

**DOI: 10.7596/taksad.v6i3.984**

**Citation:** Azmodeh, S. (2017). The Role of Gilani Businessmen and Artists in Propagation of Relations between Iran and India. *Journal of History Culture and Art Research*, 6(3), 1139-1144. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.7596/taksad.v6i3.984>

## **The Role of Gilani Businessmen and Artists in Propagation of Relations between Iran and India**

**Seyed Abbas Azmodeh<sup>1</sup>**

### **Abstract**

One of the places where Gilani people have been a wide settlement is India subcontinent. Since they found India as a safe place for themselves, they migrated to there and have eventually reached to high religious and political growth. Fertile lands of India with unlimited treasures were a motive for migration of famous Gilanians faces such as Abdurashid Deylami and Ali Gilani to India. However, the chaos during the reign of Mongolians, Turkmens and Safavies resulted into the extinction of Gilani throne. The author in this article through analytic-descriptive method tries to show the provided services by Gilanians immigrant to India that caused into extending of Iranian art, and also political and business relations between both countries.

**Keywords:** Gilani, India subcontinent, immigration, social and political influence, Safavi period.

---

<sup>1</sup> Department of History, Imam Khomeini International University, Qazvin, Iran.

## **Introduction**

People of India during the history like Iranian people had been interested in science and knowledge and this matter is confirmed by Muslim historians and scientists (Munajem, 1991: 127) and this historical background confirms this idea and shows the frequent wave of thoughts and historical idea exchanging between them. Yaaqubi, the historian of Hijri 3<sup>rd</sup> decade, believes all the science that Iranian and Greeks talked about is taken from an Indian astronomy book called *Al-sind Hind* (Yaaqubi, 1995: 115). In addition, the prevalence of Indian culture during the reign of Anu-Shiravan-Sasani was another important factor (Christensen, 1998: 516). The development of science and scientific centers in India was an attractive factor that absorbed those adored of science and knowledge from different parts of the world such as Iran. Also, Indian national worldview, way of thinking of Indians against intellectual elements and their offensive behavior to others provided a path to extend India trade communication and business relation to others and brought bounty and wealth and also good circumstance for immigrants. When the Achaemenid Darius, after the conquest of India enlisted it as his twentieth province, the importance of Iranian became as important as Buddha appointment and became their epoch.

Peaceful soul and behaviors of Indians caused that Mani the first prophet of Sasanian Shah Pour era begins his activity and prevalence of his thoughts in India and as Hafiz Abroo quoted some people of India accepted his religion, (Khafi, 1991: 35) and historical immigration of Zoroastrian of Iran that kept their cultural and tribal roots was because of Indian peaceful thought and characteristic. With the emergence of Islam, the Muslim missionaries, governors of Islamic states, mystics and Sufi's with their own ideology and way of thinking moved into India to extend their religion and other goals, as we see in 396 Hijri in Sultan Mahmud campaign to Multan (Ibn-Asir, 2004: 5431). The Ghaznavies, Ghoories, Mamaliks and Babarians also invaded to this country and ruled over it for long times because the war was banned in Indian religion (Yektayee, 1974: 32) and the most important thing was that Indians founded Islam as a religion of peace and justice. What we talked about was a reference to Iranian-Indian relation that Gilanies have a part. Maybe before we get into the main discussion, the wide presence of Gilanies during mid-Islamic period sounds interesting for us, as one of the 15<sup>th</sup> areas around Delhi was inhabited by Gilanies (Ershad, 2000: 127).

