sultanate period, it is doubtful whether their objective of converting the entire population of Kashmir was realized in their own time. However, their missionary activities did undermine the very core of the Brahmanic society. This is evident from the fact that

no less a person than Lalla Ded, a Hindu ascetic, became the chief exponent of Islamic monotheism in Kashmir. Lalla's rejection of idolatry and her tirade against the Brahmanical supremacy in popular language instead of reforming the corrupt Brahman society actually served the cause of Islam in Kashmir. This explains why Lalla's verses are still on the tip of the tongue of a common Muslim in Kashmir particularly in the rural areas. Not only that, Lalla's greatest eulogists have been Muslim writers so much so that she has been described as 'Rabia Sani'<sup>15</sup> in the chronicles.

We should not also be oblivious of the fact that what came into the villages from the minds of remote teachers like Sayyid Ali Hamadani did not vanish in thin air with the latter's departure from Kashmir. Not only Lalla, but it was also Shaikh Nur-ud-Din Wali<sup>16</sup>, who maintained, what in anthropological terms, may be described as an interaction between the Little and the Great Tradition. When we are called upon to study the history of Islam in Kashmir, we must remember, that it is in reality a history of civilization of which the village culture was the most powerful expression. Thus the greatest exponents of Islam in Kashmir were the Rishis who represented both traditions. In the time of Akbar<sup>17</sup> and Jahangir there were about 2,000 Rishis in Kashmir. It is they who carried the message of Shaikh Nur-ud-Din Wali from home to home. Even in our own times some wandering Rishis are occasionally found in Kashmir, but considering the fact that Islam has already spread in the nook and corner of the valley, the Rishi movement has gone into oblivion. Unfortunately the study of the social organization of the Rishi tradition has often escaped the notice of historians with their stereotypes about conversions.

(II) The mystical teachings of Lalla Ded and Shaikh Nur-ud-Din Wali were more in tune with the Kashmiris basic spirit than the doctrines of the *Shariat* of Islam. The study of Shaikh-Nur-Din's sayings shows that gradually *Shariat* itself in his thought came to be modelled more closely on *tasawwuf* and adopted a more tolerant attitude

towards living traditions of the people. In fact, the success of Islam in Kashmir was not only due to its rational nature, but also due to the tolerance and readiness of saint missionaries like Shaikh Nur-ud-Din Wali, and for that matter even Mir Sayyid Ali Hamadani to accept outside influences. That the Muslim saints did not always insist on a total and immediate abandonment of all old habits and traditions is evident from the fact that Mir Sayyid Ali Hamadani allowed the faithful to recite the *Aurad-i-Fathiya* aloud after congregational prayers in the mosques. The essence of this litany lies in its emphasis on the various names and attributes of Allah. It can be inferred from the psychological behaviour of the Kashmiris that they must have frequently visited the mosques whenever the *Aurad* was recited in a chorus by the neo-converts. It is, therefore, not surprising that the drummers of the temples realized that the more dignified manner of propitiating God<sup>18</sup> was not in flattering the vanity of the Brahman priests but in surrendering one's own self to the Almighty through the recitation of *Aurad-i-Fathiya*. Even now Kashmiri Muslims are seen reciting the *Aurad* in mosques with folded hands in a state of spiritual ecstasy which speaks for the local influence on their mode of prayer. Such a practice is abhorrent to the Muslims<sup>19</sup> who have come under the influence of the *Ahl-i-Hadith* movement. But only a careful analysis of Kashmiri Muslims religious tradition reveals that Islam's victory in Kashmir was effected more by the Kashmiris urge to experience the Divine in terms of love and not as a mere abstraction. In other words, Islam developed a resilient tradition of its own in Kashmir which fostered and developed first under the guidance of Mir Sayyid Ali Hamadani and later under Shaikh Nur-ud-Din Wali and his disciples.

(III) It is not correct to remark that Islam's success in Kashmir was sudden and spectacular owing to the policy of persecution adopted by Sultan Sikandar towards the Hindus. Some writers lend credence to the tradition that only eleven families of the Hindus survived in Kashmir as a result of Sikandar's iconoclasm<sup>20</sup>. Even if one agrees that the Hindus

suffered the trauma of dislocation, forced conversion, and violence in the time of Sikandar, one cannot be blind to the fact that such a policy finally had only a nullifying effect, since Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin, the liberal-minded son of Sikandar, completely reversed the policy of his father. Zain-ul-Abidin not only allowed the converts to return to their original faith (Hinduism) but he even went to the extent of popularising Hindu religion. It was on account of his eclecticism that he earned not merely the title of *Bud Shah* "the Great King", but the contemporary Sanskrit writers even elevated him to the position of Vishnu incarnate.<sup>21</sup>

(IV) Islam's triumph in Kashmir may also be explained in terms of the process of acculturation. There is a strong reason to believe that the culture of the masses in the Sultanate and the Mughal periods was undergoing an imperceptible change of which they were not themselves aware. The process of acculturation is testified to in the sources. Inter-marriages, for example, were common in the early phase of Islam in Kashmir. Such practices, though disliked by the outside visitors, seem to have been prevalent due to several reasons. First, even after their conversion to Islam, the converts did not part with their old habits and customs, nor do they seem to have severed connections with their relatives. The close contact of the neo-converts and their kith and kin leading to the intermingling of two different cultures must have accelerated the process of acculturation. This explains why Kashmiri Muslims were not generally considered to be good Muslims. Jahangir could not distinguish between Hindus and Muslims of Kashmir.<sup>22</sup> Aurangzeb called the Muslims of Kashmir irreligious (*be pir*)<sup>23</sup>. Not surprisingly, most of the European travellers of the nineteenth century Kashmir remarked that there was much in common between the religious practices of the two divergent groups. Secondly, the *Shariat* laws, though enforced by Sultan Sikandar, could not be followed strictly after his death owing to the secularisation of administration by Zain-ul-Abidin. Added to this is the fact that the Brahman dominated Hindu society had not developed cultural institutions



and practices based on a sound religious ideology which could have worked as a bulwark against the forces of acculturation. This explains why Jonaraja remarks in disgust : "As the wind destroys the trees, and the locusts the shali crop, so did the Yavanas destroy the usages of Kashmira."<sup>24</sup> The mass of Hindus were primarily cultivators, with much of their mythology associated with earth. They were animists with rituals honouring nature spirits. The strong involvement in life seems to have propelled them to embrace Islam which was also presented as an earthly religion by the Sayyids and the Rishis.

(V) We should not make the mistake of assuming that Islam was embraced in Kashmir by the Hindus alone. Though Buddhism had already shown signs of decline, it, none-the-less, continued to be the creed of a considerable number of people in Kashmir on the eve of the advent of Islam. The very fact that Buddhism held its ground in Kashmir even after the establishment of the Sultanate is shown by the construction of *viharas*<sup>25</sup> by Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin in the country for his Buddhist subjects. One of the influential members of the Sultan's Council was a Buddhist, Tilakacharya.<sup>26</sup> In Husain Shah's reign we hear of the discussions of the Buddhist priests with the Sultan.<sup>27</sup> What transpired between Husain Shah and the Buddhist priests is not known; however, the mutual discussions between the followers of Islam and Buddhism reflect the desire of the spiritually thirsty people to know the religious truth. This also explains the fact that Rinchana, a Buddhist prince of Ladakh, was the first Buddhist to embrace Islam in Kashmir under the influence of Sayyid Sharaf-ud-din (Bubul Shah), a Sufi saint of Suharwardi order, after a good deal of enquiry after the truth. Rinchana became the first Muslim ruler of Kashmir and adopted the name of Sadr-ud-din on the advice of the saint. However, his conversion should not be treated as an isolated case; nor should we regard it as a matter of political expediency.<sup>28</sup> In medieval times it was the personal decision of the chiefs that usually determined the collective action of groups or clans. It can therefore be safely inferred

that a considerable number of the Buddhist followers of Rinchana must have also embraced Islam after their chief's conversion and his elevation to the high office of kingship.

Thus the triumph of Islam in Kashmir in the fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries should not be described as an act of miracle performed by Sayyid Ali Hamadani or as a mere demonstration of force displayed by Sultan Sikandar; it was, in essence, a natural revolt of human heart against the cold formalism of ritualistic Brahman priests. It was a manifestation of an attitude of mind and heart towards God and the problems of life by people who had been receptive to new religious influences from times immemorial. Islam, with its warm mystical yearning after union and fellowship with Allah, nowhere, found a more suitable soil in which to thrive than Kashmir, where the very atmosphere was charged with a deep religious craving to know God from ages past, with the result to-day a great bulk of the population of Kashmir is under the influence of various mystic orders. This mystical dimension of Islam has, in the Valley of the saints (*Piri waer*), provided a philosophy of life to the rich as well as the poor who continue to flock to the local saints' shrines so as to elevate their soul and fortify it rather than devote themselves to the study of favourite hypotheses or systems of the fundamentalists.

The present discussion on the continuity of tradition in Kashmir will not be complete if we do not attempt to answer the question as to how far the Muslim mind of today has been influenced by the writings of Persian chroniclers. It will be seen that the latter have eulogized the activities of such men in Kashmir history as fought against the non-Kashmiri domination. Thus Haidar Malik attributes the downfall of Mirza Haidar Dughlat to the revolts of the Kashmiri nobles against his tyrannical acts. One of the remarkable features of Haidar Malik's work is the author's sense of local patriotism which is implicit in his account of relations of the Chak Sultans with Akbar. The author of *Baharistan-i-Shahi* also reveals his mind by glorifying the activities of

the Chaks against the Mughals. The extent to which the Persian chroniclers have influenced the Kashmiri mind may be judged by the fact that the Srinagar Doordarshan had to televise a Kashmiri film on Habba Khatun not less than a dozen times at the persistent demand of the public. Even now the Srinagar television continues to receive letters to this effect. The central idea of the film is that Akbar was not only treacherous in his dealings with the Kashmiri freedom fighters, but he was also an imperialist to the core, who enslaved the Kashmiris by destroying the independent character of the 'Kashmiri Nation'. No wonder, Yusuf Shah has been described as a 'national hero' of Kashmir who fought the 'Mughal imperialism' in order to save the honour, integrity and independence of Kashmir. It is also significant to note that in recent years Shaikh Muhammad Abdullah paid a special visit to Patna so as to pay his homage to the 'great sons of Kashmir'.<sup>29</sup> The Kashmir leaders' visit to Patna was given a wide publicity not only by the local press, but also by the Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Culture, Arts and Languages.

A good deal of academic discussion has also taken place in recent times to turn Yusuf Shah into a 'national hero'. It may, however, be pointed out that all this is being done to popularise the ideology of *Kashmiriyat*.

*Kashmiriyat* is not a new idea ; it ought to be understood in its historical perspective and also within the broader framework of the rich and unique cultural heritage of Kashmir. Both Lalla Ded and Shaikh Nur-ud-Din Wali's mystic poetry contributed a great deal to the evolution of the idea of *Kashmiriyat*. In fact, the Kashmiri mind began to develop and grow healthy with the birth of Kashmiri poetry during the Sultanate period. Kashmiri mind has always been, as it is now, susceptible to the mystic strain in poetry. It is also well to remember that in spite of the political upheavals, the Kashmiri has successfully maintained the strong continuity and identity in almost all fields of the activities of

social life. As a matter of reality, the Kashmiri of old chronicles is not difficult to recognize in the Kashmir of our own days. The mystic tradition of maintaining a balance between the spiritual and the material life is not merely the part of old history but also that of contemporary history. The introvert warmth of the devotees in the mosques and shrines of Kashmir is as visible today as it was centuries ago. The old peculiar habits and customs continue to be cherished and transmitted from generation to generation. Kashmiri craftsmen and artists of today are as famous for their skill as their ancestors were in the past. Curiously enough, food habits of the Kashmiri people have hardly changed. The torrid heat, food and mode of life of a greater part of India are quite often, as strange to a common man in Kashmir as they are to the foreign visitor. Unless compelled by the force of circumstances, a Kashmiri is as reluctant to move out of his Vale to day as he was in the days gone by. Even such Kashmiris as settled in the plains owing to the recurrence of natural calamities in Kashmir and also due to misrule and oppression did not forget their ancestral links with Kashmir. Sir Muhammad Iqbal and Allama Anwar Shah are two illustrious examples. While Anwar Shah did not forget Kashmir in the crucial days of the early thirties, Iqbal, in spite of his multifarious engagements, remained dedicated to the cause of Kashmir throughout his life. In fact, Kashmir owes a great deal to Iqbal whose patriotic poems on Kashmir awakened the Kashmiri from deep slumber.

Though geography has played an important role in preserving the distinct identity of Kashmir, a still powerful force which explains the continuity of Kashmir life is the love and devotion which the Kashmiris have for their mother land (*Mouj Kashmir*). This attachment which they feel for the Valley of Kashmir is reflected in their poetry which abounds in praise of the meadows, springs, rivers, rivulets, mountains, hillocks, forests, gardens, flowers, trees, birds and the sacred shrines of their *watan*. It can hardly be denied that Kashmiris have always used their language for the expression

of their intense love for the Valley. True that Kashmiris have been exposed to the influences radiating from the sub-continent, the West and even Saudi Arabia<sup>30</sup> in recent times ; yet they have not lost their soul due to the onslaught of the outside forces. And if literature is to be regarded as portraying the life of a society and as a record of its yearnings, aspirations and doubts, it would be seen that Kashmiri poets appear with their mind alive to the challenges posed by the "alien" forces. Even a cursory glance over the pages of several literary works in Kashmiri is enough to convince the ordinary reader that the Kashmiri mind of the present day is prepared to modify, even to reject much of the old, but in no case it is, prepared to repudiate totally the inheritance of Kashmir's past. The Kashmiri litterateurs have been both self-conscious and socially conscious in their endeavours to preserve what may be considered of permanent and abiding value in their own culture and to assimilate from the outside forces what is necessary for building up a new society. Thus the influences which have moulded the Kashmiris in their chequered history are apt to show amply the relevance of their unique individuality and that of the need for the statesmen of the sub-continent to recognize and understand the same.

It must be explained that in the last fifty years or so a political content has also been given to the concept of *Kashmiriyat*. This development needs to be understood in the context of Kashmiris' struggle for the recognition of their identity. To begin with, it is in Iqbal's Urdu and Persian poetry and also in some of his writings and speeches that the concept of *Kashmiriyat* begins to emerge as a political ideology. Iqbal, who always stressed the idea of 'Kashmiri nationality', found the greatest exponent of his ideology in Shaikh Muhammad Abdullah, who made his political debut at a time, when Iqbal's soul writhed in agony over the sad plight of his brethren in Kashmir. Iqbal was as much proud of Kashmir as Shaikh Muhammad Abdullah is of Iqbal's sense of Kashmiri patriotism. Ghulam Ahmad Mahjoor<sup>31</sup>

was yet another force who popularised the concept of 'Kashmiri nation' in his patriotic songs. To Mahjoor religious humanism was one of the chief characteristics of Kashmiri nationalism :

“Hindus will keep the helm and Muslims play  
the oars ;  
Let us together row ashore the boat of the  
country.”

Small wonder, therefore, one of Mahjoor's patriotic poems was adopted as a 'national' song (*Qaumi Tarana*) by the National Conference in the heyday of its struggle against the Maharaja.

Significantly, the emerging nationalism of the Muslims of Kashmir in the early thirties was not centred round the symbols of Islam or past Muslim supremacy like their co-religionists outside the Kashmir Valley, but the Muslim politics as developed in Kashmir even during its formative phase (1931-38) and although partly influenced by the Muslim politics of the Panjab, was, in the ultimate analysis, suffused with regional ethos. It is for this reason that the nationalist leaders like Gandhiji, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Moulana Abul Kalam Azad and Saif-ud-din Kitchlu were drawn to Kashmir in the thirties and they also began to influence the mind of the public leaders particularly Shaikh Muhammad Abdullah. Again, Kashmiris' identity as a separate cultural and political group was recognised by the prominent congress leaders as early as the beginning of the political struggle in Kashmir. What is significant is the fact that the Congress leadership played a great role in popularising the concept of *Kashmiriyat* so as to check-mate the influence of the two-nation theory of the Muslim League in Kashmir. Pandit Nehru was no less proud of his Kashmiri origin, and he often talked and wrote about the distinctive character of Kashmir and its people. Not only did Nehru regard Kashmir as "a definite historical, cultural and

linguistic unit," but he even described it as "a rich and lovely country to live in." While "India" according to Nehru stood in no comparison with China in craftsmanship, in an "ideal country" like Kashmir, however, he could feel "that there was something which could equal China." He was full of praise for the Kashmiri's skill in handicrafts and their prominent role in many walks of life in "India". He was proud of the fact that the Kashmiri Pandits were "more recognised in India as Kashmiris". But he was sorry to note that many of the "Muslim Kashmiris" were "not known as Kashmiris, and so people do not appreciate this fact." Nehru wrote: "Muslim Kashmiris are prominent in many walks of life in India. One famous name stands out above all others—that of the poet, Sir Muhammad Iqbal, who was a Sapru." Nehru was equally conscious of the sad reality that "impelled by a desire for self-protection" the Kashmiri Pandits had organized themselves as a "communal group" after the rise of the "popular mass movement" in 1931. He, therefore, warned his "own people" not to "fall into the trap into which minorities so easily fell" and urged them to join the National Conference which under Shaikh Abullah's leadership had steered the mass movement "out of the narrow waters of communalism into the broad sea of nationalism."

Although the Kashmiris have no two opinions about their being citizens of India, it cannot be denied that a vague sense of nationalism is still dormant in them owing to the legacy of Kashmir's recent turbulent history. The vast majority of literary production in Urdu and particularly in Kashmiri is also the expression of a latent ethnocentrism as well as of centuries long uncertainty regarding their feeling of identity. This uncertainty is compensated by a glorification of their own historical past, by an exaggerated assessment of their historical symbols like Lalla Ded, Nur-ud-din Wali, Zain-ul-Abidin, Yusuf Shah Chak and Sir Muhammad Iqbal. Kashmiris attachment to their land<sup>33</sup> and their unwillingness to settle in the plains is yet another factor which has streng-

thened the concept of Kashmir as a distinct linguistic and cultural nation. Nor should we minimise the importance of endogamy<sup>34</sup> as a factor in the continuation of Kashmiri identity. There is still another aspect worth consideration. Ever since the National Conference came to power after the Kashmir Accord,<sup>35</sup> the concept of *Kashmiriyat* has been a recurring theme in the local Urdu dailies of Kashmir. Thus Shaikh Muhammad Abdullah is constantly reminded of the lavish promises he and his party had made to the people of Kashmir before coming to power. One of the main charges levelled against the Kashmir leader is that he has failed to restore the special status that Kashmir enjoyed before his removal from power in 1953. Thus, the National Conference leadership which has always proceeded on the authority of the ideology of *Kashmiriyat*, is now finding itself on the horns of a dilemma as to how to preserve the distinct identity of Kashmir.

The concept of *Kashmiriyat* need not be misunderstood; nor should we aim at pin-pointing certain separatist tendencies in the ideology of the Kashmiris. *Kashmiriyat* may seem to be ambiguous, yet it is safer to stick to a vague appellation rather than to adopt one like "regionalism" or "separatism", which of course is precise but inaccurate. The concept of *Kashmiriyat* more nearly represents the world Kashmiris live in; it will not be fully understood if the role of Kashmiri Muslims in the last five decades of the sub-continent's history is not understood from their own point of view. A dispassionate study of their history reveals that they have not held the monistic view in sociology. Indeed, they have found it difficult to live with only one ideal. The ideal of nationality has always been uppermost in their mind. At the same time the ideals of inter-community life, of international life, and inter-religious life have equally preoccupied their mind ever since the dawn of the twentieth century. The truth is that with respect to ideals, they are pluralists. Their national ideal is both Kashmirian and Indian, their international ideal is certainly Islam.<sup>36</sup> This is why Kashmiri Muslims have been



more sensitive than other Muslim peoples of the world to issues concerning their religion. They seem to favour the ideal of the unity of the Muslim world and also the ideal of humanity among the great religions. This also explains why the holocaust of the partition of India in 1947 did not bring Kashmiri Muslims into conflict with their ideals.

The chapter on Kashmiri Muslims and their history draws our attention to such factors as seem to present the Muslim community of Kashmir with the crucial role it is destined to play in future. First, the pull of history, size and geography of Kashmir is bound to influence the future political developments in the Southern Asia's important strategic centre like Kashmir. Although Muslim politics of Kashmir has least been influenced by Pakistan in the last ten years or so, nevertheless, the constant harping of Pakistan on the Kashmir issue is likely to influence the course of Muslim politics in a disturbed political situation in the country. In addition to this, Pakistan's occupation of 'Azad Kashmir' and the movement of the United Nations observers from Srinagar to Rawalpindi and back through the Jehlam-Valley road continues to haunt the minds of Kashmiris. Last, but not the least, any attempt of the Union Government to abrogate the Article 370 in a near future and the reaction of Kashmiri Muslims to this development will prove significant to watch. It will not be out of place to mention here that the Kashmiri Muslims have the genuine fear of being overwhelmed by the 'outside domination', should the Central Government decide to revoke the Article 370. To say that the Article 370 is to an average Kashmiri Muslim religiously, politically, economically and culturally good is parochial yet relevant; it is more an article of faith rather than a constitutional document. What is significant to note is that its inclusion in the Indian constitution has added yet another feather to the cap of Kashmir. As we have argued that Kashmiri Muslims' defiance of Pakistan in 1947 and their acquiescence in the sovereignty of the Republic of India is not essential from the point of view of history, but what is more important is that

they have contributed –and strikingly much—to strengthening the Indian nation.

Ever since the establishment of the Centre of Central Asian Studies in the University of Kashmir, a good deal of discussion has taken place in certain quarters on Kashmir's historical ties with Central Asia. The oft-quoted remark in these discussions has been that geographically, historically and culturally Kashmir is more closer to Central Asia than the sub-continent. Professor S. Maqbool Ahmad, the Director of the Centre, has emphasized time and again that “geographically, Central Asia forms an area whose culture and traditions have been, from times immemorial, influenced by the geographical and environmental factors”<sup>41</sup> This is why he firmly holds the view that the area called Central Asia includes the following regions : –

1. Soviet Central Asia which comprises Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakistan, Kirgiziya and Azarbaijan.
2. Mongolia
3. Sinkiang (Chinese Turkistan)
4. Tibet
5. Afghanistan
6. Jammu and Kashmir.

In view of the above definition it would be a useful exercise to conduct an enquiry into the reciprocal influences of the various regions of Central Asia on one another. However, it may be noted here that the impact of Persian culture on some important regions of Central Asia has been much more profound than any other influence. As a matter of fact, Central Asia remained in a state of flux for the greater part of its history. It was Persia rather than Central Asia that led to the cultural conquest of many parts of the Ajam. The hub of Persian culture was never restricted to the narrower geographical limits of the present day Iran, but extended to Central Asia, Northern

India and even as far as Asia Minor. The Mughal rulers of India, though of Central Asian origin, were Persianised from every point of view and it would be no exaggeration to say that they became the greatest propagators of Persian culture in the sub-continent. Viewed in this context the so-called Central Asian influence on Kashmir needs fresh thinking.

However, certain aspects of the history and political organization of Kashmir can become more intelligible when Kashmir is studied in the context of its centuries old relations with different regions of Central Asia. In many parts of Central Asia, including Kashmir, the chief cities functioned as entrepots for the passage of merchandise in addition to serving as markets for local produce. Srinagar, in particular, on account of its peculiar geographical position remained a connecting link between various regions of Central Asia and Northern India as late as the beginnings of the World War II. Being a great entrepot of trade, Srinagar provided the most convenient ground for the meeting of various cultures represented by the traders of Yaqand, Bukhara, Badakhshan, Khotan, Kashgar, Turkistan, China, Ladakh, Tibet, Baltistan and Kashmir. The truth is that it was Srinagar's special role in Central Asia's commercial and cultural history that itself provided the environment and shaped the history of Kashmir. The social and religious history of Kashmir owes a great deal to Central Asian and Persian contacts, and not surprisingly, the constellation of these forces has always played a critical role in the political fortunes of Kashmir as well. In fact, it is also the importance of the role of these cultural forces that has determined Kashmir's special status in the democratic republic of India. One important question worthy of consideration, therefore, would be whether Kashmir's position is similar to that of the Republics in Russian Turkistan. It would also be worthwhile to investigate how far the Kashmiri represents in his person the personality of the Central Asian.

I am conscious of the fact that the issues raised in the introduction have not received the attention that was due to

them. However, I do hope that the volume will offer perspectives not only to the students of Kashmir history from the number of points of view but also to those interested in understanding the ideological background of the Kashmir problem.

## REFERENCES & NOTES

1. Baron Hugel, *Travels in Cashemere and the Punjab* (Eng. tr.) p. 220. See also Chapter II.
- (a) Jawaharlal Nehru, "Introductory Essay on Kashmir", in S. N. Dhar, *Kashmir : Eden of the East, Allahabad, 1945.*
2. *The Muslim Communities of South Asia (ed.), Delhi, 1976, p. 136.*
3. Based on the author's study of the daily *Martand*.
4. Before parting his ways with Shaikh Abdullah, Bazaz had earlier showered encomium on the Kashmir leader by calling him "Kashmir ka Gandhi" in an urdu publication under the same title.
5. This statement is based on the authors' personal interviews with some erstwhile leaders of the Junta Party in Kashmir.
6. Mohammad Ishaq Khan, *History of Srinagar, 1846-1947, a study in socio-cultural change, Srinagar, 1978, p. 181.*
7. The argument will be discussed at length in my future work on "Kashmiri Muslims : a study in their history and social organization."
8. The mob mentality is not the true index of the Kashmiri Muslims' mind. We have strong reasons to believe that the mob which caused a slight damage

to a Hindu's shop in Srinagar was bestirred into action by the provocative statements of certain vested interests. What is significant to note is that all religious and political organizations of the Muslims of Kashmir condemned the misdeeds of the hooligans. Unfortunately, the Pandit politicians seem to be fond of generalising the future of their community on the basis of a specific event.

9. *History of Muslim Rule in Kashmir*, p. 385.
10. *Ibid* , 384.
11. Mohibbul Hasan, *Kashmir under the Sultans*, 2nd edition, Srinagar, 1974, preface.
12. *History of Muslim Rule in Kashmir*, p. 124 ; see also foot note No. 20.
13. *Ibid* p. 118.
14. *Ibid.*, 129-30.
15. Rabia (d. A. D 801) of Basra is one of the illustrious Sufis of Islam.
16. The Shaikh, who was a younger contemporary of Lalla, says of her :
 

That Lalla of Padmanpore  
Who had drunk the fill of divine nectar ;  
She was undoubtedly an *avatar* of ours.  
O God, grant me the same spiritual power.
17. Abul Fazl writes that 'the most respectable class in this country is that of the *Rishis* who, notwithstanding their need of freedom from the bonds of tradition and custom, are true worshippers of God. They do not loosen the tongue of calumny against

those not of their faith, nor beg nor importune. They employ themselves in planting fruit trees, and are generally source of benefit to the people. They abstain themselves from flesh meat and do not marry." *Ain-i-Akbari*, (Jarret), , II, Calcutta, 1868-94, p. 354. See also *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri* (Rodgers and Beveridge), II, London, 1909-14, p. 149 and note ; Abdul Hamid Lahori, *Badshahnama* (Bib, Ind.) II, 1868, p. 155.

18. Even the conservative Brahman chronicler of the fifteenth century seems to have been impressed by the loud prayers of the faithful in the Jama mosque of Srinagar. He remarks : "It was here that the *Yavanas* (Muslims) chanted mantras and *looked graceful like thousand lotuses with humming bees.*" (Italics mine), Srivara, *Jaina-Rajatarangini* (Eng. tr. Dutt), Calcutta, 1935, p. 235.
19. Sayyid Ahmad Kirmani, a Sufi saint of the Suharwardi order, who came to Kashmir in the sixteenth century was distressed, like the leaders of the modern *Ahl-i-Hadith* movement, to see the Muslims reciting the *Aurad-i-Fathiya* loudly in the mosques. As he considered it against the *Sharia*, he instructed the faithful not to indulge in this practice. However, when Sayyid Kirmani decided to leave Kashmir for good he went via Baramulla and stayed for a night at Iblihag Marg. It was here that in a state of spiritual ecstasy (*muraqiba*) that he saw Mir Sayyid Ali Hamadani in an angry mood. On asking Mir Sayyid Ali the cause of his anger, the Mir replied that he was unhappy over Sayyid Kirmani's act of forbidding the Kashmiri Muslims from reciting the *Aurad*. Sayyid Ali Hamadani told Kirmani that it was owing to the recitation of the *Aurad-i-Fathiya* that Islam was understood by a common man in Kashmir. No sooner Sayyid Ahmad Kirmani returned from his

- mystic experience than he gave up the idea of leaving Kashmir and thereupon he rushed back to the city of Srinagar to convey to the people the message of Sayyid Ali Hamadani. He went from street to street and from mosque to mosque urging the faithful to recite the litany after morning and evening prayers. See Sayyid Ali, *Tarikh-i-Sayyid Ali*, f. 31 a.
20. Anand Kaul Bamzai, *The Kashmiri Pandit*, Calcutta, 1924, p. 47; R. C. Kak, *Ancient Monuments of Kashmir*, London, 1933; Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir*, London, 1895, p. 320; W. Haig, *Cambridge History of India*, III, p. 280; *Parmu*, *op. cit.*, p. 137. Even T. N. Madan approvingly quotes that the Pandits of today have descended from the traditionally remembered 'eleven' families. *Muslim Communities of South Asia* (ed.) p. 119.
  21. N. K. Zutshi, *Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin of Kashmir*, Lucknow, 1976, pp. 94, 220.
  22. *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri* (Rodgers & Beveridge), II, p. 181.
  23. *Ruqqat-i-Alamgiri*, Raza Library, Rampur, p. 132. (Quoted in *A History of Muslim Rule in Kashmir*, p. 457)
  24. *Rajatarangini* (tr. Dutt), p. 65, See also Srivara, *op. cit.*, pp. 234-36, 319.
  25. Zutshi, *op. cit.*, p. 136. A big *Vihara* was constructed on the bank of the River Jehlam near its confluence with the Mar canal in Srinagar. Srivara, I, V, Stt. 62-63 (*Ibid.*)
  26. Jonaraja (Sri Kanth Kouls' ed), St. 823
  27. Haidar Malik. *Tarikh-i-Kashmir*, f. 159b.
  28. While brushing aside the positive evidence furnished by the Persian chroniclers (*Baharistan-i-Shahi*, f,

15 a; Hasan bin Ali, *Tarikh-i-Kashmir*, ff. 99a-100b; Haidar Malik, *Tarikh i Kashmir*. f 83ab ; Mishkati, *Asrar-ul-Abrar*. f. 45a ; Rafi-ud-din Ahmad, *Nawadir-ul-Akhbar*, ff 16b-17a ; Diddamari, *Tarikh-i-Azami*, pp. 29-30) regarding Rinchana's conversion to Islam under the influence of Sayyid Sharaf-ud din, A.Q. Rafiqi (*Sufism in Kashmir*, Delhi, n.d , pp. 9-10) remarks on the authority of Abul Fazl's *Ain i Akbari* that Rinchana accepted the new faith owing to "political reasons." Notwithstanding Rafiqi's reasonings, Abul Fazl cannot be described as a 'careful' student of Kashmir history as compared with Haidar Malik, Muhammad Azam Diddamari and the anonymous author of *Baharistan-i-Shahi*, all of whom seem to have made an extensive use of the earliest historical works on the early phase of Islam in Kashmir including those of Mulla Nadri, Qazi Ibrahim and Mulla Hasan Qari. Nor is there any rationale behind Rafiqi's argument that the story of Rinchana's 'chance meeting' with the saint was concocted by the Persian chroniclers so as to "glorify Islam and to establish the miraculous powers of Saiyid Sharaf ud-din." The fact that the Buddhists of Kashmir had penchant for religious discussion is not only testified to by the Persian sources, but even by the Sanskrit chroniclers. Thus Jonaraja says that Rinchana's requests to the Brahman priests to initiate him into Saivism was not granted (See Srikanth Kaul, *Fajatrangini of Jonaraja*, intro, p. 72). It seems that the caste-conscious Brahman priests failed to satisfy the spiritual cravings of Rinchana who, according to the Persian chroniclers, used to pass sleepless nights, weeping and praying to God to guide him to the right path. As a matter of reality, Jonaraja makes no secret of his conservatism by remarking out of rancour that the Brahmans refused to admit Rinchana into the fold of Hinduism since he was a Buddhist. It is also important to note that although Jonaraja refers to Rinchana's meeting



with the Brahman priests, he does not at all talk about the Buddhist princes' conversion to Islam which, without any doubt, was motivated by his spiritual cravings. The establishment of a hospice by Rinchana in Srinagar for his spiritual mentor, and which is still known as Bulbul Lanker, also illustrates our point. Furthermore, the Ladakhi tradition preserved in the 'Song of Bodro Masjid' gives validity to our conclusion that Rinchana decided to accept Islam after a good deal of enquiry after the truth.

29. Both Yusuf Shah Chak and his son Yaqub Shah Chak lay buried at a village named Kashmiri Chak in Patna. Their tombs were discovered by Prof. Sayyid Hasan Askari at the instance of Prof. Mohibbul Hasan. See for more details, *Kashmir under the Sultans*, pp. 180-81n.
30. The close links of the *Jamat-i-Islami* and the *Islami Jamiat-i-Tulabba* with Saudi Arabia can better be imagined than described. The latter organization shot into prominence when recently the State Government declined permission to it for organizing a conference of the Muslim youth of the world in Srinagar.
31. The modern Kashmiri poets seem to have been greatly influenced by Mahjoor, who, in spite of his revolutionary ideas, respected tradition and did not make a serious departure. See *History of Srinagar*, pp. 194-196 ; 201.
32. See Jawaharlal Nehru "Introductory Essay on Kashmir," *op. cit.*, pp. i-xxvii.
33. But Kashmiri Pandits seem to have shown great desire to settle outside owing to better avenues of life available to their community in almost all parts

of India in the post-1947 period. They have settled in large numbers in many cities of India, particularly New Delhi.

