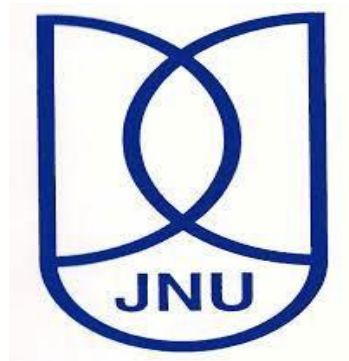


**Aspects of Kingship and Sainthood: Portrayals in the  
Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century Persian Texts of  
Kashmir**

*Dissertation submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of*

**MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY**

**Zubair Khalid**



**CENTRE FOR HISTORICAL STUDIES  
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NEW DELHI- 110067.**

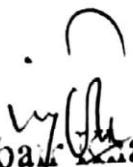
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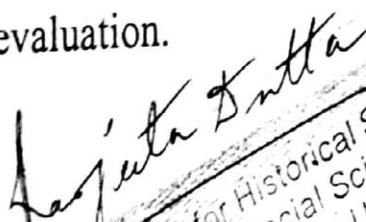
## DECLARATION


I, Zubair Khalid, hereby declare that the dissertation titled "Aspects of Kingship and Sainthood: Portrayals in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century Persian Texts of Kashmir" submitted by me in partial fulfillment for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy** of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my original work. The dissertation has not been previously submitted in part or full for the award of any other degree of this university or any other university.

  
Zubair Khalid

## CERTIFICATE

We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

  
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*Dedicated to the memory of Hamza*

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My greatest debt however is to my family, especially my parents, GH Hassan Dar and Rahmati and my sister Masrat for their belief in me. Thanks a lot.

## **A Note on Transliteration, Translation, References and Dates**

This dissertation uses many non-English words. All the words not used in the English language have been italicised and their brief meaning are provided along with them in the brackets. A Glossary has also been provided at the end of the chapters in the dissertation. Transliteration is simple and diacritical marks have been avoided in most cases. Direct quotes from texts have been retained in their original spellings. Translations from the Urdu sources used in this dissertation are mine. References to English translation of *Baharistan-i Shahi* are preceded by K.N Pandit indicating the name of the translator. The dates used in this dissertation refer to the Common Era calendar, unless otherwise stated..

# CHAPTER 1

## Situating Kingship and Sainthood in Medieval Kashmir: An Introductory Study

### Introduction

This study intends to analyze the notions of kingship and sainthood in a particular phase of the history of Kashmir, the Sultanate era. The Sultanate era includes two dynasties of medieval Kashmir, the Shahmiri dynasty (1339-1561) and the Chak dynasty (1561-1586). Therefore the analysis will be covering more than two centuries of Shahmiri dynasty's rule and two decades of the Chak rule.

Based on a preliminary study of the sixteenth and seventeenth century Persian texts of Kashmir, viz. *Dastur-us Salikin* (1554-1555), *Taufat-al Ahbab* (1560s), *Tarikh-i Sayyid Ali* (1579), *Baharistan i Shahi* (1586) and *Tarikh-i Malik Haider Chadurah* (1620), this work aims to study the ideas of kingship and sainthood in Sultanate Kashmir. These texts belong to the literary genre *taʿzkiras* (Sufi hagiographies) and *tarikhs* (Persian chronicles). While documenting the life-stories of their patrons, the Sufi saints and the Sultans, the *taʿzkiras* and *tarikhs* created their sense of past and portrayed a specific historical tradition that became integral to the identity of the region. Thus the historical past was not a unanimous concept but was multiple as these texts had their own versions of it. Together, these Persian texts form the earliest extant contemporary sources of medieval Kashmir and have along with their Sanskrit counterparts been used as primary sources for the reconstruction of various aspects of medieval Kashmiri history. From the earliest preliminary works on medieval Kashmir by Mohibbul Hassan to some of the latest works by Chitrlekha Zutshi, these texts have provided significant insights for reconstructing a range of contemporary issues in the history of medieval Kashmir.<sup>1</sup>

This dissertation will attempt to understand the political philosophy with respect to the ideas of kingship and its association to the concept of sainthood

<sup>1</sup>Mohibbul Hassan, *Kashmir Under the Sultans* Calcutta: Iran Society, 1959; Chitrlekha Zutshi, *Imagination*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2014.

based on the study of these Persian texts. Like in the period before the establishment of the Sultanate that is, between the tenth and the twelfth centuries, sacrality and kingship have been integral to the idea of an ideal ruler in the Shahmiri and Chak dynasties. Therefore the study will depict the ways in which the Persian texts used the Sanskritic and Persian resources of the pre-Sultanate period and the Central Asian and Persian region respectively to construct a normative image of a Sultan. It should be noted that one of the important groups of immigrants from Central Asia and Persia were the Sufis and other religious groups whose ideas of sainthood influenced the political ideas of the Shahmiri and Chak dynasties. It will be discussed here that by the time the Mughals under Akbar annexed Kashmir in 1586, the king as a saint and a ruler had already assumed a significant status in medieval Kashmir. So much so that along with the more obvious authority of the Sultan, the Persian texts, mostly the Sufi *tazkiras* came to argue for a saintly authority as well- not just in the spiritual realm but, in cases, in temporal matters as well. Thus as the Sultanate progressed, from Shahmiris and then to the Chaks, the sultan and the saint emerged as two significant figures in the Persian literary tradition of medieval Kashmir.

A general notion prevalent throughout the modern secondary works on medieval Kashmir is that the post-thirteenth century Kashmir was in many ways distinct from the pre-thirteenth century period.<sup>2</sup> The works of Mohibbul Hassan, RK Parmu, Ghulam Mohiuddin Sufi, Abdul Qayoom Rafiqi, Ashraf Wani and others explicitly mark off the Sultanate-era Kashmir (1320-1586) in the post-thirteenth century period comprising the Shah Mir and Chak dynasties (1320-1586) from its previous pasts in the history of Kashmir.<sup>3</sup> This divide between the period preceding and following the thirteenth century has influenced in many ways the political and the religio-social understanding of the region and its history. For instance, Mohammad Ishaq Khan, in his introduction to Mohibbul Hassan's *Kashmir Under the Sultans* terms the Sultanate era as the most formative period in the history of Kashmir, a

<sup>2</sup>All the major scholarships on medieval Kashmir support this notion of the divide. For instance, see, Mohibbul Hassan, *Kashmir Under the Sultans*; Mohammed Ishaq Khan, *Perspectives on Kashmir: Historical Dimensions*, Srinagar: Gulshan Publishers, 1983; Rattan Lal Hangloo, *The State in Medieval Kashmir*, New Delhi: Manohar, 2000.

<sup>3</sup>For instance, see works such as Manohar Lal Kapur, *History of Medieval Kashmir: 1320-1586 AD*, Jammu: ARB Publications, 1971; Mohammed Ishaq Khan, *Perspectives on Kashmir*, 1994; Rattan Lal Hangloo, *The State in Medieval Kashmir*.



time when Kashmir's gradual transition to Islam was under-way.<sup>4</sup> This idea of Kashmir's transition to the medieval period, in which Islam plays an important role, combines the narrative of a change in the religious profile along with a corresponding change in the type of polity and political culture. Developments and events in the two spheres- the political and the religio-social are seen as crucially impacting and in most of the cases, complimenting each other.<sup>5</sup> On the political front, Sultanate is seen as the beginning of a new era, established after the decline of the Loharas (1003-1320) that had left a political vacuum and an absence of a central political authority in Kashmir. This was the time when Shah Mir (r. 1339-1341), the adventurer from the Swat region (modern-day Pakistan) arrived in 1313 with his followers and became the Sultan in 1339. Ascending the throne as Sultan Shamsuddin, subsequently he came to be seen as the founder of a new ruling dynasty, the Shahmiri dynasty (1339-1561). The Shahmiri dynasty was followed by the Chak dynasty (1561-1586) and the rule of both the dynasties is known as the Sultanate era in the history of Kashmir (1339-1586). The dynasties of the Kashmiri Sultanate, as stated above, succeeded the last ruling dynasty, the Loharas (1003-1320) and preceded the Mughal rule in Kashmir (1586-1751). Akbar took over Kashmir from the last ruling Chak Sultan, Yousuf Shah (r. 1579-1586) in 1586.

As stated above, based on a preliminary study of the sixteenth and seventeenth century Persian texts of Kashmir, viz. *Dastur-us Salikin* (1554-1555), *Taufat-ul Ahabab* (1560s), *Tarikh-i Sayyid Ali* (1579), *Baharistan i Shahi* (1586) and *Tarikh-i Malik Haider Chadura* (1620), it is argued in this dissertation that the revolutionary impact ascribed to Islam in medieval Kashmir does not necessarily apply to the manner in which kingship and notions of sovereignty were articulated. The kings of the Sultanate dynasties derived their legitimacy from a variety of ideas which although may have been articulated in religious terms, did not by itself indicate any religious influence on the rulers. Nor did it necessarily mean that kingship was derived from or was a part of Islamic theology. For instance, the Sayyids and Sufis provided religious legitimacy to the Sultanate polities and various ideas of the Islamic

<sup>4</sup>

*Kashmir Under the Sultans* New Delhi: Aakar Books, 2005.

<sup>5</sup> See Rattan Lal Hangloo *The State in Medieval Kashmir* for combining a narrative of the political and the socio-religious developments in medieval Kashmir.

theory of kingship influenced notions of power and authority. However, these two developments did not by themselves constitute the much-hyped Islamization. In fact, the onset of Islam in Kashmir meant no new Islamic discourse on kingship, or any new ideas of power and authority that could be seen as an attempt to radically change the manner in which kingship and sovereignty needed to be practiced.

Notions of kingship in Muslim Kashmir, it is argued here, are better understood if seen in continuum with the earlier Hindu rule. If, as it has been stated, Brahmans gave the religious justification to earlier Hindu rulers, it was now the Sayyids and Sufis who replaced them under the new circumstances. Thus, factors such as descent and kinship, lineages of a king, marriages and his relations with the different powerful elements and his ability to harness power remained crucial elements in the discourse on kingship in Sultanate-era Kashmir, as in the previous period. The Persian texts under study emphasized these elements of kingship and sovereignty, in addition to the ideas of justice and welfare of subjects. Further, it will be argued that influences on medieval Kashmir and the Sultanate era go beyond the Islamic, Central Asian and Sufi characterisations. Even though these aspects cannot be ignored, they should not be over-emphasised and considered as instrumental in shaping the history of Kashmir. An attempt will be made to show that there were influences from the Sanskritic past and indigenous traditions on the various areas including the *tarikhs* and other textual traditions in medieval Kashmir that carved out a regional space that was far more diverse and eclectic. Ideas about Sultanate kingship should be seen in continuation with political theories of kingship which evolved across time and space. As the second chapter of this dissertation will demonstrate, rather than designating the Sultanate-era political theories as purely Islamic, these should be seen as influenced by a range of Sanskritic/ indigenous,

<sup>6</sup>For discussions on the relation between state and religious authorities in Sultanate Kashmir see, Chitrlekha Zutshi (ed.), *Kashmir: History, Politics, Representation*, New Delhi: Cambridge University Press, p. 52; Hangloo, *The State in Medieval Kashmir*, pp. 92-3.

<sup>7</sup>For a discussion on the relation between Brahmans and pre - Hangloo, *The State in Medieval Kashmir*, pp. 21-8.

<sup>8</sup>For a discussion on relation between the Sanskrit and Persian literary traditions, see

*The Indian Economic and Social History Review* 50, (2), 2013, pp.201-

*Indian Historical Review* 40(2), 2013, pp. 207-222.

Central Asian, Persian, Islamic/Sufi ideas, which themselves kept on changing and evolving.

The focus of this study are the Persian texts mentioned above, viz. *Dastur-us Salikin*, *Taufat-al Ahbab*, *Tarikh-i Sayyid Ali Baharistani Shahi* and *Tarikh-i Malik Haider Chadurah*. The textual discourse on matters of kingship and authority is important in view of the fact that the texts of historians and hagiographers of early-modern Kashmir have been seen as embodying a discursive formation which played a central role in the development of the early-modern state in Kashmir.<sup>9</sup> Written with specific purpose ranging from recording the biographies of a Sufi saint to history writing, these texts were framed within the Islamic world-views, their contents often didactic in nature thus providing a normative base to kingship and authority for the rulers. However, in practice the rulers seldom followed the textual principles articulated in them though they may have been influenced by them. Thus the texts very often may not have reflected the political realities of power politics and authority.<sup>10</sup> The manner in which kingship and notions of authority and power were dealt in contemporary Persian texts of the Sultanate-era reflects an anxiety on the part of the authors to maintain a balance of various political ideas.

This chapter will provide a critical discussion on modern historical works that have dealt with the history of medieval Kashmir, particularly the Sultanate phase and the key issues highlighted in these works. This will be followed by a brief section on the objectives and limitations of this study. Finally, a section on the primary sources used in this dissertation will provide an analytical overview of these sources.

## **Historiography: An Analysis**

Historical scholarship on Kashmir mainly focuses on the modern history of Kashmir, the medieval Kashmir history being a neglected field of study. In case of modern historical works on medieval Kashmir, the focus is mainly on the political and

<sup>9</sup> : Writing Lal Ded and Nund Rishi into the Kashmiri *History, Politics, Representation* , p. 258.

<sup>10</sup> *The Languages of Political Islam in India: c. 1200-1800*, Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2010.

religious history. These works treat the thirteenth century as a watershed in the history of Kashmir, ascribing the divide mainly to religious developments in form of spread of Islam and the resultant changes in the political history.

An analysis of the modern historical works on Kashmir demonstrates that the pre-modern era of Kashmir history has been divided on the basis religious factors. The pre-thirteenth century period is described as the Hindu period while as the post-thirteenth century period is described as the Muslim period. One of the objectives of this dissertation will be to do away with this division. Modern historical works on medieval Kashmir have largely focussed on the modern period of Kashmiri history. As a result, the medieval period of Kashmiri history has faced neglect in the historical scholarship. The main focus of these works on medieval Kashmir has been the political history, with very few works on other areas of study, including areas like interaction between religion and politics.

#### **a) A Divided Past**

Modern historiography on Kashmir, by and large, has treated the ascension of Sultan Shamsuddin (1339-42) and the establishment of the Shahmiri rule as the beginning of a new era in the history of Kashmir.<sup>11</sup> The beginning of the Shahmiri rule (1339-1561) is treated as the rise of the Muslim political power in Kashmir, a development seen as contrast to the earlier period, roughly from the seventh to the thirteenth centuries that is primarily seen as a Hindu rule of the dynasties of Karkotas, the Loharas and Utpalas. Therefore the labelling of a particular time-period in Kashmir history as Hindu or Muslim period is mainly based on the personal religion of rulers of the concerned dynasties.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> See footnote 2, 3.

<sup>12</sup> For frequent references to pre-*Cultural and Political History of Kashmir: Medieval Kashmir* New Delhi: MD Publications Pvt. Ltd., 1994; GMD Sufi, *Islamic Culture in Kashmir*, New Delhi: Light and Life Publications, 1979.

## b) Islam as a Revolutionary Force

The same is true of the manner in which the religio-social history of the post-thirteenth century Kashmir has been portrayed in almost all the modern historical scholarship. It is acknowledged that Islam gradually spread in the region with the help of Sufi personalities. However at the same time, the spread of Islam is seen as a revolutionary force that swept across Kashmir and forever changed the religious as well as the social structure of the population. Ashraf Wani in his *Islam in Kashmir* (2005) argues that Islam had a revolutionary impact on Kashmir, resulting in the formation of a culture that remains normative until the present times. In these works, there seems to be a lack of clarity with regard to the impact Islam had from the time of its advent and the period when it is supposedly began to revolutionize aspects of life in Kashmir. In the absence of a definite parameter to measure the effects of the so-called revolution, the percentage of population that had professed Islam is regarded as one such standard. <sup>14</sup>

Similarly other policies of the Sultans have been shown in the modern historiography as guided by religious considerations and, in some cases, influenced by religious personalities. The most widely cited case is that of Shahmiri ruler, Sultan Sikander (r.1389-1413), whose anti-Hindu policies earned him the title of *but-shikan* (the idol-breaker). The staunch iconoclastic attitude of the Sultan is attributed to the influences of a Sufi mystic from Iran, Sayyid Muhammed Hamadani, who arrived in Kashmir in 1393. Similarly, other administrative decisions such as the establishment of the office of Shaikh-ul Islam (the official religious authority) and imposition of taxes upon non-Muslims like *jizya*, among others, have been taken as indicative of the Sultan Sikandar's attempts to enforce the Islamic laws in totality. <sup>15</sup>

The assumption in these modern works is that the Sultanate viz. the Shahmiri and the Chak dynasties marked the beginning of an Islamic political set-up in Kashmir. For instance, Shah Mir, the first Sultan of Kashmir is presented as a self-conscious Muslim who introduced a new calendar which became representative of the

<sup>13</sup> *Islam in Kashmir (Fifteenth to Sixteenth Century)*, Srinagar: Oriental Publishing House, 2005.

<sup>14</sup>

*Islam in Kashmir*.

<sup>15</sup> Hassan, *Kashmir Under the Sultans*, p. 65.

Kashmiri era. This new calendar was supposed to have replaced the previous calendar which was based on the Laukika era, assumedly seen as the Hindu/Sanskrit calendar. Shah Mir's new calendar began with the date of accession of his predecessor Rinchen (r.1320-1339), a Tibetan prince who had converted to Islam and ruled over this region in the beginning of the fourteenth century. <sup>16</sup>

A close reading of the modern historiography on medieval Kashmir and the role of Islam in its history can be classified into two kinds of approaches. The first approach as gleaned from the works such as those by Rattan Lal Hangloo and Mohammad Ishaq Khan sees the spread of Islam in medieval Kashmir as an essentially social movement, even as people from the ruling sections also joined in.<sup>17</sup> The work of Rattan Lal Hangloo presents an account of a new politico-religious set-up dominated by Islam and Muslim in Kashmir. Hangloo argues that the Sultans, following an already-set pattern of Brahman-State alliance in which the Brahmans acted as state ideologues, patronised the Sayyids in order to gain legitimacy for their rule, the assumption, of course being that the Sayyids had already become significant in the now Muslim-Kashmir. <sup>18</sup> This position about the actual influence of the Sayyids acting as the ideologues of the kingly authority needs to be problematized and questioned. Further, the importance of the Muslim religious personalities, especially the Sufis and religious institutions at a time when Islam itself was a recent phenomenon in Kashmir needs to be questioned. As Hangloo himself points out, the first five Sultans of the Shahmiri dynasty till the reign of Sultan Qutubuddin (r.1373-89) did not give any serious attention towards the spread of Islam. It was only by the reign of Sultan Qutubuddin that the spread of Islam received royal patronage and the Sultans started building *khanqahs* and *madrasas* with *langarkhanas* and employed the Sayyids to teach the rudiments of religion to the people. Both Hangloo and Ishaq Khan see Islam as a revolutionary force in medieval Kashmir, even as they present a critique of those arguments that accuse the Sultans, provoked by the zealous missionaries, as following a policy of religious persecution of the Hindus

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*, p. 50.

<sup>17</sup> See Hangloo, *The State in Medieval Kashmir* and Ishaq Khan, *The Role of Muslim Rishis (Fifteenth to Eighteenth Centuries)*, New Delhi: Manohar, 1994.

<sup>18</sup> Hangloo, *The State in Medieval Kashmir*, p. 25-32.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*, p. 57.

primarily because of their religious identity<sup>20</sup> And yet, their position that that the Islamic social revolution did not lead to the formation of a state structure essentially antagonistic to the Hindu community needs a study exclusively devoted to the development of state and political culture of the Sultanate era, something that is missing in the modern historical literature on medieval Kashmir.

The other approach as evident in the writing of historians such as RK Parmu treats the spread of Islam as a politico-religious phenomenon, in which both the religious as well as the political groups tried to win converts and enforce their religion on the then-majority Hindu community by means of militant methods. This group of historians<sup>22</sup> feel that the alliance between the Muslim religious groups and Sultans endangered the religion, culture, life and liberty of the then-dominant Hindu community in Kashmir. On the basis of their anti-Hindu stand and their ethnic identity, the Sultanate dynasties are dubbed as an alien government<sup>23</sup>.

The dissertation argues that the connection with the past has to be analysed beyond the binaries of Islamic and non-Islamic influences. As has already been argued by the scholars, Islam did not form the majority religion in Kashmir till the middle of the fifteenth century.<sup>24</sup> It is asserted that with the spread of Sufism in general, and the rise of Rishi silsila of Kashmiri Sufi tradition in particular and the increasing influence of one of its important personalities Shaikh Nuruddin (d.1442), Islam gradually began to have an impact. It was only by sixteenth century that the situation began to change.<sup>25</sup> Moreover, the assertion that Islam revolutionised aspects of Kashmiri life needs more than demographic change as a proof.

To sum up, after a close study of most of the modern works on medieval Kashmir, the impression one gets is that the Sultanate-era Kashmir was marked off and distinct both in political as well as religious terms. In particular, the Sultanate state and political culture is seen as distinct, both from its predecessor, the Hindu Loharas as well as its successor, the Mughal state. The Mughal take-over of

<sup>20</sup>

*Perspectives on Kashmir*, 1983.

<sup>21</sup> RK Parmu, *History of Muslim Rule in Kashmir (1320-1819)*, New Delhi: Peo Publishing House, 1969, p. 118.

<sup>22</sup>

*Perspectives on Kashmir*, p. 10.

<sup>23</sup> RK Parmu, *History of Muslim Rule in Kashmir*, pp. 129-130.

<sup>24</sup> Ishaq Khan, , pp. 95,178.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

Kashmir in the modern historiography is seen as marking an end of an independent Kashmir; now with a changed political status in which Kashmir was subjected to the authority of a distant political centre. However, the Shahmiri dynasty is marked-off as distinct from the previous Lohara dynasty, not because it is seen as a foreign rule; as is the case with the Mughals, but precisely because of its equation with the Muslim rule as distinct from the previous Hindu rule. This has led to debates about the nature of the Muslim state in medieval Kashmir and questions about whether it was a theocratic or a secular state.<sup>26</sup> Most aspects of the medieval Kashmiri history remain to be written in a scholarly manner. In this case, the assertion that Islam revolutionised the entire set-up of medieval Kashmir seems to be a sweeping assertion, demanding more questions.

### c) History of Kashmir: A Focus on the Modern

The history of Kashmir presents a perfect example of the ways the present concerns shape our attitudes towards the past. Medieval Kashmir is one of the fields of study that has not been explored to its full potential. Most of the historical scholarship on Kashmir focuses on the early twenty century as the events occurring during this time are seen as decisively shaping the modern-day Kashmir.<sup>27</sup> Thus, in most of the cases, the story of Kashmir begins from the Dogra period, the focus being on events such as the 1931 movement, partition in 1947, and other developments since then.<sup>28</sup> There are at least two reasons for this general neglect of the medieval history of Kashmir. One, a strong focus on the Kashmir conflict and the related dimensions of history and two, a belief that the roots of the modern-day Kashmir are located only in the twentieth

<sup>26</sup> See Hangloo, *The State in Medieval Kashmir* for a discussion on the nature of the medieval Kashmiri state.

<sup>27</sup> The few of scholarly works that begin their narratives of the modern-day Kashmir from the pre-20<sup>th</sup> century are Mridu Rai, *Hindu Rulers, Muslim Subjects, Rai: Islam, Rights and the History of Kashmir*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004; Chitrlekha Zutshi, *Languages of Belonging: Islam Regional Identity and the Making of Kashmir* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.

<sup>28</sup> For an understanding of modern Kashmir, different studies go back to different times. While as some start from 1983 (Tavleen Singh, *Kashmir: A Tragedy of Errors* Penguin 1996), others go back to 1947 (N C Behera, *Demystifying Kashmir*, Brookings Institute Press, 2006) and the 1931 movement (Prem Nath Bazaz, *Inside Kashmir*, The Kashmir Publishing Co., 1941). Yet others go back to the Dogra Period (Mridu Rai, *Hindu Rulers, Muslim Subjects*) and others much deeper into the medieval Kashmir (Chitrlekha Zutshi, *Languages of Belonging*)



century. These two approaches have led to a situation where in the modern period of Kashmiri history, particularly the period starting from the second quarter of the twentieth century is seen as more relevant to present-day discussions. Also, this general reluctance to focus beyond the twentieth century can be seen, besides the above mentioned reasons as deriving from the notion of the medieval period being too far removed from the present times, with a seemingly alien set of structures and processes having no influence in the shaping of modern Kashmir. However, even if we agree with this argument and see the medieval Kashmiri history as remote and unconnected to the present, we cannot afford to ignore it, for every period of time is interesting and important for its own sake, in and for itself, regardless of its relations with the subsequent course of history .<sup>29</sup>

Indian scholars of medieval history have not dealt with the field of medieval Kashmir studies extensively either. Instead, as Imtiyaz Ahmad remarks, the Indian academic community has treated Kashmir as an alien world and has paid scant attention to Kashmir in their academic concerns .<sup>30</sup> In the words of Chitrlekha Zutshi, until late 1990s Kashmir was treated as a step-child within the South Asian historiography and thus marginalized within the scholarly circles.<sup>31</sup> This neglect of Kashmir in the academics, as discussed above has a crucial implication on the scholarly works undertaken on Kashmir. As a result of this neglect, the works on Kashmir have to start from the very base of descriptive studies, something hindering the development of a critical analytical scholarship in various areas of medieval Kashmir history, which could have built upon the base. To quote Imtiyaz Ahmed again, this absence of serious scholarship on Kashmir means that any work on Kashmiri history has to begin from a descriptive base<sup>32</sup> and cannot thus be expected to be of a highly analytical and critical nature.

<sup>29</sup> A J Gurevich, *Categories of Medieval Thought* (Translated from the Russian by G L Campbell), London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985, p. 3.

<sup>30</sup> *Economic and Political Weekly* , Vol. 19, No. 10 (Mar. 10, 1984), pp. 420-421.

<sup>31</sup> Zutshi, *Kashmir: History, Politics, Representation* , p. 03.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

### e) Relation between Religion and Politics

In addition to the focus on the history of spread of Islam, the historical scholarship on Kashmir has also extensively focussed on the political history of Kashmir. In case of political history, the dominant focus in the historiography has been on the events around 1947 in the Indian subcontinent. A more recent trend however seeks to study the history of Kashmir separately from the histories of India and Pakistan. The works of Chitralkha Zutshi<sup>34</sup> and Rattan Lal Hangloo<sup>35</sup> are two examples of scholarship on medieval Kashmir that move away from the otherwise commonly followed theme of political or Islamic history. The two authors present their respective arguments in narratives that combine the various themes discussed with the history of Islam in Kashmir. Yet the arguments in these two works go beyond the simplistic political and religious categories of the medieval in the history of Kashmir.

Rattan Lal Hangloo's *The State in Medieval Kashmir* is devoted to a study of the political processes and their varied foundations in medieval Kashmir. Given that it is the very first work of its kind in the said field, the author acknowledges that the work is styled as an introduction for a reconstruction of the nature of the medieval state Kashmir. A work titled *Kashmir Polity* by V N Drabu discusses themes such as kingship and nature and origin of state.<sup>36</sup> Starting from 600, this work is limited up to the time of 1200. The author believes that after 1200, the strong political authority of the Kashmiri kings along with an extensive hold on the territory waned due to the destabilising feudal tendencies which brought in an era of misrule and anarchy.<sup>37</sup> However, there is no work devoted to the theme of kingship and sainthood and the related notions of authority and power in the pre-Mughal Kashmir or their representation in the contemporary texts. The related themes of the nature of interaction between the Sufis and the religious leaders and the political authority-better captured in the phrase the Sufi-State relationship are similarly

<sup>33</sup>

*History Compass* 5/2(2007), pp.288-

*History Compass*8/7 (2010), pp. 594-

608.

<sup>34</sup> Chitralkha Zutshi, *Languages of Belonging*, 2014.

<sup>35</sup> Rattan Lal Hangloo, *The State in Medieval Kashmir*.

