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## CONTRIBUTION OF INDIAN MUSLIMS TO SANSKRIT

Sanskrit originated in India and has been studied for various purposes from the very beginning. It inspired the Vedic Aryans primarily for the sake of the growth of religion already originated and for many other purposes. Religion, philosophy, ethics, etc., are closely associated with Sanskrit and it is for the reason that it arrested the attention of people of the world. It is surprising to note that, in past, for centuries, it created a great revolution in the world and scholars studied it for the sake of their own people. As a result, it came forward as international language and local gift for the people in the sense that it started being studied through various local languages. We may quote in this respect, languages like German, French, etc., as we still have vast treasure preserved there-in.

Like other people, Muslims did not lag behind. Muslims, whether Indian or alien, showed keen interest in Sanskrit and as a result, in Persian, a vast treasure of Sanskrit is still preserved.

Like other people of the world, Indian Muslims, too, showed keen interest in Sanskrit. Many Muslim kings patronised it. As a result, Sanskrit got an impetus and flourished variously. In the past, Sanskrit was patronized by many Hindu kings. Similarly, many Muslim kings patronized it and financially assisted for the growth and development of Sanskrit. Some instances may be quoted here. Let us start from Kashmir, heaven of India and considered to be the seat of Sanskrit learning for centuries. All branches of Sanskrit, *Alaṅkāra*, *Rasa*, *Rīti*, *Dhvani*, *Vakrotti*, *Aucitya*, etc., originated and developed here. In the history of Kashmir, many Muslims ascended the throne and among them, some were very lib-

eral. Shahabuddin was the first, who chose the path of brotherhood, which is evident from an inscription written in Sanskrit. In this inscription, the king is praised for his immense regard for Sanskrit paṇḍits. Besides, he had great respect for Hindu religion as it again got an opportunity to flourish<sup>1</sup>. In 1373, Shahabuddin died and his son Kutubuddin ascended the throne. He, too, patronised Hindu religion governed by Sanskrit rules. Another celebrated name among the Muslim rulers is that of Zainul-Abedin. He spent huge money for buying Sanskrit books related to *Purāna*, *Tarka*, *Mīmāṃsā* and other subjects once vanished and made them available to scholars and Sanskrit Paṇḍits. It is due to his efforts that the study of Sanskrit again started<sup>2</sup>. There is another recorded evidence that Śīryabhaṭṭa established a Pāṭhaśālā and started the teaching of the *Atharvaveda*. Besides, he presented a copy of the *Atharvaveda* to Zainul-Abedin and sought his blessings for the re-establishment of the teaching of this *Veda* in Kashmir<sup>3</sup>. In the court of the king, there were many Sanskrit paṇḍits and noted among them, are Jonarāja, Śrīvara, Yodhabhaṭṭa, Avatārabhaṭṭa, Śīryabhaṭṭa, Karpūrabhaṭṭa, etc. Zainul-Abedin was so liberal and wanted that Muslims should know Sanskrit. He, therefore, got translated the *Dhātuvāda*, *Rasaśāstra*, *Kalpasūtra*, *Bṛhatkathāsāra*, etc., into Persian. King Zainul-Abedin himself knew Sanskrit. His sons- Haider Shah and Baharam Khan were also well-versed in Sanskrit. Hasan Shah, the son of Haider Shah, got his Sanskrit teaching from his learned Sanskrit teacher Śrīvara<sup>4</sup> and had keen interest in dance, singing, etc. He used to recite Sanskrit verses. In the history of Kashmir, Mohammad Shah seems to be the last king, in whose reign, the teaching and diffusion of Sanskrit, in some way or the other, took place variously.

During the Medieval period, many Mughal kings can be seen lenient to Sanskrit. Lenient in the sense that they were broad minded. They were religious, but not orthodox. They helped flourish

1. DEAMBI B.K. KAUL, *Corpus of Sarada Inscriptions of Kashmir*, pp. 117-118; See also *Rājatarāṅgiṇī*, 528, 531.

2. Śrīvara, *Rājatarāṅgiṇī*, 1.5.78-79, 772.

3. Jonarāja, *Rājatarāṅgiṇī*, 1268-74.

4. Śrīvara, *Rājatarāṅgiṇī*, 3-237.

other religions and culture. Besides, they took various measures for the promotion and development of Hindu religion and culture. Among them, are Akbar, Darashikoh, Jahangir, Allauddin Khilji, Asaf Khan, etc.

Among the Mughal Kings, Akbar is the foremost, who created a platform, from where, spread the unity and brotherhood of all religions.

