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### Original Research Article

## A Comparative Study of Illustrated Manuscripts by Bhagavata Purana and Hamzeh Nameh with an Approach to Court Art and Indian Mass Art\*

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### Abstract

**Problem statement:** The book Bhagavata Purana (Sanskrit: भागवतपुराण ; later: Bhāgavata Purāṇa)[1] was compiled in the 9th century by the efforts of the Indian people and illustrated during the Gurkani period in the 17th century. The version of this book presenting ancient Iranian stories was illustrated in the 16th century by the Gurkani kings of India during the Akbar Shah period. The painting of Hamzeh Nameh was done under the supervision of the Gurkani court and received the support of famous artists. This way it turned into a unique masterpiece. To accurately identify the two types, the ways of painting in the desired versions and their distinction with the names "court art" and "mass art" were adapted.

**Research objectives:** The purpose of this research is to identify the factors influencing the art of mass painting in India and analyze the role of financial and spiritual support in the formation of Indian court art. The main question of this research is: what was the role of the court patrons in the adaptation of the illustrated versions of Hamzeh Nameh and Bhagavata Purana, and what kind of representation does it show?

**Research method:** The research method is descriptive-analytical and "adaptive-comparative," and it is the method of collecting library and documentary information.

**Conclusion:** The results of the studies indicate that Bhagavata Purana's paintings, which are drawn by inferior and untrained artists and are devoid of government advertisements and support, seem to be more effective among the masses. Although some similarities can be seen in the scenes of feasts and battles in Hamzeh Nameh and Bhagavata Purana, the depiction of the epic scenes in the paintings of the Indians in Bhagavata Purana, despite their crude appearance, has a native authenticity, shows a more concrete reality, and is closer to the existing beliefs. The comparison of the two versions is, in fact, a comparison of the government's India and the people's India.

**Keywords:** *Indian Gurkani Painting, Hamzeh Nameh, Bhagavata Purana, Court Art, Mass Art.*

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## Introduction

There is no doubt that Gurkani Court was the main center of wealth and power in Indian society at that time. This entity, due to its connections with other parts of India and neighboring countries, was able to be very important and influential in the field of art, hence the prevailing conditions. The society of that time in India showed two different approaches to painting and its achievements.

The art was based on the idealism and religious ideology of the court and was able to lead artists in their desired direction. Moreover, the kings and nobles of India were generous, and bounteous people who did everything to patronize the people of literature, art, and culture, and this support led to the flourishing and growth of art, which was performed by masterful and skilled artists, especially the non-native ones. On the other hand, it is an indigenous painting and a tradition that was rooted in the rituals, beliefs, culture, traditions, and beliefs of the popular masses. As a case in point in this research, we can refer to the illustrations in the Bhagavata Purana version.

Puranas are a part of the religious-philosophical literature of India. Indian religious literature includes many books in the following categories: Veda, Brahman, Arnik, Upanishad, Puran, Ramayana, Mahabharata, Agamas, Panjatra, and Tantra. What we know as Purānic literature is a collection of dissertations and books that talk about God's power, force, dominion, sovereignty, domination, and acts, unlike epic literature such as Mahabharat and Ramayaneh, which discussed the human heroes' work and acts (Tarachand & Jalali Naini, 1971, 550). Although Puranas are religious texts, they also contain informative content and encyclopedic knowledge about astronomy, geography, medicine, health, industry, arms making (Imani, 2010, 171) pilgrimages to shrines and rivers, and the worship of icons and goddesses (Pargiter, 1919; Lipner, 2005). Puranas formed a treasure of pictures in the popular beliefs of India in the form of a book that was the result of the endeavor and the effort of the masses

of the people, a product that did not need the court, nobles, and master artists' support.

When Persian was the official language of the country, not only did many Indians speak this language and create their literary and artistic works, but also a large group of Iranians and Central Asian scientists traveled to India for political or personal reasons and added to the cultural richness of this land. So during the period of the Indian Gurkani rule (which is known in the west as the Mongolians of India), hundreds of Persian poets and prominent artists appeared in various fields of art.

One of these epic literary versions is the story of Hamzeh. Hamzeh Nameh is a half-historical and half-mythological story that seems to talk about the courage and bravery of Hamzeh (PBUH), the uncle of the Prophet of Islam (PBUH), in the land of Iran, Arabia, and India before Islam. This book has several different texts, all of which are Persian, and of course, translations have been made into Arabic, Hindi, Pashto, Turkish, Kurdish, and Javanese. The illustration of this version was done under the supervision of the court, and according to experts, famous artists with many facilities contributed to it, resulting in a very valuable masterpiece.

Each person's imaginary elements and clothing were an expression of the ideal situation at the time or that they wanted to represent the current status. So the comparison of paintings in the books of Bhagavata Purana and Hamzeh Nameh, which were formed in the same historical period, is a comparison of popular Indian art and courtly Indian art. Court art is also an art that has had the material and spiritual support of the king or influential people in the government and nobility, and its penetrating ideological views are measurable. Mass art, on the other hand, is art created by artists who are not very well known and not very illustrious and who are also deprived of government support. In them, traces of ideals, folklore, religion, and (to some extent) the image of the existing situation can be recognized.

The primary goal of this study is to identify the factors that influence Indian painting art in the

two approaches of popular art and court art. One approach is the role of financial and spiritual support from the court, which in this case has led to the formation of magnificent and mature art, and the other approach is mass and popular art without support.

Therefore, the dominant process in this research is applied in terms of purpose (theoretical, fundamental research) and descriptive-analytical in terms of research method. The nature of the data is qualitative. Data were collected from library sources using documentary methods. The statistical sample for this study was carefully chosen, with 10 paintings from each manuscript (20 pictures in total) examined.

The influencing factors on the art of Indian painting are examined in this article, as is the role of art patrons in the formation of the two books Hamzeh Nameh and Bhagavad Purana. In this research, to accurately identify two types of painting methods in these two versions, we have distinguished them with the names "court art" and "mass art."

