

**RESEARCH PAPER****A Historical Analysis of Spread of Islam in Kashmir during the rule of Shah Miri Dynasty (1339-1556)****¹Amar Jahangir, ²Riffat Naseer and ³Samreen Haider Naqvi***

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ABSTRACT

The region of Kashmir is known as paradise on earth by virtue of its picturesque beauty, unique geographical location, civilization, culture and people. Since the establishment of Muslim rule in Kashmir, a large number of preachers of Islam entered Kashmir from Central Asia, who played a key role in the reformation of the social structure along with religious propagation. The main objective of this study is to digout the historical role of Sanits, Sufis and Ulmas in spreading Islam during Shah Miri rule. Islam began to spread rapidly in Kashmir with the establishment of Shah Mir's rule in 1339, but this religion had mainly entered the region in the 8th century. The main credit for the spread of Islam goes to the Saints, Ulmas and Sufis during the reign of Shah Meri dynasty. In this paper, a historical and descriptive analysis of the subject has been described.

Keywords: Islam, Kashmir, Saints, Sufies and Shah Miri family**Introduction**

A land of dreams, Heaven on earth, the timeless image of the beauty and sense of attraction and fascination, the land of Kashmir captivates and intrigues the human heart. Dreaming is the destiny of every human being and no one can take away his destiny. If there are no dreams, then life will be devoid of movement, color and brightness. These are the dreams that keep on encouraging people to search for the best and harmonize the majestic sonnets of life with songs. (Naz, 2013) Sometimes people are transported to the land of dreams when they see the towering mountains of Kashmir, the charming meadows, the beautiful lakes on the lovely plains, the smiling springs, the gushing rivers, the humming waterfalls and the verdant green fields of the flower-clad valleys of Kashmir, their condition is like that of innocent infants who repeatedly open the window to see the moon, eye to eye. Kashmir is a beautiful and attractive heaven created by nature. Its carvings are so heart-warming and heart-warming that once they settle in the eyes, they descend into the depths of the heart and scatter reflections. (Tishna,2014) Floating lotus princesses, fairies living in the valleys of the Parbats, happy birds fluttering from the daisies, colorful butterflies flying, fragrances of saffron gardens, and deep gray evenings, the pictures of Kashmir are so beautiful. Each motif is perfect and unique in its place. Mughal Emperor Jahangir praised the beauty of Kashmir and said with great emotion; "If Firdaus is above the earth, it is for us, and it is for us, and it is for us". (Naz, 2013) This heaven on earth has seen thousands of colors of time, faced the storms of war from era to era, suffered the blows of circumstances, endured grief, but did not let any fire affect its beautiful image. Initially, there were Hinduism, Buddhism, and Shaivism that were in conflict with each other. The arrival of Islam brought the eternal color of the reality of humanity in the image of Kashmir. Muslim sultans and Sufis lit many candles of spirituality in Kashmir. They condemned the evils and the conduct of good deeds and the opponents of Islam were surprised by the unity of their actions and words (Muzaffar & Rafique, 2020).

Although it is important to carefully review all published and unpublished research on the topic under discussion. The required literature books, research articles, journals and other relevant texts which is widely available are helpful in completing this research work. The present study focuses on the assessment of the services of saints and Sufis for the propagation of Islam in Kashmir during the rule of the Shah Miri dynasty. In the light of the currently available literature on this subject, it is important to emphasize the case for rewriting history to highlight the promotion of Islam and the services of scholars and Sufis during the era of the Shah Miri Sultans.

Material and Methods

The research study primarily is done through the historical and descriptive approach. The whole data of this research study was collected from secondary sources which includes articles, books, journals and websites. The research analyses the facts and figures that are available in the form of proper documents existing as published and unpublished work.

