

## The Review of Mutual Relationships Between the Nizām Shāhī Dynasty and the Safavids

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### Abstract

Iran-India relations are deeply rooted in history, going back to the onset of Indo-migration. Based on the policy of neighborhood, their relationship grew smoothly in the spheres of commerce and trade and their cultural relations and exchanges forged. The commercial convergence and cultural similarities between two nations extended throughout the Islamic age, followed by the Muslimization of Iran and some parts of the western and southern India.

However, the promotion of their relationships can be seen throughout the relations of the Safavids with the Bāberiyān and Shi'a-ruled states in south India such as Bahmani, Adil Shāhī and Qutb Shāhī and particularly Nizām Shāhī. It seems that the Shi'a religion has greatly affected these governments to be closer to the Safavids in Iran as a Shi'a-ruled state. According to the research sources, the growth of Shi'a-ruled states throughout India began in the 8th century and reached its peak in the 13th century. These states emerged in some areas such as Kashmir, southern India, Awadh and Bengal. The factors behind the spread of Shi'a throughout India have been the presence of Iranian Shi'a Muslim scholars and businesspersons and the propaganda of Shia missionaries. However, not only did these Shi'as, especially Nizām Shāhī dynasty share the religious similarities with Safavids, but also they were considered one of the significant trading partners of this state, who was known as the main economic, political and religious sponsor of Shi'a-ruled states and Nizām Shāhī in India in this period.

This study aims to investigate the elements affecting the relationships between the Safavids and the Nizām Shāhī considering the political developments of this Dynasty. "Which factors have created huge impacts on the interpersonal growth of relations between two governments?" and "how much impression these relations have had on the political policies of Nizām Shāhī Dynasty?" To explore the raised questions, this paper tries to hypothesize the Shi'a-ruled states like the Nizām Shāhī dynasty in South India have been given the support of Safavid dynasty in the economic, political and cultural spheres for antagonism towards the Sunnis like the Bāberiyāns in India. Ultimately, what brought about the overthrow of the Shi'a-ruled states in southern India, such as the Nizām Shāhī dynasty was that the increased Bāberiyāns' power in northern India had been simultaneous with the vicissitudes of Safavids' power in Iran. This research in a descriptive-analytic method has used original library resources.

**Keywords:** Nizām Shāhī dynasty, Safavid, Shi'a religion, commercial relations, India, Iran.

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## 1. Introduction

Relations between the Shi'a-ruled states in India, whether in the southern part of India, or the Deccan Plateau or even Kashmir and Iran in Safavid dynasty period can be investigated from diverse spheres such as political, economic, cultural and social ones. In political sphere, the expeditions of emissaries and diplomats between these governments and the support of the Safavids against their historical rivals, Sunnis, can be taken into detailed consideration. In cultural sphere, the immigration of a vast number of Iranian writers, poets and artists, being recruited by these governments led to the spread of *Shi'ism*, Persian language and Iranian culture amongst them. In social level, owing to the increasing number of their immigrations over the Safavid era, the communities of Iranian Shi'as, who immigrated to India, particularly to some areas, impacted by the Shi'as can be critically examined. In the economic sphere, there was a growth of trade and commerce between the Safavids and those governments, leading to economic efficiency of these governments. The purpose of this study is to scrutinize factors and causes, contributing to the growth of these relations between the Safavids and the Nizām Shāhī dynasty with emphasis on the political developments of this dynasty.

Owing to the importance of the Safavid dynasty's interactions with the Shi'a-ruled states in their period, especially the Indian ones, some extensive research and study have been performed on interactions between the Safavid dynasty and these Shi'a-ruled states in south India. Some of them can be named such as "Shi'a in India"<sup>2</sup>, "History of Iranian-Islamic Culture and Civilization in the Bahmanian period"<sup>3</sup>, "Collection of Iranian Documents and Correspondence in the Safavid Period"<sup>4</sup>, "the Shi'a of India"<sup>5</sup>, "Indo-Persian Relations"<sup>6</sup>, "Atlas of Shi'a"<sup>7</sup> and "Political and Diplomatic Relations of the Timurids of India"<sup>8</sup>. All these references have pointed to the relations between the Nizām Shāhī dynasty and the Safavids, however, they have not been comprehensively compiled.