## Research background

There is little research on Bhagavata Purana, but there is a lot of research on the Hamzeh Nameh manuscripts. These studies are as follows:

Sharafaei Murghaki and Mahmoudi (2016) introduced this Indian literary version in their article "Study of Purnic Literature in Hindu's Popular Culture and Religion," which was published in the Journal of Indian Subcontinent Studies.

In his article, "The Secrets of Hamzeh or Amir Hamzeh Sahibqaran," published in Mirror Heritage magazine Zekavati Qaragozlu (2008), the author studied the similarity of the two stories in terms of historical antiquity and the effects of different periods of history on the secrets of Hamzeh. The author concluded that Hamzeh's symbols in his recent writing are related to the Safavid era.

Gholam Hosenzadeh, Zulfaqari and Farokhi (2010), in an article entitled "Structure of Hamzeh Nameh Motives," printed in Criticism magazine, highlighted

that the narrators of Hamzeh Nameh gained help from many motives and themes for their legendary strength and richness. For this reason, a variety of motives from all kinds of chivalry to romantic and amazing stories were used, and all these elements were rarely found in a single story. This feature is one of the things about the book that has made it famous. Some elements of Hamzeh's story can be seen in world literature as well, like dragon slaying, prophecy, immortality, blindness and vision recovery, and eternal blessing.

In another article named "Hamzeh Nameh, The First Institution in the Artistic Relations between Iran and the Subcontinent," which was published in the Librarianship Research magazine, Gharavi (1997), the author attempted to explain the formation of the school of painting in India and Iran during the time of Humayun, the compilation of Hamzeh Nameh in the era of Akbar Shah and Nader, and the current status of the precious tableau of this great book in the world.

Research is also focused on Indian painting as well as the painting of the manuscript version of Hamzeh Nameh, some of which can be mentioned:

In his article entitled "Hamzeh Nameh: The Greatest Persian Illustrated Book," which was published in Art and People magazine, Gharavi (1967) discussed how Hamzeh Nameh was illustrated, the position of painters in the Indian court, and the current position of its paintings.

In the article "The Tuti Nameh of Cleveland Museum of Art as the Base of the Evolution of the Hamzeh Nameh's Mongolian Style in Miniature Painting," published in the Journal of Visual and Applied Arts, Hosseini, Asarkashani and Moin Eldini (2014) examined the illustrations of Hamzeh Nameh and Tuti Nameh (two Gurkani's illustrated versions), and he has achieved this important thing: the luxurious manifestation of Mongolian style in Indian painting, before appearing in the great version of Hamzeh Nameh, has passed its development stages in the paintings of Tuti Nameh.

In another article published in the Journal of

Subcontinent Researches (JSR) with the title "Investigating the Differences of Abd-Al-Samad Shirazi's Paintings in the Shah Tahmasp Court and Gurkanis of India", Afzal Tousi and Houshmand Monfared (2016) reported that Abdul Samad's painting in the court of Shah Tahmasp was based on the principles of Iranian painting and Shia's religion was influential in his works.

Mass and indigenous paintings of India have not been deeply researched so far, and this is the novelty of this research. Moreover, this study focuses on the lesser-known Indo-Persian literary texts (Bhagavata Purana), and also, the comparison of two works of art from the point of view of the patrons of the Indian court is considered a research innovation.

## Introducing the Version of Bhagavata

### Purana

The very important and valuable literature of Sanskrit attracted the attention of Muslim, Iranian and Turkish rulers of India. The significance of these works caused a movement in translating them into the Persian language and provided a basis for their study for researchers unfamiliar with Sanskrit.

Many prose and poetic translations of the Upanishads, Mahabharat, Ramayan, the works of Kalidas, and epics, romantic, or philosophical stories are proof of this intellectual movement. But just as painters had illustrated Hamzeh Nameh, attention was also paid to painting Indian works, and this matter was separate from the project of illustrating the Mahabharat book, which was started by the order of the king.

The sample studied in this research is two illustrated versions of the book Bhagavata Purana with the following specifications:

1. Manuscripts at Shri Krishna Museum, Kurukshetra; Bhagavat Puran Persian Shri Krishna. "Identifier-ark: /13960/t68412752.
2. Bhagavat Purana in Urdu Script, Illustrated Shri Krishna Museum, Krishan Das Identifier-ark ark: /13960/t4zh3w915 Kurukshetra.

The word Purana means "ancient story" and "ancient

knowledge." This word is used in its second meaning in the Atharvaveda and the Brahmana.

In Puranas, many stories and myths about gods are mentioned. In the view of some Hindus, these books have a privileged position equal to the Vedas. The collection of books that are included in the Puranas are the main eighteen Puranas (Maha Puranas) and the minor eighteen Puranas (Upa Purana), and a collection called Sthala Purana (about the places of worship, myths, and acts of the gods), which is divided into three categories:

Vishnu Purana, Shiva Purana, and Brahma Purana, and the volume of these treatises is more than 100 volumes (Sharma, 2006, 50). Religious Indians believe the Puranas are only one copy in the eyes of the gods but in a very massive volume containing 10 million verses that are difficult for humans to understand. Vishnu in the body of a fish in front of Vyasa has been selected for 400 thousand verses (Rocher, 1986).

Such legend points to the divine origin and paradisaic nature of the Puranas, and this is why Brahmans say that anyone who does not know about the Puranas is not wise (Pargiter, 1919).

The main language of the Puranas is Sanskrit, but some of them were written in local and vernacular languages such as Tamil and Prakrit. Before they were written, the first Puranas were recited by sutes (singers) or poets in Yajna during sacrifice rituals (Sharafaei Marghaki & Mahmoudi, 2016, 114). It is said that these texts were written between 200 and 400 A.D., during the period of influence of Babylonian knowledge in India (Klostermaier, 1998, 48; Bailey, 2010, 635-635).