Results and Discussion

Religious conditions of Kashmir before Islam

The region of Kashmir is famous in the world as a paradise on earth and a peaceful corner. Then the colorful nature spectacles make this region attractive and beautiful as well. This is the reason that many religions came to Kashmir and many schools of Sufism were opened. Before the publication of Islam, the religious and spiritual ideas and concepts of Nagaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Shaivism were prevalent in Kashmir. (Jahangir, 2018) Their religious leaders confused people in caste, political situation and caste differences and made their way of life uneven. Pandit Kalhan writes in his book *Raj Tarangani* that Kashmir was full of temples. Goddesses were worshiped in these temples, including Lord Shiva, Vishnu Lakshmi and Goddess Saraswati. God had pushed the people of this kingdom into the darkness of darkness and ignorance. Brahminism was a manifestation of violence and social discrimination in which the Brahmins and Pandits had in a way put the Matama in their house and the simple people of Kashmir had to approach these Pandits and Brahmins to reach the Matama. The Pandits became in a way the link between the Supreme Being and the people, and eventually they became the Supreme Being themselves and pushed the Supreme Personality of Godhead behind. (Bukhari, 2004) The religious ideas and concepts of Buddhism eliminated the violence of Brahmanism to some extent, but Buddhism was less a religion and more a philosophy, and this philosophy was also non-negative, unclear and complex. There was no energy and life in the thoughts and concepts of Buddhism, but it was the teaching of annihilation and death. Therefore, with the end of the Buddhist rulers, Buddhism disappeared from Kashmir except Ladakh. (Bahati, 1995) The ideas and concepts of Shaivism, Brahmanism and Buddhism were completely confused and mixed, according to which the Shudras could reach Matama.

Arrival of Muslims in Kashmir

The existing literature unanimously states that the arrival of Muslims in the Kashmir Valley began with the advent of Muhammad Bin Qasim at the "PajNahiyat" (where the rivers Jhelum, Chenab, Sutlej and Beas merge into the Indus). Due to the political development during the Umayyad period, he was called back to Arabia and at the same time an Arab merchant Humayim bin Sami entered Kashmir with the son of Raja Dahir. (Gemi, 1986) Later in 757, the Arab governor Hisham bin Amr tried to conquer Kashmir but was unsuccessful. During these efforts Arab traders started their movement towards Kashmir. During Mahmud Ghaznavi's invasions of 1014 and 1016, many people converted to Islam in a valley south of Kashmir. Pandit Kalhan believes that the spread of Islam began with the arrival of Turkish Muslim soldiers in Kashmir. (Malik & Khan, 2021) In fact Kashmir was

known as a Hindu dominated state till 12th century AD, historically when Zulcho invaded Kashmir in 1320 AD the then Kashmiri Hindu ruler fled to Kishtwar. (Bano, 2017) In 1325, the Kashmiri ruler Ranchan Shah accepted Islam at the hands of Hazrat Bulbul Shah and became known as Sultan Sadruddin (Mir, 2006). From the writings of Marco Polo, it is known that the Kashmir valley was a Muslim colony till the end of the 13th century (Yule, 1903). The colony where the Muslims settled was known as Malichh-Mar (place of the Malichhas). During this period, the Hindu rulers of Kashmir were kind and hospitable to the Muslim soldiers and braves. This succession of Muslims in Kashmir continued uninterrupted until finally a Muslim kingdom was formally established in Kashmir under the leadership of Shah Mir known as Sultan Shamsuddin in 1339 CE (Wani, 2004). Shah Mir and his family entered Kashmir around 1313 AD during the reign of Raja Sahdev. The Hindu Raja was impressed by his bravery and gave him important posts and estates in the government administration. (Rasool, 2017)

Over the years, Shah Mir became prominent in Kashmir due to his great abilities and strategies and finally in 1339 AD he was able to establish the foundation of permanent Muslim rule in Kashmir. (Davitia, 1898) Of course, the arrival of Islam in Kashmir made its way due to a historical process and not by forceful conquests, for which the arrival of foreign adventurers, artisans, traders, tourists and soldiers had already prepared the land of Kashmir for Islam. (Rasool, 2017) It was only at the beginning of the 14th century AD that Kashmiris started accepting Islam in which Sufis, Saints and local Rishis played an important role. Thus it is clear that the Muslim Sufi Syed Sharafuddin popularly known as Bulbul Shah had already entered Kashmir before his arrival in Kashmir. The land of Kashmir proved to be an easy destination for the Sufis and Saints to propagate Islam, but due to some unfavorable circumstances, historically the Sufis could not get the position they deserved. (Bukhari, 2013)

Role of Saints and Sufis in Propagation of Islam in Kashmir

Shah Mir (known as Sultan Shamsuddin) founded his government according to the exact principles of Islam. He warmly welcomed the Sufis of Central Asia and Iran into his kingdom and allowed them to preach Islam openly. (Mir, 2006) The Sultan tried hard to improve the living conditions of the people by appointing religious personalities to run the administrative affairs of the state of Kashmir. The rulers of Shah Miri dynasty like Sultan Alauddin, Sultan Shahabuddin, Sultan Qutbuddin, Sultan Sikandar and Sultan ZainulAbedin and others followed the footsteps of their forefather Sultan Shamsuddin in their respective periods and further strengthened and stabilized Islamization in Kashmir. These rulers, through saints and Sufis, took steps for Islamic principles, justice, equality and the betterment of the people. The reign of Shah Meri Sultans spans about 211 years which proved to be important for the promotion of Islamic culture and traditions in the valley of Kashmir. (Malik & Khan, 2021)