Many Sanskrit scholars were the court-poets of Akbar. I may be brief here and only a prominent names would be mentioned. Abdur Rahim Khan-Khana was such a Muslim scholar, who knew many languages- Persian, Sanskrit, Hindi, etc., and his contribution, as Muslim to Sanskrit, is very important in the present situation prevailing in the country. It is generally believed that Muslims attacked India to spread Islam. They looted money and brought a great loss to the life and property of Hindus. As a result, Hindu culture, religion and Sanskrit suffered immensely. The study of Sanskrit was finished. But this is not always true. Historic evidences show that Sanskrit had already got momentum since 11th century A.D. It is quite evident that Akbar, Darashikoh, Abdur Rahim Khan-Khana, Burhan Khan, Shah Jahan, Shaista Khan, Mohammed Shah, Nasir Shah, Husain Shah, Paragat Shah, etc., patronised Bhanukar, Pt. Jagannath, Amardatta, Vanshidhar, Hari Narain Chaturbhuja, Lakshmiapati, Pundarika Vithal, etc., who wrote valuable Sanskrit literature. Besides, it is due to instructions of Muslim kings, many Sanskrit works were translated into Persian and Arabic languages by Haji Ibrahim Sarhadi, Sultan Haji, Maulana Shah Mohd, Abdur Qadir, Abul Faiz Badauni, Mulla Shavari, Naqib Khan, Sheikh Faizi, Mukammal Khan, Maulana Imamuddin, Nasaruddin, etc. Abdur Rahim Khan-khana is a celebrated Muslim, who enriched the glory of Sanskrit through his beautiful creation. He wrote *Rahima-Ratnāvalī*, *Barabai Nāikā Bheda*, *Barabai Saṅgraha*, *Nagara- Śobhā*, *Sṛṅgāra-soraṭhā*, *Madanāṣṭaka*, *Khetakautukam*, etc.

Akbar was very very liberal. He not only showed respect to Brāhmaṇa scholars, but to others, too. He patronized many Jain Sanskrit scholars. Noted among them, are Hira Vijaya Suri, Vijaya-sena suri and Bhanu Chandra Upadhyaya. Besides, many other probable names are included in them.

Dara Shikoh wrote *Samundra-saṅgama*. Besides, he got many *Upaniṣads* translated into Persian. He had great love for Indian philosophy. The interest of Muslims has been diversified in Sanskrit. Music, dance, drama, etc., according to real Islamic tenets, have got no reverent place in Islam. But, in spite of this, many Muslims resorted to this fine art and composed and wrote monumental works. Certainly, the *Saṅgīta Mālīkā* of Mohmmad Shah, is one of them and deals with the 21 topics of the subject-matter related to music<sup>5</sup>.

In short, we can summarize in the words of Dr Smt. Sudha Malaiya, who writes that "Under the patronage of Muslim rulers of India, not only a large number of Sanskrit works were composed and/or translated into semitic languages and vice-versa, many poetical and scientific works on different branches of learning were also composed in Sanskrit by Muslims themselves"<sup>6</sup>.

In the twentieth century, many Muslims may be given credit for learning Sanskrit. A few names are worth-mentioning here. In this connection, we may say that Aligarh Muslim University is the first University not only in India, but all over the world, which has produced a large number of Sanskrit Muslim scholars. This University is a seat of Muslim culture and civilization. Pt. Habibur Rehman Shastri was the first Muslim, who was the product of the University and was the first man even to teach Sanskrit there. His special interest was the comparative study of Hindu and Muslim philosophy. Dr Nazir Mohd is the second person, who is also the product of the University of Aligarh. He was appointed to teach Sanskrit there, but he is Ph. D. in Hindi and is now teaching Hindi in the Dept. of Hindi of the university as Professor & Head. Dr Ayub Khan did M.A. in Sanskrit from A.M.U. and is now Prof. & Head, Dept. of Sanskrit, Kashmir University, Kashmir. He is, probably, the first Muslim, who is heading the Sanskrit Dept. Besides, a few persons may be mentioned as product of Aligarh Muslim university. Dr Mohd Ali worked on *Etymologies in the Aitareya-*