Puranic texts, in addition to paying attention to knowledge as a way of union with Brahman and freedom from suffering and providing practical solutions to achieve this goal to yogis and austere people, have not neglected the mass of people who are unable to walk the yogi's difficult path and have placed the path of sincerity and surrender to god and its manifestations before them, and perhaps this is the important component that has made the Puranas

loveable and precious to such an extent among various classes of Hindus and the mass of people (Imani, 2010, 181).

### Introducing the version of Hamzeh Nameh

Hamzeh Nameh is a general name for one of the stories based on religious beliefs and epics that has a valuable place among the common people in Iran because its main character or hero is Hamzeh bin Abdulmutallab, the uncle of the prophet of Islam (PBUH).

This story does not have a standard and confirmed writing, and various narrations of it are sometimes known by the names Hamzeh's Secrets, Sahibqaran-Nameh, Hamzeh Sahibqaran, etc. The story has more foliage in the newer writings, and, the last writing of it, which may be from the Safavid period, was established and is known as Hamzeh's Secrets. Its last lithographic edition in 7 volumes was published in Tehran in 1321 AH, and the volume of its printed part, namely the volume of the first 3 volumes, is equal to one and a half or two times the volume of Ferdowsi's Shah Nameh (Mahjoub & Zulfaqari, 2007; Jafari Madhab, 2005, 204).

Amir Hamzeh's story, like all the heroes of fairy tales, is full of supernatural forces and creatures, such as jinns, demons, and fairies. In one section of the story, the fairies beg Hamzeh to deliver them from the clutches of a demon. He goes to their land and leaves the golden city, which is trapped by a demon; as expected, his wish has been fulfilled here, and he marries Asmay Pari. The result of the marriage is a daughter who is named Qureshi (Sha-ar, 1968, 209–225).

Despite the efforts of Muslim painters and illustrators to depict the story of Hamzeh, when it comes to Hamzeh's paintings, it is a masterpiece in this field that was drawn on the order of the Gurkani kings of India.

Jalal al-din Akbar Gurkani (reign: 1014-963) ordered the creation of a copy of Hamzeh Nameh with the story's text in beautiful and good handwriting and the most important parts of the story painted. In

the execution of the king's orders, a group of artists was assigned to this duty, which included dozens of prominent artists at that time in India.

Many of these artists came to India from Iran or other places and lived with the artistic approaches of the kings there. Mirsayed Tabrizi was in charge of the Hamzeh Nameh artists. The masterpiece of painting Hamzeh Nameh lasted approximately six years (Hosseini, 2015, 395), and the result was 2400 magnificent and stunning paintings (Chaudhary, 1991, 423-424) created at the pinnacle of artistry.

Akbar's order to write Dastoor al-Fosaha, or Hamzeh's Reading Guide (Fakhr al-Zamani Qazvini, 2013, 769), was probably in line with this masterpiece. Therefore, "Gurkani's court or aristocratic painting of India was, in fact, a continuation of Iranian painting that was done with the interest of Humayun Shah and the transfer of great Iranian painters such as Mir Mosavvar, Mir Sayyed Ali, and Abdul Samad to India, and the illustrated version of Hamzeh Nameh is the first work that was compiled in the workshop of this king" (Pakbaz, 2016, 93). Therefore, Gurkani's court or aristocratic painting of India was a continuation of Iranian painting that was done with the interest of Humayun Shah and the transfer of great Iranian painters such as Mir Mosavvar, Mir Sayyed Ali, and Abdul Samad to India, and the illustrated version of Hamzeh Nameh is the first work that was compiled in the workshop of this king.

### Indian Painting

Researchers believe that Indian painting in its glorious form appeared in the art of the Gurkani period. Most of the artists who created great artistic masterpieces in the Indian court had gone there from Iran. Of course, this should not be interpreted as a flaw in Indian artistic talent.

Rather, the Indian artistic spirit and imagination and the difficulties that arose for artists in Iran paved the way to India for them. The unstable policies of the Iranian court in supporting art and the problems that religious excuses or court disorder created for the elite were the main motivations for this.



Artists used to go to India to obtain financial support, and of course, as seen, they did not make a mistake in choosing the way. "...and anyone who came to India intending to gain the minimum sustenance, if his supreme desire is the same, in the first week will be the supplier of sustenance to a large number of people, and with a little time and less effort, he will enter the elders' society and what he never imagined to give to beggars..." (Kosha, 2013, 40) says the author of the Al-fi Book of History.

During the era of Humayun and Jahangir, Indian artists advanced and received attention in the Indian court system, so they excelled over many other courtiers. "They were constantly in the presence of the king and had an association with him." (Allami, 1879, 42)

Along with literates, engineers, and other intellectuals, we should mention great painters who progressed and performed in that system. Among the dozens of Iranian artists, three of them were very famous. One was Doost Devane or Doost Mosavvar, the other was Mir Sayyed Ali, and the third was Khawaja Abdul Samad, who came from Kabul to the territory of Gurkani in India in 956 AH (1549 AD) at the request of Humayun Shah. It is said that the painting of India begins in the Gurkani period with the presence of these three in the court of Gurkani (Smith, 1969, 182; Welch, 1975, 17; Dimand, 1986, 70).

## Review and Analysis of Bhagavata Purana Images

In this part of the present research, we will analyze some paintings from Bhagavata Purana's version and analyze the visual elements in them based on their purpose.

