

Samanids and revival of national heritage

E zatollah Khodadee

Department of History, Shoushtar Branch, Islamic Azad University, Shoushtar, Iran

Abstract: After Saffarids of Sistan which their Rule did last too long, Samanids who ruled much of vast and developed Transoxania and Khorasan have to be considered the first of great Persian dynasties. They formed an independent government from the Baghdad caliphates. They considered themselves the progeny of Sassanid's and were proud of their national heritage. Samanids made big efforts and took great strides in expanse of Persian heritage. Samanids supported and nurtured scientists and literates such as Bal' Ami and Rudaki and Daquqi. Because of their efforts, during their reign many of a Persian literate were published and came to existence. They, far from nationalistic bias were open to thoughts of freedom and democratic principle and freedom of expression and practiced tolerance and interaction and acceptance of differing thoughts and opinions. Samanids laid an optimum fertile ground for flourishing of knowledge and in particular rational kind of thinking and principles and sciences. The legacy of revival of proud Farsi language and native Persian culture and heritage is theirs. Samanid monarchs were tolerant and seeker of knowledge and scientists. Ahmad ibn Ismail valued educated and shunned the military. Nasr ibn Ahmad (Nasr II) from amongst seventy scientists chose three to consult him and speak freely to him and in front of him. All Samanid monarchs chose scientists as their ministers such as Jihoonnee, Bal' Ami, Muhammad ibn Ahmad salami, Atabi, These monarchs not only created pleasant circumstances for the scientists but also with active encouragement furthered the cause of knowledge and culture during reigns. One important point to consider at this era is the number of Iranian scientists from Khorasan and Transoxania is several times over the other parts of Iran at the same era. More importantly, amongst these scientists and those we know of their birth date and age at time of demise, many have lived beyond eighty and some beyond 100 years. This is an indication of what a life of luxury and wealth and comfort these scientists have had in these times to live such a long lives, and, all because the wealth and opulence the Samanid monarchs had provided them. Samanids used Arabic in official governmental communication as a matter of motto of unifying the whole empire. At the same time facilitated the political and social apparatus to be in service of political and cultural brokers. Knowingly or not this started a cycle of intellectual and cultural developments. During Samanids, this cycle of change because of prevalence of ideal conditions took such an encompassing turn which created perfect atmosphere for flourishing of principles freedom of expression and free exchange of Ideas, cultural cooperation, acceptance, interaction and tolerance of differing cultures and nationalities became the norm.

[E zatollah Khodadee. **Samanids and revival of national heritage.** *J Am Sci* 2013;9(5):7-11]. (ISSN: 1545-1003). <http://www.jofamericanscience.org>. 2

Keyword: Samanids and revival of national heritage.

Introduction:

The emergence and epiphany of a culture and a heritage is the outcome of a process in which out of necessity and or for a cause the power of creation yields an existence and an outcome. Samanid Empire was the third powerful Persian government which in a short time, in addition to ruling Transoxania and Khorasan, conquered territories up to and close vicinity of city of Ray. They were attached to their native heritage and never withheld any support from people of knowledge and sciences and literature. Samanids made Bukhara the hub of knowledge and literature. They very much encouraged and endeared renowned poets like Abu-Shakur Balkhi and Rudaki and Daquqi and modern prose of Persian language came about as a result of these encouragements. Signs and advent of Samanids became apparent even before the rise of Taherian dynasty, and the influence of

achievements of their era have continued to present day. The most prominent of Persian scientists like Avicenna, Abu Rayhan Albiruni, Rudaki, and Firdausi are the product of the age of this renaissance. In fact the advent of Samanids in the era of Islam, is indicative of revival of Persia and Persians and their ancient civilization and culture, and is also indicative of symmetric amalgamation of Islamic approach with its solid foundations with Persian life style and spirits. In the same manner as the demise of this dynasty brought the rule of Alien Turkish governments and ended the era of governance of native Iranian rulers. Samanids were the first dynasty after the advent of Islam in history that entered the political and cultural structure and put their seal as the founders of the golden age of Persia in that period. Emergence of Samanid dynasty coincided with flourishing of

Persian civilization and culture and its collapse meant the governance of foreigners.