<sup>36</sup> V.N. Drabu, *Kashmir Polity (c. 600-1200 A.D) Series in Indian History, Art and Culture-II*, New Delhi: Bahri Publications Private Limited, 1986.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

ignored. There is an article around this theme; however it mainly attempts to build a connected history of Shi'ism and its relationship with Sufism and contemporary state in Kashmir from the fourteenth to sixteenth century .<sup>38</sup> There is thus a very visible gap in the field of medieval Kashmiri history and a very basic study of kingship and sainthood and other notions of sovereignty is missing.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The problems of periodisation in Kashmir history remain unexplored.<sup>39</sup> I do not, for lack of space, intend to go into these debates, and would rather follow the traditional method of designating the time period of my study as medieval . The fact that the Sultanate dynasties have been studied does not however, by itself, mean that it was essentially different from its predecessor and successor states, the Loharas and the Mughals. In fact, this study aims to look at continuities as much as it looks for breaks and discontinuities. Besides, since the study relies on texts it needs to be kept in mind that the analysis of textual source determines periodisation but questions the conventional categories of ancient and modern. All the sources, five of them, used in this study were written in between 1554 and 1621. Out of the five texts used, four are contemporary Sultanate texts and only one, *Tarikh-i Malik Haider* is a post-Sultanate work. While as two works, *Dastur-us Salikin* and *Taufat-al Ahbab* were written in the Shahmiri period (1339-1560), i.e. by 1560 s*Tarikh-i Sayyid Ali* was completed before the Mughal annexation of Kashmir in 1586, i.e. in 1579 *Baharistan-i Shahi* in 1586, the year of annexation of Kashmir by the Mughals.

Using these textual sources, this study will attempt to show that while the Sultanate-era political culture and notions of governance may have responded to a new context, especially the spread of Islam in Kashmir, it was not entirely cut-off from its predecessor Hindu states. The analysis of the texts will show how the practices and not just the ideals of kingship are better understood in relation to the past rather than exclusively relating them to the Islamic influences from outside

<sup>38</sup>

Issue 2, 2014.

<sup>39</sup>

Kashmir, such as Iran and Central Asia. At the same time, the understanding that the Sultanate era represented a complete break from its predecessors, the Loharas or that it was nothing more than a simple replacement of one set of rulers by the other is problematic. While I argue that the religion and religious identity of the rulers was not the pre-eminent factor in the Kashmiri Sultanate, the Sultanate should not be seen as a mere replacement of the upper stratum of an already established political and social structure. We need to move beyond both these positions and come up with an understanding that acknowledges genuine engagements by the Sultans to negotiate their authority in their respective political set-up. This engagement needs to be conceptualised as a complex one, something that cannot be captured in the terminology of Islamization or its sweeping influence or its total rejection by a given Sultan. The position undertaken here is that while aspects of the political culture did undergo change as the Sultans negotiated their way into the new political and religio-social context, there were no all-out changes sweeping the entire political culture and structure as may be indicated by the terms Islamization, enforcement of Sharia and so on. The general picture presented in the modern works is vague, insufficient and lacking in clarity about the actual extent and range of impact Islam had on the Kashmiri Sultanate.

This study intends to study the nature of sovereignty of the Kashmiri Sultans, the sources on which they based their right to rule, and the manner in which the texts represented them. Clearly there were a number of possible basis that existed for the Sultans to build their claims to the throne through ideas like a particular type of descent and position that had relevance in the political set-up of the times. However, the nature of these claims changed with the changing political, social and religious context, creating different ideas of kingship and authority. Hence there was no uniform political tradition and philosophy in this regard. The main focus of this study will be on the institutions of Kashmiri Sultanate kingship of both the dynasties of Shahmiris (1339-1561) as well as the Chaks (1561-1586) within the framework of continuity and change in what is otherwise seen as a single entity the Kashmiri Sultanate. Elements of continuities and change will also be analysed in the background of the preceding Hindu dynasties.

The institutions of kingship and related notions of sovereignty, the personality of the king, the court and the royal household, the contemporary notion of

state and elements of royal ideologies- all will be analysed in these texts Thus this study will also be about the how the texts saw different aspects of the state, for instance, state and kingly authority, their origin and role, its elements and questions about the sources of their authority. The extent and the agency of the interaction between the religious and the political authorities in the contemporary texts and the manner in which the king and his activities were judged and represented in relation to this interaction has to be located within the larger historical context. It is emphasised here that the textual discourse on the relationship between the political and the religious authorities is complex and goes beyond a simple articulation of a complete subordination of one by the other.

Questions about the basis of the symbolism and the psychology of the Sultanate, its main objectives and the role the Islamic political tradition played in it need to be analysed. The general historiographical practice of giving prominence to religion in matters of sovereignty and authority in Sultanate Kashmir needs to be questioned with a view of the actual circumstances in the fourteenth century Kashmir. The fourteenth century was a time when, in contrast to areas of Central Asia and Persia, Islam had not yet formed the basis of a self-conscious identity, nor was it a politically decisive factor in Kashmir. <sup>40</sup> Pragmatism and not Islamic ideology, it will be argued, was the dominant and decisive factor. The Sultan and his court rather than the Sufi *khanqahs* was the centre of gravity, to which even the Sufis were subject as well.<sup>41</sup>

When Shah Mir ascended the throne as Sultan Shamsuddin in 1339, the religious-social profile of Kashmir was very much the same as it had been under the rulers of previous Lohara dynasty. It would be interesting to note how in the circumstances of contextual change, Sultans re-fashioned their sovereignty and authority in negotiation with the new groups like the Sayyids who assumed importance after their arrival in Kashmir. Thus we need to look for a possible evolution in these notions, understand how these notions were reflected in these texts

<sup>40</sup> Even as late as the fifteenth century, Islam did not form the majority religion in Kashmir, Sanskrit continued to remain the state language until the time of Zainul Abidin (1420-70), Kashmiri Pandits still constituted the majority in the bureaucracy.

<sup>41</sup> For a similar argument in case of South Asia see Carl Ernst, *Garden: Mysticism, History and Politics at a South Asian Sufi Centre*, New York: State University of New York Press, 1992, p.38.

and how much the theory of kingship and authority raised in these texts related to the normative Islamic ideas of kingship. We need to see how the influx of men of religious leanings tried to introduce a new discourse on kingship, for instance, an attempt to link the personality of the king with the divine or favouring political rule to be vested in a personality belonging of a particular lineage, descent, or personal leanings.

The political culture of the Sultanate-era Kashmir and the prevalent notions of sovereignty and authority, it is argued, cannot be understood without relating it to the role and significance of the shrines *khanqahs* of the saints in Kashmir. The nature of imperial engagement with the *khanqahs*/shrines of the saints thus merits special attention in this study, as does the engagement of the *khanqah*/shrine or the saint with the imperial centre. Chitrlekha Zutshi in her recent work describes the shrines in Kashmir as powerful institutions that deeply influenced the course of politics, society and culture in wake of the revenue-free lands the custodians of the shrines received in Kashmir. Thus, according to her, the shrines, with the passage of time became central to political battles, matters of political legitimacy of kings and exercised symbolic power over citizens and their inhabitants <sup>42</sup> This development, while being part of an already set pattern of the state patronage of Brahmanism and Brahmanical institutions in Kashmir, as Hangloo also demonstrates<sup>43</sup>, needs to be studied afresh in the now-changed context of the Sultanate-era Kashmir. A case of the influence of the religion on politics is presented by Dean Accardi. According to Accardi, in the fourteenth century during the reign of Sultan Qutubuddin Sultanate, the Kubrawiya Sufi Sayyid Ali Hamadani and his followers arrived in Kashmir and had a meteoric rise that made them influential in politics as prominent religious authorities. According to Accardi, Hamadani was so influential in politics during the times Sultan Sikander and implemented the oppressive policies against the Hindus <sup>44</sup> on his behalf. The seemingly monopolistic influence of religion on politics as depicted in the works of historians need a careful examination. One needs to understand that the fourteenth century was a period when the spread of Islam as a religion on a wider scale was comparatively a recent phenomenon and thus the cults of Sufi saints and others religious personalities had yet

<sup>42</sup> Zutshi, *Kashmir: History, Politics, Representation*, 2018, p. 2.

<sup>43</sup> Hangloo, *The State in Medieval Kashmir*, 2000.

<sup>44</sup> Dean Accardi, pp. 247-264.

to take roots. In other words, we need to be careful not to over-emphasise the importance of the shrine/ *khanqah* at a time when the religious figures around whose personalities these centres grew had yet to establish themselves in Kashmir. Some of them had just arrived, others were yet to and those who were there had yet to establish themselves to the extent so as to merit attention by imperial authorities.

Modern scholarship on Kashmir, by and large, organises itself around two main themes, one the spread of Islam in Kashmir and two, the Mughal invasion. Everything in between these two developments is seen as related to each other and thus fit to be categorised under a single heading, the Sultanate. The larger aim of this study, by raising certain questions is to do away with this method, and look for gaps in this narrative while at the same time try to point out larger continuities that go beyond these breaks.

It has recently been argued that the local textual tradition in Kashmir, at least since the seventh century has represented Kashmir as sacred. The Sanskrit literary tradition, from the seventh century Nilamata Purana to the twelfth century Rajatarangini represented Kashmir as a sacred kingdom while the Persian hagiographical tradition in Kashmir represented it as a sacred space. <sup>45</sup> In the light of this observation, it becomes important to look at the ways in which this idea of sacredness of Kashmir was related to the institution of kingship in Kashmir and the kings who came to rule over this sacred space. We also need to look at possible attempts by kings to fashion and express their sovereignty in divine and sacred terms.<sup>46</sup>

## **Limitations of the Study**

It needs to be mentioned at the outset that this study has certain limitations. Questions about notions of kingship, sovereignty, authority and power cannot be understood merely by a reliance on the texts of the period, even as the texts are an important source of study as they can be seen both as both as articulating the world in which

<sup>45</sup> Chitrlekha Zutshi, *Kashmir: History, Politics, Representation*, p. 5.

<sup>46</sup> For a study of this kind, see Azfar ~~M~~ain, *Millennial Sovereign: Sacred Kingship and Sainthood in Islam*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2012.

they are situated and as articulated by it . <sup>47</sup> There are other important fields, besides the textual, for instance numismatics and architectural studies that can help us in presenting a comprehensive of the medieval Kashmiri kingship and notions of sovereignty. However, this is at present beyond the scope of the dissertation. Instead, the study places itself within a broader scholarship that centres on understanding the ideals as well as the practices of these notions in medieval Kashmir as articulated in the Persian literary tradition only. Therefore this study will not discuss the articulations of these notions within the contemporary Sanskrit texts of Kashmir. An otherwise important exercise of comparative representation in the two literary traditions of medieval Kashmir is beyond the scope of this study.

## Primary Sources

The sources as stated above are the pre-Mughal Sultanate-era Persian texts and their translations will be used for analysis. In most of the cases, the Urdu translations are available and thus would be preferred over the English ones, however in case of others, where there are no Urdu translations; the ones in English will be used.

The five texts undertaken for study were written and completed in a period of around a quarter century, seventy-seven years to be exact, from 1554 to 1621; the earliest work, *Dastur-us Salikin* was written in 1554 and the latest work, *Tarikh-i Malik Haider Chadurah* was completed in 1620. The writing of *Dastur-us Salikin* (1554-1555), *Taufat-al Ahbab* (early 1560s), *Tarikh-i Sayyid Al* (1579) and *Baharistan i Shahi* (1586) started in and around the second half of the sixteenth century. Thus four of these were completed well before 1580. The composition of *Baharistan-i Shahi* began in 1586 and was completed in 1614. Thus, only *Tarikh-i Malik Haider Chadurah* is a seventeenth century work and even this was completed in the early decades of the seventeenth century, which is in 1620. So this work comfortably fits with the corpus of our texts as it deals with the same period as do the other works. Even, as Mohibbul Hassan remarks, the sources that the author has used seem to be same as the ones used by other works *Tarikh- Sayyid Al* and *Baharistan-i Shahi*.

<sup>47</sup> Ronald Inden et al., *Querying the Medieval: Texts and History of Practices of Practices in South Asia*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2000. p. 4.



Following this date of the formal Mughal annexation of Kashmir and its incorporation into the Mughal empire, three of our texts, *Dastur-us Salikin*, *Taufat ul Ahbab* and *Tarikh-i Sayyid Ali* were written well before the Mughal takeover in 1586. *Baharistan-i Shahi* although strictly speaking a post-Mughal work is an interesting case though. The author started writing in 1586, that is, just a year after the Mughal annexation and completed it after a gap of almost three decades in 1614. The last work, *Tarikh-i Malik Haideris* comfortably a post-Mughal work, as its work began in 1618 and was completed in 1621.

Almost all the authors were contemporaries and as such came to witness a lot of the important developments of their times in common. The works they wrote, even if on varied subjects, had one thing in common that their main focus were the events of the times the authors lived in. This is of significant importance to us as we are in a better position to see how the authors saw and represented a particular set of events. Baba Daud Khaki was born in 1521 and died in 1585. Mirza Haider Dughlat was born in 1499 and died in 1550-51. Muhammed Ali Kashmiri was born in the same period as was the author of *Baharistan i Shahi*. Sayyid Ali was the contemporary of Mirza Haider Dughlat.

## **Chapterisation**

This dissertation is divided into five chapters. Chapter one, *Situating Kingship and Sainthood in Medieval Kashmir: An Introductory Study* which has already been discussed here is an introduction to the dissertation that analyses the modern works and attempts to situate the present arguments in this work in a historiographical context. This is followed by a discussion on the limitations of the study and finally the primary sources. Chapter two, *The Making of Texts: Persian Literary World of Medieval Kashmir* seeks to give an introduction to the texts under study, their respective authors and the context of their production and circulation. Besides the texts, the personalities and institutions associated with patronage and composition of these texts will be briefly discussed. This chapter intends to give a background to the viewpoints on kingship and sainthood as articulated in these texts by the individual authors. Chapter three, *Aspects of Kingship in Persian Text of Medieval Kashmir*,

will deal with how the Persian texts saw the institution of kingship and other related notions. The focus would primarily be on themes such as the sources of the king's authority, basic functions of the king, requirements of kingship, nature of kingship exercised in medieval Sultanate Kashmir as the contemporary Persian texts saw it. Chapter four titled *Aspects of Sainthood in Medieval Kashmir: Portrayals in Persian Texts* looks at different aspects of sainthood as it came to evolve after a number of immigrants, including Sufis from Persia and Central Asia came into Kashmir in the Sultanate era. With the passage of time, Sufi saints assumed prominence in the Kashmiri society, so much so that that the Persian texts, more notably ~~the~~ *the kiras* came to argue for an independent and even in some cases, a superior position of the saint in relation to the Sultan. In a related development, ~~kh~~ *the qahs* assumed importance in a range of matters, religious as well as political, besides becoming the centres of textual production. This chapter traces aspects of dynamics of sainthood in Kashmir as portrayed in the Persian texts. Chapter five *Conclusion* summarises the main arguments presented in this dissertation, besides highlighting areas of studies in medieval Kashmir history that could be taken up for future studies.

## CHAPTER 2

### Persian Literary World and the Composition of the Texts in Medieval Kashmir

#### Introduction

This chapter will attempt to present a general outlook of the Persian literary world of pre-Mughal medieval Kashmir. The origin and subsequent development of the Persian literary tradition, its constituent genres, political patronage the language received and its association with institutions like the court and *the anqah*, and personalities particularly those designated as Sufis are some of the different aspects that constituted the Persian literary world after the thirteenth century in Kashmir and would be discussed. The focus here will primarily be on the works used for this study, consisting of sixteenth and seventeenth century texts conventionally categorised as *tarikhs* and *tazkiras*. This chapter provides us with the necessary details and the perspectives in which we locate the textual works. This background, it is believed, will provide a nuanced and balanced view of the specific answers sought from the texts regarding the set of questions raised in this study. <sup>1</sup>

#### Religion, Region and Language: Persian in Kashmir and its Connections with Persia and Central Asia

The history of Persian language in Kashmir goes well beyond the dates of the establishment of the Sultanate in fourteenth century. Even if the influx of saints and scholars from Persia and Central Asia during the Sultanate era is seen as constituting a landmark both in the religious as well as the literary history of Kashmir, <sup>2</sup> Persian as a

<sup>1</sup> *Querying the Medieval*, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup>For instance, see Hangloo, *The State in Medieval Kashmir* Ishaq Khan, *Perspectives on Kashmir*.

language was not unknown to the people of Kashmir earlier. The presence of Persio-Arabic words in the Sanskrit works of Kashmir in the pre-Sultanate era is one of the many evidences that can be cited for a linguistic interaction between Sanskrit and Persian before the thirteenth century.<sup>3</sup> The trend of the Persian influence on the existing languages in Kashmir continued in the Sultanate era as Persian lexical terms continued to enter the language of daily communication and literary discourse to a considerable extent.<sup>4</sup> So much so that Kashmir came to be called as *Iran-i Sageer* (literally the Minor Iran), and in this epithet, there was an element of the cultural and climatic similarities between Kashmir and Persia, in addition to the literary ones. However, it has to be acknowledged that the people from Persia and Central Asia who came into the Kashmir for different reasons contributed significantly towards the development of Persian language in Kashmir. Thus, due to this migration and the consequent influx of scholars from Central Asia and Persia, by the time of the Sultanate era, Persian had become the language of the educated elite and consequently was declared the state's official language under Sultan Zainul Abidin (r. 1420-1470), replacing Sanskrit. Gradually, the Persian language assumed such importance in Kashmir that as Chitralkha Zutshi points out some of the most potent expressions of regional belonging from the late eighteenth to the early nineteenth centuries came about to be in Persian.<sup>5</sup> The Sultanate era and the developments Persian underwent during it can thus be regarded as a template on which the Persian language and literature further evolved in Kashmir. There is no doubt that the Persian speaking immigrants to Kashmir did not exclusively consist of religious scholars only, but also consisted of merchants and traders, administrators and artists, musicians and travellers. However, the credit of popularising Persian language and learning goes mainly to those described for the want of a better term as religious missionaries and religious scholars. The reason for using these terms based on religion is that these people supposedly mingled with people of Kashmir and taught the basics of religion

<sup>3</sup> Persio- *dewara ganjoora* -Sultanate  
Sanskrit works, see Abdul Qadir Sarwari *Kashmir mein Farsi Adab ki Tariḳh* Srinagar: Sheikh Mohammed Usman and Sons Tajiran-i Kutb, 2012, p. 29.

<sup>4</sup> M Ashraf Bhat, *The Changing Language Roles and Linguistic Identities of the Kashmiri Speech Community* *nihali*

*irshad diwan* Qadir Sarwari, *Kashmir mein Farsi Adab ki Tariḳh*, p. 29-30.

<sup>5</sup> *Iran-*, see *Ibid.*, p. 28.

<sup>6</sup>

the famous Baba Mir Uvays composed his verses in Persian. See Chitralkha Zutshi, *Languages of Belonging*, p.27.

to them. In matters of its development, Persian became the language of various literary and poetic compositions and scholars in courts ~~and~~ *khanqahs* played an important role. However, in addition to them, there are several instances of individual personalities not associated with either the courts or *khanqahs* producing compositions in Persian.

Thus Persian language in Kashmir has been seen as intimately linked to Islam, and understandably so. However this is a rather simplistic notion, a picture which needs to be further clarified and complicated. The connection between the two is so well entrenched in the historiography that Kashmiri Pandits are shown by everyone as naturally dis-inclined towards Persian learning and knowledge. Persian learning when undertaken by Pandits is then seen as something extra-ordinary and indicative of the influence Persian exercised in different aspects of life, particularly so in the elite spheres and matters of courtly culture. This connection between religion and language needs further explanation, particularly when it can be shown that Kashmir was, well before the Sultanate era, already well-connected in economic and political terms with areas of the Persian world and was already familiar with a Persianate culture.<sup>7</sup>

The spread and proliferation of Persian language in Kashmir was also part of the historical, religio-cultural and economic processes. Since the early period, a continuum already existed that connected the regions of now-distinct polities of Kashmir, Iran and Central Asia.<sup>8</sup> It can be assumed that the linguistic influences and exchanges followed the economic, cultural and religious exchanges between these regions. These exchanges had started very early in ancient India and can also be traced to the times of Hindu rulers of Kashmir, even though there is a tendency to assume that the Central Asian and Persian connections to the land of Kashmir were not older than the medieval times. Sometimes a particular religion i.e. Islam is regarded as the central focus around which other terms of contact such as culture, trade and commerce, exchange of ideas related to political institutions between the

<sup>7</sup> -Sultanate connections with Persia and Central Asia, see SL Shali, *History and Archaeology of Kashmir through the Ages*, New Delhi: Indus Publishing, 1979; *Essays in Indian Proto History*, (Ed.) D.P Aggarwal, Dilip K Chakrabarti, Delhi: B.R Publishing Corporation, 1979; S.C Ray, *Early History and Culture of Kashmir*, New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1969.

<sup>8</sup> Ishaq Khan *Influences in Kashmir in the Sultanate Period 1320-1519*, *Islamic Culture* Vol.1, Jan. 1977 and Mohibbul Hassan, *Kashmir Under the Sultans*, p. 253.

Central Asia and Persia on the one hand and Kashmir on the other is traced. Thus, exchanges of all sorts are traced to a contact that is considered as mainly religious in nature, more specifically Islamic. These kinds of arguments are found in contemporary medieval texts, mainly the ones belonging to *tahkir* genre<sup>9</sup> and modern communal histories also seem to have followed suit.

It is argued here that this approach has multiple drawbacks. First, the synonymy of Islam with Persian language in the Kashmir is historically inaccurate. Second, such a simplistic approach reduces broad-spectrum exchange of ideas and institutions related to diverse fields of art and architecture, language and literature, kingship and the organisation of political theories and so on to the instrumentality of religion, in this case, Islam.<sup>10</sup> It needs to be restated that the religious aspect cannot be attributed with a pivotal role in determining the nature and kind of ideas that flowed into Kashmir from these two regions.

Modern historiography attributes the developments in medieval history of Kashmir a great deal to Central Asian and Persian contacts.<sup>11</sup> Mohammed Ishaq Khan, Abdul Qayoom Rafiqi, GMD Sufi, Mohibbul Hasan, PNK Bamzai, to name a few amongst many others have highlighted the importance of Persian and Central Asian connections for an understanding of the Kashmiri history and religious interaction as part of a broad-based economic and socio-cultural exchange. All these scholars agree that the linkages between the two regions dated to pre-Sultanate times, well before Islam became the dominant religion in Kashmir. Yet the arrival of Sufis from Central Asia and Persia is treated as heralding a new era in the relationship between the two regions, with Kashmir now seen as becoming one of the centres of Persio-Islamic culture post-1339, the date of establishment of the Sultanate. For instance, Mohammed Ishaq Khan remarks that it was not until the foundation of the

<sup>9</sup>For example, see how the author *Tahkirat-al Ahbab*, the biographer of Shamsuddin Araki sees the arrival of the Sufi saint Kashinath Pandit, *A Muslim Missionary in Medieval Kashmir* (Being the English Translation of *Ahbab*), New Delhi: Asian Eurasian Human Rights Forum, 2009.

<sup>10</sup> For instance, Sayyid Ali Hamadani, while seen as the *baan-i-islam* (founder of Islam) in the Kashmir can be alternatively seen as one who contributed diversely in varied fields like arts and crafts, political theories, and language in Kashmir. For a brief analysis of the overall Central

Mohibbul Hassan, *Kashmir Under the Sultans* .

<sup>11</sup> Ishaq Khan, *Perspectives on Kashmir* , p. 35.

Sultanate in 1320 that Kashmiri s ties with centres of Persian culture became close. <sup>12</sup>

Thus the subtext emphasized has been the Muslim element of the Sultanate that is held responsible for playing a role in the development of relations between these regions.

There is nothing wrong in concluding that Islam as a religion played a role in cementing the relations between the two regions. Indeed, historically it is quite obvious that a large number of religious personalities did indeed enter the Kashmir during the Sultanate times and played different roles in the manner in which the society and polity of medieval Kashmir emerged. Yet, it needs to be made clear that this in no sense whatsoever constituted a novel development in terms of historical linkages between these regions. Interaction of different types- including the religious interaction- existed well before the Sultanate times. For example, an analysis of early forms of Naga worship and Buddhism reflect this interaction between the two regions.<sup>13</sup> An approach that explicitly marks out the Sultanate-era migrations from Central Asia and Persia to Kashmir as a novel phenomenon that only a particular religion effected needs to be re-examined and critiqued.

While as it is a known historical fact that religions have played the role of binding together people, the assertion that this development took place only in medieval times at a moment when Islam was the dominant religion credits Islam as solely responsible for developing such a kind of relation. It also implicitly means that the evangelic spirit otherwise inherent in almost all religions traditions somehow fructified only in the case of Islam, in that only Muslims acting as missionaries journeyed from and to Kashmir. If we analyse the historical developments through which the regions of Persia, Central Asia and Kashmir together went, more specifically in the case of religious interactions, it instantly becomes evident that the migrations of Muslim missionaries from Central Asia and Persia to Sultanate Kashmir was not a novel development, rather it constituted a continuity in terms of the historical relations between these regions since early times. Right from the Neolithic times Kashmir has had connections with lands like north China, Central Asia, some

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 160.

<sup>13</sup> For a summary of pre-sultanate religious interaction between the regions of Kashmir, Persia

sites in Russia, and also in Afghanistan and Iran. Writing about the pre-Islamic religious interaction, Mushtaq A. Kaw remarks that the process of Kashmir's multi-vector amalgamation with the outer world commenced with the importation of primitive forms of snake and fire worship from Iran.<sup>15</sup> Similarly it was either from Kashmir or their Gandhara capital in Taxila that they (Buddhist monks) transported Buddha's symbols and images to Central Asia and China.<sup>16</sup> Be it the case of early forms of worship or religions like Buddhism, religious interactions between the regions of Central Asia, Persia and Kashmir is as old as the history of these regions itself. Thus, the approach advocated here is that in light of these already well-established traditions of religious interactions, the medieval Sultanate-era connections between the regions of Central Asia, Iran and Kashmir need to be contextualised and located as being part of a historical continuum rather than as constituting a break.

<sup>14</sup> R.N Kaw, *The Neolithic Culture of Kashmir*, p. 227.

<sup>15</sup> M.A Kaw,

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*



## **Persian in Kashmir: Recorded Instances of Early Contacts**

*Tarikh i Bayhaqi*, an eleventh century Persian work<sup>17</sup> records that Tilak, the son of Kashmiri Hindu barber in the court of Sultan Mehmud of Ghazna, could write Persian and Hindawi and was assigned the translation of Persian and Hindi works.<sup>18</sup> This is one of the earliest recorded instances of an already set pattern of a larger and multi-faceted inter-regional interaction between the regions of Kashmir, Persia and Central Asia. By the time Rinchen, the first Muslim Sultan of Kashmir who came to power after migrating from Tibet, the region was no stranger to the Persian language as Kashmir's established contacts with Central Asia, a place where Persian was widely circulated, had made Kashmiris familiar with the language. By this time the region of Kashmir registered the Persian scholars, including Bulbul Shah, the Suhrawardiya saint credited with the conversion of Rinchen, the first Muslim Sultan of Kashmir and Ahmed Allama, author of *Fatwa i Shihabi* and *Al-Shihab al Thaqib* who is said to have stayed in Kashmir till the times of Sultan Shihabuddin (r. 1355-1373).<sup>19</sup> Persian language spread as a standardized and well-developed medium of literary expression in Kashmir partly owing to the activities of Sufis and other Islamic religious figures that entered the Kashmir in the Sultanate era (1339-1586). Owing to its widespread use, Persian even became ingrained in the local Kashmiri language as well.<sup>20</sup>

## **The Kashmiri Sultanate Courts and the Persian Language**

The connection between a particular court setting and the events that unfolded under a particular king on the one hand and the development of a particular language and literature on the other are, the least to say, complex. Yet in some cases, as it will be attempted below, the two did have a direct relationship as in case of medieval

<sup>17</sup> Written by Abul Fazl Bayhaqi (d.1077) who was employed at the court of the Sultan Mehmud of Ghazna (997-1030). Out of his several-volume history of the Ghaznavid Sultans, only one dealing with the reign of Sultan Masud (1030-41) has survived.

<sup>18</sup> Quoted in Qadir Sarwari, *Kashmir mein Farsi Adab ki Tarikh* p. 26. Also see Iqtidar Hussain Siddiqi, *Indo-Persian Historiography Up to the Thirteenth Century* Delhi: Primus Books, 2010, p. 10.

<sup>19</sup> Khawaja Muhammad Azam Diddamari (trans. from Persian into Urdu by Shamsuddin Ahmad), *Khawaja Muhammad Azam Dydari Kashmiri ki Mashur Farsi Tarikh Waqiat-i Kashmir ka Urdu Tarjamah* Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir Islamic Research Centre, 2001, p.84.