Saints and Sufis have a great role in spreading Islam in Kashmir. It was the good fortune of the land of Kashmir that the righteous servants of Allah loved this land for the propagation of Islam. They told people the difference between morality and religion, goodness and badness, good and evil, faith and disbelief and obedience and disobedience. (Aafaqi, 2000) They explained the importance of good deeds and good intentions on the right path, explained the difference between halal and haram, told the quality of truth and falsehood, as if this valley was fragrant with the purity of his feet, good deeds and luminous glory. The preachers of Islam, who were deeply immersed in the divine love, whose mission was to spread the message of Allah Almihty, they made Kashmir the cradle of Islam and made it the center of moral peace and tranquility and Islamic civilization. It is said that Sufis and Saints are the people without mentioning the history of Kashmir is incomplete. (Azad, 1990) They propagated Islam in Kashmir and made the valley of Kashmir a cradle of peace and eradicated all kinds of prejudice and sectarianism. These people have many favors on the people of Kashmir, the Sufis and Saints who played a role in the spread of Islam during

the era of the Sultans of Kashmir are a bright chapter in the history of Kashmir. The following are the famous Sufis and Saints who served for the propagation of Islam in Kashmir.

Syed Sharafuddin Abdul Rahman (known as Bulbul Shah)

Bulbul Shah came to Kashmir during the reign of the Hindu ruler Raja Sahdev, so although Islam had spread almost completely in the Kashmir valley in 1339, it had actually entered the Kashmir region in the 8th century but was not particularly well received. For a short period between 1320 and 1323 AD, Kashmir was ruled by a Buddhist ruler, Rinchan Shah, who had converted to Islam under the influence of Syed Sharafuddin and became known as Sultan Sadrudin. (Bano, 2017)

AllamaMulla Ahmad

Mulla Ahmad came to Kashmir with Syed Sharifuddin during the time of the Hindu Raja Sahdev. He held the position of Shaykh-ul-Islam in Kashmir and he brought thousands of non-Muslims into the fold of Islam. He compiled "Collection of FatawaShahabiyyah" in jurisprudence on the advice of Sultan Shahabuddin. (Kiohami,2015) The many Madrasahs were established and removed the darkness of ignorance by him in Kashmir. After his death, he was buried in Syed Bulbul Shah's tomb.

Mir Syed Ali Hamdani (Known as Shah Hamdan)

Syed Ali Hamdani, a religious scholar, eminent writer, political theorist and widely traveled Sufi, is the most notable of all the Sufis and saints who came to Kashmir from Central Asia and Iran. (Rasool, 2007) Ali Hamdani left a deep impression on every aspect of life in Kashmir like, politics, social order, economy, population, mystical attitude, religious outlook, architecture, arts and crafts. Amir Kabir Syed Ali Hamdani popularly known as Shah Hamdan was a Kabravi Sufi. (Rafiabadi, 2009)Syed Ali Hamdani traveled the world three times, in which the most important trip was to Kashmir. There are different opinions about Shah Hamdan's visit to Kashmir, some scholars believe that he visited Kashmir three times, the first time he visited Kashmir during the reign of Sultan Shahabuddin, the second and third times during the reign of Sultan Qutbuddin. (Rasool, 2007) Some say that Ali Hamdani visited Kashmir only once, his visit was purely an Islamic mission. Some scholars believe that Syed Ali Hamdani and seven hundred Syeds traveled to Kashmir to save themselves from Timur's cruelty. (Hasan, 1967) As soon as Syed Ali Hamdani arrived in Kashmir, Sultan Qutb-ud-Din, the ruler of that time, gave him a warm welcome and made him stay in the city of AlauddinPura, and Suffa (raised floor) was built for offering prayers, in which Sultan Qutb-ud-Din himself participated. (Kiohami,2015)

