

ADVENT OF ISLAM IN KASHMIR: A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO THE CONTRIBUTION OF SAYYID ALI HAMMADANI

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ABSTRACT

The Valley of Kashmir has been acclaimed as the paradise on earth. The Valley of Kashmir is well known to the world from the earliest times, because of its geographical feature, culture, civilization and its people. The Valley has thus always played a key role in drawing attention of large number of people including Sūfis, Sayyids, Ulema, Poets, learned men and travelers. This paper is an endeavor to decipher the roots of conversion to Islam in Kashmir. With the foundation of Muslim rule in Kashmir, Persian and Central Asian people began to enter the Valley that not only acted as religious propagators but equally reformed the whole social structure of the Valley. An emphasis has been made on the contribution of Sayyid Ali Hammadani who made tremendous contribution in social, cultural as well as political phenomenon of valley.

Key words: Kashmir, Persia, Central Asia, Sufis, Arts, Crafts, Awrad-i-Fathiyyah, Iran-i-Saghir.

INTRODUCTION

Kashmir is well known to the world from the earliest times, because of its geographical features, culture, civilization and its people. Its boundaries besides touching to India and Pakistan also to other countries of the world like China, Tibet and Afghanistan etc. The state of Jammu and Kashmir is no doubt most beautiful region in the South Asian countries and is also gifted by Allah (SWT) with natural resources, It is for this reason that right from the ancient times the Valley of Kashmir due to its natural beauty, civilization, culture, unique history and its people is not only known to the world but also has played a key role in drawing attention of large number of people including Sūfis, Sayyids, Ulema, Poets, learned men and travelers.

The history of conversion to Islam in Kashmir as mass movement is synonymous with the peaceful efforts of various Sufis in the area beginning from the early 14th century after establishment of the regions first Muslim dynasty.¹ However, there is clear evidence of Islam having entered Kashmir considerably before that as it is recorded that after Muhammad Ibn al -Qāsim and his army defeated Raja Dahir , the Hindu king of Sind , in 711 C.E., then Dahir's son Jaisiah fled to Kashmir taking along with him a Syrian Muslim general of his army , Hamīm ibn-al-Samah. Hamīm was warmly welcomed by the king of Kashmir and was given an estate where he is said to have built several Masājīd ², although there is no record of such Masājīd . It is recorded that Lalataditya's second successor, Vajraditya sold many men to Mlechhas and introduced in Kashmir practices which befitted them.³ These Mlechhas were in all probability Muslim adventurers, fortune seekers and traders.⁴

In the Second decade of 11th century Mahmud of Ghazni (998 C.E.-1030 C.E) while conducting military expedition to India, attempted to conquer Kashmir on two occasions, but his efforts were defied by the strong fortresses of Loharkote and heavy and untimely Snowfall . By the time of Mahmud of Gazni's invasions were over, close contacts had been established between Hindus of Kashmir and the followers of Islam.⁵ Furthermore, the Hindu King Harsha (1089 C.E.-1101 C.E) employed many Mlechhas i.e Muslims in his court and army.⁶ Harsha was highly influenced by the teachings of Islam for which he denounced image worship, destroyed a number of temples and defiled images in his own country, thus he was called as a Turuska, Muslim.⁷ Then we find Turkish mercenaries being employed by Bhiksachara (1120 C.E-1121 C.E), to fight against Sussala.⁸ Likewise, in the later years of the same century C.E., Jayasimha (1128-1149 C.E.) used Muslim soldiers to crush the rebellion chiefs.⁹ The employment of hundreds of Muslim captains in the armies of the Kashmiri kings at the turn of 11th century alludes to the presence of a sizable Muslim population in Kashmir more than 200 years before the establishment of the Muslim Sultanate.¹⁰

Henceforth, the number of Muslims gradually increased and it appears by the accounts of Marco Polo, the Venetian traveler that by the end of 13th century there was a colony of Muslims in the Valley.¹¹ The colony where

¹ Farūq Bukhari, *Kashmir mein Islam Manzar aur pas-i-Manzar* (Srinagar: Ashraf Book Centre, 2013), p.4.