<sup>20</sup> Several instances can be cited in which Persian words found their way into Kashmiri the local language. For examples see Qadir Sarwari, *Kashmir mein Farsi Adab ki Tarikh* , p.30.

Kashmir. Some of the factors that assumed significance in the spread and development of Persian in Sultanate Kashmir were the personal inclinations of the Sultan, his learning and education, his policies about the Persian-speaking immigrants, his attitude towards men of Persian learning, and the institutions established, both by the Sultan directly as well as by other personalities. Besides when we talk of the court, it is not just the policies and tastes of the individual Sultan we should be looking at, we should be including the Sultan's family, the princes and the nobles and other higher officials also as potentially significant players in these matters. At the same time, relating the status and growth of Persian in medieval Kashmir to the court should by no means imply that the court was the sole major contributor in this process. Rather, it is acknowledged that the dynamics of the spread and development of the Persian language were much more varied and related to diverse fields, besides the king and the court. Yet at the same time, by relating the story of Persian to the Sultan and the court, it is acknowledged that the court, as a central political authority of its times could in fact, in a significant way determine the pace and intensity of the spread and development of the language. Thus follows an account of the political transition in the Sultanate era and the stages Persian language underwent simultaneously. Besides literature, Persian started to be used in other ventures of knowledge dissemination, gradually becoming the language of the state, judiciary and communication as well. Subsequently, Sultan Zainul Abidin (r.1420-1470) made it the official state language, replacing Sanskrit. Persian further developed under the Mughals, owing to their Persian connections, and with their rule extending over India; it assumed the status of a significant language throughout the East.

#### **Persian under the Shahmiri Sultans (1339-1561)**

The spread and development of the Persian language was directly related to a few personalities at the Kashmiri court. Even as the reigns of Shah Mir (r.1339-42) and Sultan Shihabuddin (r.1355-73) had a positive impact on the spread of the language owing to the political stability, it was the personality of Sultan Qutubuddin that was very important in this regard. The era of Sultan Qutubuddin (r.1373-89) can be seen as the beginning of the evolution of Persian literature. Three important factors contributed to this. One, the personal inclination of the Sultan towards Persian learning, reflected in the fact that he is said to have been a poet himself. Second, the Sultan established a huge city in his name, Qutubuddinpora which became a centre of

Persian learning and scholarship. Third, in this city a school ( *darul-uloom*) was also established and this school became a centre of Persian learning and knowledge. This institution was instrumental in further developing the Persian language in Kashmir. <sup>21</sup> Similarly, Sultan Sikandar's reign (r.1389-1413) was also important in regard for the development of Persian in Kashmir. The Sultan was himself a patron of learning and scholarship and promoted it by patronising a range of scholars, poets and saints. <sup>22</sup>

Sultan Zainul Abidin's reign, besides being remarkable for developments in political and cultural terms was equally remarkable for the development of scholarly tradition and learning. Besides Kashmiri scholars from Iran and Turkistan as well were also patronized in his court. Moulana Kabir, a prominent scholar set up a *darul-uloom* in Noushehra, which developed as a centre of learning in both Persian and Arabic languages. <sup>24</sup> Students from as far as Iran and Turkistan came to the Kashmir in this connection. Another important step in this direction was the establishment of a translation bureau by the Sultan. This bureau translated Sanskrit as well as Arabic books into Persian. This endeavour, while adding to general culture of knowledge and learning in the Kashmir had a positive effect on the Persian language itself. Sultan Zainul Abidin himself used to recite poetry in Arabic as well as Persian. After him, Sultan Haider Shah (r.1470-72) also patronised Persian literature in his court. It has been said that the Sultan used to give stipends to Pandit in order to persuade them to pursue Persian, and later on appointed them on high positions, encouraging the Pandits of Kashmir to take up Persian. Sultan Haider Shah also used to take interest in Persian poetry. According to GMD Sufi, the Sultan had compiled a collection of his own poetry which however did not survive. After him, Sultan Hassan Shah's reign (1472-84) constituted an important time in regards of development of Persian in the Kashmir. The Sultan was himself interested in scholarly activities. The influx of scholars from Iran and Central Turkistan continued under

<sup>21</sup> See Mohibbul Hassan, *Kashmir Under the Sultans*

<sup>22</sup> For a list of the religious personalities patronised by Sultan Sikander, see Mohibbul Hassan, *Kashmir Under the Sultans*, p.63-64.

<sup>23</sup> For references to Sulta

*Kashmir and its People: Studies in the Evolution of Kashmiri Society* New Delhi: A.P.H Publishing Corporation, 2004; Hangloo, *State in Medieval Kashmir*.

<sup>24</sup> GMD Sufi writes that Maulana Kabir also held the office of *Shiekh ul Islam* besides heading *Kashir: Being a History of Kashmir From the Earliest Times to Our Own*, Delhi: Light and Life Publishers, 1974, Vol I, p. 162.

him. Different steps taken by Zainul Abidin towards the development of Persian learning and knowledge were continued by Sultan Hassan Shah. Further, the royal women also contributed to the patronage of Persian. For instance, the Sultan's mother Gul Khatun established a *madrassa* on the banks of Dal Lake. Shah Begum, the wife of Malik Itoo, a wazir in the court of Hassan Shah also established a *madrassa*.

Civil war and unrest in the following period hampered the production of literature in the court, even as Qazi Ibrahim authored *Tarikh-i Qalmar-o-Kashmirin* 1514. It was with the takeover of Mirza Haider Dughlat that Kashmir again witnessed an era of development of Persian language and literature. Mirza Dughlat himself compiled his famous *Tarikh-i Rashidi*, in addition to composing other works.

### **Persian under the Chaks (1556-1583)**

Under the Chaks, Persian flourished again owing mainly to a large influx of Persian religious scholars, a trend already set during the Sultanate era, but further accelerated under the Chaks. Chak rulers patronised the Persian learning and knowledge, partly owing to their personal inclination towards literature and poetry. For instance, Husain Shah (r.1563-70) and Yousuf Shah (r.1579-8) both were poets in their own right. Under Husain Shah, a few Persian poets made their mark, notable among them being poets like Mulla the First, Mulla the Second, Mulla Mehdi, Baba Talib Asfahani.

Baba Daud Khaki (d.1587) and Shaykh Yaqub Sarfi (d.1592) were among notable scholarly personalities in this time, both of whom authored a number of books both in Persian as well as in Arabic. Baba Daud wrote among others *Dastur-us Salikinas* a commentary on his own works, *Wird-ul Murideen*. Two saints, Khawaja Hassan and Khawaja Ishaq, both of whom spent time under the guidance of Shaikh Hamza Makhdum wrote their commemorations of their saint *Raihat-ut Talibeen* and *Chilchilat-ul Arifeen* respectively. Some important *tarikhs* were written under the Chaks which included the one by Sayyid Ali. The *Tarikh* commenced with the arrival of Sayyid Ali Hamadani and ended with the mention of Shaikh Nuruddin and his successors *Baharistan-i Shahis* the other important *tarikh* written in this period.

## **Political circumstances and development of Persian in Sultanate Kashmir**

Besides the political factor, the development and proliferation of Persian language in the Sultanate-era Kashmir as a process had a range of dynamics. Some of these dynamics related directly to the political circumstances in the Sultanate-era Kashmir. In times of political stability, Persian spread and developed primarily on two accounts, one, the court patronage of Persian-speaking poets, scholars, at times works by the Sultans themselves, and second, influx of different Persian-speaking immigrants into Kashmir from parts of Iran and Central Asia belonging to different walks of life, the religious missionaries, administrators. On the other hand, one might assume that the absence of a centralised political authority and a weak court culture might have led to a negative impact on the spread and development of the language. However the case, paradoxical as it may seem was quite the contrary. The Persian language spread and developed equally well in politically uncertain and unstable times. Again this happened mainly due to two developments that had very much to do with the decline of a centralised political authority. One, a state structure at the centre led to internal chaos and a weakening of the border defences. This provided an opportunity to a number of potential invaders and adventurers who turned out to be promoters of the language. A perfect example of this being Mirza Haider Dughlat, the author of *Tarikh-i Rashidi* who after wandering about in different areas decided to arrive in the Kashmir. After settling down here, he compiled his work. Second, as Chitrlekha Zutshi has pointed out, the decline of the authority of the central court led to an intensification of intra-Sufi competition. This competition manifested itself in the literary field as well, the medium being Persian. Thus were produced a number of Persian works in the sixteenth century, otherwise a period of uncertain political times with shifting dynasties and persons in power and a weak court.

### **The Authors: Men of Power, Learning and Status**

The texts under study were written by persons with a prominent status in religious and/or political sphere. While Baba Daud Khaki, Muhammed Ali Kashmiri were

<sup>25</sup> Zutshi, , p.29.

prominent mainly in the religious sphere in their times, others like Malik Haider Chadurah were political personalities who directly exercised power through the official positions they held in the administration of Kashmir. In many cases as would be discussed below, the personal profiles and their respective personalities combined the political and religious roles in different capacities. In fact in most of the cases, the two reinforced each other and in some cases, the two derived from each other.

Baba Daud Khaki, the author of *Dastur-us Salikin* originally belonging to the medieval Kashmiri scribal caste of Ganie, was brought up in the company of prominent personalities such as Moulana Raziuddin and Mulla Shams-ud din Pal, and initially gained his livelihood as a scribe.<sup>26</sup> Soon he became a well-known scholar in traditional learning, and got access to the Sultanate court. This position helped him to get married into one of the most prominent families of his time, the Bayhaqi Sayyids. He also became the tutor for the children of the Chak royal family.<sup>27</sup> On the other hand, his relation with the prominent saints of his times, Shaikh Hamza Makhdum and Baba Hard Reshi developed. Baba Daud Khaki wrote books in honour of both these saints.<sup>28</sup> Further, one of his works, *Risala-i Ghusaliyah Yusuf Shahi*, was a panegyric praise of the Chak ruler, Yusuf Shah (r.1578-1586). By the time of Sheikh Hamza's death in 1576 till his own death in 1586, Baba Daud Khaki remained as his successor, literal as well as spiritual, and in turn came to have a group of prominent saints such as Baba Nasibuddin Ghazi, Haji Daud, Khawaja Masud Pampori, and Sheikh Mohd Saalim as his dedicated followers and future successors.<sup>29</sup>

Sayyid Ali, the author of *Tarikh-i Sayyid Ali* was the son of Sayyid Mohammed Kashmiri, the *mutawalli* (custodian) of the famous and an all-important shrine in Kashmir, the Khanqah-i Mualla during the reign of Sultan Mohammed Shah (1484-1537). Sayyid Mohammed Kashmiri, the author's father was married to the sister of Sultan Nazuk Shah (r.1540-52). The author also traced his descent to the family of the most famous personality associated with the spread of Islam in Kashmir,

<sup>26</sup> For a brief life sketch of Baba Daud Khaki (trans. from Persian into Urdu by Qari Saifuddin), *Dastur-us Salikin*, Srinagar: Maktaba Ilm wa Adab, 2008, p.19.

<sup>27</sup> Zutshi, , p. 31.

<sup>28</sup> Baba Daud Khaki wrote *Dastur-us Salikin* for Shaikh Hamza Makhdum and *Qasida-i Lamiya* about Baba Hardi Rishi.

<sup>29</sup> *Dastur-us Salikin*, p. 21.

Sayyid Ali Hamadani. Sayyid Ali and his father later on came to be the advisors of Mirza Haider Dughlat, the Mughal Governor in Kashmir from 1541- 1551.

Mohammed Ali Kashmiri, the author of *Taufat-al Ahbab* was the nephew of a close disciple of the Nurbhakhshiyya saint Shamsuddin Araki and a student of some of the famous teachers of his times, viz., Mulla Fazil Rumi, Mulla Hafiz Baseer and Mir Husain Munjim. At the age of five, he was introduced to the famous Nurbhakhshiyya saint, Shamsuddin Araki and the author recounts his childhood spent in the courtyard of Shamsuddin Araki. Ali Kashmiri grew up to be a prominent religious scholar of his times and acted in various capacities as Araki's ambassador to the court of Sultan Fateh Shah (r.1486-95/97), managing the affairs of the *Zadibal khanqah*. He was also in-charge of supervising number of mosques, *waqf* grants and lands attached to them, besides acting a teacher and supervising *hilla-nashini* (solitary worship and meditation) at the hospice.

Malik Haider Chadurah was born in a family that traced its descent to Prithichand, an ancient ruler of Jammu and Kishtwar, who belonged to the Chandrabansis (the lunar race).<sup>30</sup> The author served the Kashmiri Sultan Yousuf Shah Chak (1579-1586) for twenty-four years as a *faujdar* of his *parganas* in the Doab and crushed a rebellion by the local *amindar*.<sup>31</sup> He was also called in for an audience with Emperor Akbar. The Mughal ruler, Jehangir bestowed the author with the titles of *Rais-ul Mulk* and *Chagatai* as a reward for protecting the future Nur Jehan after her husband Sher Afghan was killed.<sup>32</sup> Even though there is no definite knowledge about the name of the author *Biharistan-i Shahi* it has been argued that he was a dependent of Sayyid Shah Abdul Ma ali, a prominent Bayhaqi Sayyid, who played an active part in pre-Mughal Kashmir and then served in the Mughal administration under Raja Man Singh.<sup>33</sup> Later on he took employment under Malik Haider Chadurah and was conferred a *mansab* and a *jagir*. According to Mohibbul Hassan, the author

<sup>30</sup> For an account of the life of Malik Haider Chadurah, see Mohibbul Hassan, *Kashmir Under the Sultans*, p. 8.

<sup>31</sup> According to the translator of his text, Malik Haider crushed the rebellion *subyindar*, Raja Darner. See Haider Malik Chadurah, (trans. from Persian by Raja Bahadur) *History of Kashmir*, Delhi: Bhavna Prakashan, 1991, p. xii.

<sup>32</sup> For reference to the services of Haider Malik to the Mughals, see *History of Kashmir* p. xii. Also see Mohibbul Hassan, *Kashmir Under the Sultans*, p. 08.

<sup>33</sup> Sufi, *Kashmir*, p. 24; Charles Storey, *Persian Literature: a Bibliographical Survey*, Vol 1, Issue 1, Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, 1970, p. 679.

might have been working under the Bayhaqi Sayyid Akbar Haideri, one of the translators of *Baharistan-i Shahi* has described its author as religious scholar, well versed in the Quranic learning and the Hadith and a renowned personality of his time.

## **A Fractured Literary World: The Authorial Diversity of Our Sources**

The authors whose works we have taken up do have a similarity in the sense that none of them was a common man, rather all them were men of merit and scholarship, belonging to families that had considerable status in their times, as discussed above. However besides this commonality of the prominence of their families and personalities, our concerned authors did not have much in common. In fact, as the following discussion will make it clear, these individuals were different from each other in several ways. A closer look at the background of these authors will illustrate the point. Baba Daud Khaki, Muhammed Ali Kashmiri and Malik Haider Chadurah were born in Kashmir itself and the family of the author of *Baharistan-i Shahi* is said to have migrated into Kashmir from Ghazni during the reign of Sultan Zainul Abidin. Similarly Sayyid Ali belonged to the family of Sayyids from Central Asia.

Baba Daud Khaki is seen in present times primarily as a religious figure and a Sufi saint. This image is not very different from his actual image in his own life. Belonging to a scribal class, he was not actively associated with the court activities and spent his time in the company of his master Hamza Makhdum, compiling books that are better seen as Sufi religious works. Mohammed Ali Kashmiri was a disciple of the Nurbakhshiyya saint Shamsuddin Araki. A prominent religious personality of his time, though not as famous as Baba Daud Khaki, he came to supervise the *khanqahat* Zadibal besides managing the waqf grants and the landholdings associated with the shrine. Much of his time, right from his childhood was spent in and around the hospice at Zadibal, as evidenced by accounts of his childhood days in *Taufat-al Ahbab*. He was not very actively associated with the court either, even as at some instances, he had to visit the court as ambassador of Shamsuddin Araki. Sayyid Ali belonged to the families, both on his paternal and

<sup>34</sup> Mohibbul Hassan, *Kashmir Under the Sultans*, p. 07.



maternal sides that were directly involved in political and the religious happenings of their times. He was at the same time closely associated with the famous Sufi saint Sayyid Ali Hamadani. His father being the *mutawalli* (custodian) of Khanqah-i Mualla, the author served directly in various positions in the government. Malik Haider Chadurah was born in a ruling family, came to be directly at the helm of affairs himself in various capacities. Malik Haider spent his life in the employment of the Mughals and Yusuf Shah Chak, served as *faujdar* and was bestowed with honorary titles by Emperor Jehangir.

## **Contexts and Composition of the Texts**

The second half of the sixteenth century in Kashmir witnessed a range of significant yet inter-related developments. Primarily centred in the political scenario, these developments occurred in the socio-religious sphere as well. A related development was an ever-increasing output of Persian texts covering a range of subjects. These textual works did many things at the same time; they dwelt in and constructed the past in their own ways, represented and at the same time tried to shape the present and reflected a definite concern for the future as well. Also as the dates of compilation of these texts are not very far from each other- all of them being written within a period of around seventy years, we can expect to find certain common themes being talked about in all of these works. All of these works were written while the authors were in Kashmir, and hence can be expected to have experienced more or less the same circumstances in terms of the dominant political and the socio-religious developments. Yet beyond these shared concerns, there was not much that was in common between these works.

In fact, a closer look at the individual authors and their respective works will show that the authors were motivated by a range of reasons to compose their works. Besides the general common context of the works, the individual position of the authors was varied as is reflected in the works themselves.

### ***Dastur-us Salikin***

*Dastur-us Salikin*, literally translated as the Rules of Saints/ Elders by Baba Daud Khaki was written as a treatise in praise of his master in the *Suhrawardiyya*,

Shaykh Hamza Makhdum. Shaikh Hamza (1494-1576) was initiated into the Suhrawardiya order by Sayyid Jalal-ud Din Bukhari and took over the order after the latter's death in 1542. Sheikh Hamza was instrumental in the development and spread of this order in the sixteenth century Kashmir, even though it had emerged way back in the fourteenth century in Kashmir. He was born in Baramulla in 1494 at a time when Sultan Muhammed Shah was the ruler of Kashmir. Shaikh Hamza's lineage was traced to the Chandrabansi ruling dynasty and grew up learning Islamic sciences and received spiritual training at the hands of Shaikh Ismail Kubravi at his *khanqah*. This *khanqah* was established by an influential government official Mali Shamsuddin Chak. Subsequently, Sheikh Hamza Makhdum was trained in a madrasa, Dar-al Shifa, a religious seminary founded by Sultan Hassan Shah. He died in 1576 in the reign of Ali Shah Chak and was buried on the slope of Koh-i Maran (Hariparbat).

Other such works that were written around the life of Shaykh Hamza by his disciples were *Rahat-at Talibin* by Khawaja Hasan Qari, *Chilchilat-al Arifin* by Hasan Qari's son Khwaja Ishaq Qari, *Qasidat-ul Murshidin* by Miran Bazaz also known as Khawaja Mir, *Risala-i Sultaniyya* by Khawaja Shaikh Ahmad Chagli. These works were produced as a part of series of works that sought to capture the different aspects of the life of Shaikh Hamza Makhdum. The present work we are concerned with was meant as an interpretation of another work written before *Wird-ul Muridin* literally the daily recital of disciples by the same author. This was not the only work Baba Daud Khaki wrote. In fact, besides penning down one work for his Sufi master, Baba Daud Khaki wrote many other works, both in prose as well as in poetry, dealing with a range of subjects of religious importance. These include *Wird-al Muridin* and its commentary, *Dastur-us Salikin*, both expressions of the life, teachings, supernatural feats, the *karamat*, and spiritual status of Shaykh Hamza Makhdum. Another work *Qasidah-i Lamiyya* and its commentary the *Rishi Nama* are based on the life of another prominent disciple of Shaykh Hamza Makhdum, Baba Hard Reshi. *Risalah-al Daruriyyah* and *Qasidah Ghushl-i Yusuf Shahi* focus on issues of day-to-day practices as viewed from the Sharia view-point. It is to be noted that the *Qasidah Ghushl-i Yusuf Shahi* was dedicated to the then Chak ruler Sultan Yusuf Shah.

### ***Taufat-al Ahabab***

*Taufat-al Ahabab* is a prose hagiography of Nurbakhshiyya saint Shamsuddin Araki written by his disciple Muhammed Ali Kashmiri. Written during the second half of

Sultan Husain Shah Chak's rule, it is a comprehensive work centered on and around the personality of Shamsuddin Araki. Like the above mentioned work on Shaikh Hamza by Baba Daud Khaki *Taufat-al Ahbabis* fully dedicated to the life and personality of the Nurbakhshiyya saint Shamsuddin Araki. The saint's life is treated from different angles and his life events, miracles, travels and preaching activities are treated in detail. The work also details his relations with various other personalities- religious as well as political which the author came across in his life and activities. Since the saint, like many others of his time and age was a wanderer and traveller, there are glimpses of aspects of life in different regions of Central Asia, Iran, Afghanistan, Tibet and Kashmir which he was supposed to have visited.

This work can be considered as a comprehensive encyclopaedia and reference work on the various aspects of the Nurbakhshiyya faith. The work also sheds light on the connections between Shamsuddin Araki and his *pir* Shah Qasim, their emissaries, training of the devotees, their proliferation and working of the sect, the rulers of their time and their relations with the Sufis and the ulema, the works of constructing mosques and *khanqahs* and related works.

### ***Tarikh-i Sayyid Ali***

*Tarikh-i Sayyid Ali* is the earliest Persian *tarikh* written after Yousuf Shah Chak ascended the throne for the first time in 1579. The author belonged to the family of Mir Sayyid Ali Hamadani. He was the son of Sayyid Mohammed Kashmiri who was at the helm of the shrine at Khanqah-i Mualla during the reign of Sultan Mohammed Shah. Sayyid Mohammed Kashmiri was also an author as well, with the Persian work *Tohfah-al Majalis* attributed to him in which he traces his descent to Sayyid Taj-ud din Hamadani. This provides the descent lineage of Sayyid Ali as well. Further, Sayyid Mohammed Kashmiri was married to the sister of Sultan Nazuk Shah. The author's lineage is thus traced to the Shahmiri Sultans as well. The work treats in detail the activities of the Hamadani Sayyids and the accompanying persons as well. The main concern of the work seems to be an attempt to record the life histories and the activities of saints like Ali Hamadani, Mir Hamadani and their disciples and contemporaries. That is why the *Tarikh* starts from the reign of Sultan Shihab-ud din, a time when the Sayyids started coming into Kashmir. There is also a detailed mention of the Rishis into Kashmir.

It is also evident from the work that the author consulted other Persian and Sanskrit works of his time such as *Jainatarangini* by Jonaraja, Srivara Pandit's *Rajatarangini*, Haji Baba Udham's *Maqamaat-i Awliya* and Qazi Ibrahim's *Tarikh*. Sayyid Ali was a Baihaqi Sayyid and participated in the power struggles against the Bukhara Sayyids who stayed away from power politics. Sultan Nazuk Shah was the maternal uncle of Sayyid Ali and his mother was the younger sister of Sultan Sayyid Muhammed who was the close companion of Mirza Haider Dughlat and fought against his opponents.

The work has two distinct components. One, a narrative which commences with the advent of Sayyid Hamadani and concludes with the coming of Ghazi Chak to power in 1559. Second, a narrative of the spiritual leaders of Kashmir belonging to the Sufi and Rishi tradition. There is no internal or external evidence for ascertaining the date of the work.

### ***Baharistan-i Shahi***

The name of the author *Baharistan-i-Shahi* is not known. He was apparently a dependent of a Kashmiri, Syed Shah Abdul Ma ali, the son of Syed Mubarak Khan who figures prominently in the later part of the work. Abdul Ma ali played an active part in the pre-Mughal Kashmir and then in the Mughal Kashmir, he served under Raja Man Singh. He later on took employment under Malik Haider Chadurah and was conferred a *mansab* and a *jagir*. There is no preface to the work. It begins with a short account of the Hindu period and then moves onto the Muslim period. The narrative provides no details from the death of Zainul Abidin (d.1470) to that of Mirak Hassan Shah (1484). After the death of Ali Shah Chak (1578), the narrative is rich in detail. The title is found at the end of the work in a sentence along with a chronogram that indicated the date of the completion of the work, which is 1614. Mohibbul Hassan in his *Kashmir Under the Sultans* writes that nothing is known about the author of the work. The work covers a period from Rinchen's reign up to the year 1614. The events before the so-called Muslim phase are recorded only in the first few pages. Not much is known about the author except that he probably worked under the Baihaqi *sadaats*. This hypothesis is made on the basis of the fact that he wrote about the Baihaqi *sadaats* in more detail and praised their godliness, valiance and generosity. The work was derived from other works such as Raj and Srivara's works,

besides the ones by Mulla Ahmed Nadiri, Qazi Ibrahim, and Hassan Qari. The work used both the Hijri as well as the Laukik calendar.

### ***Tarikh-i Malik Haider Chadurah***

*Tarikh i Kashmir* was completed in 1620-21. Haider Malik was the son of Hassan Malik who was the son of Kamal-ud Din Malik Muhammad. Haider Malik was born in Chadurah, ten miles south of Srinagar. The family traced its origin to the Chands or the Chandrabansi race to a certain Prithichand and the author that he was his grandfather.

There is no other work besides this that has been attributed to him. The purpose of the work is explicitly stated in the work itself. According to the narrative, the text was intended as an investigation into the details of the author's ancestors and their migration into Kashmir. The work was started in 1618-20 and completed in 1620-21. The work thus actually needs to be seen as an autobiography as much as a history of the rulers of Kashmir from the ancient times. The sources utilized by the author range from Kalhana's *Rajatarangini*, Jonaraja, Mulla Nadiri. The author was an eyewitness of the events in the Chak period.

### **Multiple Timeframes of the Texts: A Comparison**

All our texts were written and completed within a period of around half a century, from 1554 to 1621. The earliest work that we are concerned with, *Dastur-us Salikin* was written between 1554-1555, the last work, *Tarikh-i Malik Haider Chadurah* was completed in 1620. In between this time period were completed three other works. Among the five works, the composition of four of these was started in and around the second half of the sixteenth century. *Dastur-us Salikin* began to be composed in 1554-1555, *Taufat-al Ahabab* in early 1560s, *Tarikh-i Sayyid Ali* in 1579 and *Baharistan-i Shahi* in 1586. Thus three of these were completed well before 1580. The writing of *Baharistan-i Shahi* began in 1586 and was completed in 1614. Thus, in the true sense of the word, only one of our five works, *Tarikh-i Malik Haider Chadurah* is a seventeenth century work and even this was completed in the early decades of the century, that is, by 1620. Yet this work comfortably sits with the corpus of our texts as it deals with the same period as do the other works.

Another way of looking at the works can be classifying them on the basis of one of the most-well-known and frequently used markers in medieval Kashmir history. It would be a classification that would divide our sources on the basis of whether they were written before or after the Mughal takeover of Kashmir by Akbar in 1586. Following this date of the formal Mughal annexation of Kashmir and its incorporation into the Mughal Empire, three of our texts *Daastur-us Salikin*, *Taufat ul Ahbab* and *Tarikh-i Sayyid Ali* were written well before the Mughal takeover in 1586. *Baharistan-i Shahi*, although strictly speaking a post-Mughal work is an interesting case though. The author started its work in 1586, that is, just a year after the Mughal annexation and completed it after a gap of almost three decades in 1614. The last work, *Tarikh-i Malik Haider* is comfortably a post-Mughal work, as its work began in 1618 and was completed in 1621.

The classification is altered however in case we consider the invasion of Mughal Mirza Haider Dughlat a Mughal affair. In wake of the assertions that Mirza Haider Dughlat considered himself a representative of the then Mughal emperor Humayun and considered him as his sovereign, the method of classification based on Akbar's takeover of the Kashmir does not hold. However, as it has been suggested, Mirza Haider Dughlat, while at the head of the affairs of Kashmir (1540-1551) allowed Sultan Nazuk Shah to remain as the sovereign, rather than assume power himself or attribute it to Humayun, the Mughal Emperor of his times. While as traditionally the dates have been set as 1586 and arguments and analysis are based on this date, we need to keep in mind the differences a new approach based on the revised dates can bring to the multiple debates about that crucial phase of the history of Kashmir.