34. Though intermarriages between the Kashmiri Muslims and the 'outside Muslims' is an exception rather than the rule, there has been an increasing tendency among the Kashmiri Pandits to enter into matrimonial alliances with the 'outside Hindus'.
35. The author recalls to his mind Farooq Abdullah's slogan of *Choun Desh Meoun Desh : Koshur Desh Koshur Desh* (Your country, My country, it is Kashmir ! it is Kashmir !) which was often heard in the streets of the city of Srinagar before the National Conference captured power in 1975. True that the slogan smacked of separatism; but in reality it was aimed at inculcating the spirit of *Kashmiriyat* among the people of Kashmir.
36. Shaikh Muhammad Abdullah's presidential address to a *Milad* gathering in New Delhi in February 1982 is worth reading in this regard.
37. S. Maqbool Ahmed, "Centre of Central Asian Studies," *College Development Council Bulletin*, Vol. 1, March 1980 pp 1-10.
38. Long before the establishment of the Mughal rule in India, Sultan Ghiyas ud-din Balban introduced the practices and customs of the Sassanid rulers of Persia at his court. Balban's theory of kingship was mainly based on Persian ideals. See K. A. Nizami, *Some Aspects of Religion and Politics in India in the 13th century*, Aligarh, 1961. In fact, India had become a tributary of Persian culture much earlier than the coming of the Mughals.

## II

# Glimpses of Kashmir's Past

The early history of Kashmir is shrouded in mystery. It was not until the time of Asoka who, according to the records of the Chinese pilgrims, built many monasteries and *stupas* and Saivite shrines in the Valley. Asoka also founded Srinagari in 250 B.C. which occupied the site of the present village of Pandrethan, and which remained the capital of Kashmir till about the middle of the sixth century A.D., when a new city was founded by Raja Pravarasena II near the Hari Parbat hill.

After Asoka came Jaluka who is reported to have settled Brahmans of Kanauj in Kashmir. He is also said to have expelled the 'mlechas' (Greeks), who had entered Kashmir in the time of Asoka. According to Pandit Kalhana he introduced an efficient system of administration.

## KUSHANS

Kashmir's history again assumes a legendary character until the time of Kushans, the rulers of north-western India, who included Kashmir in their dominion. The Kushan kings, Hushka, Jushka and Kanishka, founded the three extant villages of Ushkur, Zukur and Kanispur respectively. Kanishka is credited with having organised the Fourth Buddhist Council in Kashmir. The famous Chinese traveller Hiuen Tsiang says that the decisions arrived at this council were engraved on sheets of red copper and "enclosed in a stone receptacle over which a stupa was built."

There is a controversy among the scholars as to whether the Council was held in Kashmir or not. Whatever may be

the truth, it cannot be denied that the Mahayanist doctrine of Buddhism was born and developed in Kashmir in the time of Kanishka. The greatest Mahāyanist preacher was Nagarjuna who lived in Kashmir in the first century A.D. Kalhana says that he resided at the University of Sharadardwan (modern Harwan). He further notes that Buddhism progressed in Kashmir under Nagarjuna's care and guidance.

In 178 A.D. the Kushan rule was replaced by the Gonanda dynasty, under which Buddhism declined owing to the policy of persecution followed by some of its rulers. The founder of the new dynasty was Gondana, who was a great patron of the Naga cult which flourished under him.

## HUNS

Kashmir came under the rule of Mihirakula, the White Hun ruler in 528 A.D. According to the tradition preserved by Hiuen Tsiang, Mihirkula encouraged Brahmanism and persecuted the Buddhists. Kalhana describes the king as a 'man of violent acts', a 'scourge of God, on earth', who killed people without compassion or discrimination'.

Between the death of Mihirkula and the advent of the Karkotas, twenty five kings ruled over Kashmir. But only three of them deserve our notice, namely, Gopaditya, Matrigupta and Pravarasena II. While the first king founded the *mohalla* of Gupkar in Srinagar and built the temple of Jyesthesvara (Takht i-Sulaiman or Shankaracharya hill), the second ruler acknowledged the sovereignty of Harsha Vikramaditya of Ujjain. Pravarasena laid out the city of Pravarapura. But strangely enough Pravarapura lost its own name and assumed that of the old city of Srinagarl. Since both capitals (Srinagari and Pravarapura) were near to each other, the old name remained in common use with the people in preference to the new name. It was the old familiar name of Srinagari which triumphed over the new city of Pravarapura.

## KARKOTA DYNASTY

In 627 A.D. was laid the foundation of the Karkota dynasty by Durlabhavardhana. During his reign Hiuen Tsiang visited Kashmir. He stayed here for two years (631-33) and found the king hospitable and tolerant towards the Buddhists. However, the traveller says that Buddhism was on decline. The kingdom of Durlabhavardhana was vast and it included Taxila, Hazara, the Salt Range and the hill-states of Rajauri and Poonch. The country was peaceful and prosperous.

The greatest ruler of the Karkota dynasty was Lalitaditya Muktapida, who reduced Kangra, Poonch, Rajauri and Jammu. However, Kalhana's account of his conquest of Kanauj seems to be legendary. He is also said to have marched against Balkh and Bukhara. In 733 Lalitaditya sent an embassy to the Chinese Emperor Husan-tsuang (713-55). He sought help from him against the Arabs who were pressing from the south and the Tibetans and Turkish tribes from the north. But the Chinese Emperor does not seem to have helped the Kashmirian ruler as he was himself faced with political problems.

Lalitaditya was a great builder. He founded many towns. Of these Phalapura, Parontsa, Lalitpura, Lokpunya and Parihaspura are important. While Phalapura has been traced to a village near Shadipur, Parontsa is now called Poonch. Lalitpura is the modern Letpur and Lokpunya is now known as Lokabhavan. The latter is situated on the Anantnag-Verinag road. The town of Lokpunya became an important centre of political activities in Kashmir when in the later period a group of landed aristocracy (*Dammaras*) established their headquarters there.

But the greatest building of Lalitaditya is the temple of Martand, which owes a great deal to the Gandhara School and which served as a model to all subsequent temples in the Valley. Lalitaditya brought large areas under cultivation

and established law and order. He also carried out extensive drainage works.

Lalituditya's grandson, Jayapida, founded the town of Indarkot (also known as Safapur). He was also a patron of art and learning. But when he grew old, he unleashed a reign of terror. He imposed oppressive taxes and extorted extra stocks from the cultivators. But an important measure carried out by Jayapida was that he confiscated the land grants of Brahmans. This resulted in the revolt of Brahmans who resorted to hunger-strikes.

Since the history of the Karkotas after Jayapida is a poor record of six worthless kings, a new dynastic rule under the name Utpala was founded by Avantivarman (855-83), grandson of Utpala, who was related by marriage with the Karakotas. Avantivarman founded the town of Avantipur, which still attracts a good number of visitors on the Srinagar-Jammu road. It was here that the king built great temples. His able engineer Suyya, whose name still survives in the modern town of (old Suyyapura), regulated the course of the River Jehlam whose waters always caused floods in Kashmir. Lands were reclaimed and a net work of canals were constructed to irrigate lands. Thus Avantivarman made Kashmir prosperous.

Avantivarman's son and successor Sankaravarman (883-902) was an oppressor of his subjects. He levied heavy taxes, robbed the temples of their wealth and introduced the system of forced labour (*begar*) which remained, until recent times, the most pronounced feature of Kashmir administration.

The successors of Sankaravarman were weak and inefficient. They were puppets in the hands of Tantrins, the feudal chiefs. In 950 A. D. Kshemagupta ascended the throne. He married Didda, the daughter of Simharaja, chief of Lohara. This territory which has left its name to the present valley of Lohrin, consisted of the mountain districts immediately adjoining Kashmir Valley on the south-west and north

included in the Poonch district. Since Kshemagupta was weak, the real authority was exercised by his wife. On her husband's death, Didda ascended the throne in 981 after destroying her son and her grandson one after another. The queen's rule extended from 981 to 1003 A.D. Her reign of 23 years was marked by political conspiracies 'murders, banishment and denunciation'. Before her death in 1003, Didda had appointed Samgramaraja, her nephew, as her successor. Thus the crown quietly passed to the new dynasty, the house of Lohara.

The Lohara kings were mostly inefficient. Under them the social and political conditions in Kashmir worsened. Forced labour was resorted to and all kinds of vexatious taxes were extorted from the people. The political influence of the *Dammaras* increased considerably and their constant rebellions plunged the country into chaos and confusion. King Harsha (1089-1101) destroyed temples and filled his treasury with the gold and wealth of temples and religious endowments. But the most important event that occurred in the time of Loharas was the invasion of Kashmir by Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni. He invaded Kashmir twice from the Punjab. He marched from the Jehlam along the valley of the Poonch Tawi first in 1015 and then in 1021 so as to penetrate into Kashmir from the Tosamaidan pass. On both occasions the invader invested the hill-fort of Lohkot, but a heavy snowfall and a severe winter finally forced him to give up the idea of conquering Kashmir .

The last ruler of the Lohara dynasty was Ramadeva (1250-73) . As he had no issue he adopted Lakshmanadeva, the son of a Brahman, as heir-apparent. Lakshmanadeva ruled Kashmir from 1273 to 1286 A.D. From 1286 onwards till the accession of Suhadeva (1301-1320) there was a good deal of confusion in Kashmir. It was during the period of Suhadeva that the Mongols, led by Zulju, invaded Kashmir in 1320. The origin of Zulju is not known, but it is presumed that he was a Mongol from Turkistan. He entered Kashmir by the

Jhelam-valley route. Suhadeva, instead of fighting the invader, fled to Kishtwar. The Mongols caused a great deal of destruction during their stay of eight months in Kashmir and withdrew before winter. But the anarchy that reigned supreme after the invasion of the Mongols paved the way for the establishment of the Sultanate in Kashmir.

## FOUNDATION OF THE SULTANATE

Kashmir was known to the Muslims even before the establishment of the Sultanate in 1320. It was in the 8th century that Kashmir came for the first time in contact with the Muslims. Two governors of Sindh, Junaid and Hisham b. Amr al-Taghlibi, attempted to invade the frontiers of Kashmir, but they could not proceed beyond the southern slopes of the Himalayas.

We have already referred to the unsuccessful attempts of Mahmud of Ghazni to conquer Kashmir. But finally 'Muslim rule' was established in Kashmir not as a result of a foreign invasion; it is the internal chaos that led to the decline of the 'Hindu rule'. Emboldened by the chaotic conditions prevailing in Kashmir after the withdrawal of Zulju, Rinchana, the son of a Ladakhi chief, who had taken shelter in Kashmir, made himself master of the country. He embraced Islam under the influence of Sayyid Sharaf-ud-Din, a Sufi saint belonging to the Suharwardi order, popularly known as Bulbul Shah. Soon after becoming Muslim Rinchana adopted the name of Sadr-ud-Din. He was the first Muslim Sultan of Kashmir. He founded a quarter in Srinagar known as Rinchanapura. It was here that he built the first mosque in Kashmir on the site of a Buddhist temple. The Sultan also built a public charity kitchen (*langar khana*) in the memory of his religious teacher which is still known as Bulbul Lanker.

After the death of Rinchana, his widow Kota Rani, on the advice of the nobles, married Udayanadeva, the brother of Suhadeva and raised him to the throne. But at the death of



Udayanadeva, Kota Rani herself became ruler. But it was Shahmir who conspired to bring about the downfall of Kota Rani.

It should be remembered that long before the rise of Muslim power in Kashmir, Turkish adventurers had settled here and were employed by Hindu Kings in their armies. Kalhana calls them Turukshahs. Shah Mir, who challenged the authority of Kota Rani, was also one of the foreign adventurers who was employed by Suhadeva. His origins is not known, but it is believed that he was a Turk. He gradually gained so much influence and power that when Udayanadeva died, he refused to submit to the authority of Kota Rani and finally defeated her in 1339. He ascended the throne under the title of Sultan Shams-ud-Din and thus laid the foundation of his dynasty which ruled Kashmir from 1339 to 1561.

Shah Mir ruled Kashmir for three years and five days and during his brief reign he restored law and order. Before his death in 1342, he entrusted the task of Government to his two sons, Jamshed and Alisher (Ala-ud-Din). Very little is known of the two successors of Shah Mir beyond the fact that Alauddin (1344-56) founded Alauddinpur at Srinagar which at present comprises the locality situated between Jama Masjid and Ali Kadal.

Alauddin was succeeded by his son Shirashamak in 1356 who assumed the title of Shihab-ud-din on becoming the Sultan. He was an able ruler and a good administrator. After strengthening his position at home, he was able to subdue the rulers of Jammu, Poonch, Rajauri, Baltistan and Ladakh; but the accounts in the local chronicles that he conquered Multan, Kabul, Badakhshan and Samarkand and that he defeated Firuz Shah Tughluq of Delhi are baseless. Shihab-ud-Din selected the Hari Parbat for his capital. He founded the town of Shihabuddinpur which at present is called Shadipur.

Sultan Qutbuddin (1374-89) succeeded Shihabuddin. His reign stands as a landmark in the annals of Islam in Kashmir. Srinagar saw ceaseless religious activity during his reign which engulfed the whole of Kashmir. Mir Sayyid Ali Hamadani, who, visited Kashmir during this period made Srinagar his seat and preached the gospel of Islam at a place in Srinagar which was subsequently known as the Khanqah-i-Mualla. It was here that Sultan Sikandar (1398-1413) built a mosque which in course of time became not only a centre of religious but also that of political activities of the Muslims of Kashmir. Qutbuddin is reported to have laid the foundation of Qutbuddin-pura which still survives in the name of a mohalla in Srinagar.

Sultan Sikandar, besides building Khanqah-i-Mualla mosque, erected the Jama Masjid. During his reign Mir Sayyid Muhammad, the son of Sayyid Ali Hamadani, attempted to enforce the Islamic law (*Shariat*). Dr. Parmu says that Mir Sayyid Muhammad began to persecute the Hindus by forcibly converting them to Islam and destroying their temples. But it should be borne in mind that the Sanskrit and Persian chronicles, on whom Dr. Parmu has based his opinion, have grossly exaggerated the destruction of temples in Sikandar's reign. There was no wholesale destruction of temples as chroniclers would make us believe, 'for there is evidence to suggest that massive temples of Martand and Avantipur were destroyed by earthquakes and not by Sikandar, for gunpowder, which alone could have destroyed these massive structures, was unknown in Kashmir in the 14th century.'

Sikandar was an able ruler. He abolished many oppressive taxes like *Baj* and *Tamgha*. He opened schools for the education of boys, and established hospitals where medicine and food were supplied free of cost. He made grants to a number of villages for the benefit of travellers, scholars, Sayyids and many others. Sikandar also patronised men of learning and Sufi saints; and during his reign many of them

visited Kashmir from Persia and many parts of Central Asia. They were granted *jagirs* by the Sultan and this is how the foreign Muslims permanently settled in the Valley.

The policy of religious persecution followed by Sikandar was reversed by his son Zain-ul-Abidin (1420-70) who is commonly known as "Budshah", or the Great King. He persuaded all those who had been forcibly converted to Islam to return to their old faith. He abolished the *jizya* and the cremation tax and banned cow-slaughter. He repaired Hindu temples and himself built some new ones. He also participated in Hindu festivals and himself visited some Hindu shrines as a pilgrim. The Sultan also took delight in performing *havans* and in practising *yoga*. He is said to have studied the *Nilamatapurana*, *Vasishta* and *Gita Govinda*. Himself a religious minded person, the Sultan offered prayers five times a day and observed the *Ramzan* fasts. He had great respect for the Sufis, learned men and Brahman scholars, who were granted lands.

Zain-ul-Abidin established a translation bureau in which Persian works were rendered into Sanskrit and Sanskrit works into Persian. Mulla Ahmad, who was a scholar in both Persian and Sanskrit, translated the *Mahabharata* and Kalhana's *Rajatarangini* into Persian at the instance of the Sultan. Srivara translated *Yusuf-u-Zulaikha* of Jami into Sanskrit. All this made knowledge accessible to those who knew either Persian or Sanskrit.

The Sultan was a man of versatile talents. He founded the towns of Zainanagar (Nau Shahr), Zainagir, Zainapur and Zainakot, and restored the city of Inderkot which was in ruins. He built the *Khanqah* of Sayyid Muhammad Madani, and laid out two artificial isles of Rupa-Lank and Sona-Lank. He was really a magnificent builder and his reputation in this regard rests upon Zaina-Lank, Zaina-kadal and Zaina-Dab. Of these constructions Zaina-Dab has since disappeared.

Both tradition and history say that Zain-ul-Abidin introduced various arts and crafts for which Kashmir has become world-famous. He invited craftsmen from Iran and Turkistan to instruct his people in various skills and also sent Kashmiris to these countries to learn the art of book-binding, wood-carving and *papier mache*, and those of making shawls, carpets and paper. Besides, he also introduced stone-polishing, stone-cutting, glass-blowing, window-cutting, gold and silver leafmaking and book-binding. No wonder, Mirza Haidar, the author of *Tarikh-i-Rashidi* and the ruler of Kashmir from 1540 to 1550, paid glowing tributes to the genius of Zain-ul-Abidin. "In Kashmir one meets," the Mirza observes, "with all those arts and crafts which are, in most cities uncommon.....In the whole of Mavar-u-Nahar except Smarqand and Bukhara these are nowhere to be met with while in Kashmir they are abundant. This is all due to Sultan Zain-ul Abidin."

Under Zain-ul-Abidin, the Shah Mir dynasty reached the climax of its power and glory. But after his death, succession disputes, inefficient rulers and rebellions and scheming nobles worked cut its downfall. The result was that Kashmir fell an easy prey to foreign invasions. In November 1540, Mirza Haidar Dughlat, a cousin of Babur, who was in Humayun's service, invaded Kashmir and easily occupied it. His short reign was productive of rich cultural activities. It was during this period that the Kashmiris imitated that Mughal style of dress and diet. Jahangir in his *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri* is very appreciative of the cultural excellence acquired by the people of Kashmir under Mirza Haidar. He remarks that during his regime Kashmir had many skilled musicians. Muhammad Azam, the author of *Waqiat i-Kashmir* and Moulvi Hasan, the author of *Tarikh-i-Hasan*, praise Mirza Haidar for introducing hot-baths, latticed windows (*Pinjara*) and the apparatus for drying paddy, locally known as *narah lul*.

Mirza Haidar Dughlat found the city of Srinagar thickly populated. In his time there were many lofty buildings constructed of fresh cut pine. According to him, most of these buildings were five storeyed, each storey containing apartments, halls, galleries and towers. The streets were paved with stone. There were only shops of retail dealers-grocers, drapers etc. There were no large bazars, for the whole-sale business was done by the traders in their own houses or factories.

Though at first Mirza Haidar ruled with ability and justice, but later he started a reign of terror. His Mughal officers began to oppress the Kashmiris and he himself banned Shiaism. At last the Kashmiri nobles united against him and put him to death in October 1551. The Mirza's death was followed by a struggle for power among the nobles belonging to the Raina, Magre and Chak families. In the end, the Chaks emerged victorious. They are said to have been immigrants from Dardistan who came to Kashmir in the reign of Suhadeva. They were converted to Shiaism by Mir Shams-ud Din Iraqi, a Nurbakshiya saint, who entered Kashmir from Persia in 1481 and again in 1502. The founder of the Chak dynasty was Sultan Ghazi Shah Chak. The Chak rule, which lasted from 1555 to 1586, though known for cultural excellences, was marked by internal feuds. This led to the Mughal occupation of Kashmir in 1586.

The Mughals had invaded Kashmir a number of times before 1586. First, they invaded Kashmir in the reigns of Babur and Humayun. Akbar claimed Kashmir because Mirza Haidar had conquered it on behalf of Humayun. So in 1561 he attempted its conquest, but his army was defeated by Sultan Ghazi Shah Chak. In 1585 Akbar once again launched an offensive against Kashmir. This time Raja Bhagwan Das was sent to the Valley at the head of a large army. The Kashmir forces offered tough resistance at the pass of Buliasa. When the Mughals failed to defeat the Kashmiris, they had recourse to treachery. They

entreated Sultan Yusuf Shah (1580-6) to visit their camp in February 1586. The Sultan on visiting the Mughal camp concluded a treaty with Bhagwan Das. According to this treaty, he was to retain his throne, but coins were to be struck and the *khutba* read in the name of Akbar. But when Yusuf Shah was presented to him he ordered his arrest.

In the meantime the Kashmiri nobles put Yaqub Shah, son of Yusuf Shah, on the throne. But Akbar, who was determined to annex Kashmir to his kingdom, sent a large army, first under Qasim Khan and then under Yusuf Khan Rizvi. Yaqub made a bold attempt to fight against the Mughals to a finish, but, betrayed one by one by his followers, he finally surrendered in 1588 after carrying on a valiant struggle.

### **THE MUGHAL RULE IN KASHMIR (1586-1757)**

The Mughal emperors entrusted the task of administration to their Governors, and at the same time they also visited the Valley. Akbar first entered Srinagar on 5, 1589. During his second visit to the city on October 7, 1592, the Great Mughal enjoyed the saffron blossom at Pampur and celebrated the Diwali. On this occasion the boats on the Jehlam, the banks of the river and the roofs of the houses in Srinagar were illuminated at the Emperor's command.

Akbar's third visit to Kashmir on June 6, 1597 was important. This time he was accompanied by Father Jerome Xavier and Benedict Goetz, who are the first known European travellers to visit Kashmir. Father Xavier's description of the famine of 1597 gives an idea of the devastation caused by it. He records that famine forced mothers to expose their children for sale in public places in the city. Most of them were baptized by the visiting Portuguese fathers with the hope that by so doing they would attain salvation and "eternal bliss for souls of the little ones."

To remove the sufferings of the famine-stricken population of Kashmir, the emperor is said to have ordered a strongly bastioned stone-wall to be built around the slope of the Hari Parbat hillock in the city. The township within this fort wall was named 'Nagar Nagar'. This fort wall is the only extant monument in Srinagar which is still a living tribute to the genius of Akbar.

Akbar abolished the *jizya* and deputed officers to assess land revenue. But as the assessment was heavy, the Chaks who had not reconciled themselves to the idea of Mughal rule in Kashmir, rose in rebellion. But it was firmly put down. During his second visit Akbar treated the 'rebels' generously, and tried to win the confidence of the Kashmiris by reducing the taxes and by arranging marriage alliances with the Chak nobles. But in spite of this, the Chaks remained sullen with resentment.

The most important reform introduced by Akbar was that he adopted the practice of paying the labourer in cash. An inscription on the Kathi Darwaza in Srinagar records the fact that "no one was forced to work without remuneration. All obtained their wages from his treasury."

Jahangir (1605-1626) became so enamoured of the vale of Kashmir as to make it "the place of his favourite abode, and he often declared that he would rather be deprived of every other province of his mighty empire than lose Kachemire." He and his queen Nur Jahan visited it eight times. They constructed palaces and laid out beautiful gardens at Acchabal, Verinag, Nishat and Shalimar. We are told that during his time there were nearly 800 gardens in the neighbourhood of the Dal lake and "the owners, the nobles of the court, were certain to follow the example of their master in making full use of the facilities that Kashmir so readily offers for pleasure-seeking and enjoyment.

Twice during Jahangir's reign the Chaks in their bid to capture power took up arms but they were completely

crushed. It was also during this period that the conquest of Kishtwar was accomplished.

Jahangir's last Governor of Kashmir Itiqad Khan proved to be a harsh ruler in his exactions on the people. He revived the forced labour (*begar*). But Shah Jahan who succeeded his father in 1628 dismissed Itiqad Khan and ordered the abolition of all oppressive demands made by the former governors. He issued the *farman* (imperial command) containing the new regulations and had it inscribed on a stone-slab which was fixed on the southern gate-wall of the Jama Masjid. The *farman* has great historical importance and shows that Shah Jahan was genuinely interested in the welfare of his subjects. The Governors of Shah Jahan were also considerate. Ali Mardan Khan, for example, imported grain from the Punjab in the time of famine.

It was during Shah Jahan's reign that the conquest of Ladakh and Baltistan (1634) was completed. It should be remembered that the Chaks had taken refuge in these areas

During Aurangzeb's reign (1658-1707) about twelve Governors were sent to Kashmir. Some of them laid out gardens. The Safa Kadal bridge over the Jehlam in Srinagar was spanned in 1670 by Saif Khan. But the most historical event of Aurangzeb's rule in Kashmir was the arrival of *Mui Mubarak* (sacred hair) of Prophet Muhammad in Srinagar in 1699. The holy relic was brought to the city by a rich Kashmiri merchant Khawaja Nur-ud-Din Ishbari from Bijapur.

### **THE MUGHAL RULE IN KASHMIR—AN APPRAISAL.**

The Valley presented a sad picture at the time of Mughal conquest. Shia-Sunni conflicts had become the order of the day. It goes to the credit of the Mughals that they treated Shias and Sunnis and Hindus and Muslims on an equal footing. Trade and industry flourished in Kashmir during



the Mughal period. The shawl industry of Kashmir became so famous that it was thought worthy of being minutely described by Abul Fazl, the court-historian, and Bernier, the French traveller. As Bernier observes : "But what may be considered peculiar to Kachemire and the staple commodity, that which particularly promotes the trade of the country and fills it with wealth, is the prodigious quantity of shawls which they manufacture, and which gives occupation even to the little children." The Mughal rulers also promoted agriculture. Todar Mal, Akbar's finance minister, made a revenue settlement for the Valley. He decided on the basis of the fertility of the land and extent of cultivation, how much revenue should be paid to the State by each district.

But there is another side to the picture. As a result of Akbar's invasion, Kashmir lost her separate entity and became an integral part of the Mughal empire. Kashmir, which had culturally progressed under the independent Sultans, was now intellectually impoverished because of the absence of local patronage. Poets, painters and scholars were thus compelled to leave the Valley and seek employment at the Mughal court. Another effect of the Mughal occupation of Kashmir was that the Kashmiri ruling families of the Chaks, Magres and Rainas were replaced by a hierarchy of Mughal officers who were responsible for the administration of the country. In addition to this, the Mughal rulers did not recruit the Kashmiris in the army. It is on record that as late as the early years of Aurangzeb's reign the Kashmiris, especially the Chaks, rarely got any *mansab*. Even Aurangzeb had to admit in a letter to Prince Muazzam that to 'be a Kashmiri was one of the disqualifications.' In consequence, the Kashmiris gradually became ease-loving and lost their martial qualities.

It is also necessary to note that the vilification of the Kashmiris started from the time of the establishment of the Mughal rule in Kashmir. Abul Fazl described the Kashmiri as wicked and crafty. In a fit of anger he called Yaqub Shah

Chak and Shams Chak 'two scoundrels' since both of them fought valiantly for the cause of the independence of Kashmir. Jahangir used the words 'animal-like Kashmiris' in his autobiography while describing the people of Kashmir. Aurangzeb called the people of Kashmir irreligious (*be pir*) and injudicious (*be tamiz*). A 'derogatory slang' such as the evil-natured (*Bad Zat*) Kashmiri often used to sully the reputation of the Kashmiris also owes its origin to the Mughal period. Since the Mughal army could not subjugate the dauntless spirit of the Chaks for long, this explains why the damaging remarks were often passed so as to demoralize the Kashmiris.

### **Fall of the Mughal Power**

The successors of Aurangzeb were weak and inefficient. With the decline of central authority, the outlying parts of the Mughal empire began to declare their independence. This happened also in Kashmir, but the disturbed conditions in the Valley did not allow the Mughal Governors to enjoy their independence for long. Hence in 1747, some of the Kashmiri nobles, Mir Muqim Kanth and Khawaja Zahir-ud-Din Diddamari, wrote to Ahmad Shah Abdali Durrani inviting him to invade Kashmir and annex it to his kingdom. The Afghan ruler made best of the opportunity and accordingly sent a large force in 1757. The Mughals suffered a defeat and Kashmir passed under the rule of the Afghans.

The period of Afghan rule over Kashmir extended from 1757 to 1819. During this period Kabul replaced Delhi as the centre of authority for Kashmir. Like the Mughal rulers the Afghan kings also ruled Kashmir through their governors. In all 28 Afghan governors and deputy-governors ruled over Kashmir. Only one *Subahdar* was Hindu and that rest were the Afghans. Of these fourteen governors showed designs of shaking off central authority and eventually declared themselves independent. But none of them could maintain his independence for long.

The Afghans did not take any interest in the welfare of the people. Since the Governors sent from Kabul were always uncertain about their tenure of office owing to the intrigues at Kabul, this explains why they robbed Kashmir of its wealth. The first Afghan Governor, Abdullah Khan Ishaq-Aqasi, for example, took a crore of rupees with him as *Peshkash* for Ahmad Shah Abadali when the latter recalled him to Kabul. This huge amount was forcibly realized from the merchants and peasants of Kashmir.

The Afghan governors of Kashmir and their officers caused harassment to the people of Kashmir by various devices. The people were not allowed to wear arms and a strict vigil was kept on them by a good number of spies employed for the purpose. The local chiefs were suppressed and a strong force of the Afghans kept within the city walls was always ready to put down any revolt. It is worth remembering that during the governorship of Azad Khan (1783-85) the local population under the leadership of Maluk Khan rose against him, but they could not succeed in overthrowing him.

The administrative machinery went into pieces during the Afghan period. The land was leased out for the purpose of revenue collection. It was thus the highest bidder who collected land revenue. As the lessee (*Ijaradar*) was merely interested in filling his own coffers, there took place decrease in both the land revenue and the produce. The natural consequence of such a policy was that the famines became recurrent visitors to Kashmir which in turn also resulted in the decrease of population.

It is a marvel that despite misrule and tyranny during the Afghan period, shawl industry of Kashmir flourished. During this period the shawls were in demand in Iran, Afghanistan, Turkistan and Russia. George Forster who visited the Valley in the time of Afghans writes: "In Kashmir are seen merchants and commercial agents of most of the principal

cities of Northern India, also Tartary, Persia and Turkey, who, at the same time, advance their fortunes and enjoy the pleasure of a fine climate and country over which are profusely spread the various beauties of nature.

Some of the Afghan Governors did much for the beautification of Kashmir's capital. Amir Khan Jawansher (1770-76) reconstructed the Sona Lank in the Dal lake and raised a seven storeyed mansion upon it. He rebuilt the Amirakadal bridge, which had been washed away by flood in 1772. He also laid out Amirabad garden with beautiful pavilion out of polished black stones brought from the pavilions in the Mughal gardens. But the most beautiful building constructed by Jawansher was the fort of Sherghari. Another Afghan Governor Ata Muhammad Khan Barakzai (1806-13) constructed the massive fort on the top of the Hari Parbat hillock.

While both Hindus and Muslims of Kashmir became victims of the tyranny of the Afghan Governors, it is interesting to note that the Afghan rule in Kashmir saw the rise of some Kashmiri Pandits to highest posts in administration, as for example, *Peshkars*, *Diwans* and *Sahibkars*. Mahanand Pandit, Kailash Pandit Dhar, Dila Ram Pandit, Pandit Sukh Ram, Pandit Sahaz Ram Sapru, Pandit Birbal Dhar, Munshi Bhawani Das, Vasa Kak Dhar etc. are some prominent Pandits who formed the main support of the Afghan government in Kashmir.

Throughout the Afghan period different groups and classes vied with each other for political power in Kashmir. This was due to the weak control exercised by the Afghan rulers over their Governors in Kashmir. Thus it was the conflict of interests which ultimately resulted in the establishment of the Sikh rule in Kashmir in 1819. Birbal Dhar,\* a

\*Curiously enough, Dr. R. K. Parmu calls him a hero, a patriot, and a saviour for having appealed to Ranjit Singh to invade Kashmir. *History of Muslim Rule in Kashmir*, pp, 352-53.

very high official in the time of Afghans, invited Maharaja Ranjit Singh of the Punjab to invade Kashmir when he feared punishment at the hands of the Afghan ruler for embezzling public money. Earlier in 1814, the Sikh army had attempted to invade Kashmir by the Pir Panjal route, but the Sikhs were defeated. In 1819, it was Mir Diwan Chand, Ranjit's most able general, accompanied by Gulab Singh who at the head of the Sikh force expelled the Afghans and brought Kashmir under the rule of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

### **The Sikh Rule (1819-1846)**

Maharaja Ranjit Singh ruled Kashmir through his Governors. Moti Ram, the first Governor, put a ban on the killing of cows, and sentenced many people to death who were found guilty of this practice. Jama Masjid was also closed and the Muslims were forbidden to say *aza'n* or the call to prayer. Several mosques, like Pather Masjid, were declared as the property of the State. The next Governor Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa deprived a number of Muslim families and individuals of the jagirs and hereditary allowances, they had been holding from the time of the Mughals. He introduced a new rupee of base coinage in Kashmir, known as Hari Singhi rupee. Throughout the second half the nineteenth century Hari Singhi rupee continued to be in circulation.

As Hari Singh Nalwa was an oppressor of the people, he was recalled by Ranjit Singh. Diwan Moti Ram was sent back to Kashmir as Governor again. He was succeeded by Diwan Kripa Ram who was devoted so much to the pleasures of life that he came to be known as "Kripa Shroin", Kripa, "the sound of the boat-paddle." Wherever he used to go, the dancing girls (*Hafizas*) would accompany him, and even the rowers of his official barge were women. During his reign there took place a severe earthquake in 1827, followed a few months later, by the outbreak of a severe epidemic of cholera. So great was the number of the dead that there was

no enough cloth to cover the dead bodies. It was also during Kripa Ram's period that Zabardast Khan, the Raja of Muzafarabad, revolted against the Governor and inflicted heavy losses on the Sikh army sent to quell the uprising. However, Zabardast Khan finally surrendered and agreed to pay annual tribute to the Maharaja.

In 1832 Prince Sher Singh succeeded Bhima Singh Ardali who had governed Kashmir for about a year after Diwan Kripa Ram's dismissal. In the same year Maharaja Ranjit Singh set out from Lahore on a visit to Kashmir. Jamadar Khushal Singh and Shaikh Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din were deputed to the Valley for collection of supplies for the Maharaja's camp. Their exactions, however, caused a great trouble to the people and when the Maharaja heard of the scarcity all over the province he returned to Lahore from Poonch. During the period when Sher Singh was governor there also broke out a terrible famine in Kashmir which caused many people to emigrate.

Colonel Mehan Singh took over as Governor in 1833. He is the only Sikh Governor who seems to have been kind-hearted, and he brought back some degree of prosperity by importing grain seed and livestock and by making advances for cultivation. He kept under check the Sikh soldiers stationed in Kashmir who used to collect money forcibly from the people. But taking advantage of the chaotic conditions prevailing at Lahore after the death of Ranjit Singh in 1839, the soldiers mutinied and had Mehan Singh murdered in his bed-chamber on the night of April 17, 1841.