² Hamid Naseem Rafiabadi, *Spirituality and Society in Kashmir* (Srinagar: City Book Centre, 2012), intro.

³ Kalhana, *Rajatarangini*, trans. M. A. Stein (Delhi: Motilal Banaridas, 1979), vol. i, Book 4, No.397.

⁴ Muhammad Ashraf Wani, *Islam in Kashmir* (Srinagar: Oriental Publishing House, 2004), p. 47.

⁵ Manohar Lal Kapur, *The History and culture of Kashmir* (New Delhi: Anmol Publication, 1992), p. 289.

⁶ Farūq Bukhari, *Kashmir mein Islam Manzar aur pas-i-Manzar*, op. cit., p.47.

⁷ Kalhana, *Rajatarangini*, op.cit., Book 4, No.397.

⁸ Kalhana, *Rajatarangini*, op.cit., vol.ii, p.70

⁹ Ibid, pp. 68-69.

¹⁰ Muhammad Ashraf Wani, *Islam in Kashmir*, op.cit., p.50

¹¹ H.Yule, *Travels of Marco Polo* (New York: Scribner, 1903), vol. i, p. 357.

the Muslims settled down came to be called as Mlechh-Mar¹² (the place of Mlechhas). The Hindu rulers of Kashmir seemed to be bountiful and hospitable to these Muslim soldiers and adventurers of fortune. This streaming of Muslims in Kashmir continued unabated till the Muslim Sultanate was finally established in 1339 C.E.¹³ One among the lately arrived emigrants was Shah Mir, the future founder of Muslim Sultanate in Kashmir. Shah Mir and his family entered Kashmir around 1313 C.E. during the reign of Suhadeva 1301-1320 C.E., who granted him with land and important position in the administration.¹⁴ In subsequent years, because of his great abilities and tactics, he rose to prominence and emerged as one of the important personalities.¹⁵ Eventually in 1339 C.E., he succeeded to lay the foundation of permanent Muslim rule in Kashmir.

Thus, it is clear that advent of Islam in Kashmir is a historical process not a sudden change. Islam made its way in Kashmir not by forcible conquests but by gradual conversion for which influx of foreign adventures, artisans, traders and soldiers had already prepared the ground.

Yet it was only early 14th century that great number of Kashmiris began reverting to Islam. In this process various Sūfi missionaries and local Rishis paid a crucial role. Thus, it is clear that Muslims had already reached Kashmir before the arrival of first known Sūfi Sayyid Sharaf al -Din, Bulbul Shah to Kashmir. Thus, the ground for the propagation of Islam was clear cut but to some unfavorable circumstances history could not record the names of the Sūfis.¹⁶

It must be kept in mind that on the eve of beginning of the Sultanate era, Kashmir society had two main religious groups which were Buddhist and Hindus right from 631-633 C.E., Buddhism was at the verge of decline¹⁷. On the other hand, the Hindus were divided into a number of socially interdependent groups¹⁸. The Hindus were, at that time, fed up with the misrule of their kings and the exploitation of the Brahmans which compelled them to come out of the existing social order in which their position was not better than cattle. As Islam advocates simple religious teachings, social pattern and attitude to human life thus these simple principles of Islam appealed to the persons of different ethnic origins and cultural backgrounds.¹⁹

¹² Muhammad Ashraf Wani, *Islam in Kashmir*, op. cit., p.50. The place was called as Mlechh Mar for so many Centuries before the establishment of the Muslim Sultanate and is today called as Malchimar.

¹³ Ibid, p. 62.

¹⁴ Idem.

¹⁵ Jonaraja, *Dvitiya Rajatarangini*, trans. J.C.Dutt (Calcutta, 1898), p. 15.