## A brief look at the history of relations between some Shiite states in south India and the Safavids

The first Shi'a-ruled state in India is the Bahmani sultanate, who governed in south India for 26 years, simultaneous with the period of the Safavids in Iran (907-1135 AH/1501-1722 AD), particularly during the reigns of Shah Ismail I (907-930 AH/1502-1524 AD) and Shah Tahmasb I (930-984 AH/1524-1576 AD). Bahmanian's official language was Persian, and some scientists, military force, and politicians immigrated to south India at their time. Bahmani sultanate were drawn to Iranian immigrants because of their own Iranian nationality. (Movahedi, 1390: 27-28)

The second Shi'a-ruled state in South India, was Adilshāhī dynasty, who lasted from 1490 to 1686 AD (895-1097 AH) in Bijapur, and played crucial roles in diverse scientific, cultural and political fields in the history of India. They ruled over south India for 190 years. Their religion was the Twelve Shi'a and they had officially spoken Marathi language. Moreover, they warmly welcomed many Persian-speaking scientists, artists, politicians and military forces who had emigrated from Iran to southern India throughout their rule. Of the Iranian, Turk and Iraqi scholars, writers, poets, historians, painters, calligraphers and the military whose religion was Shi'a Islam, Shaikh Jalāluddīn and Mīr Khalilullāh Shirazi are the most prominent scholars. (Nadavi, 1936: 139-138)

As the third most renowned Shi'a-ruled state in southern India, the Nizām Shāhī dynasty was founded in Ahmednagar (896-1044 AH/ 1490-1633 AD). More than eleven kings ruled this dynasty for 143 years in the Deccan. Most of the governors established a stronger correlation in different aspects with the Safavids. Their religion was the Twelve Shiite Imams. Besides, the governors paid attention to some Iranian scientists, artists, politicians and military people who immigrated to southern India, throughout their reign. Amongst them, Shāh Tāhīr Al-Husayni, Mullāh Malik Qomi, Mullāh Zohūrī, Shāh Zafar, the brother of Shāh Tāhīr, Shāh Haidar, the son of Shāh Tāhīr, and Khorshāh Ibn Ghobād Al-Husseini are known as the most famous Iranian Shi'a immigrants. (Nadavi, 1936: 133-136)

The other Shi'a-ruled state in Southern part of India was Qutb shāhī dynasty, who ruled over from 1512 to 1687 AD (918-1098 AH) and

<sup>2</sup>Athar Razavi, 1997.

<sup>3</sup>Mohsen Masoumi, 2011.

<sup>4</sup>Abdolhossein Navai, 1962.

<sup>5</sup>John Norman Hallister, 1994.

<sup>6</sup>Riazul Islam, 2000.

<sup>7</sup>Rasool Jafarian, 2012.

<sup>8</sup>Noor Mohammad Khan, 2011.

exerted an inevitably great impact scientifically and culturally on Indian society. Their official language was Persian and many Iranian scholars immigrated to their region at the period of their reign. Mīr Mohammad Mo'men Astarabadi can be mentioned among the Iranian Shi'a scholars in their period (died 1034 AH). Qutbshāhī dynasty had the strongest connection with the Safavids. Because of their relations and diplomacy with the Safavid dynasty, the central government of India often threatened them. Their relations, therefore, would deteriorate, but never break down (Razavi, 1997: 463-430).

### **The establishment of the Nīzām Shāhī dynasty (896-1044 AH/ 1490-1633 AD)**

Ahmednagar region in the south of India was considered as one of the states of Bahmani dynasty (895 AH/ 1489 AD) and after break-up of Bahmani Kingdom, the Nīzām Shāhī dynasty was founded there. Their territorial expansion was bounded to the north by the border of Khandesh district, to the east by Bidar and Berar, to the south, by Bijapur, and to the west by the coastlines, in which the city of Mumbai is today located (Fahmi, 2009: 544). In governmental manuscripts and official historical dates, recorded by the Mongol Empire in India, this kingdom has been called Nīzām al-Mulk. (Riazul-Islam, 1391: 138)