Fig. 1 of Bhagavata Purana, the avatar, shows Krishna riding an eight-headed serpent in a pond covered with lotus flowers and conversing with several ladies. The banks of the lagoon, which look very simple and limitless, lead to a mountain and a cypress (sarv-e naz), in a corner of which a teacher is standing in front of the three princes. In total, there are four men and four women in the picture, whose sum is

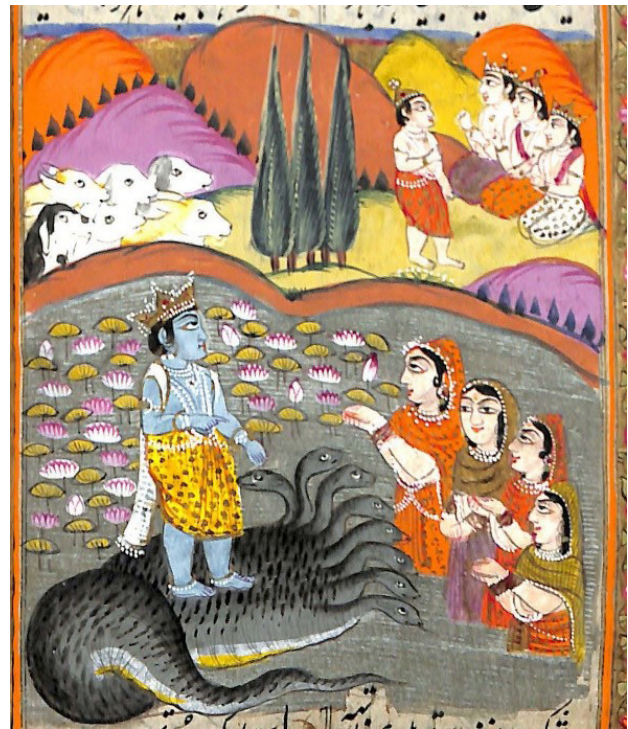


Fig. 1. Avatar of Krishna. Source: www. archive.org

probably related to the number of serpent heads. Other creatures are drawn much smaller than they are in reality.

Coloring the water of the lagoon, the mountains, and the land originates from a free imagination, and it seems that they have no meaningful realist relationship with each other. In traditional Indian painting, or "non-court painting," the heights of human figures and even other creatures are drawn much smaller than those in reality. Apart from the fact that the painter does not see the need to respect the proportions of the bodies' figures, which is consistent with the beliefs and spirit of Indian imagination,

Fig. 2 the Bhagavata-puranic chapter shows another avatar of Krishna, who defeated the mighty giant and began to create something; according to the context of the story, what he created from the universe was covered by water and therefore not possible to live in.

In fact, what can be seen above his head, which is the heavenly cow and some castles half submerged in water, is his creation that he later decides to organize. The painting of the flooded world in a light



Fig. 2. Avatar of Krishna. Source::www. archive.org.

purple color is also a free, imaginary, and unrealistic impression that the painter achieved. This rule can be seen in other places of the painting as well, and except for a few contractual cases like the indigo color of the avatar, the red color of the evil demon, and an old man with a bright face and clothes, all cases are painted with unaffected and, of course, enriching colors.

The unpretentious appearance of a self-taught artist in drawing figures and ignoring the technical details and subtleties specified, as well as the simple compositions and the choice of enriching colors that were formed away from the specified principles more than it was an indication of crudeness, shows a special tendency and sincerity to express the beliefs that are currently prevalent among mass arts and creates a way to let the artist's imagination run wild and attempts to place the addressee in the realm of meaning rather than leaving them alone, surrounded by the aristocrats' flashy images, elegance, and appealing contractual arrangements.

Fig. 3 refers to one of the parts of the story of Bhagavata Purana in which the avatar of Krishna, together with his consort, are sitting on the calyx of the lotus flower. The root of this lotus came out of the frog's mouth, and a multi-headed serpent is wrapped around its stem, which was restrained by another mythological creature's avatar, who in

one of his four hands has a bud of a lotus flower, which he is holding towards the earthly couple. The pink color of the lotus flower has been extended to the color of the clothes of the earthly couple, the goddess, and one of the mythological creatures.

The ancient Indians believed that the great creator (Oikta) first created water, which is the most basic material for the creation of the universe. After that, wind and fire were created, and then, with the help of fire, water went into space, and with the help of fire and wind, a hard mass called the earth appeared. In the mythological cosmology of ancient India, the earth is also called Padma, which is synonymous with the lotus flower. The primary lotus flower had eight petals, from which the eight directions of the world emerged. From it, a ray of divine light emerged, and inside the flower, a person was found who was called Brahma (Jalali Naini & Shukla, 2002, 202).

The figure depicts Krishna's fourth avatar sitting on a throne. The dishes containing food and gifts for God are placed in front of him, and princes and crowned elders and a few clergies surround him and are engaged in reverence and anointing him. In the meantime, a woman throws a crown of flowers on his shoulder.

The proportion of volume between elements and people does not adhere to objectivity in any way. If a woman's height is drawn much larger than other people, the coloring behind the scenes is influenced by a free mentality. Simplicity in this painting does not mean that the painter did not have the facilities and conditions necessary to create a worthy work due to his distance from the main power centers. If in a part of the background of the picture, it is observed that the painter covered the space with gold water, such work is not very common, even in many court paintings.

Therefore, the conceptual space intended by the painter, such as a tone of pictorial discourse, is a more practical, easier, and more media-rich solution, experience, and choice. It can be said that more or less all elements and symbols have been copied





Fig. 3. Avatar of Krishna, with his couple. Source: www. archive.org



Fig. 4. Krishna's avatara on the throne. Source: www. archive.org

from previous images. This seems to be due to content constraints in illustration, which should not be considered a weakness for the artist. The detail of the avatara image is the most important recurring item in the illustrations of Bhagavata Purana. Another part of the visual elements of this Indian version is related to mythological creatures. As

an example, Fig. 5 shows one of the mythological creatures of Hinduism, who is sitting on a stone pillar and has killed someone. The clothes of the killed man are pink, and under the capital, the lotus flower symbol is carved on the stone. These capitals are similar to ancient Indian capitals that were common during the Ashoka Empire.

The color of the blood that came out of his intestines and viscera is shown in red. On both sides of this scene, a happy couple can be seen. The painter of the version usually does not make much effort to distinguish and differentiate the masculine face from the feminine face, but here he has shown happiness and satisfaction with the matter.

Fig. 6 also depicts one of the masculine mythological creatures mentioned in the text and investigated by a group of princes or devats (Sanskrit). All of them have radiant light from their bodies, and they have childlike and calm faces. Their lower bodies are covered by short skirts, which were common among the nobility in India during the Gurkani period, and lace examples of which can be seen in the iconographic paintings of Akbar Shah Gurkani.

