

CONTRIBUTION OF KASHMIR TO ARABIC LITERATURE

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Abstract

Kashmir has been a prominent seat of learning for centuries. People of Kashmir contributed to every field of knowledge. Though Persian remained an official language of Kashmir in the past yet Kashmiri have given special attention to Arabic language as well. Their renditions in Arabic language are of much importance and hence considered invaluable contribution to the Arabic language and literature. This article deals with the contribution of Kashmir to Arabic literature.

Keywords:

Quran, Kashmir, Hinduism, Dogra, Sub-continent, Mughal, Mahmood Ghaznavi, Muslim, Arabic, Sanskrit,

The state of Jammu and Kashmir looks like a crown on the head of Sub-continent. It has a rich history spread over a period of more than five thousand years preserved in written form. It was ruled under Hindus, Buddhists, Shahmeri sultans, Mughal emperors, Afghan, Sikh and Dogra rulers at least five thousand years. Its geographical location made this territory hard to conquer. High mountain passes, the unbeatable defense of Kashmir, forced the Arab chieftains and Mahmood Ghaznavi to return empty handed. (1)

The people of Kashmir remained unique in every field of life. Different religions like Hinduism, Buddhism and Sikhism remained four thousand years in Kashmir. Kashmir was a great Buddhist learning centre during the reign of great Ashoka.(2) During pre-Islamic period, Kashmir was higher seat of Sanskrit learning and scholars from all parts of India came to the valley to study at the feet of great teachers and savants. Kashmiries are proud of the literary glories of their land. For upward of two thousand years, Kashmir remained the seat of Sanskrit learning and master pieces of history, poetry, romance, fable and philosophy flourished in this paradise.(3)

After the decline of Hindu rule, the Muslim rule was established in Kashmir without much bloodshed. The arrival of Central Asian envoys was not a mere visit; they initiated a change, a sort of social change. They carried with them Islamic teachings and enlightened the whole Kashmir by the light of Islam. Not only this, Kashmiri masses who were facing hardships due to the instability of Hindu rajas rule, were provided with a stable Sultanship. Dying economy was restored back and to provide education to the people, educational institutions were opened wherein teachers from Central Asian regions were appointed. It was the result of these efforts, that Turkish, Arabic and Persian languages introduced in Kashmir. (4)

The Kashmiri language which has developed out of Sanskrit and old Indo-Aryan language and has lately been influenced by Persian and Arabic languages. The present form of Kashmiri is written in an adapted form of Arabic script using same the letters as are used in Arabic with some added extra letters for sounds which do not occur in the Arabic language.(5) Kashmiri script like Arabic, Persian, Urdu or Hebrew is written from right to left. Kashmiri numerals are represented in the same form as Arabic but spoken like in Sanskrit.

The first regular Islamic government established in Kashmir during 1339 A.C. The Shahmeri dynasty produced well known kings, who took initial steps for the promotion of Arabic language. Although the official language of Kashmir during this era was Persian. The great

conqueror of Kashmir, Sultan Shahab-ud-Din, established the first Madrasa-tul-Quran for the promotion of Arabic language.(6) It was a college for the study of the Holy Quran. Great scholars of that era, taught in this institution. Mir Abdulla Bahqi was a renowned Kashmiri scholar. He wrote two verse booklets *Qasida Bad-rud-Duja* and *Qasida Istaghfar* in Arabic language. Mir Syed Saeed Andrabi was a Kashmiri mystic. He wrote a commentary on the Holy Quran in Arabic language. (7)

Sultan Sikandar was a great Muslim king of Kashmir. He built a college near his mosque, where famous scholar Mulla Muhammad Afzal Bukhari taught Arabic language and Hadith to the Muslim students.(8) This institution played an important role for the promotion of Arabic language in Kashmir.

Zain-ul-Abidin was a shining star of Shahmeri era. Under his benign rule, established a number of educational institutions in Kashmir. He also established a translation bureau where books of Arabic and Sanskrit were translated into Persian and Kashmiri languages. This translation bureau also translated the Bible and the Holy Quran into Kashmiri language so that a common person could understand the message of the Holy Books. (9)

