



“My visit to Persia has given me faith in the power of the eastern people to assert them and quickly find their way to a united manifestation of their undying heritage in spite of conflict and difficult economic circumstance.”

Rabindra Nath Tagore

CHAPTER III

INDO – IRAN RELATIONSHIP HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE (FROM ANCIENT TO MODERN PERIOD)

Indo-Iran historical relationship:

The civilization of India and Iran are the two ancient ones. The people of these countries have been enjoying close historical harmony through the ages. They had common motherland and shared a common linguistic and racial past. For the past many years, they interacted and enriched each other in the fields of language, religion, arts, culture, food and other traditions. Even now the two countries have a very warm, cordial relationship. They are alike in various fields.

In history Iran and India have emerged as culturally rich and the oldest civilizations. The two nations have the same origin which is traced back to the Aryans. As such a lot of likeness and similarities are found between these countries not only in their customs, traditions and languages but also in attitude towards life. One cannot deny the influence of Iranian culture on the Indian culture. In this connection, the late Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru writes in his book *Discovery of India* among the many peoples and races who have come in contact with and influenced India's life and culture, the oldest and most persistent have been the Iranians.¹ India and Iran have in the same racial stock share many things in common. They are eastern Asians originate from the same race. The strong bondage and the same features are highly parallel between these two countries and such affinity is not found anywhere else.

India and Iran had a common homeland and shared a common linguistic and racial past. They are eastern, Asians and originated from the same race. Besides their political, economic and regional relations, we hardly find parallel to that somewhere else. We can find the elements of common culture in the ancient civilizations of both the nations. In the earliest chapters of the Vedas, we find the word *asoura*, the same word is pronounced in Persia as *ahura*. This is because the letter "S" of Indian languages always changes into "h" in Persian. Words like *Som* and *Sindh* have changed in Persian as *hom* and *hind*.²

India and Iran both are Aryan blood, so their cultural and historical approach is the same. Iran is one of the most important countries in the West Asian Region. There was strong influence of Buddhism on the east Iranian region in those times. The region grew closer during the Mughal periods. The Persian language becomes the language of the Indian elite. A new language Urdu with a strong Persian influence developed in northern India.³ Taj Mahal is referred as the "Soul

of Iran incarnated in the body of India". A good example of political similarity of Iranian was through the wife of Jahangeer Noor Jahan, who was a political expert and a good diplomat of that time.

Historical back ground :

Pre-historic times :

As per the history, it is believed that before 2000-3000 B.C. the inhabitants of modern Iraq and southern Iran and also the people of west and North West India came from the same region. Later, around 1500 BC Aryan tribes from north invaded and defeated these people and marched further to south Asia.⁴ During the pre-historic times, the people of Kulli culture excelled in making small boxes of soft stone delicately engraved with linear patterns. At Susa a few pieces of painted pottery have been found which is similar to the wares of the Kulli people. In the hills of Baluchistan, the people of Nal and Zhob cultures built their little villages, the Barhuis ethnically Iranian speak a Dravidian language.⁵

The Indus valley civilization had contacts with the contemporaneous civilizations of Iran and Mesopotamia. There was trade between the coast of southern Iran and India through the Persian gulf and the Arabian sea. Some of the Indus seals have been excavated at Kish, Sasa and Ur in Iran. The Harappan people are believed to have imported silver, copper, turquoise and lapis lazuli from Persia and Afghanistan. Iran supplied silver, gold, lead, zinc, turquoise to ancient India. Ivory was imported from India.⁶

India and Iran: Common Homeland, common linguistic and racial past :

As per the linguistic evidence, the people on the southern slopes of Alborz mountains in North Iran and in Western Iran are regarded as Indo-Iranians and they shared a common tradition living as Nomads in the central Asian steppes. Eventually the two groups separated and migrated towards south. The Iranian group moved to the high lands of Iran that's south-east of Caspian sea, while the Indian tribes migrated to the Indian sub-continent.⁷

Indians and Iranians belonged to one single family before the beginning of the Indo-Aryan civilization. They lived together with a common language for many centuries in pasturelands of Oxus valley in central Asia.⁸ The first Aryan migration into India and Iran took

place around 2000 B.C. These people brought with them their patrilinear system, their worship of sky gods, their horses and chariots. There was close agreement between the language and mythology in the second millennium B.C. The religious and social institutions of Indians and Iranians on the one hand and those of the Greeks, Romans, Celts, Germans and Slavs on the other hand.⁹

In Iran, as in India, the impact of the Aryans was to prove ineffaceable and founded a long enduring tradition.¹⁰ These people brought with them their patrilinear system, their worship of sky gods, their horses and chariots. In the second millennium B.C., there was close concordance between the language and mythology, religious traditions and social institutions of Indians and Iranians on one hand and those of the Greeks, Romans, Celts, Germans and Slavs on the other. After their separation from their western kinsmen, the Indians and Iranians are believed to have lived together.¹¹

The scriptures of veda and avesta both agree on the cause which led to the migration of the Aryans from their original homeland. According to the vedic account, it is a flood of water that is referred to and in the Avestan account it is a flood of snow and frost. The praleya signifying snow or frost is derived from pralaya or deluge in Sanskrit by Panini. There was a huge flood in pre-historic. The name of the person who escaped this disaster is Noah, Nuh as in Arabic which is a contracted form of Manuh, nominative form of manu. In both Iranian and Indian versions, he is the son of the same person vivasvat or vivanghat. As per the tradition of the vendidad, the ancestors of the Iranians lived in 15 other countries. One of these was Hapta hindu i.e. saptasindhu, the cradle land of Indo-Aryan civilization.¹²

