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Beyond Persian: The Role And Importance Of Sanskrit In The Mughal Empire

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Abstract

The aim of this article is to point out the importance of Sanskrit language in the Mughal Court. Mughal court has been a place for the great scholars and learned persons. They welcomed the men of letter who has brilliant knowledge in their respective fields without any divisions. Leaders of Hindu society gave them a social status which Akbar was quick to recognize. As a special mark of confidence the Rajputs were deputed to guard the royal *haram* a position which they continued to enjoy throughout the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries. The Rajputs were also valued as doughty warriors. Relations between the Hindu and Muslim nobles seem to have been cordial on the whole though most of the Hindus adhered strictly to caste restrictions regarding dining and inter-marrying etc. They made no difference between Hindu and Muslim. This is the sole message that has been attempted to highlight throughout this article.

Keywords: Hindu society, Akbar, Social status, Relations, Between, Hindus, Religious, Sole.

Introduction

The chroniclers of the Mughal Empire had their ornate, poetic idiom for summing up such situations the veil has come off the face of the affair. For weeks on end the Emperor through his long painful convalescence and hoping against hope had dithered not allowing the might of the imperial forces to be unleashed against his rebellious sons relying instead on placatory letters penned in his still-fine nastaaliq to keep them at bay. A whole set of English words for India its people, religion and language derive from the Sanskrit name for the Indus through Persian and Greek¹. Aurangzib and Murad having combined their armies in massive numbers kept returning equally flowery missives to the court that it was only concern for their ailing father that was bringing them all haste to Agra if the Emperor were found to be truly well they would apologize and return to their respective province while advancing steadily northwards². Aurangzeb in a pathetic tone “Praised be the Hindus in all cases as they ever offer water to their dead and thou, my son, art a marvellous Mussalman as thou causest me in life to lament for water.”³ But from the language of the epic it was thought that we can draw conclusion about its pre-Buddhistic time of origin. This epic-language is a popular Sanskrit⁴.

The other prominent god is Siva, who has features reminiscent of the three-faced Indus figure surrounded by totem nascent of the three-faced Indus figure surrounded by totem animals. With *gana* companions who were cacodaemon goblins and a family headed by his 'wife', the mother-goddess Parvati ('daughter of the mountain'), Siva too could build up a syncretism. The ancestry of these gods is no longer relevant. The essential is that they were new personal gods whom every one could worship. Siva demanded orgiastic rites known in many primitives cults, but certainly not Vedic, nor Brahminic. Krsna, as preacher of the Bhagavad-gita (which would have been completed by the end of our period) summarized all previous doctrines. Since Akbar was genuinely interested in securing the welfare of his subjects, he attempted to mitigate the evil influence of the unwholesome religious and social usage that had existed in India, even before the beginning of the Muslim rule⁵. As he was an athlete, a husband of many goddesses and a shepherd boy at the same time, people of many originally different cults could and did, worship him. This set of rustic cults made it possible to write the *Bhagavad-Gita* in Krsna's name. Later, after Buddhism had faded away, the two newer worships came into violent conflict which matured in the twelfth century and was fought out without the least attention to the Muslims who opposed all Hinduism⁶. The Mughal commanders withdrew in panic and the local Sikhs and their supporters seized the opportunity to slaughter the Mughal stragglers and put their own armed posts in the towns of Batala Sand Kalanaur and in the surrounding villages. The only purpose of Nizam-ul-Mulk's proposals was to create confusion in the administration and to sow discord and hate between the state and its servants ascribes their opposition to the revival of jizyah to the instigation of the Hindus, the most powerful attraction of Islam in India⁷.

However, the favorites were opposed to Nizam-ul-Mulk for reasons of their own. The latter's insistence on the re-imposition of jizyah enabled them to secure the sympathy and support of the Hindu nobles and officials also and to isolate Nizam-ul-Mulk. The Mughals came to India from foreign lands and their rule came to be considered as alien. With the exception of Akbar, no Mughal ruler made any effort to bring the Hindus and Muslims together and create a composite nation⁸.