Maharaja Sher Singh, who succeeded Ranjit Singh, despatched Gulab Singh, the Raja of Jammu, at the head of a strong force in order to restore order and punish the rebellious soldiers in Kashmir. The mutiny was suppressed and Shaikh Mohi-ud-Din was made Governor.

Encouraged by chaos and instability at Lahore, Gulab Singh, who had been formally installed as the ruler of Jammu by Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1820, decided to conquer the neighbouring territories. His wazir, Zorawar Singh, conquered Ladakh and Garo and reduced into submission Ahmed Shah, the Chief of Skardu, who was made a vassal. He even attempted the conquest of Tibet but met a tragic end in the barren uplands.

Sheikh Mohi-ud-Din opened the gates of Jama Masjid and tried to win the confidence of the people by restoring the *Jagirs* and cash grants to scholars, poets, mendicants and religious leaders and also by ordering the sale of government grain at cheap prices. But his exactions following the Dogra army's march to Ladakh via Srinagar added to the distress of the people of Kashmir.

In 1845, Mohi-ud-din's son Imam-ud-Din became Governor, but he could not rule Kashmir for long because of the Treaty of Amritsar by which the sovereignty of Kashmir passed into the hands of Gulab Singh in 1846. Imam-ud-Din sought the help of the hill tribes of the west so as to give fight to Gulab Singh. But Gulab Singh, however, won the day as the British came to his help.

Thus the Raja of Jammu took possession in 1846 of a territory that he had desired to conquer from his boyhood.

The Sikh regime was like that of the Afghan Government autocratic in its nature. Both the Afghans and the Sikhs were conquerors who owed their authority purely to their military strength and were interested only in reaping the fruit of their conquest. Nor did they take any interest in settling the administration of the conquered provinces as the Mughal rulers before them had done. Under the Sikhs, in particular, the condition of the people worsened. They looked down upon the Kashmiri and if one was killed by a Sikh, the compensation allowed to his family was

four rupees if a Hindu and two if a Muslim. Thus a Sikh soldier was given a free hand to kill the local people. The ancient practice of forced labour (*begar*) was continued by the Sikhs with such a great rigour that even an ordinary soldier could command the Kashmiri to do any work for him. Moorcroft and Hugel have given a horrid account of how the local people were forced to do unpaid labour for their Sikh masters. Moorcroft says that some of the Kashmiris accompanying him were seized by the Sikh soldiers to act as unpaid porters. They were tied together by a cord fastening their arms and driven along the road, and at night, their legs were bound with ropes so as to prevent their escape.

The Sikhs had great lust for money. The people were heavily taxed and as Moorcroft writes, subjected to every kind of extortion and oppression by the officers of the Sikh Government. This account is also testified to by other travellers like Hugel and Jacquemont who relate many striking stories of oppression and misrule. The shawl trade was no doubt in a flourishing state during the Sikh rule, but in the ultimate analysis it was the heavy taxation which contributed to the decay of the famous industry. So bad was the condition of the shawl weavers that some of them chopped off their fingers in order to avoid being forced to weave for the Sikh rulers by their employers. As regards revenue administration, the Sikhs entrusted the task of revenue collection to the revenue farmers each of whom was placed in charge of a *pargana*. As the revenue farmer had to pay a fixed share to the government, he was at liberty to extort as much as he could from the peasants. Thus the condition of peasants was no better than those of other classes of people. All these exactions resulted in the poverty of the masses, and the revenue remitted to Lahore fell increasingly from sixty two lakhs of rupees at the beginning of the Sikh rule to ten lakhs at the end. Begging became common. Natural calamities further added to the miseries of the already famished people. Many villages became depopulated as a result of death and



emigration, As Vigne writes : "Many of the houses were tenantless and deserted; the fruit was dropping unheeded from the trees ; the orchards were overgrown with a profusion of wild hemp and wild indigo". The condition of the houses and gardens in Srinagar was by no means good.

### **Foundation of the Jammu & Kashmir State**

To understand how the State of Jammu and Kashmir was created, it is important to relate here the later history of the Sikhs and in particular the career of its founder, Gulab Singh.

Gulab Singh was born in a Rajput family which like many other families of the Rajputs seems to have been driven up into the outer Himalayas by the Turkish invasions of India in the course of history. He was the son of Mian Kishore Singh who lived mainly on his *jagir* near Samba, 24 miles to the south of Jammu city. Mian Kishore Singh was the grandson of Surat Dev, a younger brother of Ranjit Dev. It was under Ranjit Dev that the principality of Jammu acquired a fairly stable government by about 1760.

Gulab Singh, who was born in 1792, was sent at an early age to his grandfathers' house where he learnt the art of warfare. When he was seventeen years old he ran away from his grandfathers' house and after some adventures entered the service of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1809. Some time later his two brothers Dhayan Singh and Suchet also came into the service of the Sikh ruler. But it was Gulab Singh who distinguished himself in various military campaigns and thus helped Ranjit Singh in the extension of his power. In 1820 Gulab Singh was installed as the Raja of Jammu by Ranjit Singh.

After becoming the ruler of Jammu, Gulab Singh conquered Ladakh (1841) Baltistan (1841) and Kishtwar. He

ruled firmly and exercised a close personal supervision over matters concerning money.

The death of Ranjit Singh in 1839 was followed by the death of his two legitimate successors, Kharrak Singh and Naonihal Singh. This brought rival claimants to the throne. A compromise was agreed upon by which Sher Singh, a famous son of Ranjit Singh, became the ruler.

Sher Singh was not unaware of the fact that Gulab Singh and his brothers had become very powerful. So he conspired against them. Other Sikh leaders also indulged in intrigues. All this resulted in the death of Sher Singh and two brothers of Gulab Singh. The Sikh party in power at Lahore also sought the destruction of Gulab Singh, but they could not continue their opposition against him when the Sikhs started a campaign against the British. They were conscious of Gulab Singh's military strength and skill and appealed him to become their leader. This was followed by the battle of Sobraon in February 1846 in which the Sikhs were defeated. Gulab Singh who was keen to reach a settlement with the British started negotiations with them. In the treaty that followed, the British recognized a Sikh Government at Lahore and certain Sikh territory together with an indemnity of a crore and a half of rupees (fifteen million rupees) was ceded to the British. A week later the British made a separate treaty with Gulab Singh at Amritsar by which the hilly or mountainous country east of the River Indus and west of the River Ravi was transferred to him and his heirs, and in consideration of the transfer, Gulab Singh paid to the British a sum of seventy-five lakhs of rupees.

Thus Gulab Singh became the master of Kashmir, in addition to Jammu and the other territories which he already possessed. The treaty of Amritsar did not definitely fix the boundaries of the newly created territory. However, the limits of the Jammu and Kashmir State were fixed by a boundary commission and later by re-arrangements and

transfers. It was on 9th November, 1846 that Gulab Singh entered Srinagar as its ruler.

Gulab Singh reorganized the revenue and police administration of the valley into four *Wazarats* or districts. The department of shawl, known as the *Daghshawl* was also reorganized. Rice was made a state monopoly and it was sold to the people of Srinagar at fixed price. But in spite of this, the condition of the people did not improve. The high price of rice and the corrupt practices of the officials added to the sufferings of the people. The Muslims, who formed over 90% of the population of Kashmir, had to pay a tax for the *Dharmarth*, a Hindu religious trust, established by the Maharaja.

Gulab Singh's greed for money is well known. Cunningham writes in his *History of the Sikhs* that "in the accumulation of money he will exercise many oppressions." It is interesting to note that if any of Gulab Singh's subjects could catch his attention, even though he was busy, by showing him a rupee and shouting 'Maharaja, a petition', he would at once grab the coin and after hearing the case would give his judgement. The Maharaja's passion for money explains why butchers, bakers, boatmen, scavengers, tailors and even prostitutes were taxed. The condition of the shawl weavers further worsened during the reign of Gulab Singh. In 1847 they struck work and about 4000 of them fled the Valley. They demanded reduction of various kinds of taxes.

Reference may be made to the affairs of Gilgit and the surrounding territories. When Kashmir was ceded to Gulab Singh in 1846, Gilgit, which was occupied by the Sikhs in 1842, was also handed over to the Dogras. The next year Lieutenants Vans Agnew and Young of the Bengal Engineers visited Gilgit. Since Nathu Shah, Gulab Singh's officer in Gilgit, had permitted the British officers to enter the area, the Mir of Hunza had him murdered in the disturbances which arose in Gilgit at his instigation. Gaur Rahman, the ruler of Yasin, took advantage of this and attacked Gilgit

with the support of the people of Darel. Gulab Singh sent his troops from Kashmir which were reinforced by those stationed at Astor and Skardu. Gaur Rahman was defeated. Bhup Singh and Sant Singh, the two officers of Gulab Singh, remained in charge of Gilgit and administered the area for four years. But in 1851 the sons of Gaur Rahman assisted by the Raja of Hunza and his followers attacked the Dogra forces. The result was the death 1100 of Bhup Singh's forces. The rest were imprisoned and taken as slaves. Thus all the territories to the right of the Indus river were lost to Gulab Singh. In other words Gilgit had to be given up and the Indus became the boundary of the State, with Bunji as its most northerly outpost.

Ranbir Singh, who succeeded his father Gulab Singh in February 1856, was interested in improving the condition of the people, but, unfortunately his officials, proved themselves to be corrupt and cruel. As a result of the exploitation of the shawl weavers by the officials, there took place the Zaldagar episode in which a good number of weavers were killed at the instance of an official. Though the revolt of the shawl weavers was suppressed with a firm hand, it, nonetheless, created a new sense of awareness among the oppressed people of Kashmir.

The construction of the cart road between Srinagar and Jammu started in the reign of Ranbir Singh. The Maharaja also built a track between the Kashmir Valley and Jammu. A telegraph and postal service was also introduced. Efforts were made to improve sericulture. Silk-worm seeds, imported from China, were distributed among villagers.

In 1860 Ranbir Singh sent a force under Devi Singh which recaptured Gilgit without much opposition. Dogra influence was also established over the neighbouring states of Hunza and Nagar.

It is important to refer to Ranbir Singh's relation with Chitral also. The Tsarist Russia is said to have sent military

experts not only to Hunza, but to Chitral as well. Meanwhile British were anxious to isolate Afghanistan which was under Russian influence. Since the Afghan Government was threatening the Mehtar of Chitral with invasion, it was felt necessary by the British to induce Ranbir Singh to accept the position of suzerain over Chitral. He was also directed to assure the Mehtar of his assistance. Negotiations between the officers of the Maharaja and the Mehtar subsequently took place. The result was a treaty between Aman-ul-Mulk, the Mehtar, and the Maharaja. According to the treaty the Mehtar accepted the suzerainty of the Maharaja and agreed to pay an annual tribute. The Maharaja in return had to pay him annually a subsidy of Rs. 12,000/-.

But the Mehtar was soon involved in a military conflict with the forces of the Maharaja. This resulted in the loss of some territories, namely, Koh, Ghizer and Ishkoman to the Mehtar. These territories were handed over to more loyal chiefs and came under the direct influence of the Maharaja's rule.

Unhappy with Maharaja Ranbir Singh's policy towards the frontier region, the British deputed Captain Biddulph as Officer on Special Duty at Gilgit in 1877. This move was necessitated by the possible threat of Russia. In fact, the main purpose of the Gilgit Agency was to keep the British Government informed of the latest moves of Russia across the Pamirs.

Ranbir Singh was succeeded by his son Pratap Singh in 1885. Since Pratap Singh was weak and strong government was necessary in view of the threat of a Russian invasion of India, he was deprived of all authority, and his State was placed in the hands of a Council of Regency under the control of the British Resident. In 1889 the Gilgit Agency was re-established and was given full charge of civil, military and political administration of the district. The advance of Russia up to the frontiers of Afghanistan and the great development of her military resources in Asia were

given as reasons by the British Government for strengthening her line of defence. A "strategic road" fit for pack ponies and mules was built, connecting Srinagar with Gilgit. In 1891, the two chiefs of Hunza and Nagar rose in rebellion against the Maharaja. But the Imperial Service troops (mainly Gorkhas and Dogras) stationed at Gilgit under the command of Colonel Durand, the political Agent at the time, destroyed the power of the chiefs and brought them under the control of the Kashmir Government. It should, however, be remembered that although the Gilgit Agency advanced the British Imperial interests, the greater part of the expenditure on this account and on the administration of these strategic areas was borne by the Jammu and Kashmir State. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that "save us from Gilgit" was always on the lips of the poor villagers of Kashmir who were often taken for forced labour (*begar*) for the purpose of carrying ammunition and supplies to the frontier region. Thus cultivation was neglected and famine conditions always prevailed in the valley.

During the period (1885-1921) that the Council of Regency was at the helm of affairs, valuable reforms were introduced under the direction of the British Resident. The Jehlam-Valley road was opened in 1890. With improved means of communications and transport Kashmir saw the dawn of a new era. Trade and industry began to develop. An important consequence of the improved communications was the growth of the tourist industry which created fresh employment avenues for thousands of people. The inauguration of the land settlement and the reorganization of the Financial, Public Works, Postal Telegraph and Forest Departments contributed a great deal to the material uplift of the people. Sanitation of Srinagar improved and this helped in the prevention of cholera epidemics which took a heavy toll of life in the city.

But in more than one respect the reforms introduced in Kashmir at the instance of the British Resident were deficient,

The decline of Shawl industry had caused a great deal of unemployment among the weavers. The *papier mache* artists were also thrown out of job on account of the non-availability of raw material. The workers in the Silk Factory were also restless as they had grown conscious of their rights. The educated Muslims were unemployed. The Muslims were conscious of the fact that their interests had been ignored. Influenced by the Pan-Islamic, Khilafat and Non-cooperation movement, the Muslims of Kashmir became politically conscious and demanded the redressal of their grievances. In 1924, when the Viceroy, Lord Reading, visited Srinagar, some of the leading members of the Muslim community submitted a Memorial to him. They demanded the complete abolition of forced labour, large representation of Muslims in government service, improvements in the condition of Muslim education in the State, and the restoration of mosques in possession of the Government. Maharaja Pratap Singh who was restored to full powers in 1921 took offence at its submission to the Viceroy and confiscated the property of the signatories and expelled some of them from the State. This, however, created a wave of widespread resentment among the Muslims and when Hari Singh became the ruler of Kashmir in 1925 the political situation in Kashmir had grown serious.

A far-sighted observer like Sir Albion Bannerji deplored such a state of affairs and resigned the post of the Foreign and Political Minister which he had held for over two years. On March 15, 1929 he criticised the Maharaja's government and made some remarks which produced a stir in the young minds of the Reading Room Party who started the movement against the Maharaja. On July 13, 1931, the 'dumb driven cattle' — the phrase Sir Albion Bannerji used to describe the people of Kashmir — revolted against the despotic rule of Hari Singh under the leadership of Shaikh Muhammad Abdullah. Hari Singh's government replied by floggings, arrests and shootings in various parts of the Valley. An official committee appointed under the Presidentship of Sir

Barjor Dalal to enquire into the firings of the 13th July was boycotted by the Muslims, who, besides questioning its independent character, demanded the setting up of an impartial commission of enquiry.

It was mainly because of the impact public opinion that Hari Singh appointed the Commission under the chairmanship of Sir B.J. Glancy of the Foreign and Political Department of the Government of India. The report of the Glancy Commission was of great importance as it brought to light the grievances of the Muslims and made recommendations for their redress. But the Muslims continued their agitation against the Government as they were not fully satisfied with the Government's policy towards them.

In 1939 the Muslim Conference which was founded in 1932 was converted into the National Conference by Shaikh Abdullah and his close associates. This was done to win over the Hindu and Sikh inhabitants of Kashmir. But some members like Moulana Muhammad Yusuf and Chaudri Ghulam Abbas did not approve of the policies of the National Conference and decided to keep the old organization alive and drew closer to the policy and programme of the All-India Muslim League. The National Conference, on the contrary, subscribed to the aims and aspirations of the Indian National Congress. In October 1939 it passed a resolution demanding responsible government and in May 1946 it started the "Quit Kashmir Movement" under the leadership of Shaikh Abdullah. The Maharaja's government arrested the Kashmir leader and his colleagues and let loose a reign of terror.

At the time of the partition of the sub-continent India was conceived as a federation of States. Upon the creation of the Independent Dominion of India soon after the withdrawal of the British in 1947, the Princely States of the erstwhile British India were offered the choice of joining either the Dominion of India or that of Pakistan. The



Maharaja of Kashmir, however, decided to remain uncommitted. Immediately there were riots in Poonch and Pathan tribesmen from the North-West Frontier came in to assist the Muslim 'rebels'. The Maharaja fled to India, appealed for help and offered to accede Kashmir to the Indian Union. The Indian Government accepted, while stipulating that this accession of Kashmir to India should be ratified ultimately by popular consultation. On March, 5, 1948 the Maharaja conceded full responsible government to the National Conference. Shaikh Abdullah became the Prime Minister and the Constituent Assembly elected in October, 1951, besides ratifying the accession, safeguarded the autonomy of the State of Jammu & Kashmir. The fields of Defence, Foreign Affairs and Communication were, however, abandoned to the Central Government by the State Assembly. The accession of the State of Jammu & Kashmir thus effected was given legal and constitutional validity and sanctioned by the incorporation of Article 370 in the Indian constitution which defined the State's special relationship with India.

## **Problem of Transition from Medieval to Modern in Indian History—Kashmir : A Case Study**

Periodisation in Indian History in terms of "ancient" 'medieval' and 'modern', though a Western import has nevertheless received scholastic and intellectual sanction of the doyens of Indian history. Credit should be given to Indian scholars<sup>2</sup> for contributing a good deal to the medley of schematic exercises on medievalism.<sup>3</sup> Though there is no wrong with attempts at demarcating phases of Indian history, it, however, remains a fact that any generalisation covering the entire sub-continent or even its greater part is bound to be misleading and arbitrary. It is in this context that we shall study the problem of transition from the medieval to the modern in Kashmir history.

The most widely accepted meaning of 'medieval' in the context of European history is "pertaining to or characteristics of the Middle Ages."<sup>1</sup> It is well known that the term 'medieval' in European history is generally used to signify the period from the fall of the Roman empire in 476 A.D. (or from the later half of the seventh century as Pirenne thinks, depending on the argument of the continuity of Mediterranean trade and commerce) to about the end of the fifteenth century. Roughly speaking, these long centuries were characterized by the feudal mode of production in

\*Based on a paper read in the Seminar of the Indian Council of Historical Research held at Himchal Pradesh University, Simla in October, 1981.

Western Europe whose key feature was the direct access by the rulers to the land. Clearly the medieval period in Western Europe is understood not only in a chronologically "positionally descriptive manner," but also in a qualitative, "connotative meaning", that is, "they are not just adjectively descriptive, but they have also the significance of qualitative abstraction."<sup>5</sup>

The Indian historians have given various interpretations of the term 'medieval'. In his address as the General President of the 29th Session of the Indian History Congress held at Patiala in 1967, N.R. Ray discussed at length the medieval factor in Indian history. Among the major values and features of medieval India the learned historian took note of "supremacy of the scriptures and religious texts ; subordination of reason and spirit to faith and acceptance of authority ; absolute obedience to priests and preachers ; regionalism in territorial vision and in the pattern of political action ; regionalism in art, language, literature and script ; relative paucity of secular literature ; preponderance of commentarial thinking and writing over the creative ; relative disregard for science and technology ; proliferation of religious cults and sects ; multiplication of gods and goddesses and increasing conventionalisation of iconic representations of them ; accentuation of sectarian rivalries and jealousies ; proliferation of administrative machinery and extension and multiplication of bureaucracy ; feudalisation of land ownership and tenure and increasing fragmentation ; relative dependence on land and agriculture in preference to trade, commerce and industry ; preponderance of natural economy over what is known as money economy ; and a fatalistic and fearful attitude towards life, pre-disposition towards the supernatural and pre-determined destiny."

Fifteen main traits and features as enumerated above constituting what, in abstraction, Ray describes as 'medievalism' in Indian history are said to have made themselves manifest from about the seventh-eighth century of the Christian era. Ray further adds that they slowly but

surely went "on unfolding themselves till the end of the period, and not a few of them continue right through into the period which we call 'modern'."<sup>8</sup>

Ray's interpretation, though full of useful insights, gives us neither an objective presentation of facts nor an integrated interpretation, but an arbitrary and subjective recasting of Indian history<sup>9</sup> prepared in the manner of the specific nature of a particular periodisation scheme. In fact, he tends to take medieval India as something in the nature of being exclusive, neither owing anything to the preceding period, nor indeed contributing anything to the emerging of modern India. Furthermore, out of Ray's fifteen components of 'medievalism' one still finds about thirteen appreciable segments strongly present in large areas of the life of our pluralistic society.<sup>10</sup>

The Aligarh School of historians<sup>11</sup> too has defined the term 'Medieval'. In its journal the school purports to interpret the term in its widest sense, that is, the historians of Aligarh begin their study of medieval India "from the time of the break-up of the Rajput states and the foundation of the centralised Sultanate of the Turks," who attempted "to bring the different parts of the country under a unified political, as also economic system." The study is continued "down to the period when the British rule was established and the country was drawn into the orbit of modern industrial civilization in the form of a colony of British imperialism." Thus their study "includes movements and institutions which the Europeans call 'oriental', i.e., those whose main source of inspiration did not come from the industrial civilization of the West but which may be regarded essentially as a continuation from the pre-industrial era."<sup>12</sup>

Though the interpretation of the Aligarh School is reasonably sound, it may, however, be explained that in actual practice the celebrated medievalists of Aligarh seem to have unconsciously lent support to the false idea that the

medieval period in Indian history is the so-called 'Muslim period' by confining themselves to writing the history of the Delhi Sultanate and Mughal period.<sup>13</sup>

R. S. Sharma has discussed at length the problem of transition from ancient to medieval Indian history. According to him medieval period begins from the sixth and seventh centuries when "most features such as feudal organisation, reversion to closed economy, proliferation of castes, regional identity in art, script and language, *pūja*, *bhakti* and *tantra*" made their appearance. These characteristics developed in medieval times and continued later. As a matter of fact, Sharma traces the beginnings of the medieval period in India to the feudalization of the State apparatus during the Gupta period.<sup>14</sup>

It will be seen that although scholars have very ably tried to clarify the concept and content of medievalism, the problem remains as to when, why and how the medieval period ends in Indian history. True that the advent of the British in Bengal is generally seen as marking the beginning of the modern period in Indian history, it should not, however, be supposed, as is usually the practice, that India entered the so-called modern period in history with the ascendancy of the British in Bengal. Our argument rests on the fact the British rule on the sub-continent did not come into being concurrently. While it was a process which took nearly a century to achieve, the "introduction of British administration and its sensitivity to existing institutions varied overtime and by region." Traditional or medieval "institutions and arrangements survived more or less intact until conquest occurred, and even then they persisted in many areas".<sup>15</sup> The British impact was 'in no sense a uniform, once-for-all event.' As a matter of reality, Indian society at the advent of the British in India was not monolithic; 'it varied greatly from one region to another and had its own orthogenetic processes.'<sup>16</sup> The fact that the British conquest of Bengal did not 'atomise' India is amply borne out by Kashmir which remained medieval as late as the beginning of the present century.

Our study which is confined to the period beginning from the Dogra occupation of Kashmir in 1846 to the dawn of modernism in the second quarter of the twentieth century is organized around Marx's<sup>17</sup> view which regards the status of 'serfs' for the cultivators, a high degree of direct access to the land for the rulers, and the concentration of artisanal labour in towns as crucial characteristics of the feudal social order *vis a vis* the Asiatic mode of production.<sup>18</sup> Our model may appear to be vague in view of differences in many directions. Nonetheless, we can speak in terms of feudalism in Kashmir, though not without obvious regional variations. To reject totally the notion of applying European feudalism to Indian history is not, of course, without any reason, but seldom with a good one considering the fact that it is not always possible to find a perfect example of a pristine model.<sup>1</sup>

## II

The political unification of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh comprising what is now known as the Jammu & Kashmir State was achieved by Gulab Singh, the Dogra Raja of Jammu, as a result of the Treaty of Amritsar concluded with the British in 1846. But this fact does not itself provide sufficient ground for marking the end of the medieval period in Kashmir. Notwithstanding the seeming political unity under the Dogras, the period extending from 1846 to the close of the last century saw a strong feudalisation of the State machinery the like of which can rarely be found in the eighteenth century Kashmir when, in spite of political instability, the rulers did not enjoy the optimum degree of direct access to the land. The Kashmiri peasants' position, though pitiable, throughout the eighteenth century, cannot, however, be compared with the 'serfs' of medieval Europe; to a considerable degree, he was allowed independent use of his labour. Of course he often fell victim to the rapacity of the revenue farmers (*ijaradars*) and revenue officials, but even then his hereditary, occupancy and above all proprietary rights<sup>20</sup> in the land were never challenged by the Government. There is no evidence to suggest that the concept of

the State as the owner of land or the employment of forced labour<sup>21</sup> in the fields for production purposes existed in the 18th century Kashmir. Significantly, the 18th century which is generally regarded as one of the worse periods<sup>22</sup> in Kashmir history saw the growth of shawl industry and corresponding increase in the shawl trade.<sup>23</sup>

With the sale of Kashmir by the British to Gulab Singh, Kashmir society underwent a deep-seated change. The pattern of new agrarian relations began to emerge when the Dogra rulers declared themselves to be the absolute owners of the soil. A specific State concept survived repeatedly to play a powerful role throughout the Dogra period (1846-1947). The new rulers often invoked the Treaty of Amritsar to establish their legitimacy and to perpetuate the notion of their superior ownership of land. Not only that, the Treaty was also invoked to thwart the British machinations of establishing a Residency in the State.<sup>24</sup> It is no wonder that Maharaja Pratap Singh drew on the Treaty in moments of despair to legitimate and consolidate his authority. His letter to the Chief Minister is worth quoting here :

“As you are already aware of the proprietary rights in all the lands of Kashmir belong to the ruling Chief exclusively, for the simple reason that the territories of Kashmir were purchased by my late lamented grandfather, Maharaja Gulab Singhji, and hence any sale of such land by anyone else is illegal.”<sup>25</sup>

It is hard to deny that the Treaty of Amritsar conferred both *de jure* and *de facto* rights on the Dogra Maharajas to regard Kashmir as their personal property.<sup>25a</sup> In fact, the Treaty was understood to imply that Maharaja Gulab Singh had purchased against cash payment all lands, rivers, forests, mines, natural products<sup>26</sup> and indeed, as we shall see later, everything including even the skill of weavers of shawl industry. It is this Dogra concept of superior ownership which so pathetically reflects in both Kashmiri and Urdu

literature produced during the Dogra rule. Thus, for example, Iqbal, the renowned Urdu poet of the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent, writes :

“O breeze, if you happen to go Geneva way, carry a word from me to the Nations of the whole world.

A land & people, its streams and forests all were sold.

In fact the whole nation was sold and fancy at how cheap a price.”

Although the recognition of the Dogra ruler's superior ownership of land formed the basis of the Government's policy, throughout the period extending from 1846 to 1931 or so, the Dogra administration worked directly to create a class of landed aristocracy comprising mainly the Kashmiri Pandits<sup>27</sup> and the Dogra Rajputs.<sup>28</sup> In the whole process the land grants viz , *Jagirs*<sup>29</sup> and *Chaks*<sup>30</sup> particularly assumed institutionalised form. The use of these assignments may be mentioned as a major device for ruling-class support. What the foundation of the Dogra rule brought about was the creation of a new system of agrarian exploitation, with a parasitical urban growth based upon it. The new polity combined political authority with economic power more fully than either the preceding ruling classes had united before, vesting the control over the bulk of the surplus produced by the peasants in the hands of a ruling class. The relationship of the peasants to the land was epitomized in the deriding remark *gama hakur*, meaning village bull. Though many aspects of this ridicule are worthy of full investigation and comment such as the context in which it first appears,<sup>32</sup> it can, however, be taken as a byword of basic social relations which bound the peasant to the soil and the master. The growth of closed village economy<sup>33</sup> was thus an essential element in the changed situation. It is not, therefore, surprising that as late as the beginning of the present century salaries were unheard of in Kashmir.<sup>31</sup> The Dogra ruler's



frequent attempts at changing currency<sup>35</sup> besides showing how unstable was the economy, also points to the decline of trade and industrial production resulting in the dependence of a vast number of people on the land.<sup>36</sup> As compared to the numismatic traditions of Kashmir of the 18th century, the coins of the 19th century show progressive debasement of metal and stylistic degeneration.<sup>37</sup> The paucity of coinage resulting from the decline of long distance trade like shawls also gives validity to the hypothesis about the growth of feudalism in Kashmir.

In order convincingly to demonstrate that the Dogra rule brought about feudalisation of polity and society, a more detailed examination of the facts that can be made here would be necessary. But keeping in view the limited scope of the paper, we shall confine our study to the forced labour (*begar*)<sup>38</sup> which remained till the beginning of this century the most pronounced feature of Kashmir administration. We must, however, make a clear distinction between the forced labour employed for transport of goods and the labour used for production purposes. The latter is considered to be the essential ingredient of European feudalism. In Kashmir both forms of the forced labour were present in the economic organization of the post-1846 period.

*Begar* as a means of transport was not a system peculiar to Kashmir alone. It was resorted to in the Panjab at British annexation and continued for many years afterwards in a good number of its districts.<sup>39</sup> But in Kashmir the abuse rather than the use of *begar* was the real evil. *Begar* meant to the cultivators "far more than the impressment of labour, for under its comprehensive name every kind of demand for labour or property but not paid for the officials was included." It consisted "of requisitions for village produce" and was "a form of purveyance on behalf of officials." Under this system the peasant was subject to labour demands, such as building houses for the nobility, and to a variety of regular and irregular levies, some of them very onerous. For example, it was normal for the peasant to supply wood, grass, milk,

poultry and grain, blankets and an occasional pony, cows and sheep free of cost to officials.<sup>40</sup> The highest degree to which the ruling class enjoyed direct access to land is shown by numerous instances of land being brought under cultivation through the unpaid labour of the peasants.<sup>41</sup> It may be argued that the ruling class through its franchises or through the agency of the State, was striving to maximize feudal rent which according to Rodney Hilton "is the forcibly appropriated surplus of the direct producer, all the time."<sup>42</sup>

It may be observed from the structural-functional point of view<sup>43</sup> that *begar* was "functional" for the needs of feudal society owing to the absence of proper roads in Kashmir as late as the dawn of this century<sup>44</sup> and also because of the tortuous paths in the hilly regions which necessitated the use of load-carriers in preference to all other means of transport. Two main reasons, however, explain more clearly why the magnitude of forced labour grew in volume during the Dogra rule in Kashmir. First, the feudal exigencies resulting in an intense military activity in the north-west frontier of Kashmir after 1846 put a heavy demand on the peasantry for carrying supplies to the Dogra soldiers in Gilgit<sup>45</sup> and its adjoining areas. As we shall see later, this ever-increasing demand with its ramifications reduced the peasants close to the position of 'serfs'. Furthermore, the forced labour assumed dangerous proportions also due to the emergence of an organized landed aristocracy which was actively interested in the accentuation of localism. This is shown by the fact that it was always able to entice away cultivators from the *Khalisa*<sup>46</sup> villages whose residents were often seized for carrying supplies to the frontier region.<sup>47</sup> The tendency of deserting their villages was always found present among the cultivators of the *Khalisa* land and they preferred to work in the *Chakdars'* estates than in the *Khalisa*.<sup>48</sup> Since the cultivators working on the land grants of the *Chakdars* were not seized for forced labour in the hilly areas, cultivation in the *Chakdars'* estates was relatively better<sup>49</sup>. This kind of an attitude on the part of the landed aristocracy besides contributing to

the decline of land revenue<sup>50</sup> to the State made the intensity and scope of subjection and dependence of the peasants in Kashmir no less than the servitude of the peasantry in Western feudalism, which overburdened the peasant with service on the lord's farm and payment of various dues, and rendered them dependent on the lord as well as the land. Thus patron-client relations, resembling the "ties of obedience and protection"<sup>51</sup> linked the members of the society in a *chakdar's* estate in a most pronounced way. The family<sup>52</sup> and communal ties of the Kashmir peasantry must have correspondingly weakened by these ties which seem to have penetrated more deeply among them. In no sense then, economically, politically, or even religiously was the Kashmir peasant an independent or autonomous figure but rather was linked in all these spheres by relationships which ran vertically up a hierarchical social order, and horizontally over a wide geographical area. No wonder, he was pithily described as a 'worshipper of tyranny' (*Zulum parast*).<sup>53</sup>

One important result of the tyrannical manipulation of *begar* by the officials was the destruction of the occupancy rights<sup>54</sup> of the peasants. The fact that *begar* became the most injurious instrument in the hands of officials goaded by the ambition of grabbing more and more land is attested to by strong documentary evidence. "Every year the levy of coolies for Gilgit places in the hands of the *Tehsildars* (the District Magistrates) great powers of oppression....." remarks Ernest Neve. "And from the Chief of the local administration down to the humblest person of the Tehsil this was an unfailing source of income. Meanwhile, the poor and the friendless, or those who had incurred the wrath of the authorities, were seized and sent off on the hated task of carrying loads, a thirteen days journey, over rough mountain tracks to Gilgit. Their condition was indeed little better than that of slaves."<sup>55</sup> Thus, in order to earn exemption from doing forced labour in a far-off region, the peasants of the *Khalisa* villages left their residential areas so as to work in the official's (*chakdars*) estates.<sup>54</sup> An assessment report on Kashmir refers to cases in a certain district where a village

sold its *assami* or occupancy rights to officials for sums of Rs. 50.<sup>57</sup> In another case three villages were sold to the Governor of Srinagar for pecuniary amounts giving an average of about Rs. 40/- per village.<sup>58</sup> "On asking the villagers why they parted with their rights and their children's birthrights for so inadequate a sum", remarks Lawrence, "they replied that by selling their village to a Pandit (official) they escaped from *begar*, and they added that the right of an *assami* conveyed with them no privileges."<sup>52</sup>

The foregoing account should, in no sense, force us to reach the hasty conclusion that the peasants were free to alienate the land or that there emerged modern bourgeoisie property rights in the land during the Dogra period. The real picture of the Dogra polity does not emerge until the process of colonization of new land and of intensified exploitation of the peasantry, in other words the process of maximization of rent is seen as the source of strength of the Dogra Government. Besides maximization of rent, monopolistic control exercised by the Government over almost all products of Kashmir, contraction of town life and trade and above all the Government's least encumbrance about social overheads are sufficient proof of the growth of the ruling power as an engine of oppression. The principal feature of the mode of production in the feudal society under discussion was that the owner of means of production, the ruling class, was constantly striving to appropriate for its own use the whole of the surplus produced by the direct producer. Thus the sales referred to above cannot be termed as sale-deeds in the strict sense since the peasants were not deemed to have any rights in the land either by the Dogra Maharajas or their ruling class. This also explains why an official is said to have disbursed not even a penny from his own pocket when he declared himself to be the owner of a village under the pretext of sale, but deducted the amount from the arrears entered against the village<sup>59a</sup> in the revenue records of the Government. All this points to the most favourable degree of accessibility to the land enjoyed by the ruling class.