In the 14th century BC, there appeared in North East Syria, a group of people called mittani, whose kings had Indo-Iranian names and whose gods were very similar to the Aryan gods like Indara, Uruvna (Varuna), Mitira and Nasatiya. Prof. S.A. Cook writes “In what may roughly be called the ‘mosaic’ age that’s illustrated by the Amarna letters and the “HiHite” tables from Boghaz-Keui, Palestine was exposed to Iranian or Indo-European Persian Empire. In the mosaic age varuna, the remarkable ethical god of ancient India was known to North Syria”.¹³

In the 14th century BC, there appeared in North East Syria, a people called Mittani, whose kings had Indo-Iranian names. Even the names of god in Iran had were more or less similar to the

names of Indian gods. To mention a few Indara (Indra), Uruvna (Varuna), Mitira and Nasatiya . Some other chiefs in Syria and Palestine also had Indo-Iranian names. ¹⁴ The modern word Parsi is derived from the Persians who were called India called Parshavas and later Parasikas . India is mentioned in the Avesta and there is some description of north India in it. The fact is revealed through references that are made to Persia –the Persians in the Rig Veda. The Parthians were referred to as Parthavas. ¹⁵

In rig veda there are references to Persia, the Persians who were called Parshavas and later Parasikas from which the modern word Parsi is derived. The Parthians were referred to as Parthavas old Persian language was a member of the Indic branch of the Indo-European languages. Zend of Avestan, the language of the earliest Zoroastrian text, which was later divided into two branches Indic and Iranian. And therefore one developed as Sanskrit and the other as Persian. ¹⁶ India is a Greek word written 'India in the Greek alphabet and pronounced Hindia has come from river Hindos - 'the river Indus'. River Indus originally refers to the river Sindhu in Sanskrit. (In Avesta and Old Persian an initial 's' was pronounced 'h').¹⁷

The name of India has been derived from Iran through a long relay. Iranian to Greek to Latin to English and finally to India with the dominance of English. India is derived from the Greek word written 'India in the Greek alphabet and pronounced Hindia. It comes from Hindos 'the river Indus' from the old Persian Hindu, the Persian pronunciation of the Sanskrit Sindhu. ¹⁸

There is much in common between the vedic religion and Zoroastrianism. The name of Hapta Hindu is mentioned in Avesta whereas Ariya is mentioned in the Vedas. Gatha, the hymns of prophet Zoroaster included in a part of the Avesta, the holy book of the Zoroastrians which suggest a close link with the ancient Indian hymns, the Rig veda of 1700 B.C. ¹⁹

Relation between Achaemenian Persia and India:

The founder of the Achaemenian dynasty in Persia was Hakhamanis. During the Achaemenian period, some parts of northwest India came under Persian rule. Indian emissaries were present in the courts of medes and emperor cyrus in 550-529 BC. Indians and Persians had established a distinct cultural and racial entities with their boundaries meeting at Kabul and Sistan. ²⁰ The third ruler of the Achaemenian dynasty was Darius. Three of his inscriptions refer to his relations with India. The Behistun rock inscription dating back to around 518 BC includes

Gandhar in the list of his subject countries.²¹ The Persepolis inscription mentions Punjab as a part of the Persian Empire. The epigraph of Nagsh-i-Rustam shows India as the 24th state of his empire. When Cyrus the Great was invaded by King Croesus of Lydia in Greece.²²

In 510 BC the Emperor Darius found in India “the reed which gives honey without bees”, which he then brought to Persia. Herodotus also mentions the Indian contingent in the Persian armies consisting of infantry, cavalry and chariots.²³ One-third of gold that flowed into the imperial treasury of Iran came as a tribute from India. Indian mercenaries roamed the coasts of Caspian and skirmished with the Scythians. The Khudrakas of the Ravi were deployed beyond the Hindukush. The Achaemenians brought rice from India to be planted in the Near East. It is also believed that cane sugar was first used by man in Polynesia from where it spread to India.²⁴ The Greek philosopher Pythagoras obtained his doctrine of metempsychosis from India mediated by Achaemenian Persia. Before the Ashokan period of history, there is no evidence of epigraphy in India. The pillars, with their animal capitals are influenced by Achaemenian pillars. At Kandahar, Ashoka left instructions in both Greek and Aramaic.²⁵

There had been a lot of significant influence of Achaemenian art and architecture on India. Before the Ashokan period of history, there is no evidence of epigraphy in India.²⁶ It has been suggested that the idea of issuing decrees by Ashoka was borrowed from the Achaemenian emperors, especially from Darius (though the tone and content of Ashoka’s edicts are different). The pillars, with their animal capitals (fine examples of Mauryan imperial art) are influenced by Achaemenian pillars. The use of this means of propagating official messages and the individual style of the inscriptions both suggest Persian and Hellenistic influence and India under the Mauryas was certainly more continually in touch with the civilizations to the west than ever before. At Kandahar, Ashoka left instructions in both Greek and Aramaic.²⁷

Alexander defeated Darius III in 330 BC. Alexander the Great after destroying the Achaemenian empire marched into India. Chandragupta Maurya had friendly relations with the Macedonian conqueror in Persia.²⁸ Commercial and cultural relations continued between Persia and India. Persian nobles were conspicuous in the courts of Mauryan kings. The Kharoshti script was introduced by the Persian officials.²⁹ A line of kings with Iranian names known as Pahlavas gained suzerainty of North West India at the end of 1st century BC. Christianity was brought by

St. Thomas to the kingdom of one of these rules that's Gondophares.³⁰ India exported spices, black pepper and imported gold and silver coins from Iran. Grape was introduced from Persia with the almond and walnut was cultivated in the Western Himalayas. Karsa is a coin which is derived from Persian origin.³¹

Relation between Parthian and Sassanian Persia and India:

The Parthian Empire involved in its cultural and commercial relations with India. this empire was called “white Indian” border regions of Kabul, Kandahar and Sistan which formed part of Gandhara. The history of Gujarat from 78 to 400 CE was called the period of Khsatrapa where the suzerainty of the Parthian Empire was replaced by the Sakas. Ranas of Udaipur, heads Sisodia Rajput clan are of Iranian origin and came to India in the late 16th century AD. As we know that Pulakesin II, king of Badami sent an ambassador to Chosroes II in 625 AD.³²

The Sassanian monarchs maintained relations with the Patliputra based Gupta Empire. The Sassanian period in Persia coincided with the Gupta period in India. The name of Pulakesin, the ruler of the Deccan was known in Persia. Embassies were exchanged between India and Persia. Iranian traders acted as commission agents to deliver Indian goods to European ports. Indian Physicians were invited to practice medicine along with Greek and Iranian Physicians in Jundishpur Hospital in Southern Kuzestan province of Iran during the reign of Shahpur.³³

Sassanian motifs are abundant in Gupta art. Indian peacock, dragons, cocks and spiral creeper adorn sassanian monuments. The tiles of Harvan monastery near Srinagar testify to the sassanian influence on the Kashmir valley. The kushanas became affluent through trade, particularly with Rome. They issued large number of gold coins, which exhibit the figures of Greek, Roman, Iranian, Hindu and Buddhist deities. The Pallavas are also believed to have originated from Iran. Nahapana, Chashtana, Jayadaman, Rudradaman, Tushasp, Suvisakha were some of the rulers of that period.³⁴

The Ranas of Udaipur, the head of the Sisodia clan of the Rajputs, are believed to have been Iranians originally who came to India towards the end of sixth century. The Pallavas (Parthians, Sanskrit – Pahlavas) are also believed to have originated from Iran. Pulkessin II, the Ruler of Badami sent an Embassy to Khusro II (Parviz) in 625AD. A beautiful fresco in one of

the caves at Ajanta denotes the return of the embassy to his court. The name Gujarat itself has associations with the Gujar tribe of Iran that inhabited the region of Gujistan near west of Caspian Sea. These people are believed to have entered India around 6th century AD. After the conquest of Alexander, the nobles of Saurashtra and Kutch acknowledged the suzerainty of the Parthians and later the Sassanians. The history of Gujarat from AD. 78 to AD. 400 is shown as Kshatrapa (Satrap) period. Nahapana (Parthian), Chashtana, Jayadaman, Rudradaman, Tushasp, Suvisakha were some of the rulers of this period. In due course, the rulers assumed Hindu names.³⁵

Buddhist Influence on Persia :

Buddhism began to spread to central Asia and the far East. In the 1st century BC, Kanishka the ruler of northwest India became a great patron of Buddhist faith. Kanishka patronized the Gandhara school of Buddhist art which introduced Greek and Persian elements into Buddhist iconography.³⁶ Buddhism became the religion of the east Iranian province of Khorasan through the Kushana emperors. The biography of Buddha in Sanskrit that's the Buddha charita was composed by Ashva Ghosh was translated into Khotanese and then into Sogdian and Parthian from old Persian idioms, then into Pahlavi and into Arabic and other languages. Ibn Babaviah of Qom in his work Akmal al din wa Taman al Nimah included a story based upon the Persian version written by Zakariya Razi. In Iran, the story of Ibrahim ibn Adham, the prince who abandoned his kingdom to lead a religious life is moulded on the model of Buddha.

Zoroastrianism and Buddhism came into close contact in north West India. The temples, monasteries and the monuments which dotted Khorasan influenced the early architecture of Persia. The blue of turquoise from Khorasan in east Persia became the symbol of the 'mind by nature luminous'. The shades of blue porcelain created by the Buddhist masters of East Asia reflected the subtle planes of contemplation. This tradition was taken over by the blue mosques of Persia.³⁷ In North West India, Zoroastrianism and Buddhism came into close contact. The Zoroastrian doctrine of the Saviour (Saosyant) probably influenced the idea of the future Buddha, which later became part of the orthodox belief.³⁸

The temples, monasteries and the monuments, which dotted Khorasan, must have in some ways influenced the early architecture of Persia. The blue of turquoise from Khorasan in

east Persia became the symbol of the 'mind by nature luminous' (cittam prakriti-prabhasvaram). The spires of Buddhist monasteries were made of turquoise, as blue was the colour of meditation. The shades of blue porcelain created by the Buddhist masters of East Asia reflected the subtle planes of contemplation. This tradition was centuries later taken over by the blue mosques of Persia. The Jandial temple near Takasila was probably Zoroastrian. Ivory plaques, originally fastened to the lids and sides of furniture and boxes, are greatly of Indian inspirations that are found at the Kushana site of Begram, 80 km North West of Kabul.³⁹

The most ancient stringed instrument from Persia, a red-sandalwood five stringed vina has been preserved at the Todaiji monastery in Nara, Japan since 8th century. It is decorated with a Persian motif in mother-of-pearl inlay and represents a cultural exchange between the Persian and the Buddhist world. The Tibetan histories of medicine relate that Jivaka the Physician to Lord Buddha was born as the son of king Bimbisara. He wished to become a doctor and king Bimbisara sent him to Taxila. These white-clad men were Iranians. Early Persian Poetry, creation of east Persians cultivated abstract mental forms recalling the grace of Buddhist statues.