By encouraging Iranian arts and crafts, Ali Hamdani changed the atmosphere and destiny of Kashmir. Because of these wonderful industries and crafts, Kashmir was transformed into a small Persian nation (Iran-e-Sagir). He emphasized the importance of earning their own livelihood and rejected the traditional ways of supporting religious leaders. He believed that giving charity would turn people into parasites, due to which he completely rejected the concept of charity. He helped his students to earn their livelihood and encouraged them greatly. He emphasized the need to earn money in legal and legitimate ways, which he saw as "a form of Prayer". (Rasool, 2007)

Mir Syed Ali Hamdani (Shah Hamdan) was a great fan of travel and tourism, he wanted to deeply observe the creation of the universe and the scenery of nature. In connection with the tour, he visited the whole of Kashmir, from which it was beneficial that along with the observations of nature, he also propagated Islam in a better way. Wherever he went, he established monasteries, mosques and schools of learning and also opened schools of handicrafts. (Gami, 1987) The aim of Shah Hamdan was to teach the religion of Islam as well as to learn skills so that they could earn a living in a dignified way. Before the

arrival of Syed Ali Hamdani, Islam had reached Kashmir, but the belief of monotheism had not yet been firmly established in the hearts of these people, because many Muslims continued to go to shrines and rulers wore non-Islamic clothes. He instilled in the people of Kashmir a keen taste for faith and the region of Kashmir resounded with the cries of "La Ilahalla Allah Hu Muhammad urRasoolullah". Historians agree that at least 37,000 non-Muslims were converted to Islam at his hands. It is an undisputed fact that a great revolution took place in the civilization and culture of Kashmir due to the efforts and efforts of Syed Ali Hamdani and spiritual greatness and power. Shah Hamdan guided the Kashmiri people by preaching of Islam to bring them to the right path. (Farooq, 2012) His preaching had the following effects.

1. The king dressed in Islamic clothes and ordered all his subjects to wear Islamic Shariah clothes.
2. At the request of Shah Hamdan, Sultan Shahabuddin built the first madrasa in Kashmir, which taught Islamic sciences.
3. The establishment of a central library in Kashmir was possible due to his efforts.
4. Persian language and literature were promoted in Kashmir by Shah Hamdan.
5. Madrasahs, monasteries, mosques and hospitals and libraries were established in Kashmir.
6. In Kashmir, Islamic civilization replaced Hindu civilization and Arabic and Persian languages became popular instead of Sanskrit.
7. Lal Dad accepted Islam at the hand of Shah Hamdan and became a virtuous woman, whereas before she used to walk naked and say that there is no one here.
8. A vast tract of land on the banks of the river Jhelum in Kashmir was reserved for a place of worship and training for Muslims. (Farooq, 2012)

However, some scholars believe that Syed Ali Hamdani and his disciples who came with him to Kashmir preached Islamic principles in Persian and Arabic which few Kashmiris could understand and further, they mostly resided in Srinagar near the royal courts and therefore had little contact with the Kashmiri people. Syed Ali Hamdani spent a short time in the valley during which he could not convert Hindu Kashmir into Muslim Kashmir but he laid a strong foundation for the mission which was later taken over by his son Mir Muhammad. (Rasool, 2007) Shah Hamdan had a short stay in Kashmir, due to ill health and strained relations with Sultan Qutb-ud-Din, he left the valley and traveled to Pakhli, during which he fell ill and died on 19 January 1385 CE. Shah Hamdan was buried in Khatlan. (Hassan, 1967) Most of the subjects of the written work of Syed Ali Hamdani are Sufism, Divine Worship, Monotheism, Prophethood, Ethics, Society and Politics. Through these topics, he taught people good manners, Islamic values, religious traditions and social behavior.

Shaykh-ul-Islam Maulana Kabir

He was of Kashmiri descent and in his youth he went to Herat to quench his thirst for knowledge, where he acquired great expertise in jurisprudence, hadith and tafsir. Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin heard of his scholarly fame and with great effort invited him to Kashmir and appointed him to the distinguished post of Qazi-ul-Qaqza "Chief Justice of the State". Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin built a huge religious school and appointed Maulana as its principal and gave him the title of Shaykhul Islam (Fauq, N.A.). No one had received this title before in Kashmir, which clearly shows what his academic merit was and how well he would have rendered his academic and literary services.

