

Influence Of Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani On Vocational Education In Kashmir

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Abstract: *Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani, The Apostle Of Kashmir Was Born In Hamadan, Iran. He Belonged To Kubraviya Order Of Sufis. The Kubraviya Silsalah Was An Offshoot Of The Suharwardi Silsalah. He Received His Early Education From His Maternal Uncle, Saiyid Alau Din, A Great Sufi Of His Time. Shah-I-Hamadan Travelled Across The Continents For Twenty One Years, In Pursuit Of Knowledge. The Shah Of Hamadan Reached Kashmir In 1372. The Arrival Of Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani Is By All Standards A Turning Point In The History Of Kashmir. It Heralded The Dawn Of A New Era In The Sense That The History Of Kashmir Took A Decisively New Turn And A Vigorous Process Of Socio-Cultural Change Got Activated.*

At The Time Shah-I-Hamadan Arrived In Kashmir, Morality Was At Its Lowest Ebb. The Sheltered Economy, Prevalence Of Castes And Sub-Castes In The Society, Exploitation Of Common People At The Hands Of Traditional Brahmins, Frequent Inter And Intra Group Civil Wars Between Various Sections Of Society, Confusing Paths And Lawlessness Had Rendered Average People Helpless. People Were Ready To Welcome Any Change In The System. Thus A Good Number Of 37000 People Got Converted To Islam Within A Brief Period Of Time. Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani's Influence Is A Major Factor Behind Changing The Demographic Character Of Kashmir. Under His Impact, Brahmanical Influence Declined And Most Castes Embraced Islam.

Amir-I-Kabir's Great Influence On Kashmiri Society Was The Result Of His Accessibility. His Khanqah Was Open To All From Sultan To Poor Hindu. He Had No Reservation In Counseling Monarchs Because He Saw That Their Policies Were Key To The Welfare Of People. Hamadani's Introduction Of The Tradition Of Zikr Was Motivated By His Desire To Bring Different Sections Of Kashmiri Society Together. The Zikr Of Awrad-I-Fathiya Ceremonies After The Fajr (Morning Prayers) And Isha (Night) Prayers Served The Social Purpose Of Gathering Different People Together Twice A Day Without Reference Of Their Wealth And Poverty.

One Of The Shah-I-Hamadan's Impacts Of Great Significance Was The Emergence Of A Network Of Khanqahs Which Served As Great Centers Of Proselytisation Especially At Hindu Rich Centers. In The State There Are Four Shrines Dedicated To Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani: The Khanqah-I-Mualla (Srinagar), Tral, Doru And Shey (Ladakh). There Are Also Several Lesser Known Shrines Which Are Situated At Pampore, Sopore Etc.

Shah-I-Hamadan Was A Multi-Dimensional Personality. He Was A Social Reformer Besides Being A Preacher. Among The 700 Followers, Who Accompanied Him To Kashmir Were Men Of Arts And Crafts Who Flourished Here. Several Industries Of Hamadan(Iran) Became Well Introduced In Kashmir. The Shawl Industry Was In Its Moribund Condition When Saiyid Ali Hamadani Came To Kashmir. It Was Due To His Fervent Support To This Industry That This Industry Received A New Lease Of Life. Besides Shawl Industry The Local And Iranian Crafts Were Given A Big Boost By Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani.

Influence Of Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani On Vocational Education In Kashmir:

The Valley Of Kashmir Has Been The Land Of Handicrafts Since Ancient Times. Every Artisan, Artist And Craftsman Is A Product Of Environment And Geographical Setting.¹ The People Of Kashmir Are Celebrated For Their Artistic Skill. D.R. Goyal Has Very Aptly Said:

*"Nature Choose Kashmir To Be The Show Window Of Its Beauties. Rightly Proud Of Being The Inhabitants Of Earthly Paradise, The People Of Kashmir Exhibited A Matching Skill By Putting Forth All Their Excellent Artistic Talents Through Arts And Crafts. One Is Face To Face With Magnificence As One Looks Upon Architecture Or Read Their Poetry"*²

The Kashmir's Have The Continuous Tradition Of Arts And Crafts. Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani's Impact Is Quite Clear On The Economy And Society Of The Valley Because The Economy Was Declining Due To The Failed Political Policies, Wrong Taxation Policies, Feudal System, Reduced Participation In Agriculture And Degradation

In Morals.³ Shah-Hamadani Was Quite Aware Of The Benefits Of The Trade, Commerce And Other Means Of Earning Livelihood. So He Introduced The Pattern Prevailing In The Central Asia. Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani's Keen Interest Inspired The Sultan Qutub'ud Din To Introduce The Modes Of Life Befitting The Muslim Court And Society.⁴ The Sultan Therefore Earnestly Strove To Remodel The Socio-Economic System Of Kashmir Which Had Brought Ample Material Prosperity To The Region.⁵