The main subject of the painting is the detestable face of a giant, which is similar to the examples in Bhagavata Purana's ex-paintings. The main origin of the negative face in Indian painting is believed to have been taken from monkeys living on Indian land and among the people.

The use of strong colors and attention to mass coverings, which are freely combined in the composition of these images, have created a more active space for the presentation of people, objects, and elements of the image in the eyes of the audience. Although their coordination with the covering of the skirts causes more visual connection in the overall composition and a more distinctive display of the state and discourse of the people together, Of course, it is worth mentioning that canary yellow, Indian yellow, pink, ochre, and their spectral range are widely used in traditional Indian painting and are even sacred to some extent.

Another image we present here tells the scene of





Fig. 5. Mythical creatures of the. Source::www. archive.org

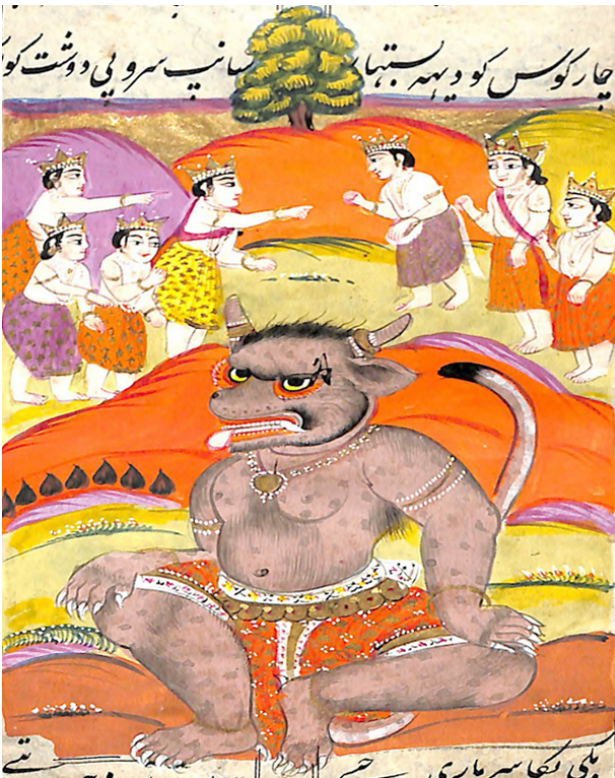


Fig. 6. Mythological. Source:www. archive.org.

Krishna's other figure that we are introducing here and shows one of the giants (Fig. 7).

In the traditional Indian illustration that is visible in Bhagavata Purana, the protagonist is smaller and has no weapons compared to the giant. What guarantees his victory is not the strength and possession of

weapons or ta'zir and talismans but an eternal destiny that has ordained his victory and dominance; therefore, based on these beliefs, the painter does not need to depict war instruments and epic states. Detention and imprisonment, scourge, and enmity are not mentioned. The skin color of Krishna's avatar is the same as indigo, but another important point here is the completely dark color of the giant's skin, which indicates the filthiness of this creature. If in Indian court paintings, relatively dark colors indicated servanthood and non-inclusion in the circle of nobles and elders, in the same proportion, black colors in traditional Indian paintings indicated the "impurity" of the creature.

Fig. 8 is one of the most famous images of the Bhagavata Purana due to its epic atmosphere. On both sides of the picture, two kings lined up with their armies. On the right side of the image is a king in bright clothing accompanied by an avatar of Krishna and his troops, and opposite him is a king in a red dress accompanied by a person in a white dress.

This opening scene of the battle in Sanskrit literature (from which the Bhagavata Purana is also translated) is similar to the opening of the first stanza of the Bhagavata Purana, in which the Pav and Dhtarra face each other; where Dhtarra, anxious and confused,

धृतराष्ट्र उवाच॥

धर्मक्षेत्रे कुरुक्षेत्रे समवेता युयुत्सवः ।

मामकाः पाण्डवाश्चैव किमकुर्वत संजय ॥१-१॥

Dhṛtarāṣṭra said: O sañjaya, what did my sons and the sons of Pāṇḍavās do after they had gathered to fight at the pilgrimage site? (Prabhupada & Bhaktivedanta, 2001, 33).

An important point in this image is that the commander on the right, who is supported by the avatar of Krishna, has a crown and obviously Indian characteristics, but opposite him stands a king with a turban or headband, which seems to imply the painter wants to put him in the place of the Gurkani Muslim rulers of India, who have usurped the ancient land of Bharat. The placement of the Avatar Corps on the





Fig. 7. The scene of the victory of Krishna's avatar over one of the giants. Source: <https://archive.org>.



Fig. 8. Of the opening scene of the battle. Source: <https://archive.org>.

right side originates from an ancient thought pattern, which in Iranian-Islamic culture is referred to as the "Ashab-Yamin (Companions of the Right) in front of the Ashab-Yesar (Companions of the Left)".

Fig. 9 also shows the presence of devas (Sanskrit:

"divine"), which are placed on top of the picture, and below it, the presence of one of the Indian maharajas is located. In the original Indian culture, it should be noted that Hindus, unlike Iranians, knew them as good and pleasant creatures. Both devas are seated on pink lotus calyxes in this image, with one being carried by a duck and the other by mice.

Another bud of a lotus flower is seen in the hands of the Maharaja's lady chaplain being shaken, it makes the atmosphere fragrant and soft. The reason for choosing the lotus flower is its sanctity in the Hindu religion, and other elements and symbols of the image are also drawn based on the descriptions of the positions of the gods in the Hindu scriptures.

It seems that the artist has chosen a free tone in depicting this scene, as in other famous paintings, without following the rules of school and determination, or, in other words, he has found such a simplistic pictorial tone desirable in reaching his goal. This liberation is evident in the coloring and division of this image. It shows that the painter is focused on the subject to be able to realize what he wants. Therefore, it seems that the content of the painting is the main subject of the painter, and this intentionality can be seen in the way the colors interfere with each other.