Kashmiri scholars and writers made a lot of efforts for the promotion of Arabic language and literature. Although Arabic remained a secondary language in Kashmir like Sub-continent yet Kashmiri writers did their best efforts for its development. Many famous scholars from Kashmir went to Central-Asian schools to acquire mastery in Islamic Jurisprudence, Arabic grammar, Rhetoric, Logic, Philosophy, History, Arabic and Persian literature. The famous institutions at Samarkand and Bukhara had on their rolls many of the outstanding scholars from Kashmir, no doubt they went there to acquire higher education in their respective fields, but they were not mere students. They were great thinkers of their times and their contributions were no less as compared to others. Among them Shaikh Yaqub Sarfi had an international repute for his learning and piety. He was a great mystic and scholar. He was considered an authority on all branches of learning which are treated in Arabic, such as Quranic commentaries, traditions of the Prophet (PBUH) and Sufiism. He was an authorized religious leader of Kashmir. He wrote an Arabic (Preface) on Faizi's Comentory entitled *Sawati-ul-Ilham*.(10) He also wrote an Arabic commentary on the books *Manasik-i- Hajj and Sharah of Sahih Bukhari*.(11) He also wrote a commentary of the Holy Quran in Arabic language.(12) He made an appreciable

contribution to the Arabic and Persian literature. His son Mulla Kabir Hasan was also a great scholar and writer. He wrote Arabic commentary on *Shamail-i-Tirmizi*.(13) Its manuscript is preserved in Dhaka University.

Mughal rulers of Kashmir not only promoted Persian language but also gave importance to Arabic language. Many writers and scholars contributed a lot to the promotion of Arabic language and literature. Mulla Abdur Rashid was a religious scholar of Kashmir. He wrote a booklet on the importance of *Kalma-i-Tayyaba* in Arabic language. Shaikh Abdul Wahab Noori contributed a lot to the promotion of Arabic literature. He wrote a book *Ain-ul-Irfan* in Arabic language (14). Mulla Muhammad Mohsin was a Kashmiri scholar. He wrote commentary on *Sharah -i- Aqaid* in Arabic language (15). Its manuscript is available in Islamia College library, Peshawar. Haji Muhammad Kashmiri was born in Kashmir. He got religious education from Khawaja Muhammad Baqi Naqashbandi. He was the author of many books. He wrote commentary on *Shamail-un-Nabi* in Arabic language. This work published from Egypt in 1349A.H. He also wrote a commentary on Hasan Sghani Lahori's book *Musharaq-ul-Anwar* in Arabic language (16). Mulla Muhammad Saeed was a famous scholar of Kashmir. He wrote a commentary of the Holy Quran in Arabic language. Mulla Mustafa Khan wrote a book *Kafia-i-Nahu* in Arabic language (17).

Kashmir is called a place of mystics and scholars. Ghulam Ahmad, a well known writer and historian of Kashmir, wrote a book in Arabic language, entitled *History of Khankahi Faiz-i-Panah*. This Khankah is situated in Srinagar (18). Khawaja Shah Niaz was a literary figure of Kashmir. He wrote many books about Arabic language and literature, which are unpublished. Khawaja Muhammad Topi Guru was a great scholar of Arabic language. He was the best teacher of Arabic language. He wrote commentaries on different books of Arabic language and literature. Molvi Jalal-ud-Din was a famous scholar and mystic. He wrote commentary on the famous books of Fiqah *Dur-i-Mukhtar* and *Khazinatul Radiat* (19). Khawaja Mohin-ud-Din Naqashbandi was son of famous scholar of Lahore, Akhwand Mahmood Naqashbandi. He spent a lot of time in Srinagar. He wrote many books in Arabic language. Among them famous books are *Zahra-tul-Tafseer*, *Kitab-i-Rizwani*, *Marat-i-Tayaba*, *Kanz-us-Sadat* and *Fatawa-i-Naqashbandia*. *Fatawa-i-Naqashbandia* is his famous book. It was written in 1130A.H.(20) Its manuscripts are

available in Khankah-i-Mualla library, Srinagr and Peshawar University library, Peshawar.

Kashmiri writers continued their efforts for the promotion of Arabic language and literature. Agha Syed Mehdi wrote a book *Tamrinatul Azvia* and Mir Mohi-ud-Din Mehdi wrote a book *Meezan-ul-Miqadeer*. Both books were written in Arabic language. Mulla Mohsin Kashmiri wrote a book *Nijat-ul-Momineen* in Arabic language.(21)

Abu-al-Fatha Kulu Kashmiri was a famous Kashmiri scholar. He wrote a book entitled, *Saif-ul-Salikin* in Arabic language.(22) Mulla Muhammad Amin Kashmiri was a famous Kashmiri scholar and writer. He wrote commentary on *Sharah-i-Tahzeeb* in Arabic language. Mohsin Kashmiri was a religious scholar. He wrote a book entitled *Rad-ul-Shia* in Arabic language.(23) According to the Sunni's point of view, it is considered the best book. Shaikh Sulman wrote a commentary on Baha-ud-Din Aqli's Mathematic's book, *Khulasat-ul-Hisab*, entitled *Sharah Lub-ul-Albab* in Arabic language.(24) Its manuscript is available in Rampur library.