Samanids and revival of native culture

After the rule of Taherian and Saffarids , Samanids were the third relatively powerful dynasty which emerged in Iran and, in a short time they brought Transoxania , Khorasan and Sistan under the realm of their power. Samanids during this period not only cemented the political life of the country but, also were instrumental in booming of sciences, arts, poetry and culture.

We shall recognize the Samanids period as a turning point in the history of Persian culture and Farsi (language). Samanids monarchs worked diligently to establish Persian independence from the Abbasids caliphates. In Samanids times, Persians gradually achieved political and cultural unity thru the means of cultural and native language revival. In this period the Persian Dari language and Islamic consuetudes like blazes of a fire with patronage of the monarchs lit up Transoxania, all of Iran and sub-continent . In its height of Magnificence and grandeur, Bukhara as the center of Persian literature and the seat of Persian heritage and culture and influence competed with Baghdad, the capital of caliphate. Baghdad no longer was able to prevent the capture of Khorasan territories by the Samanids , and nor could it block establishment of another powerful Persian government . Therefore , the antecedent and propitious circumstances for resurrection of Persian spirit and establishment of Persian morals cumulated. Persian civilization and literature and culture owe a great deal of its pageantry and permanence to the Samanids . Samanids of Persian ancestry, freedom loving had both Persian zeal and Islamic limen and apprehension. In light of their brilliance and abundance of fellowship and plentitude of knowledge thirsty adjoins in their court, they laid such a stable foundation for wisdom and learning which could not be shaken by detriment of natural disasters nor from onslaught of Ghaznavids and Seljuk's.

Samanids considered themselves decedents of Bahram Chubin, the great spahbed (army chief) of Sassanid army. They were very much valued and adored their native culture and patronage such scientists and poets such as Rudaki, Daquqi. Bal'Ami. This patronage resulted in publication of many of a books and masterpieces in Farsi. They created history of Iranian civilization and were instrumental in establishing education and culture in Iran post Islam . One of biggest cultural developments in this period was a fundamental renaissance in verse and poetry which developed and took root in Khorasan. Khorasan became the center for literature and poetry. Farsi got a new nascence, but in it never

became an instrument of eulogy of the Samanids court.

Samanids without nationalistic precludes cultivated freedom of thought and toleration and interaction and acceptance of differing opinions, and created a fertile ground for growth of knowledge and especially rational thinking and sciences. It must be noted, their historical legacy is revival of Farsi and Persian civilization⁴.

Rulers of This Dynasty themselves being of Persian ancestry had a love for their civilization and its old established customs. Samanids monarchs loved a Farsi and prose and poems in that language. They rewarded the poets and writers generously and they sometimes even composed poems themselves. They were not even prejudice in Islamic-religious matters and different sects and religions were free to practice⁵.

Major consequence of their rule for Islamic Iranian civilization and its people was the unity between different Persian tribes of Transoxania and Khorasan and, an attempt to incorporate and introduce Islamic customs into the legacy of ancient Iranian civilization and way of life.

It is worth noting although their territories later were divided between Turkish rulers, but the cultural and scientific movement their founding monarchs initiated did not cease in Transoxania and Khorasan, if anything, in Khorasan it led to codification of national epic of Persian people.

Actually the tale of Khoutaye Namak , Which at the end of Samanids an attempt to rewrite and enumerate and reorganize parts of, before the time of Samanids at beginning of Baghdad caliphate was translated from Pahlavi to Arabic and different Arabic versions were available.