The use of one color in other parts and the shape of the people show that the subject in the work is preferable to the technical sophistication and has marked a different path for expressing such a picture dialect in this period. As a result, the colors are all used in a sharp and active mode, as the painter appears to be uninterested in distinguishing between the presence of the gods and the presence of Maharaja, depicting both in the same. The colors of People's faces are chosen to be the same as Indians to show that people and gods are of Indian origin. Except that the face of the god's elephant is painted in red. Ganesha (Sanskrit) is the name of this god, and as seen here, it is painted on the lotus flower.

The final tenth figure in this version depicts a dance scene from a portion of the wise story of Bhagavata Purana. Sherry Kirschenji, one of the avatars (Sanskrit:





Fig. 9. In the presence of Devas. Source: [www.archive.org/details](http://www.archive.org/details).



Fig. 10. Ras Leila dance. urce: <https://archive.org>.

materializations or embodiments of the gods), appears and dances among the girls in this scene. He is the only one who has been pluralized, and each of the dancers assumes that he is alone with him. This image depicts one of the most famous and sacred scenes in Indian dance, known as Rass Lila (in Sanskrit) or rassa dance

and dance of the gods, and its legend is based on the same text as Bhagavata Purana.

### Analysis of Hamzeh Nameh Images

Fig. 11 shows the story of the conversion of Fereydu Shah, the king of Greece, to Islam and his daughter's marriage to Hamzeh. The face figure has been painted professionally, and the artist has been able to show the mental states of each person based on their situation in the image. More importantly, the physical states of the human body that we see in its various forms (standing, sitting, resting, lunging, and walking) are skillfully proportional to other organs. Some of the human faces have the characteristics of the earliest Mongolian paintings.

An example of this can be seen in their Chinese-Mongolian thin beards, as well as the faces of Safavid chivalry with suffied mustaches. The coloring and composition of the painting based on the previous methods were done to a great extent and in accordance with the principles of the school of painting, which shows the precision and elegance of the work in this painting. The ocher color, which has been widely used in India, is also the dominant color of the painting here. The architecture and style of the building have the characteristics of Iranian-Islamic buildings, which were common in India during the Gurkani period.

The architecture and style of the building have the characteristics of Iranian-Islamic buildings, which were common in India during the Gurkani period. Knotting designs are an example of this effect that the painter has drawn to a large extent, regardless of the rules of perspective and dimension in the upper field of the image.

The pavilions on both sides of the building and its lower columns show the influence of Indian style to a great extent. The way people gather and treat each other, their gathering during the construction of the palace, the servants who are doing their daily work, their luxurious and aristocratic clothes, and the emphasis on the processing of the architectural splendor have made the court characteristics well visible in the image.

Fig. 12 is another painting of Hamzeh Nameh in





Fig. 11. Fereydu Shah, the king of Greece, converted to Islam and married his daughter to Hamzeh. Source: <https://artsandculture.google.com>

which the figure of the Prophet (PBUH) is seen while some of the drowning sinners supplicate and entreat the Prophet to save them. The gloomy dark sea and forest, combined with the state of the sinners, evoke an eerie state, and the painter of Hamzeh Nameh has not only captured the terrible hell atmosphere but also decorated it like the beautiful Delhi Gurkani gardens. For the painter Hamzeh Nameh, the beauty and adornment of the picture were of primary importance, and he wanted the artistic product created in the royal court to be worthy of the critical and fault-finding views of the kings and reflect the greatness and glory of the king. Even if this image is a scene of slaughter, hell, the land of demons, or a sky-high mountain peak.

The scene of Prince Badii-al-Zaman's battle with Iraj, which is one of the parts of the story of Hamzeh Nameh, is the subject of this third figure (Fig. 13). Badii al-Zaman is the son of Amir Hamzeh in the Hamzeh Nameh or the Sahibqaran Nameh, whose story is described in a part of the story titled "The quality of Badii al-Zaman, son of Amir al-Mu'minin Hamzeh



Fig. 12. The story of the Prophet and the sinners. Source: <https://www.britishmuseum.org>

(RA), peace be upon him, who was raised by fairies..." (Shi'ār, 1968, 423).

The Fig. 12 Buddhist monks walking the mountain path, with the skin color of one of them being black and the other being white, is probably inspired by Chinese paintings, and the spirit of Chinese Daoist art can be seen in the composition and shape of the mountains. How the mountains have become lost in the endless void, resembling a beaten woolly mass. This effect can also be seen in the coloring of the sky behind the picture. That is how the painter wanted to create an in-between combination between the vaporous skies of Chinese painting and the vaporous skies traditional to Iranian painting. On the right side of the picture, a cow's head can be seen, which, according to Hindu religion, is decorated and adorned. On top of the mountain, two people can be seen who are praying toward the sun. Although there are parts dedicated to the land of India in Hamzeh Nameh's story, in this picture and other pictures, the influence of Indian culture, especially its court and aristocratic culture, is more apparent than in



Fig. 13. The scene of the battle of Prince Badi-l Zaman with Iraj. Source: <https://artsandculture.google.com>

the story itself, which tries to show the brilliance and luminosity of culture, and even in the sections of the story that are not related to India, the influence of Indian culture can be seen strongly.

Fig. 14 presents another war scene in the illustrated version of Hamzeh Nameh. This picture shows the emergence of Surkhab from the castle. Even though the scene of a war operation is depicted in it, all the scenes show a part of a palace that is surrounded by towers and barrows. Its buildings and congresses decorated with blue tiles were a style of Iranian architecture that became popular during the Gurkan period and the reign of Akbar Shah. The floor of the building is covered with knotted tile patterns, which were used a lot in Samarkand and Bukhara.