This Modeling Was Based Primarily On Introduction Of Arts And Crafts, A Technique In Central Asia And Secondarily On The Mineral Resources And Renovated Irrigation System Meant To Improve The Lots Of Masses.⁶ Shah-Hamadani's Mission Was Successful Because Of His Personal Practical Life Which Was Full Of Integrity And Truthfulness. He Was A Great Propounder Of Earning One's Own Livelihood And Rejected The Traditional Means Of Patronage And Support Open To Religious Men. This Has Evidence When He Rejected The Idea Of Charity For Religious Men Or Orders Because He Hated The Concept Of Paristology And Himself Earned His Living By Cap Making And Encouraged His Followers To Do The Same.⁷

In Khulasatul Manaqib It Is Said That "Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani Used To Tailor Caps And It Was His Means Of Livelihood." The Introduction Of The New Crafts Must Have Had Tremendous Impact On The Local Economy, Providing New Sources Of Income For Impoverished Artisans. It Is A Sign Of Shah-I-Hamadani's Breadth Of Vision That He Clearly Understood That "Religious Emancipation Is Incomplete Without Economic Emancipation". In A Sense, Then Saiyid Ali Could Be Justifiably Considered To Be The Father Of Kashmiri Arts And Crafts. By Encouraging The Spirit Of New Arts And Crafts He Unleashed What One Writer Calls "An Industrial Revolution" Which Slowly Freed The Masses From The Exploitation Of The Brahmins. Further The Positive Worth That The Shah Placed On Manual Labour Was In Marked Contrast To The Contempt With Which The Brahmins "Looked Down Upon Workers And Artisans, But Saiyid Ali Hamadani, By Popularizing Various New Crafts And Making The Economically Oppressed Sections Of The Society, Helped To Build Their Self Confidence And Self-Respect And Pride In Their Work."⁸

Professor H. N. Rafiabadi, In One Of His Paper In An International Seminar On Shah-I-Hamadani's Contribution To Learning And Society (13-15 March 2012) At Kashmir University Said That There Were Two Things Which Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani Wanted To Flourish In Kashmir: 1. Wahadat I.E., Unity Of God. 2. Saadat, Meaning Leading One's Life To Salvation. This Is Not Possible Without Akh-I-Halal I.E., Earning One's Living Through Sanctioned And Legal Ways. Keeping This In View Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani Placed Great Emphasis On Insan-I-Kamil-The Perfect Man. This Can Only Be Achieved Through Education And Earning A Livelihood In Sanctioned Ways. To Secure The Freedom Of Man He Placed The Great Emphasis On Akh-I-Halal That Is Earning A Livelihood In A Sanctioned And Legal Way. Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani Again And Again Exhorted His Disciples Not To Eat Their Religion. His Commitment To Individual Hard Work And Engaging In Honest Living Led To The Development Of Craft Industry In Kashmir. He Rejected The Entire Idea Of Charity For Religious Men Or Sufi Orders Because He Feared That This Would Make Them Parasitical On Society. He Himself Made His Living By Cap-Making And Encouraged His Disciples To Do Same Work To Earn Their Livelihood. Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani's Commitment To Craft Is Linked With The Establishment Of Handicraft Industries In Kashmir. His Role In This Respect Was Both Motivational And Exemplary.⁹

The Seven Hundred Saints (Saadat) Who Accompanied The Shah-Hamadani Brought With Them Economic, Political, Industrial, Agricultural, Artistic, Literary, Architectural, Religious And Spiritual Traditions Of Iran. These People Were Themselves Related To Various Professions And Most Of Them Were Architects, Agriculturists And Men Of Different Crafts And Art. Since Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani Selected A Special Entourage To Accompany Him To Kashmir, From Among The Artists And Professionals In Order To Render This Wonderful Historical Achievement.¹⁰ The Saadat From Iran Did Not Become The Burden On Kashmir Because The Arts And Crafts Which They Bring With Themselves Were Well Established By Them. Several Industries Of Iran Became Well Introduced In Kashmir. Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani Possessed Vast Knowledge, Wisdom And Understanding. His Disciples Were Practical Men, Who Worked Hard To Earn Their Living, Absorbed Themselves In Prayers After Their Daily Work. For Neo-Muslims They Set The Same Example And Taught Them To Earn Their Bread With The Sweat Of Their Brow. There Was No Caste System And All Were Equal. Such An Economic Order Of The Society Greatly Influenced The Hindus And They Felt Attracted Towards This Social Order.¹¹

The Cultural And Artistic Relations With Iran Were Established By Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani. It Was Due To The Persian Influences On The Socio-Cultural Life Of People In Kashmir Sir Mohammad Iqbal Referred To Kashmir As In His Poetry As "Iran-I-Saghir" Meaning Little Iran.¹²

Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani By His Efforts Revived And Boosted The Following Local And Iranian Crafts In Kashmir. Shawl, Papier Machie, Calligraphy, Stone-Work, Copper-Work, Silver-Work, Wood-Work, Embroidery, Carpet Industry, Wicker-Work, Hamams Etc. With The Promotion Of All These Arts And Crafts, A New Environment Was