What in this regard in the realm of Samanids, especially that which is referenced by Abu Mansur Muhammad ibn Abdalrazizhsephsalar of Khorasan and Konarang of Tus , and was created in Dari had an enormous role in strengthening the bonds and creation of national identity in this era and the times to come. At the same time this action was indicative of the feel and notions stemming from societal and political conditions of Samanids era, which was both bonding and distinguishing different Iranian nationalities in the east based on their old **ASATEER** customs. Relating and linking the present conditions era to ancient Asateerian sentiment, was the cause to make Amoon River (jaihoon) in the national Persian epic a separation and dividing line between Persian sphere and the Toranid entity. Turks at the time had forayed into Persian sphere of Transoxania , were termed and considered as Toranids and later their Government was named Al Afrasiab . This pretext was an explanation for the sentiments expressed based on constant onslaughts of Toranians to the realm of

Keyanian in Asateerian tales which in reality had nothing to do with real attacks of present day Turks compared to what expressed in Asateerian customs of Iran

Basis and factors for advances in literature and science during Samanids

Samanids Monarchs were Just and fair and thirsty for knowledge. They patronized scientists and artists and educators and teachers. Ahmad ibn Ismail patronized Educated and shunned the military and this resulted in his death. Nasr II from amongst seventy scientists picked three to consult him and give him free and unabated advice and speak freely in front of him. All Samanids had scientists as ministers. Jaihani, Bal'ami, Muhammad ibn Ahmad salami, Atabi,.....

1-Samanids monarchs provided the educated elite with amenities and facilities and optimal conditions and patronized them. With patronizing treatment they created optimum environment for advancement of sciences and literature.

2-Scientist Ministers were seeker of higher advances and sciences. they supported public learning and encouraged advancement in education for the masses.

3-Economic growth was simplified in value for Caravans, good irrigation system for agriculture, producing silk in abundance, and

4-Freedom of thought and opinion, Freedom of any and all religion and multiplicity of religions

5-Sheer desire of the monarchs for the revival of beautiful Persian language

6- National awareness and rationalism which Rudaki championed

Main characteristics of Samanids two centuries of rule are that Islamic Iranian scholars and characters possessed bright and intelligent capabilities and, in religious matters and principles and practice they themselves attained position of sanctity, so much so that they were very much respected by the religious figure of other nations. Still till today in religious publications Islamic and specially non-Islamic and non-Iranian and non-Shia their name is mentioned with a halation of sanctum. In fact even in the furthest of Islamic lands people mention their name with utmost respect. This period from scientific and cultural perspective is in 1st place but, from perspective of gaining power and religious respect for Iranians definitely has no match and is second to none. We should not forget that during Saffarids and Samanids many of a Iranian scientists which have proved their intelligence were not living in Iran and were living abroad usually in places like Iraq and possibly Hejaz and other places.

Revival of national language with the help of national movements

People of other captured Islamic lands like Mesopotamia and Damascus and Palestine and Egypt and North Africa in the process of advancement of Arabic language gradually lost their native language. Although, some of these languages like Aramaic and Ghabty Language were several thousand years old. Even Christians in these lands after many centuries spoke and wrote and read with the conquering language. On the hand Iranians, even after they became a majority Muslim nation have kept native language and with passage of time kept it from hegemony and influence of Arabic. Even people of Bukhara in order to save their native language and because of attachment they had to their mother language, in the beginning of conquests of Islam accepted Islam with the condition to Salah recite Quran in Farsi. In history of Bukhara it is said that in bowing, Muezzin would yell "Negoonkeet" and in bow he yelled "NegoonoeNegoonkeet". Iranians made every effort and attempts to keep their native language. This definitely was one of the means of their struggle to and victory in keeping the national spirit and continuation of their and eventual success of their national movements. It is Because of this same persistence and efforts, that in a short time they again revived Farsi this symbol of their national and native brio. With the advent of giant characters and oratories like Rudaki and Firdausi they brought Farsi to such glamor and prestige where the world is in gratitude for several immortal works in that language.