Like other paintings, the light color of the king's or leader's skin (Surkhab) has been emphasized, reminding us of his non-Indic and white race descent while pointing to his glory and pomp. The Indian yellowish color spectrum has saturated most places of the image; more or less, it can be said that the

coloring of the whole picture and even the faces of the persons were also obtained from this spectrum. All the military equipment and outfit and the saddles and tools of the horses are drawn in their eventual splendor and titivation to show the luxuriance and splendor of persons, buildings, and tools. All the places of the picture are filled, and the places that could be left blank are piled up with complicated geometric lines. The subtleties in the selection of surfaces, the remarkable sensitivity in their arrangement, the unique precision and skill in the type of etching, and the good juxtaposition of shapes indicate the artist's skill and technical ability, which, while additionally emphasizing the content of the work, tries to make the painting appear flawless in every way, more so because the subtleties and sensitivities of Timurid period painting can be well observed.

Fig. 15 depicts the story of Hamzeh assassinating the leader of the elephant-eared people who lived on Qaf Mount. The figure of the giant's face that is grappling with him is much more dynamic and alive than other faces and looks like a court teenager in a luxurious court dress who enjoyed all kinds of comfort and food and has slept and fattened; probably, in portraying this face, the painter had a certain person around himself in mind. In these types of paintings, the illustrator is careless with the rules and principles of a designation view (anatomy, perspective, and realistic spatialization). Therefore, the shape of the legs and the proportions of the person's organs in this picture are formed from a perspective based not on imagination but on the school principles of painting, which can be seen in most Iranian paintings.

If the focus is Qaf Mountain, the height and greatness of the mountain are not shown as they should be and are not in accordance with the text of the story; in fact, in most of Hamzeh Nameh's pictures, the mountains are drawn smaller, which is consistent with the urban and court atmosphere of the artist's place of work.

On the back of the mountain, the artist has shown





Fig. 14. Surkhab coming out of the castle. Source: <https://artsandculture.google.com>.

the image of some people who are watching, and as the color of their faces shows, they have two races, Indian and non-Indian (Iranian and Central Asian), because some of them are black in color. In the upper left corner of the picture, a person can be seen; he looks very similar to the Sikh elders (Qalandran) community, and the short pants he is wearing are one of the necessities of every follower of this religion, which is known as Kachhe, and the sword he is holding is similar to a sword that is called kirpan in this ritual. These cases reflect the characteristics of Indian culture shown in the figure.

Fig. 16 is also related to a part of the story in which Qasim al-Abbas arrived from Mecca and vanquish Tahmasb with a mace made of palm wood. The picture shows the nighttime atmosphere of a royal palace in India, which is decorated with Iranian architecture. The importance of pavilions in the royal architecture of India depends on the country's geography and its warm ocean climate. The painter has not neglected any effort in showing the glory of a Gurkani royal palace. The view of the pavilions and pergolas is very similar to that



Fig. 15. Killing the leader of the Elephant-eared people by Hamza. Source: <https://artsandculture.google.com>.

of the Taj Mahal building. Although the construction of the Taj Mahal started about sixty years after Hamzeh Nameh was painted, this style was settled in India, and the Taj Mahal was measured as its high point and masterpiece. At the bottom of the building and on the ground floor, two mesh walls can be seen, which are called Jali in India. An excellent example of India's Jalis is located in Sidi Seyed mosque today, which is one of the attractions of Gurkani's architecture in India. This mosque was built between 1572 and 1573 a.d., which is close to the years 1562–1577 a.d. when the painting masterpiece of Hamzeh Nameh was created, and the painter may have been influenced by the tendency of his contemporary architects to construct magnificent Indian jalis. Trying to represent the glory and grandeur of the Gurkani court in this painting is such that a viewer unfamiliar with Hamzeh Nameh pictures can evaluate it completely independently of the content of the story and even identify it as a propaganda work drawn by the order of the princes and nobles of the court.

Fig. 17 shows Umar digging the tunnel and presenting himself to Amir Hamzeh. The protagonist's aristocratic



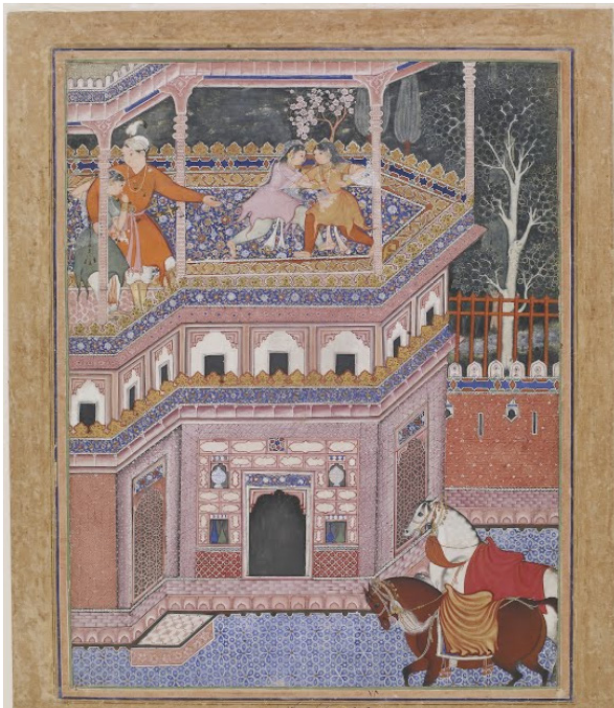


Fig. 16. Of the story of Qasim al-Abbas and Tahmasb. Source: <https://artsandculture.google.com>.



Fig. 17. Burrowing by Umar and coming to Amir Hamza. Source: <https://artsandculture.google.com>.

dress, sword adorned with jewels, weaponry hung on his belt, crowned helmet, patterned boots, and his luxurious clothes have manifested with the royal beard. Umar's

exit from the dust has been painted very poetically, and at first glance, it looks like a romantic scene where this lover released from shackles has rushed to the beloved's embrace with cuteness and charm. To show the first-person position in the story, his figure and body are drawn much larger than others. More or less, this matter appears everywhere in *Hamzeh Nameh*, and it does not just mean that the painter wanted to display Umar's stoutness compared to his contemporaries; what if this matter in other parts is also seen among mythological creatures and negative heroes? Body magnitude, the light color of the face (which was also seen in the *Bhagavata Purana* version), garment adornment, and studied movement are the main characteristics of the first person in the story, and they point to his originality and the greatness of his honor and lineage. The facial expressions of the persons in this painting are observed to a great extent, and the uproar and chaos that the unknown poet of the *Sahibqaran* interprets as "drum-drum" and "grom-grom" are evident here, but they are all seen independently of the existing dust and chaos and seen separately from that.