This dynasty was originally founded by Ahmad Nizam Shah, who was the son of the Nīzām al-Mulk Malik Hassan, originally named Bahīrūn Brahmin, was a Hindu Brahmin from Beejanuggar, and was arrested by the Muslims during the reign of Sultan Muhammad Shāh Bahmani in Vijayanagar. After arriving in Bijapur, both the father and the son converted to Islam. The name of Bahīrūn Brahmin was changed into Malik Hussein (Fahmi, 2009: 544) or Malik Hassan Bahri (Ghaderi, 1387: 25) and the name of his son, Bhiima Bhat, into Malik Ahmad. Malik Hussein Bahri, who had served in the court as a royal steward, was talented at reading and writing the Hindu, therefore, was appointed by Sultan Muhammad Shāh Bahmani as the tutor of his son, the Prince Mahmud. In this short period, Hussein therefore became well versed in Persian language along with the Prince. First, he was in charge of the royal hunting, and then was formally designated as the loyal chief secretary in the period of Mahmud Bahmani (Fahmi, 2009: 544)

Over time, Malik Hussein Bahri was highly respected at the court of the Bahmanis, his

influence was considerably extended, and finally he was awarded the title of Nīzām ul-Mulk Bahri. Subsequently, he was conferred with the governorship of the Telangana province. After Sultan Muhammad Shāh, Sultan Mahmud Shāh ascended the throne of the Bahmani dynasty. The Sultan also treated Malik Hussein Bahri with respect and admiration, appointed him as the royal lawyer, and gave him properties with a lot of land. These assets later would be passed to his son Ahmed. Malik Hussein Bahri sent his son Ahmed as a ruler to Junnar district and thus, the foundation of the Ahmednagar dynasty was established by Malik Hassan Bahri. (Razavi, 1997: 442-443)

After the time of his accession to the throne, Malik Ahmad defeated the Maratha Hindus, who had dominated many districts in the period of the Bahmani dynasty, and recaptured the fort Bir. At that moment, the other forts such as Jind, Lohagarh, Tung, Kori, Tikona, Purandar, Bhorop, Jivdhan, Manaranjan, Mahuli and Pally were captured by him too. He conquered the entire Konkan region at the point of his sword. After making these conquests, while Malik Ahmad was fighting in the Konkan coastal regions, he heard of the assassination of his father by the Bahmani dynasty. Malik Ahmad, therefore, rebelled against this dynasty. After reaching Junnar, he assumed the titles of his father, called himself Ahmad Nīzām-ul-Mulk Bahri, and declared his independence in 1490 AD (896 AH). He appointed Zarif al-Mulk-ī-Afghanī as "Amir al-Amra" and Nasīr al-Mulk Gujarati as "Mīrjamla". That year, he struck a coin in his own name and the Ahmednagar dynasty became an independent Islamic government called the Nīzām Shāhī. (Fahmi, 2009: 544-545).

When Sultan Mahmud Bahmani received a declaration of his independence, he dispatched his troops repeatedly to suppress him. He, however, could not do anything. (Nadavi, 1936: 131)

Ahmad Nizam Shah established the city of Ahmednagar in 1494 AD (900 AH) as his capital, on the banks of the Sina River near Daulatabad. He promoted the empowerment of the Ahmednagar dynasty so strongly that the greatest royalties trembled of its growing power. Finally, Ahmad Nizam Shah Bahri, the real founder of the Nīzām Shāhī dynasty, died in October 1510 AD (916 AH). (Hallister, 1373: 443)

After the death of Ahmad Nizam Shah, his son, Burhan Nizam Shah, succeeded to the throne while he was only seven years old. In the initial days of

his reign, due to his low age, Mukammal Khān took the charge of the affairs (Nadavi, 1936: 131). One of the greatest historic events, occurred in the rule of Burhan Nizam Shah was the emergence of the Iranian Shi'a Islam scholar named Shāh Tāhīr Hosseini (880-952 AH/ 1475-1545 AD) in the Deccan region of India. He propagated the Shiite religion, so Shiism was considered as the official religion of this government until the end of the regime. (Astarabadi, 1387: 25)

Of other famous sultans, Burhan Nizam Shah II was the seventh sultan in this dynasty. He was greatly interested in improving arts and sciences. Due to simultaneous of his reign with that of Hussein Nizam Shah II and his strictures, imposing on the Shiite religion, he was ousted from power. Throughout this period, religious difference and hostility came out and grew, and the Deccans seized the power, assassinating thousands of Shiite immigrants. (Astarabadi, 1387: 27)

National independence and sovereignty of the Nizām Shāhī dynasty was gradually relinquished in the period of Murtaza Nizam Shah coincided with the reign of Akbar, the greatest Mughal emperor of India, so it became one of tributary states of the Mongols. Finally, the Nizām Shāhī dynasty in the reign of Hussein Nizam Shah III was annexed to the territory of the Mughal Empire in the reign of Shāh Jahan, the fifth Gurkhani emperor of India in 1633 AD (1044 AH). The Nizām Shāhī dynasty, consequently, came to an end (Khorshāh Ibn Ghobād Al-Husseini, 2000: 20).