The metaphor of Bot was constant and exclusive in early Persian poetry. The facial type of bot-e-mahruy was the norm in Persian paintings and poetry. Bahar is both spring and a monastery. Shih-Kao was a Parthian prince who became a Buddhist monk. The parthians of east Iran and central Asian Iranians translated Sanskrit texts into Chinese.⁴⁰

As known to all, Early Persian poetry, the creation of east Persians, cultivated abstract mental forms which recalled the grace of Buddhist statues. (Till the 11th century Persian poetry came from Khorasan, Sogdiana and adjacent areas, which were once steeped in Buddhism). The metaphor of Bot (Buddha) was constant and exclusive in early Persian poetry. The facial type of bot-e-mahruy (moon-faced statue) was the norm in Persian paintings and poetry. Bahar is both spring and a monastery (vihar).

The Persian raghe for sloping hill refers to the location of vihars on top of a hill with gentle slopes. The Parthians of east Iran and Central Asian Iranians translated Sanskrit texts into Chinese. An Shih-Kao was a Parthian prince who became a Buddhist monk. After he came to China in 148 AD, he translated 59 Sanskrit works on Buddhism into Chinese of which are

still available in Chinese Tripitaka. Two other Sanskrit works were also translated into Chinese in 181AD by another Parthian prince An Huen.⁴¹

Continuign Contacts (2nd to 7th Century AD) :

It is believed that Behram Gur visited India in 5th century AD. Sassanian king Behram Gur requested Indian king Shangol to select 12,000 gypsies expert Indian musicians and introduced them into Persia from India. They propagated Indian music and dancing in Persia and travelled to all parts of the world. During the reign of Sassanian king Noshirvan scientists and other scholars were exchanged between Persia and India. During the same period, the game of chess is believed to have been introduced in Persia from India.⁴²

Burzuya physician of Noshirwan was sent to India to bring medicine. The Jundishpur school of medicine continued its active existence and after the Arab conquest of Persia exerted a great deal of influence on the development of Arabian medicine. The collection of Indian fables was translated from Sanskrit to Pehalvi by Burzoy-e-Tabib. From Persia it travelled to the West. Several versions of the text existed in Persian later Arabian nights owes several of its stories and themes to India.⁴³

During the period of Noshirwan, Jundishpur was developed as a leading center of Persian medicine, in which the Indian Ayurvedic system was syncretized with the Greek system which was propagated there by the Nestorian Christians. Burzuya, the physician to Noshirwan, was sent to India to bring back works on medicine and search for elixir of life. He brought stories of Panchatantra with him on his return. The Jundishpur School of medicine continued its active existence and after the conquest of Persia by the Arab, a great deal of influence was exerted on the development of Arabian medicine.⁴⁴

Panchatantra, the collection of Indian fables – which contains the instructions about conduct of one's affairs, was translated from Sanskrit to Pehalvi by Burzoy-e-Tabib and he called it as Kalila va Demna. Later on from Persia it travelled to the west. Abdullah ibn Muquaffa translated this Pehalvi text into Arabic. There exists several versions of the text in Persia written by Rudki (10th century AD), Nasrullah bin Mohd bin Abdul Hamid Munshi (15th century AD) and a version by Abdul Fazal (16th century AD). Arabian Nights, which came later, owes several of its stories and themes to India.⁴⁵

In the 6th century, sandalwood, magenta, shells, corals, pearls, gold and silver were traded. Bam in south-east Iran was a major commercial and trading town on the famous spice road, a major tributary of the silk road that connected trade routes from India through Iran to central Asia and China. ⁴⁶An Arabic translation from a Persian Version of the Charaka Samhita, the famous Indian medical text was performed in the 7th century AD.⁴⁷ According to Christian Topography of cosmos Indicopleustes of 6th century AD, there were churches in Kerala and Ceylon in the hands of Persian Priests. Therefore Persian merchants are believed to be chiefly responsible for establishing Christian community in South India. ⁴⁸

Advent of Islam :

The Zoroastrians, a section of the Persians migrated to India through the strait of Hormuz. During the 7th century, Arab traders came to the southern and western coast of India. The Arabs invaded India from west in 712 A.D. but that was short lived after Islam came into existence in Persia, Zoroastrianism disappeared from Persia. They are known as Parsis today. The parsis arrived to India at about 636 AD. They settled at Sanjan, 100 miles north of Bombay. They built a big fire temple at Sanjan in 790 AD. According to the Parsis own tradition, one band of refugees settled first at Diu in Saurashtra and then at Thana near Mumbai in the early 8th century.⁴⁹ Even today Parsis maintain a cultural relationship with Iran travelling to the cities of Tehran, Yazd and Kerman in Iran for pilgrimage.

Their connection with their co-religionists in Iran seems to have been almost totally broken until the end of the 15th century. Re-established in 1477, the connection was kept up chiefly in the form of an exchange of letter until 1768. Even today, Parsis maintain a cultural relationship with Iran, travelling to the cities of Tehran, Yazd and Kerman in Iran for pilgrimage. There have been several prominent Indians which include political leaders, industrialists and Government officials from this community. They are including Dadbhai Nowroji (thrice president of Indian National Congress), Field Marshall Manekshaw, the great scientist Dr.Homi Bhabha and the leading business groups of Tata and Godrej among others.⁵⁰

The scientific study of astronomy in Islam commenced under the influence of an Indian work Siddhanta which was brought to Baghdad in 771 AD. At about 800 AD Aryabhata's treatise Aryabhatiyam was translated into Arabic under the title Zij-al-Arjabhar. The knowledge

of Hindu numerals and the decimal place-value system reached the Arabs along with the Indian mathematical and astronomical works which rendered into Arabic in the 8th and 9th century A.D.⁵¹ In the second half of the 14th century Indian astronomy was influenced by Persian. An Indian astronomer who made use of Arabic or Persian knowledge was Kamalakara, who wrote a big treatise on astronomy called *siddhanta-Tatva-viveka*. But it was Sawai Jaya Singh II who showed the greatest interest in Arabic/Persian astronomy.⁵²