## **The role of Gilanies immigrant in trade and business between Iran and India**

As we already mentioned in introduction, one of the reason of Iranian migration to India was trade ways of this country and its unlimited wealth. It was a motivation for Gilanies to move to India. Among the eminent figures Haj Muhammad was an eminent Gilani Businessman of Safavi era, after moving to India he met General Abd-ul-Rahim Khan the great commander of Akbar Shah and by his mediation he gained the leadership of Iran trade caravan and reached to high places (Nahavandi, 2002: 232-233). At once the General ordered him to bring some cashes and materials to Iran and make a charity near the Imam Reza Shrine and also some gifts to Safavi Hamzeh Mirza. He fulfilled his duty and satisfied the Safavi prince and as a reward gave him some gifts as Abd-ul-Rahim Khan to him to take with himself to India. The Gilani businessman after receiving these gifts went to Kashan and begun to revelry till nothing left for him and became miserable and also when he heard that Hamzeh Mirza got killed as an excuse he spent those received gifts from king. Haj Muhammad after this treason went to Muhtasham Kashani and begged him to describe his situation to king and ask for his forgiveness. After hearing the poem about him, Abd-ul-Rahim Khan forgive him and gave him some cashes as a tip for Gilani businessman (ibid: 232-233). Obviously, Haj Muhammad was a spy and Missionary of Gurkanies and as Mr. Abd-ul-Hussain Navayee referred in his Rshimi Taaliqat (suspension) he had a mission to exact information about Turks and situation of west of Iran and also give exact information about Khorasan situation and Uzbeks invasion and Khorasan chaos. What was important in relation of Iran and India was possession of Kandahar and caused that Shah Jahan in 1046 announce his possession to Kandahar through united triangle of Uzbeks, Indians and Turks against Iran to Murad IV that somehow dealt with (Navayee, 1998: 62-63). Now by considering these circumstances this trade and business relations, merchants disguised themselves for political missions and as a spy reveals. For instance, Abdu'l-Karim Gilani that was sent to India by Shah Abbas Safavi. Gilan was an important center of silk production in this era and silk trade of Gilan to Europe and Asia was thriving. So famous tradesmen of this area with high social and political ranks considered by Safavi courts and kings like mentioned Abd-ul-Karim Gilani. Although he was busy with silk trade but by demands of King of Iran he became the minister of Gurkani Jahangir to accomplish two very important goals for might King. First the king asked him to buy some of his necessary stuffs from India and second goal was political because Shah Abbas asked Jahangir to give him an assistant (ibid: 56-57). In this time, in addition to mutual conflict over Kandahar, efforts made to establish a close relation in different cultural and business backgrounds. But Gilani at this time was in India and yadegar-Ali Sultan Gilani was grandson of Talesh Caliph as Esfandyar Bigmaneshi wrote, his mission was dealing over Kandahar that was possessed by Gurkanies (Monshi, 1998). Obviously Kandahar issue was one of the most

important political crisis in Safavi era between Iran and India and both country tried to resolve it under cover of business relations. However, it brought chaos and misery to Iranian.

### **The role of Gilani artists in prevalence of Iranian arts in India**

In spite of the fact that some Gurkani kings were interested in Iranian and Islamic arts, they were always welcomed to court and palace. When Abd-ul-Rashid Deylami entered into Shah Jahan court, the King honored them with names such as treasure writer and diamond writer (Velayati, 2011: 946). Abd-ul-Rashid in addition to political duties had an important role in artistic and cultural transferring to India, he is one of the most effective artist that had an important role in evaluation of Persian writing. In addition to education of some noble prince such as Dara-Shokooch and Zeynab-al-Nesa, he educated some figures such as Muhammad Ashraf Khaje Sara, Saeed Ashraf, Abd-ul-Rahman Farman Nevis and Mir Jaami and each one of them was master of writing in India. Most of Nastaaliq writers in India followed him. Haji Namdar was a famous calligraphy master of Babari era and Mir Abul Hasan (koln) and Muhammad Afzal Al-Hussaini followed Deylami method. Another expert of calligraphy was Mirza Muhammad Ali that followed his method and the rest of his artists that followed Abdul-Rahid such as Hafiz Abdul-Ali lived in Banaras. Haj Ibrahim and his children and Molana-Fakhroldin were among the elders of Cheshtiyeh in Delhi (Abed Mahmudi, 2001: 87-91).

Another famous Gilani immigrant artist was called Saeeda, he was famous in calligraphy and treasure work and in poetry especially in history, Jahangir and Shah Jahan, Two Gurkani kings weighted him with Deram and gave him five thousand rupees twice his weight. Carbuncled throne of Shah Jahan famous to peacock throne was made under his administration within seven years (Bayani, 1969: 754) and Shah Jahan named him Mumtaz-bi-Badal Khan (Islah Arabanin, 2001: 650). Among other famous Gilani faces that had an important role in development of Iranian art into India is Zaman Gilani. He was a musician that moved to India and had high position in Bahmanian court. The author of Iranian historical immigration to India quoted that he had no equal in playing Qanoon (law) (Ershad, 2000: 195). What is obvious during the history so many cultural communications existed between Iran and India. That's a reason for closeness of both countries' artists together. For example, during Shah Abbas reign a political missionary team of Khan was a painter called Beshendas which provided lot of paintings in this journey such as painting of Shah Abbas and other Imaginary paintings that shows Shah Abbas and Jahangir near each other peacefully (Navayee, 1998: 58). These artists had an important role in communication closeness of both

countries so as we see at the same time of being courtier they had other duties. For example, artists such as Abdul-Rashid Deylami in addition to prevalence of Persian writing in India, was responsible for education of Babari princes in India. Artists in this era could be effective in relation closeness. As Shah Abbas used Van Hasselt, the famous Dutch painter in his court as his minister (ibid: 164).