So closely knit together was the ruling class that if an official or his distant relative wanted to acquire land, he would bring a ruined village under cultivation "by calling ploughs from all the surrounding villages." He never paid a rupee for labour and he now considered himself to be the owner of the village.<sup>60</sup> That there took place increasing transference of land from the cultivators to the powerful bureaucracy of the Dogra Government can hardly be denied. This argument was raised even in the British House of Commons when it was pointed out that since "the death of Maharaja Gulab Singh from which date central authority seems to have become weaker, there has been a steady and, latterly, rapidly increasing transference of land from the cultivating class to the non-cultivating classes, and a landlord element is intruding itself between the cultivator and the State."<sup>61</sup>

The chief object of the new landed aristocracy was to maintain the local agrarian economy. This is shown not only by their oppression of the peasantry through various kinds of arbitrary exactions,<sup>62</sup> but also by controlling the market of the produce of the land. Ever since the establishment of the Dogra rule, the Government had taken up the responsibility of selling rice to the people of Srinagar at rates far below the cost of production.<sup>63</sup> This system necessitated the realization of the greater part of the land revenue in kind which in turn not only checked cultivation but gave birth to many abuses.<sup>64</sup> For instance, the revenue after being collected in kind was managed in such a way by the officials that neither the State nor the poor people of the city derived any benefit from the system. It was rather the hierarchy of officers from the Governor of Srinagar to the district Teshildars who being the "partners and managers of a grain dealing firm" misappropriated most of the revenue."<sup>65</sup> So fragmented had authority become in Kashmir that an attempt made by Maharaja Ranjit Singh (1858-1885) to collect revenue in cash in 1873 proved to be abortive owing to the opposition of the official class bound by common interests.<sup>66</sup>

Now that we have attempted to show that the ruling class enjoyed direct access to the land, it is necessary to point out that there was a notable lack of peasant movements in the pre-1930 period. Class conflict there undoubtedly was, and in our period it sometimes expressed itself openly,<sup>67</sup> but certainly never in spectacular, uprisings until the thirties. The markedly less turbulence of the Kashmiri peasant may be attributed not only to the ties of obedience and protection fostered by the economic control of the ruling class over the production process, but also to the facts of his religious history. Apart from the governing class, the religious heads of the Muslim community of Kashmir were also responsible for much of the woes of the peasants. The fact that the peasants were also tied to the exploiters of Islam in Kashmir like the Sayyids, Pirzadas and custodians of the mosques and shrines<sup>68</sup> is borne out not only by various devices through which the latter fleeced the peasants, but also by the sad reality that till recent times the Sayyids of Kashmir worked their land by the forced labour of their disciples.<sup>69</sup> It seems that the Muslim priestly classes had forged a close alliance with the ruling class in view of the fact the peasants working on the fields of the Sayyids and Pirzadas were not seized for forced labour of any kind by the officials.<sup>70</sup> All this explains why issues such as the woeful condition of the peasantry, ownership of land, forced labour and open oppression carried on by the *Chakdars & Jagirdars* in their estates became the focus among the discontented Shaikh Abdullah when he started a powerful movement against the feudal regime in 1931. Apparently the Kashmir movement seems to have urban roots,<sup>71</sup> but fundamentally it was deep-rooted in the rural unrest which marked the emerging agrarian relations after the sale of Kashmir to Gulab Singh.

We may now turn our attention to the concentration of artisanal labour in Srinagar, the chief urban centre of the Jammu and Kashmir State. It was here that the highest form of labour organization could be observed in the shawl-making trade in Kashmir at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries. Refail Danibegov, a

Georgian nobleman, visiting Srinagar towards the end of the 18th century, talks about the considerable development in the city of shawl manufacture. "In the vicinity of the town and in the town itself," writes the traveller, "there are up to 24,000 looms, many of which specialize in the weaving of shawls."<sup>72</sup> According to reports of Məkh̄ti Rafailov, the Russian Ambassador to India, no less than 20,000 looms existed in Srinagar.<sup>73</sup> William Moorcroft and George Trebek,<sup>74</sup> the well-known English travellers who visited Kashmir in the early 19th century, tell us that 120,000 of the total 800,000 people inhabiting Kashmir were employed in the shawl manufacture. During the reigns of Gulab Singh and Ranbir Singh there were 30,000 to 40,000 shawl weavers in the city of Srinagar alone.<sup>74a</sup>

The highest concentration of labour in the shawl industry at the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th centuries has led Chicherov<sup>75</sup> to conclude that "there emerged enterprises which possessed a number of important features typical of capitalist manufactures."<sup>76</sup> However, it is well to remember that essentially the economic organization of labour in the shawl industry contained forms traditional for the feudal society. Thus, for example, when a shawl was sold, the out-play of the master workman (*Ustad*) was deducted from the price, and the remainder was divided into five shares, of which one went to the *Ustad* and the other four to the workmen.<sup>77</sup> Added to this, the system of dividing proceeds equally and the *Ustad's* practice of feeding the workman<sup>78</sup> bear striking resemblance to the traditional 'artel' form of labour organization, to the relations of master-craftsman and apprentice, characteristic of feudal workshops in medieval Europe.<sup>79</sup>

With the emergence of organized aristocracy after 1846, the feudal class exercised its exploitation of the artisans of shawl industry not only through a ramified and diversified system of taxation<sup>80</sup>, but also by various forms of political and economic control,<sup>81</sup> feudal restrictions,<sup>82</sup> monopolies<sup>83</sup> etc., including the widely practised direct plunder<sup>84</sup> and

coercion<sup>85</sup> of artisans. So rapacious was Gulab Singh in order to ensure a constant income from the manufacture of shawls that he even promulgated an ordinance which bound the weaver to his master and forbade him to give up his operative.<sup>86</sup>

It sounds strange why the shawl industry could not develop potentialities true of capitalist enterprise keeping in view the emergence of rudiments of capitalist relations between the proprietors and their workers namely, the weavers, embroiders etc, following the growth of international trade in shawls from the close of the 18th century to the 1860's. Our explanation of the abortion of this development<sup>87</sup> is the plundering of shawl weavers by way of feudal exactions which in the long run proved to be detrimental to the manufacturers' interests, and the practice of employing them in 'bondage' which at times forced weavers to chop off their fingers so as to disable themselves from weaving.<sup>88</sup> Thus we should not make mistake of assuming that the importance of the international trade in shawls during the 1850's and the 1860's was a measure of significance to the Kashmir economy. The continuation of shawl trade in the first two decades of the Dogra rule should not at all negate the possibilities of the agrarian forms and elements which constitute the basis of a feudal society. The immobility of the artisans resulting from the legal restrictions must have killed their initiative and enterprise. This partly explains why the deterioration in the quality of shawls<sup>87</sup> seems to have set in owing to the stagnation of skills in the third quarter of the 19th century. Furthermore, the kind of commercial activities as existing in Srinagar for most part of the 19th century could hardly originate a process of urbanization<sup>90</sup> that might lead to the emergence of a stable commercialised middle class, for profits from trade were either appropriated by the foreign merchants<sup>91</sup> or frittered away by the ruling class.<sup>92</sup> In spite of the fact that the shawl industry provided sustenance to a large majority of the population of Srinagar, its outward progress never basically modified the social structure of Kashmir. Of course, there



were certain rich shawl merchant families<sup>93</sup> in Srinagar, but under the conditions existing in the feudal set-up capital formation in the true sense was well-nigh impossible. It is no surprise, therefore, why these trading merchant families<sup>94</sup> were the first to challenge the feudal order in the twenties of the present century.

## RESUME

The parallels which we have attempted to show between the traditional Kashmirian social order and the medieval European norms of feudalism may not appear striking, but the application of broad notions of feudalism to an analysis of Kashmirian reality brings home to us the fact that India's economy was not necessarily the same at any given time in history on account of the country's vastness and varied geography. Thus, while in the 19th century forces for the transformation were gathering strength in some areas directly under the British rule, in Kashmir, however, we cannot preclude a situation in which feudal relations were becoming stronger. In consequence the level of development of Kashmir's economy before the dawn of modern era remained very low. The obligation on the part of the peasant to hand over his surplus had the disastrous effect of depriving him of bare subsistence needs resulting in his migration and abandonment of cultivation of superior crops. Whatever economic surplus was appropriated, it was spent for the large consumption of parasitic classes like the Maharaja, the absentee landlords and an extensive phalanx of officials.<sup>95</sup> In fact, the Kashmir State rested firmly on the peasantry and on the produce of the land. The rural-urban trade<sup>96</sup> was one way traffic since urban commodities found no markets in the countryside. Money was scarce in the villages. The decline of shawl trade, mainly as a result of feudal exactions, forced weavers to take to agriculture which was carried on by means of forced labour in the estates of the *chakdars*. All this worked for a closed economy.

The above discussion thus brings us up against the conventional and arbitrary periodisation of Indian history which certainly places a researcher doing studies of the regions at micro level in a serious difficulty. Though periodisation has generally been found convenient by historians investigating issues of all-India significance, the crucial issues raised by the regional studies like the one under reference are much more complex, and have still to be fathomed convincingly.

The culmination of a historical process has precisely no cut-off points in time. Nevertheless, it can be safely assumed that the modern period in Kashmir history begins in the first half of the present century—the period which marks a clear starting-point of a new phase of development in Kashmir from almost every point of view. It was during this period that Kashmir saw the rise of bourgeoisie movement led by the trading merchants like Saad-ud-Din Shawl and followed by the peasants movement under the National Conference leadership. These developments coincided with the expansion of the communications infrastructure<sup>97</sup> and a slow growth of capitalist enterprise in the carpet industry.<sup>98</sup> The extent to which these developments altered the social structure of Kashmir is best reflected in the emergence of a commercialised middle class<sup>99</sup> in the strict sense only after the liquidation of the feudal order in 1950 when the new Government of Kashmir headed by Shaikh Muhammad Abdullah sounded a death-knell to the relics of the feudal society such as the *jagirdari* and the *chakdari*.<sup>100</sup>

### References and Notes

1. The conventional division into ancient, medieval and modern in European history is attributed to Cellarius (1634-1717). Cited in D.M. Sturley, *The Study of History*, London, 1969, p. 116 n.

2. N.R. Ray, "The Medieval Factor in Indian History", Presidential Address, Indian History Congress, Patiala, 1967; R.S. Sharma, "Problem of Transition from Ancient to Medieval in Indian History," *The Indian Historical Review*, Vo. 1, 1974, pp. 1—9.
3. The division of Indian history into ancient, medieval and modern is the development of the post—1947 period. Before independence, the British scheme of dividing Indian history into Hindu, Muslim and British periods was broadly accepted by the Indian History Congress.
4. See *Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles*.
5. N.R. Ray, *op. cit* , p. 3
6. *Ibid* , p. 3३.
7. *Ibid*.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 30—40.
9. A fatalistic and fearful attitude towards life is a psychic tendency among the human beings rather than a medieval trait. It is also unhistorical to make a case for 'medievalism' on the basis of the so-called supremacy of religion in the pre-modern period considering the firm hold the medieval religious institutions like the shrines still have on the bulk of the Indian people.
10. Even if one applies the hypothesis of Ray to Kashmir of the nineteenth century, one is obliged to remark that as late as the dawn of the twentieth century Kashmir had not wriggled itself out of the 'medieval' grip.

11. Since the historians of Aligarh were the first Indian historians to offer insights into the problems of medieval Indian history and also because of the fact that their persuasive scholarship has influenced the modern historical writings on 'medieval' India to a great extent, this explains why the term Aligarh School has been used here.
12. All volumes of *Medieval India Miscellany*, Aligarh.
13. The historians of Aligarh Muslim University have produced a plethora of works on 'medieval' Indian history in the form of monographs, edited Persian tax with annotations, translation of some Persian chronicles and research articles of a very high standard. For want of space mention is made here of some well known works: Muhammad Habib, *Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni*, Aligarh, 1927; K. A. Nizami, *Some Aspects of Religion and Politics in the 13th Century*, Aligarh, 1961; Muhammad Habib and K. A. Nizami, *Comprehensive History of India* (ed.) vol. V, Delhi, 1970; Muhammad Habib and Afsar Begum, *The Political Theory of the Delhi Sultanate*, Allahabad, 1960; Irfan Habib, *The Agrarian System of Mughal India (1556-1707)*, Bombay, 1963; Satish Chandra *Parties and Politics at the Mughal Court (1707-40)* Aligarh, 1959; Athar Ali, *Mughal Nobility Under Aurangzeb*, Bombay, 1968; N. A. Siddiqi, *Land Revenue Administration under the Mughals*, Bombay, 1970. Though the abiding contribution of the historians of the Aligarh School to Indian history can not be denied, it should, however, be borne in mind that the school's preoccupation with the Delhi Sultanate and the Mughal India tends to perpetuate the false notion of indentifying the medieval period with the so-called 'Muslim rule' in India.
14. *The Indian Historical Review*, vol. I, 1974, pp. 1-9.
15. Morris D. Morris, *Indian Economy in the Nineteenth Century A Symposium*, Delhi, 1969, p. 135.
16. Low, *Soundings in South Asian History* (ed.) London, 1968, pp. 17-18.

17. Karl Marx, *Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations* (ed. E.J. Hobsbawm), London, 1964, pp 75, 91, 126. A good deal of subsequent historical research has done little to shake Marx's characterization of the feudal society. Recently B. Hindess and P. Hirst (*Pre-Capitalist Modes of Production*, London, 1975) have cogently argued that direct access to the land is the determining feature of the feudal mode of production.
18. Marx saw the Asiatic mode as based on "self-sustaining unity of manufactures and agriculture," and saw the private possession of landed property as occurring within a framework of essentially communal property. *Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations*, pp 91, 75. However, the researches of some Marxist Indian historians have invalidated the concept of Asiatic mode of production. See, for Example, Irfan Habib's brilliant views, "Problems of Marxist Analysis", *Enquiry*, n. s. vol. VIII, no. 2. Monsoon 1969, pp 52-67.
19. For challenging views that feudalism did not exist in India, see Habans Mukhia, "Was there Feudalism in Indian History", Presidential Address, *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress, 1979, Waltair*, pp 229-280. Irfan Habib too does not regard the economy of India in the 'medieval' period as feudal; instead he characterizes it as 'Indian Medieval economy'. See "Economic History of the Delhi Sultanate", *The Indian Historical Review*, vol. IV, No. 2, p. 293. Notwithstanding the learned historians stimulating insights, the characterization of 'Indian Medieval Economy' seems to be a poor substitute for the feudal economy. We base our contention on the mere fact that the 'medieval' in Western Europe is understood as having the significance of qualitative abstraction. The use of 'Indian Medieval economy' also seems to be vague in view of the absence of any significant economic integration on a national or even multi-regional scale in the pre-modern period.

20. Unfortunately, no work has so far been done on the agrarian system of Kashmir under the Muslim rulers. However, our study of persian chronicles and a few sale-deeds preserved in the library of Central Asian Studies, Kashmir University reveals that there did not exist the concept of any superior ownership of land vested in the ruler in the pre-1819 period. Even during the Sikh rule in Kashmir (1819-1846) the peasant's hereditary and proprietary rights in the land were not challenged by the rulers.
21. *Begar* or compulsory labour was not a part of the fiscal system under the Afghan rulers as it was in the Dogra period.
22. Abdul Majid Mattoo's view that during the Afghan rule in Kashmir "the feudal mode of production made a headway..." is not supported by any documentary evidence. Nor does he substantiate his argument that there evolved a process "within the feudal economy, which ultimately brought about certain changes and shaped the economic and social structure of our modern history (Sic !)". However, Mattoo has reasonably challenged the views of R.K. Parmu and P.N.K. Bamzai regarding the supposed cruelty of the Afghan rulers of Kashmir towards their Hindu subjects (See "A Glimpse of the Afghan Rule in Kashmir", *Research Biannual*, Vol. II, No. I, Srinagar 1978, pp. 18-20,
23. The once reputed shawl industry of Kashmir has yet to receive the attention that was due to it from scholars of Kashmir history. The tentative observation offered above is based on the travellers' accounts. George Forster (*A Journey from Bengal to England through the Northern Part of India, Kashmir, Afghanistan, and Persia, and into Russia by the Caspian Sea*. II, London 1838, p. 22) speaks of the presence of shawl merchants and "com-

mercial agents of the principal cities of Northern India, as also of Tartary, Persia and Turkey .." in Kashmir in the Afghan period. The relative strength of the shawl industry under the Afghan rule in Kashmir is also testified to by T.G. Vigne (*Travels in Kashmir, Ladak'h, Iskardo, Countries adjoining the mountain courses of the Punjab the Indus and the Himalaya, north of Punjab*, London, 1842, p. 124 ) who refers to "infinitely more numerous" shawl-frames in Srinagar in the pre-1819 period.

24. For a detailed discussion on the British Policy towards Kashmir, See D.K. Ghosh, *Kashmir in Transition, Calcutta, 1974*.
25. JKA, File No : 191/H-75, Bloc C of 1906.
25. (a) Walter Lawrence describes Kashmir of the 1880's as an "absolute monarchy". *The Valley of Kashmir*, p.2. It is pertinent to note that the conclusions of the Soviet and English Marxist historians show "that the absolute monarchy is a form of feudal State." *The Transition from Feudalism to Capitalism (A Symposinm)*, 1957, First edition, Patna, p. 75.
26. Mirza Muhammad Afzal Beg, *On the Way to Golden Harvests; Agricultural Reforms in Kashmir*, 1951, Jammu, pp 22-23.
27. Though a great mass of the people of Kashmir had accepted Islam by the end of the fifteenth century, a sizeable section of the Hindus was not converted to the new faith. This well-knit group whose members are now popularly known as Kashmiri Pandits has always struggled to maintain its identity. Demographically the Pandits formed approximately less than 7 per cent of population of Kashmir at the Dogra occupation of Kashmir, but they were a highly urbanized group and despite their overall numerical

insignificance their demographic distribution was such that they were located in numbers in the city of Srinagar, the centre of power, which was sufficient to remind both their rulers and their Muslim brethren constantly of their presence. In 1868, for example, the Pandits formed nearly 20 per cent of the population of the city.

28. The Dogra Rajputs who were given land grants in Kashmir were mainly the kith and kins of the Dogra rulers.
29. The Jagirs of the Dogra period should not be confused with the Mughal *Jagirs*. While the Dogra *Jagirdar* enjoyed unlimited powers and considered himself to be the virtual owner of the landed estate, the Mughal *Jagirdar* was a mere functionary of the Government.
30. *Chaks* were the landed estates mainly under the possession of the Pandit officials of the Dogra Govt. *The Valley of Kashmir*, p. 414; NAI/Foreign, Sec E, Pros. Feb. 1890, Nos, 106-110.
31. A large body of the Dogra officials comprised the Pandits of the city of Srinagar. As already pointed out, they were in small number of the entire population of Kashmir, but having common landed interests, they were interrelated, and functioned in part through their direct relationship to institutions which expressed or symbolised society as a whole. See also Chapter on "Kashmiri Muslims and their History."
32. In all probability, the term seems to have originated in the 19th century when Kashmiri literature developed a satirical style of its own.
33. More than three-fourths of the revenue of the Kashmir State was "drawn from land and the culti-



vating classes." NAI/Foreign, Pol. Feb., See F, No. 295.

34. In his preliminary report on the Settlement operations in Kashmir in 1888, Wingate writes that prices were non-existent in Kashmir. (Quoted in *The Valley Kashmir*, p 243). Lawrence also observes that when he started his settlement operations in Kashmir in 1889 "money prices did not exist. Salaries were paid in grain" (*Ibid*).
35. Pir Hasan Shah, *Tarikh-i-Hasan* (Persian text), II, published by the Research & Publicattion Department. J & K Government, n.d., pp. 833-34, 853, 869.
36. The decline of shawl trade in the seventies of the last century, for example, forced some shawl weavers of the city of Srinagar to take to agriculture. See NAI/Foreign, Sec E, pros. Feb 1890. Nos 106-110 KW No. 3; also Foreign, Feb 1891, Sec E, Nos. 295-326, P. 28.
37. The observation is based on the comparative study of the coins of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries Kashmir, made by the present writer, in the numismatic section of the S.P.S. Museum, Srinagar.
38. For greater details on the system of forced labour in Kashmir, see Ishaq Khan. "Some Aspects of *Begar* in Kashmir, *Research Biannual*, Vol. I, No. II, Srinagar, 1976, pp 58-71
39. NAI/Foreign, Sec E, Pros. Feb. 1891, No. 295.
40. *The Valley of Kashmir*, pp. 411, 414.
41. *Ibid.*, also p. 448; NAI/Foreign, Sec E, Pros. Feb. 1891, No. 296. Even in our own days there are many old men living in different villages of Kashmir who not only corroborate the documentary evidence

cited here regarding the prevalence of forced labour in the *Chaks* but they even supplement it by narrating woeful tales of how the peasant was tied to the land and his master (*chakdar*) in a landed estate.

42. *The Transition from Feudalism to Capitalism*, p. 69.
43. For a general view of the structural-functional approach, see Kingsley Davis, *Human Society*, New York, 1949.
44. This state of affairs was the result of a complete lack of any constructive policy as regards the development of communications in Kashmir which characterized the greater part of the Dogra rule.
45. *The Valley of Kashmir*, p. 413; Mirza Saif-ud-Din, *Akhbarat-i-Darbar-i-Maharaja Gulab Singh* (Persian MSS), Vol. IV, 1851, ff, 62ab, 64b, 66a, 67b, 70b, 74a. Other volumes of Saif-ud-Din's work are full of information regarding the prevalence of *begar* in Kashmir. See also Taylor, *Lahore Political Diaries*, vol. VI, p. 71 (Punjab Government Records).
46. Land under *Khalisa* was directly administered by the State.
47. *The Valley of Kashmir*, p. 414; NAI/Foreign, Sec E, Pros. Feb 1890, Nos 106-110.
48. *Ibid.*
49. *Ibid.*
50. The object of the State in making land grants (*chaks*) to the officials was to increase cultivation. But this object was frustrated by the extensive class of officials who made it a point to take away from revenue paying villages (*Khalisa*) cultivators for their own use. This led to the decrease in culti-

vation in the *Khalisa* and the consequent loss of revenue to the State. *The Valley of Kashmir*, pp. 414-15. Thus the land revenue of the Valley fell from Rs. 2,775,990 in 1871 to Rs. 12,31,258 in 1888. (See *Ibid.*, p. 238). E.F. Knight (where *Three Empires Meet*, London, 1905, p. 68) also notes that as a result of *begar* the village was "impoverished and rendered incapable of paying its share of revenue to the State." See also *Akhabart*. IV. f. 62a; NAI/Sec E, Pros. Feb. 1890, Nos. 106-110, K.W. No.3

51. Marc Blochs' well-known definition of feudalism may also help us in understanding the structure of agrarian relations in Kashmir : "a subject peasantry; widespread use of service tenement (i.e. the fief) instead of salary, which was out of the question; the supremacy of a class of specialized warriors, ties of obedience and protection which bind man to man within the warrior class, assume the distinctive forms called vassalage; fragmentation of authority - leading inevitably to disorder; and, in the midst of all this, the survival of other forms of association, family and state, of which the latter would acquire renewed strength—such then seem to be the fundamental features of European feudalism." *Feudal Society*, tr. L.A. Mayon, Chicago 1664, p. 446.
52. Lawrence found the peasants "moving from one village to another in the hope of finding some rest and freedom from oppression." *The Valley of Kashmir*.
53. *Ibid.*
54. One of the main features of Lawrences' revenue reforms, introduced towards the end of the last century, was the recognition of occupancy rights of the peasants. However, the right of occup-

ancy was deemed to be hereditary and not alienable either by sale or mortgage, See *The Valley of Kashmir*, 429-30.

55. *Beyond the Pir Panjal*, London, 1915, pp 53-54.
56. NAI/Foreign, Sec E, Pros. Feb, 1820, Nos 106-110; *The Valley of Kashmir*, p. 414.
57. *Assessment Report of Lal Tehsil*, p.38 (NAI/Foreign Sec. E. Feb. 1891, No. 298).
58. NAI/Foreign, Sec E, pros, Feb 1890, Nos. 106-110, *The Valley of Kashmir* p. 414.
59. *Assessment Report of Lal Tehsil*, p. 38.
59. (a). NAI/Foreign, Sec, E, pros, Feb 1890, Nos106-110, K, W. 3.
60. NAI/Foreign, Sec E, Feb. 1891, No. 296.
61. NAI/Foreign, Sec E, Dec. 1890, Nos. 196 211, p. 15.
62. *The Valley of Kashmir*, pp. 411, 414, 415. 448. For further details on the arbitrary taxes imposed by officials on the cultivators, see *Report on the Position of the Cultivating Classes in Kashmir* (NAI/Foreign, Sec E, Pros. Feb. 1890, Nos. 106-110) also Henry's Report (NAI/Foreign, Sec E, Pros. March 1883, No. 86, p. 95).
63. *The Valley of Kashmir*, pp, 409-10: NAI/Foreign, Pol. July 1863, Nos, 73-75, pp. 5-6.
64. *The Valley of Kashmir*, pp, 409-10 : Arthur Neve, *The Tourist Guide*, Lahore, 1896, p. VII, NAI/Foreign Sec E No. 86, Pros., March 1883, para 10.
65. *Lahore Political Diaries*. VI, p. 265 : *The Valley of*

- Kashmir* p. 215 : See also NAI/Foreign, See E, March 1881, No. 86 pp. 8-10.
66. *The Valley of Kashmir*, p. 539 ; *The Tourist Guide*, p. VII
67. In 1877, the first signs of agrarian discontent became manifest, when the peasants appealed to Maharaja Ranbir Singh during his sojourn at Achabal in Kashmir against the high-handedness and corrupt practices of his officials and the *Jagirdars*. The deep-rooted discontent of the peasantry is reflected in the manner in which the revenue officials were forced to return whatever they had taken from the peasants as bribes, But the peasants' success proved to be nightmare, in that Wazeer Punnoo was able to wean away the Maharaja from taking any action against the officials. Not only that, in a vendetta against the peasants, the Wazir got the houses of the peasants searched and whatever little they had in their stores was seized by officials See *Tarikh-i-Kashmir* (Persian text), II, pp 860-61 ; Pandit Hargopal Khasta, *Guldasta-i-Kashmir* (Persian text) Lahore, 1883, pp 222-24.
68. Ishaq Khan, *History of Srinagar, 1846-1947, a study in Socio-cultural change*, Srinagar, 1978, pp 104 and 107.
69. Lawrence remarks that by the end of the last century the villagers declined "to work for their spiritual leaders." *The Valley of Kashmir* p. 291. However, there is strong reason to believe that the *Sayyids* and *Pirzadas* continued to get their land cultivated through the unpaid labour of their disciples even at the turn of the present century. Lawrence himself points to the peasants working on the land of *Pirzadas* and *Sayyids* who, like their counterparts in the *Chakdar's* estates, were not forced to carry loads in the far-flung areas like Gilgit. Moreover, one can hardly think in terms of the peasants having

manifested designs of shaking off the authority of their spiritual masters in the absence of any religious reform movement among the Muslims of Kashmir as late as the twenties of this century. In actual fact, Kashmiri peasants could not free themselves from the clutches of the *Pirzadas* and the *Sayyids* until the emergence of Shaikh Muhammad Abdullah as the undisputed leader of the down-trodden Kashmiris whose rise marked the gradual eclipse of the ecclesiastical leadership in Kashmir (Based on my paper "The Growth of National Consciousness in Kashmir 1924-1947" presented in the UGC Seminar on "Regional Roots of Indian Nationalism" at Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi, November, 1980.)

70. *The Valley of Kashmir*, p. 412.
71. Superficially observed, the Kashmir political movement of the early thirties appears to be an educated middleclass movement started by some disgruntled youth of Srinagar led by Shaikh Abdullah, but fundamentally the urban leaders were bestirred into action by the woeful condition of the peasantry. Thus, from the very beginning of the freedom struggle, the public leaders always roused the peasants to anger by stressing the feudal nature of the agrarian system under the Dogra rulers. The advocacy of the peasants' rights in the publications of the National Conference (particularly the "National Demand" and "The New Kashmir Manifesto") testifies to the agrarian roots of the freedom struggle in Kashmir.
72. Quoted in A.I. Chicherov, *India : Economic Development in the 16th-18th centuries*, Moscow, 1971, p. 217.
73. *Ibid.*

74. *Travels in the Himalayan Provinces of Hindustan and Panjab, in Ladakh and Kashmir, in Peshawar, Kabul, Kundur and Bokhara from 1819 to 1825, II*, London, 1841, p. 123.
74. (a) *History of Srinagar*, p 63.
75. No evidence has been quoted by Chicherov to support his argument that 1,00,000 women were simultaneously engaged in the spinning of shawl wool and that 90,000 of this number sold yarn "on the market 'to earn their livelihood' " *op. cit.*, p. 217. Even if the learned Russian historian had furnished [evidence, we would have doubted the authenticity of his statement on the simple fact that the population of Srinagar was never more than 1,25,000 in the 19th century. There is also no evidence to suggest that, except for Srinagar and a few women of the towns of Anantnag, Shahabad and a few villages, the entire women population of Kashmir was ever engaged in the spinning of shawl wool. As a matter of fact, the shawls manufactured in the villages were of inferior quality.
76. These interpretations of the organization of the shawl industry in Kashmir in the early 19th century originally occur in the writings of Soviet historians such as Y. V. Gankovsky and N.I. Samyonova (Chicherov, *op. cit.*, pp. 218-19 and n.)
77. Moorcroft, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 178-79.
78. Chicherov, *op. cit.*, p. 218.
79. NAI/Foreign, Sec E, March 1883, No. 86, p. 15; John Irwin. *The Kashmir Shawl*, London, 1955, p. 9. For more details on the system of taxation under the Dogras, see *History of Srinagar*, pp. 58, 61-63, 78-79.
80. *History of Srinagar*, pp. 59-63.
81. *Ibid.*

82. The system under which the shawl weavers were not allowed to leave Kashmir was known as *Rahdari*.
83. For the elaboration of my argument that the monopolistic control exercised by the Dogra rulers over shawl industry greatly contributed to the decline of shawl trade, See *History of Srinagar*, p. 62.
84. *Ibid* , pp. 56-63.
85. Armed with the authority of the rulers, the officials of the shawl department subjected the poor weaver to a great deal of tyranny, which, in turn, often led to the extensive migration of the shawl weavers to the Punjab. But even deserting their own families did not assuage the troubles of the shawl weavers: This was because their escape was made difficult by the high mountain passes which were guarded. And even if they succeeded in managing their escape, the members of their families were not left in peace. See for greater details, *Ibid* , p. 62.
86. K.M. Pannikar in his bid to prove the ameliorating zeal of the greedy and rapacious Gulab Singh says that as a result of new regulations, announced by the Maharaja, the shawl weaver became "free" and that he was no longer a "serf". *op. cit* , p. 139. However, the evidence furnished by the contemporary persian historian of Gulab Singh and corroborated by the travellers' accounts belies Pannikars' argument. In fact, the shawl weaver was tied to his master, and was not allowed to work for another master. See *Tarikh-i-Hasan*, I, p. 364; Andrew Wilson, *The Abode of Snow*, London, 1875, p. 398; *Cashmere Misgovernment (op. cit., p. 67)*.
87. For causes of the decline of shawl industry, see *History of Srinagar*, pp. 62-65.



88. *Lahore Political Diarics*, VI, p. 48. Such cases are also reported in the Sikh period. See *Wajzeet ut-Tawarikh*, f 93; *Tarikh-i-Hasan*, I, p. 364.
89. John Irwin attributes the artistic decline in the shawl making to "foreign taste which increasingly dominated shawl design" in the mid-nineteenth century (*op. cit.*) p. 15.
90. Srinagar had considerably declined as an urban centre by the eighties of the 19th century. For greater details, see *History of Srinagar*. Chapter II; also Ishaq Khan, "*Srinagar, 1846-1947*", *Studies in Urban History* (ed. J.S. Grewal), 1981, Amritsar.
91. In the 1850s and 1860s, for example, the shawl industry was under the dominant control of the French shawl merchants. See John Irwin, *op. cit.*, p. 35.
92. Pandit Raj Kak Dhar, the superintendent of the shawl department (*Daghshawl*), had amassed huge wealth. NAI/Foreign and Pol. July 1863, Nos. 73-75, p. 9.
93. The political role of these merchant families will be discussed at length in my study on "Kashmiri Muslims : a study in their history and social organization" which is under progress.
94. Haji Mukhtar Shah Ashai & Sonallah, the two shawl merchants of Srinagar, seem to have been politically active towards the close of the 19th century. Lawrence describes them as "mere intriguers" who made use of the peasants grievances for their own ends." NAI/Foreign, Sec E, Feb 1890, Nos, 106-110, K.W. No. 3.
95. There was practically no expenditure on social overheads before the establishment of the British Residency in Srinagar in 1886. Thus, out of the

- Rs. 45,97,868 total estimated expenditure of the Jammu and Kashmir State in 1863, Rs. 32,34,516 were spent on the army alone. See NAI/Forsyths' note, Foreign, Pol. A., July 1863. Nos. 73-75.
96. *The Valley of Kashmir*, p. 397.
  97. The opening of the Jehlam-Valley road in 1890 proved to be a turning point in Kashmir's transition from medieval to modern period. For the impact of the road on Kashmir, see *History of Srinagar*, p. 375 sqq.
  98. For the revival of carpet industry in Kashmir's recent history, see *Ibid*, pp. 65-67.
  99. Not only has Srinagar grown both horizontally and vertically, but, it has at the same time, developed as one of the chief commercial centres of northern India in the past eighty years or so. Among its major items of export, carpet forms an important article of trade. Some big business houses of the city like those of Haji Muhammad Jamal Siraj export carpets worth crores of rupees annually.
  100. A pioneering study on the agrarian change in Kashmir in the post-1947 period, recently made by Bashir Ahmad Khan (*Economic Consequences of Land Reforms in the State of Jammu & Kashmir*, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Kashmir University, 1981), reveals that as a result of the promulgation of the Big Landed Estates Act on 17th October, 1950 acquisition of land by the Government from the *Chakdars* and the *Jagirdars* and its redistribution among the cultivators "initiated far reaching changes in the ownership and incentive structure." According to Bashir Khan, the Act "evoked considerable debate not only in the State, but throughout the country as it was a bold experiment in moulding the whole structure of village life 'on new formations of social and economic relativity.'"

