

Tarikh-e-Firoz Shahi of Shams Siraj Afif: An Important Source of Sultanate Period

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ABSTRACT: From the Sultanate period to the Mughal era, the Persian language maintained its foothold in India as a court language. It has preserved the ancient history of India. And it has established itself over all the genre of Persian writing. Be it Tazkira, Malfoozat, biographies, travelogues, accounts and information of kings, historical books, Sufi literature, prose or poetry, all the heritage of medieval and Mughal period, we get only in Persian language. Arabic language which was and is a rich language in itself. And the Arabs called the speakers of other language dumb and deaf and the people as uncivilized nation and they ruled over that nation for two hundred years. The language of this nation came to India and captured this valuable and cultural language of India. Not only Arab, the Turks also believed the richness of this language. Babur, who himself was Turkish, keeping in mind the need of the time, he also generously appreciated this language. This language has ruled India with great glory for seven, eight hundred years and in these seven, eight hundred years the roots of this language spread all over India, which is still today although not very stable, but definitely looks established in its place.

KEY WORDS: Shams Siraj Afif, Tarikh-e-Firoz Shahi, Sultanate Period, Socio Cultural history.

Historically speaking, many historical books related to India are available in this language. For example, in the history of the Sultanate, the important history books

are as Taj-ul-Maasir, Chachnama, Tabaqat-e- Nasiri, Tarikh-e- Firoz Shahi, Tarikh-e- Mubarak Shahi, Tarikh-e- Ala'i, Tughluq Nama, Ijaz-e- Khosravi, Fatuh al-Salatain, Tarikh-e- Yamini, Tarikh-e- Mas'udi, Tarikh-e- Balami and Mujamal al-Tawarikh wal Qasas, Rahat al-Sudoor, Lobab al-Albab etc. In all these tarikhs, general history of that period are available to us.

Here is an overview of Shams Siraj Afif's Tarikh-e- Feroz Shahi. Afif's Tarikh is or may be said to be the remanence of Burney's Tarikh-e- Firoz Shahi and Sirat-e- Firoz Shahi. Burney, who is the first historian of India, but his history covers only six or seven years of Firoz Shah and the Sirat-e- Firoz Shahi covers the first twenty years, while Afif's history covers the history of Firoz Shah from his birth to his death. This history was compiled by Shams Siraj Afif around the time of Timur's invasion (1399 AD. 801 AH). Burney has written his book in (758AH, 1356 AD), after hundred years of the Tabaqat-e- Nasiri of Minhaj al-Siraj, which was compiled in (658 AH 1256 AD). According to the researchers, Afif's style of narrating history is fiction and the style of writing is neither very simple nor very tough, while the odes made by historians and writers in the praise of Bernie are not hidden from anyone. And his history has been considered much better than Afif's history. Even though Shams Siraj Afif have faithfully narrated the complete events of Firoz Shah's period or reflected the social and cultural condition of that time along with historical events and data, but Afif's history has been considered secondary. Afif's only mistake is that he was born after Bernie and he used Bernie's book. Otherwise, if he had been born before Bernie, it might have been opposite. The purpose of the writer of this article here is not to favor someone and not to put any other historian or writer in the deck and accuse him, but to illuminate some dark corners in the light of facts based on various evidences. I have noticed since my student days that when it comes to the reign of Firoz Shah, only Burney and his history has been mentioned and his book is considered important, while flaws are

also seen there. Burney is a historian, but sometimes he is seen giving advice to the king like an adviser, and sometimes like a poet, his statement becomes colorful and literary glory and poetic imagination arise in his writing. Sometimes he is seen flattering the king like a flatterer and sometimes he unites the earth and sky in his praise. Sometimes, just like a poor person. Where in the tarikh-e Firoz Shahi he writes:

Murgan wa mahi dar watan Asudeh and illa ki Man

(مرغان و ماهی در وطن آسوده اند الا که من)