Created In Kashmir. The Scholars Like Farooq Bukhari, Shamsu'd Din Ahmed, Nishat Ansari, Dr. Iqbal, Mushtaq Hamadani And Others Attribute Emergence Of These Industries To Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani. Zainul Abidin And Mirza Haider Were The Two Rulers Of Kashmir Who Played Their Significant Roles In Promoting The Arts And Crafts In Kashmir But Introduction Of Arts And Crafts In Valley Is Attributed To Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani, Because He Opened The Gates Of Interaction Between Iran And Kashmir, In A Manner Which Had No Precedence. Similarly Mohammad Yousf Teng, Professor Mohibbul Hassan, Hakim Ghulam Hasan Makhmoor And Other Important Researchers Unanimously Regard Shah-I-Hamadan And His Mission As The Great Advent Of Emergence Of Arts And Crafts In Kashmir.¹³

Shawl:

The English Word 'Shawl' Is Derived From The Persian 'Shal'. In Orient Tradition 'Shal' Describes Not Only The One Particular Article Of Clothing, But A Whole Range Of Fine Woolen Fabrics.¹⁴ The Shoulder Mantle Or Shawl Had Been In Existence, In A Variety Of Forms From The Most Ancient Times, Serving As A Staple And Protective Garment Not Only For The Rich And Noble But Also And Above All For The Common People. In Ancient Buddhist Literature The Shawl Can Be Found Among Recorded Inventories Of Woolen Textiles, And Its Manufacture Appears To Have Been A Cottage Industry In Kashmir As Early As The 11th Century.¹⁵ GMD Sufi In His Book, "Islamic Culture In Kashmir" Writes, "The Shawl Industry Of Kashmir May Be As Old As The Hills, It Is Stated To Have Flourished In The Days Of Kuravas And Pandavas. In Was In A Prosperous Condition In The Days Of Roman Empire, When Kashmiri Shawl Was Worn By The Proudest Beauties At The Court Of Caesars. In Asoka's Time We Find The Shawl Mentioned In The Buddhist Works As The Kashmiri Shawl. But In Course Of Time It Had Its Death.

It Was However Through The Efforts Of Great Saint, Shah Hamadan That The Shawl As We Know It Now Was Reborn In Kashmir In The Later Part Of The Fourteenth Century And The Shawl Industry Took A New Lease Of Life. Sultan Qutub'ud Din Who Was Then The Ruler Of Kashmir Patronized, Nourished And Stimulated It".¹⁶

Mohibbul Hassan In His Book, "Kashmir Under Sultans" Holds:

"It Is Also Stated That The Shawl Industry Was Founded By Saiyid Ali Hamadani In 1378, Because The Shawl Industry Did Not Exist Before The 13th Century, For There Is No Reference To It Either In Kalhan's Rajtarangni Or Any Other Source And It Was Developed Under The Patronage Of The Sultans With The Help Of Weavers Who Came From Persia And Turkistan. These Immigrants Not Only Introduced New Patterns But Also A New Technique In The Twiltapestry Technique, Which Has A Parallel In Persia And Central Asia But Nowhere In India And Pakistan. However Under Zainul Abidin Kashmir Had Become Famous For Its Shawls. When The Mughals Conquered The Valley, The Shawl Industry Was In Well Developed State."

N.Saraf Says: "It Is Said That Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani Of Hamadan, Known As Shah-I-Hamadan, Who Visited Kashmir For The Second Time In 1398 And Stayed Here For About Over Two Years, Encouraged Some Shawl Weavers To Produce Fine Textures".¹⁷

Moti Lal Saqi Writes, "About The Shawl Industry There Is A Famous View That This Fine And Beneficial Art Was Made Prevalent In Kashmir By Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani. He Came To Kashmir Three Times And Was Accompanied By Religious Scholars And Expert Craftsmen And Artists Of Central Asia, Who Settled Down In Kashmir And Made It Their Permanent Abode. It Is Due To These Craftsmen And Artists That The Shawl Industry Was Firmly Established In Kashmir And Made Great Progress Which Has Rendered The World Wonder-Struck."¹⁸

Later During The Time Of Mirza Haider Daughlat This Industry Received Patronage And Began To Flourish. The Mughal Emperors Were Very Fond Of Shawls And The Industry A Great Phillip. New Designs Were Introduced And Shawls Of Fine Texture Were Produced From The Emperors, Their Harems And The Court.¹⁹ It Was During This Period That The Fame Of Kashmir Arts Had Reached Europe. Later On The Demand Increased And The London Custom House Imposed An Import Duty Of 80% On Kashmir Shawls Which Were Sold At 500 Pounds Each. In The Mean Time These Shawls Became Very Popular In France As Well.²⁰

Of All Indian Textiles, Says Dr. A. Coomaraswamy None Excels In Beauty Of Colour, Texture And Design The Famous Kashmiri Shawl. All The Finest Work Takes The Form Of Shawls And Coats. Some Of These Are Woven, Some Embroidered, The Result Being Often Indistinguishable Without Close Inspection. The Woven Shawls Are All Of Patch Work Construction, Though The Joins Are So Fine As To Be Invisible And The Thickness Of The Stuff Is Not Affected At The Join. Such Shawls Are Made Of Long Strips Or Ribbons Woven As Fine Tapestry On Small Looms And Afterwards Joined Along Their Length: But Many Of The Best Shawls Are Partly Woven And Partly Embroidered.²¹