## IV

# Sources of the History of Kashmir

(Sultanate and the Mughal Periods)\*

It is an established fact that Kashmir is the only part of India where the tradition of writing history existed even before the advent of Islam. This must have been due to Kashmir's historical links with a number of non-Indian cultures, such as the Greek, the Chinese, and definitely the Central Asian, all of which had strong historical traditions. Buddhism, which flourished in Kashmir for a very long period, with its sense of history,<sup>1</sup> influenced the Kashmiri mind. With the establishment of the Sultanate in Kashmir in 1320, many learned men from Persia and Turkistan began to pour into the Valley. They brought with them the Persian<sup>2</sup> and Central Asian traditions of historiography. Thus a good number of chronicles were written during the medieval period in Kashmir. But, unfortunately, some of them did not survive, as for example, the works of Mulla Ahmed and Mulla Nadri, Qazi Ibrahim and Mulla Hasan Qari. However, other medieval writers like the anonymous author of *Baharistan-i Shahi*, Haidar Malik, Hasan bin Ali and Muhammad Azam Diddamati made an extensive use of the works which are no longer extant.

For a proper understanding of the sources of medieval Kashmir, it is necessary to divide them into the following headings :

### I. Sanskrit sources

\* Published in S.P. Sen (ed.), *Sources of the History of India*, Calcutta, 1979.

- II. Persian chronicles written by Kashmiris
- III. Chronicles of non-Kashmiris
- IV. Biographies of Saints

## I SANSKRIT SOURCES

The *Rajatarangini* of Pandit Kalhana, written in the pre-Muslim period in Kashmir, is a long narrative of occurrences taking place in the Valley from the earliest times to 1149-50 A.D. Written in verse, it is based on several sources including traditions, legends and inscriptions.

Kalhana seems to have been conscious of the duties of an historian, for not only did he narrate the events of the past but also analysed the past in a manner so as to enable his readers to think on the nature and impermanence of life. He emphasizes the role of religion (*dharma*), action (*Karma*) and fate in history. Among the various causes given by the author for the downfall of King Harsha (1089-1101) fate seems to have played an important role.<sup>3</sup> The historical events have also been explained in terms of 'Divine Retribution' and 'Divine Pleasure'. The use of witchcraft, especially as a means of vendetta, has not been ignored amongst many possible historical explanations of events.

It is, however, important to remember that although in the earlier books, Kalhana overestimates the role of supernatural forces in history, in the seventh and eighth books, the author proves himself to be a serious student of history. No doubt, in the later works Kalhana does not totally ignore supernatural causes in the shape of events, "but owing to other causal explanations they tend to recede somewhat into the background". Since he was writing the history of his own times, this explains why Kalhana recognizes the multiplicity of causes that go into the making of a historical situation. Thus, for example, he does not deprecate the role of the *Damaras* (feudal landowners) and the Brahmans in the politics of Kashmir in the early medieval period. The emergence of *Damaras* and their relationship with the King

has been described in a proper perspective. Though he does not approve of revolts by Tantrins and Ekangas, the *Damaras* and the royal princes owing to their fissiparous trends, he acquiesces in the revolt of the Brahmins<sup>5</sup> when they kept a fast on the plea that the fast is always in a righteous cause, namely, the removal of an oppressive king or minister.

Nor has Kalhana omitted to mention the failure of kings due to human weaknesses. For example, Harsha's downfall has been attributed to his avoidance of battles, lack of independent judgement, wrong selection of persons as ministers, and above all, heeding the advice of some intriguing woman.<sup>6</sup>

It is significant to note that Kalhana was conscious of the relationship of the various political power groups of his time with their economic conditions. Thus he repeatedly admonishes the kings not to allow any village to stock food if it exceeds a year's consumption. Nor should a village be allowed to keep oxen beyond the number required to cultivate the fields. Why? Kalhana ascribed the emergence of the feudatories and their revolts to the "accumulation of wealth".<sup>7</sup> Among various other factors matrimonial alliances among the official class are also described as a source of trouble for a king.

The Sanskrit writers after Kalhana did not adopt the latter's technique. Jonaraja, two hundred years after Kalhana, wrote *Rajatarangini*. This is a continuation of Kalhana's work from 1150 to 1459, and is very useful in helping us to understand the social and political conditions prevailing in Kashmir before the establishment of the Sultanate<sup>8</sup>. One of the causes to which Jonaraja has referred to for the decline of Hindu rule in Kashmir was the continuous rebellion of the Lavanyas and Damaras.<sup>9</sup> Added to this was the policy of Suhadeva (1301-20) towards the Brahmins whom he alienated by imposing tax on them. While writing about the unpopularity of the king the chronicler says, "the Raksas of

a king who, under the plea of protecting the country, devoured it for nineteen years and twenty-five days."<sup>10</sup>

Jonaraja wrote his book at the command of Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin<sup>10a</sup> (1420-70) who, the author says, was eager to see that the long gap in the history of Kashmir be filled. About his own work Jonaraja writes that it is "only an outline of the history of kings."<sup>11</sup> True that he has briefly discussed the history of the earlier part of the Sultanate, but the period from 1389 to 1459, during which the author was an eye-witness to many of the important happenings in Kashmir, has been treated in some detailed manner. While he does not fail to notice the influence of a powerful religious movement launched by Mir Sayyid Muhammad, son of Mir Sayyid Ali Hamadani,<sup>12</sup> on Sikandar (1389-1413),<sup>13</sup> at the same time, he does not gloss over the fact that there took place a gradual change in the policy of the Sultan towards the Hindus.<sup>14</sup> He says that the Sultan "fixed with some difficulty a limit to the advance of the great sea of the Yavanas"<sup>15</sup> and abolished *jizya* (*turuskadanda*).<sup>16</sup>

Jonaraja was not oblivious of the great change that was brought about in Kashmir as a result of the establishment of the Sultanate. He remarks: "As the wind destroys the trees, and the locusts the shali crop, so did the Yavanas destroy the usages of Kashmir."<sup>17</sup> No doubt, the approach of this medieval chronicler was coloured by religion, but this was inevitable as he wrote within the framework of a society dominated by religion. Nevertheless, we should not exaggerate the religious element, for, the chronicler's extollment of the virtues of Zain-ul-Abidin shows the working of human agency and material factors in him. His patron performed "what was beyond the power of the past sovereigns and what will be beyond the ability of future kings."<sup>18</sup>

There are some useful references in the *Rajatarangini* of Jonaraja with regard to the social life prevailing in Kashmir in

Bud Shah's time. His references regarding Sudra women,<sup>16</sup> the Dombas,<sup>20</sup> the Rajasthaniyas,<sup>21</sup> the Damaras,<sup>22</sup> the Qazis,<sup>23</sup> the Thakurs,<sup>24</sup> etc., are helpful in reconstructing the social history of medieval Kashmir. Wine drinking seems to have been practised in Jonaraja's time even by some Sayyids who, under the spell of intoxication, killed people.<sup>25</sup>

Though Jonaraja has not mentioned his sources, his chronology and topography are, on the whole, trustworthy. One glaring defect of the work is that its author has given a very brief summary of some important events, e.g., the Mongol invasions of Khajlak and Dulaca. Many other Mongol invasions have totally been ignored.<sup>26</sup> It is strange that while Jonaraja discusses the spread of Islam in Kashmir he does not say anything about Mir Sayyid Ali. He is also silent about Lalla Ded and Shaikh Nuruddin Wali,<sup>26a</sup> the two prominent mystics of medieval Kashmir, who left a profound impression on Kashmir's unique culture.

Jonaraja's views on history "end with the conclusion that his chronicle is a tree planted to remove the afflictions of kings born of pride and langour."<sup>27</sup> Thus he treats history as a guide for the Kings. Though Jonaraja is essentially a chronicler, sometimes he does interpret facts. For instance, the role of fate<sup>28</sup> and supernatural forces<sup>26</sup> is emphasized so as to explain the course of events. Even "incantations and magic herbs are brought to explain the adventurous spirit of Malacandra."<sup>30</sup> The Hindu notions of virtue (*punya*) and sin (*pap*) and the evil influence of the Kali age, have been introduced to account for the course of history.<sup>31</sup>

Srivara, a pupil of Jonaraja, continued the account of the Sultans of Kashmir and called it *Jaina-Rajatarangini*. Being a courtier and a trusted friend of Zain-ul-Abidin,<sup>32</sup> he gives a detailed account of the remaining years of the Sultan's reign from 1459 to 1470. He enjoyed the patronage of Sultan Haidar Shah (1470-72) and Hasan Shah (1472-84). Besides writing about his two patrons, he continued the

history of the Sultans from 1472 to 1486. Srivara was a scholar, poet and a musician as well.

Srivara is a hero-worshipper rather than a historian. He himself says that he wrote his work partly "to free myself from my endless obligations to him (Zain-ul-Abidin) and partly because I am attracted by his merits."<sup>33</sup> Thus he extols his patron Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin to the skies. Added to this is the fact that he "is a slavish imitator of Kalhana, not above reproducing whole verses from his predecessor. His text looks, in great portion, more like a canto from the *Rajatarangini* than an original composition."<sup>34</sup> But in spite of these failings, Srivara's work is important because it throws much light on the religio-political trends of his time. His account of the role of the Baihaqi Sayyids<sup>35</sup> is useful, though not without faults. The *Jaina Rajatarangini* reveals the penetration of the Persian and Central Asian influences in Kashmir in the Sultanate period. We hear of some Hindus partaking of beef<sup>36</sup> as a result of their contact with the Muslim immigrants from Persia and Central Asia. Though a chronicler, Srivara tries to give causes responsible for the downfall of the Hindus in Kashmir. He looks with abhorrence at the cultural changes that began to take place in Kashmir with the rise of Muslim power and attributes the misfortune of Kashmiris to their tacit acquiescence in these changes.<sup>37</sup>

Srivara's chronicle was continued by Prajyabhatta. He composed *Rajavalipataka* describing the history of the Sultans from 1486 to 1512. Being defective in topography and chronology, Prajyabhatta's work is of very little importance.

Another Sanskrit chronicler, Suka Pandit, a pupil of Prajyabhatta, wrote *Rajatarangini* after the name of Kalhana's work, dealing with the history of the period from 1517 to 1596. Like Prajyabhatta his topography is defective and



chronology incomplete. There are many important gaps in the narrative.

An important Sanskrit work of the medieval period is *Lokaprakasa*.<sup>38</sup> It seems to be the product of a number of learned persons including Kshemendra (d. 1066), who composed only a part of it.<sup>39</sup> That some portions of the work were written in the seventeenth century is shown by the mention of Shah Jahan in the book.<sup>40</sup> The *Lokaprakasa* is in four parts. In the first part of the book the names of four main castes and sixty sub-castes have been discussed. The titles of Government officials and ministers have also been given.<sup>41</sup> According to Professor Mohibbul Hasan, the second part, "which contains bills of exchange, bonds, commercial contracts, official orders and so forth, is the biggest and most important of all."<sup>42</sup> The third part contains a list of synonyms of various kinds, of fishes, birds and mice and of salt, gold coins and gold ornaments.<sup>34</sup> The fourth and the last portion of the book is full of satire on the *Kayasthas* (writers and physicians) and the Brahmans who had embraced Islam. A list of the districts of Kashmir is also given in the fourth part.<sup>44</sup>

The *Lokaprakasa* does not rank with history, though it supplies many a useful information for the social history of medieval Kashmir. Buhler regards it as a *Kosa*;<sup>54</sup> but the work appears to be both a *Kosa* and a practical note book describing the various facets of social life and administration in Kashmir.<sup>46</sup> One important feature of the book is the admixture of Persian and Kashmiri words in it.

## II PERSIAN CHRONICLES WRITTEN BY KASHMIRIS

The *Tarikh-i Kashmir*<sup>47</sup> of Sayyid Ali is the only extant Persian source written in Kashmir before the Mughal occupation of Kashmir in 1586. The author was a Sayyid and was a relative of the Shah Mir dynasty, the first Muslim ruling power in Kashmir. His work is essentially important for the activities of Mir Sayyid Ali and his disciples: the iconoclastic

activities of Sultan Sikandar and Mir Muhammad Hamadani's influence on the religious thought of the Sultan, Zain-ul-Abidin's enlightened religious policy and his encouragement to arts and crafts; the struggle for power between Muhammad Shah and Fateh Shah, and above all the brief biographical notices of Sufis and Rishis flourishing in the Sultanate period. Sayyid Ali furnishes an eye-witness account of Mirza Haidar Dughlat's rule in Kashmir. The Mirza's policy towards the Shias and the circumstances leading to his downfall have been described fully.

Sayyid Ali's treatment of his subject is that of a chronicler rather than of a historian. He is deficient both in chronology and topography. He indulges in fancies while giving the account of the exploits of Sayyid Hasan, the son of Sayyid Taj-ud-din, who had entered the service of Sultan Shihab-ud-din. He is credited with having conquered not only Delhi, Agra and Lahorā, but also Persia, Badakshan, Kabul, and many other places outside India. The chronicler says that Mir Sayyid Ali acquired scholarship miraculously when he saw his father in a dream.<sup>48</sup> Far from attempting to explain the causes of the success of the Sufi movement in Kashmir, the *Tarikh-i-Kashmir* of Sayyid Ali lays stress on the role of miracles of the saints.

The *Tarikh-i-Kashmir* of an anonymous author written in 1590 is one of the earliest Persian sources. Based on the Sanskrit chronicles and some earlier non-existent Persian accounts, it is a narrative of events, from ancient times to the reign of Shams-ud-din II (1537-38). Though incomplete in many important details, it "is useful source, for it describes those events in detail which have been omitted by the *Baharistan-i-Shahi*, Haidar Malik's *Tarikh* and other Persian chronicles."<sup>49</sup>

But the two great works of medieval Kashmir are the *Baharistan-i-Shahi* of an anonymous writer and Haidar Malik's *Tarikh*. Both are useful from the point of view of chronology and topography. Not only do they furnish a

more detailed account of the period than the other chronicles but they describe their sources as well : Kalhana's *Rajatarangini*, the chronicles of Jonaraja and Srivara, the Persian *Tarikh*s of Mulla Ahmad, Mulla Nadiri, Qazi Ibrahim and Mulla Hasan Qari, which were then extant. In addition, they derived information from their contemporaries and near contemporaries.

Nothing is known about the author of *Baharistan-i-Shahi* beyond the popular belief that he was a Shia<sup>50</sup> and that his great grand-father, Mulla Hasan-ud-din, was an immigrant from Ghazni. The latter was a disciple of Haji Ibrahim Adham a Kubravi saint of Kashmir. The author's eulogisation of the role of the Baihaqi Sayyids and his lavish praise for their acts of piety, bravery and generosity lead us to the inference that he must have been in their service. No other chronicler has given so much space in describing the careers and characters of the Baihaqi Sayyids as the author of *Baharistan-i-Shahi*.

The *Baharistan-i-Shahi* describes the history of Kashmir from the earliest times to 1615. Though the pre-Islamic period has been dismissed in a few pages, the events taking place in Kashmir from the accession of Rinchana to 1614 have been narrated fully. It should, however, be remembered that the events like the revolt in Lohara against Outb-ud-din, the Regency of Queen Sura, and the civil war during the reign of Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin have been left out. Besides, there is only a brief mention of Sultan Haidar Shah and omission of the political affairs of Hasan Shah's reign. Notwithstanding these omissions, the history of Kashmir from the time of Muhammad Shah to the establishment of the Mughal rule in 1586 has been discussed at length. The historical value of the *Baharistan-i-Shahi* is further enhanced by its full description of the activities of Mir Shams-ud-Din Iraqi. No other chronicler has given so much importance to the role of the founder of the Nurbakshiya<sup>51</sup> order in Kashmir than the author of *Baharistan-i-Shahi*. What is of great merit, the author narrates in detail the events leading to the

Mughal conquest of Kashmir. He alone describes the exile of Yusuf Shah Chak and his son, the last two independent Sultans of Kashmir who fought the Mughals to a finish, but were routed.

The religious zeal shown by the medieval Indian historians like Zia-ud-din Barani and Mulla Abdul Qadir Badauni seems to be present in the Persian works of Kashmir also, but with this basic difference, that the Kashmiri writers do not show any fanaticism in their writings. The spirit of religious toleration for which Kashmiris are famous guided the writings of the medieval writers. Thus, the author of *Baharistan-i-Shahi*, though a Shia, condemns the policy of Yaqub Shah towards the Sunnis. He does not like the manner in which Qazi Musa was executed for having recited the name of Ali in the *azan* when ordered to do so by the Sultan.<sup>52</sup> The medieval terminology of designating the non-Muslims as *Kafirs* and their acts as *Kufr* is no doubt used, but unlike most of the medieval writers, the Kashmiri chroniclers have used these words in an underogatory sense. This is reflected in the description of the measures taken by Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin and his successors to restore confidence among the Hindus. Had the author of *Baharistan-i-Shahi* or Haidar Malik been anti-Hindu, they would have certainly disapproved of the actions of the great king of Kashmir.<sup>53</sup> The objective approach of the author of *Baharistan-i-Shahi* is reflected in the following passage :

“The temples destroyed during the time of Sultan Sikandar were rebuilt. Those Hindus who had fled to Jammu and Kishtwar were recalled. The learning of Hindus was encouraged. Hindus were given complete freedom of worship and freedom to perform their customs. They, therefore, began to celebrate their festivals on particular days of the year. Zain-ul-Abidin himself used to participate in them. He gave presents to singers and dancers and because of this he was very popular. The result of the revival of Hinduism under Zain-ul-Abidin was that Hindu rites and customs revived among the Muslims also. Even men of learning

and the ulama practised them. This continued until the time of Shams-ud-din Iraqi, who took up arms against the idolatrous practices.’<sup>54</sup>

Though *Baharistan-i-Shahi* is descriptive in its character, its author sometimes explains events in terms of human vilitation. Thus for example, Mirza Haidar’s downfall is attributed to his persecution of the Shias, Shafis and Sufis.<sup>55</sup> In addition to this, Yusuf Shah’s pursuit of pleasures and his negligence of the State affairs are accounted for the Mughal occupation of Kashmir, Yaqub Shah’s intolerant policy towards the Sunnis and his neglect of the defence have been given as causes for facilitating the task of the Mughals in Kashmir.<sup>56</sup>

The *Baharistan-i-Shahi* is composed in an ornamental language. It occasionally mentions both *Hijra* and *Laukika* dates. Though essentially a political history, it contains notices of some famous saints and learned men of Kashmir.

The *Tarikh-i-Kashmir* of Haidar Malik, written in a simple and lucid style, supplies valuable information for the period 1586 to 1621. His purpose in writing history was to preserve the memory of his own ancestors who, according to the author, played an important part in shaping the course of events in Kashmir.<sup>57</sup> One of the distinguishing features of Haidar Malik’s *Tarikh* is the author’s sense of local patriotism which is implicit in his account of the relations of the Chak Sultans with Akbar.

Haidar Malik was the son of Hasan Malik of the village of Chadura and he traced his descent to a Rajput family of Suhadeva’s reign. Both Haidar Malik and his father seem to have served Sultan Yusuf Shah Chak. So devoted was the author to the Sultan that he accompanied his master in his exile to Bihar in 1586. He shot into prominence only after Nur Jahan’s marriage with Jahangir when the Emperor honoured him by conferring on him the title of Chagtai and *Rais-ul-Mulk*.<sup>58</sup>

The part played by the supernatural forces in determining the course of events so omnipresent in Kashmiri literature, poetry and folklore is sometimes found a determining factor in Haidar Malik's chronicle. In fact, there is one section in the chronicle entirely devoted to supernatural events happening in lakes, streams, etc., of Kashmir. But occasionally the author is also concerned with historical causation. Thus the main cause of the downfall of Mirza Haidar has been found in his being cruel towards the people of Kashmir and the ensuing revolts by the Kashmiri nobles against his tyrannical acts.<sup>59</sup>

The *Tarikh-i-Kashmir* by Hasan bin Ali Kashmiri furnishes a short account of Kashmir's past from the earliest times to 1616. Not only are the sources of Hasan's and the *Baharsitan i-Shahi* the same, but both works seem to suffer from the same lacunae. There is a complete omission of the events taking place in the reign of the later Shah Mirs and the Chaks, though there is a casual mention of Yaqub Shah's submission to Akbar. The importance of the work, however, lies in its treatment of the history of the Sulanate period up to the end of Hasan Shah's reign (1472-84), for which period it is very useful.

Of the later indigenous Persian sources of Kashmir, *Tarikh-i-Kashmir* by Pandit Narayan Kaul Ajiz, *Nawadir-ul-Akhbar* by Aba Rafi-ud-din, *Waqiat-i Kashmir* by Muhammad Azam and *Gauhar-i Alam* by Badi-ud-din Abul Qasim are important.

Narayan Kaul was a Kashmiri Brahman who wrote his history from the earliest times to 1710, the year when he completed his work. Aba Rafi-ud-din Ahmad was a Kashmiri by birth. He completed his *Nawadir-ul-Akhbar* at Shahjahanabad in 1723. It contains useful information regarding the civil war which took place after Sultan Hasan Shah's reign. However, this work needs to be read with caution as it overemphasizes the religious factor in these wars.<sup>60</sup> Besides corroborating the *Baharistan-i-Shahi* and

Haidar Malik's *Tarikh*, Rafi acquaints his readers with the changes brought about by Mirza Haidar in Kashmir.

The *Waqiat-i-Kashmir* of Muhammad Azam Diddamari was written in 1747. Among many other sources mentioned by the author are *Tarikh-i-Rashidi* and *Tarikh-i-Firishta*. The work is written in simple Persian. It describes not only the political history but also throws light on the life and achievements of various Sayyids, Sufis, *Ulema* and poets. There are useful references to the prevalence of *begar*<sup>61</sup> (forced labour) in Kashmir. The migration of Kashmiris to the Punjab and Delhi is referred to on account of the political disturbances and economic instability in the time of the later Mughals.

The *Gauhar-i Alam* describes the history of Kashmir from ancient times to 1786. According to its author, he made use of the *Nur-Nama* and the accounts by Hasan Qari and Muhammad Azam, but there is no new information in his work.

The Persian chroniclers of Kashmir seem to have copied the traditions of historical writing in Hindustan, and Persia. They were also influenced by Kalhana, the Persian translation of whose *Rajatarangini* was always available to them. But it should be remembered that they could not rise to the height of Kalhana. Unlike Kalhana, their treatment of history as a narrative of occurrences does not suggest any interrelationship among the events in a broad historical perspective. Whenever they try to explain why things happened the stress is more or less in explaining historical causation in personal terms.

Unlike the works of Zia-ud-din Barani and Abdul Qadir Badauni, and Abul Fazl, most of the Persian chroniclers of Kashmir do not have any representative character. While the difference of approach in the works of these medieval Indian historians helps us in understanding the innermost tensions

felt by the orthodox and the secular minded Muslims, the monotonous approach of the Kashmiri writers renders their narrative jejune. The sameness in their approach to history may largely be attributed to their dependence on common sources. Neither did they, with the possible exception [of Muhammad Azam, try to separate the grain from the chaff. All this resulted in some grave historical inaccuracies in their works. Thus almost all the medieval chroniclers of Kashmir give a hyperbolic account of the military exploits of Sultan Shihab-ud-din. Of all these writers, however, Muhammad Azam seems to be the only exception to the rule. He alone has applied the critical historical method in his work. Thus he rejects such opinions expressed in earlier works as are not supported by historical evidence. To him the testing of evidence is the first requisite of a true historian.

One significant feature of the medieval historical writings in Kashmir is the absence of any trend among the chroniclers to treat history as a branch of theology, a common feature of medieval European historiography and to some extent noticeable in the works of the Delhi Sultanate. There are no doubt occasional references to explain historical causation in terms of supernatural forces or miracles performed by saints, but there seems to be no conscious attempt by the chroniclers of Kashmir at establishing that historical causation always lay in divine will.

Another interesting feature is the influence of local environment on the chroniclers which at times has lent an imaginative or rather poetic touch to their writings. The natural surroundings of rivers, springs, lakes and mountains and the legendary tales connected with them have also found a prominent place in the Sanskrit and Persian chronicles. Interestingly enough, almost all medieval works with



a few exceptions, begin with the legendary description of the land. It is well to remember that while all histories of the Delhi Sultanate and the Mughal period ignore the "pre-Islamic period" of Indian history and while many begin their narratives with the description of the general history of Islam, the Kashmiri chroniclers do not show their extra-territorial links with the lands of Islam. Perhaps the geographical isolation of Kashmir fostered a stronger sense of regional bias in their writings.

### III. Chronicles of Non-Kashmiris

The earliest available information supplied by a Muslim regarding Kashmir is found in Al-Masudi's *Muruj-uz-Zahab*. Al Masudi (941-43) describes the geography of Kashmir. He says that in his time there were 60,000 to 70,000 villages in Kashmir, which seems to be incredible. Alberuni's notices in regard to Kashmir are, however, very useful. He was an eye-witness to the campaign of Lohkot (1015-21) launched by Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni. As he was himself present at the campaign, he was able to establish contact with some Kashmiris. It was on the basis of oral information that he wrote about the political divisions of the south-western mighty mountain pass which separates the Kashmir Valley from the Punjab. Besides telling about the pedestrian habits of the people of Kashmir, Alberuni writes about the conveyances used by the Kashmiri nobles and the climate of Kashmir.

There are three Central Asian histories which throw some valuable light on Kashmir. The *Zafarnama* of Sharaf-ud-din Al Yazdi, completed in 1424-25, is history of Timur and Khalil Sultan. It is especially important for Sultan Sikandar's relations with Timur and also for the geography of Kashmir. The *Malfuzat-Timuri*, attributed to Timur, also contains useful references regarding Sikandar's relations with Timur. It also gives a brief description of the topography of the Kashmir Valley.

One important Central Asian work is the *Tarikh-i-Rashidi* of Mirza Haidar. Written in 1546, it is a history of the Mughals of Central Asia. Mirza Haidar led two invasions against Kashmir: once from Kashgar in 1533 on behalf of Sultan Said, and the second from Lahore in November 1540 when he accomplished the conquest of the Valley and ruled it for ten years. Though he has given us a full description of his first invasion of Kashmir, he is wanting in information with regard to the second invasion. There is also very scanty information in regard to his administration of Kashmir. However, Mirza Haidar gives useful details in regard to the Hindu temples and ancient sites, agriculture, religion and geography of Kashmir. He pays glowing tributes to Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin of Kashmir for introducing various arts and crafts in Kashmir.

The *Tarikh-i-Mubarak Shahi* of Yahya Ahmad Sirhindi briefly mentions the conflict between Ali Shah of Kashmir and Jasrat Khokar. A brief description of Azam Humayun's relations with Mirza Haidar and the nobles of Kashmir at the time of his revolt against Islam Shah Sur is given in *Tarikh-i-Daudi* of Abdullah and *Tarikh-Khan-i-Jahani*. Both works are, however, wrong in stating that Azam Humayun was killed in an encounter with the Kashmiri forces while Mirza Haidar was still alive.

The *Tabaqat-i-Akbari* by Nizam-ud-Din Ahmad, the *Tarikh-i-Firishta* by Muhammad Qasim Hindu Shah Astrabadi and the *Maasir-i-Rahimi* by Khwaja Abdul Baqi Nihawani have no new information to offer. The *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh* by Abdul Qadir Badauni refers to famous saints and men of letters in Kashmir. His account of Shaikh Yaqub Sarfi is useful who is said to have played an important role in the Mughal occupation of Kashmir.<sup>93</sup> There are useful references about Akbar's relations with the Chak rulers.

The *Majalis-ul-Salatin* by Muhammad Sharif-an-Najafi, written in 1628-29, describes at length the story of Rinchana's

conversion to Islam. The *Haft Iqlim* by Amin Ahmad Razi was completed in 1594. It refers to the shawl industry of Kashmir and contains short notices of Kashmiri poets, saints and rulers. The author also briefly mentions Mirza Haidar's conquest of Kashmir.

Among other non-Kashmiri chronicles must be mentioned *Akbar-nama* and *Ain-i-Akbari* of Abul Fazl, *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri* of Jahangir, *Iqbal nama Jahangiri* of Mutamid Khan, *Badshah-nama* of Abdul Hamid Lahori, *Badshahnama* of Muhammad Amin Qazwini, *Amal-i-Saleh* of Muhammad Saleh Kumbu and the *Dabistan-al-Mazahab* of an unknown author.

The *Akbar-nama* briefly describes the history of Mirza Haidar's rule in Kashmir. But the invasions of Kashmir by Abul Maali and Qara Bahadur, the relations of the Mughals with the Chak Sultans, and the Mughal conquest of Kashmir in 1586 have been described in detail. His account is not deficient in dates. Nor is his topography defective. There are a few lapses in his account, but, on the whole, it is trustworthy and reliable. The *Ain-i-Akbari* is a mine of information regarding the revenue system of Kashmir. The author throws light on the changes which were brought about in the field of revenue administration in Kashmir after the Mughal conquest. There is also a detailed information with regard to the topography, fruits, flowers and food-grains of the Valley. Nor does Abul Fazl ignore the religious beliefs, customs and habits of the people of Kashmir.

The *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri* supplies us an interesting and detailed information regarding the life of the inhabitants of the Valley. He describes the practice of planting tulip flowers on the roofs of buildings as a peculiarity of the people of Kashmir. He says that silk-worm eggs were imported into Kashmir from Gilgit and Tibet. Jahangir was a keen observer of things. He writes about the dress and food habits of the people of Kashmir. We learn about the celebration of *Vyath*

*Truwah*<sup>64</sup> in Kashmir. He also refers to the bridges over the Jehlam in the city. The emperor gives us a clear description of the great plague and fire in Kashmir in 1617-19.

Jahangir's references to the political history of Kashmir are useful. He writes that 'Kashmir is much indebted to Mirza Haidar for its excellences'. His account of the conquest of Kishtwar (1618) is important.

However, Jahangir's remarks regarding Kashmiris should be read with a grain of salt. He calls them "animal-like Kashmiris". He says: "Although most of the houses are on the river bank, not a drop of water touches their bodies. They are as dirty outside as inside."<sup>65</sup> In fact, he failed to notice the *bathing-ghauts* on the River Jhelam and the *hamams* attached to the mosques in Kashmir.

There are useful references in the *Iqbal-nama-Jahangiri* with regard to the plague of 1616 and the campaign of Kishtwar. The dress of the people of Kashmir has also been described.

Both the works of Abdul Hamid Lahori and Muhammad Amin Qazwini throw some light on Shah Jahan's reign in Kashmir. There are occasional references to the habits of the people of the city. Lahori has depicted a graphic picture of the famine which stalked Kashmir in 1641 during the governorship of Tarbiyat Khan. Qazwini's description of the oppressive rule of Itiqad Khan is useful.

Kumbu's account of the destruction of temples in Anantnag by Shah Jahan is useful. It was during his time that the ancient name of Anantnag was changed into Islamabad. He also describes Achabal.<sup>66</sup>

The *Kitab-i-Dabistan-i-Mazahab* of an unknown author contains useful references to Kashmir. The author of this ex-

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cellent work on contemporary Indian religions seems to have visited Kashmir several times. He writes about the popularity of Saivism in Kashmir during the reign of Shah Jahan and names some well-known Saivite scholars of his time.

The *Alamgir-nama* of Muhammad Kazim, *Muntakhab-ul-Lubab* of Khafi Khan, *Khulasat-ul-Tawarikh* of Sujan Bhandari, *Ruqaat-i-Alamgiri* of Aurangzeb, *Maasir-ul-Umara* of Shah Nawaz Khan and *Kalimat-i-Tayyibat* are valuable for the reign of Aurangzeb in Kashmir. The *Ruqaat-i-Alamgiri* and the *Kalimat-i-Tayyibat*, in particular, help us in understanding the attitude of Aurangzeb towards Kashmir. Among various other restrictions imposed by Aurangzeb in Kashmir, he also stopped the practice of hereditary singers of Kashmir who used to welcome the Mughal Governor and high officials on their assuming office.<sup>67</sup>

## **IV. Biographies of Saints<sup>68</sup>**

The period under review is rich in biographical account of Sufis, most of them written by their disciples. Although they have greater historical value than any other type of non-political literature produced in Kashmir, there is a conscious attempt on the part of the biographers to glorify the deeds of their masters. Thus their accounts are replete with the miracles and supernatural powers of the saints. Notwithstanding this criticism, the hagiological literature enables us to understand the powerful impact of Sufism on Kashmiri mind. We can feel the pulse of the common man in medieval Kashmir through this type of literature. In fact, the religious literature of Kashmir does not show any detachment from the life, yearnings and aspirations of the common man

The *Khulasat-ul-Manaqib* of Nur-ud-Din Jafar Badakshi is a life of Sayyid Ali Hamadani. The author was a disciple of the great saint, but, unfortunately, he does not make any mention of the activities of Sayyid Ali in Kashmir,

The *Tuhfat-ul-Ahbab* of an unknown author describes the life of Mir Shams-ud-Din Iraqi, the founder of the Shiaism in Kashmir. The author seems to have been a fanatic Shia who, in his zeal to show the greatness of the Mir, highly exaggerates his iconoclastic activities. However, the historical importance of his work can hardly be over emphasized. Not only does he refer to some political events of the Sultanate period, but there are occasional references to the *Khanqah* life, dress of the *Qazis* and *Ulema*, food habits and beliefs of the people of Kashmir, etc.