A Persian Pharmacologist Abu Mansur Muwaffaq ibn Ali al Harawi of Heart wrote *Kitab'l Abniya an Haq'iq'l Adwiya* in the 10th century AD. It is believed to be the oldest prose work in modern Persian. Islam came to India from the side of Persia through Sultn Mohammad Ghaznavi in the 11th century AD.⁵³ The magnificent art and architecture of Iran came to be associated with Islam. Some new ideas like the Shi'a movement took shape in Islam. Islam became the common element that linked the Persian and Indian elites. Lahore became an important centre of Persian literature of art and mysticism. Between 1206 AD and 1687 AD many Muslim dynasties appeared in different parts of India. at this period, Turks, Tartars and some Arabs came to India. during the rule of Khiljis, several Persian scholars from Tabriz, Esfahan and Ray visited the royal courts in India.⁵⁴

Hindu, Jain religious and philosophical texts from Sanskrit and Prakrit were translated into Persian. These include the Ramayana, Mahabharata, Upanishads, Bhagavata Gita etc. There are 24 different translations of Ramayana and different versions of the Bhagavat Gita, II of Bhagwat Puran and 6 of Mahabharat in Persian language written by Hindu and Muslim scholars.⁵⁵

Sufism Spiritual Interaction between India and Iran :

Sufism was the result of spiritual interaction between Persia and India. Sufism was originally borrowed from India and returned to India with a distinct Iranian stamp. The mysticism of Islam came under the impact of Hinduism and its philosophy of Vendata. Hinduism also accepted some Islamic elements such as equality and monotheism.⁵⁶

Islamic grew in the intellectual soil of Iran. Among its sources were the qur'an, the teachings of Hindu Philosophy and neo-platonism of Alexandria. The dominating concern of the neo-platonists was religious and their attitude was subjective and intuitive. Upanishadic monism

and ethics of Hinduism transformed the idealism of Plato into a Gnostic Philosophy. Therefore Hindu thought entered the structure of Muslim Tasawwuf through neo-Platonism.⁵⁷

Buddhist monks and Hindu priests spread throughout the land from Khwarizm to Khotan and Afghanistan. Sufi thought and practice grew in Knorasan. Sufi philosophy inspired sufi poetry and learnt the Hindu practices of restraining the breath using the rosary and mediation. Great mystic poet Abu said Abil Khair, Abdul Majid Sanai, Jalaluddin Balkhi and Summa Rumi came from Khorasan. The Iranian muslim mystics were mainly responsible for propagating Islam in India and thereby bhakki movement existed in Hinduism. Today, India is the biggest centre of Sufism in the world. The four well known sufi, silsilas in India are the qudiriya, the Chishtiya, the Naqshbandiya and the sohravardiys.⁵⁸

There are a lot of similarities among the Hindu and Muslim mystical thought. The Pantheist monism of the Advita Vedanta and Wahdat al Wujud of the Sufis are different expressions of the same world view.⁵⁹ Self-manifestation of the ultimate being is spoken of in vedantic terms such as vivarta, Pratibhasa and Pratibimba. These are the same as the sufi concepts of tajalli, Zuhur, aks and numud. The immanence of the divine essence described as sarvabhutatma and antaryamin is also postulated by the sufis in their conception of God as soul of the world that's jane-I' jahan. The idea of nirguna Brahman is comparable to dhat al-mutlaq, jivatman with ruh and tajrid and so on. There are several similarities in expression also:

Table-3.1 comparative some vocabulary between Sanskrit and avesta

Sanskrit	Avestic
Aham Brahmasmi	Ana'i-Haq
Sarvam idam Brahma	Hama-ust
Ato "nyad artam"	Kullu ma Siwa'llah batil
Satsaya Satyam	Haqiqat at -haqa'iq
Jyotisam Jyotih	Nur at-anwar
Tatsatyam	Huwa " I-Haq

The most prominent Sufis in India were Moinuddin Chishti, Fariduddin Ganj Shahr, Nizamuddin Auliya, Jalaluddin Tabrizi, Bahauddin Zakariya, Qutubuddin Bakhtiar Kaki and Amir Kabir Seyyed Ali Hamadani.⁶⁰ These are the exact translations of upanishadic passage into sufi terms. The most prominent sufi in India were moinuddin chishti, Fariduddin Ganj Shahr and so on. Seyyed Ali Hamadani came to Kashmir in the 14th century along with 700 friends, disciples and artisans. He propagated Persian and religious guidance.

Before the establishment of the Delhi sultanate in 1206 and the muslim kingdom of Kashmir in 1320 -, Sufis had migrated to northern India. The abodes of the sufis in India were generally known by their Persian name Khanqahs. Most of the sufi pioneers came from Iran or from central Asia.⁶¹ The Shattari silsilah of Sufism was founded by Shahn Abdullah Shattari in Persia. The poetry of Khwaja Abdullah Ansari, Sana'i, Ahmad Jam, Nizami Ganjavi, Attar, Rumi, Sa'di, Hafez and Jami inspired the Indian Sufis. Mohd Ghose translated Amrit Kund into Persian under the title of Bahr al-hayat. A warifu' lma' arif of sheikh sihabuddin Suhrawardi was another sufi work that contributed to the spread of Persian ideas in India. An important Iranian tradition that influenced the Indian minds in the Khanqahs was the compilation of malfuzat. Sufis also contributed in large measure to the development of Urdu language.⁶²

The love of Sufi poetry cemented relationship between Hindus and Muslims. A Persian verse of 'Attar was inscribed on temples of Kashmir. A glossary of masnavi by Rumi, compiled by Abdul Latif Abbasi during the reign of Shah Jahan identifies words in the masnavi that's common to Persian and Hindi. Hafez's literary reputation reached India during his lifetime. The sufi literature pertaining to Kashmir is rich in discussion involving the sufis and Hindu ascetics.⁶³