Maulana Haji Baba

He was considered an expert in many sciences and left his homeland to perform Hajj. Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin came back to Kashmir after being inspired by the friendship and scholarly spirit. He was one of the special devotees of Bahauddin Ganj and Sheikh Nooruddin Wali Kashmiri. "Muqalat-e-Auliya-e-Kashmir" is his famous Book. (Azad, 1990) In this book, he has mentioned in detail the saints who gave Islamic education in Kashmir. His mausoleum is adjacent to Owaisi Bagh in front of Hari Parbat Fort.

Mullah Hafiz Baghdadi

He was a high-ranking scholar of Baghdad and the Imam of his time in jurisprudence and hadith, as well as an appreciator of scholars. The scholarly friendship of Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin brought him from Baghdad to Kashmir and here he joined the royal scholars and continued to benefit the creation of God. He was busy in teaching the knowledge of jurisprudence, hadith and right path. Sometimes he used to give advice in Jama Masjid. (Azad, 1990)

Syed Shams-ud-din Andrabi

The family of Syed Shams-ud-din came to Kashmir with Syed Ali Hamdani. Sultan Sikandar arranged a fine monastery for him and dedicated the villages of Sayyed Ahmad Vader, Chera Hara and Achhan to the anchorite. He got a good reputation in jurisprudence and hadiths, so Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin included him among his companions. Andrabi was associated with the royal court for a long period of time and in his last age he gave up worldly glory and started leading a dervish life. (Azad, 1990) Through this seminary, he promoted knowledge in Kashmir and enlightened the people in the dimensions of Kashmir with religious studies.

Mulla Parsa

During the reign of Zain-ul-Abidin, Mulla Parsa came to Kashmir from Bukhara and within a few days his scholarly fame spread throughout Kashmir. Zain-ul-Abidin included him among his close scholars and entrusted the management of the Mosque to Mulla Parsa so that he could spread the light of Islamic education in Kashmir. Apart from being a practical scholar, he was also a high-ranking author. Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin also granted him a Jagir in Nowshera and after his death, he was buried in Nowshera. (Kiohami, 2015)

Maulana Razi-ud-din

Razi-ud-din was fully skilled in jurisprudence and Hadith. When Mirza Haider occupied Kashmir, at that time he was a Madrasa-e-Aala in Qutb-ud-din Pura and he did not have his successor in this school. The books written by him are considered to be high-level in the field of Islamic education. Sheikh Baba Dawood Khaki and Mulla Shams-ud-din Pal were his students. (Kiohami, 2015)

Syed Muhammad Amin Owaisi

Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin made Syed Muhammad Amin Owaisi his son, due to which he was brought up in a royal environment and achieved perfection in external and internal sciences. Some historians agree that when Muhammad Amin Owaisi refused to become the crown prince of Sultan, the Sultan appointed him the governor of the University of Asham. Muhammad Amin Owaisi devoted his entire life to the promotion and publication of knowledge and literature. (Azad, 1990) It was during Bud Shah's reign that the university made its mark, and much of the credit goes to Owaisi, who innovated and expanded it even more than before.

Syed Muhammad Hamdani

Syed Muhammad Hamdani was the son of Amir Kabir Syed Ali Hamdani (Shah Hamdan) and was skilled in rational sciences and imitation. He came to Kashmir with six hundred dervishes during the reign of Sultan Sikandar. (Azad, 1990) Mir Muhammad Hamdani worked like his father for the promotion and publication of Islam in Kashmir. He wrote a magazine for the Sultan on the subject of Sufism and often discussed scholarly topics in Sultan's congregations and gatherings. He turned the king's side towards Sufism, so the Sultan stopped lavish practices and turned to knowledge and practice. Syed Muhammad Hamdani did a great favor to the Hindu women of Kashmir by abolishing the ritual of sati in Kashmir and thus brought them out of the dark streets of ignorance and brought them to the open field of knowledge and thought. Sultan Sikandar built Khanqah-e-Malah and gave several villages as Jagir, so that the anchorage for the people could continue and thus it would be easy to spread Islam and end ignorance.

Conclusion

During the reign of Shah Meri dynasty, Sufis and saints played an important role in spreading Islamic teachings in Kashmir. Most of the people who came to Kashmir with the Sufis from different regions were skilled. He came to Kashmir and showed the essence of his skills and equipped hundreds of Kashmiris with skills. The Sufis, Saints and Scholars have played an active role in the development of Kashmir and the publication of knowledge and literature, and have carved their names forever in the hearts of Kashmiris. Due to their sincerity, the people of Kashmir still remember them with respect. They went to every corner of Kashmir and light the candle of knowledge and awakened the Kashmiri people from their slumber.

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