*Dastur-us-Salikin*, popularly known as *Wiridul-Muridin*, contains biographical notices of Shaikh Hamza Makhdum. It was completed in 1554-55. *Rishi-nama* by the same author describes the miracles of his spiritual master. It also gives a brief account of the Rishi saints of Kashmir.

The *Hilyat-ul-Arifin* of Khwaja Ishaq Qari is a biography of Shaikh Hamza Makhdum. The work affords us a glimpse into the *Khanqah* life in Kashmir. There are useful references to the food habits of the inhabitants of the Valley and intoxicants like liquor, *bhang* and opium which were common. The *Tazkirat-ul-Arifin* was written by Mulla Ali Raina in 1587. This biography of Shaikh Hamza also contains some references to the social and religious life of medieval Kashmir.

*Rishi-nama* by Baba Nasib, completed in 1631, is an invaluable source for the history and growth of the Rishi movement in Kashmir. The author describes the activities of Shaikh Nur-ud-Din and furnishes a useful information regarding the discussions of the Brahman priests and Muslim saints on religious issues. A brief reference to Mirza Haidar's religious policy towards the Shias has been made in the work. There are useful references to the dress and food habits of the inhabitants of the Valley. Baba Nasib's work helps us in understanding the attitude of Shaikh Nur-ud-Din towards the *Mullahs* who have been described as hypocrites

and materialists. However, the work suffers from certain defects. In the first place, a great stress has been laid on the supernatural powers of Shaikh Nur-ud-Din Wali in getting converts to Islam and also those of Shaikh Hamza in crushing the religious activities of the Shias. Secondly, Baba Nasib had irrational prejudices against the Shias who are dubbed as "wretched". Thus his account of the persecution of the Shias by Mirza Haidar is not free from exaggeration. In spite of these defects, *Rishi-nama* reveals the mind of an orthodox Sunni Musalman of the medieval period.

Among the general biographies of saints, *Asrar-ul-Abrar* of Daud Mishkati, *Futuh-at-i-Kubraviya* of Wahab and *Khawariq-us-Salikin* of Mulla bin Abdus Sabur are important.

The *Asrar-ul-Abrar* was completed in 1653. It describes the life of the prominent saints of Kashmir. Though there is a brief description of the activities of Sayyid Ali Hamadani and his disciples, the history of Rishi saints has been described fully. Some sayings of Shaikh Nur-ud-Din, which are not found in Nasib's *Rishi-nama*, have been recorded by Mishkati. The author quotes his sources and occasionally refers to the social habits of the people.

The *Khawariq-us-Salikin*, completed in 1698, also gives a biographical account of the famous Sufis of Kashmir. Besides, the work refers to the centres of learning in Kashmir. The author also describes the mystical powers of Shaikh Nur-ud-din Wali.

The *Futuh at i-Kubraviya* describes the life of Kubravi and Rishi saints of Kashmir. It was written in 1748-49. Besides describing the brief history of the Sultans of Kashmir, the author of the book also depicts the history of Islam in the Valley from the time of Rinchana to that of Akbar.

## V. European Accounts

The first Europeans to visit Kashmir were Father Jerome Xavier and Benedict de Goes who arrived in the company of Akbar in 1597. Xavier's account of the sufferings of the people of Kashmir in the famine of 1596 is important. Francis Pelsaert's description of Kashmir,<sup>70</sup> though sketchy, is useful. But Bernier,<sup>71</sup> who came to Kashmir with Aurangzeb supplies useful information regarding the shawl trade. His account of the social and economic life is also important. Father Desideri and Father Manoel Fryer<sup>72</sup> have also left an account of their impressions which also throw some light on the social and economic life. In 1783 Kashmir was visited by George Forster<sup>73</sup> who describes the economic conditions in the time of the Afghans in Kashmir.

## VI. Kashmiri Literature and Folklore

The Kashmiri poems of Lalla Ded, Shaikh Nur-ud-Din Wali and Habba Khatun are rich in giving useful references to social history of the medieval period. Though Lalla Ded and Nur-ud-Din have sung didactic songs, they are an extremely valuable source for the study of social conditions. Their criticism of social life is somewhat balanced. Habba's tone, in general, is gloomy, but her songs disclose a wealth of information and reveal the deep emotions which moved the oppressed women of that age.

## REFERENCES AND NOTES

1. The Buddhist missionaries sent to various parts of Asia were supposed to maintain a record of their proselytising activities. This must have become the basis for 'much historical thinking and writing.'
2. For the impact of Persia on Kashmir, see my article 'Persian Influences in Kashmir in the Sultanate Period,



- 1320—1586', *Islamic Culture*, Vol. LI, No. 1 Jan. 1977, pp. 1—10.
3. Kalhana, *Rajatarangini*, English trans. M. A. Stein, 2 vols. London, 1900, Book VII, verse 1715.
  4. Romilla Thapar, 'Historical Ideas in Rajatarangini' in *Historians of Medieval India* (ed. Mohibbul Hasan), p. 2.
  5. *Rajatarangini* (Stein), Book VII, verse 13, verse 400, Book VIII, verse 890-900, verse 2224.
  6. *Ibid.*, Book VII, verse 449.
  7. *Ibid.*, Book IV, verses, 347-48.
  8. Dr. R. K. Parmu wrongly says that Jonaraja "does not enlighten us on the causes which were responsible for the downfall of Hindu sovereignty", see *History of Muslim Rule in Kashmir*, New Delhi, 1969, pp. 4-5. In sober fact, one has to read Jonaraja's work between the lines for a proper understanding of the conditions prevailing in Kashmir before the advent of Islam.
  9. Jonaraja, *Rajatarangini*, English tr. by Dutt, Calcutta, 1835, pp 5 - 15.
  10. *Ibid.*, p. 19.
  - 10a. He is known to this day as 'Budshah', the Great King.
  11. *Ibid* , pp. 2-3.
  12. Amir-i-Kabir, Ali Sani, Sayyid Ali Hamadani, popularly known in the Valley as 'Shah-i-Hamadan' was the son of Mir Sayyid Muhammad Al Hasani of Hamadan, Persia. He played an important role in the spread of Islam in Kashmir. His Khanqah at Srinagar is known for its religious and political importance. See Mohammad Ishaq Khan, *History of Srinagar (1846 - 1947), a Study in Socio-cultural Change*, 1978 Srinagar, pp. 9-10n.

13. *Rajatarangini* (Dutt), p.57.
14. Dr. {A. Q. Rafiqi tends to believe that the change in Sikandar's attitude towards the Hindus was prompted by the opposition of Sayyid Hisari, a sufi saint, against the Sultan's anti-Hindu policy. (*Sufism in Kashmir*, Delhi, n. d., pp. 102-103). This is not correct because neither the hagiological literature nor the Persian chronicles warrant the assertion of my friend. In all probability the Sultan's softened attitude towards the non-Muslims must have been guided by political expediency rather than the supposed influence of the saint on the Sultan.
15. *Rajatarangini* (Dutt), p. 65. Originally the term Yavana meant Ionian or Greek. But later it was used for any foreigner including Muslims. Jonaraja, however, seems to have used it for the Sayyids.
16. *Rajatarangini* (Srikanth Koul's edn., p. 112 (St.609)
17. *Rajatarangini* (Dutt), p. 57.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 90.
19. N. K. Zutshi, *Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin of Kashmir*, Lucknow, 1976, p. 174.
20. *Rajatarangini* (ed. Koul), St. 952.
21. *Ibid.*, Std. 313. Stein says that Rajasthaniyas were State officials. *Rajatarangini* (Stein), I, Book VII 601n.
22. *Rajatarangini* (ed. Koul), St. 887.
23. *Ibid.*, St. 841.
24. *Ibid.*, (Bombay edition by Peterson, 1896), st. 1325 sqq.
25. *Ibid.*, (ed. Koul), st. 841-49.
26. See for greater details of these invasions, Yuan-Chao-Pi-Shi, *The Secret History of Mongol Dynasty* (Eng. tr. Wei Kwei-Sun), Aligarh, 1957, p. 170, and 26 n; Henry H. Howarth, *History of the Mongols*, I, London, 1876, p. 135; III, 1888, London pp. 184-85; E. Bretschneider,

*Medieval Researches*, I, London, 1888, pp 138 and 368, see also p. 305; Henry Yule, *Marco Polo*, I, 3rd ed., London, 1903, p. 98.

- 26a. Some writers (Rafiqi, op. cit., p. 158; *Rajatarangini* (ed. Koul, p. 101) have fallen into the error of taking Mulla Nur-ud Din of Jonaraja for Shaikh-Nur-ud-Din Wali. Actually, Jonaraja has referred to Mulla Nur-ud-Din, the Parma Guru (religious preacher) who seems to be the same person as mentioned in the Baharistan-i-Shahi (transcript No. 960, Oriental Research Department, Srinagar, f, 26) the *Zafarnama* of Sharaf-ud-din Ali Yazdi (Vol. II, ed. Moulvi M. Iahdad, Bib. Ind. Calcutta, 1855-88, p. 164) and the *Malfuzat-Timuri*. Asiatic Society of Bengal, 85, f. 319 a. b. Rafiqi's assumption that Shaikh Nur-ud-Din raised his voice against the anti-Hindu policy of Sultan Sikandar is not borne out by facts of history. Had the Shaikh done so he would have certainly won the approbation of the Brahman chroniclers for they do not fail to praise the tolerant attitude of Zain-ul-Abidin towards the Hindus.
27. *Rajatarangini* (ed. Koul), p. 40.
28. *Ibid.*, st. 597.
29. *Ibid.*, st. 388
30. *Ibid.*, p. 41
31. *Ibid.*
32. *Jaina-Rajatarangini* (Eng. tr. Dutt), p. 165 sqq.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 99.
34. *Rajatarangini* (Stein,) II, p. 373.
35. The Baihaqi Sayyids came to Kashmir in the reign of Sultan Sikandar. They entered into matrimonial alliances with the royal family, and played an important role in the politics of the Sultanate of Kashmir.

36. *Jaina-Rajatarangini* (Dutt), pp. 234-35, 319.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 235.
38. To Professor A. Weber we owe a great deal for publishing the extracts of the work in *Indische Studien*, XVIII, pp. 289-412.
39. *Ibid.*, pp. 298-300.
40. *Ibid.*, pp. 337, 341.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 302 sqq.
42. *Kashmir Under the Sultans*, 2nd edn., 1974, Srinagar, p. 4.
43. *Indische Studien*, XVII, p. 348 sqq.
44. *Ibid.*, p. 369 sqq.
45. *Ibid.*, p. 292.
46. *Rajatarangini* (Stein,) II, p. 376.
47. Dr. G.M.D. Sufi (*Kashir*, I, Lahore, 1948-1949, p. xi) says that the work was written in Muhammad Shah's reign (1530-37). But Professor Mohibbul Hasan says that it was completed in 1579 during Yusuf Shah's first reign, which lasted for about two months (*Kashmir under the Sultans*, p. 5n). The latter view appears to be correct because of the absence of the names of Sayyid Mubarak and Lohar Shah in the chronicle.
48. Sayyid Ali, *Tarikh-i-Kashmir*, R.L.S., f. 10a.
49. *Kashmir under the Sultans*, p.6.
50. *Kashmir*, I, p. XI; *Historians of Medieval India* (ed. Mohibbul Hasan), p. 56, *Kashmir under the Sultans*, p .8.
51. For an excellent discussion on this subject, see *Kashmir under the Sultans*, Appendix A.
52. *Baharistan-i-Shahi*, I.O. 509, f. 181 a.b.

53. Zia-ud-din Barani and Badauni in their works, for example, show their fanaticism by criticising liberal-minded kings.
54. Quoted in *Historians of Medieval India* (ed. Mohibbul Hasan), p. 57.
55. *Baharistan-i-Shahi*, 181 a.b.
56. *Ibid.*
57. Haidar Malik Chadura, *Tarikh-i-Kashmir*, I.O., 510, f. 3a.
58. For details, see Mohibbul Hasan, 'A note on the Assassination of Sher Afghan' (Dr. Yazdani Commemoration Vol. ed., H.K. Sherwani, 1966).
59. Haidar Malik Chadura, *op. cit.*, f. 146a.
60. See *Nawadir-ul-Akhbar*, B.M. Add. 24029, f. 78b.
61. For the system of forced labour in Kashmir, see my article 'Some Aspects of Corvee in Kashmir', *Research Biannual*, Vol. I, No. II, Srinagar, 1976, pp. 58-71.
62. His views on Shihab-ud-din's military conquests in Hindustan and Lalla Ded's supposed talk with Mir Sayyid Ali Hamadani differ from those of the earlier writers.
63. Nobody can dispute with Rafiqi that "the Mughal conquest of Kashmir.....formed a part of Akbar's ambitious scheme of conquest." *op. cit.*, p. 236. But, it is hard to escape the fact, as Rafiqi does, that Shaikh Yaqub Sarfi played a leading role in the Mughal conquest of Kashmir. The very fact that Akbar sought his help more than once suggests that the Great Mughal must have been motivated by the representations of Sarfi also. That Sarfi wielded great influence with the grandees of Kashmir is shown by his representation to Akbar when he claimed that they would follow his advice in any eventuality. See *Akbar-nama*, III, p. 496.

64. See for this festival, *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri* (Rodgers and Beveridge), II, p. 167-68.
65. *Ibid.*, I, p. 93.
66. *Amal-i-Saleh* (Bib. Ind.) II, Calcutta, 1932, p. 41.
67. *Kalimat-i-Tayyibat*, f. 77a (S. R. Sharma, *The Religious Policy of the Mughal Emperors*, Delhi, 1972, p. 132). The practice of entertaining the visitors to Kashmir with the musical dance, was, however revived in the time of the Afghan, Sikh and Dogra rulers. See, for details, *History of Srinagar (1846–1947)*, pp. 96-97.
68. I have made use of the manuscripts available in the Oriental Research Library, Srinagar.
69. Du Jarric, P., *An Account of the Jesuit Missions to the Court of Akbar*, tr. by C.H. Payne as *Akbar and the Jesuits*. Broadway Series, London, 1926.
70. Pelsaert, F., *Remonstrantie*, tr. by W. H. Moreland and P. Geyl as *Jahangir's India*, Cambridge, 1923.
71. Bernier, F., *Travels in Mughal Empire (1656–68)*, Oxford, 1914.
72. Fillipo, De Filippi, *The Travels of Ippolit Desideri of Pistoia 1712-27*, London, 1937.
73. Forster, G., *A Journey from Bengal to England, through the northern part of India, Kashmir, etc.*, 2. Vols., London, 1808.

## Chapter V

# Kashmiri Muslim and their History

The transformation of Muslim society of Kashmir from its centuries old stolidity to its twentieth century ebullience is a subject of vital importance. Their society is characterized not only by a faith Islam, but it is also in significant measure the outgrowth of its immediate past. The Kashmiri Muslims constitute certainly the most significant and conceivably the most creative community among the Muslims of the Indian nation and in the history of Islam as well. Having experienced the trauma of negative change since the beginning of the 19th century, the Kashmiri Muslims have now met with positive change, and have come to feel its power and to accept its challenge. The winds of the modern world have swept through the impregnable mountain barriers of the Valley : political, social, economic and educational pressures have brought irresistible influences to bear on the community's life. But nothing has eroded the faith of the community in Islam and significantly its members have often sought to relate the new influences to Islam. The average Kashmiri Muslim's attitude is such that new solutions will not be admitted unless they are at least verbally related to Islam. It is for this reason that the present ruling party in Kashmir has always tried to win the confidence of the people through the mosques and shrines managed and controlled by the Muslim

\*This is a modified version of the Paper 'The Social Background and Politics of the Muslims of Kashmir, 1846-1947' read at the thirteenth annual session of the Bangladesh History Congress held at Sylhet in March, 1980.

Trust (*Auqaf*).<sup>1</sup> The influence of Kashmiri Muslims religious life is forcing the scope of Islamic concern in Kashmir to be widened and deepened, a process that parallels and contends with the compartmentalization of faith and life. However, it may be noted here that Islam in Kashmir has a different colour; its essential component is humanism which is the outcome of mystic traditions developed and fostered by ascetics like Lalla Ded, and Shaikh Nur-ud-din Wali popularly known as *Nund-Rishi* among the pandits of Kashmir.

Although the focus of the present study is on the politics of Muslims of Kashmir during the Dogra rule (1846-1947), its final outcome in the shape of preserving Kashmir's distinct identity through Article 370 of the Indian Constitution, has been studied against the background of strong cultural traditions of Kashmiris.

The present study has been motivated by a number of factors; chief among them being the sad fact that Kashmiri Muslim is still a suspect in the eyes of the politicians of the Indo-Pak sub-continent in spite of the avowed declarations of his leaders that the state of Jammu and Kashmir<sup>2</sup> is an integral part of the Indian Union. But what is more baffling is that Pakistan continues to pin high hopes on Kashmiri Muslims by often pandering to their religious sentiments and also by raising the issue of Kashmir on international forums. Viewed from the Pakistani standpoint, Kashmir problem is in essence the problem of Kashmiri Muslims who are in an overwhelming majority in the State of Jammu and Kashmir. Though Pakistan's harping on the Kashmir problem has not influenced the course of Kashmir politics during the last decade or so, it has, nevertheless, kept the issue of Kashmiri Muslims alive and has, thus served to make their *bona fides* a suspect in the eyes of teeming millions of the sub-continent. People in general seem to have vague notions about them. If, on the one hand, they are dubbed as Pakistanis at heart, on the other, they are accused of having betrayed Islam for upsetting the applecart of Pakistan in 1947<sup>3</sup>, and again in



1965<sup>4</sup>, when the Pakistani infiltrators attempted to raise an armed revolt in Kashmir. The Kashmiri Muslims are, therefore, puzzling, nay almost baffling, for an outsider and, to study them therefore constitutes an important problem for a social scientist

The Muslim community of Kashmir is one of the oldest extant [Muslim communities<sup>4a</sup> in the Indian sub-continent. Long before the "Muslim rule" was established in Kashmir in 1320, Muslims had entered the Valley as traders and soldiers of fortune. Pandit Kalhana's references to the *Turukshahs* (Turks)<sup>5</sup> and Marco Polo's evidence regarding the employment of the "Saracens"<sup>6</sup> as butchers by the Hindus speak of the earliest Muslim settlements in Kashmir. But it must be explained that the "Muslim Rule" was established in Kashmir not as a result of a foreign invasion; it is the internal chaos that finally led to the decline of the "Hindu Rule".

Kashmir society on the eve of the establishment of the Sultanate was divided into two main religious groups, Hindus and Buddhists. Though Buddhism had flourished in Kashmir in earlier times, it had begun to show signs of decline when the famous Chinese traveller Huien Tsiang visited Kashmir in 631-33 A.D.<sup>7</sup> It seems that the Buddhists were the first to embrace Islam in Kashmir. The first Muslim ruler of Kashmir was Rinchana, a Buddhist prince of Ladakh, who embraced Islam at the behest of a Muslim saint. Rinchana's conversion should not, however, be treated as an individual case. It would have been difficult for him to maintain his foothold in Kashmir, but for a sizeable number of Buddhists who must have followed suit.<sup>8</sup> That Kashmiri Muslims are peace-loving and they still continue to follow certain ancient traditions of the Buddhists bears testimony to the fact that a good number of them are descendents of the Buddhist converts.<sup>9</sup> As regards the Hindus, they were split into a multitude of socially exclusive but economically inter-dependent groups. Theirs was a fractional society where

group distinctions were recognized as an integral part of society. Thus during the 14th and 15th centuries Islam was able to draw into its unified fold a vast majority of different ethnic and cultural types into one homogeneous religious group, not by the power of sword, but by a strong attraction of a simple religious teaching, a simple social pattern and by an attitude to human life that appealed to men of different ethnic origins and cultural backgrounds. Not only was Islam embraced by the agriculturists, artisans, boatmen, gardeners and other groups performing menial jobs, but also by such powerful politically dominant groups in ancient society such as Damaras, Lavanyas, and Tantrins whose names now survive in the modern family names among Kashmiri Muslims such as Dar, Loan and Tantray.

It is important to note that among Kashmiri Muslims different types of family names are commonly used. One of the most widely prevalent of such names is Bat, which, without any doubt, is the same as Bhatta, and obviously bears an elaborate testimony to the fact of conversion. There are some more examples of this kind of surname such as Pandit, Koul (Sanskrit *Kaula*, originally the name of a Brahman Sect) Naik, and Ryosh (Sanskrit Rishi, saintly, learned man). The Shaikhs<sup>10</sup> who constitute an overwhelming majority of the Kashmiri Muslims are generally considered to be from converts.<sup>11</sup>

During 1320-1586 when Kashmir was an independent Muslim kingdom there was steady stream of Muslim migration from Central Asia and Persia. Besides the Sayyids who flocked to the Va ley in numbers, there were Persian speaking immigrants whose descendents formed an important element of Islamic society in Kashmir. In the Mughal period in Kashmir (1586-1757), the dominant Kashmiri groups such as Chaks, Magres, Rainas, Dars and Bats were dispossessed as military and administrative groups. A hierarchy of Mughal

officers now began to man high posts in administration. The descendants of the Mughals may now be found among Mirzas, Begs, Mirs, Buchh etc. Similarly during the Afghan rule in Kashmir (1757-1819) there settled in the valley certain men of Afghan tribes. In the second half of the 19th century certain Muslim families from different parts of northern India poured in Kashmir and settled there permanently.<sup>12</sup>

Though a great mass of the people of Kashmir had accepted Islam by the end of the fifteenth century, a sizeable section of the Brahmans was not converted to Islam. This well-knit group whose members are now popularly known as Kashmiri Pandits has, throughout the medieval and the modern periods, struggled to maintain its distinct identity.

The foregoing account may force us to remark that the Muslims of Kashmir are not a homogeneous group but a conglomerate community which has grown slowly as a result of inter-marriage and conversions. This has of course led to the formation of various exclusive sub-groups within the community defined in terms of geographical, racial and even caste<sup>13</sup> origin. But in reality the Muslim society of Kashmir has not totally lost the homogeneity, nor has it become differentiated. The total amalgamation of the foreign settlements through inter-marriages that has taken place during the last hundred years or so has given an enduring unity both culturally and linguistically to Kashmiri Muslims. The very fact that the entire Muslim population of Kashmir shares a common religious and political outlook gives it a relatively monolithic character.

It should be remembered that the Muslims of Kashmir remained in political backwater until the twenties of this century owing to certain historical factors. They were greatly oppressed under the Sikh rulers (1819-1846) who had succeeded the Afghans in Kashmir. The Sikhs closed the

Jama Mosque of Srinagar to public prayers, and in addition several mosques including the Pather Masjid were declared to be the property of the State.<sup>14</sup> The slaughter of cow was declared a heinous offence and punishable by death.<sup>15</sup> All sections of the Muslim population including butchers, bakers, boatmen, scavengers and even prostitutes were taxed.<sup>16</sup> The Sikh governors posted in Kashmir unleashed a reign of terror and if one Muslim was killed by a Sikh, the compensation allowed to his family was two rupees and four rupees if a Hindu. Thus a Sikh soldier was given a free hand to kill the local Muslims. The ancient practice of forced labour (*Begar*) was continued by the Sikhs with such a great rigour that even ordinary soldier could command the Muslim to do any work for him. Moorcroft and Hugel, the two European travellers who visited Kashmir in the Sikh rule, have given a horrid account of how Kashmiri Muslims were forced to do unpaid labour for their Sikh masters.<sup>17</sup> The system of revenue farming enabled the *Ijaradar* to extort as much as he could from the peasants. All these exactions resulted in the impoverishment of the Muslims, and the revenue remitted to Lahore fell increasingly from sixty-two lakhs of rupees at the beginning of the Sikh rule to ten lakhs at the end.<sup>18</sup> Begging became common. Natural calamities further added to the miseries of the already famished people. Many villages became depopulated<sup>18</sup> as a result of death and emigration. Another important consequence of the Sikh rule was that the *Ulama*, *fuzala* and other respectable families of Muslims were deprived of the land grants (*jagirs*) and hereditary allowance they had held from the time of the Mughal rulers.<sup>20</sup>

The defeat of the Sikhs in the first Anglo-Sikh war in 1846 at the hands of the British marked the end of the Sikh rule in Kashmir. By the Treaty of Amritsar, concluded on March 16, 1846, Kashmir was sold by the British imperialists to Raja Gulab Singh, the Dogra ruler of Jammu, for a sum of 75 lakhs of rupees.

The deep-seated change that Muslim society of the Valley underwent after the sale of Kashmir to Maharaja Gulab Singh in 1846 has yet to receive the attention it deserves from the students of history. The contours of change, however, are clear; the pattern of new economic relations emerged when the new rulers declared themselves to be the absolute owners or lords of the soil.<sup>21</sup> Although the recognition of the Dogra ruler's superior ownership in land formed the basis of the new Government's policy, throughout the period extending from 1846 to 1887 or so, the Dogra administration worked directly to create a class of landed gentry comprising mainly the Kashmiri Pandits<sup>22</sup> and the Dogra Rajputs. Most of the Pandit officials of the new regime were from the urban background and there was a tendency among them to become land owners.<sup>23</sup> We have already seen how the increasing transference of land from the cultivators to the official class took place immediately after the death of Maharaja Gulab Singh.<sup>24</sup>

Demographically the Pandits formed approximately less than seven per cent of population of Kashmir by 1891<sup>25</sup> but they were a highly urbanized group and despite their overall numerical insignificance their demographic distribution was such that they were located in numbers in the city of Srinagar<sup>26</sup>, the centre of power, which was sufficient to remind both their rulers and their Muslim brethren constantly of their presence. It is the relatively few and numerically small strata of the landed gentry of the Pandits of Kashmir society that developed class consciousness much earlier than the rest of the population. They were few in small number of the entire population of Kashmir, but they were interrelated, and functioned in part through their direct relationship to institutions which expressed or symbolised society as whole. In fact, this part of the society had no other particular economic function than parasitic consumption. No less an authority than the founder of the modern education in Kashmir while writing about the two hundred and fifty boys who were first to seek admission in the Mission School of Srinagar says :

“They are the sons or grandsons of those officials who had bullied and squeezed the Mohammedan peasants for years past, and their large houses in the city with all their wealth were a standing witness to their looting powers, for the salary they received from the State was quite insignificant<sup>27</sup>”.

Corruption was ripe in the ranks of the revenue staff manned by the Pandits, who made a common cause with the revenue officials, tampered with deeds and contracts so as to serve the latter's interests, and made their own fortunes. It is, therefore, in the context of these emerging agrarian relations that the opposition of the Pandit officials<sup>28</sup> to Sir Walter Lawrence's reforms needs to be studied.

Closely connected with the creation of the landed aristocracy is the system of forced labour (*Begar*) which remained until the beginning of this century the most prominent feature of Kashmir administration. After 1846 the magnitude of forced labour grew in volume not only due to the military expeditions sent to Gilgit and the adjoining border areas of Kashmir, but also owing to the emergence of an organized landed aristocracy and the weak functioning of exchange economy, especially in the agrarian set-up characterized by localism. It has elsewhere been noted how by accentuating localism the official class made the intensity and scope of subjection and dependence of the peasants in Kashmir no less than the servitude of the peasantry in Western feudalism, which overburdened the peasant with service on the lord's farm and payment of various dues and rendered them dependent on the lord as well as the land.<sup>29</sup>

The destruction of the Kashmiri peasants' proprietary rights under the institution of *begar* and the reduction of peasants to a state close to “serfdom” are thus two marked features of agrarian economy in the first half of the Dogra rule in Kashmir. In spite of restrictions on the movement of peasants imposed by the feudal government, the peasants

started fleeing to the Punjab so as to work there as coolies. Not only the landless labourers were driven to the plains, but a good number of artisans were forced to emigrate to the Punjab owing to feudal exactions.<sup>30</sup> Of course other factors such as recurrent famines, cholera, epidemics, floods and scarcity of grains, too, forced the Muslim peasants and artisans to move to the plains.<sup>31</sup>

It is in the background of these emerging economic relations that we shall study the various phases in the growth of social consciousness among the Muslims of Kashmir during 1846-1947.

When Kashmir came under the occupation of the Dogras the Muslims formed more than 93% of the population of the Valley. The cultivation of land was the principal source of their livelihood, although a fair proportion of them were engaged in small scale business, shop-keeping and trade in towns like Baramulla, Sopore, Anantnag and the city of Srinagar. An overwhelming majority of the Muslim peasants were illiterate and unskilled. In the city of Srinagar the Muslims formed 80 per cent of the population<sup>32</sup>. Of these the artisans of the shawl industry alone formed nearly 30 per cent of the population.<sup>33</sup> The shawl trade which was the mainstay of Srinagar's economy had flourished during the Afghan and the Sikh rule, but it began to show signs of decline after 1846.<sup>34</sup> Educationally Muslims were very backward considering the fact that as late as 1921 only 988 Muslims out of 1000 were unable to read or write. As against this, the Pandits claimed 70 literates out of every 1000.<sup>35</sup>

It is not to be wondered at, therefore, why until the twenties of this century the Muslims of Kashmir remained politically inactive as compared with their co-religionists in India. Their political inertia before the twenties may also be attributed to the ban on the formation of societies or even the

publication of newspapers in the Valley. As late as 1921 the Dogra Government hesitantly gave permission to the formation of an association whose object was the teaching of the Quran and ordered the police "to watch that the Anjuman does not take part in political matters."<sup>36</sup>

However, it should not be supposed that there was total absence of social consciousness among the Muslims of Kashmir. If on the one hand, they had developed a fatalistic outlook owing to oppression, exploitation and misery, on the other, they had tended to show a spirit of revolt against intolerable conditions. Earlier in 1847, the shawl weavers, comprising the bulk of the Muslim population of Srinagar resorted to strike<sup>37</sup> and demanded the reduction of the various kinds of taxes such as *Baj*, *Nazrana* etc.<sup>38</sup> They also demanded that the wages<sup>39</sup> of the labour be fixed and urged the government to establish a rule of law in respect of the shawl industry and codify it.<sup>40</sup> Though the agitation died down owing to the intervention of Maharaja Gulab Singh, there remained an undercurrent of hostility among the weavers against the feudal exactions. Thus, in 1865, the workers of the shawl industry staged a demonstration in the streets of Srinagar against the extreme forms of exploitation.<sup>41</sup> Lacking organization, effective leadership and ideology, the shawl weaver's uprising was essentially pre-political in nature: hence it was ruthlessly suppressed. Nevertheless, the outcome of their uprising and their never ceasing hullabaloo over the scarcity of grains did provide an impulse to various classes of the Muslim society to fight for their rights. In 1877, for example, the first signs of agrarian discontent became manifest when the peasants appealed to Maharaja Ranbir Singh during his sojourn at Achabal in Kashmir against the high-handedness and corrupt practices of his officials and the *Jagirdars*. The deep-rooted discontent of the peasantry is reflected in the manner in which the revenue officials were forced to return whatever they had taken from



the peasants as bribes. But the peasant's success proved to be a nightmare, for Wazir Punnoo was able to wean away the Maharaja from taking stern action against the officials. Not only that, in a vendetta against the peasants, Wazir Punnoo got the houses of the peasants searched and whatever little they had in their stores was seized by officials.<sup>42</sup>

These developments did, however, make the Muslim community of Kashmir introspective. In 1886, some seventeen or eighteen Muslims who had landed interests sent two signed petitions to the Viceroy of India and the British Resident in Srinagar requesting them earnestly to appoint a compassionate, just and courteous Englishman as Settlement Officer in Kashmir. The petitioners hoped that they would be able to explain to him "their circumstances without fear."<sup>43</sup> The representations of the Muslims did not go unheeded as is evident by the appointment of Wingate as the Settlement Commissioner in 1887 who was succeeded by Lawrence in 1889.

From 1890 onwards Muslim self-consciousness was heightened by several factors. Though the opening of the Jehlam-Valley road in 1890 brought several advantages to Kashmir, it caused economic dislocation to a good number of Muslim trading families. A large influx of the Punjabis into Kashmir for business or employment – never for pleasure – after the improved means of communication marked the prominent feature in the changing economic relations. New markets like those of Maharaja Bazar and Maharaj Gunj, meant entirely for the enterprising Punjabi traders, began to sprang up. The old trading community of Kashmir mainly situated in the Jama Masjid area and Nowhatta in the city could not compete with the Punjabis owing to lack of enterprise and capital. The result was that the export trade passed entirely into the hands of the Punjabis who established their trading monopoly in the new markets. Little wonder, from the point of view of the urban population, there were a few

indigenous traders in the city of Srinagar towards the close of the nineteenth century.<sup>44</sup>

It is well to remember that the Muslims of Srinagar had a strong natural bias to commerce, but this had been crushed by their unfortunate political circumstances.<sup>45</sup> The fact that the development of trade was greatly hampered by the system under which the state itself monopolised all trade<sup>46</sup> can hardly be denied. For example, rice trade was practically in the hands of the Dogra government.<sup>47</sup> Silk, saffron, violets, various kinds of forest products, hemp, tobacco, waternuts and paper were at different times monopolised by the state and it also enjoyed virtual monopoly over the shawl industry.<sup>48</sup> Apart from this, the government subjected various other trades to vigorous impositions.<sup>49</sup> It is enough to remark here that it was the policy of Gulab Singh and his successors to make every product of the Valley a State monopoly.<sup>50</sup> Even prostitutes were taxed<sup>51</sup> and in the words of Lawrence, everything save air and water was under taxation.<sup>52</sup> This policy of the Dogra rulers killed the initiative and enterprise of many trading families. And this explains why after the abolition of many vexatious taxes on the trade in 1885 and a marked improvement in the means of communication and transport, the Punjabi traders succeeded in weakening the financial predominance of the old Muslim trading classes of Kashmir.