Sufis appealed to all classes of Muslims particularly those who are less educated in traditional sciences and exhibited a way of life. Sufis had spread their network of 'retreats' over north India. Between the end of the 12th century and the end of the 15th century, three great sufi orders had migrated from Iraq and Persia into northern India-the chishti, the Sohrawardi and the Ferdowsi. The tombs of the mystic saints are still honoured by both Hindu and Muslims.⁶⁴

In 13th century, the great Persian poet travelled from Shiraz to Punjab, Somnath, Gujarat and Delhi. From Somnath he went to Gujarat and then to Punjab and later to Delhi and from Delhi to Yemen. In 1220, Islam went into eclipse in Persia when the Mongols ransacked the

muslim world. India escaped the mongal invasion. The Delhi sultanate offered a refuge in that crucial period and India became a cultural sanctuary of the muslim world.⁶⁵

(Mughal – Safavid Period) :

Iran witnessed the rise of the safavi dynasty and India saw the rise of the mughal empire in the 16th century. India and Iran became great powers under these tow dynasties. The mughal patronage of culture constantly attracted Persian scholars, talented Persians were absorbed in expanding services of the Mugal empire. Babur received help from the safavid king shah Ismail I and established himself in Kabul first and then in Delhi and Agra. Babur himself an accomplished Persian poet was a Patron of Persian Poets.⁶⁶

Humayun, son of Babur after being defeated by an Afghan king Sher Shah Suri fled to Iran and was only able to return to India with the help of the Iranian king Shah Tahmasp Safari. On his return, Humayun took over Qandahar from Kamran Mirza with the help of Persian in 1545. And he handed it to the Persians. He then went on to take Kabul.⁶⁷ Humayun's stay in Iran further stimulated Mughal interest in Persian literature and art.

Several Iranian poets and scholars migrated to Iran. Persian artistes Mir Sayyid Ali and Khwaja Abdus Samad were the founders of the Mughal school of painting in India-Humayun a Sunni muslim patronized Khurasanis and Persians of Shi'a faith. Persians accounted for a high proportion of personnel in all branches of Mughal empire.⁶⁸ After Humayun's death, Akbhar conferred favours on those Persians and their families. Akbar sent farmans to chalapi Beg of Shiraz and Mir Sadruddin Muhammad Naqib inviting the two scholars to join the mughal court.⁶⁹

The cultural relationship between the courts of the Mughal and safavid monarchs strengthened their diplomatic relations and envoys were exchanged. The relations with Persia were the most important aspect of the foreign policy of the mughal rulers of India.⁷⁰

The Adil Shahis of Bijapur nad the Qutb Shahis of Golconda were already Shi'a before the advent of the chaghatai mu;ghals into India. Babur and his son Humayun had been constrained to accept Shi'ism while negotiating for support of the Persian shi'ite safavids. There were extensive diplomatic relations between the Deccan kingdoms and the safavid rulers. A

Persian immigrant and a diamond merchant Muhammad sa'id rose to high position. The diplomatic relations between Persia and the Deccan kingdom and the recitation of the Persian Shah's name in the Khutba in Golconda were resented by the Mughals.⁷¹

Following the victory of Mahmood Begarah over the Portugese, the practice of Muzaffarids of Gujarat was enhanced in the early 16th century. The Iranian King, Shah Ismail Safavi, sent an Embassy to his court keeping in view the growing maritime and commercial importance of Gujarat. A brief account about the state of Gujarat, its people, their religion and customs were recorded in black and white by several Iranian travellers . In 951 AD Abu Ishaq Ibrahim Isakhri from Istakhr wrote about the cordial relations between the Hindus and Muslims of Gujarat in his book Kitabul Aqalim.⁷²

This resulted in the movement of several Persian poets– Naziri Nishapuri, Urfi Shirazi, Anisi Shamlu, Shikebi Isfahani and Zahuri from Iran towards India during early Safavid era. The first four joined the entourage of Abdur Rahim Khan Khanan and Zahuri were welcomed at the courts of Ahmadnagar and Bijapur.although Jahangir's rule also began with a clash over Qandahar, Jahangir had friendly relations with Shah Abbas I which went back to Akbar's lifetime. He had Shah Abbas's picture depicted with his own picture in his picture gallery.⁷³

During the early safavid era, several Persian poets like Naziri Nishapuri, urfi shirazi, Anisi Shamlu and Zahuri left Iran for India. several embassies were exchanged between Jehangir and Shah Abbas. Noor Jahan and Mumtaz Mahal are belived to be of Iranian descent. Noor Jahan was the daughter of an Iranian noble Mirza Ghiyasuddin Beg Tehrani. Shah Jahan's court also continued to attract Persians scholars and poets. Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri contains many references to Iranians who received the patronage of Jahangir. Many influential Persians merged their interests with the Mughals.⁷⁴

The Indians attained a strong position in the economic life of the Persian capital and ports while the Persians became influential in the politics and culture of the Mughal Empire. The Indian merchants kept in touch with the Mughal embassies. The main overland trade route between India and Iran was Via khaiber and Kabul and via Bolan and Qandahar. The sea trade route was mainly between surat and Bandar Abbas. There are also references to Indian dancing woman in Esfahan and a mosque at Shiraz built by an Indian Muslim Aqa Rida.⁷⁵

Dara Shikoh, the eldest son of Shah Jahan was a great Persian scholar and a sufi. He drew parallels between religious and philosophical views of Hindu and Muslims. In his *Majma' al-bahrain* he compares Hindu Philosophical terms with those from Islamic Sufism. He compares the Hindu trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh with the Islamic trinity of Jibra'il, Maka'il and Israfil. The four states of atman are compared with the four states of being known in Sufism.⁷⁶

Nader Shah a powerful noble of Safavids of Iran following his victorious campaign against the Turks marched to Khorasan to attack the Afghan Abdalis. He crowned himself as the ruler of Iran in 1736. He acquired Qandahar in 1738 and the Mughal province of Kabul. In March 1739, Nader Shah acquired Delhi. Before his return to Iran he restored the crown of the Mughal Empire. Nader Shah took back vast amounts of money and valuables from his raid of India. Among these are said to be the famous Mughal throne-Takhat-I-Tavoos and the *Muraqqae-Gulshan*.