The Beauty Of Shawls Depends As Much On The Brilliancy And Durability Of Its Unrivalled Colours And Their Being Careful Harmonized And The Material Of Which It Is Made, As On The Quality Of The Workmanship. The Shawl Is Made Of Fine, Short, Soft, Flossy Underwood Called 'Pashm'. Raw Pashm Was The Main Item Of

Raw Material Used In The Manufacturing Of Shawls Of High Quality. Despite Being Costly It Was In Great Demand In The Entire Europe Particularly In France. This Raw Pashm Was Brought By Caravans Via Ladakh Into Kashmir Where From It Was Passed To Amritsar, Ludhiana And Lahore, There It Was Also Processed And Woven Into Cloth.²²

Mir Syed Mushtaq Hamadani Says, “When Amir-I-Kabir, Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani Came To Kashmir From Ladakh, He Brought With Him Pashm And After Arriving Here He Got The Processing Of Pashm Affected And Started Various Varieties Of Pashmina Work Conducted. He Prepared A Pair Of Socks By His Own Hands And Gifted That To Sultan Qutub’d Din”.²³ Soft, Attractive And Elegant Kashmiri Shawls Are The Result Of The Weavers Skill In Colouring, Designing, Embellishing And The Use Of Fine Fabrics. The Geographical Position Of The Kashmir Valley, Northwest Region Of India, Is Also Vital In Providing The Finest And Softest Fleece, The Main Source Of Wool. After Cleaning And Processing, The Fleece Is Used For Creating Woolen Items. Baron Schonberg Wrote In His *Travels* Published In 1853 A.D.:

“The Shawl Of Kashmir Is Perhaps The Only Article Of Apparel That Imposes By Wear, But Certain It Is That One Of These Beautiful Fabrics Which Has Been Worn For Some Time, And Even Washed, Becomes Brighter In Colour And More Pliant To The Touch Than When New”.²⁴

In India Shawls Were Made Of Wool, Silk Or Cotton. The Choice Of Material Depended On The Climate Of The User’s Area, The Status Of The User And Of Course The Occasion For Which It Would Have Been Worn. Men And Women Both Used Shawls As A Drape Or A Warp As Is Evidenced From Harappan Stone Sculptures, Medieval Miniature, Paintings And Later Period Oil Paintings.

The Initial Structure Of The Shawl Was Simple, Generally Plain (An Off-White Field) Occasionally Coloured (In Maroon, Navy Blue, Green, Brown) And With Narrow End Panels Decorated With A New Row Of Single Flower Bothes Or Several Rows Of Bothes.²⁵

There Were Two Principal Classes Of Shawl, One Kani Or Loom Woven Done Generally In Small Segments Which Were Sewn Together In Such Precision And Neatness That The Sewing Was Quite Imperceptible. The Other Was Amliker In Which Over A Ground Of Plain Pashmina An Embroidered Worked With Needle Exquisite Patterns In Different Colours. The Kani Shawl Weaver Called Shalbat Or Khandavav, Fixed The Warp In The Loom. He Wound The Coloured Yarn On Small Bobbins Which Might Be Over 500 In Number And Manipulated Them According To The Talim. The Ingenious Method Was Employed By The Weaver In Converting The Original Design, Was Prepared By A Naqaash Into A Textile. Instead Of Working From A Coloured Drawing Or Diagram, The Weaver Had The Pattern Translated On Paper Into Rows Of Symbols, Each Of Which Expressed The Numbers Of Threads To Be Worked In And Their Colour. The Weaver Had A Tray At His Hand Filled With Bobbins Of Every Required Colour And With This Written ‘Key’ Or Talim As Called By The Kashmir’s He Sat On Loom, Worked In The Stated Numbers Of Threads Of Each Coloured.

Shawls For The Amliker Design Was Woven As Plain Cloth By The Weaver Known As Sada-Baf. After The Plain Pashmina Was Ready It Was Handed Over To Naqaash Or Pattern Drawer Who Drew On It The Required Design With Black Ink. The Embroidered Or Sozankar Did The Rest, Using The Imagination In The Choice Of Colours Which He Embroidered With His Plain Needle.²⁶ The Improvement In The Manufacture Of Shawl Was Developed With The Development In The Refinement Of Taste And Hashia Or Borders Were Added To It. This Itself Became A Specialized Art And Was Woven By The Hashia-Baf Or Border Weaver. The Hashia Was The Border And Might Be Single, Double Or Triple. The Palla Was The Embroidery At Two Ends. The Dor Or Running Ornament Covered All The Four Sides. The Kunj Was The Cluster Of Flowers Or Cone In The Corners. The Matten Was The Decorated Or Plain Part Of The Central Ground.²⁷

Embroidery:

Second Only To Kashmir Shawl In Beauty Came The Kashmir Embroidery. Embroidery Is Widely Scattered, The Most Artistic But Unfortunately The Least Organized Industrial Handicraft In Kashmir. The Embroiderer Has Been Closely Connected With The Shawl Industry And Has Made A Very Important Contribution For The Production Of Some Of The Most Artistic Designs. This Particular Art Got Strong Impetus Only After The Advent Of Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani. Embroidery Work Was Done In Four Styles:

- Amlī
- Chiken
- Doori And
- Yarma.