Fig. 18 is related to a scene from the story in which Mehrdokht, an Iranian girl, boards the ship after throwing an arrow and leaves there with passengers. The darkness and eerie water, which can be seen in *Hamzeh Nameh*, show the artist's unfamiliarity with seafaring culture. As expected, the ship's crew consists of Indian Negroes, or people from India's lower and paltry social classes who were assigned to despicable and menial jobs during Gurkani's conquest and dominance. Their unpleasant condition is completely evident in their naked and muscular body or the dark color of their clothes. In the center of the ship (or boat), a wealthy man is sitting and putting his hand on his burden greedily, and around him, two of his servants are facing the direction where their master is addressing someone. Probably the painter wanted to establish a relationship between the master's not-so-bright facial color and his avidity and greed, which are clear from the position of his sitting and hands and the location of the servants, and the pride that is evident from his turban's stigma.



Fig. 18. Story of Mehrdokht Iranian Girl. Source: <https://artsandculture.google.com>.

The style of tree-leaf paintings is inspired by nature and the trees of India. In this style, the tree leaves are drawn, unlike the common plantain leaves in Iranian paintings. The colors of leaves in the surrounding area or the center are slightly lightened so that the leaves in mass mode are seen differently from each other. Probably this tree is the same fig tree or species called the "temple fig," which also grows in the southeast of Iran and is sacred in India, especially to Buddha.

Other figures are related to mythological creatures. For example, Fig. 19 deals with the subject of Baba Junaid and Umar's encounter. Here, a dragon figure is seen that is absolutely modeled based on its Chinese examples, and its coloring is also based on the pattern of the white demon that exists in the stories of Ferdowsi's Shah Nameh. The figure of the dragon in this painting is the clearest image and, compared to other pictorial elements, is greatly exaggerated in its decoration. The main theme of the painting is probably derived from the famous game "Snake and Ladder," which was invented in ancient India to teach Karma or Karman thinking. (In Sanskrit: संसर) the end of the cycle of perpetual birth reproduction known as samsara (in Sanskrit: संसर).

Fig 20 presents Amir Hamzeh's story that narrates a demon trapped and carried a Negro while he was sleeping. The ochre color in the background of the painting is in harmony with the demon's bloody eyes and mouth adding an eerie and terrifying atmosphere to the painting and amplifying the suspended state of the sleeping person, who seems to be a servant of the painter and paints his bed like the waves of the sea. Although there is no sign of the palace atmosphere or royal rituals in this painting, the artist's aristocratic and courtly background has caused the demon's skirt to be a suitable environment for artistic arabesque motifs. It is not clear whether the earlier origin of this archetype was Iran, India, or another land, but its application in the illustration of folk tales has been very common. From the pre-Islamic culture of Iran until now, demons were evil and vicious creatures, unlike in the Aryan rituals of India, where demons were benevolent beings and Ahuras (Sanskrit: Asuras) were harmful and detrimental creatures. Therefore, it should be noted that the villain position of the demons in Hamzeh Nameh and its painting may be inspired by some paintings and statues of ancient temples, but it draws from Iranian culture. The Iranian roots of this ancient pattern can be seen in their subtle movements, images, and clothing. The main subject of the painting is the unsightly face of the demon, which is similar to the samples in Bhagavata Purana's paintings.

## Conclusion

The findings showed that mass paintings, in comparison with the paintings that were made with the support of the court and nobles in India during the Gurkani period, show a clear distinction. The paintings in Bhagavata Purana's version are considered popular art and are based on the cultural and traditional needs and the heritage of the people of India during the Gurkani period, which were formed by the efforts of the people themselves.

In terms of content, these works deal with stories, myths, rituals, and religious beliefs, which are often obtained from the beliefs of the masses and have roots in their cultural and ritual past. In terms of structure, these paintings have a native local authenticity, and as a form





Fig. 19. The encounter between Baba Junaid and Amr. Source: <https://artsandculture.google.com>.



Fig. 20. Of Dave and the Negro. Source: <https://artsandculture.google.com>.

of painting technique, they have an unaffected simplicity and are unassuming.

As it indicates that the artist followed principles in creating these works that were experienced, recognized, and acquired in this local and indigenous process, it is seen as far from the principles of trained painting at that time.

Regardless of ceremonial occasions, the painter freely puts more effort into conceptual demands and clarity of expression than paying attention to the aesthetic techniques of trained paintings. Therefore, the use of brushstrokes, the selection and variety of colors, the style of coloring, the composition of visual and pictorial elements, the pleasant juxtaposition of the visual elements together, technical and skillful elegance, proportions in figures, and fictional characters in comparison with the trained works, look very weak and crude and unprofessional, and the illustrations of the Hamzeh Name manuscripts show that this copy was done by the order and request of the government of the time and under its support and that of the nobles by the employment of the trained, well-known, and famous and of course non-native painters, who were

from Iran. Therefore, the theme in these works deals more with historical teachings and Islamic religious myths that were of interest to the rulers of the time than just mass beliefs, and structurally has a very impressive level of skill and mastery.

The style of composition, selection of colors, finishing, penmanship, dealing and processing of visual and pictorial elements, and abundant elegance, besides being elaborate, are very similar to the style and context of paintings in the Timurid School of painting in Iran, and in some cases, they have been influenced by Chinese works. Although both versions were created during the same time period and introduce a valuable treasure in terms of aesthetic indicators, it should be noted that the paintings in Bhagavata Purana's version have more originality in terms of mass art and expression of cultural, popular, and indigenous feelings, as well as the folk art of the people of India at the time.

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