### **The Authors Life and Times**

Baba Daud Khaki was born in 1521 and died in 1585. Muhammed Ali Kashmiri was born in the same period as was the author of *Baharistan i Shahi*. Sayyid Ali was the contemporary of Mirza Haider Dughlat (1499-1550). Haider Malik Chadurah died in 1627. Thus almost all the authors were contemporaries and as such came to witness a lot of the important developments of their times in common. The works they wrote, even if on a varied subjects, had one thing in common: their main focus were the

events of the times the authors lived in. This is of importance to us as we are in a better position to see how the authors observed and represented a particular set of events. The following discussion will try to take a look at the major developments that have been seen as shaping the times that the authors lived in and then wrote about in their works. Even though this is not an attempt to provide a definitive single context for the works we are concerned with, an account of the times the authors lived in is expected to provide an account of the events and major developments so as to provide a background for the works.

The period in which these works were written was one in which the Sultanate was nearing its end after more than two centuries. Founded by Shah Mir, who assumed the title of Sultan Shamsuddin once he ascended the throne as the first Sultan in 1339, the dynasty towards its end witnessed a political chaos, a picture vividly painted in the texts of this period. The main feature of the political life of this period was the presence of multiple centres of power. These were controlled by various noble families, including the Chaks, Magreys, Dars, who had earlier contributed to the centralisation of power and now were leading contenders in a scenario of multi-polar and fragmented political authority. One of the results of the absence of a strong centralised government was that the frontiers once again became sites of contestation. This political scenario became suitable for any potential adventurer to make his way into Kashmir. Added to this was the fact that no single group in this power contest was able to assert itself dominantly. This resulted in each group seeking fresh alliances in the power struggle so as to consolidate and expand their hold. A loosening of the central control over the peripheral areas had several implications. It meant that the rebellious leaders could easily move to these areas and establish themselves there. It also meant that there were more chances of seeking fresh allies outside the Kashmir, who could, in absence of the central authority over the border areas easily make their way into the Kashmir. Control over peripheral and outlying areas became crucial in case of nobles seeking to enlist foreign help. Thus the control of the periphery became crucial for the political destiny of the rebellious nobles. The presence of a weak centre prevented those controlling the centre from exercising direct and decisive control of the outer frontier areas. This was the situation that led to the entry on the political scene of Kashmir of one of our authors, Mirza Haider Dughlat. At the invitation of three Kashmiri nobles Kaji Chak, Abdal Magrey

and Regi Chak, Mirza Haider invaded Kashmir and ruled it for around a decade. According to his own account, this adventure did not prove challenging at all, as he easily made his way into the Kashmir as a dominant power contender with an added support from Kashmiri nobles as well. Political consolidation and expansion that took place under him helped him establish a dominant centre of power in Srinagar, even as challenges from different directions kept him occupied. This consolidation subsequently translated into an expansion as Mirza Haider came to include many outer lying areas of Kashmir into his dominion. His death in 1551 though led to a setback as the Chak dynasty's ascent to power still could not translate into a complete or final control of Kashmir. The ascendance of the Chak dynasty to power could not thus reverse the trend of a decline in the central authority of the central court and remained a far cry from what now came to be seen as the glorious era of Sultan Zainul Abidin. This downslide continued right until the Mughals under Akbar formally annexed Kashmir in 1586 and ended decades-old political uncertainty in Kashmir. The Mughal hold on the Kashmir lasted till 1751. The last of our *Tarikh-i Haider Malik* completed by 1621, thirty-four years after the establishment of the Mughal rule can thus be seen as having been written well in the early years of the rule which lasted for one hundred-sixty seven years.

### **Multiple Contests, Multiple Sites: Conflicts and the Production of Texts**

In Sultanate Kashmiri, intense activity in the political sphere was directly reflected in other areas as well, particularly in the socio-religious and the economic spheres. The connections between the religious and the political were very apparent as the two frequently impacted each other. Even though there can be no straightforward reduction of one to the other. Suffice it to say that the two were crucially important for each other in medieval Kashmir, a time when Kashmir was going through religious changes while at the same time facing political uncertainties as well. The mutual relations of these developments are illustrated when we take a look at the personalities of our authors, for example. Baba Daud Khaki was the tutor of the children of the Chak royal family before he emerged as a prominent Sufi personality, as the leader of the Suhrawardiya Sufi sect in Kashmir. The father of the author of *Tarikh-i Sayyid Ali*



was married to the sister of Sultan Nazuk Shah and at the same time was the custodian of Khanqah-i Mualla. Besides these developments in the political sphere, developments on other fronts, particularly the socio-religious were equally dramatic, with rapidly shifting grounds. These changes were related in a complex manner to the changes in the political scenario. To argue for a case of direct relation or derivation of the socio-religious from the political would be a simplification though. While as the two were related to each other and derived from each other in certain ways, the exact nature of this link, in absence of a full-fledged study, should better be described as that of a complex relation. Rather than subduing the socio-religious to the political, the socio-religious changes had at times dynamics of their own. That is to say, while the religious differences were frequently used by the rulers as means, it did not mean that there were no religious issues as such. In fact it is argued that theoretical differences over religious doctrines did in fact underpin differences in religious communities and sects and made a difference in practice. Not all doctrinal differences though translated into sectarian conflicts of violent nature. It is argued here that the sites of contest between different religious communities and sects were different at different times. For example, there was no battle in which the contenders projected themselves as representing the Hindu faith fighting a supposed Muslim army in our period of study. Similarly this applies to contests between the ulema and the Sufis and the intra-Sufi competitions we witness in sixteenth century Kashmir. This was not the case with the *Shia-Sunni* contest in which case battles were fought between those who claimed to represent the *Shias* and the *Sunnis* on their respective sides. Certain spaces, for instance the royal court, the shrines besides the texts and the followers can be seen as the sites on which the intra-Sufi competition played out.

### **The Religious Context**

This was a time when Islam was gaining more followers in Kashmir. More Islamic religious spaces sprung into prominence across different areas in Kashmir in the forms of mosques, hospices, shrines and madrassas. These developments represented a contest over spaces across Kashmir between those who came to represent the Muslim on the one hand and the Hindus on the other. This inter-religious divide led the authors of our texts to project Kashmir as an Islamic land, a space won over in a contest with the *ṭogis* and *sadhus* as much as with the harsh and uninhabitable geography of Kashmir. These texts, more particularly the ones classified as *tazkiras*

record in detail references to these incidents. The society that our authors lived in was in a time of transition, in which gradual socio-religious re-arrangements and substitutions were taking place. Even as Rinchen had long declared himself a Muslim way back in early fourteenth century and Islam as a religion had won many converts, the Kashmir of our authors' time was one in which there were contestations between different religious traditions.

This inter-religious contest however formed only a part of the story of the second half of the sixteenth century. Intra-religious contests, particularly within Islam which now neared domination in terms of numbers, formed an equally important element of the story. In our period of study, this intra-religion contest was far more intense compared to the inter-religious one. In the period we are concerned with, there was an intense struggle amongst those who claimed to represent and speak for the religion of Islam. This can be seen in three different ways: one, the contest between the *ulema* and the Sufis; second, the intra-Sufi competition; and third, the *Shia-Sunni* contest. The intra-Sufi competition formed one of the important contexts of the *tazkir* works which sought to validate their claims to specific spaces, institutions and positions.

The *Shia-Sunni* rivalry was another dimension of the story. One of our authors charts the journey of this saint into Kashmir and gives us a picture of the *Shia-Sunni* conflicts as he saw it. As GMD Sufi remarks, the *Shia-Sunni* rivalry was one of the main features of the age as were the fights between the two communities a common phenomenon. As Mohibbul Hassan remarks, the sectarian discord between the *Shias* and *Sunnis* played a role in the political instability in the Kashmir which gradually led to the decline of the Sultanate in Kashmir.<sup>35</sup> Thus, one of the frames through which to explain the continuous internal strife, discord and civil war in the second half of the sixteenth century is the fact of the *Shia-Sunni* discord prevalent throughout the period. This situation is well-reflected in the texts we are studying. Works such as *Tarikh-i Sayyid Ali* are full of indictment of the *Shias*. There are derogatory references to the people of this faith as *rafidiyya*. Among our authors, Baba Daud Khaki in fact penned down an account of Ali's displeasure with his followers for reviling the three other companions of the Prophet and the *Ahl-i sunna*

<sup>35</sup> Mohibbul Hassan, *Kashmir Under the Sultans*, p. 279.

*wa Jama*. Again the same author was a part of a group *Sufiulema* who, reacting against the *antSunni* stance of the Chak ruler Yaqub Shah Chak visited Akbar and persuaded him to annex Kashmir into his dominions. The author of *Taufat-al Ahbab* though not explicitly writing against the *Sunnisin* general indicts in his account of sixteenth century Kashmir a number of *Sunniulema* and public figures for obstructing the mission of Mir Shamsuddin Araki in Kashmir.

Much like the case of other conflicts and rivalries, intra-Sufi competition was one of the most visible and the important developments of our period of study. This process coincided with the spread of Islam in Kashmir. As more and more Sufis and other religious personalities arrived into Kashmir from areas of Persia and Central Asia, they began attracting more and more followers. Different personalities came to set their centres at different places, mainly after the hospice of their main Sufi leader. Following the Suhrawardiya saint Sayyid Sharaf -al Din also known as Bulbul Shah, whose time of arrival in the Kashmir is considered in between 1301-1320, subsequently a number of *Sufi silas* with different centres came to establish themselves in Kashmir. Among the main *silsilas* that gained prominence in the subsequent centuries in Kashmir were Kubravi, Suharwardi, Naqshbandi and Nurbhakhshiyya and Qadri orders. Besides these mainstream Sufi orders, the Kashmiri Rishis had a significant presence as well, following their founder, Shaikh Nuruddin, with a significant number of personalities following him. With an ever-increasing number of orders and religious personalities to contend with, each Sufi order sought to produce its own version of the past and thus justify its current position and attempted to attract more and more resources in the form of land donations, grants and custodianships of well established *khanqahs*. This also meant an appropriation of personalities as well as spaces associated with Islam, as manifested in claims laid on persons such as Sayyid Ali Hamadani and Khanqah-i Mualla, for example. This was also the context for an ever-increased number of texts being written, including some of our sources, *Taufat-al Ahbab*, *Tarikh-i Sayyid Ali*, *Dastur-us Salikin*.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>36</sup> As Chitrlekha Zutshi points out, with a rapid decline in the central political authority and resulting political uncertainty, the intra-Sufi competition both for followers as well as patrons grew more intense in Sultanate Kashmir. See Zutshi, *Contested Pasts*, p. 29.

## Conclusion

This chapter aims to provide a general background of the five texts and their authors used in this dissertation. This is aimed to provide a context in which the texts used in this study were produced. Owing to a number of factors, Persian language thrived in Sultanate Kashmir. While as a number of Persian texts were written even before the sixteenth century in Kashmir, the set of texts used in this dissertation as primary sources are the earliest extant Persian sources available. A closer look at the background of the authors illustrates the fact that these texts were produced with a range of purposes. These texts have mainly been divided into two genres of *tarikh* and *tazkira*. A close reading of the texts however illustrates the fact that the texts and their authors are better seen as participating in and deriving their meanings from a shared pool. The idea of a strict distinction between the two on the basis of the genres to which the texts belong, it is argued here, can be misleading.

One of the aims of this chapter has been to highlight the historicity of a broad range of linkages between the regions of Central Asia, Persia and Kashmir.<sup>37</sup> The spread of Persian language in Kashmir is treated as an instance of these historical linkages.

# CHAPTER 3

## Aspects of Kingship in the Persian Texts of Medieval Kashmir

### Introduction

This chapter will discuss some aspects of kingship in medieval Kashmir as discussed in the sixteenth and seventeenth century Persian texts. Certain aspects such as the importance of the king, basic requirements of kingship, character and traits of a king and aspects of relation between religion and politics as highlighted in the texts will be discussed. In studying these, this chapter aims to study the prescribed nature of kingship as discussed in these texts and the manner in which the texts expected the Sultan to rule. More importantly, this discussion is expected to give us an idea of the practices of kingship in Sultanate-era Kashmir. An important part of the chapter would be to discuss how these texts saw the ideas and practices of the Sultanate-era kingship in relation to those of the previous dynasties.

Among the five Persian texts under study in this dissertation, it is *Tarikh-i Malik Haider* that has the strongest position on matters of king's authority and contained detailed discussions on various aspects of kingship. Thus, it is one of the main sources of study of ideas and practices of kingship in Sultanate Kashmir. For debates on different aspects of kingship, this chapter relies more on this text. The viewpoint of other texts on matters of kingship discussed is also included.

### King as a Central Figure in Persian *tarikh* texts

From an implicit statement of the king's importance and role in *the* *tarikh* to an explicit mention of the practical need of a king bringing order and stability amongst

the population, king emerges as an important personality in the Persian texts. Among the most frequently mentioned personalities in the Persian texts of medieval Kashmir is Sultan i.e. the king. Persian texts of medieval Kashmir belonging to the *tarikh* genre have mainly focussed on the political history of their respective times. The kings and their dynasties occupy the centre-stage in the respective accounts of political histories. In their accounts of the history of Kashmir, the king is the most important personality. These works are organised around the reign of the individual kings and their achievements. This is the case with the *tarikh* texts of the sixteenth and seventeenth century Kashmir. For example, *Baharistan-i Shahi* and *Tarikh-Haider Malik* narrate the political history, a history in which the kings featured prominently. What is interesting however is that texts such as *Tarikh-i Sayyid Ali* and *Taufat-al Ahabab*, two sixteenth century Persian works meant to commemorate the lives of Sufi saints Sayyid Ali Hamadani and Shamsuddin Araki respectively also attest to the importance of kings in their narratives. Both the texts weave their narratives on the life and activities of their respective protagonists in tandem with the political history of Kashmir at that time, a history centred around the king and his activities. The account of Shamsuddin Araki's stay in Kashmir in the *Taufat-al Ahabab* while recording Araki's activities in Kashmir also record how the then Sultan of Kashmir, Sultan Hasan Shah received him after his arrival in 1483.<sup>1</sup>

One of the ways in which these Persian texts emphasise the importance of the king is by recording instances of rivalries and struggles amongst the Kashmiris themselves at a time when Kashmir was without a king. By recording such instances, these texts emphasise on the importance of a king in maintaining a basic order and political stability in the society. For instance, the absence of a king after the invasion of Zulju, a thirteenth century Turkish raider into Kashmir is seen by Haider Malik as leading to a situation of chaos in which no one obeyed the other. Similarly, the author of *Baharistan-i Shahi*, a sixteenth century Persian chronicle painted a gloomy picture of Kashmir as a land plunged in chaos and confusion after the death of Sultan Zainul Abidin (r.1420-1470), and a situation of intense conflict among different power groups in Kashmir fighting against each other for power and domination.<sup>3</sup> For

<sup>1</sup> *Taufat-al Ahabab*, p. 98.

<sup>2</sup> *Tarikh-i Haider Malik*, p. 80.

<sup>3</sup> K. *Baharistan-i Shahi: A Chronicle of Mediaeval Kashmir*, Calcutta: Firma KLM Private Limited, 1989.

the author of *Baharistan-i Shahi*, the commencement of a rule happens after a place is settled with people. In his account of the early settlement of Kashmir, he recounts that after the water had been drained off from the *sar*,<sup>4</sup> a king named Tarkash came to rule over the population of Kashmir after its resettlement. The king is at the top of a hierarchy of sixty-four groups of people in ancient Kashmir, which includes besides the Raja, Brahmins, Khatrish, Vaish and Chandals.<sup>5</sup> Besides making implicit statements about the importance of the king, Haider Malik explicitly talks about the importance of the king. Haider Malik mentions the classical Sanskrit logic of the fish as the *raison d'être* of kinship in Kashmir after its origin from a lake as mentioned by Kalhana- the twelfth century author of *Rajatarangini*.<sup>6</sup> In his account, Haider Malik reproduces Kalhana's story of re-settlement of Kashmir by Kashf, the ancient saint of Kashmir, recording how after the draining of the lake and the killing of the demon Jaldev, the saint then brought the Brahmins from India and made the place populated. Within a short period of time, the Brahmins multiplied themselves and were now in need of a ruler in accordance with the sayings: If there is no king, they would have devoured each other. <sup>7</sup>

### **God and the Sultan: The Universal and the Earthly Sovereign**

The Persian texts describe God as the ultimate sovereign. For instance, the author of one of our text, Haider Malik in the very beginning of his text describes God as source of status and authority for the Sultans. God and his word, the Quran are seen in the text as the ultimate sources of kingly authority and status. The Sultan is seen as the *khalifa* (vicegerent) of God on earth. The bestowal of power on the Sultans is considered an act of generosity by God, that is, a sharing of God's divine sovereignty over the universe by bestowing a part of it on the earthly sovereign, the Sultan. The act of assuming kingship by the Sultan is thus seen as coming into being as a result of a divine decision, something resulting due to the fact that God as the

<sup>4</sup> *Sar* refers to a lake, in this case the ancient pond from which Kashmir is said to have in Zutshi, , pp.01-2.

<sup>5</sup> *Baharistan-i Shahi*, tr. Ghulam Muhammad Bhat a *Tarikh-i Kashmir*, Srinagar: Idara-i Umm-un Nabieen, 1997, p. 01.

<sup>6</sup> *Hindu Kingship and Polity in Precolonial India*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, p. 01

<sup>7</sup> *Tarikh-i Haider Malik*, p. 23.

ultimate source of sovereignty decides to do so *Baharistan-i Shahi*, while not explicitly mentioning God in matters of authority and sovereignty implies the same by modifying the origin myth of Kashmir and crediting the draining of water from the pond to three angels sent by the God for the said purpose.<sup>8</sup> Attributing sovereignty to God and describing the Sultan as his representative on earth, the Persian texts of medieval Kashmir were in line with how other Muslim Sultans throughout the Muslim lands in medieval times described themselves and fashioned their authority. All these attempts to link sovereignty of the Sultan with God followed the Quranic injunction: and then We made you successors after them, generations and generations in the land, that We might see how you would work.<sup>9</sup>

On one hand attributing ultimate sovereignty to the God meant emphasising the God's authority as final in relation to all the descendents of Adam that is, the humans including the Sultan. On the other hand, linking the Sultan's sovereignty directly to the God served as a tool to emphasise the Sultan's sovereign status in relation to other human beings and fashioned them as subjects of the Sultan.

The Persian literary world of medieval Kashmir was constituted by authors ranging from those holding the position of governors (Haider Malik) to those known as saints (Baba Daud Khaki). Following this fact, it should be noted that the notions of sovereignty and authority reflected in these texts authors display no uniformity of thought.

For instance, in a significant alteration to the doxological pattern usually used as a preface to Persian texts, Haider Malik inserts the Sultan immediately after the praise of God, an aberration of a pattern in which usually the praise of the God is followed by a mention of the Prophet and his companions and finally the religious figures, *the dema*. The opening passage of the text of Haider Malik is as following

The Lord of Kingdom is worthy of immeasurable gratitude. He bestowed upon humanity the grace according to the verse: We have been benevolent to the progeny of Adam. He elevated the crowns

<sup>8</sup>*Baharistan-i Shahi*, p. 01.

<sup>9</sup>Muhammad Taqi-ud-Din Al Hilali and Muhammad Muhsin Khan, *Translation of the Quran in the English Language* Madinah: King Fahd Complex for the Printing of the Holy Quran, undated, p.271.



of the exalted sultans...Blessed be the Prophet...Blessed be the pious family, his companions and the chosen men of letters. <sup>10</sup>

Haider Malik, significantly enough, rather than following the classical doxological pattern in which the praise of God is followed by the praise of the Prophet and then the Prophet's family and his Companions instead inserts the Sultan immediately after God in his account, thus creating a hierarchy in which the Sultan comes second to the God only, bypassing the Prophet, his family and religious figures. Again, in the above passage, Haider Malik quotes a verse of the Quran in relating the sovereignty of the Sultan to that of the God, a verse that requires, in the interpretation of Haider Malik, the people to subject themselves to the Sultan's authority. Haider Malik translates the *sahib-al amr* (people of the Command) in this verse as the political leadership as embodied in the Sultan. Haider Malik relates the sovereignty of the Sultan to his being *sahib-al amr*, hence providing a divine legitimation to his authority.

A complete contrast to this exalted and sacred status of the Sultan in *Tarikh-Haider Malik* can be found in *Dastur-us Salikin*, a *tazkira* on the personality of the sixteenth century Suhrawardiya saint of Kashmir, Shiekh Hamza Makhdam. This text, *Dastur-us Salikin* was written by his disciple, Baba Daud Khaki. Of crucial importance is the manner in which the text completely excludes the Sultan from the definition of *sahib-al amr*, somebody central for Haider Malik in his definition of the same. Instead, it identifies the successors of the Prophet as *sahib-al amr* and then goes on to define them as the Caliphs, the scholars, the philosophers of Islamic law, the intellectuals, the followers of the path. These according to *Dastur-us Salikin* are the ones who, in accordance with the Quranic injunction should be followed.

It is to be remembered that the diverse positions of both the texts, *Tarikh-i Malik Haider* and *Dastur-us Salikin* are derived from the same source: the Quran. The authors of these texts quote the same verses of the Quran O ye who believe! Obey Allah, and obey the Messenger (Muhammed saw), and those of you

<sup>10</sup> *Tarikh-i Haider Malik*, p. 19.

<sup>11</sup> *Dastur-us Salikin*, p. 140.

(Muslims) who are in authority<sup>12</sup>. This is another instance of intertextuality of the Persian texts in medieval Kashmir whereby the texts participate in a shared pool of meanings and a common context.

A closer look demonstrates that the standing and position of the individual authors influenced the choice of the literary categories of the texts they wrote. Haider Malik, the author of the *Tarikh* completed in 1621 was descendent of a ruling family and held the post of the fourth Mughal governor of Kashmir from 1605 until his death in 1627. Throughout, he remained connected to the Mughal court, serving in various capacities under the Mughals. A complete contrast to his position on the issue of kingship is provided in *Dastur-us Salikin*, written by Baba Daud Khaki in his *tazkirah* which focuses on the personality of his Sufi master, Sheikh Hamza Makhdum, the sixteenth century founder of the Suhrawardiya order of Sufism in Kashmir. The primary focus here is on the spiritual authority and not the temporal one. This is in contrast to how Haider Malik represented the authority of the Sultan in relation to others like the *ulema* and the other religious sections.

The position of other texts like *Tarikh-Sayyid Alīs* more complex. Certain rulers who have attained a state of inner purification are seen in the text as ideal rulers and thus are not entirely and always deemed to be subject to a spiritual authority. This is well illustrated in the case of Sultan Zainul Abidin, a Sultan who, according to the text had attained inner purification and possessed intuitive powers. Yet as the story of the Zainul Abidin's encounter with a Sufi saint demonstrates, even *Tarikh-i Sayyid Ali* seeks to subdue, at least in this case, the temporal authority to the spiritual.

Thus, in matters of theories on sovereignty and authority of the Sultan, these Persian texts do not come up with a unanimous stance. While as some like *Tarikh- Haider Malik* emphasise the complete submission of all the subjects to the Sultan's authority, in turn tracing his authority to God, others like *Dastur-us Salikin* and *Taufat-al Ahbab* emphasise the superiority of the religious and the spiritual authorities in their narratives. Then there are other texts like *Tarikh-i Sayyid Ali* and

<sup>12</sup>Muhammad Taqi-ud-Din Al Hilali and Muhammad Muhsin Khan, *Translation of the* p. 118.

*Baharistan-i Shahi* which, rather than simply subduing the one to the other, take a much more complex stand.

The Persian literary texts of medieval Kashmir cannot be neatly divided into mutually exclusive categories of *tarikhs* and *tazkiras*. *Tarikh-i Sayyid Ali*, written as a *tarikh* attributes the ultimate authority, in some cases to the Sufi saint, as discussed above, something that would otherwise be expected of a *tazkira*. Again, being titled as a *tarikh* it reads as a *tazkira* centered on the two Sufi saints, Sayyid Ali Hamadani and his son Mir Muhammed Hamadani, recording in detail their life histories, activities and miracles performed by them after their arrival in Kashmir. Even though titled as *atarikh*, both in terms of its thematic content and the moral stories contained in the text, it reads more as a *tazkira*. Thus, rather than seeing the Persian historical tradition of medieval Kashmir as divided into strict categories of *tarikh* and *tazkira* texts, which in turn could be expected to be distinct on the basis of their content and themes corresponding to their genres, it seems to be a case of intertextuality. This was a situation in which the authors of these texts subscribed to a shared pool of meanings and borrowed from each other. Chitralekha Zutshi demonstrates a case of intertextuality between two Persian texts *Tarikh-i Malik Haider* and *Baharistan-i Shahi*. Both the texts start their discussions on the history of Kashmir from the advent of Islam into the region, in form of the conversion of Rinchen, the first Muslim king of Kashmir.<sup>13</sup>

An overview of these texts gives a sense of mutual competition between the different viewpoints the authors of these texts held on matters of sovereignty and authority. On the one hand, Haider Malik's *Tarikh* represents the case for the absolute sovereignty and authority of the king and a complete submission to the king, while on the other hand, *Dastur-us Salikin* represents the other side of the debate and excludes the Sultan altogether from his definition of those prescribed by the Quran to be followed. It is no surprise then that Haider Malik, even while talking about a Sufi saint tries his best to emphasize on the activity and agency of the Sultan of his times. For instance, in describing the relation between the Rinchen, the first Muslim king of Kashmir and the Sufi saint credited with his conversion, Bulbul Shah, Haider Malik highlights the agency of the king not just in temporal but in spiritual

<sup>13</sup>Zutshi, , p. 104.

matters as well. While as the conversion of Rinchen is treated in the *tazkira* literature as a miracle of the Sufi saint Bulbul Shah, Haider Malik highlights Rinchen's own freedom from darkness as a result of a lamp of faith kindled by God which became his guide and freed him from the darkness of non-belief. The *tazkira* literature usually reserves these kinds of attributes and instances of divine guidance for the Sufi *pirs*. Similarly and less surprisingly in Haider Malik's *Tarikh*, Rinchen the king dominates the material aspect of his relation with the Sufi saint Bulbul Shah. In his text, Haider Malik records that Rinchen fixed a land grant...and built a *khanqah* for the Sufi saint Bulbul Shah.<sup>15</sup> These acts are seen by Haider Malik as an ample reward for Bulbul Shah after he had explained the true nature of faith and spoken about the beliefs of Islam to the Sultan.<sup>16</sup> The king is shown in the text as an equal partner in the subsequent spread of Islam which the author saw as happening in a short period due to the efforts of Rinchen (Rinchen) and under the guidance of Baba Bulbul.<sup>17</sup>

Attributing acts such as construction of mosques and hospices and fixing of land grants to the saints is not new in the *tarikhl* literature. What is surprising however is that acts such as embracing of Islam by the Sultan and then spreading it are attributed to his own agency in the *tarikhl* literature, something the *tazkiras* typically reserve for the Sufi saints. In this manner, it is argued that there is a tendency in texts like Haider Malik's *Tarikh* in which the agency of the king is highlighted, even in matters where other texts emphasise the agency of the Sufi saint.

### **Old Patterns of a New Model: A Saint-King in Ancient Kashmir?**

As discussed above, the *tazkiral* literature constructed the image of the saint as one of the main contenders to the sovereign status of the Sultan. Haider Malik's portrayal of the status of the Sultan can be seen as a response to the assertion of the saint's superiority as articulated in certain texts like *Dastur-us Salikin* and *Taufat-al Ahabab* and even to an extent in *Tarikh-i Sayyid Ali*. One of the main attributes on the basis of

<sup>14</sup> *Tarikh-i Malik Haider*, p. 81.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 82.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

which a Sufi saint's status could be elevated was his spiritual status and connection with the divine, besides his ability to perform miracles and so on. Similarly, one of the ways to counter the image of the saint's spiritual superiority was to produce instances of a king with the same spiritual powers and ability as were attributed to the saint in the *tazkirah* literature. Haider Malik did exactly the same. In his *Tarikh*, Haider Malik records an instance of a king in ancient Kashmir, Raja Ashok during whose rule

a group of impious people belonging to the false religion of the Hindus introduced certain evil innovations in the religion. In order to overpower this group, the Raja devoted himself to prayer in pargana Lar...As a result of his abstinence, God blessed him with a son by the name of Raja Jalok who annihilated this group <sup>18</sup> (emphasis mine)

This observation is a multi-layered one. The innovations in the religion are dealt with not by a Brahman for instance, but through the agency of a king himself, as a result of a divine blessing. The king's agency is emphasized upon and highlighted through his direct connection with the divine, himself receiving the blessings and further as a king who annihilates this group of impious people. That is, even in deciding an otherwise religious case, the *tarikh* credits to and attributes the solution to a king, who seemingly uses his power to annihilate this group. The text thus bestows both the divine/spiritual/saintly traits as well as the human/temporal/kingly authority in the single personality of an ancient Kashmiri king. Again, the king is shown as bringing under his control a *Jinn* who could, at will metamorphose into a serpent and the Raja riding it would visit the places of worship and temples, <sup>19</sup> an attribute otherwise typically reserved in the Persian Sufi hagiographical literature of medieval Kashmir for Sufi personalities.