The Articles Produced In This Work Were Bed Covers, Cushions, Curtains, Scarves, Tablecloth, Napkins, Felt Rugs And Shawls. Besides Draping, Tea Cloth, Counterpane, Tie, Dress Pieces And Café Were Also Made And Sold

Rapidly. The Most Important Patterns Which Were Famous And Liked By The People Were- Shawls, Chinar-Leaf, Iris, Dragon And Ihassa. These Patterns Has Replaced Old Conventional Designs.²⁸

Calligraphy:

The Art Of Calligraphy Of Introduced In The Valley By Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani And Then It Got Its Stronghold At Various Places In Kashmir. Calligraphy Is The Art Of Decorative Writing. Arabic Alphabets In Its Various Forms As Used For Writing Both The Arabic And Persian Languages Is So Well Adapted For Decorative Purposes That Almost Every Muslim Building Of Importance Is Freely Adorned With Texts From The Quraan Or Other Inscriptions Arranged Decoratively To Form Part Of The Architectural Design And Often Signed As The Work Of Calligrapher.²⁹

The Angular Kufi Script Is An Instance To The Point. In Kashmir Calligraphy Actually Ranked Before Painting, Sculpture And Architecture. Moreover, Before The Invention Of Printing, Clear And Neat Hand Writing Was A Necessity And This Was The Principal Reason Why So Much Stress Was Laid Upon This Art. Some Of The Most Excellent Penman Whose Products Rank As Classics Are Kashmiris. Penmanship Flourished Under The Sultans And Later Under Mughals. In Kashmir When Kashmiri Calligraphists Invented An Ink Which Could Be Washed Away With Water.³⁰

Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani Was An Expert Calligrapher And He Encouraged This Art In Kashmir.³¹ According To Abul Fazl The Following Calligraphical Systems Were Used In Persia, Turkistan, India And Turkey Towards The End Of The Sixteenth Century: 1. The Sul And 2. The Naksh Consisting Of One Third Curved Lines And Two Third Straight Lines. 3. The Tauqi And 4. Riqa, Both Containing Three Fourth Lines 5. The Muhaqqaq And 6. The Raihan, Both Curved Containing One Fourth Curved Lines 7. The Tauliq And The Riqa Containing Only A Few Straight Lines And 8. The Nastiliq Composed Entirely Of Curved Lines.

The Sul, The Tauqi And The Muhaqqah Were Characterized By Thick Heavy Letters Obtained With A Pen Full Of Ink And Conversely The Naksh, The Riqa And The Raihan By Thin Letters. The Nastiliq Or The Round Persian Character Was One Of The Favoured Both By Akber And Jahangir And Consequently Was Specially Practiced By Mughal Writers From About 1560A.D. To The End Of The 17th Century.³²

Professor Hamid Naseem Rafiabadi In His Book “Sufism And Islam In Kashmir” Writes: “*The Art Of Calligraphy Was Introduced In The Valley By Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani And Then It Got Its Strong Hold At Various Places. It Was Unto The Period Of Zainul Abidin That About Two Dozen Beautiful And Captivating Calligraphical Designs Including Khat-I-Dewani, Khat-I-Rugh, Khay-I-Reehan, Khat-I-Saroo, Khat-I-Shafeeah, Khat-I-Tugra, Khat-I-Ghubar, Khat-I-Kufi, Khat-I-Gulzar, Khat-I-Maghrabi, Khat-I-Makki, Khat-I-Madani, Khat-I-Muhaqqiq, Khat-I-Mahi, Khat-I-Munhani, Khat-I-Nakhun, Khat-I-Naksh, Khat-I-Nastiliq And Khat-I-Shakastah Were Developed. Though Later On, From All These Calligraphical Forms Only Three Forms Of Calligraphy Remained In Vogue I.E., Khat-I-Shakasta, Khat-I-Naksh, And Khat-I-Nastiliq. These Forms Are Still In Use. In These Calligraphical Forms Important And Rare Manuscripts, Royal Commands, Classical Poetical Compositions, Reshinamahs, Epic Literature, Important Documents, Religious And Historical Writings Are Preserved In Various Academic And Literary Centers And Research Libraries Etc. It Can't Be Claimed That In Making All These Art Forms Prevalent In The Valley, Only Saiyid Ali Was Responsible Single-Handedly. However This Art Form Owes Its Origin To Him To A Great Extent As He Initiated The Process Of Assimilation Of Persian Culture And Its Various Manifestations In Valley Calligraphically Included.*”³³