The following is the list of the Nizam Shāhī dynasty rulers:

- 1) Ahmad Nizam Shah Bahri: 1490 AD-1509 AD
- 2) Burhan Nizam Shah I: 1509 -1553 AD.
- 3) Hussain Nizam Shah I: 1553-1565 AD.
- 4) Murtaza Nizam Shah I: 1565-1586 AD
- 5) Miran Hussein Nizam Shah II: 1587 AD.
- 6) Ismail Nizam Shah: 1589 AD.
- 7) Burhan Nizam Shah II: 1591-1564 AD
- 8) Ibrahim Nizam Shah: 1595-1596 AD.
- 9) Bahador Nizam Shah Ibn Ibrahim Shah: 1596 AD.
- 10) Ahmad Nizam Shah II: 1596 AD.
- 11) Hussein Nizam Shah III: 1630-1633 AD.

### **Factors underpinning the relationships between the Nizām Shāhī dynasty and the Safavids**

Since the beginning of the Nizām Shāhī dynasty, the sultans of this dynasty established

close collaboration with the Safavids. Three main factors led to these relations; the political factor was regarded the first and most significant one. In spite of good relations between the Safavids and the Gurkhani sultans in India, there was competition and conflict between them over Kandahar sovereignty and border clashes.

Additionally, in the Deccan, the Gurkhans and the Safavids' interests were in conflict. It was because the Gurkhans considered the Deccan as a part of their territory and furthermore the Safavids supported the Nizām Shāhīs and other local Shiite rulers in the Deccan in a way by which they could take up struggle against the Sunni Gurkhans who were trying to harness the power. Consequently, by apparently obeying the Safavids, the local governments of the Deccan would withstand the Gurkhans's pressure. Religious factors such as having a common religion have had an inevitably profound impact on this convergence. (Astarabadi, 1387: 25)

Throughout this period, the Safavid Shiite government claimed to take the leadership over the Muslim population, particularly over all the Shia's across the world against self-aggrandizement of the Ottoman Sunni caliphate. At the onset of this dynasty, the Nizām Shāhī embraced the Shia religion, and recognized it as their official religion.

The third influential factor associated with the development of their international relations was cultural field. The Nizām Shāhīs warmly welcomed some Iranian people, immigrated to the Deccan and a large number of these immigrants had been recruited in their military service or administrative system, and they had key positions. The immigration of Persian poets, nobles, and artists to the Deccan resulted in promoting Persian language and culture in the region throughout their reign. In conclusion, sharing the cultural affinity was the other key factor attributable to strengthen interactions between the Nizām Shāhī dynasty and the Safavids. (Astarabadi, 1387: 25)

### **Relations between the Nizām Shāhīs and the Safavids**

The historical trajectory of relations between the Nizām Shāhī dynasty and the Safavids indicates the close relationships and interactions between the two governments in this controversial period. The basic building blocks to these relations can be

categorized into the spheres of politics, culture, and economy. Generally, The Nizām Shāhī dynasty was wielded an inevitably spiritual influence by the Safavids in Iran. The sermons delivered by the name of the Safavids, the Shiism followed by The Nizām Shāhīs, the common language shared between two governments, diplomats and ambassadors get accredited, correspondence exchanged between the two governments and some Iranian recruitment were associated with shaping this policy.