However, one important consequence of the opening of the Jehlam-Valley road was that the isolation of the Muslims of Kashmir from their brethren in India began to diminish. As a result of their contact with the outside Muslims, the prominent among them started the Muslim education movement in Kashmir in the nineties of the last century. It was started by Mir Waiz Moulvi Rasool Shah as a safeguard against Muslims being driven towards Christianity. He believed that a good education on Western lines, supported by wise religious teachings from the Quran, would

produce young Muslim of capacity and character. In order to mobilise public opinion in his favour the Moulvi founded an association called the Anjuman-i-Nusrat-ul-Islam devoted to religious and educational subjects of the Muslims. The climax of his efforts was the creation of a primary school in which religious instruction was imparted. With this initial purpose, the school slowly developed into a High School and began to follow the pattern of Christian Missionary School in Srinagar. Interestingly enough, the local Muslims under the leadership of fanatic Mullahs raised violent agitation and even attempts were made on the life of the Moulvi.<sup>54</sup>

The advent of modern education had a mixed effect upon the Kashmiri Muslims. In spite of the best efforts of Moulvi Rasul Shah, they could not keep pace with the educational developments taking place in Kashmir. The Pandits who were first to take to modern education were thus better equipped to adapt themselves to the changing circumstances and could capture small as well as high official posts in the Government.<sup>55</sup> It is, therefore, not surprising that concessions and privileges in education and appointment to government jobs were demanded for the Muslims from the Government by the Muslim petitioners in 1907 and 1909. In a petition, written in 1907, the Muslim petitioners implored the Government of India to take effective measures for the propagation of education among Kashmiri Muslims.<sup>56</sup> In 1909, some thirty petitioners claiming themselves to be the representatives of the Muslims expressed the hope that the British would relieve the Muslims of Kashmir of the tyranny of their rulers.<sup>57</sup> The growing Muslim public opinion also began to be expressed through the press outside the state. As the press was practically non-existent in Kashmir, the Muslims utilized the Punjab press in order to give vent to their feelings.<sup>58</sup>

The introspection of the Muslims is not only explicit in their petitions and letters addressed to the Viceroys, Residents and the Maharaja, but also by the desire on their part to keep pace with the changing social conditions. In 1904, Muhammad Din Fouq, a prominent Kashmiri, moved by the ignorance, superstition and poverty of his brethren, requested the Maharaja to grant him permission for starting a "social magazine" from Srinagar. But so antagonistic was the government to the idea of making its subjects self-conscious that Fouq was refused permission.<sup>59</sup> The noted writer did not, however, budge an inch from the path he had chosen. In 1906, he started the "Kashmiri Magazine" from Lahore which, no doubt, influenced the mind of the Muslims of India and in particular such Muslims of Kashmiri origin as had long settled in the Punjab. The interest shown by the All India Muhammedan Education Conference in the welfare of Muslims of Kashmir<sup>60</sup> in the second decade of this century was evidently the culmination of a process started by Fouq.

Between 1900-1930, the Muslim self-consciousness was further heightened by the propaganda carried on in the newspapers of the Punjab constantly harping on the paucity of Muslim students in government schools in Kashmir owing to the smallness of the number of Muslim teachers employed there.<sup>61</sup>

Although the Muslims of Kashmir were not an affluent community, a small core of wealthy merchants had emerged during the period when the Kashmir shawl was in demand in foreign countries. Among these may be mentioned certain trading families like Shawls<sup>62</sup>, Ashais, Jahaz and Bachh. In spite of the decline of shawl industry, the family of Shawls, for instance, had accumulated huge wealth. This is shown not only by the big business houses of the Shawls in the Punjab, Calcutta and Bombay, but also by their display of wealth during the great famine of 1877-79 when they rendered relief to thousands of famine-stricken people.<sup>63</sup> With

developed communications after 1890, the commercial contact of some merchant families with northern India began to improve further. The improved communications drew some prominent Muslims into the mainstream of modern social and cultural activity centred upon northern India. Certainly the Urdu speaking Muslims of Kashmir were courted by north Indian Muslim organizations such as the All-India Muhammadan Educational Conference, the Majlis-i-Ahrai<sup>61</sup>, the Anjuman-i-Himayat-i-Islam etc. which attempted to weld the Indian Muslims into a whole as a result of increasing social and political activity amongst non-Muslims and growing Muslim self-consciousness. In September 1913, a deputation of the All India Muhammadan Educational Conference presented an address to Maharaja Pratap Singh. Among the remedies suggested by the deputation to remove the backwardness of Muslims of the Jammu and Kashmir State was provision for religious education; assistance to enable the schools run by Anjuman-i-Nusrat-ul-Islam to be raised to the collegiate grade; the grant of special stipends and scholarships for Muslims; the appointment of Muslim professors, teachers, inspectors etc. and the appointment of a special Inspector for Muslim education.<sup>65</sup>

It will also be seen that the Muslims of Kashmir responded readily to the stimulus provided by some north Indian Muslim religious movements. The establishment of the Anjuman-i-Ahl-i-Hadith in Srinagar in the twenties of this century marked a further step in the growth of Muslim consciousness. Among some founder members of the Anjuman were the rich merchants like Haji Muhammad Shahdad and Ahmed Ullah Shahdad. The Anjuman came into limelight under the inspiring leadership of Moulvi Ghulam Nabi Mubarakji who had come in close contact with the Ahl-i-Hadith leaders of the Punjab.<sup>66</sup>

A careful reading of the *Muslim*<sup>67</sup>, an official organ of the Anjuman-i-Ahl-i-Hadith, reveals that the aim of the north-Indian inspired organization was to purge contemporary Islam of ceremonies and beliefs which made it ridiculous in the eyes of western rationalism, in particular, the extravagant ceremonies associated with funerals. But, not unoften, the leaders of the Anjuman held the custodians of the shrines responsible for much of the ills of Muslim society.<sup>68</sup> The fact that the *Mullahs* had sunk to the most contemptible depths of hypocrisy, greed and degeneration is shown by their hold on the masses through shrines which had been turned into important exploiting agencies in an organized manner. Instead of exercising a moral influence on the people, the *Mullahs* had contributed a great deal to the superstition, ignorance and poverty of their credulous believers. Interesting to note is the fact that superstitious practices such as *noufal* processions in the city of Srinagar were often taken by the *Mullahs* at the command of the Dogra rulers.<sup>69</sup>

The leaders of the Anjuman were thus justified in describing the condition of the Kashmiri Muslims as being worse than that of the political slaves.<sup>70</sup> True that the influence of the Anjuman was limited to a few families in Kashmir, yet by attacking the social evils, which like a canker, were eating into the vitals of Muslims society, the Anjuman-i-Ahl-Hadith did fill up an important gap by providing the intellectual leadership.

The twenties of this century was a formative period in the awakening of the social consciousness in Kashmir. The All India Muslim Kashmiri Conference which was started in the Punjab by Kashmiri Muslim settlers had done a great deal for the Muslims of Kashmir. In 1920 a deputation of the Muslim Kashmiri Conference sought an interview with the Maharaja regarding the inaction of his government in implementing Sir Henry Sharp's recommendations for the

improvement of education among Muslims, but interview was refused.<sup>71</sup>

Thus the Muslims of Kashmir could not keep silent and they showed their resentment against the government in various forms. The first signs of unrest appeared in Srinagar, the largest urban centre in the State of Jammu and Kashmir, and which had always been both the political, intellectual and commercial capital of Kashmir. Situated in the centre of the Valley and commanding trade routes to Central Asia and the Punjab, the city contained the wealthiest and most articulate section of the Muslim community of Kashmir such as the Naqshbandis, the Shawls and the Shahdads. While the Naqshbandis had big landed estates in the valley and had also been the leading merchants, the Shawls and the Shahdads had monopoly of carpet and shawls trade in Kashmir. Srinagar also provided religious leadership to the entire Valley. In fact, before 1931 the Muslims of Kashmir were completely under the spell of the two religious heads of Srinagar, the Mir Waiz of Jama Masjid and the Mir Waiz of Shah Hamadan mosque, who were quite often at logger heads with each other. It is the religious, the merchant and the landed leadership which was first concerned with articulating the grievances and aspirations of the Muslims of the middle class. Thus, when the Viceroy of India, Lord Reading, visited Srinagar in 1924, some of the prominent members of the Muslim community including Khawaja Saad-ud-Din Shawl, Khawaja Nur Shah Naqshbandi, Khawaja Hasan Shah, Naqashbandi Jagirdar, Mir Waiz Kashmir Moulvi Ahmed Ullah of Jama Mosque, Khawaja Maqbool Pandit, Khawaja Sayyid Hasan Shah Jalali and some other dignatories submitted a memorial to him. While demanding a larger representation of Muslims in Government services and improvement in the condition of Muslim education in the State, the Muslim leaders represented the interests of the middle class, but their demand for the grant of proprietary

rights in land to the peasants and abolition of the hated *corvée* shows that they also wanted to utilize the support of the masses for the furtherance of their demands.

As stated earlier, the third decade of this century marked an important stage in the growth of public opinion in Kashmir. At this stage in the awakening of the social consciousness all classes of the Muslim population in Kashmir were seething with discontent. The shawl trade which had been subjected to rigorous impositions<sup>73</sup> had declined. This had caused a great deal of unemployment among the weavers.<sup>74</sup> Through the carpet industry had absorbed some shawl weavers,<sup>75</sup> there were many who were wandering in search of employment. Equally deplorable was the condition of the *papier mache* artists most of whom were thrown out of job on account of the non-availability of raw-material. As a result of the recession also, caused by the World War I, many artisans had become jobless and most of them are said to have sold their ordinary clothes so as to provide themselves with means of subsistence during the times of the Great War.<sup>76</sup> Distress and frustration were written not only on the faces of the artisans but also on the workers of the silk factory of Srinagar who were demanding reasonable wages and medical facilities. In 1924, the workers in the State owned silk factory resorted to strike.<sup>77</sup> The strike did not last long, as it perhaps could not in those early days. None-the-less it projected the social tensions inherent in the emerging group of the working class.

It should be borne in mind that the rich merchant of Srinagar, Khawaja Saad-ud-din Shawl, had not only played a leading role in submitting the memorial to the Viceroy in 1924, but he was also involved in the Silk factory riots. This explains why he was banished from the State. But so great was the pressure of public opinion that the new Maharaja, Hari Singh, was obliged to lift ban on the exiled leader's entry



into Kashmir in 1927. On his return home, Saad-ud-din Shawl was given a heroic welcome by the people. However, the Government in its vendetta against the emerging leaders deprived them of their landed property. The two religious heads were only warned, though some official privileges which they had been hitherto enjoying were withdrawn from them.<sup>73</sup> This, however, only served to add fuel to the fire.

It was in the late twenties that the merchant leadership was reinforced by the emergence of a group of some Muslim youngmen, fresh from the universities in India, particularly, Aligarh, where they had come in contact with Muslim leaders and propagators of Pan Islamism. In April 1930 the Reading Room Party<sup>79</sup> was formed in Srinagar under whose auspices several meetings were held by the educated men. The fact that Pan Islamists were at the back of the educated Muslims is evidenced by the presence of Azad Subhani of Calcutta's Jama Mosque in Srinagar on the eve of the formation of the Reading Room Party. He is reported to have held secret meetings with the religious heads of Srinagar urging them to support youngmen. Thus the members of the Reading Room Party were definitely drawn into the maelstrom of the politics of the Muslims of undivided India. This is also supported by the activities of the leaders of the All India Kashmir Committee<sup>81</sup> in the Punjab and the Majlis-i-Ahrar-i-Islam Hind who vied with each other in tightening their grip on the Muslim politics of Kashmir.

During 1930-32, when Kashmir witnessed the flogging and mass killing of Muslim agitators, the Kashmir politics remained under the direction and virtual control of the Punjab Muslim leaders. The Ahrars launched a people's movement in Kashmir and carried on an intense propaganda in the form of a press campaign, meetings, processions of the Kashmiri labourers and the celebration of a Kashmir day against the State.<sup>82</sup> In June 1931, the Ahmediyas in their bid to gain

firm foothold in Kashmir sent Sayyid Wali Shah Zain-ul-Abidin and Chaudhari Bashir Ahmad to Srinagar for the guidance of leaders<sup>83</sup> Even, Shaikh Muhammad Abdullah, the emerging champion of Muslim sentiment, and, a very active member of the Reading Room Party, did not lose sight of the contribution of "the Muslims of Punjab" and "Hind" and also that of the "Muslim Press" to the ferment of the early thirties when he presided over the first session of the Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference in October 1932. In his presidential address the Shaikh thanked them for all that they had done for Kashmiri Muslims.<sup>84</sup>

But it should be remembered that the ideology of some Muslim leaders of the Punjab did not fit in the social milieu of Kashmir. Their constant harping on the "Hindu Raj" of Kashmir did rouse the Muslim sentiments<sup>85</sup>, but soon the sense of history of Kashmir leaders convinced them of the hollowness of the idea of a religious conflict against the Dogra oligarchy. This also explains why from the very start of the foundation of the Muslim Conference in 1932 its aims and objects remained secular in principle.<sup>86</sup>

It is necessary to examine here why after 1932 or so the Muslim leaders of Kashmir did not allow their minds to be influenced by the Muslim politics of the Punjab. In the first place, the association of Kashmir leaders with the All India Kashmir Committee which had some Ahmediyas as its members, generated doubts among their co-religionists regarding their religious beliefs. Mir Waiz Muhammad Yusuf Sha' mademuch of the Shaikh's association with the Ahmediyas. His diatribes<sup>87</sup> against the Shaikh were, however, understandable. In fact, the Shaikh's growing popularity<sup>88</sup> had marked the gradual eclipse of the influence of the religious leadership on the people. But so vehement was the propaganda carried on against what they called Shaikh's unholy alliance with the Ahmediyas that the Kashmir leader had to

write to Allama Anwar Shah (Shaikh-ul-Hadith) in 1932 affirming his faith in the finality of prophethood (*Khatam-i-Nabuwat*).<sup>89</sup> Secondly, the pressure of Hindu public opinion in Kashmir also helped in loosening the grip of Muslim leaders of the Punjab on Kashmir politics. Understandably, in the beginning the Kashmiri Pandits did not join the Muslim leaders against the Dogra Government. But soon some prominent leaders among them realised the futility of their opposition. Thus the formation of a party on the lines of the All India National Congress "having a common flag, common slogans, common programme and a common goal" was advocated time and again in certain sections of the "Hindus Press"<sup>90</sup>. Last, but not the least, the gradual association of the Muslim leadership of Kashmir with Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Nehru also began to influence the future course of Muslim politics of the Valley. In November, 1934 Abdullah while on a visit to various parts of India came into contact with Nehru and other nationalist leaders. Addressing a press conference at Dr. Saif-ud-din Kichloo's house in Lahore, the Kashmir leader accused the Muslim leaders of the Punjab for their interference in Kashmir affairs and also for giving birth to communal tensions in Kashmir. Abdullah also indicated the future line of action by expressing his desire to lay the foundation of such an organization in Kashmir as would support the programme of the Indian National Congress.<sup>91</sup>

Abdullah's address at the press conference caused a good deal of reaction in the Punjab. The nationalists applauded him, but the communals both among Hindus and Muslims, launched a virulent attack on him. While the Punjabi Muslims carried on a vehement propaganda against Abdullah, the Punjabi Hindus described his statement as mere "eyewash". The Kashmir leader, however, proved true to his convictions. Soon after his return from Lahore, Abdullah began to mobilise public opinion in favour of the formation of a united party of Hindus and Muslims of Kashmir. It was not an easy task to

prepare the ground for the foundation of a nationalist party considering the fact that a sizeable number of Muslim leaders, particularly, Chaudhari Ghulam Abbas wanted to retain the Muslim character of the Muslim Conference. However, it was Shaikh Abdullah's convictions that ultimately triumphed over the obstacles in the path of nationalism in Kashmir. He succeeded in winning over to his side even such a die-hard like Chaudhari Ghulam Abbas of Jammu. It was Chaudhari Abbas who in a presidential address at the annual session of the Muslim Conference in October, 1935 made a fervent appeal to the non-Muslims of the State to join the Muslims in their struggle against the Maharaja for 'social justice.' In May 1937, Abdullah in his address at annual session of the Muslim Conference held at Poonch, reiterated his party's stand for the protection of the rights of the minorities in the State and even pointed out that the Muslim Conference had gone a step further in this direction than the Indian National Congress.<sup>74</sup>

It was under these circumstances that the birth of the All Jammu & Kashmir National Conference took place in 1939. The conversion of the Muslim Conference into the National Conference was an event of far-reaching importance in Kashmir's modern history. The change, besides giving a fresh impetus to the movement against the Maharaja, gave a definite political unity and political identity to Kashmiris. The reason why the All India Muslim League could not make much headway in Kashmir was due to the fact that it had to encounter the opposition of the National Conference which had no faith in the ideology of the League. The ideology of the National Conference was compounded not only by political and economic programmes, but it was also strengthened by a strong regional identification and leadership which for all practical purposes wished the group to continue as a functional part of Kashmir society. Furthermore, the orientation of

the National Conference was purely Kashmirian ; its outlook was not based on the lack of social integration with non-Muslims, but on close cooperation with them. This explains why the holocaust of the partition of India in 1947 did not bring the National Conference leadership into conflict with the local tradition. In fact, the accession of the Muslim majority province of Kashmir to the Indian union was the logical culmination of a process started by Shaikh Abdullah in 1939.

### CONCLUSION

It would be seen that the role of Islam in Kashmir and that of Islam in the rest of undivided India was necessarily and intrinsically divergent. The Muslim leadership of Kashmir set at naught the most widely accepted view that Islam and nationalism are opposed to each other and worked out a harmonious relationship between the two. Kashmiri Muslims thus generated a positive conception of what they wanted and an operative loyalty towards attaining it. The particular relation of this goal and this loyalty to both Islam and nationalism has mostly occupied the attention of Muslim leadership in Kashmir.

With its distinctive character and with its own geographic, historical, economic, cultural and other particularities, nationalism of Kashmiri Muslims was influenced to a great extent by the ideas of Indian nationalism. Paradoxically, it is at the same time also related to nationalism in Kashmir's history. Thus, for instance, Shaikh Abdllah has always been and is still vehement in his attacks on the Mughal, the Afghan, the Sikh and the Dogra occupation of Kashmir. It is this unique feature of the nationalist struggle of Kashmiri Muslims that explains why their leadership joined India since it was sure that Kashmir could retain her separate entity in India alone, "where the existence of several other sub-nationalities will safeguard their identity." And by doing so the Kashmiri Muslim leadership also revitalized the traditions and

values of Kashmir's cultural heritage which were now made meaningful and creative in the new environment.

Not only are the Muslims of the valley of Kashmir self-consciously bound together by language, culture and religion but unlike the Muslims of the rest of India they are politically united. What gives them a radically unique posture among the Muslims of India and is manifestly the fundamental feature of their historical development, is the fact that they share citizenship in the Indian Republic without losing their personality. In fact, they constitute the only sizeable body of Muslims in India who are a force to be reckoned with in the country's political arena.

The primary importance of Kashmiri Muslims for the Muslim world is the demonstration that it is not difficult under the right circumstances for a Muslim community to make necessary change. They, therefore, represent a symbol of hope not only for the Indian Muslims but also for several Muslim minorities living in different parts of the world. In fact, Kashmiri Muslim has moved from the position of being a negative symbol to the position of being a positive one for Muslims.

It seems necessary to note that unfortunately there are some politicians in India who have not yet grasped the fact that the Muslim community of Kashmir is a distinct historical community and, therefore, problematic in regard to the question of its identity. Hence they have been advocating the abrogation of the Article 370 through which the State of Jammu and Kashmir enjoys a special status in the Indian Constitution. Not only has the Muslim leadership proceeded on the authority of the Article 370 in the recent past, but its inclusion in the Indian constitution seems to be the great dominating event of Kashmiri Muslims' society and life. To a Kashmiri Muslim the Article 370 is an article of faith; he sees it as having given a new birth to his "nation",<sup>93</sup>

transforming it from decadence and disrepute into strength and honour.

The principal argument for recognising the Muslim community of Kashmir amongst the cardinal Islamic communities of today rests on a combination of three factors, viz; size, history and situation, None of these quite possibly would be sufficient in itself. But the juncture of three seems to present the community with the crucial role it is destined to play in future. On the score of its history the community's concern for Article 370 is equally convincing. The essential point of course is not that it defied Pakistan and joined India, but simply that it contributed much—and strikingly much—to strengthening the Indian nation.

The story of Kashmiri Muslims has been a long one, with many vicissitudes. In it has been much of importance, little of grandeur, much of turmoil (both inflicted and suffered). The point is that story is not yet over. To dismiss the actions of the National Conference leadership in raising the question of special status of the State of Jammu and Kashmir at the time of elections as merely the vote catching demagogy is to miss the potential significance of the Article 370 for Kashmiri Muslims. In what form they will react to the moves to abrogate it is a matter that will in the future prove significant to watch.

## REFERENCES AND NOTES

1. The affairs of the All Jammu & Kashmir Muslim Trust are virtually managed by Shaikh Muhammad Abdullah who, besides being the Chief Minister of the J & K State, is also the president of the Trust. The predecessors of Abdullah have never enjoyed this dual authority. As a matter of

fact, the Auqaf has become a religio-political body in Kashmir.

- 2 The Jammu and Kashmir State consists of three regions viz., Kashmir valley, Jammu and Ladakh. According to the census of 1971 total population of the State (excluding the area which is under the occupation of Pakistan) is 46,16,632 of which 66% are Muslims. Out of the total 25,40,19 population of the Kashmir valley about 93% are Muslims. Culturally and linguistically the Muslims of the valley form one homogenous group and it is they who are generally known as the Kashmiri Muslims. Though the present paper concerns this group alone, it may not be out of place to mention here that their political outlook is shared by Muslims living in other regions. In fact, it is the urban Muslim leadership of the valley which has been guiding the destiny of the Muslims of Jammu & Kashmir ever since the growth of political consciousness in the State.
3. That Shaikh Abdullah upset the plans of Pakistan in 1947 can hardly be denied. He organized a "National Militia" against the tribal invaders and mobilised public opinion against Pakistan by delivering incendiary speeches.
4. In 1965, when the armed men of Pakistan occupied Kashmir infiltrated into the valley, they could not get any help from the local Muslims. With the result the Pakistani move to capture Kashmir by force ended in a fiasco.
5. Kalhana *Rajatarangini* (Stein's tr.) Delhi, 1961, BK VVI IV, p. 179. BK I, P. 170 BK VIII. P, 152; BK VII pp51, 56, 70 118, 520, 885, 919, 923, see also BK VII, No. 1149 *Ibid* I, Intro. p. 112.
6. H. Yule, *The Book of Ser Morco, Polo*, ed. & Tr. by Sir H. Yule, I, London, 1903, pp. 176-7.



7. See Stein, I, Intro., p. 87.
8. The next to embrace Islam after Rinchana was his brother-in-law, Rawacandra, Mohibbul Hasan, *Kashmir under the Sultans* (2nd ed.), Srinagar, 197 p.
9. The Orthodox Islam forbids the relic worship ; yet a vast majority of the Muslims of Kashmir hold the relics of several Muslim saints as objects of veneration. Like the ancient Buddhist monks of Kashmir, the Muslim priests display the "holy relics" on festive occasions.
10. Shaikh, an Arabic word, literally denotes an old man or man of authority. "The term seems to be widely used in South Asia to designate Muslims descended from Hindu converts". T. N. Madan, *The Muslims communities of South Asia*, Delhi, p. 109.
11. Walter Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir*, London, 1895. p. 306. There is, however, all likelihood of some of the Shaikhs particularly in urban centres of Kashmir, to have descended from immigrants.
12. It will not be out of place to mention here that the present writer's ancestors had to leave Rampur (in UP) for good in 1857 for their anti-British activities. They took refuge in Kashmir where their services were utilized by Maharaja Ranbir Singh against the British, Similarly some Muslims of the Punjab also settled in the Valley during the Dogra period as they were lured by the patronage extended to them by the Maharaja.
13. Like the Pandit, the Kashmiri Muslim has generally recognized the idea of *Zat* (Caste) as the crucial factor in identity specification and in determining an individuals natural or moral conduct. But this should not delude us into believing that the social structure of Kashmiri Muslims like those of 'Indian Muslims', is "a modified system of castes", as the studies of so-called Muslim

castes by Dunmount, Ansari and Hutton tend to do. As Madan rightly points out: "The temptation do so is particularly strong in Kashmir, where the bulk of the Muslim population is of Hindu ancestry...It is an easy way out but fails to attach sufficient importance to the Muslim self-ascription today." *Op. cit.*, p. 130.

14. Pir Hasan Shah, *Tarikh-i-Kashmir* (Persian text), II, printed by the Directorate of Research and Publications, Govt. of Jammu and Kashmir, pp. 757-58.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 758.
16. Major Leech's report (NAI)
17. For greater details, see Ishaq Khan, "Some Aspects of Corvee in Kashmir" *Research Biannual*, Vol. I, No:II, published by the Directorate of Research, Srinagar, 1976, pp. 58-71.
18. James P. Ferguson, *Kashmir: An Historical Introduction* London, 1961, pp. 49-51.
19. Ishaq Khan, *op. cit.*,
20. Hasan, *op. cit.*, p. 758-59.
21. See Chapter on "Problem of Transition from Medieval to Modern in Indian History—Kashmir a case study."
22. NAI/Foreign, Sec, E. Pros. Feb.,1890. Nos. 106-11.
23. Lawrence to Nisbet, Letter No. 13,1891, NAI/Foreign Feb., 1891, Sec, E, 295-326,
24. See Chapter on "Problem of Transition from Medieval" to Modern in Indian History—Kashmir: a case study.
25. *Census of India* (J & K), 1891.
26. "The Hindus who preponderate in the urban population and comprise well known literate castes like Kashmiri Pandits and the urban Brahman population

of cities and towns claim 70 literates out of every 1,000." *Ibid*, Part I, 1921, p. 111. In Srinagar the Pandits nearly formed 20% of the population of the city in 1868. See *The Valley of Kashmir*, p. 225.

27. Tyndale Biscoe, *Kashmir in Sunlight and Shade* London, 1922, p. 268.
28. Lawrence, *op. cit*; p.6.
29. For greater details see my article, "Some Aspects of Corvee in Kashmir", *op. cit*.
30. The system, under which no person could leave the Valley without permission, was known as *Rahdari*. Lawrence, *op cit*, p. 215. See also Robert Thorp. *Cashmere Misgovernment*, London, 1870 (*Kashmir papers*) ed. by S.N. Gadru, Srinagar, 1973, p. 68.)
31. For greater details, see Ishaq Khan, *History of Srinagar, 1846-1947, a study in Socio-Cultural Change, Srinagar, 1978*.
32. See Lawrence, *op. cit*, p. 225.
33. See NAI/Foreign, Sec. March 1883, No. 86; also Census I, 1921, p.181.
- 34 *History of Srinagar*, pp. 62. Sqq.
35. Census, 1921, I.p.iii; see also *The Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore) Nov., 1,1923, p.13, Kashmir Government Records (General) F. No: 204/9-C (1920).
36. Kashmir Government Records (General), F.No.66/102/c of 1921. The Government also accorded permission to Sanatan Dharam Sabha to open its branch in Srinagar in 1923 on the "distinct understanding that the Sabha will take no part in politics." The Sabha was a purely religious institution." *Ibid*; No: 46/G-39 of 1923.

37. *Lahore Political Diaries, 1847-49*, Vol. VI, p. 48.
38. K.M. Pannikar, *The Founding of the Kashmir State*, London, 1930, p. 139.
39. Again in 1853, the workers of shawl industry expressed their resentment against the *Karkhanadars* over the question of wages. There broke out some riots in the city. See Mirza Saif-ud-din, *Akhbarat-i-Darbar-i-Maharaja Gulab Singh*, MSS., 1853, Vol. vi, ff. 9a, 10b.
40. Pannikar, *op. cit.*, p. 139.
41. *Cashmere Misgovernment* (typed copy in the J & K Archives pp. 18-19), Mir Saif-ullah *Tarikh-nama Kashmir* (Ibn-Mahjoor's Collection) pp. 100-101, Khalil Mirjanpuri, *Tarikh-i-Kashmir* Vol. II MS. No: 800, CCAS, p. 910, Pir Hasan, *Tarik-i-Hasan* (Ibrahim's Ur. tr.) III, p.577.
42. Pir Hasan, *op. cit.* (Persian text), II, pp.860-61. See also Pandit Hargopal Khasta, *Guldasta i-Kashmir*, Lahore, 1883, py. 222-24.
43. NAI/Foreign, S.E. Oct., 1836 Nos. 235-300. p. 20; J.C. Bose *Cashmere and its Prince*, Calcutta, 1889, p. 3.
44. *History of Sinagar*, pp. 39-49, 77-80.
45. Bates, *Gazetteer of Kashmir* etc. Calcutta, 1873 p.71; Arthur Brinckman, *Wrongs of Kashmir*, London 1868, (typed copy in the J & K Archives), Chapter II, p. 12 See also Henry's note on famine. NAI/Foreign Sec. E. March, 1883, Nos. 83-85.
46. Lawrence, *op. cit.*, pp. 387-390.
47. *Ibid; Papers relating to Kashmir*, London 1890. p. 52. See also Khan Bahadur Gulam Ahmad Khan. *Note -on High Prices of Shali Jammu*, 1903. p. 4.

48. Lawrence, *op. cit.*, p. 417.
49. The right to legalize marriage was farmed out and the office of grave digger was also taxed. Lawrence, *op. cit.*, p. 417; Prinsep, *Imperial India*, London, 1879, p. 214; Richard Temple, *Journals kept in Hyderabad, Kashmir, Sikkim and Nepal*, I, London, 1887, p. 302; Henry Torrens, *Travels in Ladakh Tartary and Kashmir*, London 1863, p. 301, For greater details, See *History of Srinagar*, p. 79; & n.
50. Lawrence, *op. cit.*, p. 17.
51. Younghusband *Kashmir*, Edinburgh, 1909, p. 161; Bates, *op. cit.*, p. 101, NAI/Foreign, Pol. Sec. E March 1883, No. 86.
52. Lawrence, *op. cit.*, p. 417; Lawrence, *The India We Served*, London, 1928, p. 134; Arthur Brinckman, *op. cit.*, p. 13, Bates, *op. cit.*, p. 101.
53. See *History of Srinagar*, p. 80.
54. Muhammad Din Fouq, *Mashahir-i-Kashmir* Lahore, 1930, p. 123.
55. In Oct. 1931 Maharaja Hari Singh expressed these words to a deputation of the Kashmiri Pandits: "I am certain you will be the first to recognize that with the steady growth of education in other communities the position of advantage which your community enjoyed in the past in regard to the State service cannot continue." *The Tribune*, Oct. 27 1931.
56. NAI/Foreign, Intl. Feb , 1907, Nos. 163-64.
57. *Ibid*; Genl. B. Jan, 1909, Nos. 15-16.
58. See the *Observer*, Lahore, Sept. 16, 1911; also *Report on Native Newspapers*, Punjab. 1911 p. 975.

59. *Kashmir Government Records*, General 117/p. 51 of 1904.
60. See *Sir Henry Sharp's Report on Education in Kashmir*, Calcutta, 1916. p. 40.
61. See *History of Srinagar*, pp. 154 and 186-77; also Abdus Salam Khurshid, *Suhāfat Pākistan Wa Hind Maen*, Lahore 1963. p. 450 : *The Amrit Bazar Patrika*, Aug, 15, 1931. Prem Nath Bazaz, *Inside Kashmir*, Srinagar, 1941, pp. 116-17.
62. Shawl is also a family name among Kashmiri, Muslims.
63. *Tarikh-i-Aqwam-i-Kashmir*, p. 336.
64. The Ahrar movement began with the establishment of all India Majlis-i-Ahrar-i-Islam at Amritsar in 1931 with Habib-ur-Rehman as its president and Daud Ghaznavi and Mazhar Ali as its Secretaries. It aimed at working for the economic, educational and social uplift of the Muslims. Besides, its object was to awaken political consciousness and to infuse the spirit of Islam among Muslims and also to work for the freedom of the country by peaceful methods (A note on Muslim political organizations. NAI/Home Pol.F. No: 150 of 1934 p. 27). Though the movement was started by pro-Congress Muslims with the main purpose of maintaining the position of the Muslims in the Congress itself and to secure seats in the working committee, the Ahrars did not stick to any consistent policy. See J.B., Mathur, *Muslims and Changing India* New Delhi, 1972, pp. 102-110.
65. Sharp's Report, pp. 40-41, See also *Kashmir Government Records (O.E.R.)*, F. No. 217/p.96, 1913.
66. Based on the present writer's interview with the late Moulvi Ghulam Nabi Mubaraki.
67. Moulvi Mubaraki was kind enough to donate to my personal library some rare issues of the *Muslim*.

68. *The Muslim*, Oct. 2, 1941; March 2, 1942; Safar, 1360; The Hijri, Moharram, 1360 H.
69. *Akhbarat* etc., 1852, Vol. V, ff. 37 ab, 63, vol. VIII, 1855, ff. 129 ab; Ghulam Nabi Shah Khanyari, *Wajeez-ut-Tawarikh (MS)*, CCAS. f. 69b. For more details on *Noufal*, see *History of Srinagar*, p. 106.
70. *The Muslim*, Safar, 1360 H.
71. *Kashmir Government Records*, F. No: 2/Misc 14, 1920.
72. *The Ranbir*, Aug. 23, 1927; *The Pioncer* Sept. 4, 1931; *Inside Kashmir*, p. 84; *Daur j-Jadeed*, July 8, 1955.
73. NAI/Foreign, Sec. E. March, 1883, No 86 p. 15; See also Diwan Kishan Lal's report. Foreign, Sec., March 31, 1846 Nos. 66-70 (MS): *Ibid* Foreign Pol. July, 1863. Nos. 73-75.
74. During the reigns of Maharaja Gulab Singh and Ranbir Singh there were 30,000 to 40,000 shawl weavers in Srinagar alone (NAI/Foreign Sec. E. March 1883 No. 86) See also *Census of India (J&K) I*, 1921 p. 181). But the Census of 1891 records that there were 5148 shawl weavers. The level to which shawl trade of Srinagar had declined may be judged from the fact that only 148 persons were found working at it when an industrial enumeration was held in 1912. See *Census 1911*, I, p. 232.
75. *The Valley of Kashmir*, p. 375: Marion Doughty, *A Foot Through the Kashmir Valley*, London, 1901, p. 158. see also *Imperial Gazetteer*, p. 120.
76. Kashmir Government Records, General, F. No : 278) p. 16, 1915. For the decline of papier mache craft. See *East and West* XV, July-Dec. 1916 p. 661,
77. NAI/Foreign, pol. F. No : 19 (2) of 1924 Nos. 1-4. see also the *Ranbir*, Sept. 2, 1934; *The Amrit Bazar Patrika*, Aug. 25, 1931.