In seeing this instance as buttressing an image of a king connected with the divine in his own right, the question raised here, in this chapter, is whether this can be seen as part of a larger literary project to provide for instances of a saint-king in the past and thus justify the image the Mughal monarch Akbar, who sought to cultivate a similar image of himself, or by extension prescribe it as a model to the present as well as the future monarchs. The work on *Tarikh-i Malik Haider* began in 1618-20, corresponding to the twelfth regnal year of Emperor Jehangir and was completed in 1620-21 by its author. The *Tarikh* was composed in the thirteenth year

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

after the death of Akbar in 1605.<sup>20</sup> The author, Haider Malik himself was one of the early and very few indigenous Kashmiri governors appointed by the emperors during the entire period of Mughal rule in Kashmir and was thus firmly a part of the Mughal courtly culture.

The question raised above can be further elaborated upon. It can thus be queried as to how far these depiction of a king in terms of attributes otherwise reserved for Sufi saints can be seen as a textual discourse that sought to undermine the claims to spiritual merit and authority of the Sufi saints as articulated in the contemporary and the near-contemporary Sufi hagiographical texts.

### **The Worldly Requirements of a Divine Sovereign: Justice, Character and Lineage of a Sultan**

As the above discussion on kingship makes it clear, the authors of the Persian texts took a range of positions when discussing the nature of kingship and the standing of the Sultan vis-a-vis other sections of the population. Some of the authors, Haider Malik for instance, attributed the sovereign status of the Sultan to God, tracing the position of the Sultan to none but God. Others like *Dastur-us Salikin*, *Taufat-al Ahbab* and *Tarikh-i Sayyid Al* for instance subject the Sultan to the spiritual authority. However, a simplistic reading of these positions has given rise to a number of problematic suppositions about the practices of kingship in medieval Kashmir. Based on this reading, one is inclined to believe that the Sultan in medieval Kashmir, in order to establish himself, did not require any legitimation besides the divine. It may be assumed that since the Sultan was seen as a divinely chosen figure in the texts, no other requirements were needed for a person to establish himself as the ruler. A second assumption is that since the Sultan was a divinely chosen one, he could not be held accountable for his actions by his subjects. An extension of this position is that because of his status as the divinely chosen figure, the subjects did not choose to complain against any misuse of power on part of the Sultan and his administration either.

<sup>20</sup>

*The Millennial Sovereign: Sacred Kingship and Sainthood in Islam*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2012, pp.94-130.

In light of a closer reading of the Persian texts, these assumptions about the practices of kingship in medieval Kashmir need to be re-examined. It is hereby argued that both these positions do not stand in face of a closer reading of the texts. One, the texts which argue for a case of ultimate superiority of the Sultan do so in theoretical terms and these statements do not reflect the actual practices of kingship in medieval Kashmir. When read between the lines, the same texts demonstrate how the practices of kingship were very different from these normative theoretical prescriptions. Second, there is a clear articulation of the basic requirements of kingship besides the divine legitimation; requirements that can be termed as earthly/worldly in contrast to the divine legitimation in these very texts themselves. Thus while *Tarikh Haider Malik* for instance, advocates the case of the divine legitimation of Sultan's authority in the strongest terms, the same text is replete with instances in which the basic worldly requirements of kingship are emphasised as necessary traits for one to be a Sultan. For instance, Haider Malik in a single sentence combines the statements about the Sultan's ultimate sovereignty with a statement about how those Sultans who spent their lives in building cities and welfare of people actually earn the praise of the people. This, I argue is one of the many instances in the text which qualify the otherwise ultimate position of power the text seems to bestow on the Sultan. While on one hand the Sultan's power is linked to the divine agency in the text, on the other hand, Sultans, in practice are subject to certain worldly things as well, the main concerns being those of welfare and goodwill of their subjects. Haider Malik goes on to explain how the signs of manliness and lights of learning actually determined, besides the divine will, the actual status of a would-be Sultan. For the author, the fact that a particular king is bestowed upon with kingship requires him to take certain measures to justify his position. The protection of the weak and the oppressed against injustice and oppression, according to the author, thus become the *raison d'être* as well as the divine logic of the bestowing kingship and authority. Thus, the key elements of kingship and its basis as enumerated in the text are justice, ability to fight against oppression, and attributes such as kindness, love and intelligence. Haider Malik cites an instance of a very cruel and oppressive king who was ousted by his brother for using his magic to enter the houses of strangers and dishonour the inmates<sup>21</sup>. Again, Haider Malik seems to justify instances of

<sup>21</sup> *Tarikh-i Haider Malik*, p. 29.

rebellions and acts of arson and destruction in the reign of Lalitaditya by a group of his servants after they came to know the king had broken promises and after tricking people killed them.<sup>22</sup> In a similar vein, *Dastur-us Salikin* mentions justice and welfare of the people as some of the traits of a king who on the day of resurrection will be amongst the best rewarded.<sup>23</sup>

Both the two factors of descent and an ability to exercise power figure prominently in Haider Malik's account of takeover by Rinchen (r.1320-1323/24) after the Mongol invasion of Kashmir in 1320. Rinchen is shown as having assumed kingship primarily because he was one of the grandsons of the ruler of Tibet and also because his rival Ramchand was not equal to him in power. A similar explanation for the assumption of kingship by Shah Mir is given by Haider Malik in his *Tarikh*. The prophecy of his saint-grandfather that he would one day assume kingship materialised after Shah Mir carried a campaign against the invasion of the Turks under their leader Urdal. These personal efforts according to Haider Malik, vested Shah Mir with power and authority as his power and strength took roots in the hearts of the people and the prophecy was fulfilled.<sup>25</sup>

At times the prophecies of a future kingship in favour of a certain person came along with the advice by the prophet that kingship necessitated that the king treat the humanity with kindness and generosity.<sup>26</sup> Haider Malik finds the qualities of carelessness and absence of determination and diplomacy detrimental to kingship and the resultant conflict and repugnance, detrimental to the kingdom.<sup>27</sup>

### **Traits of a Good King: Justice and Good Character**

Even though there are instances of kings with matchless knowledge of alchemy and ...great expert of the art<sup>28</sup>, proficiency in art of music<sup>29</sup> and *qiyafa-dan*<sup>30</sup> (practising

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 52.

<sup>23</sup> *Dastur-us Salikin*, p. 198.

<sup>24</sup> *Tarikh-i Haider Malik*, p. 80.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 83.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 98.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 110.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.



metoposcopy), justice and good character are the most frequent attributes of the kings in Haider Malik's *Tarikh*. Consolidation of hold over conquered territories achieved by administering justice and welfare of the people is seen as a pre-requisite for further adventures to conquer foreign lands, as is the case of Lalitaditya, who proceeded... to conquer the world after he had practiced justice and followed a policy of welfare of the subjects and thus was satisfied with the problem of consolidation of his hold over Kashmir.<sup>31</sup> Haider Malik seeks to trace the happiness of subjects as well as the army under a king directly to the personality of the king himself. In narrating the story of Kashmir under the rule of Raja Lu, the successor of Queen Jashumati, justice and character are mentioned as essential features of kingship, without which, according to the author, contentment of people and order in the army cannot be achieved. Raja Lu is a king under whom the people as well as the army were very happy primarily because the ruler...was extremely just and had a pleasant character.<sup>32</sup> Since the borders are secured and internal order established, this order and peace in the kingdom in general is seen as paving the way for attempts at foreign expeditions. The benefits of such an achievement accrue to the political centre headed by the just and morally upright king, who after establishing himself in his domain and conquering foreign territories around Kashmir diverts his attention back to his political centre, this time working on the development and welfare of the people. These measures are seen as leading to a rise in the status of the political centre, a status reflected in an increased number of inhabitants residing there, so much so that eighty lakh houses are constructed in the city.<sup>33</sup> Thus, a broad pattern of the development of a city/country through multiple stages is narrated by the author in which development and progress are linked and traced to the basic features of a just king. Haider Malik emphasises the personality of the king in the entire state structure while at the same time however, the scheme includes the subjects as well as the army also playing a crucial role in the whole set-up: sections whose consent and happiness form important elements of a successful king's story. Even the fact that the children of a particular

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 48.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 48.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

king could succeed him is traced to the virtues of justice of the king. Other things attributed to a just king are cheaper grains, and prosperity of the masses. <sup>34</sup>

The antithesis of a just ruler is a tyrant king, who even while being successful in conquering territories, meets a bad end. Haider Malik criticises King Meherkul for his tyranny even as he had indulged in works such as digging canals and conquered far-off territories as far as Ceylon crossed the river in a boat and acquired plenty of wealth, goods and elephants <sup>35</sup>. On the contrary, similar foreign adventures of Lalitaditya are praised primarily because he is seen as a just king who worked for the welfare of his subjects. <sup>36</sup> While as ideally, Haider Malik seems to emphasise justice, welfare as traits of a good king, this instance of a tyrant king clarifies that in actual practice, tyrant kings also come to exercise power. The only difference being in the end of the king's reign; while as a good king meets a good end, a tyrant king, as a result of his oppression meets a bad end. We are told that King Meherkul finally meets a bad end as he is at last afflicted with a mortal disease and thus receives punishment for his own deeds. <sup>37</sup> At a different place, Haider Malik cites the instance of a king who lost his kingdom and had to die of starvation in the prison and in strange surroundings precisely because he had made tyranny his habit due to which the army and the subjects turned against him <sup>38</sup>. Inversely, an unjust king is seen as a product of people's own sins and immoral acts. Haider Malik illustrates this case in the event of the invasion of Kashmir by a Mongol chief Zulju in 1320. Even as at other places *Tarikh-i Malik Haider* mentions cases of divine vengeance on the tyrants, this one is an inverse case in which a tyrant king acts as the medium of the divine punishment for the sins and immoral acts of people

In brief the low morals and ugly acts of the dogs of this land became thoroughly well known, they committed sins and immoral acts. Since in this world there is a recompense, a Turk by the name of Zilchu, with 70,000 Turks from Turkistan, entered Kashmir from Baramulla road and starting spilling the blood (of the people) and pillaging and destroying (the land). <sup>39</sup>

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 48.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 79

Thus the text constructs justice and good governance as the very basis of kingship and explicitly states that the existence of a kingdom and country depends upon the love of the people<sup>40</sup>. Haider Malik praises Sultan Zainul Abidin for possessing a noble character and good qualities because of which the subjects were prosperous. This praise is in spite of the fact that the author sees the Sultan not as pious and upholder of the *Sunnat* as his father was

Although Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin was not as pious and upholder of the *Sunnat* as his father was, but he looked after the subjects, there are a few examples in history like him. Because of his noble character and good qualities, the subjects were prosperous. <sup>41</sup>

In case of Chak rulers like Ghazi Chak (r. 1555-1563) and Husain Chak (r. 1563-1570), Haider Malik praises them meting out justice and doing good and looking after the welfare of the subjects and establishing a sound government and administration. <sup>42</sup> Again Lohar Chak (r.1579-80) and Yusuf Chak (r.1580-85) are praised for their respective roles in promoting justice and welfare of the subjects. <sup>43</sup>

*Baharistan-i Shahi* records that Rinchen, the first Muslim king of Kashmir also ruled with justice, linking the economic prosperity of the Kashmiris with Rinchen's justice<sup>44</sup>. Even though there are instances of unjust and oppressive kings, mutiny and rebellion against an oppressive and tyrant king is justified by providing examples of oppressive kings against whom army and people rose and overthrew him.

Besides personal qualities like justice, wisdom and good character, a prominent feature of kings in Haider Malik's *Tarikh* is that they invariably indulge in construction activity. Thus in addition to building of massive cities, towns and lofty forts, kings are also shown as digging canals and even founding villages. For instance, the cities of Kakapura and Kunmuh are associated with Raja Gulkander, the construction of a canal named Siran is traced to Raja Suran while the building a lofty fort and laying a massive city housing as many as six lakh people is traced to Raja Ashok.<sup>45</sup> Same is the case of Sultan Sikander and his son Zainul Abidin both of whom

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 80.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p.107

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 134-5.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 145.

<sup>44</sup> *Baharistan-i Shahi*, p. 09.

<sup>45</sup> *Tarikh-i Haider Malik*, pp. 25-7.

are shown as builders engaged in widespread construction activities in Haider Malik's *Tarikh*.

## **A Foreign King in Ancient Kashmir: Debates on Lineage and Descent in the Persian Texts**

Even as the Sultan may be seen as somebody bestowed with the divine legitimacy to exercise authority, justice and welfare emerge as traits that are not just the characteristics of an ideal king, but also the very basis of the claims to kingship in the Persian texts. Even if the king exercises a divinely-bestowed authority, these traits, if lacking in a king may well deprive him of his right to rule. However in addition to these, there are other equally important conditions a king is supposed to fulfil in order to claim his right to rule over a population. These Persian texts of medieval Kashmir discuss among others, descent, lineage and place of birth of a king and the implications of these on the nature and exercise of kingship. The positions taken here are again varied and display the concerns of the respective authors. For instance, Haider Malik provides various instances of kings who came from outside Kashmir and ruled there. In mentioning these instances, the author makes nothing special out of the fact that the kings came from outside Kashmir. Haider Malik's story of the establishment of the institution of kingship in Kashmir begins with the narrative of the first king of Kashmir who, after the land had been drained and populated by Kashyap, (the legendary ancient sage of Kashmir) as brought from Jammu, after they (Brahmans) went to the Raja of Jammu and made a request to him to give them a ruler.<sup>46</sup> Again, moving forward in time, after the end of Raja Okand's dynasty, according to Haider Malik

Now, when the kingdom of Kashmir had no ruler, the chiefs and the nobles agreed to bring from India one of the grandfathers of Bakarmanjit named Partap Aditi who lived in Malwa and placed him on the throne. He treated the army and the subjects nicely and rehabilitated Kashmir.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34.

In another similar instance, Haider Malik records the case of how after the death of Raja Haran, the uncle of Parvarsen, the chiefs of this kingdom (Kashmir) wrote letters to Raja Bakarmanjit requesting him for a ruler .<sup>48</sup>

In all the three instances, Haider Malik constructs a multi-layered definition of kingship and its requirements; interestingly not giving any importance to the requirement of the King being a native of the land that he was going to rule. In all the three instances cited above, these kings belonged to regions outside Kashmir, that is, Malwa and Jammu. The text recounts that these foreign kings were approached and invited to rule over Kashmir by the Kashmiris themselves. What becomes clear is that the author emphasises descent and lineage of a king as one of the basic requirement, while marginalising the place of birth of the king; in other words, doing away with the local-foreigner debate. The obvious emphasis instead is on the descent of the kings sent to Kashmir; all the three kings were either already acting as kings or had connections with kings. Thus, besides justice and welfare, it is the descent/lineage and not the place of birth that is a crucial factor for Haider Malik.

This emphasis upon descent of a king and subsequently ignoring the place of birth by Haider Malik can be understood in two ways. One is to relate it to the general context of regional identity and consciousness in ancient Kashmir and ask questions about how much it mattered to have a foreign king in Kashmir at a time when the ideas and vocabulary of regional belongings were not exactly the same as they were at the time of Haider Malik. The second is the more specific context of the work and the personality of the author himself. Haider Malik wrote *Tarikh* in 1618-20. This was a time when Kashmir had already been annexed to the Mughal Empire after group of Kashmiri nobles and chiefs had requested Emperor Akbar's intervention in Kashmir. Quoting of such precedents from ancient Kashmiri history can be seen as an effort by Haider Malik to establish some kind of legitimacy for the Mughal annexation of Kashmir. Again, in emphasising the descent and not the place of birth of the kings who came to rule Kashmir, Haider Malik, himself a descendent of a ruling family can be seen as seeking to justify his own position as the Mughal governor of Kashmir.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40.

The position of other texts like *Baharistan-i Shahis* more complex. The author displays a clear sense of an awareness of the local-foreigner debate in his text and records the origin of three most influential political personalities of medieval Kashmir Rinchen, Shah Mir and Lankar Chak, clearly identifying them as non-natives who were born outside Kashmir. The author does not stop at the mere mention of their place of birth, marking them as non-locals. Instead, the author goes on to demonstrate the practical implication of a king's foreignness on the practices of kingship in Kashmir. According to the author, the very reason a king being a non-local led him to re-shape the manner in which he exercised his authority

In AH 725, Rinchen became the ruler and lord of this land. Not being a native, he took the pragmatic view that it would not be possible for him to rule Kashmir unless he won over its people as his friends and supporters. <sup>49</sup>

*Baharistan-i Shahi* explicitly names Rinchen as a foreign king and attributes his pragmatism to the fact that he was not a native of Kashmir. In fact, Rinchen's marital alliances with ruling families and his reward of titles to Kashmiri nobles are attributed by the author of *Baharistan-i Shahi* to the fact that he was a non-native of Kashmir.

Among the most important qualifications for the kingship, according to Haider Malik was the descent of the king. Haider Malik cites instance of a king who even after being successful in acquiring surrounding territories was dethroned since these people belonged to a low community. <sup>50</sup> The passage in which a discussion of the qualities of the king and requirements of kingship is carried out is the one which the author styles the narrative as an introduction to his own ancestors

He has adorned the north-star like foreheads of the victorious kings with the key of pride and superiority and the crown of authority and rule in respect of the administration of the world and the good of the humanity, so that they are able to protect the weak from the tyranny of the oppressors and are able to cut short the high-handed activities of the masters perpetrated upon the oppressed. <sup>51</sup>

The argument is two-fold here; Haider Malik while describing his predecessors credits them with the qualities of kingship mentioned in the above passage precisely because of which they are seen as having been bestowed these

<sup>49</sup> *Baharistan-i Shahi* , p. 09.

<sup>50</sup> *Tarikh-i Haider Malik* , p. 53.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p.20.

position of power and authority. And yet the fact that claims of kingship on the one hand and a royal descent on the other hand are connected with each other by Malik gives substance to his claims to power and authority in Kashmir. The author thus self-consciously fashions himself as a scion of the Chand dynasty .<sup>52</sup> Even in case of Rinchen, Haider Malik sees his take over after Zulju's invasion as partly linked to his descent from the family of Tibetan rulers, with Rinchen being described as the grandson of the rulers of the Tibet.<sup>53</sup> The text also records that besides questions about his name and faith, Rinchen also enquired about the descent of Bulbul Shah before his conversion to Islam at his hands.<sup>54</sup>

The author of *Tarikh-i Sayyid Ali* sees the tensions between the Bayhaqi Sayyids and the Kashmiri nobles primarily in terms of their different descents. According to him, the Bayhaqi Sayyids, after taking over the affairs of the state at the death of Hassan Shah in 1487 did not treat the Kashmiri nobles in a manner befitting them, mainly because of their dynastic pride

The government was run by Baihaqi Sayyeds headed by Sayyed Hasan. Owing to his dynastic pride he did not treat the nobles of Kashmir in a manner befitting their dignity. This was not tolerable to the Chiefs of Kashmir who joined hands, forced their entry into his residential house and assassinated him along with four sons and dear ones.<sup>55</sup>

## **Kingship and Religion in Sultanate Kashmir: Portrayals in the Persian Texts**

While the Sufi texts attribute the spread of Islam in Kashmir primarily to the saints, Haider Malik attributes it to the activities of the king himself. The case of Rinchen (r.1320-23) and the saint associated with his conversion, Bulbul Shah (d.1326) illustrates this. Similarly, in case of spread of Islam in Kashmir, Haider Malik gives primacy to the agency of the king himself. According to the author, Islam spread in Kashmir mainly as a result of efforts by Rinchen himself and his guidance by the Sufi

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 80.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 82.

<sup>55</sup> Sayyid Ali, *Tarikh-i Sayyid Ali* translated as *History of Kashmir 1374-1570* by Zubaida Jan, Srinagar: JayKay Bookshop, 2009, p. 62.

saint Bulbul Shah.<sup>56</sup> Similarly, in case of Sultan Shihabuddin (r.1354-73), instances of conversions and construction of mosques are attributed to the king's justice rather than to the activity of any Sufi saint.<sup>57</sup>

Sayyid Ali in his *Tarikh* attributes the conversion of prominent monks and yogi ascetics along with a large number of their followers, breaking of idols and destruction of temples to the activities of the Sufi saint Sayyid Ali Hamadani.<sup>58</sup> Not surprising, the temple destroyed by the Sufi saint is said to be the same which the reigning king, Sultan Qutubuddin used to visit every morning. Even the *Jinn* residing in the place is said to have been presented before the saint and converted to Islam. Sayyid Ali records that the reigning king Sultan Qutubuddin would even do acts of patronage on his own, and visited the saint for the purpose of seeking his permission to grant scholarship for each of his followers. Instead the Sultan, according to the text got lectured on how to correctly wear his *gossam*.<sup>59</sup> Sayyid Ali mentions that Sayyid Ali Hamadani fixed a tutor for the Sultan and his household members, instituted daily and Friday prayers in Srinagar.<sup>60</sup> A similar relationship between the next Sultan Sikander and the Sufi saint Sayyid Muhammed Hamadani is posited by Sayyid Ali. According to him, Sultan Sikander declared himself a follower of the Sufi saint and with all sincerity of conviction and faith became his disciple in words and deeds.<sup>61</sup> Sayyid Ali credits Sultan Sikander with laying the foundations of the most famous Sufi *khanqah* in Kashmir, Khanqah-i Moualla in 1395.<sup>62</sup> The author portrays Sultan Sikander and Sayyid Muhammed Hamadani as equally participating in instances of temple and idol destruction. Resolutions against sound of flutes, trumpets or musical pipes passed by the saints and their companions included the clause that these sounds were not to be produced without the prior permission of the Sultan.<sup>63</sup>

*Tarikh i Sayyid Ali* even though categorised as a *tarikhi* is a complex text. Its author had connections with both the saints as well as the Sultans. The text mainly revolves around the life and activities of two Sufi saints Sayyid Ali Hamadani and his

<sup>56</sup> *Tarikh-i Haider Malik*, p. 82.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 100.

<sup>58</sup> *Tarikh-i Sayyid Ali*, p. 33.

<sup>59</sup> *Tarikh-i Sayyid Ali*, p. 34.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 36.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 42-3.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 47.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 49.



son Sayyid Muhammed Hamadani and their disciples after their arrival in Kashmir. The text places the saint as the superior spiritual power when compared to the Sultan, despite the fact the Sultan, at one place in the text is also described as possessing the power of intuition. This quality according to the text was embodied in Sultan Zainul Abidin whom the text also describes as having attained a state of inner purification. <sup>64</sup> *Tarikh Sayyid Ali* narrates an encounter between a saint Baba Zainu d Din and Sultan Zainul Abidin when the latter paid him a visit at his place of worship in the following manner

The Sultan paid him a visit. The Baba was busy in his ablutions. The Sultan, finding the carpet unoccupied sat on it. When the Baba came to know that the Sultan has come, he paid no attention to the king. The Sultan felt enraged and at once ordered the *nauchoas* to carry Baba to Tibet...In compliance with the Sultan's orders, the Baba was taken to Tibet. Baba Zainu d Din used his spiritual power and caused the Sultan a swollen foot which gave latter pain...The Sultan...got back Zainu d Din with great honour. The Baba prayed at Aisha Muqam for the Sultan after which his pain subsided and he felt quite healthy. <sup>65</sup>

This passage illustrates the manner in which the author saw the divisions between the spiritual and the temporal aspects of power as represented by the saint and the Sultan respectively. While the Sultan was fully capable of sending the saint into an exile, the saint had the advantage of possessing the spiritual prowess, on the basis of which he could bargain with the Sultan. The author used this example to show how even an ideal Sultan like Zainul Abidin could be fully validated after he had submitted to the mightier powers of the saints. <sup>66</sup> In this, the story highlights the supremacy and the purity of the spiritual power... a moral lesson to those in power. <sup>67</sup>

The above discussion is intended to make one thing clear; the claims to an advent of Islamic kingship in medieval Kashmir with the establishment of the Sultanate in the fourteenth century when and if based on references to the supposedly more reliable *tarikht* texts need to be analysed equally critically as do those claims which are based on the supposedly less reliable *tazkirat* texts. A reference to the *tarikht* texts

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 57.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 59

<sup>66</sup> Zutshi, , p. 55.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*

in this regard should not be considered as sufficient by itself as embodying a statement of historical truth. As Chitralkha Zutshi argues, *the* *tarikhs* and *tazkiras* were part of a shared narrative practice and both made little distinction among facts, memories and myths.<sup>68</sup> Therefore, a neat division of Persian literary texts on the basis of exclusive genres to which they claim to belong to or are classified as such is also questioned. Instead a case of intertextuality across the otherwise strict divisions of *tarikhs* and *tazkiras* seems to offer a more nuanced explanation of the manner in which the authors of these texts modelled these texts. Authors of both the *tazkiras* and the *tarikhs* drew liberally from each other besides using similar modes of authentication.<sup>69</sup>

Sayyid Ali describes Sultan Zainul Abidin as a king who had attained a high state of inner purification so much so that he possessed the power of intuition, typically an attribute of the saints in the Persian texts.<sup>70</sup> At the same time the author describes his religious policies as showing tolerance towards infidels and mentions how the Sultan allowed everyone to follow his own religion.<sup>71</sup> The text attributes these policies of the Sultan to his own personality in as much as there is no mention of any Sufi saint closely associated with the Sultan. If as Chitralkha Zutshi had argued, Sultan Zainul Abidin emerges in the text as an ideal king, then it can be argued that his model of kingship stands idealised by the text.<sup>72</sup> When compared to the spiritual powers as represented in the personality of the saints, the authority of the Sultan is treated in the text as subservient to that of the saint. This is clear from a story in the text in which the Sultan is forced to call back to Kashmir the saint he had earlier ordered to be exiled after the saint had caused the Sultan an illness by virtue of his spiritual powers.<sup>73</sup> This statement of superiority of the spiritual vis-a-vis the political in the text is better understood on the basis of the larger purpose of the writing of the text itself. *Tarikh-Sayyid Ali* which, as already discussed, was mainly concerned with recording the life histories of two prominent saints, Sayyid Ali Hamadani and Sayyid Muhammed Hamadani and their followers in Kashmir. In keeping with the purpose and major concern of its compilation, the text could only be expected to speak of Sufi

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 08.

<sup>70</sup> *Tarikh-i Sayyid Ali*, pp. 54, 57.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, p.52.

<sup>72</sup> Zutshi, , p. 55.

<sup>73</sup> *Tarikh-i Sayyid Ali*, p. 59.

saints in the highest terms. What is however clear is that in matters of kingship, as in the case of Sultan Zainul Abidin, the text while mentioning his reign has treated him as an ideal ruler. This tag of ideal ruler is not about his activities in the realm of patronage of arts, culture and literature, (D)instead he is presented as an ideal ruler with almost mystical powers of intuition, and also a transformer of the landscape of Kashmir. <sup>74</sup>

## **Sultanate as the Advent of Islamic Kingship? Reading the Persian Texts**

The first five Sultans of the Shahmiri dynasty till the reign of Sultan Quttubuddin have been shown by historians as not giving any serious attention to the spread of Islam.<sup>75</sup> It is by the time of the arrival of Sayyid Ali Hamadani that most historians see a change in the practices of kingship. This change is mainly attributed to the influence of Sufi saint Sayyid Ali Hamadani in Kashmir during the reign of Sultan Quttubuddin. For instance, RK Parmu sees this change in kingship mainly in terms of the effort of Hamadani to transform Kashmir, a result he achieved after he influenced him (the Sultan) with his spiritual powers which he possessed in abundance. <sup>76</sup> The sway over the mind of the Sultan <sup>77</sup> which the saint is shown as having possessed is seen as being responsible for the basic change in the nature of kingship in medieval Kashmir. After Sultan Qutubuddin, the reign of Sultan Sikander is portrayed in similar terms, his policies attributed to the influence of Mohammed Hamadani, the son of Sayyid Ali Hamadani. Similarly, Ashraf Wani describes the reign of Sultan Sikander as one in which the Islamic culture reigned supreme...owing to sovereign influence exercised upon him (the Sultan) by Mir Muhammed Hamadani. <sup>78</sup>

The narrative of a change in the nature of kingship in medieval Kashmir mainly revolves around the fact that the medieval Persian texts recorded instances in

<sup>74</sup>Zutshi, , p. 55.