Scientific Exchanges up to the moment of demise

During those years in eastern Iran when between Sultan Mahmud ghaznavid and remainders of Samanids bloody wars was going, and don those days where Turkish salves in Baghdad ever so often changing one caliphate with another, Scientists were not negligent of their practices and between Samarkand and Baghdad and or Baghdad and Thathjeh scientific exchanges being made. Amazingly, sometime scientific problems from Balkh(eastern tip of this vast territory) will be sent to Cordova(western tip of the territory), and in a spat of time which would not pass half a year the solution to the question in the form of a codified book will be sent back. Samanids were always were thinking to increase the number of scientists and make them onto giant figures of science and literature. One of the great traditions of Samanids, they never required the educated to kiss the ground they walk on. They would throw a debate session during Ramadan. This session would be in the presence of the monarch, who he himself started the disputation by asking a question, following that all present scientists would enter into a discussion.

Samanids would invite anybody in Bakhara who was better in Jurisprudence, virtue than anybody else to be a minister and they put them in charge of affairs. obviously in such a land and rules like this, the masses would turn to education and sciences . That was why in Samanids period, Samarkand and bakhara were the center and seat of sciences, especially since bakhara was the capital, it had superiority over Samarkand and always there were crowds of leaders, figure heads, religious leaders and specialists in all fields and expertise were present or they were being trained. There are some publication has been remained and some other have perished. Important thing is that during period the number of Iranian scientists from Khorasan and Transoxania meaning the Samanids realm of power who rose to prominence is ten times the famous individuals from other parts of Iran. There were some scientists from Herat and Nishapur, which indicate these two cities were the other major seats of science after Bukhara and, people there had joined pursuit of science. More importantly, from the ranks scientists who we are aware of their birth date and know their age, some have lived past 80 and even 100 years. This is best proof that scientists during that period had lived in ultimate wealth and luxury and comfort and opulence to have lived such a long lives. This was all in light of all the patronage and comfort that Samanids rulers had afforded them.

Celebrities during Samanids

Major characteristics of Bal'Maian household and of a bulfazi Muhammad in Abdullah and his son Abu Ali Muhammad ib Jaffar Bal Ami, was nurturing and propagation of Farsi language. They were the 1st Iranian ministers who followed this good policy. Abulfazi Bal'ami and Abu Ali Bal'Ami during their ministration have always preferred Farsi over Arabic. They tried to get Persian published as much as possible. This was an important practice to keep Farsi alive and keeping Persia alive and keep it from succumbing to Arabic hegemony and losing it impendence and it was a top agenda for all national movements. This was a practice founded by Bal'Ami household and was an official practice they established in ministration and statesmanship. Bal'Ami expectations are one of their works, because both father and son were experienced and resourceful secretaries. It is not known who the writer of Expectation is Because of Abulfazi Bal'Ami' hard work Panchatantra was translated from Arabic to Farsi. So did Tabry history was converted from Arabic to Farsi by him. With the patronage of and constant attention of Samanids to revive, Abu mansouri Shahnameh was compiled in prose. Amir Nuhin Mansour Samanid asked Daquqi to convert it to verse. After his assassination by his slave, Hakim Abul

Ghassem Firdausi, in his epic immortal masterpiece of Persian literature Shanameh which is symbol of Iranian national identity accomplished the Task handily. These adductions were all efforts in establishing political independence of Samanids in the way of preserving the national Identity of Persians. Samanids devoted themselves to social and cultural issues. The wonder of their tireless efforts is in creation of a united and congruent political and cultural spirit in a non-congruent carcass of different cultures and nationalities. Samanids realm of power was a symbol of a congruent cultural and political of a nationality **Rudaki**