Mohammad Hussain Of Kashmir Was The Court Calligraphist Of The Emperor Akber By Whom He Was Honoured With The Title Of Zarrin Qalam(The Golden Pen). Abul Fazl Says That Mohammad Hussain Surpassed His Master Moulana Abdul Aziz, His Muddat(Extension) And Dawair(Curvatures) Show Everywhere A Proper Portion To Each Other And Art Critics Consider Him Equal To Mulla Mir Ali. He Himself Called Him Jadu Raqam (The Writer Of Magic). Jahangir As A Mark Of His Great Appreciation Of The Skill Of Mohammad Hussain Presented Him With An Elephant In 1609A.D. Mohamad Hussain Died In 1020 A.H.(1611 A.D.) Six Years After The Death Of Akber. Ali Chaman Kashmiri Was Another Of The Renowned Calligraphists Attached To Akber's Court.³⁴

Papier Machie:

Papier Machie Is Mashed Paper. It Is An Art Peculiar To Kashmir. The Work Goes By The Name Of Kar-I-Qalamdani Or Pen-Case Work, Because It Is Usually Applied To The Ornamentation Of Pen Cases And Small Boxes. It Is Also Called Kar-I-Munaqash Or Painted Ware.

Nishat Ansari While Appreciating The Role Of Shah-Hamadani And His Companions Says:

“Though The Cultural And Commercial Exchange Between Our Valley And The External World Has Remained With Samarqand, Bukhara In General, But So Far The Kar-I-Qalamdan Is Concerned, It Has Reached To Kashmir

From Iran. There Is A Narration In This Regard That Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani And The Group Of Preachers Who Accompanied Him, Were Well Versed With The Arts And Professions (Like Kar-I-Qalamdan), Which They Made Prevalent In The Valley. By Writing Zakhirat-Al-Muluk He Provided To The Rulers Of His Time A Code Of Conduct To Present A System Of Good Governance To Be Reckoned With. It Is Quite True That The Art Of Papier Machie Was Introduced In Kashmir By The Companions Of Shah-I-Hamadani."³⁸

The Process Of Making Papier Machie Is Very Elaborate. It Is The Matter Of Days Or Even Weeks. First Several Layers Of Kashmiri Handmade Paper Are Pasted On The Mould Of Required Article, Over It Is Laid Pulp Made Of Kashmiri Scarp Pounded And Mixed With Rice Paste. Over It Again Is Pasted Kashmiri Paper, Layer Upon Layer By The Repeated Slow Process Of Drying And Adding. After Obtaining The Correct Shape, The Mould Is Removed. The Surface Is Made Even By Rubbing It With A File. After That It Is Wrapped Round With Thin Cloth And Covered With The Plaster Of Paris (POP) Mixed With Glue And Water. The Surface Is Then Smoothed By Rubbing It Gently With A Piece Of Hard Burnt Brick. Then Comes The Staining With Special Stone Found In Quarry At Manasbal. On This Stain Is Applied A White Powder Mixed With Glue And Water And Over It Is Applied The Ground Colour. When Dry The Outlines Are Generally Drawn With Yellow Colour And The Spaces Delineated For Floral Work.³⁶

The Deterioration Crept In With The Growing Demand Of Papier Machie Goods By Tourists And The Traders In Calcutta And Bombay.

During The Last Two Decades Of 19th Century A Variety Of Articles, Such As Tables, Tea Poys, Trays, Screens, Picture Frames And Candle Stands Were Made In Order To Create Taste In The People. Besides The Upper Classes Called In Naqash To Decorate The Ceiling Walls Of Their Houses And Palanquins.³⁷ The Foliage, Stems, And Flowers Were The Most Frequently Featured Patterns On Articles Like Book Marks, Writing Desks, Cigarette Cases, Dressing Tables, Vases, Post Card Boxes, Stamp Boxes, Candle Holders And Tie Boxes.³⁸

Wood Work:

Wood Work Is An Ancient Industry Of Kashmir. There Are Many Ancient References To This Industry. Wood Work Was The Paying Profession Before The Coming Of Mohammadans.³⁹ With The Advent Of Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani To Kashmir This Industry Flourished In Kashmir. This Is Evident From The Fact That Ancient Hindu Buildings Are Of Stone But The Mosques Are Of Wood, Such As Shah-Hamadani Mosque (Khanqah-I-Moulla) Which Shows The Great Dexterity In The Carpenter's Craft.⁴⁰ In The Beginning The Most Artistic Design Made On Woodwork Consisted Of Minutely Delicate Surface Carving In Shawls, Floral And Geometrical Patterns, But The Later Development Was In The Direction Of Over-Elaboration And Border Carving In The Relief Of The Various Flowers And Dragon Designs. Further Designs Were Copied From Foreign Catalogues.⁴¹ With The Plenty Of Wood Of Best Quality Growing Around The Valley, The Kashmiri Carpenters Attained Great Skill In Building, Carving Lattice Work And Allied Arts. The Wood Work Of Srinagar In The Opinion Of Lawrence Lacks A Little Finish, But He Says The Kashmiri Carver Is Perhaps Second To None In His Skill As A Designer. He Works With Hammer And Chisel And A Great Deal Of Roughness And Inequality Of His Pieces Is Due To Difficulty Of Obtaining Seasoned Walnut Wood. In Islamabad The Carpenter Turns Out A Good Deal Of Highly Coloured Wooden Articles, Which Looks Like Lacquer Work, But Are Really Wood Coloured And Then Highly Polished By The Use Of The Lather.⁴² The Main Types Of Wood Work Found In Kashmir Were: I. Lattice Or Piinjra Work Ii. Paneling Or Khatamband Iii. Carving Of Wood And Iv. Furniture Making. In The First Type Generally Conifer Wood Was Used. It Was Made On Geometrical Basis Or Floral Designs And Was Very Bold And Effective. There Were Local Persian Names For Different Designs As Posh Kandur (A Floral Design), Chahar Khana (Four Square), Shesh Sitara (Six Stars), Dwazdah Sar (Twelve Cornered) And Many Other Such Designs.⁴³