¹⁶ Farūq Bukhari, *Kashmir mein Islam Manzar aur pas-i-Manzar*, op. cit., p.62.

¹⁷ Muhammad Ishaq Khan, *Perspectives on Kashmir: Historical Dimensions* (Srinagar: Oriental Publishing House, 1983), pp.127-28.

¹⁸ Idem.

¹⁹ Idem.

The credit of spreading Islam in Kashmir goes primary to the Sufis, the earliest Sufi as per available records in Kashmir was the Turkistani Suharwardi Sayyid Sharaf al-din commonly known as Bulbul Shah who arrived in Kashmir in 1295 C.E. during the reign of Suhadeva.²⁰ He was disciple (*Murid*) of Shah Niamatullah Farsi,²¹ descendent of Mūsa Kazim who is also called as Mūxwi . He belonged to Suharwardi Silsila, that's why he is commonly known as Suharwardi.²² It is recorded that when Shaykh entered Valley he was accompanied by a short party of religious scholars among whom Mullah Ahmad Allama is notable,²³ who said to be a lieutenant of Bulbul Shah.²⁴ Very little is known about the missionary activities of Bulbul Shah beyond the fact that he had Rinchana reverted to Islam. Rinchana was a Ladakhi Buddhist, he was the son of Ladakhi chief, Lha-chen-denyos-grub (Lhachen and Negos-grub), who ruled Ladakh from 1290 C.E. to 1320 C.E.²⁵

Rinchana came to Kashmir along with his followers due to unfavorable circumstances in Ladakh, following his father's death. His conversion to Islam is regarded as landmark in the history of Kashmir. There are divergent views regarding the motives of Rinchana for accepting Islam as some scholars are of the opinion that he wanted to become Hindu, but Devasami refused to take him into the fold of Hinduism on the ground that he was a Buddhist.²⁶ Some held the view that he approached the Hindus and Muslims to instruct him in their religion but none could satisfy him, thus he decided to adopt the religion of the person whom he would see first in the next morning and the first person whom he saw was the Bulbul Shah engaged in prayers.²⁷ But the most accepted view is that Rinchana was fond of taking part in the religious discussion. Even as a king he used to spend sleepless nights in quest for the truth.²⁸ Meanwhile, he met Sayyid Sharaf al-Din who explained him truth and simplicity of Islam. It is said that Rinchana was impressed by personality of the Sufi and thus accepted Islam under the influence of same Sufi and adopted the Muslim name Sadr al-Din.²⁹ This singular achievement ultimately paved the way for the establishment of Muslim rule in Kashmir. Following the conversion of Rinchana and his family, several other leading Kashmiris also followed suit, most notably Rawachandra. Rinchana after conversion constructed a Masjid in his newly build capital, Rinchanpura in Srinagar, where he prayed in congregation five

²⁰ Farūq Bukhari, *Kashmir mein Islam Manzar aur pas-i-Manzar*, op. cit., p.62.

²¹ Idem.

²² Muhammad Ishaq Khan, *Kashmir's Transition to Islam: The Role of Muslim Rishis* (Srinagar: Gulshan Books, 2005), p. 61.

²³ Farūq Bukhari, *Kashmir mein Islam Manzar aur pas-i-Manzar*, op. cit., p.63

²⁴ G.M.D. Sufi, *Kashir* (New Delhi: Light and Life Publishers, 1974), p. 83.

²⁵ Muhammad Ishaq Khan, op.cit., p.62.

²⁶ Idem.

²⁷ Hasan Shah Kiohami, *Tarikh-i-Hasan* (Srinagar: City Book Center, 2015), vol. iii, p. 509.

²⁸ Anonymous, *Baharistan-i-Shahi*, f.14a. See also Muhammad Ishaq Khan, op. cit., p. 62.