### **Delivering sermon in the name of the Safavids**

After declaring his independence in 1490 AD (896 AH), Ahmad Nizam Shah deleted the names of the Bahmani kings and delivered a sermon in his own name. Burhan Nizam Shah I, the second king of this dynasty (1509-1553 AD) converted to Shia Islam under the tutelage of Shah Tahir Husaini (880-952 AH/ 1475-1545 AD). He delivered a sermon in the veneration of the Twelve Shiite Imams, like The Safavid rulers (Astarabadi, 1387: 25). His successors, Borhan Nizam Shah and Hussein Nizam Shah (961-972 AH/ 1553-1565 AD) also preached their sermons in the veneration of the Twelve Shiite Imams (Hallister, 1373: 459). In the meantime, any relationships between the Deccan and the Safavids made the Mongols deeply suspicious with a sense of resentment. They refused to deliver any sermons in the name of the Safavid rulers. Shah Jahan, the Mongol Empire, feared for the independence of the Nizām Shāhī dynasty, and objected to name the Iranian rulers in sermons. In 1636 AD (1045 AH), he wanted Nizām Shāhīs to mention the name of Shāh Jahan instead of Iranian rulers, and delivered their sermons on the Sunni view (Riaz ul-Islam, 1391: 138, 168-169). On the other hand, in the pursuit of a supporter, Nizām Shāhī dynasty found Iran as the most powerful country that could reduce the constant pressure of the Mongols until the Ahmednagar's government could resist the Mongols. As a result, the continued diplomatic relationships between Iran and the Deccan improved (Hallister, 1373: 138, 140, and 169).

### **Shiite religion in the Nizām Shāhī dynasty**

Undeniably, what had built a link between the Nizām Shāhīs and the Safavids, was their common religion, while one of the most significant religious differences and conflicts in the Islamic world of that period in Muslim states was Sunni-

Shiism controversies. Consequently, it led to develop a close interaction between the states, sharing the same religion. As a result, it was considered a key factor in their unity. Ahmednagar Nizām Shāhī had adopted the Shiite religion, motivated by the Safavids in 1537 AD (944 AH), almost half a century before Akbar implemented his policy for the contests of the Deccan (Ibid: 249).

As mentioned in the previous discussions, the founder of the Nizām Shāhīs was Ahmad Nizam Shah, a descendant of the Hindu Brahman who later converted to Islam. Early in the reign of his son, Burhan Nizam Shah I (915-960 AH/ 1509-1553 AD), the propaganda efforts, designed to "servant's blessing", the "Mahdavi" movement, was being promoted in Ahmednagar. It was said that one of Burhan Nizam Shah's daughters married to Sheikh Mahdavi (Ibid: 443). However, there is a truth that Burhan Shah converted to the Shiite religion and recognized it the official religion, under the sponsorship of Shāh Tāhīr Husaini, a prominent Iranian missionary, who entered the Deccan in 1520 AD (926 AH) or in 1521 AD (928 AH), and spread the Shiite religion (Astarabadi, 2008: 25).

Shāh Tāhīr was a disciple of the Shiite religion in southern India and played an active role in spreading the Shiism there (Riazul-Islam, 1391: 138). Burhan Nizam Shah tried to propagate the Shiism. It is said that after his death, his bones were taken to Karbalā and buried next to the tomb of Imam Hussein (Hindushāh, 2009, J 3: 28).

Throughout the reign of Hussein Nizam Shah II (995 AH/ 1586 AD), Shiism was the official religion. After his death, in the reign of Murteza Nizam Shah (972-995 AH/ 1565-1586 AD), the Shiite school empowered, the disciples and followers of "Ahl al-Bayt" were represented with tremendous honor and *respect* and the more number of villages were entrusted to them. He was finally assassinated by the sons of Hussein Nizam Shah II in 1588 AD (Rajab 996 AH), and his burial ceremony was performed according to Shiite jurisprudence and after a few years, his bones were transferred to Karbala. (Hallister, 1373: 460).

When Ismail Nizam Shah (997 AH/ 1589 AD) has shown more receptiveness to Mahdavidism under the influence of Jamal Khan Dekni, his action led to dissatisfaction among some courtiers. Mahdavidism, therefore, recognized as the official religion instead of The Twelver Shi'a religion throughout his reign. Two years later,

Ismail's father who had been taken refuge with the Mongol court, got into fight with his son (999-1003 AH/ 1591-1564 AD). After he pulled off the victory in the fight with his son, and regained the throne under the name of Burhan Nizam Shah II (999 AH/ 1590 AD), he rejected the Mahdavi religion and once again recognized the Shiite religion (Hindushah, 1388: 28). He correspondingly delivered his sermons in the veneration of the Twelve Shiite Imams and mentioned the name of the Safavid rulers, while Sunni and Mahdavi formed the majority of population there. (Nadavi, 1936: 135)

### Sharing the common language by the Safavids and the Nizām Shāhī dynasty

As mentioned in the previous discussions, after the collapse of the Bahmani dynasty, several dynasties such as Adilshāhi, Qutbshāhi, Barid shāhi and Nizām Shāhī, established in the south India, which were similar to one another in terms of having the same religion and language throughout their reigns (Bashir al-Nisa Begum, 1379: 31). Persian-speaking writers, poets and Iranian immigrants, and the attention of the Nizām Shāhī rulers led to the development and spread of Persian language and literature at the time.