5. Mohammad Shah, *The Saṅgīta Mālīkā* (ed.), Dr Jatindra Bimal Chawdhury, Prācyavāṇī Text Series», Calcutta, 1948.

6. Dr RADHĀ BALLABHA TRIPATHI (ed.), *Sanskrit Sahitya Ko Islām Pa-ramparā Kā Yogadāna*, Sagar, 1986.

*Brāhmaṇa* and he is now teaching Sanskrit in a college in Mathura Distt of U.P. in India. His interest is in the Vedic lore. In the most recent past, the Aligarh Muslim University has produced two Muslim Ph. D. Women and both are teaching Sanskrit in two different colleges in India. Fortunately, one lady's husband is also Sanskritist and is teaching Sanskrit in a college of Haryana state of India. Dr Mohd Khan Durrani is also a product of Aligarh Muslim university. He has worked on «*the comparative study of the Geeta and Quran*». His Ph. D. thesis is published from Delhi. He is working in the Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan, Delhi. Besides his thesis, he has translated some Sanskrit dramas in Urdu. Another fellow is working in the same University on *pardah*-system as prescribed in Quran with special reference to the *Vedas*. A girl named Quddusi, too, did Ph. D. from Aligah University, but her further activities are not known now. To me, it seems, Aligarh Muslim University has produced a large number of Muslim Sanskrit scholars and I am sure that it will produce more and more in future. I, too, am the product of Aligarh University and am working as Reader in the Dept. of Sanskrit, Delhi University, Delhi. I have written a number of books, about 80 research papers and have produced 10 Ph. D. My special interest is in the *Veda* and Drama and Dramaturgy. Many other research scholars are working under my supervision for Ph. D.

In other Universities, many Muslims are doing research and in some, teaching opportunities are given. A few names may be mentioned here. Mr Ausaf Ali is working as Lecturer in the University of Gorakhpur, U.P. Mr Husaini is working as Lecturer in Sri Venkateshwar University in South India and is also doing research on a topic related to grammar. Mr Ausaf Ali is specializing in the *Veda*, most probably in the *Brāhmaṇas*. There is another Muslim named Qazi Anjum, who is teaching in a college of Rajasthan State. He has specialized in drama and dramaturgy, the exact topic being *the Nāṭyadarpaṇa and Daśarūpaka: A Critical and Comparative study*. A Muslim lady is working in a Govt. college of U.P. She is already a doctor and her thesis is on: *References to Akbar in Sanskrit Literature*. The thesis is very valuable in the sense that it gives a detailed account of the love and interest of Akbar, who patronised Sanskrit variously. There is another young man, with whom a great singu-

larity is attached. And that singularity is in the sense that the person is a traditional Muslim. A traditional Muslim in the sense that he is strict adherent to Islamic dogmas. He leads a true life of a Muslim, bearing a long beard and wearing a cap. He knows Arabic and Persian well and has done M.A. in *Veda* from Banaras Hindu University. He is now teaching Sanskrit in a school attached to Shibli National Degree College, Distt Azamgarh in U.P. State of India. The school imparts education of various disciplines to students, especially to Muslims. There is another Muslim young fellow, who is in South India and is the Head of a traditional Sanskrit Pathashala. He has unique command over Sanskrit language. It is for the reason that he has been made the Head of that Sanskrit Pathashala and that, too, in South India, where Sanskrit is still alive and is very much in practice.

Mr Bashir 'Mayukha' is a simple farmer in Rajasthan. He has translated some *Maṇḍalas* of the *R̥gveda* in a simple poetry-form. He has got little education and has natural approach to Vedic lore. It is generally believed that the *Vedas* i.e. *Ṛcās*, were revealed to *R̥ṣis*, who were illeterate and were practising hard penances in the forests. God sent His message to men through *R̥ṣis*, and that method was simple and natural. Mr Mayukha's efforts remind us of the path, bestowed upon the *R̥ṣis* by the Almighty.

Another very living and active example is that of Mr Gulam Dastagir, who hails from Maharashtra State of India. He has got no books to his credit, but speaks Sanskrit fluently. He always speaks in Sanskrit and has great love for Sanskrit. His house's name is in Sanskrit and he always makes correspondences in Sanskrit. The Sanskritists have great regard for him. In social gatherings and on religious occasions, he is invited often and on. His worth is also recognized by the Govt. of India.

A Muslim named Nizamuddin worked for Ph. D. on a Vedic theme: *Various Games in Ancient India* from Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh and is, at present, employed as Distt Supply Officer or so in Badaun Distt of U.P.

At present, in the department of Sanskrit, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, a number of Muslim students are doing Ph. D. Noted among them are Rizwan Ali Shamshi, Shamim, Rizwana Begum, Mohd Yunus Khan and Dr Salma Begum. Dr Salma

Begum is doing post-doctoral work on 'A Critical Evaluation of Shire-Akbar VS Upaniṣads'. Miss Shamim is working on the *Mahā-nārāyaṇa-Upaniṣad* and Mr Mohd Yunus Khan on another *Upaniṣad*.

From this study, we deduce that Muslim scholars of India have done many valuable works in the field of Indology. They have entered various fields like the *Veda*, drama and dramaturgy, grammar, philosophy, philology, poetics, literature and so on and so forth. In this way, they not only preserve the rich and varied culture of India, but are preserving the unity and integrity of India. Thus, they stand for national integration.

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