²⁹ Idem.

times. As per records this is considered the first Masjid ever to have been built in Kashmir.³⁰ He also constructed a Khanqah on the banks on the river Jhelum which is regarded as the earliest Khanqah of Kashmir as per records. After the death of Rinchana up to the time of Sultan Shihāb al -Din the sources are silent about the presence or arrival of any missionary in the Valley. Then from the reign of Sultan Shihāb al-Din there were repeated influxes of Muslim preachers from different parts of Persia and Central Asia (besides the emergence of a local Sufi order- the Rishi Order).³¹ It was then during the reign of Sultan Shihāb al -Din (1354-1373 C.E.), that the process of Islamization got activated again primarily because of the arrival of some Kubravi Sūfis , accompanied by their families and followers. Although there are many names like Shaykh Jalāl al -Din Bukhari, Sayyid Gayas al -Darāz, Shaykh Alau al-Din,³² Sayyid Masūd and Sayyid Yusuf ,³³ Sayyid Taj al-Din and Sayyid Husain Simnani. They were given a warm welcome by Sultan who bestowed on them *Madad-i-Mash* (grants) to ensure their comfortable stay in the Valley.

SAYYID ALI HAMMADANI

Among all the Sayyids, who have arrived to Kashmir from Central Asia and Persia the most notable is Sayyid Ali Hammadani, a religious scholar, a prolific writer, a political theorist and a widely traveled Sufi. His sojourns in Kashmir left very deep imprints on every aspect of life here; including polity, economy, social set-up, demography, religious outlook, arts and crafts, architecture and mystical attitude. Sayyid Ali Hammadani better known as Shah-i-Hamadan and Amir-i-Kabir³⁴ was a Kubravi Sūfi and was the person who brought that very order to Kashmir.³⁵ Sayyid Ali Hammadani was born at Hamadan (Iran) on 12th Rajab 714 A.H. (21st October, 1314 C.E.),³⁶ though there is disagreement about his date of birth.

Sayyid Ali Hammadani journeyed round the world three times.³⁷ The most important travel of Sayyid Ali Hammadani was his visit to Kashmir . There are different views regarding Sayyid's visit to Kashmir , while some scholars are of the view that he visited Kashmir three times , first during the reign of Sultan Shihāb al -din in 774 A.H./1372 C.E., (this time he stayed for a short time and left for Makah), second time in 781 A.H./1379 C.E., in the reign of Sultan Qutub al-Din (this time he stayed for two and a half year and left for Turkistan) and third time

³⁰ Muhibul Hassan, *Kashmir Under the Sultans* (Delhi: Aakar Books, 1959), p. 40.

³¹ Idem.

³² Farūq Bukhari, *Kashmir mein Islam Manzar aur pas-i-Manzar*, op. cit., p.55

³³ G.M.D. Sufi, *Kashir*, op. cit., p. 63.

³⁴ Muhibul Hassan, *Kashmir Under the Sultans*, op. cit., p.57.

³⁵ Hamid Naseem Rafiabadi, *Islam and Sufism in Kashmir* (New Delhi: Sarup book publishers, 2009), intro, vi.

³⁶ Muhibul Hassan, *Kashmir Under the Sultans*, op. cit., p. 57.

³⁷ Idem.

in 785 A.H./1383 C.E.,(this time he stayed in Kashmir for a short period).³⁸ At the same time the early sources are unanimous in saying that Sayyid Ali Hammadani came to Kashmir only once. Furthermore, there is again a controversy regarding the causes of Sayyid Ali Hammadani's visit to Kashmir, while some scholars believe that Sayyid's visit was purely an Islamic mission but at the same time there are scholars who are of the view that Sayyid Ali's journey to Kashmir have been caused by the cruelty of Timur (1335 C.E.-1405 C.E. therefore in order to be safe from the wrath of Timur Sayyid Ali along with his Seven hundred Sayyids set out towards Kashmir.³⁹

On reaching Kashmir Qutub al-Din the then ruler of Kashmir received them with great honor and respect and brought them to the city of Alaudinapura,⁴⁰ where a *Suffa* (raised floor) was constructed to perform prayers which were attended by Qutub al-Din also.⁴¹