<sup>75</sup>Hangloo, *The State in Medieval Kashmir* , p. 57.

<sup>76</sup>RK Parmu, *History of Muslim Rule in Kashmir (1320-1819)* , p. 105.

<sup>77</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>78</sup>Ashraf Wani, *Islam in Kashmir* , p. 64.

which the kings along with certain Sufis are shown as indulging in acts of temple destruction and construction and patronage of mosques and *khanqahs*, among others. A closer look at such textual stories illustrates that these statements in the Persian texts about such acts are recorded in a very different context and as such cannot be used in support of an argument that speaks of change in nature of kingship under the Sultans in medieval Kashmir. For instance, in case of instances of iconoclasm and patronage of mosques and shrines or enforcement of Islamic laws recorded in *Tarikh-i Sayyid Ali*, upon a close observation it becomes clear that these statements are made to prove the credibility of the saint rather than speak about the king as such. Instances of iconoclasm and patronage of *khanqahs* and shrines by the Sultans as recorded in the texts are meant to impress the reader about the importance of the saint who commanded obedience rather than meant to reflect on the character of kingship. *Tarikh Sayyid Ali* records the iconoclastic activities and building of *khanqahs* in a manner designed to impress the audience about the impact Mir Hamadani had on Sultan Sikander. In fact the entire text is structured as a *tazkirah* with the author mainly enumerating the history of Sayyids and their arrival into Kashmir under the Sultans in this work. Towards the end, the text records short life histories of a number of saints of the Rishi order, miracles performed by them and their places of burials. The main concern of the work is an attempt to record the life histories and activities of saints like Sayyid Ali Hamadani and his son Sayyid Muhammed Hamadani and their accomplices. This is one of the reasons why the *Tarikh* starts from the reign of Sultan Shihabuddin (r. 1354-73), a time when the Sayyids started migrating into the valley. The author himself belonged to the family of these saints on the father's side and to the family of the Shahmiri Sultans on the mother's side. Similarly, instances of construction and patronage of mosques and shrines by Sultans in *Tarikh-i Sayyid Ali* are recorded with a view to speak about the influence the saints had on the Sultan personality and his policy. In his description of the reign of Sultan Quttubuddin, the author continuously seeks to subdue the role and authority of the saint vis-a-vis the Sultan. Even in matters which would have otherwise implied the authority of the Sultan such as grant of scholarships to the saint's followers, the Sultan is shown in the text as visiting the saint and asking for his permission in this regard. The author follows this by an account of how the Sultan was instructed by the saint to divorce

<sup>79</sup> *Tarikh-i Sayyid Ali*, p. 34.

one of the two sisters he simultaneously had held in marriage, something deemed unlawful in Islam.<sup>80</sup> The Sultan is even shown as presenting himself barefoot five times a day to perform prayers in presence of the saint. <sup>81</sup> Sultan Sikander is shown in similar terms as a devout follower of the Sufi saint Sayyid Muhammed Hamadani. According to the text, the Sultan declared himself to be his follower with all sincerity of conviction and in complete faith became his disciple in word and ~~acts~~<sup>82</sup>. Acts attributed to Sultans in the texts are thus meant to embellish the status and influence of the saints rather than speak about the actual beliefs and activities of the Sultan. In such a situation if statements about Sultan's barefoot attendance in the service of the saint five times a day are not treated as statements of facts but rather as a literary device meant to increase the status of the saint, there is no reason why statements about iconoclasm and patronage of religious institutions or persons should not be similarly analysed critically through the literary frame rather than be accepted in their literal sense. These instances as recorded in the Persian texts of medieval Kashmir need to be located in their proper context rather than reading them as instances indicating state support for Islam in Kashmir. <sup>83</sup> Besides, the construction of mosques and shrines and the patronage of the persons associated with these institutions, as Chitrlekha Zutshi points out acted as symbol(s) of political legitimacy for the Sultans.<sup>84</sup>

Persian texts, both the *tarikhs* and the *tazkiras* tend to see activities of iconoclasm as markers of individual piety. It was not just an act of desecration but more importantly an act with a much deeper meaning, implying piety. Thus the texts try to attribute acts of temple destruction on the one hand and construction of mosque on the other to the individuals who were meant to be praised for their religious devotion. Attributing iconoclasm to a certain person was more of a literary device designed to embellish the protagonist than to make a statement of ~~fact~~<sup>fact</sup>. The author of *Baharistan-i Shahi* mentions the iconoclastic activities of Sultan Shihabuddin in a paragraph that starts with how the Sultan towards the end of his life addressed himself to such works as would get him peace in the world hereafter and

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 35.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 36.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 42-3.

<sup>83</sup> RK Parmu, *History of Muslim Rule in Kashmir (1320-1819)*, pp. 104-118.

<sup>84</sup> Zutshi, p. 128.

goes on to boast about his designs to destroy all the temples and put an end to the entire community of the infidel<sup>85</sup>. It is interesting to compare this statement of Sultan Shihabuddin's intent given in the text with the description of the actual practice of the Sultan by the same author. In *Baharistan-i Shahi*, Sultan Shihabuddin is shown as a king busy who rather than indulging in acts of iconoclasm busied himself with internal consolidation and external conquests.

### **Continuity and Pragmatism under the Sultans: Titles, *Jagirs* and Marriages**

When Rinchen undertook the kingdom of Kashmir in early fourteenth century, nothing much changed. Soon after assuming kingship, Rinchen restored Ramchand, the son of his slain rival to a position of *malik* and married Ramchand's sister, Kota Rani.<sup>86</sup> Haider Malik records that Sultan Shihabuddin (1354-73) upon his ascension took Chander and Udshah Rawal into his services<sup>87</sup>, gave Achal Chand a village and appointed him to head an army against the revolting kingdoms of Kabul and Badakhshan.<sup>88</sup> In his expedition to Kashgar and Tibet, Sultan Zainul Abidin's army was commanded by Malik Autar Chand, who after its success was bestowed *jagirs* by the Sultan. Similarly, the army of Sultan Hasan Shah (r.1475) was commanded by Malik Sanjarchand.<sup>89</sup> The landlord of Kishtwar Bahadur Singh sent his daughter to marry the Chak Sultan Ali Chak (r. 1570-78) and another daughter to Sultan's grandson Yaqub Chak after his revolt against the Sultans failed.<sup>90</sup> Sayyid Ali seemingly supports Sultan Qutubuddin for not following the Islamic customs at a time when these customs were not in practice in the city and also since all the government dignitaries were polytheists.<sup>91</sup> The Sultans continued to parcel out *jagirs*, even as the Sufi saints made recommendations in favour of certain persons. The ultimate authority in matters still rested with the Sultan as is shown by the statement in *Tarikh-*

<sup>85</sup> *Baharistan-i Shahi*, p. 15.

<sup>86</sup> *Tarikh-i Haider Malik*, p. 80.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 98.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 100.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 108-9.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 139.

<sup>91</sup> *Tarikh-i Sayyid Ali*, p. 35.

*i Sayyid Ali* that Sayyid Muhammed Hamadani obtained a written document from the Sultan to keep the interests of the caretakers of the *khanqah* protected .<sup>92</sup>

*Baharistan-i Shahi* clearly states that the matrimonial alliances by Sultan Shamsuddin reflected his intelligence and sagacity as he sought to establish harmonious relations with the nobles and leading personalities of Kashmir .<sup>93</sup> The text also mentions Chandsar Dev and Ujaini Raina as the commanders of Sultan Shihabuddin's troops while Udsheh Rawal is mentioned as collector of taxes, duties and revenues of Kashmir .<sup>94</sup>

*Baharistan-i Shahi* gives a glimpse of Rinchen's pragmatism when the author states that the king solved very difficult problems of his people with the help of his intelligence, understanding, sagacity and wisdom since, according to the author, there was no one who could settle public disputes in accordance with the tenets of Muhammadan religion.<sup>95</sup> As the author himself mentions, this was a time when only a handful of people in Kashmir had embraced Islam.<sup>96</sup> Similarly, the author criticises Udyandev as imbecile, coward and pusillanimous for fleeing and not fighting the invasion of the Turks. Instead his wife Kota Rani is praised for showing courage and infusing heroic spirit into different chiefs and powerful persons of her time and getting them ready to fight against the Turks.<sup>97</sup> Similarly the author mentions that Shah Mir came to the throne of Kashmir after he found that it lacked a government by men of ability .<sup>98</sup> *Baharistan-i Shahi* details the steps Shah Mir took to consolidate his power, including acts such as winning the favour of chiefs, murder of rivals, marital alliances and a shifting of the base of his seat of power from Anderkot to Kashmir. The author also records that the first Muslim king of Kashmir, Rinchen chose pragmatism in legal matters. Rather than using the Islamic law, the *Sharia*, Rinchen used intelligence, understanding, sagacity and wisdom .<sup>99</sup> This was because of a number of reasons. First, the majority of the population still did not profess Islam. Also, the state institutions under Rinchen were the same as they were

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 47.

<sup>93</sup> K N Pandit , *Baharistan-i Shahi* , pp.10-30.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.10-31.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 09-26.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 10-30

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*

under previous Hindu kings. Moreover the religious judges or authorities needed for dispensing matters in accordance with the Islamic religious laws were not available in Kashmir. *Tarikh i Sayyid Ali* justifies the pragmatism of Sultan Qutubuddin in the following manner

Although Sultan Quttubuddin was a Muslim by birth but since Islamic customs were not in practice in the city and also since all the government dignitaries were the polytheists, he followed them apprehending otherwise revolt which could subsequently lead to a general chaos and commotion in his realm. Secondly, they were not conversant with the main tenets of the Sharia. <sup>100</sup>

The above description about the manner in which Sultan Quttubuddin ruled points out to a pragmatic view of the Sultan in matters of governance of the state under him.

### **A Female Ruler in Kashmir: Kingship and Gender in *Tarikh-i Haider Malik***

Haider Malik records a case in which wife of one Raja Damodar, son of the ruler of Methra (sic) was raised to throne after Damodar was killed in an attack. The queen, Rani Jashumati who happened to be pregnant at that time treated the subjects well.<sup>101</sup> Haider Malik mentions the name and the reign of the queen in the usual narrative of the history of rulers of Jammu. The reign of the queen though dealt in only in a few sentences is described in the same manner as is the reign of other male kings. Haider Malik does not seem to treat this as an anomaly in a pattern in which usually the kings and not queens ran the state of affairs. Perhaps, for Haider Malik then, kingship is not gendered. This attitude fits the general pattern of Kashmir history, in which queens like Didda and Kota Rani played prominent part in the political developments of the state, a pattern which one assumes Haider Malik must have been aware of. Besides assuming kingship, there are instances in which queens are shown engaging in building and construction activities, founding towns and

<sup>100</sup> *Tarikh-i Sayyid Ali* , p. 35.

<sup>101</sup> *Tarikh-i Haider Malik* , p. 24.



donating areas of land. Haider Malik records the case of Ishani Rani, wife of Raja Jalok, who founded mozao (sic.) Daraij who and donated it as waqf for the poor. <sup>102</sup>

Haider Malik credits an instance of aversion of drought to a just king and a chaste wife who passed the whole night in praying and weeping as a result of which the gates of subsistence were opened for the people...and agriculture was also blessed. <sup>103</sup> Thus while as the justice of a king is important, the agency of a chaste wife is also emphasised. Similarly, writing about the adventures of Lalitaditya in Dekkan, Haider Malik mentions Zata Rani as the lone ruler of the Dekkan kingdoms who marched out to fight with a huge army...and displayed many (sic) courage in the battle so that everyone was full of admiration for her strength<sup>104</sup>. Even the prophecy of the kingship of Sultan Shihabuddin (r.1354-73) is stated by Haider Malik to be a woman saint. <sup>105</sup>

## Conclusion

A study of the sixteenth and seventeenth century Persian texts of medieval Kashmir demonstrates the fact that the texts, *tarikhs* mostly, treated the king as a central figure and organised their narratives around the personality of the king. Even though the *tazkiras*, meant as they are to be centered on the saint's lives, did not exclude the king altogether. At the same time however, based on genres of the texts, there is no neat division in these texts in terms of their contents. This becomes evident in case of *Tarikh-i Sayyid Al* which, although designated as a *tarikh* reads as a *tazkira*, with frequent references to the miracles of the saints in Kashmir. Due to lack of space however, this notion of intertextuality between the Persian texts of medieval Kashmir remains unexplored in this chapter.

An analysis of the manner in which these texts write about the requirements of kingship and characters of the king reminds us the fact that the texts do not treat the Sultanate kingship as very different from the manner in which kingship was practiced in previous dynasties. Pragmatism and continuity are terms that best capture the

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 35.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 49.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 97-8.

characteristic features of the Sultanate kingship. The idea of advent of an Islamic kingship with the coming of Kashmiri Sultanate to power is not supported in these texts. Debates on the relation between the king and the saint in these texts are complex and varied; the texts do not seem to argue for a total submission of one to the other.

And finally, the debates within these texts and the positions the authors undertake on various matters has to be related to the context of the text and the position of the author himself, something that Chapter Two of this dissertation deals with.

## CHAPTER 4

### Aspects of Sainthood in Medieval Kashmir: Portrayals in the Persian Texts

#### Introduction

This chapter will discuss aspects of sainthood as they came to emerge in the Sultanate era of Kashmir as narrated in the Persian texts of sixteenth and seventh century Kashmir. *Tazkiras* as such would be the main focus of this chapter, even as *tarikhs*, wherever they discuss the saint, would also be included. Besides prominent local personalities, immigrants from Central Asia and Persia came to play an important role in the religious and political sphere in Sultanate-era Kashmir. This chapter aims to trace the manner in which sainthood slowly achieved a prominent status in Kashmir, a status which, with the passage of time, was reflected in the growing importance of *khanqahas* as a religio-political site. Saints in Sultanate-era attained significance to the extent that the contemporary Persian texts, particularly the *tazkiras* but also in some cases, the *tarikhs*, came to argue for a superiority of saint in certain matters vis-a-vis the king. Aspects of this relation between the saint and the king, as the texts saw it, will also be discussed in this chapter. The basis on which the texts constructed the importance of the saint will also be discussed.

#### Saint as the Central Figure in the Persian *Tazkira* texts

Texts like *Tarikh-i-Haider Malik* and *Baharistan-i Shahi* recount the political history of Kashmir in a manner in which the king and his dynasties become the central concern of the texts. On the contrary, texts categorised as *dazkiras* like *Dastur-us Salikin* and *Taufat-al Ahbab* display a tendency of being focussed on the personality of the saint. The same is true of *Tarikh-i Sayyid Ali* which, even though categorised

as *atarikhis* actually focussed on the life history of two saints, viz. Sayyid Ali Hamadani and his son Sayyid Muhammed Hamadani. These texts, even while recounting the political history do so from a perspective of the how their protagonist-the saint, or his followers saw the events. Thus the saint is established as the central figure by the very manner in which the text is structured. In this aspect, this group of texts can be juxtaposed against other texts categorised as *astathis* like *Tarikh-i Malik Haider* and *Baharistan-i Shahi* for instance, which by their structure establish the king and his court as the central figures in the history of Kashmir.

Texts like *Dastur-us Salikin*, *Taufat-al Ahabab* and *Tarikh-i Sayyid Ali* structure themselves around the personalities of certain Sufi saints and their activities in Kashmir. While as *Dastur-us Salikin* is focussed on the personality of the sixteenth century Suhrawardiya Sufi saint of Kashmir Shiekh Hamza Makhdur *Taufat-al Ahabab* records the life and activities of Nurbakhshiyya Sufi saint Shamsuddin Araki after his arrival in Kashmir. *Tarikh-i Sayyid Ali* describes the life and activities of Iranian Sufi saints Sayyid Ali Hamadani, his son Sayyid Muhammed Hamadani and their followers after their arrival into Kashmir.

By virtue of their structure, these texts serve to bring into centre the personality of the saints and emphasise their role in the shaping the history of Kashmir. The beginning and end of these texts coincides with the saint's birth/arrival into Kashmir and their death/exit from Kashmir. The beginning of the text, for instance, coincides with the beginning of the activities of the saint in Kashmir and his background, for instance the details about his family and the place of his birth. *Dastur-us Salikin*, for instance, recounts the place of birth and the details of the family of the saint and stories about early childhood of the Sufi saint Sheikh Hamza in the very opening pages of the text. Similarly *Tarikh-Sayyid Ali* and *Taufat-al Ahabab* begin their accounts in tandem with the beginning of the activities of the saints after their arrival in Kashmir. *Tarikh-i Sayyid Ali* starts his account from the time of the arrival of Sayyid Ali Hamadani into Kashmir and ends with the stories of the saints who accompanied him, detailing their places of death and burial. Similarly *Taufat-al Ahabab*'s beginning corresponds with the time when the Sufi saint Shamsuddin Araki left for Kashmir, detailing the preparations and his travel to Kashmir. Narrating the stories of these saints, these texts narrate the history of Kashmir as well. Aspects of life in Kashmir, political as well as social are also narrated as the authors go on

recounting the life experiences of these saints in Kashmir. However, the political history, though an important part of these texts is only mentioned when the saints interact with important personalities at the political centre-in most cases the Sultan and his nobles. Even these accounts of the relation with the political centre or political personalities are almost always narrated from the point of view of the saint. While *Dastur-us Salikin* eschews any details about the political climate of Kashmir, *Taufat-al Ahabab* and *Tarikh-i Sayyid Ali* both detail the political conditions of Kashmir while referring to the interaction of the Sufi saints with the respective political authorities of their time. Narrating the beginning of Shamsuddin Araki's arrival in Kashmir in 1483, *Taufat-al Ahabab* gives details about the person and the court of the reigning Kashmir Sultan, Hasan Shah (r.1472-84). As the text goes on, similar other instances of interaction of the saint with other leading nobles and influential personalities are recounted from the point of view of the saint. Details of political life of medieval Kashmir similarly emerge from *Tarikh-i Sayyid Alias* the author goes on recording details about the activities of the fourteenth century Sufi saint Sayyid Ali Hamadani after his arrival into Kashmir during the reign of Sultan Quttubuddin (r.1374-89). Aspects of political life are recounted in the text, most notably under Shahmiri kings Quttubuddin (r.1474-89), Sikander (r.1389-1413), Zainul Abidin (r.1420-70) and the Mughal Governor Mirza Haider Dughlat (r.1540-51) along with the life histories of the successors and disciples of the saint, most notably his son Sayyid Muhammed Hamadani (b. 1372).

Thus in terms of their content, the main focus in all these texts remains the saint and his activities. Various aspects of the life of these saints are treated in detail in these accounts- instances of their connection with the divine, performance of miracles and other such acts, acts of iconoclasm and construction of religious structures such as mosques and *khanqahs*, stories of converting the local population and so on figure prominently in these accounts.

## Saints as Credible and Effective Personalities in Persian *Tazkira* Texts

The Persian texts, most notably the ones designated as *tazkiras* like *Dastur-us Salikin* and *Taufat-al Ahbab* and *Tarikh-i Sayyid Ali* try to build an image of the saints as credible figures in spiritual and religious matters. Positive traits such as piousness, a connection with the divine manifested in the acts such as fore-telling of events, an ability to perform miracles such as *tay-al ard* (thaumaturgical teleportation) and *tay-al huruf* (mastering the word) often figure in these texts as distinguishing traits of the saint.<sup>1</sup> *Dastur-us Salikin* records how the Sufi saint Sheikh Hamza happened to meet Khawaja Khizr, the latter known to be an epitome of wisdom and mystical knowledge in the Islamic traditions. Sheikh Hamza describes his encounter as follows

One day after Friday prayers at Jamia Masjid Srinagar, a saint-like person wearing green clothes held my hand, his cool hands soothing me. Holding my hand, we crossed Zaina Kadal and reached Zaldagar. Facing *qibla*, the saint gave me plenty of blessings and good wishes. While on our way, he also gave me plenty of advices. Impressed by his physical appearance, I forgot to ask for his introduction....As we finished our *asr* prayers, he soon disappeared... That night in my dream I was told that the said person was Prophet Khizr. <sup>2</sup>

In a similar effort to build credentials for the protagonist of his text, Baba Daud describes Sheikh Hamza as born in and coming from an area already inhabited by people of the faith. It is mentioned that Shaikh Hamza's family would always pay the prescribed tax on crops, animals and property, ~~the~~ *kaat* and take it to the *khanqah* of Shaikh Ismail in Srinagar, the spiritual head of Muslims of his times. <sup>3</sup> A connection with the divine was a distinguishing feature of the Shaikh's early life. According to the author, Shaikh Hamza received detailed discourses on matters of personal conduct and behaviour from the divine guidance through the medium of dreams right from his (Shaikh's) childhood days. <sup>5</sup> Dreams figure prominently in the Sufi texts as the medium of divine guidance for persons other than the Prophets, for whom a direct revelation is reserved. A divine power of memorising and a strong

<sup>1</sup> *Dastur-us Salikin*, pp. 59, 60.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 39-40.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30-31.

memory is also highlighted, as Baba Daud quotes Shaikh Hamza as saying how he memorised a particular chapter of the Quran while hearing it from another person who was actually trying to memorise it and yet failed. <sup>6</sup>The initiation of Shaikh Hamza into the Sufi order is seen as not just as a mere coincidence, but rather as a result of Shaikh Hamza's own inner cravings for a master who would help him in acquiring the divine guidance.<sup>7</sup>The saint is himself quoted in the text as re-collecting how he would, leaving all the household activities alone, instead prefer to spend time in the company of Sufis at his home.

At the same time, Sheikh Hamza emerges *Distur-us Salikin* as a person who despises all traits deemed as forbidden in the Sufi religious traditions. These features of his personality emerge right from his childhood as the text captures instances of how right from his childhood days Sheikh Hamza would never lie, and hated and cursed those he even suspected of <sup>8</sup>lying. The saint grew up free from hatred and jealousy, and came to despise the forbidden such as music. <sup>9</sup>

Narratives of the credibility and superiority of the saints in these texts mainly focus on the spiritual and the religious aspects of the saint's life. However at the same time, the texts do not build an image of the saints as detached from other important aspects of life, like the political and economic aspects. Instead these texts are full of instances which, besides highlighting the spiritual and the religious achievements, narrate the life achievements of the saints in the material world. Chitralkha Zutshi reminds of how these texts attribute a transformation of the physical landscape of Kashmir to the activities of these Sufi saints. This becomes evident by observing the manner in which *Taufat-al Ahbab* records the activities of a Sufi saint Shamsuddin Araki in the fifteenth century Kashmir. Zutshi remarks

A large portion of *Taufat* is devoted to Iraqi's activities in Kashmir to cleanse it...through the transformation of its physical landscape, thereby reasserting the ability of the Sufi mystics to exercise control over and shape the land...it (*Taufat-al Ahbab*) describes the actual

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 27.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 29-30.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 29.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 27, 79, 87.

changes wrought over the Kashmir's landscape through Iraqi's actions.<sup>10</sup>

The point to note here is how texts such as *Taufiqat-al Ahbab* tried to build a narrative of effectiveness of the saints and emphasise their actions as making a decisive impact on different aspects of life in Kashmir; religious, political and even physical. There is an obvious attempt throughout the text to highlight the activities of the saint and their impact on the social and religious landscape of Kashmir. By their very scheme of narration, the texts bind the spiritual and the religious with material aspects of life in Kashmir. These texts set out a theory of practical conduct for the saint, prescribing the duties of the saint towards his disciples after a person had attained sainthood. *Dastur-us Salikin* makes it incumbent upon a *Shaykh* (the spiritual guide/Saint) to guide the disciple, make the disciple aware of the good and the bad and point the beneficial and the harmful after the sainthood is achieved and disciples enrolled themselves.<sup>11</sup> *Dastur-us Salikin* mentions how, owing to the influence of his grandparents, Sheikh Hamza Makhdum found the residents of his ancestral village in a far-off hilly location to be pious and knowledgeable.<sup>12</sup> Far from the image of a Sufi saint as tucked in a corner of *khanqah* reciting *zikr* and *wazifa* (the rhythmic repetitions of certain attributes of God), these texts instead are full of accounts of activities of the saints and the changes they brought about by their activities. There are instances in these texts where the saint successfully intervenes in matters such as addressing issues of domestic violence and medical cases. In the former case, *Dastur-us Salikin* records such cases in which Shaikh Hamza intervened in favour of a person suffering from domestic violence by warning the perpetrator of imminent death with the help of God, and in the latter case, the text tells us of an instance when Sheikh Hamza restored the eyesight of a disciple.<sup>13</sup>

Another such theme emphasising the effectiveness of the saint was the ability of the saints to work for the general welfare of others, specifically including practices such as making places habitable, settling populations and bringing in people with set of arts and crafts and introducing trade and commerce. As Chitrlekha Zutshi argues, the *tazkiras* presented Kashmir as a discursive Islamic space created and made

<sup>10</sup> Zutshi, *Contested Pasts*, p. 47-8.

<sup>11</sup> *Dastur-us Salikin*, p. 94.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 65.



habitable through the efforts of particular Sufi mystics and his followers .<sup>14</sup> While as kings are shown in the *tarikh* literature as founding and populating cities, constructing forts, mosques and canals, the *tazkira* tradition credits the Sufi saints as indulging in similar kind of acts, making otherwise uninhabitable places populated, cleansing areas of land and even springs occupied by evil spirits. Thus goes a passage in *Dastur-us Salikin*

There were two springs in Nadihal, between them was a tree...From dusk till dawn, no one would pass that area for the fear of getting troubled, except for those who would practice infidel customs. As soon as Sheikh Hamza reached the spot, the evil spirits left the place . The springs were cleansed and structures for performing ablution and a mosque as constructed.<sup>15</sup>

This narrative emphasising the practical impact of the saint's activities primarily revolved around making geographies habitable, encouraging traders and merchants in their activities, and improving the general conditions of the people. Besides, spiritual and physical prowess could exist in a single person, for instance a Sayyid (particularly one claiming descent from the Prophet of Islam, more generally used for a leader, a wise man). *Tarikh-i Sayyid Ali* records the case of a Sayyid Hassan Bahadur who while being a *qutb* (lit. the pivot, used for an eminent religious personality) of his time was also a man of valour. Sayyid Ali names seventeen forts this *qutb* conquered, besides subduing cities and even taking the ruler of Kabul as his prisoner.<sup>16</sup> When not in direct combat roles, Sufis could act as intermediaries as in the case of Sayyid Taj-uddin who, according to *Tarikh-i Sayyid Ali* interceded in case of Sultan Feroz Shah, the ruler of Delhi and Sultan Ahmad Khan, the ruler of Kabul, after both of whom were taken as prisoners.<sup>17</sup> The same Sayyid Taj-uddin is shown by Sayyid Ali as having built a mosque in the locality of the town of Shihabudinpora built by Sultan Shihabuddin.<sup>18</sup>

The *tazkira* and the *tarikh* literature, it is argued here revolve around two main personalities, the Sufi *pir* (a saint) and the king respectively. While the king is shown as important for the maintenance of law order and general welfare of his territory, the

<sup>14</sup> Zuts p. 08.

<sup>15</sup> *Dastur-us Salikin* , p. 67.

<sup>16</sup> *Tarikh-i Sayyid Ali* , p. 29.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.

Sufi saint as the *murshid* (spiritual guide or master) is seen as equally important for guidance in the spiritual sphere. *Dastur-us Salikin* emphasises the need for a spiritual master, the *murshid* in Sufi terminology. A person without the guidance of a *murshid* is equated with a tree that grows in the wild, being fruitless or at the most bearing non-edible fruits. On the other hand, the person with a spiritual guidance of the *murshid* is equated with a tree carefully cultivated in a garden, bearing delicious fruits.<sup>19</sup> *Dastur-us Salikin* portrays the *Shaykh* as the most prominent personality of his time, someone people have to look for, identify and follow in order to be guided and termed him as the commander of God's forces on earth, thus highlighting his importance.<sup>20</sup>

Both the *tarikhs* and the *tazkira* texts portray the indispensability for their respective protagonists by emphasising upon their role and contribution for the good and general welfare. In both the cases an absence of the protagonist is seen as dangerous and unwanted and in both the cases, God has to be thanked for having blessed the people with both the king and the *murshid*. *Dastur-us Salikin* quotes Sheikh Hamza as describing a dream in which he was asked to thank God for having sent his Sayyid Jamal-ud din Bukhari as his *murshid* to *khawajah* Ahmad Itoo.<sup>21</sup> *Dastur-us Salikin* maintains the need for being a follower of a Sufi saint as mandatory.<sup>22</sup> Much like the need for a king is portrayed in *tariqah* tradition as practically beneficial for the general population; the *tazkira* tradition builds the case for the Sufi *pirs* requirement in practical matters of domestic violence and medical issues as stated above. Thus both the texts, and by extension the genres they represent can be seen portraying significance of their respective protagonists; king in the *tarikhs* and *murshid* (a spiritual guide) in the *tazkiras*.