Persian language and literature was the most important administrative and bureaucratic language of the states and the most significant remnant of this heritage can be seen through history. The encyclopedia of the history of India in the Islamic period, which can be considered as the most enormously important historic work, is called "Firishta" or "Ferešte" by Muhammad Qasim Hindu Shah Astarabadi. The presence of the most increasingly prominent Iranian scholars and politicians resulted in the growth and development of Persian language and literature among the governments, causing a period to be followed by the history of Iranian literature and poetry with the Indian literary style, which has been discussed in History of research and contemporary literature in detail.

### The exchange of political and cultural ambassadors between the Nizām Shāhī and the Safavids

Among the numerous Shiite governments in south India throughout this period, the Nizām Shāhī seemed to have built up better relationships with foreign countries than the others had and their ambassadors had been mutually traveling to the

other neighboring governments with many gifts (Nadavi, 1936: 135). Subsequently, the exchange of ambassadors with Iran and the employment of Iranians in high positions strengthened the connections between the Deccan dynasties, particularly the Safavid emperors and the Nizām Shāhīs. (Riazul-Islam, 1391: 249)

Seyyed Mohammad Hossein Madani, who had a special respect and honor in the court of Burhanshah, after coming back from India met Shah Tahmasb and complied Burhanshah's kindness and affection to the family of Muhammad Prophet (S) and Shāh Tāhīr's efforts in promoting the Shiism religion. As a result, the relations and interactions between two rulers and their correspondence and communication established and improved. To offer congratulation, Shah Tahmasb dispatched Agha Salman Tehrani, known as Mīr Jamāl, with gifts and an agate ring on which was engraved the phrase "May God grant success"<sup>9</sup> to promote the Shiism religion. (Khorshāh Ibn Ghobād Al-Husseini, 1379: 15).

This letter<sup>10</sup> as one of the most important documents indicates the strong relations between two governments. Accordingly, a reciprocal relation were built between them, and Burhan Nizam Shah's ambassadors were sent to the court of Shah Tahmasb. Shah Haidar, the son of Shah Tahir Hosseini, was one of the ambassadors, about whom Khorshāh writes, "Shāh Tāhīr complied

<sup>9</sup> «التوفيق من الله»

<sup>10</sup> «... در این اوقات خجسته ساعات که سیادت پناه نقابت دستگاه، رفیع الدرجات کثیر البرکات، ذی الحسب والظاهر وانسب الطاهر، عمده افاحم السادات والقباء العظام، نقاوه اولاد حضرت خیر الانام - علیه الصلاه والسلام - شمساً للسیاده والنقابیه والدین، محمد الحسینی المدنی الواحدی که به تقبیل قوایم سریر خلافت مصیر و حاشیه بساط جلال مناصب مستعد و سرافراز گشت صورت ارادت و اعتقاد و کیفیت اخلاص و اتحاد آن سیادت و نقابت دستگاه کماهی بر مرایای ضمیر منیر سعادت تصویر کرد که مورد اسرار غیب و مهبط انوار لاریبیست مرتسم و منقش گردانید ... چه بنابر وفور مساعی جمیله آن سیادت پناه در اعلاء اعلام دین مبین و ترویج احکام شریعت حضرت خیر النبیین علیه الصلوه والسلام و انتشار مذهب حق امامیه در آن صوب و ظهور آثار اخلاص و بروز قواعد اختصاص او بدین درگاه سلاطین پناه توجه خاطر دریا مقاطر درباره آن سیادت و نقابت دستگاه زیاده از حد و حصر است «لا یحتاج الصباح الی المصباح» و آن افاضت پناه را از زمره معتقدان به اخلاص و مخلصان به اختصاص این دولت بی انتقال ابدی الاتصال دانسته، به موافق تعظیم و عوائد تفخیم از سایر اکابر و اشراف ممتاز و مستثنی می دانیم و نتایج این معانی نسبت به آن سیاده پناه و اولاد عظام «الی ما تناسلوا و تعاقبوا» ازین دودمان رفیع مقام ما دارالشهور و الاعوام ظاهر و باهر خواهد شد. تحریراً فی شهر محرم ۹۴۹م» (Khorshāh Ibn Ghobād Al-Husseini, 1379: 16-18)

with Shah Tahmasb's invitation, and he sent his son, Shāh Haidar, to the court of Shah Tahmasb with a letter by the Burhan shah's consent. Subsequently, Shah Tahmasb replied the letter. After having stayed in Iran for a while, Shah Haidar came back to India and when he resided in the city of Homayounpour, he presented Shah Tahmasb's letter with gifts and donations to Burhan shah (Khorshāh Ibn Ghobād Al-Husseini, 1379: 17).