Speaking about the economic dimension it is said that when Sayyid Ali Hammadani along with his seven hundred followers who belonged to Iran, Iraq, Kabul, Kandhar, Bukhara and other areas entered the Valley, these people brought along with them not only the religious prosperity but also the Iranian crafts and arts, thus paved the way for economic development in form of handicrafts.⁴² Several industries of Hamadan and Iran were introduced in Kashmir. The Shawl industry which was in its declining condition when Sayyid Ali Hammadani came to Kashmir, it was due to his fervent support to this Industry, that this industry received a new lease of life. Sayyid Ali Hammadani along with his followers is said to have introduced in the Valley the arts like Shawl weaving, carpet-making, paper mache, silver and glass smithy and book binding.⁴³ Even the art of calligraphy is said to have been introduced in the Valley by the great Sayyid. Thus apart from bringing new sciences, culture and values from Iran to Kashmir, Mir Sayyid Ali Hammadani created a different environment in Kashmir by promoting various arts and crafts of Iran. Thus Sayyid Ali Hammadani made Kashmir a minor Persia (*Iran-i-Saghir*) by these fine and captivating industries and crafts.

Sayyid Ali Hammadani laid great emphasis upon earning one's own livelihood and rejected the traditional means of a patronage and support open to religious men. Sayyid Ali rejected the entire idea of charity for religious men because he feared that it would make them parasitical. He himself made his living by cap making and encouraged

³⁸ Ibid, p. 58.

³⁹ Muhibul Hassan, *Kashmir Under the Sultans*, op. cit., p.58.

⁴⁰ Hasan Shah Kiohami, *Tarikh-i-Hasan*, op. cit., p.15.

⁴¹ Muhibul Hassan, *Kashmir Under the Sultans*, op. cit., p.58.

⁴² Hamid Naseem Rafiabadi, *Islam and Sufism in Kashmir*, op.cit., pp.4-6.

⁴³ Ibid, op. cit., p.10.

his followers to do the same to earn their livelihood. He stressed the need to earn by the lawful means, which he considered itself as “a form of Prayer”.

It was the period when Muslims constituted only a thin slice of population and the dominant majority was Non-Muslims. The Muslims had adopted a Hindu way of life to the extent that they were even worshipping idols, celebrating Hindu festivals and dressing themselves after the Hindu fashion.⁴⁴ Even, the Sultan Qutub al-Din and his Muslim subjects used to visit a temple in Alaudinapura.⁴⁵ Sultan Qutub al-Din himself used to dress like Hindu kings, visited Hindu temples and distributed alms there.⁴⁶ Furthermore, in an open violation of Shar’iah, Sultan wedded two real sisters simultaneously.⁴⁷

According to sources it was the period when none of the Ulema and men of learning (although present in good number) in Kashmir preached religion without hypocrisy.⁴⁸ The theologians of those days paid scanty attention to things permitted or prohibited in Islam and thus the teachings of Islam had not been enforced fully even by the then Sultan. Islam yet had not gained a firm foot hold even in the capital city of Kashmir. The great Sufi espoused the policy of attracting and stirring the ruler and his nobles to recognize Islam as their way of life because he was of the firm conviction that common masses followed the demeanor and mores of their rulers, he also preferred to convert the people in the city because the cities played a great makeup for the social amend. Thus, Sayyid Ali addressed himself to the task of first reforming the Sultan rather than converting his Non-Muslim subjects.⁴⁹ Thus apart from making economic and social revolution, Sayyid Ali Hammadani wrote a book for the guidance of the rulers and their subordinates, named as *Zakhira al-Muluk*, the essential purpose of which is to guide Muslim rulers in the discharge of their duties towards their subjects in the light of Quran and the *Sunnah*. Apart from writing on affairs of the state Sayyid Ali made personal contact with the ruler Qutub al-Din and made him conscious of his obligations towards fulfilling the requirements of *Shariah* in his personal life and in turn it was on the advice of Sayyid that Sultan divorced his eldest wife and retained only one. The Sultan was also advised to discard the Hindu dress and instead, wear a Muslim dress. Thus, other Muslim subjects also adopted themselves to the Muslim way of life.⁵⁰

⁴⁴ Anonymous, *Baharistan-i-Shahi*, op. cit., p.11a.