Anyway, Tarikh-e- Firoz Shahi of Afif's history consists of five parts and each part includes eighteen chapters. But here I want to share a very important information that during the use of both books of Urdu and Persian, it was found that both the author and the translator, while giving details of all the parts in the book, have mentioned eighteen chapters in the fifth category, for example, the preface of fifteenth chapter: Farewell to Syed Jalaluddin. The preface of sixteenth chapter: statement of regret of Sultan Firoz Shah. The preface of seventeenth chapter: acceptance of Tughlaq Shah to Khan Jahan. The preface of eighteenth chapter: description of magic that had been done to Sultan Firoz Shah, but the thing to consider here is that In both Urdu and Persian books, only fifteen chapters are mentioned in the fifth part, there is no description of the remaining three chapters. And the book ends after fifteen chapters. At the end, there is a closing (tammat). The interesting thing is that the translator must have paid attention to this while using the Persian book, but it is not mentioned anywhere in the translation. And no information has been given. Perhaps these three chapters have been lost in the passage of time. It would have been fine if the information about the rest of the chapters was available. Firoz Shah's Manaqib (good characteristics) are mentioned in the first pages. These chapters present the social, political and cultural

conditions of Firoz Shah's era. Apart from this, the campaigns of Firoz Shah, the establishment of Firoz Shah's Hisar, conquest of NargarKot, campaign of Thatta, and the rules and regulations and many strange incidents have been described. For example, the story of a short man, the story of two tall men, and so on a lot of details will be mentioned in the next few pages.

In the first part of the sixteenth chapter it is written as "Firoz Shah's Blessing upon people by the order of God" that the king has given so much to the country and the people that the paths of development have been opened in every field and he has urged the people to fear God. It has been done so that no one can be oppressed and tortured, and by this act and order, people have become more comfortable and the population has increased to such an extent that a village has been settled for every four Kos in the Pargana in whole the country. Every man's house has been provided with so much grain and wealth that it is beyond description. Every person has accumulated so much gold and silver that no one's wife is seen without ornaments among the people. Fine beds and numerous means of comfort were present in every house. Every person of Delhi is living a life free of sorrows by the grace of God.

And in the eighteenth chapter of the same part, a work done by Firoz Shah is worth mentioning. He abolished the custom that only the sermon of the living king should not be recited on Fridays and Eids, but the names of the past kings and prayers for forgiveness should be recited. Therefore, in the Friday and Eid sermons, the names of the past sultans were mentioned along with current king. Which started from Ghauri and ended with Sultan Alauddin bin Sultan Muhammad Shah. But there is no mention of Razia Sultan here, there is a detailed mention of twenty one coins in this chapter. Similarly, Afif has also mentioned the fields, rivers, fruits and flowers on the occasion of the foundation of the city of Hisar Firoza. In the second part of seventeenth chapter, he writes under the title of the happiness of the

people related to the Firoz shah period that during this period, soldiers, scholars, traders and agricultural people, farmers, each achieved profit and progress in their own fields. The king grants millions of taangeh annually to each class of the society as an aid. From which people has been happy. The poor groups of the society who were in distress, they have been given one crore taangeh per annum which has relieved their sufferings. In this chapter, Afif mentioned a book under the title of "Ruins of Delhi" which is attributed to Afif and is unpublished.

In the ninth chapter of the fourth part, the author has mentioned about the construction of tall minarets built by Firoz Shah. It has been mentioned that Firoz Shah built these two minarets which were located at the foot of the mountain in Mouza Navira in the suburbs of Salura and Khizrabad and the second minaret in Meerut, the author writes about these minarets that these two minarets were located in the same places during the reign of the Pandavas and no king of Delhi was lucky enough to move these minarets to the city of Delhi, but Firoz Shah did it. With great zeal and effort these two minarets were installed in Delhi. One was installed adjacent to the Juma Masjid inside Kaushik-e- Firozabad and named after him. The second minaret was brought to Kaushik-e- Hisar. Along with the installation of these minarets, the author Afif told about his age that he was only twelve years old at that time. We get this important information from this chapter.

Just as Burney's mouth was never tired of praising Firoz Shah and his era, Afif is also not behind in this race. He writes about the installation of these minarets. That a few lines in Hindi are engraved on them in silver, which no one has been able to read but according to a tradition that some Hindus have read it and it is written on them that no Muslim or non-Muslim king will be able to move these minarets except in the last age a king named by Firoz Shah. We do not know that which tradition Afif has mentioned or he himself has created this because till today these inscriptions on Minarets could not be read. It shows only the praise of king.