The other ambassador of Burhan Nizam Shah, who had been dispatched to the court of Shah Tahmasb, was Khorshāh Ibn Ghobād Al-Husseini, who was sent to Iran as an ambassador by Nizam Shah and Shāh Tāhīr in 1545 AD (Rajab 952 AH), and then came to Shah Tahmasb in Qazvin city. He lived in the camp of Shah Tahmasb for a year and a half. That is why he was known as the "emissary of Nizam Shah" and wrote a book entitled *The History of the emissary of Nizam Shah* (Ibid: 20-21).

In 1611 AD (1020 AH), another significant issue, which had been done through mediation, was that the two governments forged an alliance to support one another against the threats of Jahangir, the Mongol emperor (Filsafi, 1369: 240).

In the later periods, Malik Anbar Habashi, the commander of the Nizām Shāhī dynasty sent some ambassadors to the court of Shah Abbas as well. He requested Shah Abbas to mediate between them in the presence of Jahangir, the emperor of India. (Ibid: 1421-1422), and Shah Abbas granted their request, then he dispatched Darwish Baig Marashito Nizam Shah and Malik Anbar, who reconciled them and Jahangir accepted the conciliation Shah Abbas's role.

In 1616 AD (Shawwal 1025 AH), Shah Abbas sent the other conciliation officer, named Mohammad Reza Baig, to Jahangir's court (Ibid: 655). Sir Thomas Roe, English Diplomat, reports that Mohammad Reza Baig awarded clothes, rewards and badges by Jahangir with respect and dignity. Sir Thomas Roe received reports that the emissary had apparently commissioned to conclude a peace treaty between the emperor and the Deccan, but in reality, his major goal was to provide his lord with financial assistance in the war against the Turks. Mohammad Reza Baig had been given a large amount of rewards and benefits and then left Malwa region in 1617 AD (Rabī' al-Awwal 1026 AH). Jahangir gave him a letter, addressed the king, in which the aims of Jahangir's trip to Malwa and the fruitful military operations against

the Deccan government were described. There was likelihood that after spending his leave, Mohammad Reza Baig probably stayed in India for six months or came back to India because he died in 1617 AD (Shawwal 1026 AD) and Jahangir ordered his property to be given to an Iranian businessman, named Mohammad Ghasem Baig. (Riazul-Islam, 2012: 118-119)

In 1620 AD (1029 AH), three embassy officials were sent to Bijapur, Golkandeh and Ahmednagar by Shah Abbas (Filsafi, 1369: 759). The massive improvement of these relations between the Safavids and the Deccan Shiite governments, however, was extremely unpleasant to the Mongol Empire. Although the main preoccupation of Babur and Homayoun, Mughal Emperors, was controlling the northern India, none of them was aware of the Deccan. They kept up correspondence with Burhan Nizam Shah. In 1600 AD, Akbar Shah besieged an army to capture the fort of the Deccan, but this rebel was routed through negotiation on land with the Mongols. Throughout the reign of Jahangir (1608-17 AD), the Mongols put increased pressure on the Deccan. Abdul Rahim, Khān Khānān and Prince Shah Jahān, one after another, launched large-scale invasion and occupation of Ahmednagar and Bijapur. The long war and conflict from the Mongols against Ahmednagar and Bijapur ended as a result of the intense pressure from Shah Jahān and the immediate success of Abdul Rahim Khānīn 1026 AH/ 1617 AD, and finally there was a peace treaty by which the Mongols annexed some territories including Ahmednagar Fort. (Riazul-Islam, 1391: 139-141), and in conclusion, they overthrew Ahmednagar government in 1633 AD (Ibid: 168).