⁴⁵ Muhibul Hassan, *Kashmir Under the Sultans*, op. cit., p.58

⁴⁶ Jonaraja, *Dvitya Rajatarangini*, op.cit., p. 53.

⁴⁷ Anonymous, *Baharistan-i-Shahi*, op. cit., p.11a.

⁴⁸ Idem.

⁴⁹ Muhammad Ishaq Khan, *Kashmir’s Transition to Islam: The Role of Muslim Rishis*, op. cit., p. 65.

⁵⁰ Ibid, op., p. 66.

It is sure that Sayyid Ali Hammadani stayed for a very brief of time and during this period he did not changed completely the Hindu Kashmir into a Muslim Kashmir but his role in spreading Islam cannot be denied. Islam in Kashmir received a great impetus because of Sayyid Ali Hammadani and his followers. Sayyid Ali left his disciples at a number of places which were Hindu rich centers such as Pampore, Awantipora and Vijbore. These followers of Sayyid Ali established Khanqahs and network of branches which gradually emerged as important centers of preaching.⁵¹ Sayyid Ali Hammadani's influence is regarded by some of the scholars as major factor behind changing the demographic character of Kashmir. It is said that under his impact Bramanical influence declined and most of the castes embraced Islam.⁵² According to some sources the Sayyid is said to have induced 37000 Kashmiris to convert to Islam.⁵³

However, the most important contribution of Sayyid Ali Hammadani was the introduction of Invocatory prayers *Awrad-i-Fathiyyah* (*Awrad* the plural of *Wird*) which literally means a specified portion of prayers, supplications *Dhikr*, salutations and litanies which is recited by a group of people under the guidance of a teacher or by an individual.⁵⁴ According to one tradition Sayyid Ali Hammadani is said to have composed Award-i-Fathiyyah in Sarandeeep⁵⁵ and collected all invocations (*Awrad*) in it, which he had imbibed from about two hundred Sufis during his journeys. However, it is also recorded that Sayyid Ali Hammadani collected these invocations from fourteen hundred Sufis.⁵⁶ It seems that the introduction of the tradition of *Dhikr* was motivated by Sayyid Ali's desire to bring different sections of Kashmiri society together. The *Dhikr* of *Awrad-i-Fathiyyah* after the *Fajr* and *Isha* prayer served the social purpose of gathering different people together twice a day. It had been the age old practice of Hindus in the Valley to recite mantras loudly in the temples especially in the early morning hours. Sayyid Ali Hammadani who had an anthropological sense understood the efficacy of the popular mood of social behavior, drafted this unique prayer (*Awrad-i-Fathiyyah*). He allowed the neo-converts to recite it in chorus loudly to lessen the captivating effect of the Hindu Mantra. Although it is believed that Sayyid Ali disapproves *Dhikr-i-Jahr* (outward or loud *dhikr*) and recommends *Dhikr-i-Khafi* (inward or silent *dhikr*) but for the people of Kashmir *Dhikr* in form of *Awrad-i-Fathiyyah* was allowed to be recited loudly. Mohammad Ishaq Khan while appreciating the wisdom of Sayyid Ali Hammadani writes "it goes to his (Sayyid Ali Hammadani) credit that instead of taking a narrow view of religious situation in Kashmir, he showed an acute discernment and keen practical sense in grasping the essential elements of the popular Kashmiri religious culture and ethos, and gave

⁵¹ Abd al-Qayum Rafiqi, *Sufism in Kashmir* (Srinagar: Al-Rafiq Publishing House,2003), p.46.