By narrating accounts of effectiveness of the saints in the different aspects of practical life in medieval Kashmir after establishing the saints as superior in spiritual and religious terms, the texts serve a number of functions. First they trace the real-life effectiveness of these saints to their spiritual and religious credentials. Second, the religious and the spiritual is established as the ultimate standard, against which

<sup>19</sup> *Dastur-us Salikin* , p. 33.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 89.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 141.

success was to be measured, even in areas such as political and economic. Third, political credentials otherwise considered widely important and decisive are relegated to a secondary position and are thus not seen as decisive.

### **Sufi Saint as Successors of the Prophet**

*Dastur-us Salikin* defines the Caliphs, the successors of the Prophet as the one who lives by and promotes the *Sunna* (Prophet's way of life and legal precedent). The Sufis linked themselves to the Prophet mainly in two ways; one, on the basis of the concept of spiritual transmission, the passing of the secret, linking a Sufi with the Prophet by a chain of descent traced through an elaborate *silsila-nama*, the genealogical tables linking a living Sufi to the Prophet and even further to Adam. One of these written documents is mentioned by Sheikh Hamza, as being handed over by his *pir* Sayyid Jamal-ud Din Bukhari.<sup>24</sup> Therefore, this method of linking with the Prophet is more specific to the Sufi tradition. A more general method, one which followed the saying of the Prophet according to which the learned in general are termed as the successors of the Prophet. This concept of the learned being the successors of the Prophet was used by a wide range of people, including the Sufis and the *Ulema* (plural of *Alim*, a Muslim religious scholar) to claim a connection with the Prophet. *Dastur-us Salikin* uses both the qualifications to claim for its protagonist the status of the *Shaykh* of his times, while as the *Shaykh* is defined in the same text as the representative of the Prophet in his time. First, a claim is made on the basis of the *silsilah-nama* indicating the spiritual connection, and then claim to being the Prophet's successor is made on the basis of the knowledge and the practice of the *Sunna* attained by the Sufi saint. These claims to the spiritual transmission and succession of the Prophet by Sufis were the basis of conflict between them and the *ulema*, who equally lay claim to being the successors of the Prophet on the basis of qualifying as the learned. Thus a rivalry between the Sufis and *ulema* was evident: the *ulema* criticised the Sufis for their lack of competence in the discipline of specialised knowledge, the Sufis criticised the *ulema* for being interested in the formal

<sup>23</sup> MH Kabbani, *Classical Islam and the Naqshbandi Sufi Tradition* USA: Islamic Supreme Council of America, 2004, p. 559.

<sup>24</sup> *Dastur-us Salikin*, p. 35.

aspects of religion only.<sup>25</sup> *Dastur-us Salikin* details a number of religious personalities categorized as *ulemas* being submissive and dependent on their contemporary Sufis, including personalities as prominent as Imam Shafi and Ahmad bin Hanbal, considered as two among the four *imams* (Muslim religious leaders) by the majority followers of *Sunni* theology.<sup>26</sup>

Even if the traditional rivalry between the Sufis and *ulemas* has been highlighted, we need to be aware of the fact that, as Omid Safi has shown in case of the Seljuk era in Iran, Sufis could be and were often religious scholars, and religious scholars could (and often did) pursue the spiritual path.<sup>27</sup> Also the categories of the Sufis and the *ulema* were not strictly functional and rigid. Cases of *ulema* grouping along with orthodox Sufis in a united opposition against other Sufi sects have been recorded in the case of Delhi Sultanate. For instance, Vipul Singh mentions a case in which the *ulema* along with the Suhrawardis and the Qadiris objected to the Chishti practice of *sama* (Sufi musical gathering)<sup>28</sup>. A similar quality is evident in the case of *Dastur-us Salikin*, which tries to use both the aspects otherwise seen as distinct as present in single personality of Sheikh Hamza: the typical Sufi secret transmission and *silsila*, and the more general and typical *ulema* attribute of knowledge and its practice.

However what is more important is that in laying the claims to being the Caliph of the Prophet, *Dastur-us Salikin* brought the personality of the saint and the king in a potential direct conflict with each other, in view of the fact that the *tarikhi* tradition presented the Sultan as the Caliph of God. Besides the Sufi stylised themselves as ones who were in the words of *Dastur-us Salikin* supposed to disdain those who follow worldly desires and glory<sup>29</sup>, a category that involved among others, the ruling classes and the people associated with them. The seeming conflict in theory however did not materialise due to a very subtle distinction in the manner the Sultan and the Sufi saint fashioned their authority. The distinction becomes clear when it is

<sup>25</sup> Eric Geoffroy, *Introduction to Sufism: The Inner Path of Islam* Indiana: World Wisdom, 2010, p. 78.

<sup>26</sup> *Dastur-us Salikin*, p. 98.

<sup>27</sup> Omid Safi, *The Politics of Knowledge in Premodern Islam: Negotiating Ideology and Religious Inquiry*, Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006, p I.

<sup>28</sup> Vipul Singh, *Interpreting Medieval India: Early Medieval, Delhi Sultanate and Regions (c.750-1550)* Vol.1, New Delhi: MacMillan Publishers India Ltd., 2009, p. 274.

<sup>29</sup> *Dastur-us Salikin*, p. 115.

observed that while the Sultans' claims to sovereignty and authority originated from their claims to represent God on earth, the Sufi saints laid no such explicit claims. Instead they claimed Prophetic knowledge and their claims to a connection with the Prophet did not mean for them any claims to exercise of power and authority in the political sphere. In an era of intense sectarian competition *Dastur-us Salikin* illustrates<sup>30</sup>, these claims of connection to the Prophet made in the *tazkirah* literature were more aimed at dealing with fellow religious personalities and sects, rather than with the kingly court. However the Sufi saints came to influence power and authority, the *wilaya* on the basis of their *walaya*,<sup>31</sup> the intimacy with divine and thus did not need to stake explicit claims to Sultan's power and authority. Even if the text fashions the *Shaykh*, the Sufi equivalent of Sultan, in terms of his religious attributes such as his ability to know aspects *shariat*, *tariqat* and *haqiqat*<sup>32</sup> (the three stages of the Sufi path), the Sufi saints of medieval Kashmir, acted against the typical Sufi stereotype of being involved in individual mystical practices, marginalising their social and political role. Even as there is a praise of those who forsake the world and adopt an attitude of non-attachment to the world on the other hand, *Dastur-us Salikin* gives a long list of the duties and responsibilities of the Sufi *pir*, signifying the saint's busy activities in this world. These include, among others, a duty of a Sufi to call people to his following, instructing his disciples in matters of the good and the bad, and teaching his disciple the basics of worship, manners and behaviour more crucially, the act to stop the bad and promote the good. In fact one of the attributes of the pious personalities in these texts is that they work for public welfare while remaining immersed in the world of love. <sup>36</sup> This signified the active social and by extension, the political roles these texts prescribed to the Sufi mystics to play in Kashmir.<sup>37</sup> The Sufi texts portrayed the Sufi saints as independent and self-sufficient, not in need of any sort of help from any earthly authority. *Dastur-us Salikin* portrays the Sufi saints as free from any anxiety and dependence from any worldly authority,

<sup>30</sup> For instances of sectarian competition in *Dastur-us Salikin*, see pp. 41-2, 78.

<sup>31</sup> Omid -modern Politics,  
*The Muslim World*, Vol 90, Fall 2000, pp.259-288

<sup>32</sup> *Dastur-us Salikin*, p. 103.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 96.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 95.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 108.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 114.

<sup>37</sup> For a discussion of a similar role played in Safavid Iran, see Omid Safi, *The Muslim World*, 2000, pp. 259-288.

after they had achieved the ultimate stage of Sufi<sup>38</sup>. At another place Sheikh Hamza is quoted as describing himself as free from any worldly desires and requirements, having achieved a status from where no worldly desire could cause in him either a desire or a tension<sup>39</sup> and at another place, as having been bestowed upon with everlasting safety and freedom from any anxiety.<sup>40</sup>

### **Saint s Wilayat in the Sultan s Territory**

*Tazkiras* do contain references to the presence of the king, his power and authority. The most dominant presence in these texts is that of the Sufi *pir*, who is shown acting as a sovereign in his own capacity. This is linked to his role as the omniscient spiritual master, the smallest of whose commands merit the greatest of attention by his disciples. For all practical purposes, the saint resembles a king in his court, holding regular assemblies of devotees, instructing and admonishing them. At the same time, the saint stakes claims to sovereignty, mostly by his claims to his divine legitimation as conveyed by the medium of his own connection with the divine. The legitimation of the saint comes from these self-made claims as much as from the practical acts of miracles such as the ability to perform *tay-al ard* (the folding up of earth) *tay-al makaan* (the folding up of space) and *tay-al huruf*<sup>41</sup> (the folding up of words), besides attributes such as a connection with the unseen world of other species, most notably the *jinn*s.<sup>42</sup> Since religious sphere was dominated mainly by the Sufis belonging to various orders, there was situation of intense intra-Sufi competition and under these circumstances these attributes came to be claimed by almost all the orders of the Sufis irrespective of their practical credentials. Thus the *pir* s legitimacy solely based on claims to a connection with the divine, which in most cases were self-made, was not adequate. This concern was reflected throughout the Sufi hagiographical literature which is full of instances highlighting the Sufi *pir* s worldly and practical achievements as opposed to a merely spiritual status based on the divine connection. This situation led to frequent references to, for instance the connections of a particular Sufi with the king and his dynasty or inversely tracing the saint as a scion of a

<sup>38</sup> *Dastur-us Salikin* , p. 118.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 84.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 68.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 59.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 66.

previously ruling dynasty. *Dastur-us Salikin* traces the lineage of its protagonist Sheikh Hamza Makhdum to the Chak dynasty of Kashmir and to the Lone (the Lavanyas) tribe.<sup>43</sup> Another instance of this kind is recorded in *Baharistan-i Shahi* in which the Sufi saint, Sayyid Ali Hamadani, after having been received in person with sincerity and conviction is shown to be presenting Sultan Qutubuddin a cap from his personal wardrobe by way of a token .<sup>44</sup> The attempts by the Sufis/religious personalities beyond the claims of spiritual and ritual status are well illustrated in the case of the immigrant Bayhaqi Sayyids in fifteenth century Kashmir. The Bayhaqi Sayyids focussed their energies on establishing family ties with the ruling house and high government officials<sup>45</sup> Their involvement in the fifteenth century Kashmiri politics can be gauged by references to them heading centres of power, and accomplishing the assigned military expeditions successfully<sup>46</sup>. Even at one stage they staked their claims to the throne of Kashmir, resulting in a bitter struggle for power between the Kashmiri nobility and the Bayhaqi Sayyids .<sup>47</sup>

In case of Sultanate era, the Bayhaqi Sayyids have been singled out for their political ambitions. However, it is argued here that attempts to align with the prospective power groups and display political prowess as a warrior already existed in the Persian Sufi textual discourse of the fifteenth century Kashmir. The images of a warrior-saint as well as tracing connections to ancient ruling dynasties by the Sufis was an already prevalent feature of the medieval Sufi hagiographical literature of Kashmir. For instance, the author *Dastur-us Salikin* traces the descent of Shaikh Hamza, a prominent sixteenth century Suhrawardiya Kashmiri Sufi to ruling dynasties of Kashmir, in addition to highlighting his warrior-skills, such as mastery in archery and horse-riding.<sup>48</sup>

The manner in which the *tazkiras* describe the assembly of the saint at his *khanqah* and the activities therein is reminiscent of and bear a strong resemblance to

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 19,2.6

<sup>44</sup> K.N Pandit , *Baharistan-i Shahi* , pp. 10-33.

<sup>45</sup> - *History of Civilizations of Central Asia* , Eds. MA Asimov, C E Bosworth, Delhi: Motilal Banarasi Dass Publishers Private Limited, 1999, p. 314.

<sup>46</sup> and the Chak Sultans of Kashmir: 1554- *Proceedings of the Punjab History Conference* Department of Punjab Historical Studies, Punjabi University, 2006, pp. 160-5.

<sup>47</sup> f Shah Mir Dynasty (1339- , p. 31.

<sup>48</sup> *Dastur-us Salikin* , pp. 26-8.

the manner in which a king holds his court and his assembly. Resemblances between the Sufi and the Sultan's assembly are many. Even the manner of initiation of people into Sufi orders and their gradual journey up the ladder in the spiritual hierarchy matches the manner in which people at the court move up the hierarchy and are promoted to higher positions, getting rewards for their services to the king and his kingdom. Baba Daud Khaki describes the manner in which his *pir* Hamza Makhdum was initiated into the Suhrawardiya order by a Central Asian saint, Sayyid Jamal-ud din Bukhari.<sup>49</sup> There is a detailed summary of the manner in which people were initiated into Sufi orders. *Dastur-us Salikin* records the procedure and the recitations made in this regard.<sup>50</sup> The progress of Hamza Makhdum in the Sufi hierarchy is depicted as a gradual multi-stage process starting from regular attendance in the company of the *pir* and ending with the saint being assigned a document authorising him to enrol disciples in his own right.<sup>51</sup> This document was a written one, signed by the Shaikh and in some cases, counter-signed by his senior disciples<sup>52</sup>, followed the structure of the *ijazat-nama*, the typical teaching license of Islamic scholarship<sup>53</sup> and included, besides the written certificate any other object symbolizing spiritual succession.<sup>54</sup> Sheikh Hamza mentions the handing over of *silsilah-nama* to him, a genealogical table tracing the lineage of a Sufi saint and the *silsila* to the times of Adam.

*Dastur-us Salikin* mentions how Sheikh Hamza described a certain man of authority who visited him had appeared to him as a female because of his love for the materialistic world and asked his disciple to explain to him how he could bear to look at such a person. These instances in the texts represent a typical Sufi attitude towards royal authority in particular and the worldly powers in general. In these instances, the Sufi masters try to construct an image of two different and contrasting worlds, one that of the outer world of a Sufi wearing a drab dress but possessing brighter inner being and on the other hand a person of authority and power wearing

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 145-6.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34-5.

<sup>52</sup>

Proceedings of the Pakistan

History Conference, Vol 1, p. 89.

<sup>53</sup> Carl Ernst, *Eternal Garden*

<sup>54</sup>

*The Sufis of Bijapur, 1300-1700: Social Roles of Sufis in Medieval India*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978.

<sup>55</sup> *Dastur-us Salikin*, p. 55.



colourful robes but possessing a darker inner being. However, poverty ( *faqir* Sufi terminology) as Carl Ernest argues was an internal attitude of detachment rather than an actual and external deprivation of possessions<sup>56</sup> Similarly, *Dastur-us Salikin* cites the example of Prophets of Islam who combined within themselves both the spiritual and the temporal authority. <sup>57</sup> *Dastur-us Salikin* defines renunciation as not in the act of wearing rag-tags but rather in the act of being well-fed, feeding others and at the same time not surrendering to the worldly desires. <sup>58</sup> In doing this, *Dastur-us Salikin* arguments can be seen in line with the general Suhrawardiya attitude towards poverty, as propounded in the teachings of its founder Abu Najib Al-Suharwardi (b.1097-1168), something this particular order came to de-emphasise, with the focus being on trust in God and being content with one's lot rather than on actual state of being materially poor. <sup>59</sup> However, not all the Sufis criticised the Sultans or the powerful personalities in the same manner and in fact some Sufis sought to influence the sultanate to make it genuinely Islamic in character. <sup>60</sup> *Dastur-us Salikin* seeks to differentiate the attitude of worldliness from that of prosperity in this regard. Accordingly, there could be Sufis who were wealthy and prosperous, like for instance, Shiekh Lajduddin Baghdadi who would, according to the text, donate two gold coins to the *langar-khana* (kitchen associated with the *khanqah*) of his *khanqa* every year.<sup>61</sup>

## **Sainthood and Politics in the Persian Texts: The Ideal and the Pragmatic**

One of the important devices by which the Persian texts established the credentials of the saint was by narrating the stories of the saint's superiority in the spiritual realm. At the same time however, the saint was shown as an effective figure, bringing about real-life changes in different aspects of practical life. This effectiveness of the saint

<sup>56</sup> Carl Ernst, *Sufism: An Introduction to the Mystical Tradition of Islam*, Colorado: Shambhala Publications, 1997.

<sup>57</sup> *Dastur-us Salikin*, p. 195.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 196.

<sup>59</sup> Adam Sabra, *Poverty and Charity in Medieval Islam: Mamluk Egypt, 1250-1517*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, p. 26.

<sup>60</sup> Carl Ernst, *Eternal Garden*.

<sup>61</sup> *Dastur-us Salikin*, p. 195.

was traced by these texts to the spiritual powers the saint possessed. Thus, by virtue of their spiritual authority, the saints were shown as exercising considerable influence over the different fields of life in medieval Kashmir, politics being one of them.

By virtue of their spiritual status and religious credibility, the saints were in theory closer to God and supposedly acted as agents of implementation and dissemination of the divine will. This included an ability to prophesise and fore-tell about the future kings and even in certain cases, their deaths. This ability to prophesise is almost elevated to the act of bestowal of the kingship itself by the saint. *Tarikh-i Sayyid Ali* records the episode of a cap Sayyid Ali Hamadani had given to Sultan Qutubuddin

While laying on the death-bed, Fateh Shah had willed that the noble cap be put inside his shroud. May be the noble cap may help him enter the heaven along with his righteous sadaats. The headwear was thus put into his shroud and his dead body was brought from Poonch...After his burial Muhammed Shah enquired about the noble cap. He was informed that the same has been buried with the shroud of Fateh Shah, Muhammed Shah desired to re-open the grave of Fateh Shah to get the cap from the shroud...The news was brought to Hafiz Fatehullah who said that the kingship would go away from them. The same thing happened. After that day, seditions, riots and disturbances became a routine matter in Kashmir. <sup>62</sup>

Sayyid Ali narrates how the cap of Sayyid Ali Hamadani signified and embodied the kingship itself, and thereby the loss of the cap is equated with and actually leads in the text to the loss of kingship. This is the manner in which the *tazkirat* texts structure and describe the relation between the saint and political centre as headed by the king. From this narrative it is clear that, the saint emerged as the superior one with an ability to bestow kingship on a certain person. In these texts, the relation between the saint and the political centre was structured in a way that the political is seen as deriving from, and in a way subject to the spiritual. This sets the stage in these texts for statements that show the typical Sufi disdain for those in power, including the king and the nobles. Baba Daud gives a glimpse of the same in *Dastur-us Salikin*

Sheikh Hamza never gave a hint of any respect and courtesy whenever the affluent, the powerful and the officials visited him, not

<sup>62</sup> *Tarikh-i Sayyid Ali*, p. 63.

to mention standing up for them or showing respect in any other way.<sup>63</sup>

The same text comes up with an explanation for such a kind of conduct. Baba Daud recollects the explanation ~~h~~<sup>is</sup> Sheikh Hamza gave in reply to a question about his conduct towards those in power

If they dont like not being extended the courtesy, then let them not come to me. I have never desired their company. The fact is that God reveals their true nature to me and in spite of their claims to power, they appear to me as poor and impoverished, dressed in rags. In fact, that is how these people are going to look like on the day of judgement. Believe me! If you were to see the state of their inner being, you would not talk to them; neither cast your glances on them.<sup>64</sup>

With this kind of dismissive attitude, ~~the~~<sup>the</sup> kiratexts set out to show the superiority of the spiritual and the religious over the temporal and the political. The texts record instances of interaction between the two whereby the saint stood in a relation of superiority vis-a-vis the Sultan. Sayyid Ali records how in a meeting between Sultan Qutubuddin and Sayyid Ali Hamadani, the Sultan had to put off the gown, as instructed by the Sayyed after the saint found out that the Sultan had tied his gown towards the left side thus following the custom of the infidels .<sup>65</sup> These and similar other instances made the case for appointing a tutor for the Sultan and his family. The saint then appointed Peer Haji Muhammed for the Sultan and his family so that he would teach them the Holy Quran and the minute details concerning prayers and fasting .<sup>66</sup> In other instances, Sultan Shihabuddin is seen as holding the stirrups of Sayyed Hassan's horse in order to help him get into the<sup>67</sup> ~~the~~ saddle. superiority of the saint vis-a-vis the Sultan is attributed in these texts to the spiritual prowess of the saint.

*Dastur-us Salikin* articulates a position wherein the protagonist is seen as displaying a total disregard for those in power. On the other hand, Sayyid Ali reflects a rather pragmatic attempt by the Sufi saint from Iran, Shamsuddin Araki who, rather

<sup>63</sup> *Dastur-us Salikin* , p. 54.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.* , p. 56.

<sup>65</sup> *Tarikh-i Sayyid Ali* , p. 34.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 35-6

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.

than relying on his spiritual credentials is reported to have produced a letter from the ruler of Khurasan and some gifts in the court of Hasan Shah, the Kashmiri ruler:

He brought an affectionate letter from Sultan Hussain Mirza, the ruler of Khurasan to Hasan Shah. One fur cloak from the royal wardrobe was brought as a present from that Sultan...Shams Iraqi stayed in Kashmir for eight years and trying to win favour of Kashmiri nobles and dominate the country. <sup>68</sup>

However, attempts on the part of the saint to win over those in positions of power and authority are treated as unsuitable for the personality of saint and subjected to harsh critique. In fact, in *the kīra* literature, the saint's nearness to a political personality implies a lack of the saint's spiritual prowess and his incapability to win over the king and the nobles. For instance, the author of *Tarikh-i Sayyid Ali* criticises Shamsuddin Araki, a Central Asian saint for attempting to allegedly win over the nobles after his arrival in Kashmir. While *Taufat-al Ahbab* describes him arriving on diplomatic mission to the court of Sultan Hasan Shah, *Tarikh-i Sayyid Ali* records that he attempted to fake his credentials as an envoy by producing a fake letter from the Sultan of Khurasan.

While the texts set high moral standards of an ideal sainthood being averse to politics and power, they also displayed instances in which the reputed saints of medieval Kashmir had to deal in a pragmatic way with the court and others in the political centre. In such instances, the texts describe the absolute power of the Sultans and attempts to win over those in power by the saints, howsoever disdainful such attempts were supposed to be. *Tarikh-i Sayyid Ali* gives a glimpse of the absolute power the Sultan could exercise when dealing with his subjects, saints included. As has been mentioned before in the previous chapter, the text narrates an incident involving Sultan Zainul Abidin and a Rishi saint Baba Zainu d Din. According to the text, the Sultan paid a visit to the saint and while the saint was away, the Sultan sat on his prayer rug. As the saint returned to his room, he saw the Sultan sitting on his prayer rug. This angered the saint and he paid no attention to the Sultan. Enraged, the Sultan exiled the saint to Tibet. Even as the text goes on to recount how the Sultan had to order him back to Kashmir after the saint had caused him a swollen foot, this

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 61.

instance, among many others illustrates the actual power a Sultan could exercise, even, as in this case, while dealing with a reputed saint

The Sultan paid him a visit. The Baba was busy in his ablutions. The Sultan, finding the carpet unoccupied sat on it. When the Baba came to know that the Sultan has come, he paid no attention to the king. The Sultan felt enraged and at once ordered ~~him~~ ~~to~~ ~~carry~~ ~~Baba~~ ~~to~~ ~~Tibet~~...In compliance with the Sultan's orders, the Baba was taken to Tibet. Baba Zainu d Din used his spiritual power and caused the Sultan a swollen foot which gave latter pain...The Sultan...got back Zain d Din with great honour. The Baba prayed at Aisha Muqam for the Sultan after which his pain subsided and he felt quite healthy. <sup>69</sup>

Despite the spiritual superiority of the Sufi saint, the kingship in medieval Kashmir was represented a powerful institution. The resulting tension between the Sufi saint and the king is very evident in the texts. ~~that~~ ~~as~~ ~~were~~ ~~meant~~ ~~to~~ highlight the power and superiority of the Sufi saints, but at the same time, they could not afford to miss out on the overwhelming political power of the king. This ambivalence is further sharpened when these texts narrate with justification the attempts of the saints to be close to politics and associate with political affairs and activities. The best example of such an ambivalent attitude can be seen in the instance of the author of *Dastur-us Salikin*, Baba Daud. While maintaining a disdain towards those in power in his text, Baba Daud himself came to acquire close associations with politics and various power groups. Baba Daud headed a delegation to the court of Mughal Emperor Akbar, inviting him to invade Kashmir. One should therefore be little surprised that Baba Daud while describing the credentials of ~~his~~ ~~Sheikh~~ Hamza traces his political lineage to a ruling family belonging to the lone tribe and the ruling Chak dynasty of Kashmir<sup>70</sup>. Thus, far from the position of total disdain, *Dastur-us Salikin* enumerates a pious and just king as equivalent to or even superior to a saint.<sup>71</sup>

<sup>69</sup> *Tarikh-i Sayyid Ali*, p. 59.

<sup>70</sup> *Dastur-us Salikin*, p. 26.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 198.

## ***Khanqahs* as Important Institutions in Medieval Kashmir**

Thus, even as the saints did not consider the Sultan as superior in theory, particularly in matters of the spiritual and the religious, in practice, the Sultan exercised the ultimate authority. However, since the two had separate and distinct areas of influence, the Sultan's claims to actual power and authority could not dismiss the basis of saint's claim to spiritual superiority. The saint, even if ultimately subject to the political centre eked out his own area of influence, commanding disciples and followers. The saints acquired an important status in the society, at times making followers with political credentials as well. Thus the saint could, in some instances, boast of powerful nobles and in some cases the king himself among his disciples and followers. The centre of all religious activities of the saint was ~~the~~ *khanqah* the character of which depended upon the personality of the saint and the latter's ability to draw followers. The *khanqahs*, with the passage of time emerged as institutions that would attract disciples and followers from far-off places, including important officials, nobles and sometimes the Sultan himself.

A network of *khanqahs* was already in place in the sixteenth century as is indicated by the description of Sheikh Hamza in ~~D~~ *Dastur-us Salikin Dastur-us Salikin* records Sheikh Hamza moving from one *khanqah* to another in search of education. At least two *khanqahs* associated with the early education of Shaikh Hamza find mention in the text; one located near Koh-i Maran, under the supervision of Shaikh Fatahullah, and the other one established by Shams Chak. By the time Sheikh Hamza associated with these two *khanqahs*, these were already well-established institutions as Shaikh Hamza spent as many as twenty years in the *khanqah* of Shams Chak<sup>73</sup>. *Zakaat*, the obligatory religious tax to be paid by every Muslim, formed one of the sources of income for the *khanqahs* and the text states that the family of Shaikh Hamza always paid *zakaat* to the *khanqah* of Shaikh Ismail. Besides the institutions of *khanqahs*, the personalities of the saints also attracted gifts in different forms from devotees and disciples. *Dastur-us Salikin* mentions a range of gifts including valuable clothing and even horses donated to Sheikh Hamza.<sup>74</sup> These instances point out to the fact that well before the time of Shaikh Hamza Makhdum

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 83.