Stone Work:

At The Time Of Arrival Of Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani To Kashmir There Were About 12000 Idol Makers Present In The Valley. Since Islam Does Not Approve Of The Idol Carving, These Idol Makers Would Have Been Rendered Jobless, If Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani Had Not Provided Them With Alternative Profession. Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani Facilitated Their Earning By Encouraging Them To Take The Profession Of Stone Carving And Handicrafts By The Agency Of The Numerous Artisans Who Had Accompanied Him.⁴⁴

There Were Two Types Of Stone Work, Architectural And Ornamental. As Regards The Former The Ruins Of Martand Testify To The Ancient Stone Carving Of Kashmir. Even The Mughals Encouraged This Art. As Is Evident From The Carvings In The Pavilion Waterfalls Of The Mughal Gardens Of Kashmir, Like Shalimar, Nishat, Cheshma Shahi, And Achabal. With The Passage Of Time It Went Into Background And The Later Type (Ornamental) Which Was Already There Emerged Once Again And Became A Famous Art Peculiar To Kashmir.⁴⁵ For This Purpose Precious Stones Were Imported From Samarqand And Fashioned Into Various Ornaments.

The Articles Made Out Of These Stones Were Buttons, Beads, And Brooches. Turquoise Was Found In Ladakh And Was Upon The Most Charming Designs And There Was A Great Business Carried On In This Art.⁴⁶ Among The Locally Procured Stone May Be Mentioned: Takht-I-Suliman-Black And White Streaks, Sang-I-Musa – Black, Bilor-White Crystals, Sang-I-Sumak-Blue Or Purple With Green Spots, Sang-I-Shalamar- Green, Sang-I-Ratel- Chocolate And Sang-I-Nadid – Dard-Coffee Colour, Mostly Found In Wangat. Besides These A Kind Jade, Which Used To Be Employed For Flint-Locks Is Brought From The Wasterwan Mountains. Cups And Plates Are Made Of A Stone Known As Sang-I-Nalshan. The Stone Is So Soft That It Can Be Cut Like Wood. It Is A Kind Of Soap-Stone, Grey, Yellow, And Green In Colour. The Lapidaries Of Srinagar Are, However A Very Skillful Lot And The Tograi Monograms Which They Engraved On Various Kinds Of Stones Were Excellently Executed. Later Under The Influence Of European And Indian Visitors, They Took Up The Production Of Imitation Jewellery. This Continued To Be A Lucrative Business. However Lawrence Says That, “Lapidaries Are Not A Prosperous People, But If The Seal Cutters Were To Seek Work In India They Could Command High Wages”⁴⁷

Silver Work:

Silver Goods Of Kashmir Have Been Praised From Time Immemorial. During The Hindu And Muslim Periods They May Have Had Good Business. W.R. Lawrence, Writes That The Silver Ware Of Kashmir Is Extremely Beautiful And Some Of The Indigenous Patterns, The Lotus And The Chinar Leaf Are Of Exquisite Design.

The Silver Ware Of Kashmir Was So Renowned For Its Beauty And Form That Every Traveler Made A Point Of Carrying Back A Memento Of His Visit In The Form Of One Article Or Another Of Silver. The Kashmiri Workmen Displayed Much More Native Taste In It Than In Gold.⁴⁸ It Is In This Industry That We Find The System Of Division Of Labour, As It Was Based On Five Different Sections Of Workers Who Carried It On. They Were Smith (Khar), Engraver (Naqash), Gilder (Zarkob), Polisher (Roshanger) And Cleaner (Charikgar). They Worked With Simple Tools.⁴⁹ The Large Variety Of Silver Ware Included Drinking Cups, Trays, Water Vessels, Goblets, And Scent Holders On Which Designs Were Turned Out After Consulting The Foreign Catalogues. The Most Important Designs Were Of Shawl Pattern, Chinar Leaf Pattern, And Lhasa Pattern But The Floral Designs Were In Great Demand.⁵⁰

Copper Work:

Copper Work Was Perhaps The Most Effective And Certainly The Best Value For The Money. Copper Work Came Next To Silver Work As Observed By Lawrence: “Many Of The Present Copper Smiths Are Men Who Used Once To Work In Silver”.⁵¹ They Also Worked In Brass, Their Designs Were Very Quaint And Bold And They Were Ready To Adopt Any New Pattern Offered To Them. Copper Work Was Excellently Adopted For Electroplating And Certain Beautiful Articles Were Produced Particularly Through This Process. The Articles That Come Out Of This Work Were Flower Vases, Samovars, Ash-Trays, Jugs, Glasses, Wash Basins And Trays. There Was A Rising Demand For Copper-Trays Framed As Tables In Carved Wood Of Walnut Wood And The Carpenter Was The Close Ally Of The Copper Smith. Of The Enamel Work, The Enamels On Brass Were The Best Though The Enameled Silver Work Was Very Pretty. Copper Does Not Lend Itself To Enamel.⁵²

Carpet (Qaleen Industry):

One Of The Principle Industries In Which Kashmiris Attained Mastery And The Products Of Which Are Even Today Esteemed In Europe And America Is Carpet Weaving. The Work Of Qaleen-Bafi In Iran Is From Time Immemorial. With The Advent Of Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani In Kashmir, The People Of Kashmir Also Adopted This Art. In Order To Get Mastery In This Art They Went To Central Asia And Iran For Training From Experts. With The Result Kashmir Got Worldwide Fame In This Particular Art And Is Labeled Number Second In The World After Iran.⁵³

Pile Carpets Were Made And Attained Great Perfection. The Oldest Kashmir Carpets Were Of Floral Design With Mosques, Gardens, Wild Animals, Gliding Fishes Etc.

The Weaver Sitting On A Low Bench Has Threads Of Every Required Colour In Double Or Triple Folds Wound Up Into Balls Hanging Down From A String And With This Written Key, Or Talim, He Ties In The Stated Number Of Knots With The Woolen Yarn Of The Colour As Given In The Ciphred Script. He Uses His Fingers Instead Of Shuttle Needles As The Fabric Is Of Coarser Material. The Weaver Cuts Each Thread After Its Being Knotted Into The Wrap With A Curved Knife And Then The Whole Row Is Pressed Down By An Iron Comb And Made Even The Surface Of The Carpet By Clipping With A Shears. He Does All This With The Marvelous

Deftness, Knowing Nothing Of The Patterns He Is Preparing, But Gradually Building Up In A Mechanical Way The Carpet On The Warp Before Him.⁵⁴

Carpets With As Many As 400 Knots To The Square Inch Have Been Made And Silk And Pashmina Wool Are Sometimes Used To Bring Out The More Delicate Shadings In The Designs. The Stitch Which The Persian Weavers Used In Order To Give Their Carpets Density, Combined With Pliancy Has Been Adopted. The Patterns Chiefly Used In Kashmir Were Copies From Illustrations Of Oriental Carpets Published By The Imperial And Royal Austrian Commercial Museum, And Special Attention Was Paid To Make The Colours Fast.⁵⁵

Hamam:

Since Ancient Times, The Kashmiris Knew The Technique Of Hamams Or Hot Baths And Used It Individually. With The Coming Of Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani This Technique Got A New Turn. It Was Shah-Hamadan, Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani Who Introduced Community Hamams Instead Of Private Family Hamams. With Every Mosque A Hamam Was Constructed To Serve The Needs Of Muslims Who Would Come To Prayers. At The Same Time Community Hamams Were Constructed In Each Khanqah Or The Sufi Cloisters. The First Community Hamam Was Constructed At Khanqah-I-Maula Srinagar.⁵⁶

Wicker Work:

Wicker Work Was An Important Industry Given Impetus By Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani. Most Of The Villages Had Their Own Artisans Who Used To Make Necessary Baskets For Agricultural Purposes, Besides The Kitlas, Used For Transportation Of Apples And For Rough Village Work. With The Establishment Of Amar Technical Institute Experiments Were Made To Develop This Industry And The English And French Willow-Trees Were Planted Which Wet With Success.⁵⁶ Wonderful Things Are Made Of The Willow Sticks By The Kashmiri Deft Hands. Baskets, Boxes, Chairs And The Famous Kangaries Are Produced In Large Quantities. However, In The Kanger (Portable Brazier) The Indigenous Art In Willow Work Appears To Have Reached Its Perfection.⁵⁷

Book Binding And Hashiakari

Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani Also Introduced The Art Of Book-Binding In Kashmir. Shah-Hamadan Directed One Of His Disciples To Train Kashmiris In Leather Book Binding, Decorative Covering And Embossing With Gold And Silver. Mostly Religious Scriptures, Sacred Writing And Royal Correspondence Was Flapped In Embossed Leather Jackets.⁵⁸

The Art Of Hashiakari Or The Outline Decorative Art Work Of Leaves And Documents Was Also Introduced By Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani. Hashiakari Is A Design Work Of Decorating Leaves Of A Book Or Individual Document. Even Royal Letters Were Decorated Through The Medium Of Hashiakari.

Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani Established The First Manuscript Library Of Islamic Books At Srinagar In Kashmir. The Library Contained His Personal Collection Also. A Number Of Calligraphists Worked Under The Supervision Of The Chief Librarian, Syed Mohammad Qazim.⁵⁹

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