Iranian artists in Gurkani courts in India had an eminent place. They had a great role in transferring of Iranian culture and art. An eminent example is Tahj Mohall building that shows Iranian spirit of art and architecture. Another Gilani that we should always remember him is Hakim Ali Gilani. Because of his great knowledge in different science among his temporaries he is famous as the Second Plato. In his first meeting with Noor-Al-Din Jahangir he surprised the king with his knowledge (Farrouhi, 1990: 313). An interesting example of his knowledge was Hoze-Ali building. In 1002 in Lahore he made strange pool long and weight was 20 in 20 and its depth was about 6 meters. In his pool he made a room that its roof was like a tower and in 4 rounds of the room four bridges existed that ends into for big doors and after opening the doors the water didn't get inside them. Akbar Shah who was interested in strange subjects personally visited a room and through water he entered the room. He saw a room decorated for 10 or 12 people and furnished with bed and food and a shelf with some books. The interesting point was that compressed air didn't let even a drop of water get inside the room. The King spent some times in this room and his companies worried about him but he came out safely and his companies became happy. A pool same to it was made in Agra and its architecture and administrator was Hakim Ali Gilani (Forroohi, 1990: 314-315). It's good to remember the word of one of the greatest man in India, Eghbal Lahouri that believed, and Islamic civilization reached to its highest peaks by Iranian. And through this people, Gurkani kings developed Iranian civilization methods in India and build libraries, schools, gardens and monastery and through this they benefited way of civilization, house rules and dressing. All this happened in the country that was excluded from bath, school and etc... as its king Babar said.

### **Concluding remarks**

Since old times, the immigration of Gilanies to India started but during Safavi era this immigration increased and immigrant Gilanies such as businessman and artists found their ways into Muslim kings' territory. They could have an important role in prevalence of Iranian

arts and civilizations and reach to high positions such as business and political situation and caravan leadership in Iran and India route.

## References

Abedi, Abul-Hassan & Mahmud, Seyed Fayaz (2001). *History of Persian Literature in India*, vol. 1. Translated by Nategh sharif, Maryam. Tehran: Rahnamoon.

Bayani, Mahdi (1969). *Works and Life of Calligraphist*, vol 3. Tehran: Tehran University.

Christensen, Arthur Emanuel (1998). *Iran in Sassanid Era*, vol 9. Translated by Rashid Yasemi. Tehran: Donyaye Ketab.

Ershad, Farhang (2000). *Historical Immigration of Iranian to India*, vol 2. Tehran: Arts and cultural studies center.

Forroohi, Ali (1990). Gilani physician in Mongolian kings court in India. *Gilan Nameh*, Vol 2, Vol 1, Muhammad Taqi Jaktaji, Rasht: Ta'ati.

Ibn-Asir, Ez-ul-din (2004). *Complete History*, vol 12, vol 1, Hamidreza Azhir, Tehran: Asatir.

Islah Arabani, Ibrahim (2001). *Gilan Book*, vol 2. Tehran: Researchers team.

Khafi, Shahab-ul-din, Abdullah (1991). *Khorasan Historical Geography*, vol 1, Gholamreza Varharam. Tehran: Etela'at.

Monshi, Eskandar beig (1998). *Alem Araye Abbasi*, vol 1, Muhammad Ismaeel Ramayana. Bija: Donyaye Ketab.

Munajem, Issac-ibn-Hanin (1991). *Al-Marjan*, vol 1. Translated by Muhammad Asef fekrat, Mashhad: Astan Razavi.

Nahavandi, Abdul-Baghi (2002). *Maser Rahimi*, vol 3, vol 1 with Abdul-Hussein Navayee. Tehran: Center of works and cultural faces.

Navayee, Abdul-Hussein (1998). *Economic and Political Communication in Safavi Era*, vol1. Tehran: SMT.

Velayati, Ali Akbar (2011). *Flourishing of Islamic Culture and Civilization*, vol 4. Tehran: Center of diplomacy history and documents.

Yaaqubi, Ahmad (1995). *Yaaqubi History*, vol 1, vol 7, translated by Muhammad Ibrahim Ayati. Tehran: Scientific and cultural publishing.

Yektaee, Majid (1974). Effect of Iran and Islam cultures and civilizations in India and Pakistan, Vol 1. Tehran: Eghbal.