⁵² Muhibul Hassan, *Kashmir Under the Sultans*, op. cit., p.237

⁵³ Hamid Naseem Rafiabadi, *Islam and Sufism in Kashmir*, op.cit., intro.vi.

⁵⁴ Ibid, op.cit., p.87.

⁵⁵ It is a concise primer which describes in a grand and sublime style-the attributes of one Allah, His beautiful Names, prayers for ourselves and for breather, blessings on prophet Muhammad ﷺ, all written in Arabic

⁵⁶ Hamid Naseem Rafiabadi, *Islam and Sufism in Kashmir*, op.cit., p.107.

creative expression to these in enjoining his followers in the Valley to recite *Awrad-i-Fathiyyah* allowed in chorus in Masājīd.⁵⁷ Although, it is argued that singing hymns aloud and beating of drums in temples had assumed such a venerated and devotional place in the religious scheme of the Hindus that for launching a successful conversion movement the Muslim missionaries were left with no alternative but to adjust it to the local religious ethos, thus, it is believed by some writers that Sayyid Ali compiled *Awrad-i-Fathiyyah* especially for Kashmiri Muslims for its loud group recitation.⁵⁸ *Awrad* had so much effect on lives of the people of Kashmir that it is memorized by heart by majority of the Muslims and even today the repetition of *Awrad* in Masājīd and shrines with folded hands can be noticed.

After staying a brief period of less than a year in Kashmir Sayyid Ali Hammadani partly due to his ill health⁵⁹ and partly on account of strain in relation with Sultan Qutub al-Din⁶⁰ leaving behind Maulana Muhammad Balkhi commonly known as Mir Haji Muhammad at the request of Sultan to give him guidance in matters relating to Shariah, left the valley, travelled to Pakhli and then proceed to Kunar where he fell ill and died on Jan 19, 1385 C.E., and was buried in Khatlan.⁶¹

Sayyid Ali Hammadani was the preacher of Islam in Kashmir who brought furtive change in the life styles of Kashmiri people who stood for the diffusion of *Tawhidic* and *Shariah* consciousness among the commoners through the example of his disciples, including both Kings and nobles and provided the Islamic values and established the Persian culture in the Soil of Kashmir. However, it is believed by some Scholars that Mir Sayyid Ali Hammadani and his disciples who accompanied him to Kashmir preached Islamic tenets in Persia and Arabic, which few Kashmiris could understand, further, they were based largely in Srinagar, close to Royal courts, thus they had few links with the Kashmiri masses, most of whom resided in far flung areas. Furthermore it is clear that as Sayyid Ali spend a brief time in the Valley during which he couldn't change the Hindu Kashmir into the Muslim country but he laid a strong foundation for such a mission which was later on taken up by his son Mir Muhammad Hammadani and finally by Shaykh Nūr al-Din who is said to be responsible for mass conversion.

CONCLUSION

The advent of Islam in Kashmir is a historical process not a sudden change. Islam made its way into Kashmir not by forcible conquests but by gradual conversion for which influx of foreign adventures, artisans, traders and

⁵⁷ Muhammad Ishaq Khan, *Kashmir's Transition to Islam: The Role of Muslim Rishis*, op. cit., p.68.

⁵⁸ Muhammad Ashraf Wani, *Islam in Kashmir*, op.cit., p. 263.

⁵⁹ G.M.D.Sufi, *Kashir*, op.cit., pp. 86-87.

⁶⁰ Muhibul Hassan, *Kashmir Under the Sultans*, op. cit., p. 59.

⁶¹ Idem.

soldiers had already prepared the ground. One of the great contributions was made by Sayyid Ali Hammadani. He laid immense and profound impact on Kashmir; its economy, society and culture. Mir Sayyid Ali Hammadani created a different environment in Kashmir by promoting various arts and crafts of Iran. Thus Sayyid Ali Hammadani made Kashmir a minor Persia (*Iran-i-Saghir*) by these fine and captivating industries and crafts.

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