The History of Indian Literature both with respect to their contents and with respect to their times and they belong actually to religious literature and for the later Indian religion which is sometimes called Hinduism and which culminates in the worship of Visnu and Siva they are approximately what the Veda is for the oldest religion the Brahmanism. At one moment gentle generous qualities. But how closely the Puranas on the other hand are connected with epical poetry is sufficiently clear even from the fact that in the preceding chapters we had to speak of them again and again. Indeed the Mahabharata is to a great extent a Purana and even the later books and chapters of the Ramayana partake of the character of the Puranas. Further, the Puranas go back undoubtedly to a very distant past and have their roots in the Vedic literature many a legend already familiar from Rig-Vedic hymns and from the Brahmanas, reappears in the Puranas⁹.

The earliest known classical Sanskrit inscription of any extent belongs to Rudradaman dated A.D.150. It is inscribed on the same rock as Asoka's famous Girnar rescripts with impressive contrast both of language and content. A full seventh of the inscription has disappeared by deliberate or casual damage to the rock-face. The main achievement proclaimed is the restoration to double size of the shattered dam that had had been constructed by the Vaisya Pusyagupta the *rastriya* of Candragupta Maurya and completed with a canal system by the yavana Persian king Tusaspha under Asoka Maurya. Asoka had not thought this worth commemorating in his admonitions to his subjects¹⁰. Transliteration of Sanskrit terms which had been so mutilated in the Persian text that in many cases it became almost impossible to identify them correctly. Ridwan-i-Akbar or the High Paradise is a great salvation called *mukti*. *Mukti* is of three kinds First, *Jiwanmukti* or salvation in life. According to them that is the Indians *Jiwanmukti* consists in one's attainment of salvation and freedom by being endowed with the wealth of knowing and under attending the Truth in seeing and considering everything of this world as one in

ascribing to God and not to oneself all that is man's deeds actions, movements and behavior whether good or bad and in regarding oneself together with all other existing objects as in complete identity with the Truth. Similarly, the Indian monotheists like Vayas and others having considered Barhmand which is 'Alam-i-Kabiror the great world as one individual self have accordingly described the different limbs of it's that is Barhmand's body. The reason of such description is that whenever a pure mystic casts his eyes on anything he conceives that he is looking at a particular limb of *mahapurasthat* is the Self of the truth Sanctified and Exalted is He¹¹.

Literature Review

Among the many well-known administrators and distinguished warriors produced by the Mughal Empire there were many Hindustanis and immigrants who had lived in India for a long time. The eighteenth century also produced a large number of capable nobles and distinguished generals. Their personal ambitions were unlimited and they preferred to carve out independent principalities for themselves rather than serve the Mughal Emperor loyally and devotedly. The Mughals came to India from foreign lands and their rule came to be considered as alien. With the exception of Akbar, no Mughal ruler made any effort to bring the Hindus and Muslims together and create a composite nation. The Hindus continued to look upon the Muslim rulers as foreigners and enemies of their religion and country.

Objectives of the Study

1. Role of Mughal Empire to other sects
2. Important of Sanskrit language in their court
3. Mughal Empire and their love for Sanskrit and other language
4. Prominent figures insights regarding the up-liftmen of other language

Methodology

The Mughal Empire was one of the great powers of the early era. It started with the ascension of Babur in 1526 and ended with the death of Aurangazeb in 1707. With weak successors to Aurangazeb a near empty treasury the rise of the regional princes of various Hindu kingdoms and the arrival of the East India Company that established the British rule the Mughal Empire came to an end. The last of the Mughal emperors was Bahadur Shah who was deposed and deported to Rangoon by the East India Company in 1757.

Discussion

However, it may be stated that this influence of Persian is indirect and may be termed as Mughal influence. As a result of the fusion of "Indo-Muslim" cultures new developments occurred in architecture, music, literature, religion and clothing. It is a fact that the Urdu language was born during this period as a result of the intermingling of the local speakers of Sanskritic Prakrits with immigrants speakers Persian, Turkic and Arabic under the Muslim rulers¹².

Persian was recognized as the official language of both Sultanate and Mughal Empire. This led to a number of important works being composed in Persian. Many poets, authors and historians have richly contributed to the growth of the Persian literature in Indian environment. India had close relations with Persia from the very ancient times. Their relationship between the Aryans and the Persians existed even in the Rigvedic days¹³.