The accounts of the Mughal-Safavid relationship is available in various documents of that time.⁷⁷The account of the Mughal-Safavid relationship is available in various documents of that time. These include Khwand Amir's *Hobibus Siyar*, *Babur Nama*, Amir Mahmud's *Tarikh*, Jauhar's *Tadhkiratul Waqiqat*, Abul Fazl's *Akbar Nama*, *Ain-I-Akbari*, Fadli Esfahani's *Afdalut Tawarikh*, *Tuzuk-I-Jehangiri*, *Padshah Namas* (by Jalal Tabatabai, Muhammad Amin Qazvini, Abdul Hamid Lahori) and Muhammad Kazim's *Alamgir Nama* among others.

Spread of Persian Literature in India :

The Muslim rulers in India patronized Persian language. Most of the Persian vocabulary was, absorbed into this language that's Urdu. The grammar and essential structure of Urdu remained very close to the language of north India. Persian was the official and court language under the Mughals. An Indian style developed in Persian poetry and literature. Many Persian poets and scholars came to India to seek employment at the courts of the Mughal rulers.⁷⁸

The official and court language of the Mughal's was Persian .An Indian style developed in Persian poetry and literature. Amir Khosrau Dehlavi and Mirza Asadullah Khan Ghalib were among the prominent Indian poets. Many Persian poets and scholars came to India to seek employment at the courts of the Mughal rulers. Akbar for the first time appointed a poet as poet-laureate in his court.

The first one was Ghazzali Mashhadi. Another Persian scholar Mir Abdul Latif of Qazvin became Akbar's tutor. Persian poets – Naziri Nishaburi, Urfi Shirazi and Anisi Shamlu among others – and Iranian scholars like Sharif Amuli were present at Akbar's court.⁷⁹ During the Mughal period, the importance of Persian was enhanced both by Akbar's attempt to have the main works of classical Sanskrit literature translated into Persian and by the constant influx of poets from Iran who came seeking their fortune at the lavish tables of the Indian Muslim grandees. Enriched the Persian vocabulary was enriched due to translations from Sanskrit, and new stories of Indian origin added to the reservoir of classical imagery.

The translations from Sanskrit enriched the Persian vocabulary and new stories of Indian origin. Urfi who left Shiraz for India and died in this mid 30s in Lahore was one of the genuine master of Persian poetry. The Persian poet Hazin came to India in the early 18th century.⁸⁰ In the 13th century Amir Khusrau created 12 new melodies including zilaf, muafiq, ghanam and so on according to several Persian texts. The origin of Tarana is associated with Amir Khusrau. In 14th and 15th century the earliest Persian writings on Indian music appeared in the form of Ghunjat-ul-Munya and Lahjat-e-Sikandar Shahi.⁸¹

In all the local languages of northern India that's Punjabi, Kashmiri, Sindhi, Marathi and Bengali besides Hindi and Urdu there are a large number of Persian words and expressions including popular proverbs. Persian and Arabic vocabulary entered the speech of the common folk of Punjab.⁸² In the 18th century Swami Bhupat Biragi was deeply influenced by Rumi's mathnawi which composed a long mystical mathnawi in which Vedanta and Sufism were fused in exquisite form and style. There were several Hindu poets and authors who contributed to Persian poetry and literature in India. Mirza Asadullah Khan Ghalib was a distinguished poet of Persian and Urdu and is immensely popular even today.⁸³

Persian Influence in the field of Art and Architecture :

Indian crafts men worked with Persian and Turkish masters to create a new harmonious art and architecture. The Indian flora blended with Islamic calligraphy. New colour palette of turquoise blue, emerald green, lapis, viridian and brilliant white were added to the Indian

safforns, indigos and vermilions. Persian artists like Abdus Samad of Shiraz, Mir Sejjed Ali of Tabriz and so on worked with their Indian colleagues in royal Mughal courts.

The Taj Mahal, Fatehpur Sikri and Humayun Tomb are the finest examples of the synthesis of Indo-Iranian style in architecture. The Iranian influence is visible in Qutab Minar. Persian architects and artisans were brought to India to design and construct palaces and forts, mosques and public buildings.⁸⁴ Iranian painters introduced the art of portrait and miniature paintings in Mughal courts. The Mughal schools of paintings owed much to Iran and blossomed under Akbar's patronage. Mir Sayyed Ali and Khwaja Abdussamad from Persia were the founders of the Mughal school of paintings in India.⁸⁵

there were major developments in the technique of miniature painting, portraits, scenes of war, social events and illustrations of manuscripts.(Although literary evidence shows that miniature painting existed in India long before the coming of the Muslims. These were the products of formalized Buddhism).⁸⁶

The Kashmir carpet weavers absorbed the Persian design of the 'tree of life', mehrab, vase and floral medallion designs. In the 17th century, a kind of handmade carpets by the name of Indo-Esfahan carpets with designs inspired from heart were exported by the east India company to Europe and are frequently seen in Dutch paintings of that time.⁸⁷ Indian palangposh, pardeh, jah-namaz and jama were being exported to Persia. Kalamkari was a fusion of the indigo and ochre based temple paintings of South India with the Safavid Persian Chitsaz and Kalamkars, Damascene wire-work, the base of steel or bronze and ornamentation in gold and silver wire travelled to India via Iran and Afghanistan from its original home in Damascus.