### **Recruitment of some Iranian prominent scholars in Nizāmshāhī's court**

Scholars, artisans, business persons and other social groups who immigrated to the Deccan drew the rulers' much attention. By appointing Iranians in high-position jobs, they greatly influenced the Iranian-Shi'a culture and civilization in the Deccan. Throughout their reigns, many important Iranian-Shi'a personalities, scholars and politicians served in their government organizations. During the reign of Burhan Nizam Shah, one of the Iranian Shi'a scholars, named Shāh Tāhīr Hosseini (880-952 AH/ 1475-1545 AD) entered the Deccan (926 AH/ 1520 AD) and Burhan Shah appointed him as a minister. An institute was established in

Ahmednagar by Shah Tahir, which drew many Shia scholars, poets, and political figures' attraction to immigrate southern India. Shāh Tāhīr's brother, Shāh Jafar, played an active role in the reign of Burhanshah; consequently, scientific services were performed with the support of this Shiarule. (Mohieddin Ghaderi, 2008: 25)

Throughout the reign of Murteza Nizam Shah (973-995 AH/ 1565-1586 AD), Iranian scholars had been greatly given respect and honor, among them, Mullāh Malik Qomi and Mullāh Zohūri were prominent Iranian scholars. Zohūri was known as a renowned Iranian poet. After fleeing his homeland for India, he was welcomed at the court of Ahmednagar and Bijapur. (Nadavi, 1936: 133)

Another Iranian scholar, Mohammad Qhasem Fereshteh, the author of *Golshan Ebrahimi*, came to India throughout the reign of Murteza Nizam Shah. Mohammad Ghasem Fereshteh was the son of Gholam Ali Hindushah Astarabadi, who was born in Astarabad in 1553 AD (960 AH). As a child, he immigrated to India with his father during the reign of Murteza Nizamshah (972-996 AH) and took up the city of Ahmednagar as his residence, and both of them infiltrated the royal court. Murteza Nizamshah appointed Hindushah as the tutor of his son, Mīrān Hussein. Fereshteh had been staying in Ahmednagar until Mīrān Nizamshah died and then he appeared in the court of Adilshāhīs. (Qaderi, 1933: 16)

In conclusion, although the local governments of the Deccan and the Safavids, had always had respectable relations with each other and apparently supported one another owing to the same religion and culture and the existence of a common rival, Gurkhans of India, they did not take any action so as to give support to each other. They refused to jeopardize their own interests in favor of other interests and to enter into military conflicts with the Bāberiyān.

### Conclusion

The Shi'a religion was being propagated and spread in India in the second century AH by business persons, adherents of the Shia Imams, and practiced and preached by Fatimid Caliphate and Ismailism in the fourth and fifth centuries. Since India was one of the centers of the Islamic Caliphate, many immigrants and Shi'a families who had entered the regions spread the branches of the Shi'a Islam, the Zaidis, Ismailis (including the Bohras, and Agā Khāniye branches). After centuries of a great struggle, the Shias were

able to hold political power in several parts of India and establish independent governments such as Bahmani, Adilshahi, and most importantly the Nizāmshāhī, which most of rulers and kings were those who supported and promoted the Shias. Thus, these governments provided the necessary basis for the spread of Shiism.

The foundation of the Safavid state in Iran and the recognition of the Shi'a religion led to many connections between Iranians and other Shi'as to have a common religion. The south India was one of the centers facilitating such communication, and the Nizāmshāhīs attained impregnable position as one of the most important Shi'a-ruled states in south India and the Deccan. The interaction policy of the Safavids with the Nizām Shāhīs was not consistent and reliable and factors such as political changes in southern India, and the constitution of the two neighboring powers of the Safavids and Babur affected the political policy of the Nizām Shāhī dynasty.

Undoubtedly, the spiritual support, and almost financial assistance from the Shi'a Safavid dynasty, especially towards the Nizām Shāhīs, significantly influenced the continuity and development of these states as well as the Shiism in southern India. Moreover, some issues such as delivering the sermons in the name of the Safavids, paying attention to Iranian immigrants like Shi'a scholars or Iranian artists and writers, recognizing the Shiism, exchanging emissaries with gifts and numerous missives, recruiting some Iranians in the government system contributed to the development of the relations and interactions.

In addition, the presence of Iranian prominent personalities in the Shi'a-ruled states in India, including the Nizām Shāhīs and the more extensive connections with the Safavids had highly influenced the spread of Shiism in India. Nowadays, Shiism has achieved an elevated position among the Hindu and Muslim communities, many Hindus, therefore, were strongly influenced by it.

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