He was able to create a monumental evolution in poetry and literature of Iran post Islam. In this period nexus of Islamic religious teachings and Iranian language was propagated and developed. It is said that life of Rudaki in the time span specified in Bukhara and Samarkand was conditioned in between magnanimity and bravery of Samanids. From the three Samanids monarchs who were contemporary with Rudaki, two, Ismael ibn Ahmad and Nasr ibn Ahmad as it is in scriptures were great men. They had the most zeal about Iran and, it is quite apparent with what an enthusiasm and fire they were attempting to revive the order of Iranian civilization. All the efforts and fighting and wars in east and west was for Ism and aelbn Ahmad and Nasr ibn Ahmad to establish a venerable territory for revolt against Arabs which would be the ideal cradle for rebirth of a proud Persian civilization and establishment of a just Iranian state. Persian poetry from the outset because of Patronage of the kings and the elite alike not only became the most important model and the mold in literature but it did overtake other forms of art also. Poets became the pre-eminent of all Iranian artists and even the intellectuals. Later historians and biographers mention them with such respectful titles as Hakims meaning wise men and wizards and philosophers. In light of these respectful perspectives to poets and poetry short while later in the beginning of fourth century, the 1st capable Iranian poet Hakim Rudaki Samarkandy gained a legendary position of fame and pre-eminence. Rudaki who in modern times is known as father of Persian poetry, was the royal court poet of Samanids and his work include epeope of Kalilah Wa Dimnah , Sandbad Nameh , Masnavi " Dovraneh Aftab". With patronage of Samanids monarchs (mid fourth century) first set of major works in Farsi was written thru efforts of a group of Iranian scientists. These works were actually the essence of two valuable books of another Iranian antecedent scientist named Muhammad ibn Jareer Tabaree who had written them in Arabic half a century earlier. These two works now days are known as Tabaree Interpretation, and

Bal'Ami History. They are counted as precious treasures in Iranian prose.

Dari Farsi poets likes of Rudaki" Died on 329 GHamary/1-940 AD" and Daquqi" About 325-70Ghamaree/ 935-80AD' were the 1stto write in their folk-native language in such a way which has been formed by kneading different local dialects. This language was accepted in Samanids court and eventually was developed into modern day Farsi and with minor phonetic variation has remained up to present day. Modern Farsi was written in Arabic and little by little more Arabic words have slipped into it. This more and less is the result of international advance of Islamic civilization.

Bakhara and Samrkand Celebrities

- 1- AmeribnOmran The Arbiter of bakhara
- 2- Abulfazlibn Muhammad ibn Ahmad MarvarziPdrone of Kafee
- 3- Muhammad ibnTalootHamedani
- 4- Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn Mansour Khaiat known as ibnKhaiat author of " alnahvulkabeer and " MaaneulGhoran"

Shahnameh, Abu almoedBalkhi and other works of his AjayebAlboldan, Hododulalam Men alshargheiAlmaghreb in Geography.

References:

1. Aluminy in history Dept. at Shooshtar Azad University
2. Ghadyani, Abbas, History of Iranian culture and civilization (from Islamic introduction to

- the end of Samanids), Written lexicon, Tehran 1384, 2nd edition p.380
3. Bertolt schpuller , Iranian history in initial centuries of Islam, translation JavadFlatooripp 109-142
4. Heravai, javad, Samanids history(golden age of Iran after Islam) Amir Kabeer publications, Tehran1382, 2nd ed. P.229
5. Story of Samanids(excerpts from the book"history of Bukhara" written by Muhammad ibnJafarNarshakhee) work of FrazadZiba pour, literate association of penned individuals, Tehran, 1382,2nd ed.p.124
6. Zareenkob,History of Iranian people(2), Amir kabeer Publications Tehran 1373, 4th ed.pp.227-228
7. Motahari, Morteza, services between Islam and Iran, sadraPublications Tehran 1390, 42nd ed.p.p.104-105
8. zarreenkoob, Abdulhussin, of the other things, Javeedan publications, 1356, 1st ed. P.176
9. Shaheedee, Jafar, from yesterday to today, Drop Publication Tehran 1372, 1st ed. P 75
10. Nafeesee,Saeed, life environment, disposition Rudaki'spoems,AmirKabeer publishing, 1381,4th ed.pp.233-234.
11. Nafeesee,Saeed,lifeand time and poem of Rudaki, P.233
12. Abraham Ghaisaree, General Farsi, Muhammad deghanee, Jaami Publications, Tehran 1379, P.9

3/5/2013