The pottery of Khurja and Jaipur contain folk memories of colours, glazes and motives derived from Turkmen and Persian influenced turquoise, green and lemon tiled ornamentation.⁸⁸ The Persian carpets which have designs characteristics of the Mughal taste with staggered horizontal rows of plants or a plant-filled lattice were in the seventeenth century. Its subsequent popularity is often linked to Nadir Shah who brought back considerable booty from his Indian campaign and also the scheme was used in the decoration of his palace. The theme remained popular for carved stone revet ments, tile works and textiles. Inclusion of the new

floral designs on carpets and ceramics probably reflects a broader popularity, stimulated by familiarity with both European and Indian goods.⁸⁹

Decline in Direct Into-Iranian links :

In the 18th century the Iranian ruler Nader Shah drove out the Afghans, Turks and Russians from Iran and invaded Delhi. The Indo-Iranian links had started to decline during the reign of Aurangzed. After the death of Nader Shah, the centre of political activity shifted to Afghanistan. Iran became a battle ground for conflicting European powers.

In the mean time, the British established their supremacy in India and Indo-Iran exchanges stopped. Direct trade between India and Persia was prevented. Duties on Indian exports increased and duties on British imports decreased. Postal stamps were issued by the Indian postal authority under the British rule were used in some Persian ports like Bandar Abbas and Bushire until 1923. Rabindra Nath Tagore visited Iran in 1932 and 1935. There is a photograph of Tagore visiting Hafiz's tomb in Shiraz. It was only after the independence, direct regular contacts between the people of India and Iran, which had suffered a brief break during the British colonial rule in India resumed.⁹⁰

Continuing Contemporary Links:

The first lot of Indians, predominantly Sikhs came to the border town of Zahedan in Iran from west Punjab in the early 1900s. Around 180 Indian families settled in Zahedan. The Indians gradually spread to the towns of Zabol, Birijand, Mashad and Tehran. In the 1960s and 70s around 10,000 Indian professionals came to Iran. At present, there are 150 Indian families in Tehran, 35 families in Zahedan and 2 families in Esfahan. There are around 300 to 600 Indian Muslim students in the holy city of Qom.

A Gurudwara in Zahedan was built by the sikh traders in 1927. The town was earlier known as Dozdab but was later renamed as Zahedan. A Gurudwara was also built in Tehran in 1950. An Indian school was established in Tehran in 1952. A Hindu temple was built in the southern port city of Bandar Abbas by the Indian community.⁹¹ A total of 3,462 Indian died from the two world wars were buried in the Tehran was cemetery in the Islamic Republic of Iran. The

external affairs Minister Shri Jaswant Singh visited the Tehran war cemetery on April 10th, 2001 and laid a wreath at the memorial.

Indian universities are popular for Iranian students for higher studies. Several high ranking Iranian officials and professionals have studied in India. there is a large number of Iranian students studying in universities of Mumbai, Pune, Bangalore, Mysore and Delhi. There has been a tradition of Iranian football players having played in Indian clubs and coached Indian teams.

Two of Iran's leading contemporary film directors such as Abbas Kiarostami and Mohsen Makhmalbaf have visited India.⁹² Several Iranian publications were printed in India in the early 20th century. The first Iranian Persian weekly was published by India. Mohammad Mirza Chaikar brought out first tea saplings to Iran from India and planted it in the north Iranian city of Lahijan. Mirza chaikar is known as the father of the tea industry in Iran.⁹³

Around the turn of the previous century (1900) an Iranian Consul based in Mumbai - India, Haj. Mohammad Mirza Chaikar (Kashef os Saltaneh) brought out first tea saplings (along with some pepper, cinnamon, and turmeric saplings) to Iran from India and planted them in the north Iranian city of Lahijan. Today the area has a large number of tea plantations. Mirza Chaikar is known as the father of the tea industry in Iran.⁹⁴

Prime Minister Nehru had visited Iran along with his daughter Indira Gandhi in 1959. President Radha Krishnan visited Iran in 1963. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi visited Iran 1974. Prime Mminister Narasimha Rao visited Iran in 1993. Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee visited Iran on April 10th to 13th, 2001. On the Iranian side president Rafsanjani visited India in 1995. The present leader of the Islamic Republic, Ayatollah Khamenei had visited India in 1994. A street in Tehran is named after Mahatma Gandhi.

Imam Khomeini's grandfather Sayyid Ahmad left Lucknow in the middle of 19th century. He used "Hindi" as pen name in some of his Ghazals. India and Iran have exchanged cultural delegations regularly. Iran has three cultural center in Tehran which is named after ustad Bismillah Khan. Iran has three cultural centres in India that's in New Delhi, Mumbai and Hyderabad. The first Iranian consulate was opened in Mumbai.⁹⁵

An Iranian scientist travelled along with a team of Indian scientists on an Indian ship on a scientific expedition to Antarctica in 1998. Two Iranian professors of Persian are working as faculty at the Osmania university of Hyderabad and the Delhi university. In an important development of India, Iran and Russia signed an important agreement in 2000 on a “North South corridor” for transit of goods from India through Iran to Russia. In 1997, India, Iran and Turkmenistan also signed a trilateral co-operation agreement on transit of goods. an important India – Iran seminar was held in New Drlhi / Nimrana in November 2000. India participated at a senior level in a seminar on “Dialogue among Asian civilizations” held in Tehran in February 2001.⁹⁶

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