Mulla Abdul Shakoor was an Arabic poet of Alamgir's reign. He wrote a dirge on the death of Abdul Shakoor Patlu. Allama Tafzal Hussain and Syed Abu-ul-Qasim both were Kashmiri scholars. They were adept in Arabic, Persian, English and Latin languages. Syed Abu-ul-Qasim wrote sixty two books on Arabic and Persian literature. Among these books *Lawah-ut-Tanzil Swath Tadil* is the best commentary. Scholars of Iraq, Iran and India appreciated this work(25).

Great scholar Abdur Rahim translated the famous work of Allamatul-ulama Khawaja Saif-ud-Din from Arabic to Persian. Moreover, Zib-un-Nisa the eldest daughter of Aurangzeb Alamgir supported a lot Mullah Safi-ud-Din Ardabilli in translating the gigantic Arabic Tafsir-i-Kabir into Persian (26).

Hafiz Abdur Rehman Amritsari was a Kashmiri scholar. He wrote two books on *Arabic language* and two on *Arabic grammar*. Mulla Abdur Razaq Banday was a religious scholar and Arabic teacher. He wrote commentary on *Sharah-i-Tajreed*. King Shah Jehan appreciated his effort and sent him as a teacher in Madras-i-Kabul in Afghanistan (27).

The British sold Kashmir to Gulab Singh under the treaty of Amritsar in 1846 A.D. After the sale deal, Gulab Singh was declared the sole owner of Kashmir. Dogra rule lasted in Kashmir for one century. During Dogra era, Moulvis and Pandits imparted education to

local Muslim and Hindu boys in Madrasas and Pathshalas. These institutions, inextricably bound to Temples and Mosques, were run through community support and imparted basic Arabic and mathematical education to students (28).

Ranbir Singh was torch-bearer of education. He established translation department where Moulvis helped to translate Arabic and Persian works on Philosophy and History into Sanskrit.(29) Arabic language was given much importance in Dogra period. It was compulsory for the Kashmiri Muslims to learn Arabic language. Dogra government established two schools in Srinagr, one for teaching Arabic to Kashmiri Muslims and the other for teaching Sanskrit to Kashmiri Pandits. The government also began to recognize the need to encourage education among Muslims of the Valley and sanctioned scholarships for Muslim boys studying in Srinagr high school, while appointing an Arabic teacher for the school.(30)

Muslim scholars of Kashmir also contributed a lot to the promotion of Arabic language during Dogra period. Kashmiri scholars wrote commentaries and translations of the Holy Quran in their native language, Kashmiri. So that a common Kashmiri could understand the theme of the Holy Quran. During the Dogra period, also appeared Molvi Yahay' *Tafseer-i-Quran* and Noor-ud-Din Qari's *Masaayil*, both expounding Islamic tenets and the style in which they were written are proofs of the prose being hearing stilted and of ornate Persian diction. Molvi Yahaya also translated 30th *Para of the Holy Quran* in Kashmiri language (31).

Anwar Shah Kashmiri was a renowned personality of Kashmir, who specialized in Arabic language. He began his studies in Arabic, Persian and Islamic subjects under his father and other scholars. He composed around 1155 verses in Arabic mostly on prais of the Prophet and others.(32) He also wrote a book *Aqidatul Islam* in Arabic language(33).

Mulla Muhammad Din was a Kashmiri scholar. He was a Professor in Oriental College Lahore. He wrote a book *Rozat-ul-Adab* in Arabic language. This book was about the poets of Arabs. He wrote another book *Qalaid-uz-Zahb Fil Fawa-ud-Adab* in Arabic language. He wrote a commentary of Fateh-ul-Azeem. He wrote a lexicon of the famous book of Arabic language *Alif Laila*. (34)

Kashmiri scholars contributed a lot to the promotion of Arabic language and literature. Pir Ghulam Rasool was Kashmiri scholar who migrated to Amritsar. He wrote a book *Tahqiq-ul-Muram Fimanhal Qirat* in Arabic language. He wrote another book *Ilham-us-Sahih Fi*

Isbat-ul Hiyat-u-Masih in Arabic language. The head of Ahmadi sect wrote a book *Itmam-ul-Hujat* in his response.(35)

Pir Ghulam Mustafa Qasmi wrote *Risala-tul-Jalila Fi Isbat-ul-wasila* in Arabic language. He also wrote a book *Majma-ul-Nahrain* in Arabic language.(36)

In light of above discussion, it is evident that Kashmiri scholars of Mughal and Dogra periods made serious efforts for the promotion of Arabic language and literature in Kashmir.

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