(b.AD 1494) such *khanqahs* had assumed significant importance so as to attract donations from various sources, such as property tax from individual families. These contributions, besides royal patronage in many forms, contributed to the establishment of these *khanqahs* as places that could provide for education and other basic necessities such as residence and food, for a large number of their students. The curriculum included a range of subjects such as polity and governance, mysticism and Islamic law. The texts on these themes written by prominent personalities of their times such as Sayyid Ali Hamadani (b.1314), Farid ud-din Attar ( b.1145), Amir Husain (13<sup>th</sup> century) were included in the curriculum and it was expected that the students would memorise and orally recite these texts in front of the concerned teacher.<sup>75</sup> In these institutions, even the company of the students was properly arranged for, as was the case with Sheikh Hamza for instance, who because of his young age was assigned an elderly person as his roommate. <sup>76</sup>

### ***Khanqahs* and Politics: Patronage, Legitimation and Acts of Violence**

*Dastur-us Salikin* illustrates clearly that besides housing the saint, *khanqahs* served as centres of training, preparing the disciples for a future life in an exclusive and specialised company of prominent personalities. <sup>77</sup> Instances of patronage of *khanqahs* were not necessarily seen as political acts and were also seen in the texts as acts intended to earn merit. *Tarikh-i Sayyid Ali* while describing the establishment of a *khanqah* narrates the assignment of villages for its maintenance by Sultan Sikander. This act of the Sultan in the text was depicted as a pious act intended to provide sustenance to the people living in seclusion so that they might meditate with devotion without having to worry for their livelihood. <sup>78</sup> This act of Sultan Sikander is justified in the text according to the which, money needed to be spent on those who dedicate themselves in the path of God, and undergo trials and tribulations; a reference to the Sufis and their dwelling places, the *khanqahs*.<sup>79</sup> On account of their mass following, *khanqahs* emerged as important centres which could be potentially harnessed for

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 77.

<sup>78</sup> *Tarikh-i Sayyid Ali*, p. 47.

<sup>79</sup> *Dastur-us Salikin*, pp. 191-2.

political purpose as well. Chitrlekha Zutshi explains the importance of *khanqahs* had attained by sixteenth century in Kashmir in the following words

*Khanqahs* had undergone increasing corporatization through the course of the fifteenth century and controlled huge swaths of land and resources, alongside having mass followings. By the sixteenth century, they were major centres of political intrigues and their managers exercised influence far beyond the court as they played a critical role in disseminating new crafts and skills, and Islam, along with Persian language and literature in the region. <sup>80</sup>

According to Zutshi, shrines in Kashmir were powerful institutions that deeply influenced the course of politics, society and culture in wake of the revenue-free lands the custodians of the shrines received in Kashmir. <sup>81</sup> This political potential of *khanqahs* partly explains the patronage the *khanqahs* attracted from the Sultans, nobles and others in power in medieval Kashmir.

Political patronage of religious institutions was already evident in the pre-Sultanate Kashmir (that is before the thirteenth century). Contemporary Sanskrit sources from Kashmir, including Rajatarangini document practices of political patronage to temples and Brahmans in the form of land grants. For the author of *Baharistan-i Shahi*, the greatness of a king, besides the act of conquering, also lies in the act of building religious structures. In its account of king Lalitaditya (r. 724-60), *Baharistan-i Shahi* mentions that besides bringing lands from the borders of China to the farthest west under his control, Lalitaditya built many idol houses in Kashmir which came to be worshipped ardently in his own days, one of these so huge that it measured sixty yards in height.<sup>82</sup> Lalitaditya was also known for his zeal for foundation of Vishnu temples <sup>83</sup>. The kings of Karkota (625-885) and the Utpala (885-1003) dynasties extensively indulged in practices of temple building and extended their patronage to them. <sup>84</sup>

The patronage to the religious personalities and institutions was thus continued by the Shahmiri and Chak Sultans after they established their respective states in medieval Kashmir. For instance, *Baharistan-i Shahi* mentions the first Muslim King

<sup>80</sup> Zutshi, , p. 29.

<sup>81</sup> Chitrlekha Zutshi, *Kashmir: History, Politics, Representation* , p. 02.

<sup>82</sup> K.N Pandit , *Baharistan-i Shahi* , p. 02

<sup>83</sup> PNK Bamzai, *Cultural and Political History of Kashmir* , Vol 1, p. 203

<sup>84</sup> K Warikoo, *Cultural Heritage of Jammu and Kashmir* , p. 87.



of Kashmir, Rinchen (r. 1320-23) building a *khanqah* and a mosque for the Sufi saint Bulbul Shah in the neighbourhood of his palace and conferred upon *himgira* (revenue-generating land) for meeting the expenses of *khanqah*.<sup>85</sup> It should be noted that Rinchen had adopted Islam at the instance of Bulbul Shah. By the sixteenth century, we have instances of a well-established network of *khanqahs* and shrines spread throughout Kashmir. References in *Tarikh-i Sayyid Ali* written in 1561 indicate that shrines of certain Sufis had already attained important status so as to attract pilgrimages.<sup>86</sup> *Khanqahs* and shrines, with the passage of time became central to political battles, matters of political legitimacy of kings and exercised symbolic power over citizens and their inhabitants.<sup>87</sup> Instances of Sultans patronising the *khanqahs* thus can be interpreted as attempts to earn legitimacy from such centres which attracted mass following. Thus the more important centres such as Khanqah-i Moulla turned into spaces that the Sultan could not afford to lose control of. *Tarikh-i Sayyid Ali* attributes the construction of Khanqah-i Moulla to Sultan Sikander and informs us that the Sultan endowed three villages and money for the maintenance of the *khanqah*.<sup>88</sup> Owing to its importance, the Khanqah-i Moulla thus remained under the jurisdiction of political authorities most of the time in Sultanate Kashmir. Sayyid Ali records the custodianship of the *khanqah* being entrusted to a certain Sayyid Muhammed in writing of a document signed by Sultan Sikander. In another such instance, Sayyid Ali records that the reigning Sultan, Hasan Shah acquired the land surrounding the *khanqah* and paid compensation to the persons who owned the land. Again, the author records that after its rebuilding, the reigning Sultan Muhammed Shah was requested to entrust the custodianship of the shrine to a certain individual.<sup>89</sup>

Besides patronage, another aspect of the interaction between the political and the religious centres was the acts of violence on the part of the ruler. As in the case of patronage and legitimation, precedents of such acts of violence by the rulers in medieval Kashmir were already set before the thirteenth century in the pre-Sultanate period. The Kashmiri kings such as Jayapida (r.764-795), Samkaravarman (r.883-902), Abhimanyu II (r.958-972) and Rajadeva (r.1213-1236) outrageously indulged

<sup>85</sup> *Baharistan-i Shahi*, p. 09-27.

<sup>86</sup> *Tarikh-i Sayyid Ali*, pp. 89, 110, 112.

<sup>87</sup> Chitrlekha Zutshi, *Kashmir: History, Politics, Representation*, p.02.

<sup>88</sup> *Tarikh-i Sayyid Ali*, p. 47.

<sup>89</sup> *Tarikh-i Sayyid Ali*, pp. 67, 60, 47.

in sacrilege of idols temples and persecution of Brahmans .<sup>90</sup> The classic example of such acts violence was that of King Harsha (r.1089-1101). Despite being known as a Hindu king in history, his extensive iconoclast activities earned him the title of *Turushka* by Kalhana, the author of *Rajatarangini*.<sup>91</sup> Thus, in the pre-Sultanate Kashmir, the acts of plundering and desecration of religious sites by rulers, otherwise professing the same faith were already established, just like the acts of their patronage. This pattern of destruction and patronage was replicated in the Sultanate-era Kashmir with the dynamics of a political and sacred geography now marked by a growing number of *khanqahs* and mosques. The spaces and structures to be patronised or desecrated had to be important so as to command attention.<sup>92</sup> The life cycle of one of the prominent *khanqahs* of medieval Kashmir, the Zadibal *khanqah* illustrates the importance of political status in cases of both patronage and destruction. Built in the fourteenth century by a Sufi saint of Nurbakhshiyya saint, Shamsuddin Araki, the *khanqah* was patronised by the Shahmiri Sultans, Fateh Shah and Muhammed Shah. Both the Sultans we are told, met the expenses of the *khanqah* and even attended the gathering there on daily basis. Sayyid Ali records that Mirza Haider Dughlat, the Mughal Governor of Kashmir burnt down the *khanqah* apparently due to its *Shia* affiliations, introduced the Sunni religion completely and uprooted the corruption of the *rafiz*.<sup>94</sup>

### ***Khanqahs* , Sectarian Competition and the Texts**

Since competition amongst various Sufi orders was an already present phenomenon in medieval Kashmir, competition between the *Shias* and *Sunnis* intensified mainly after

<sup>90</sup> Khalid Bashir Ahmad, *Kashmir: Exposing the Myth Behind The Narrative* New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2017, p. 32.

<sup>91</sup> For references to the iconoclastic activities of King Harsha, see Andre Wink *Hind: The Slave Kings and the Islamic Conquest* , Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1990, p.249; David N. Lorenzen, *Who Invented Hinduism?: Essays on Religion in History* New Delhi: YODA Press, 2006, p.48.

<sup>92</sup> For a discussion of acts of violence against religious structures in India, Iran and Central

*Comparative Studies in Society and History* 2015, 57

(2), pp. 467-

*The Journal of Asian Studies* , 1993, 52(1), pp. 22-48.

<sup>93</sup> *Tarikh-i Sayyid Ali*, p. 63.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 69.

the arrival of Shamsuddin Araki's arrival in Kashmir. The sixteenth century Persian texts of Kashmir are full of references that indicate a growing sectarian competition in medieval Kashmir. *Dastur-us Salikin*, a Suhrawardiya *tazkira* quotes Shaikh Hamza, a Suhrawardiya saint as recounting an incident in which a famous religious personality of Kashmir, Mulla Baaz Kashmiri asked the author to refrain from reading certain texts associated with the Hanafi sect of Islam, and instead recommended a certain work *Risala-i Imamiyya*. The text recounts Shaikh Hamza further narrating that he was suspicious that the *Risala-i Imamiyya* was associated with the *Shia* faith and thus was not entirely willing to read it.<sup>95</sup> Voicing a typical Sunni stance, *Dastur-us Salikin* praises the Caliphs of the Prophet as worthy of tributes and compliments and at the same time deems any critique on their personalities as equivalent to criticising the Prophet himself.<sup>96</sup> In another such instance, Sheikh Hamza narrates a dream in which Abu Bakr, the first Caliph, advised him to stick to *ahle-sunna wal-jamaat* (a term used for the *Sunnis* as against the *Shia* sect in Islam).<sup>97</sup> At another place *Dastur-us Salikin* links the benefits of reading the Quran with the beliefs of *ahle-sunna wal-jamaat*.<sup>98</sup> There are instances in which prominent Sufi orders and their important personalities are described as belonging to *ahle-sunna wal-jamaat*.<sup>99</sup> *Dastur-us Salikin* launches a critique against those who despite claiming to be lovers/admirers of Ali practiced their religion against the spirit of his teachings and were tyrannical and ruthless.<sup>100</sup> Similarly, the author of *Tarikh-i Sayyid Ali* makes no attempt to hide his sectarian prejudices throughout the texts. From terming the arrival of Shamsuddin Araki into Kashmir as inauspicious and declaring the document in which Araki mentioned his allegiance to Sayyed Nurbhaksh and produced it in front of the Sultan as fake to using the derogatory word *rafzi* (lit. the rejecter/rejectionist) for *Shias*, the author clearly articulated his sectarian thoughts in the text.<sup>101</sup> The author approvingly records the anti-Shia policies and acts of Mirza Haider, praising his acts as uprooting

<sup>95</sup> *Dastur-us Salikin*, p. 41.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 178.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 42.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 102.

<sup>99</sup> For a praise of the *Naqshbandiyya silsila* and Baha-ud din and their association with *ahle-sunna wal-* see *Dastur-us Salikin*, p.120.

<sup>100</sup> *Dastur-us Salikin*, p. 156.

<sup>101</sup> *Tarikh-i Sayyid Ali*, pp. 61-4, 68.

the corruption of the *rafz*, a derogatory word for ~~the~~ *Shia* faith as mentioned before.<sup>102</sup>

*Khanqahs* in medieval Kashmir were at the centre of an intense sectarian competition and conflict. The sectarian importance of the *khanqahs* can be attributed to the fact that they embodied an important personality associated with a given sect, and acted as the centre of production of texts glorifying their respective personalities and institutions. These texts adopted the teachings of their protagonist and actively participated in the sectarian competition through the composition of narratives that recorded instances of divine and prophetic legitimation supposedly revealed to a particular saint only. In this way, thus, the texts portrayed the legitimacy and significance of the saint and his sect. *Dastur-us Salikin* records one such instance in which the protagonist Shaikh Hamza received prophetic legitimation for *ahle-sunna-wal-jama a*

From time to time, I used to have visions of the Prophet and his companions in my dreams whereby I would get advices, particularly on matters of religion and sects, since sectarian competition was intense in those times. Time and again I was strongly advised to stick to *ahle-sunna wal-jama a*.<sup>103</sup>

Thus the *khanqahs* while being centres of learning and religious education and housing religious personalities, at the same time emerged as centres of propagating and legitimising particular sectarian ideologies. Since the political groups were also at times aligned along sectarian affiliations, *khanqahs* became sites of not just religious but political assemblies as well. In a situation of intense sectarian competition, *khanqahs* as institutions with mass following and potential to legitimise ideologies came under special focus of those wishing to promote their sectarian ideologies. *Khanqahs* became sites of sectarian debates and discussions, and also in some cases, sites of actual physical violence as well. In his account of the infighting among the Kashmiri nobility in the aftermath of the killing of Mirza Haider Dughlat in 1551, Haider Malik records that the Khanqah-i Amoriya was partly damaged and one of its pillars was destroyed. This incident according to Haider Malik took place after a group of nobles attended an assembly of oath and allegiance in the

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 69.

<sup>103</sup> *Dastur-us Salikin*, p. 32.

*khanqah*.<sup>104</sup> Similarly, the Zadibal *khanqah* of Shamsuddin Iraqi was burnt down by Zafar Khan after the Mughal forces defeated the last Chak leader Yaqub Chak and took over the city of Srinagar in 1586. Sayyid Ali mentions how the Sufi saint Shamsuddin Araki wanted to demolish the *khanqah* of Sayyid Ali Hamadani on the pretext of building a new one. Further he recounts that an opposition to such a move spearheaded by the sister of Malik Kaji Chak, Salah Maji took place leading to it being rebuilt in a short span of time after it was demolished.<sup>106</sup>

## Conclusion

One of the important developments in the Sultanate-era Kashmir was the emergence of Sufi sainthood. As the Sultanate progressed, owing to a number of factors, the gradual spread of Islam spread assumed the importance of a prominent phenomenon. A natural corollary of the spread of Islam was the increased importance of the religious personalities, including among others, the Sufi saints. This growing stature of the Sufi saints gradually translated into their increased importance in aspects of life besides the religious. Thus for instance, in Sultanate Kashmir, some Sufi saints became prominent players in the political sphere as well. The Sufi saints fashioned their authority in terms of claims to multiple elements, which included among others, a connection with the divine, an ability to perform miracles and other supernatural acts, such as control over the *jinns*. However the most important elements were the claims of the saints to their being the successors of the Prophet and being among *sahib-al amr* (lit. people of the authority) and thus prescribed by the Quran to be followed. This position of the saints potentially brought the saint in direct confrontation with the head of the political authority, as represented by the Sultan. Sixteenth century Persian texts, more specifically the *tazkiras* reflected this growing influence of the saints in mundane matters, and in some cases, as cited in this chapter, argued for a submission of the kingly authority to the spiritual. Yet as the texts themselves cite several instances, in most cases, this idealistic notion of the saint's superiority as articulated in the *tazkiras* texts seldom translated into actual practice.

<sup>104</sup> *Tarikh-i Haider Malik*, p. 126.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 155.

<sup>106</sup> *Tarikh-i Sayyid Ali*, pp. 67, 68.

Overall, the Persian texts, both the *tarikhs* and the *tazkiras* thus reflected the actual overwhelming authority the Sultan exercised over medieval Kashmiri state.

One of the direct implications of spread of Islam in Kashmir was the spread and proliferation of *khanqahs* during the Sultanate-era. Primarily associated with the personality of the saints, the *khanqahs* in Sultanate-era Kashmir assumed the status as important political centres and centres of mass mobilisation, a status some of them, like Khanqah-i Moulla and the Zadibal *khanqah* enjoy till present times

## CHAPTER 5

### Conclusion

The Sultanate-era was a time in the history of Kashmir when the Persian language was slowly gaining circulation in various areas of writing and communication. By the time the Sultanate came to an end, Persian became a sophisticated language of literary expression in Kashmir. This was the result of a gradual process, traced back to the multi-dimensional connections the ancient Kashmir had developed with regions of Central Asia and Persia. One of the main arguments in this dissertation is that the pre-Sultanate era Kashmir had connections with Persian and Central Asian regions, thus not isolated as has been usually imagined. These connections ranged from economic to linguistic and religious exchanges between these regions.<sup>1</sup>

With the establishment of the Sultanate in Kashmir, Persian language was patronised by the Sultans of both the Shammiri and Chak dynasties, many of whom used to compose poetry in the same language themselves. Among others, important factors responsible for the gradual spread and increased stature of Persian language in Kashmir was the role of immigrants from Central Asian and Persian regions, the political circumstances, religious competition and so on. As a result, starting from the sixteenth century, Kashmir witnessed an increased production of Persian texts, a phenomenon which continued well into the nineteenth century.

On one hand, together these Persian texts reflected the changing political and religious contexts while on the other, they reflected the particular concerns of their respective authors and their larger affiliations. On the basis of their respective concerns and purpose of composition, these Persian texts have come to be categorised into two different genres- the *tarikhs* and the *tazkiras*. This dissertation has used a total of five texts, three of which- *Tarikh-i Sayyid Ali*, *Baharistan-i Shahi* and *Tarikh-i Malik Haider* have been categorised as *tarikhs*. Two other texts, *Dastur-us Salikin* and

<sup>1</sup>For an analysis of the historical geography of Kashmir and the influence its landscape had on the region and its id (Re)locating Early Kashmir: Geoculture of Kaul, *The Making of Early Kashmir*.

*Taufat-al Ahbab* are categorised as *tazkiras*. While as the *tarikhs* are mainly seen as concerned with the political history with a focus on the personality of the king, the *tazkiras* have mainly been seen as concerned with the personality of the Sufi saint. For instance, *Tarikh-i Malik Haider* highlights the role and importance of the Sultan through the narrative of the text. The Sultan, the most frequently mentioned personality in the text, is portrayed as a divine authority. A clear contrast to the manner in which Haider Malik projects the king can be seen in one of the *tazkiras*-*Dastur-us Salikin*. The text almost makes no mention of the Sultan in the narrative and crucially excludes the Sultan from the definition of the *sahib-al amr*, a Quranic term central to the definition of kingship for Haider Malik. Texts like *Tarikh-i Sayyid Ali* and *Baharistan-i Shahi*, designated as *tarikhs* have a complex position on matters of kingship and sainthood. Though the worldviews articulated in all of these texts are different and sometimes in contradiction to each other, they and their authors actually are better seen as participating in and deriving their terms and concepts from a shared pool of meanings. As Chitralkha Zutshi puts it, the authors of *tarikhs* and *tazkira* texts drew liberally from each other and used similar modes of authentication in their texts.<sup>2</sup> Thus, as this dissertation tries to make clear, a strict division between the two is misleading. Instead these Persian texts should be seen as participating in a world of shared terms and meanings. Intertextuality and not mutual exclusion, it is argued in this dissertation, would be more helpful in understanding these texts. At the same time, this notion of intertextuality explains the mutual connections between the Sanskrit and the Persian literary traditions of medieval Kashmir. In one of her articles, *Past as tradition, past as history: The Rajatarangini narratives in Kashmir's Persian historical tradition*, Chitralkha Zutshi has attempted to debunk the myth of the Persian texts of medieval Kashmir as being unhistorical imitations of *Rajatarangini* and its Sanskrit continuations. Rather, as she argues, a case of inter-textuality arises, wherein the Persian texts, although borrow certain elements from their Sanskrit counterparts, yet engage with them in an active way.<sup>3</sup> Thus, a comparative study of kingship and sainthood in the Persian and Sanskrit texts of the same time period is important and could not be dealt with due to the limited scope of this research.

<sup>2</sup>Zutshi, , p.08.

<sup>3</sup>radition, past as history



Two of the texts analysed in this dissertation, *Baharistan-i Shahi* and *Tarikh-i Haider Malik* belong to the Mughal period, that is, they were written after the Mughal annexation of Kashmir in 1586. Based on a comparative analysis of these two Mughal-era texts and the other three Sultanate-era texts, an important exercise would have been a comparative study of the Mughal and the Sultanate model of kingship. Similarly, the same set of texts could have been used for a comparative analysis of the manner in which the texts saw the idea of sainthood in the Sultanate and the Mughal periods. However, this important exercise is beyond the scope of this dissertation. Also, one of the reasons for avoiding this exercise is the concern that this comparative study would take the focus away from an exclusive analysis of kingship and sainthood in the Sultanate era. While as the Mughal model of kingship has already been studied by scholars of medieval Indian history, the Sultanate-era kingship and sainthood is one such area that has been completely ignored. Keeping this in view, this dissertation limits itself to a study of Sultanate-era kingship and sainthood. Hopefully then, the important and intriguing theme of a comparative study of the ideas of kingship and sainthood between the Mughal and Sultanate era Kashmir would be taken up in future.

The texts contain references that can be crucially important for understanding the nature of medieval Kashmiri state under the Sultans of Shahmiri and Chak dynasty. This dissertation argues that the Sultanate kingship cannot be seen as an Islamic kingship. References in the Persian texts to state patronage of religious personalities and institutions and acts of iconoclasm by the Kashmiri Sultans cannot be by themselves taken as indicative of the establishment of the so-called Islamic kingship in Kashmir. Instead, these instances need to be located in their proper context and understood in the same critical manner as acts such as miracles and other supernatural phenomenon as mentioned in the texts. Instead of taking the references to such acts at their face value, these instances, it is argued in this dissertation, are better seen as literary devices aimed to embellish the concerned personality. Besides, there was an element of didacticism involved in making such statements, and thus the statements that did not exactly translate into actual practice. It is argued that the Sultanate-era kingship in Kashmir, rather than marking a break in terms of ideas and practices of kingship, is better seen as existing in continuum with the rule of earlier dynasties, before the thirteenth century. The manner in which kingship was practiced

under the Shahmiri and the Chak Sultans demonstrates that factors such as lineage and descent of a king, his relations with powerful elements in the kingdom and his ability to harness their power in a given situation, besides marital alliances were crucial elements for the assertion of authority by a Sultan. The Persian texts, particularly the *tazkiras* depict acts such as construction of *khanqahs* and mosques, patronising religious personalities and acts of iconoclasm and desecration of religious structures as explicitly motivated by religious zeal of their characters. Instead, this dissertation argues that such acts as and when narrated in the texts are better understood as political acts, motivated by concerns much broader than merely religious. It is also argued that the act of recording such instances by the authors of these Persian texts, is by itself a deliberate act, with a definite purpose. What the authors of these texts chose to record and what they chose not to record, it is argued here was by itself a political act, a deliberate choice. It was political and deliberate in the sense that the authors intended to serve a definite purpose by recording some instances and not recording others. A critical reading of the overall context of the production and circulation of texts is thus necessary for understanding the texts, something this dissertation has aimed to provide in Chapter Two of this dissertation.

Besides the king, it was the saint who has been seen as the other important personality by the Persian texts of medieval Kashmir. While as texts such as *Tarikh-i Malik Haider* attributed the authority of the Sultan to God, *tazkiras* such as *Dastur-us Salikin* fashioned the saint as the successor of the Prophet besides enumerating the saint among those the Quran required to be followed. A direct implication of this exalted position of the saint was the manner in which the ~~texts~~ *tazkiras* especially, saw the personality of the saint. The saint was thus seen as not only an effective leader in the spiritual matters but also in the temporal matters as well. This set the stage for a potential conflict between the king and the saint in Sultanate Kashmir, instances of which are recorded in the Persian texts. The *khanqahs* housing these saints reflected the power and influence of the saints in medieval Kashmir. However, as the texts indicate, the relations between the king and the saint were not always marked by conflicts. Instead there were frequent cases of a mutually beneficial relation between the two, a relation translating into the patronage of a saint by the Sultan and frequently referred to in these Persian texts. The varied relation of conflict and patronage between the saint and the king is reflected in the life-cycles of the *khanqahs*

itself. On account of their association with particular personalities and sects, *khanqahs* in Sultanate Kashmir saw both patronage and destruction at the hands of powerful groups, including the Sultan.

The *khanqahs* were not just institutions of political importance. More importantly, they acted as important institutions in religious and sectarian matters. At least two of our texts, *Dastur-us Salikin* and *Taufat-al Ahbab* record such instances which demonstrate that *khanqahs* acted as institution of education and training. At the same time, the association with a particular Sufi order/religious sect meant that *khanqahs* acted as institutions which came to be associated with a particular sect or a Sufi order. In their capacity as centres of learning and housing important religious personalities, *khanqahs* emerged as important sites of textual production. Each of these texts reflected back on its site of production, narrating the history of Kashmir in tandem with the history of a religious sect or a Sufi order and the particular personalities associated with this sect or order. One of the most common recourse to the past in this regard was an attempt by almost all the texts to trace their connection to the most prominent personality associated with the spread of Islam in Kashmir, Sayyid Ali Hamadani. Even the author of *Taufat-al Ahbab* whose protagonist Shamsuddin Araki, according to the author *Tawrikh-i Sayyid Ali* as discussed in Chapter Four of this dissertation was a Shi'ite faith, attempts to link himself with the personality of the Sayyid Ali Hamadani. This is one of the many ways in which the texts tried to legitimise their position and build a following in the Sultanate Kashmir, *khanqahs* being at the centre of all this.

Multiple contexts, including the linguistic, the political and the religious and the sectarian thus went into the making of the Persian texts used in this dissertation. Keeping this multiplicity in view, it is argued that these texts and the contents therein have to be understood in a similar fashion and traced to multiple contexts. A unilinear line of argument that does not address these inherent multiplicities that went on in the making of these texts is thus bound to lead to a misconceived notion of various aspects of Sultanate-era Kashmir history.

## Glossary

*Ahle-sunna-wal jama a* : people of the community . A term used for the Sunni sect in Islam.

*Bani-i islam*: the founder of Islam . Used for Sayyid Ali Hamadani in the context of Kashmir.

*But-shikan*: the idol breaker . A title given to Sultan Sikander in case of medieval Kashmir.

*Chilla-nashini*: Solitary worship and meditation mostly associated with the Sufi tradition of Islam.

*Darvish*: beggar .A common term for Sufis.

*Dar-ul uloom*: house of knowledge . An Islamic seminary or religious education.

*Faujdar*: Commander. A military officer.

*Hadith*: Stories and anecdotes of the Prophet and his earliest companions.

*Hijri*: A lunar calendar starting 622, the year of Prophet Muhammed migrated from Mecca to Medina.

*Ijazat-nama*: Administrative permission. A certificate.

*Iran-i sageer*: the minor Iran . A term used for Kashmir.

*Jinn*: Imperceptible, salvable spirits.

*Jogi*: Hindu Monk. A sage.

*Karamat*: divine grace . Supernatural miracle.

*Khanqah*: Hospice. Abode of a Sufi.

*Langarkhana*: Communal kitchen associated with a *khanqah*.

*Madrassa*: Islamic religious school.

*Mulla*: Persian word for a learned man. A Muslim religious teacher learned in religious texts.

*Murid*: the one who leads straight . The spiritual preceptor.

*Murshid*: Spiritual guide.

*Mutawalli*: Custodian.

*Naga*: Inhabitants of Kashmir prior to its earliest settlement. Serpent deity associated with its springs (*nag*).

*Pargana*: An administrative unit of land. A district.

*Pir*: Persian equivalent of Arabic Shaikh. Old man, venerable guide, spiritual leader. A Sufi master (also known as Shaykh).

*Qiblah*: The direction of prayer for Muslims towards Mecca.

*Qutb*: The cosmic pole around which the universe rotates. Highest member in a Sufi hierarchy.

*Sadhu*: a wandering devotee. An ascetic.

*Sayyid*: A Muslim claiming descent from the Prophet Muhammed.

*Sharia*: Islamic law whose primary source is Quran and *Hadith*.

*Shaykh*: The leader of a clan or tribe, also called Sayyid.

*Sheikh-ul Islam*: Title of the highest religious official.

*Shia*: Follower of Ali.

*Silsila*: The chain. In Sufism, the continuity of spiritual descent from the Prophet.

*Sunna*: Traditions of the Prophet composed of the Hadith.

*Tariqah*: The first step in spiritual path or the way of the Sufi.

*Tazkira*: mentionings. A genre of historical writing that focuses on Sufi saints.

*Ulema*: plural of Alim. one who has the knowledge. Scholar-jurists among the Muslims.

*Wali*: Protégé of God. Saint. Protector.

*Wazir*: the one who shares the burden. A powerful office under the king in medieval Kashmir.

*Zikr*: remembrance. The primary ritual in Sufism of reciting certain words, mainly the attributes of God.

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