78. Rashid Taasir, *Tahreek-i-Hurriyat-i-Kashmir, I*, Srinagar, 1968, p. 72, See also the *Ranbir* Aug, 23 1927.
79. *Inside Kashmir*, pp. 97-98.
80. *Tahreek-i-Hurriyat-i-Kashmir, I* pp. 77 Sq.
81. The Kashmir Committee was formed after the meeting of some well-known Muslims like Mian Afzal Hussain, Sir Zulfiqar Khan, Moulana Abdul Kalam Azad, Dr. Ansari, Moulana Shaukat Ali, Dr. S. M. Iqbal, the Nawab of Dacca, Shaikh Sadiq Hussain Ansari, Dr. Saif ud din Kitchlu and the Nawab of Kanchoore in Simla on July 24, 1931. Mirza Mian Bashir-ud-din Mehmud Ahmad, Khalifa of the Qadian Party, was made its president. Though initially started with the object of rendering financial assistance to Kashmir leaders for organizing the movement against the Maharaja, the Kashmir Committee openly supported the Muslim movement by sending *Jathas* to Kashmir in 1931. *Ibid.*, pp. 141-42: also *Inside Kashmir*. p. 142.
82. NAI/Home, Pol. F. No. 150 of 1934, see also *Civil and Military Gazette*, Feb., 4, 1932.
83. *Tahreek-i-Hurriyat-i-Kashmir, I*, p. 95.
84. Proceedings of the Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference, year, 1932.
85. The observations of Moulana Abdus Salam Hamadani on the eve of the celebration of "Kashmir Day" in Amritsar on Aug 14, 1931 are worth quoting here: "... the Muslim subjects of Kashmir were greatly oppressed. There was nothing communal in this agitation and it was a pity that some people were trying to give a communal colour". *The Tribune*, Aug. 8, 1931.
86. See, for example, *Inside Kashmir*, p. 187.
87. On Jan. 30, 1933 Mir Waiz Yusuf Shah in a sermon at Khanqah-i-Naqshbandia alleged that the Shaikh was



paving the way for the spread of Ahmediya movement in Kashmir.

88. That the Mir Waiz felt the growing popularity of Abdullah as a challenge to his leadership is clearly noted in a letter dated Oct. 31, 1933 addressed by a Qadiani, Mirza Bashir Mehmud Ahmad to the people of Kashmir. (Cited in *Tahreek-i-Hurriyat-i-Kashmir*, I, 270-74.)
89. A zerox copy of this letter is in possession of Abdul Rahman Kundoo of Gojwara in Srinagar. One should not, however, lose sight of the fact that Abdullah received firm support from the Ahmediyas. See Aziz-ur-Rahman, *Rais ul-Ahrar, Moulana Habib-ur-Rehman Ludhianvi*, Talimi Samaj Markaz, Delhi, 1961 p. 144. That Abdullah was closely associated with the Ahmediyas is evident from a reference by the British Resident in his report of Oct., 3, 1931 in which he referred to the arrest of S.M. Abdullah "Qadiani" NAI/File No : 35p, Foreign & Pol. *Report on Kashmir for the period ending Oct 3, 1931*. But it should not be supposed that the Kashmir leader had turned an Ahmadi, for "the record of a conference of the All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference held at Sialkot on Feb 10. 1904 shows that Abdullah staunchly denied being an Ahmadi." Spencer Lavan, *The Ahmadiyah Movement : A History & Perspective*, New Delhi, 1974, p. 159.
90. See *The Kashmir Times*, Aug 7, 1937: also April 3, 1937 April 3, 1937; *The Hamdard* March 19, 1938: See also *Inside Kashmir*, p. 365.
91. *Tahreek-i Hurriyat-i-Kashmir*, I. pp. 327-28.
92. *Ibid.*
93. Nation as understood by Kashmiris has a wider meaning than its use in the strict political sense. Thus Shaikh Abdullah has taken so much of pride in using the term

“Kashmiri Qoum” ever since the struggle of Kashmiris against the Dogra oligarchy that even now this terminology finds a greater currency in the Kashmir leaders public speeches.

## Chapter VI

# Impact of Iran on Kashmir (1320-1586)\*

The earliest mention of Kashmir is said to be made by Herodotus, the 'Father of History.' He refers to the town of 'Kaspatyros' as the 'place at which the expedition under Scylax of Koryanda, sent by Darius to explore the course of the Indus, embarked.'<sup>1</sup> Dr. Horace Wilson was the first scholar who identified Kaspatyros with Kashmir<sup>2</sup> Although some scholars argue that Kaspatyros of Herodotus does not refer to Kashmir but to some place bordering on the Indus,<sup>3</sup> it can be safely assumed that Kashmir had come into contact with Persia in the earliest period of its history and that throughout most of historical times Persia and Kashmir were no strangers to each other.<sup>4</sup> This is testified to by the tiles of Harvan Monastery near the city of Srinagar which bespeak of Sassanian characteristics.<sup>5</sup> The Sassanian impact is also discernible in the use of words like *divira* and *ganjavara* by Pandit Kalhana.<sup>6</sup> While the former is a derivative of the Persian *dibir* (writer or secretary) the latter term has been identified with the Persian *ganjivar* (treasurer).<sup>7</sup>

But it was not until the foundation of the Sultanate in 1320 that Kashmir's ties with the centres of Persian culture<sup>8</sup> became close. Thenceforth a stream of immigrants from Persia and Central Asia began to flock to Kashmir. They brought with them fresh ideas, a new tongue, and a virile religion, all instruments of persuasion and conversion.

\* Earlier published in Islamic Culture, Vol. L I No. 1, January, 1977, Hyderabad under the title "Persian Influences in Kashmir in the Sultanate Period, 1320-1586."

Such foreign adventurers were chiefly Sayyids.<sup>9</sup> Their motives for migrating to the valley of Kashmir were possibly varied according to time and place. The Mongol invasion of these Muslim countries<sup>40</sup> undoubtedly caused many to flee in the direction of the comparative safety of lands beyond the Indus, others may have been attracted by the accounts by travellers and compatriots of a beautiful land, while a persistent flow was maintained by men of all professions, who on various occasions found their efforts producing little reward in their own countries, and who thereupon travelled in search of more sympathetic patrons of their talents and skills.<sup>11</sup>

From the time of Shihab-u'd-Din (1356-74) Persian and persianized Turks, lured by the patronage extended to them by the Sultans, began to enter Kashmir in larger and larger numbers. These men exercised considerable influence on the social and cultural life of the inhabitants of the Valley.<sup>12</sup> Besides, the Sufi saints like Bulbul Shah,<sup>13</sup> Sayyid Ali Hamadani, his son Sayyid<sup>14</sup> Muhammad Hamadani,<sup>15</sup> Mir Shamsuddin Iraqi<sup>16</sup> and many others played an important role "in bringing about an Iranian orientation of Kashmir's culture, for they were also zealous propagandists of the Persian language and culture."<sup>17</sup>

We should not ignore the fact that with the spread of Islam in Kashmir, its new converts naturally sought their spiritual and intellectual inspiration from important hubs of Islamic culture. Little wonder, therefore, that we hear of the Kashmiris visiting Herat, Merv, Samarqad and Bukhara "to learn at the feet of eminent jurists and devout sufis, and drink deep from the fountains of Persian culture."<sup>18</sup>

Sanskrit, which was in the heyday of its glory during the 'Hindu' rule in Kashmir, continued to remain the court language even under the early Shah Mirs.<sup>19</sup> But from the time of Shihab-ud-Din it began to be replaced by Persian. With the passage of time <sup>20</sup> it became the language of the

educated classes. It is interesting to note that the Kashmiri Pandits learnt this new language with great avidity.<sup>21</sup> Hafiz did not merely indulge in poetical fancies when he remarked:<sup>22</sup>

'The black-eyed beauties of Kashmir and the  
Turks of Smarqand,  
Sing and dance to the strains of  
Hafiz of Shiraz of Shiraz's verse.'

During Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin's<sup>23</sup> reign (1420-70) the Sultanate was in the meridian of its splendour. The Sultan was a great patron of learning and always kept the company of learned men.<sup>24</sup> In fact, it was his patronage that attracted scholars like Qazi Sayyid Ali Shirazi, Sayyid Muhammad Rumi, Sayyid Ahmad Rumi, Sayyid Muhammad Luristani, Qazi Jamal and Sayyid Muhammad Sistani to Kashmir during his reign.<sup>25</sup> Himself a linguist, scholar and poet, the Sultan<sup>26</sup> wrote two books in Persian. One of them was on pyrotechnics<sup>27</sup> and the other was named *Shikayat*.<sup>28</sup> Thus his personal contribution to the spread and development of Persian language was by no means meagre. Although Zain-ul-Abidin's reign was productive of considerable literary activities, very little of it is in a state of preservation. For this reason it is hard to judge its quality. But as Prof. Mohi-ud-Din Hasan observes: "Stray verses of the Sultan and his court-poets are found scattered in the chronicles and if they can be any criteria, then Persian poetry must have achieved a high standard of culture under him."<sup>29</sup>

It would, however, be wrong to assume that literary influences at this period were all one way; a process of give and take applied so that Sanskrit words were translated into Persian, thereby opening up new and wider horizons to the greater edification of Persian savants. Under the patronage of Zain-ul-Abidin, Mulla Ahmad, the court-poet,

translated the *Mahabharata*, *Dasavatara* and *Rajatarangini* of Kalhana into Persian.<sup>30</sup> Bhattavataras.<sup>31</sup> *Zaina-Tarang*<sup>32</sup> was composed on the model of Firdausi's *Shahnama*. Bhattavataras is said to have "mastered the ocean-like texts that existed in the country of *Shahnama*."<sup>33</sup> Pandit Srivara, the court historian of Zain-ul-Abidin, completed the translation of Jami's *Yusuf-u-Zulaikha* into Sanskrit and named it *Karihakautuka*.<sup>34</sup>

Among other Sultans who were men of culture may be mentioned Haidar Shah, Hasan Shah and Hussain Shah Chak. The last named was a poet and encouraged men of learning. One of the Persian poets of Husain Chak's reign was Mir Ali, who had come from Persia and wrote a long poem in praise of Kashmir.<sup>35</sup> Other poets who made their mark during the Sultanate period were Mulla Mehri, Muhammad Amin Mustaghni, Mirza Ali Khan and Baba Talib Isfahani.<sup>36</sup> But the two most celebrated poets and scholars of the Chak period were Baba Daud Khaki and Shaikh Yaqub Sarfi. Baba Daud's poetry is impregnated with religious and mystical ideas. Shaikh Yaqub Sarfi besides being a prose writer, put in black and white many *ghazals* and *qasidas* and completed a *khamasa*, a series of five *masnavis* in imitation of *khamasa*, of a Nizami.<sup>37</sup> "His genius", remarks Badauni, "was highly adapted to the composition of eloquent poetry."<sup>38</sup>

It is interesting to observe that owing to the popularity of the Persian language in medieval Kashmir, the Sanskrit writers of this period extensively used Persian words. *Loka Prakasa*<sup>39</sup>, for instance, contains many foreign words like *shahi khawas*, *suratrana* (*Sultan*) and *silah-dar*. Similarly in the Sanskrit chronicles of Jonaraja, Srivara, Prajyabhatta and Suka, we come across Persian terms like *khatona*<sup>40</sup> (*khatun*), *madrassa*,<sup>41</sup> *ravava*<sup>42</sup> (*rabab*), etc.

The Persian language exercised a tremendous influence on Kashmiri. One important effect of the spread of Persian was that it led to an influx of many foreign words into Kashmiri.<sup>43</sup> It goes without saying that on account of the influence of Persian, the Kashmiri language came to be a language and repository of a literature in its own right. The Kashmiri writers of this period have made use of Persian words. Shaikh Nur-ud-Din Rishi, for instance, uses words like *ashk* (Persian '*ihsaq*'), *aqal*, *fikir*, *teer kaman*,<sup>44</sup> *ashakh* (Persian '*ashiq*'), *lamakan*,<sup>45</sup> etc. Habba Khatun also uses Persian terms like *pyala*, *shisha*, *gul*, *bulbul*, *dil*, *sumbul*, *didar*, etc.<sup>46</sup> She experimented with Persian metres on the advice of a sufi, Sayyid Mubarak.<sup>47</sup> Thus Persian infiltrated into the literature and the common language of the people influencing them and leaving its impress there until the present day.<sup>48</sup>

As regards the system of education, it was the same as in Persia and other Muslim countries. Under the Persian influence, new educational institutions came to be known as *madrasas*. Credit goes to Sultan Shihab-ud-din who first established *madrasas* in various parts of Kashmir.<sup>49</sup> Other Sultans who were zealous in furthering the education of their subjects were Zain-ul-Abidin, Hasan Shah and Husain Shah. Zain-ul-Abidin was a great bibliophile, and spent a considerable amount of money in collecting Persian and Arabic manuscripts from Persia, Iraq and Turkistan.<sup>50</sup> The courses of study were also the same as in the *madrasas* of Persia, India and Turkey. Usually the child was admitted into the school at the age of five. At the beginning he was supposed to learn the Arabic alphabet and to read the holy Quran.<sup>51</sup> Shaikh Sadi's *Gulistan* and *Bustan* were read with interest. Dogmatic theology (*Ilmul-Kalam*), *Ilmul-Tawhid*, interpretation of the Quran (*Tafsir*) tradition (*Hadith*), Jurisprudence (*Fiqh*) were taught in the *madrasas*. Boys also received training in archery, swordsmanship and horsemanship.

It has already been observed that the Sultanate period hummed with great literary activity. This demanded skill in calligraphy which was not wanting. Zain-ul-Abidin's, patronage attracted some calligraphists from Persia to the Valley. They were granted *jagirs*. One of the prominent calligraphists of the Sultanate period was Muhammad Husain. He joined the service of Akbar when Kashmir was annexed by the Mughals in 1586. Akbar bestowed upon him the title of *Zarrin-qalam* (golden-pen) as the grace, beauty and symmetry of his compositions captivated the Emperor.<sup>53</sup> Jahangir described Muhammad Husain as 'the chief elegant writer of the day' and as a mark of his great appreciation of the artist, presented him an elephant.<sup>54</sup>

In this cultural resurgence science was not neglected. With the advent of Islam in Kashmir, the new skills of Persian and Arabic medicine were practised by those of the like persuasion. One of the great *hakims* of the Sultanate period was Mansur bin Muhammad. He wrote the *Kifaya-i-Mujahidiyyah*, a treatise on medicine. This book was dedicated to Zain-ul-Abidin. Another book by the same author on the anatomy of the human body with illustrations, entitled *Tashrih-bit-Taswir* was dedicated to Timur's grandson Mirza Pir Muhammad.<sup>55</sup>

The Persian influence is also evident in the dress, food, pastimes, music and architecture.

It was because of the impact of Persia on Kashmir that various kinds of *Pilavs*<sup>56</sup> (rice preparations) like *Zard Pilav*<sup>57</sup> *Tursh-Pilav*,<sup>58</sup> and *Shulla-Pilav*,<sup>59</sup> were introduced in Kashmir. *Harisa* also seems to have been introduced from Persia. It is a kind of thick pottage made of rice, meat, butter, and cinnamon and aromatic spices. In winter an average Kashmiri of the city of Srinagar even now partakes of this food in the morning. The Kashmiri pheran<sup>60</sup> is supposed to be named after the Persian *Pirahan*. Polo (Persian *chawgan*) was the favourite game of the sultans



and nobles. It is believed that falconry and hawking were introduced from Persia.<sup>64</sup> Kashmiri music, though it represents a synthesis of diverse elements, has, in the main, been influenced by Persia. Besides the *Turanis*, musicians of the Irani origin also established schools of music in Kashmir in the reign of Zain-ul-Abidin.<sup>62</sup> The classical music of Kashmir is *Sufiana Kalam*. It has about fifty-four *maqamat* (modes). Of these some bear Persian names, for example, *Isfahani*, *Dugah*, *Panjah Iraq Rast-i-Farsi* and *Sehgah*.<sup>63</sup> Some of the musical instruments like *Rabab*<sup>64</sup> and '*Ud*'<sup>65</sup> were probably introduced from Persia.

The Sultans of Kashmir were great builders. But, unfortunately, only a few tombs and mosques have survived. Some of the buildings of the Sultans bear the stamp of Persia. For instance, the most striking feature of the tomb of Sayyid Muhammad Madani was 'its coloured tile-work which was introduced from Persia and was different from the tile-work of the Mughals.'<sup>66</sup>

The tomb of Zain-ul-Abidin's mother on the right bank of the River Jehlam below Zaina Kadal in Srinagar is one of the oldest Muslim buildings in Kashmir. Brick has been extensively used in its construction. "The figure is octagonal and ornamented with Saracenic arches surmounted by a single dome, with four smaller ones surrounding it. Over the posterior gate there is an inscription in Persian." The chief characteristics of the tomb are "the glazed tiles and moulded bricks which are studded, at intervals, in the exterior walls, the semi-circular brick string courses sunk panels on the drums of the cupolas."<sup>67</sup> As Percy Brown observes :

"In each wall-face a pointed archway has been set, and there are the remains of fluting and arcading in the tall drums of the domes, while the inner doorway seems to

have been attempted at a rare type of horse shoe arch. The design and execution of this tomb indicate that it was the production of men accustomed to working in brick masonry, and in a method implying Persian influence."<sup>68</sup>

It should not be surmised that the early Muslim buildings in Kashmir were wholly Persian, for that clearly is not so. As Percy Brown remarks: "It seems fairly obvious that attempt to convert the Islamic architecture of Kashmir into a form of provincialised Persian, in the face of the firmly established indigenous timber tradition, could not be maintained."<sup>69</sup> However, the fact remains that the dynamic concept, especially in the dome design and the interior chamber complex,<sup>70</sup> certainly is, for the most part, Persian, while indigenous ideas are revealed in the excellence of masonry and carpentry whereby they represent a synthesis of the Hindu and Muslim building styles.

Brickwork of Kashmir is said to have reached a state of perfection during the Sultanate period. Kashmiris must have learnt the art of baking bricks from Muslim immigrants from Samarqand, Bukhara and Persia.<sup>71</sup> The most significant feature of the brick buildings of this period is the glazed tile-work with which they were ornamented.<sup>72</sup>

The Persian influence also permeates through some of the minor arts of Kashmir. The Valley was known for its shawls in Zain-ul-Abidin's reign. The shawl industry developed when there took place influx of weavers into Kashmir from Persia. According to John Irwin, "these immigrants not only introduced new patterns but also a new technique – the twil-tapestry teshnique which has a parallel in Persia and Central Asia but nowhere in India and Pakistan."<sup>73</sup> Not only the shawl industry, but also the manufacture of silk developed following Zain-ul-Abidin's importation of decorative designs from Persia. No doubt, Kashmir became renowned for its silks in the reign of the Sultan.<sup>74</sup>

Kashmir has imported the art of tinned metals from Persia.<sup>75</sup> Copper cooking and eating vessels commonly used by the Mulims of Kashmir are usually tinned before use. The floral decorations and forms on these utensils are suggestive of Persian impress. Although the metal works of Kashmir bear the stamp of the Chinese and the Hindu art too, yet the Persian influence seems to be dominant. While commenting on the impact of Perso-Arab art on Kashmir, Ujfalvy says :

“With Islam came Perso-Arab art in Kashmir. The people, the most ingenious, perhaps in the entire world and certainly in Central Asia, found themselves in the presence of admirable models, and with their marvellous talent for imitation and execution they set themselves to work and create for their daily use a series of objects of art which soon surpassed the originals.”<sup>76</sup>

In the religious sphere, too, Persian influence make its presence felt. Some of the Sufi Orders in medieval Kashmir were introduced from Persia. The mystics exercised a tremendous influence on Kashmir. It was also because of their efforts that Islam spread in every nook and corner of the Valley.

It would be clear from the above that Kashmir was not impervious to foreign influences during the reign of independent Sultans. The literati, scholars, philosophers, poets, and artists from almost every part of the Persian speaking world—Isfahan, Shiraz, Herat, Merv, Gilan, Bukhara, Hamadan, Meshhed, Naishapur, Najaf Kashan, Qum, Ray, Sabzawar and Tabriz adorned the court of the Sultans. They left an indelible mark on Kashmir. In fact, the impact of foreign culture was so deep and far-reaching, that even at the present age the Persian influence makes itself manifest in the diet, dress, manners, customs, morals, art,

literature, language, beliefs and practices of the people of Kashmir.

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2. H.H. Wilson, *An Essay on Hindu History of Kashmir*, *Asiatic Researches*, XV; Lassen, Humboldt and some other scholars take Kaspatriyos for Kashmir, J.W. MacCrindle, *Ancient India as Described in Classical Literature*, Westminster, 1901, pp. 2-3.
3. Longworth Dames, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, II, Leyden, 1913, P.792; also *Rajatarangini of Kalhana* (Stein's tr.) II, p. 353.
4. It is interesting that Firdausi in his *Shahnama* states that the army of Yezdigird, the last Sassanian ruler of Persia, was made out of the woollen cloth from Kashmir (J.R.A.S., Bombay, 1895, IX, p.241); Mr. A.J. Arberry says: "Sassanian coinage had become common in Afghanistan and the Indus Valley. It lingered on until the eleventh century, becoming more and more degenerate in Kashmir, Rajputana, and Gujerat ....." see *The Legacy of Persia*, (ed.), Oxford, 1968, p.92.
5. R.C. Kak, *Handbook of the Archaeological and Numismatic Section of the Pratap Singh Museum*, Srinagar, 1923, pp. 4-65; also by the same author,

- Ancient Monuments of Kashmir*, (new ed.) New Delhi, 1971, p. 110.
6. *Rajatarangini*, (Stein's tr.) I, BK, V, verse No. 177 and note, BK. VII, verse No. 119, BK VIII, p.131.
  7. *Ibid.*
  8. The hub of Persian culture was not restricted to the narrow geographical limits of present day Iran, but extended to Central Asia, Northern India and even as far as Asia Minor.
  9. For the arrival of different batches of Sayyids in Kashmir, see Sayyid Ali, *Tarik-i-Kashmir*, MS, R.P.D. (No. 739) ff. 9a-11a; *Baharistan-i-Shahi*, (anonymous) transcript, R.P.D. (No. 691), ff. 10b, 12b, 13, 13b; *Rajatarangini of Jonaraja*, (Srikanth Koul's edition) Hoshiarpur, 1967, Stanzas 571; 573; 576; The 'Yavanas' (foreigners) of Jonaraja comprised the *Ulama* (scholars) *fuzala* (learned), *quzat* (judges) and *Saadat* (Sayyids). The title Sayyids seems to have been used by the Persian chroniclers as a generic name for all foreigners from Iraq, Madina, Khurasan, Mawara-un-Nahr, Khawarazm, Balkh, Ghazni and other Muslim countries., See, for instance, *Baharistan-i Shahi*, ff. 15b-16b; Sayyid Ali, *op. cit.*, ff. 10b-12b; 28a sqq; The author of *Rehla* tells us that the Indians address the Arabs as Sayyids (Mahdi Husain's tr. Baroda, 1953), p. 128; see also Daud Mishkati *Asrar-ul-Abrar*, MS., R.P.D., ff. 19a, 19b; Haidar Malik Chadurah, *Tarikh-i-Haidar Malik*, MS, R.P.D., p.27; Ghulam Sarwar, *Khazinat-ul-Asafiya*, Lahore, A.H. 1283, p.938; Muhammad Azam Diddamari, *Tarikh-i-Azami* (MS), p. 30.
  10. For Timur's conquests in Central Asia and Persia, see Sir Percy Sykes. *History of Persia*, II, London. 1930, pp. 115-30.

11. Jonaraja, for example, says that the munificence of Sultan Sikandar attracted Mir Sayyid Muhammad Hamadani and his followers to Kashmir. See *Rajatarangini* of Jonaraja, (Koul's ed.), p.94; also see Pir Hasan Shah, *Tarikh-i-Hasan*, 1, R.P.D., pp. 412-13; It is, however, very interesting to note that Sayyid Ali Hamadani had advised his son, Sayyid Muhammad Hamadani, to embark upon journeys for he considered travel to be the best education :

سنا نہ سیاح وقت شد علی ہمدانی نہ گشتم  
ہر فیض و فتوح کہ مرا حاصل از سفر شد

see Abdul Wahab, Kashmiri, *Futuh-i-Kuberawiyah*, MS., R.P.D. (No. 17) ff. 155b.

12. *Rajatarangini* of Jonaraja (Eng. tr.) under the title *Kings of Kashmira* by Jogesh Chandar Dutt, Vol. III, Calcutta, 1879-98, pp. 57-58
13. Bulbul Shah had been active in Srinagar even before the establishment of the Sultanate. He is known to be the first Muslim missionary to Kashmir. For his life see Mufti Muhammad Shah Sadat, *Bulbul Shah Sahib*, (Urdu), Lahore, 1360/1941,
14. Sayyid Ali Hamadani persuaded Sultan Qutub-ud-Din (13-74-89) to adopt Muslim style of dress and introduce it among his Muslim subjects : *Baharistan-i-Sahi*, 11, *Tarikh-i-Haidar Malik*, p.28.
15. *Baharistan-i-Shahi*, (I.O.L.), ff.25 b; 26 a; *Tarikh-i-Haidar Malik*, p.29; *Tarikh-i-Azmi*, (MS), p. 37; *Asrar-ul-Abrar*, f.45a; Sayyid Ali, *opcit.*, p. 16 sqq.

16. For the details of the life and activities of Mir Shams-ud-Din Iraqi, the founder the Nurbakshiya order in Kashmir and Baltistan, see *Tuhfat-ul-Ahbab* (anonymous) transcript, (R.P.D.); *Baharistan-i-Shahi*.
17. Mohibbul Hasan, *Kashmir Under the Sultans*, 2nd, ed. Srinagar, 1974, p.254.
18. *Ibid.*
19. *Rajatarangini*, (Stein' tr.), I, chapter V, noter V, note 2, pp. 130-31.
20. It was during the reign of Ghazi Shah Chak (155-62) that Persian completely took the place of Sanskrit language. This is evident from the fact that the coins of this period bear only Persian names. Even Arabic ceased to be written on coins.
21. So popular was Persian with the Pandit class, that they composed hymns and prayers to their deities in the Persian language rather than in Sanskrit.
22. E.F. Brown, *A Literary History of Persia*, III, London and Cambridge, 1902-24, p,283.
23. See my article on Zain-ul-Abidin in *The Struggle* e Calcutta, August, 1969, pp.27-28.
24. Srivara, *Jaina Rajatarangini*, Egg. tr. by J.C. Dutt under the title of *Kings of Kashmira*, Vol. III, Calcutta, 1935, pp. 164 and 181.
25. *Baharistan-i-Shahi*, ff. 48b-56a.
26. *Ibid.*, ff. 27<sup>a</sup>, transcript, R.P.D. states ;

واین سلطان زمین العابدین خود ہم مایہ شاعری  
 وقوت سخن پروری داشت و در اشعار خود قطب تخلص  
 مے کرد و از اشعار وی دیوانی مشہور است و این مطلع  
 ازوست :-

ای بگردش مع رویت عالمی پروانہ  
 وز لب شیرین تو شوریت در بہ خانہ  
 قطب مسکین گر گناہی میکند ہمیش کن  
 عیب نہ بود گر گناہی مے کند دیوانہ

27. Srivara, *Op. cit.*, p. 135.
28. It deals with the 'vanity and transitoriness of this world' *Ibid.*, p. 167.
29. *Kashmir Under the Sultans*, p. 255.
30. Srivara, *op. cit.*, p. 146; Nizam-ud-Din Ahmad, *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, II, Calcutta (Bib-Ind.) 1927-36, p. 439; also Eng. tr. by B. Dey, III, Bib. Ind. Calcutta 1927, 39, p. 659; Firishta, *Tarikh-i-Firishta*, (Eng. try. by Briggs), II, p. 444.
31. Srivara, *op. cit.*, p. 136.
32. A History of Kashmir in verse.
33. See Peterson's edition of Srivara's *Jaina Rajataragni*, Bombay, 1896.
34. Published in Bombay in 1901, see also G.M.D. Su'fi *Kashir*, I, Lahore, 1949, p. p. 167. The Sanskrit writers



of Zain-ul-Abidin's time elevated the Sultan to position of the God Vishnu. Srivara (Koul's ed.) p. 112.

35. Diddamari. *Waqiat-i-Kashmir*, (A.S.B. 41). f. 61a; *Tarikh-i-Hasan*, IV (R.P.D.), f. 278b.
36. Baba Talib came to Kashmir from Isfahan and settled down in the Valley in the reign of Ghazi Chak. He was held in high esteem by the Chak ruler Yusuf Shah. Besides being a religious minded person, he was also experienced in political matters. See *Akbarnama* (Eng. tr.) III, p. 838, see also Persian Text. III (A.S.B.) p. 552: Badauni, *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh* (Bib-Ind.) III, p. 265: (Lowe's tr.) p. 388, *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, (R&B) II, p. 119: see also *Ain-i-Akbari* (Blochman): 676.
37. *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh* (Eng. tr.) III, p. 200-1.
38. *Ibid.*
39. See *Rajatarangini* (Stein) I, chapter V, pp. 103-31 and note 2.
40. Srivara (Dutt), p. 157.
41. *Ibid.* pp. 225-7.
42. *Ibid.*, pp. 136.
43. Vigne who came to Kashmir during the Sikh rule (1819-1846) observed that in a group of hundred spoken Kashmiri words, 25 were Sanskrit, 40 Persian, 15 Hindustani, 10 Arabic and 10 Tibetan.
44. J.L. Kaul, *Studies in Kashmiri*, Srinagar, 1968, pp. 35-35.
45. *Ibid.*, *Kashmiri Lyrics*, Srinagar, 1945, verse, 10.
46. *Ibid.*, verses, 43-45, 58, 68.
47. *Kashmir Under the Sultans*, p. 260,

48. So great was the Persian influence that till recently the Kashmiri poets modelled their poetry on Persian metre and used Persian metaphors, similes and imagery. For greater details, see my unpublished thesis on *Srinagar 1846-1947, Socio-Cultural Change* (Kashmir University Library).
49. Aba Rafi-ud-din Ahmad, *Nawadir-ul-Akhbar*, B.M. Add. 24029 (R.P.D.), f. 29b; Abul Qasim, *Gauhar-i-Alam*, (A.S.B.) 189, f. 110b; see also Sayyid Ali, *op. cit.*, p. 10.
50. *Bahasistan-i-Shahi*, transcript (R.P.D.) ff. 23a, 23b; Hasan b. Ali, *Tarikh-i-Hasan*. Bodleian, 305, f. 120b; see also Sayyid Ali, *op. cit.*, p. 25.
51. Mulja Ali Raina, *Tazkirat-ul-Arifin*, (R.P.D.) ff. 511 ab.
52. *Ibid.*, f. 513a.
53. *Ain-i-Akbari* (Blochman), III. p. 109.
54. Sufi, *op. cit.*, II, p. 559.
55. C. Rieu, *Catalogue of Persian manuscripts in the British Museum*, Vol. II, London, 1879-83 (Supplement 1895) pp. 467b-68a, 470b.
56. *Asrar-ul-Abrar* f. 38a.
57. *Tuhfat-ul-Ahbab*, transcript, R.P.D., p. 283. The transcript is not folioed and therefore I have given the page number.
58. *Ibid.*
59. *Ibid.*
60. It is the long loose wrapper reaching the ankles. See Newell, J.A.S.B. (V), 1854, p. 433, Knowles, *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XXV, October, 1885, p. 266, Hasan,

Tarikh-i- Kashmir, I, pp. 452-54, Bates, *A Gezetteel o Kashmir*, etc. Calcutta, 1873 pp. 35-36. For the movement launched by a social reformer in Kashmir against the use of *Pheran*, see my unpublished thesis, *op. cit* pp. 124-25.

61. *Kashmir Under the Sultans*, p. 231.

62. *Ain-i-Akbari* (Blochman), p. 68on

63. See Mohan Lal Aima's article in *Kashmir*, IV. No.6. pp. 135-7, All these *maqams* are included in the *maqam* of Persian music vide *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, II, p. 14 which refers to the use of Indian musical mode.

64. *Kashmir*, I. No. 14 and IV, No. 4, *Rabab* is most commonly used in folk music of Kashmir. It was a natural instrument of the Arabs (H. G. Farmer, *A History of the Arabian Music to the 13th century*, London, 1929, p. 21). It was, however, introduced into Kashmir from Persia in the time of Zain-ul-Abidin.

65. Sivara (Dutt), p. 136.

Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin patronised musicians, and in time Kashmir gained celebrity for its musician *Baharistan i-Shahi*, ff. 49a-b; Haidar Malik Chaudhary (*op. cit*, f. 113a). Among others, Mulla Udi, Mulla Zaid and Jamil were great musicians of his reign.

66. A.J. Arberry remarks that this "building belongs to Persian tradition of Ismail of the Samanids mausoleum at Bukhara... Persian tile-work first appears in Madani mausoleum, but seems to be an early Muslim addition", *op. cit.*, p. 104.

67. W. H. Nicholls, *Muhammadan Architecture of Kashmir* (*Archaeological Survey Report, 1906-07*), p. 162.

68. Percy Brown, *Indian Architecture*, (Islamic period), London, 1942, p. 87.
69. *Ibid.*
70. See, for instance, the interior head of the Shah Hamadan mosque at Fateh Kadal in Srinagar, whose tapering eight-sided ornamented posts, the arched and recessed *mihrab*, pannelled walls and ceilings painted in multi-coloured designs, and the valuable prayer carpet of different colours on the floor point to the Saracenic and Persian influence.
71. R.K. Parmu, *History of Muslim Rule in Kashmir*, Delhi, 1969, p. 418.
72. R.C. Kak, *Ancient Monuments*, p. 70.
73. John Irwin, *The Kashmir Shawls* (The Marg, VI., No. 1, pp. 43-50).
74. Srivara (Dutt), p. 151, Nizam-ud-din Ahmad says that very fine threads were produced in Kashmir during this period. See *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*. III, p. 457.
75. George Watt, *Indian Art Exhibition*, London, 1903, p. 16.
76. CM-E, De, *L'Art des Cuivres Anciens au Cashmere et au petit Tibet*, Paris, 1883, p. 262 (Quoted in *Kashmir under the Sultans*).