The Mughal Empire was an imperial power in south Asia that ruled a large portion of the Indian subcontinent. It began in 1526 invaded and ruled most of India by the late 17th and early 18th centuries

and ended in the mid-19th century. As already mentioned above that the Mughal Emperors were descendants of the Timurid, a dynasty of Turco-Mongol ancestry and the height of their power around 1700 they controlled most of the Indian subcontinent extending from Bengal in the east to Baluchistan in the west, Kashmir in the north to the Kaveri basin in the south. Some of the Delhi Sultans like Ala-ud-din Khalji and Mohammad bin Tughlaq conquered some of the Hindu states of Rajputana and South and brought them under their control but these states re-asserted their independence as soon as these rulers returned. In fact one of the outstanding Hindu states of Vijayanagar emerged in 1346¹⁴. When Shah Jahan fell ill in September 1657, Aurangzeb challenged the brilliant albeit volatile Dara Shikuh who was designated by their father as his successor to the throne. Aurangzeb defeated and killed him. He then imprisoned his father and assumed imperial authority on 21 July 1658. His next step was to execute his remaining three brothers and their two sons. After that, he crowned himself Emperor of India, assuming the title “Alamgir”. He then started building a strong army and started expanding his empire. He conquered Punjab, Bijapur and many other states. Kalila-wa-Dimna was originally written in India in Sanskrit¹⁵.

However, Aurangzeb was not as tolerant as his father or grandfather. He could not tolerate other religions and in the process destroyed many of the hindu temples. He also banned, dancing, Singing and playing musical instruments in his empire. He committed to making India an orthodox Muslim state and for this he did many heinous acts and failed to do so. Censors or Royal religious police were appointed to enforce morals and edicts were issued against gambling, drinking, prostitution and narcotics. Furthermore, a poll tax on Hindus was imposed in 1679. Akbar also conceived a plan in terms of religion to counter the divisive religious forces which stood in the way of hindu-muslim unity¹⁶. The Mughal Empire founded by Babur who saw a new world having a room for wonder in Hindustan after mounting four expeditions defeating Ibrahim Lodhi on 21 April 1526 in the first Battle of Panipat. Mughal rulers like Babar and Jahangir also wrote their autobiographies which are the important source material. Various texts written in Turki, Arabic, Hindi and Sanskrit are also significant source material for knowing the history of contemporary period¹⁷.

Moreover, as we have already pointed out the liberal and catholic spirit which had guided Akbar's policy as ruler and which had helped to win the sympathies of the peoples of Hindustan and cement the Empire was relinquished when the power of the Mughals seemed to be firmly established. His son and Successor, Jahangir in his zeal for Islam shed the blood of Jains of Gujarat and Shah Jahan gave proof of similar sectarian intolerance by the destruction of 'Hindu shrines' at Benares and other places. This policy was brought to fruition by Aurangzeb who not only persecuted Hindu idolaters but also compassed the ruin of the Shia Sultans of the Deccan whose kingdoms were overthrown and absorbed in the territories of the Empire¹⁸.

As a result of the establishment of Muslim rule in India a large number of Hindus particularly those who belongs to the lower classes were converted to Islam. The system of infanticide came into vogue among the Hindus as a result of the danger created by Islam for Hindu society¹⁹. It would be more rational to accept that the Rgveda represents all that was preserved all that was preserved in that mass of poetry of Indo-Aryans and to which a definite form was given with a careful attention in the remote past²⁰.

Findings

Of all the Muslim rulers in India, Akbar proved the most liberal exponent of universal tolerance 'Sulah Kul.' Politically endowed with a rare shrewdness of mind Akbar discerned early that a mere tolerance of the Hindus by itself was not enough. Akbar with his inborn spirit of liberalism and toleration extended the policy to the Hindus too. Thus in 1562 A.D. he formulated a matrimonial alliance with Biharmal. With its proud history of valour, Mewar had refused to take cognisance of the ascending Mughal

power. In spite of fundamental differences and bitterness of relations between Hindus and Muslims in India there appeared feelings of toleration and cooperation in course of time. Both the Hindus and Muslims realised the futility of war and tried to understand each other.

Conclusion

From the discussion as mentioned above it has been understood that the Mughal emperors were the rulers of literary taste with the result that literature and literary activities developed in the country. Babur the founder of the Mughal dynasty, himself was great lover of literature and had command over Persian, Arabic and Turkish languages. He used to choose to gather with the literary people and since Persian was the official languages of the Mughals therefore, much literature both prose and poetry was produced in this language and dozen numbers of works were translated into Sanskrit language.

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