The twelfth chapter of the fourth part deals with “king's attention to the conditions of the idle nobles”. It was a great step taken by Firoz Shah for the welfare of them otherwise who cares after the work is over. He issued a decree that idle persons in the city should be brought before him. Workers did the same. He engaged every idle person in some work or occupation. In this way, the noble class did not come forward due to shame and honor. And used to live a poor life. Or those people who used to sit in front of the court every day to find out who was arrested in the royal court, who was deposed and who was arrested so that they could get a job in their place. The problems of all these persons were solved by the king in this way. But here it would be inappropriate to say that these works were done only during the reign of Firoz Shah, it is not like that. Social evils were also present in the time of Iltutmish. One of the evils that have been criticized in all ages was the prostitute and her profession, about which we find important information in Burney's Tarikh-e-Firoz Shahi. About the reign of Iltutmish, Barni writes that on one hand Syed Nooruddin Mubarak Nagauri used to declare all the habits of the king against the Sunnah but On the other hand, they were against expelling prostitutes from Delhi. And they used to say that if this is done, stray people will jump into the houses of nobles. But it is not necessary that everyone has the same idea because Alauddin's opinion was different in this matter. When he undertook the reformation of unscrupulous elements, he forced the prostitutes to leave their profession and live a life of chastity. Sultan forced them to marry. Amir Khusro has also written that:

"برہمہ بہ عقد حبابہ پای بند گشتہ، کار پرھیز گاری ایشان بجای کشیدہ کہ در پردہ ستر بہ ہنگام تافتن ریشہ دامنی بہ ندامت تمام دست بر دست می مالند۔ فی الجملہ ہرچہ مادہ فسق و فجور بود، چنان منقطع گشت!"

The list of good deeds of Firoz Shah is very long. In the construction of buildings, which has been mentioned in the previous pages. He has done some fabulous works. He built buildings everywhere in every place and in every city. Among

them are Qila, Hisar, Kaushik, such as Kaushik-e- Firozabad, Kaushik-e- Nuzuli, Fahidari, Kaushik-e- Shahr-e- Hisar, Kaushik-e- Fatehabad, Kaushik-e- Jaunpur, Kaushik-e- Sapura, Kaushik-e- Band Fateh Khan. Apart from this, there are monasteries and inns built for travelers. Afif gives important information in this regard and tells that Firoz Shah built about one hundred and twenty monasteries all over in Delhi, travelers could stay in the monasteries for three days as a royal guest. In this way, a traveler in one hundred and twenty monasteries could comfortably become a royal guest for a whole year. King paid special attention to the repair of tombs, graves and shrines, in this matter, according to Afif, during the reign of the pious king, the living and the dead continued to benefit equally. And building construction reached its peak during the forty years of Firoz Shah's reign. Many almshouses and sanatoriums were also built for the welfare of the people.

In the fifteenth chapter of the fourth part, important details of Eid celebration and Shab-e-Barat have been also provided. Like ancient kings, Firoz Shah also actively participate in such celebrations. According to Afif, the kings themselves used to get so much involved in the preparations and arrangements of the celebration that they used to wake up the night before and see all the work themselves and provides all the necessary means. On the day of Eid, the palace was decorated and all the rituals of Eid were performed. The ensign was not allowed to appear on that day. All the people saluted and prayed before the king according to their status. After them, a group of singers would enter who were wearing saffron clothes and red dastar. This cloth used to be very costly, one person's cloth price used to be forty thousand tangeh. Reward and prize was also given to Qawwals and Ahl-e-Tarab on this day. In this chapter, information is also provided about Shab-e-Barat that there was a lot of fireworks that night. And fire person used to hire for the fire work. On every third night during Kaushik-e-nuzul, torches and lamps were lit so much that night turned into day. Every third night drums were played and various fireworks

took place. People could see these things. For three days, these kinds of works used to happen. The kings rarely attend such functions, but the princes, khanans were always present. Fil banan and shutra banan used to offer clay made camel and elephants to the king, and the king rewarded them all.

In the seventeenth chapter important details have been given related to singers, wrestlers like the number of all these people was about to two to three thousands, yet the king used to meet all these people after the Friday prayer and see their tricks, wrestling and achievements and listen to the stories of the narrators, and used to reward these groups with immense rewards and blessings that everyone used to bring their small children even from Delhi to Firozabad, some children were even four or five years old. The reason for this was that the king used to reward everyone equally without any discrimination. Once the workers in turn decided to make a difference in these rewards, the king was shocked to find that these people wait seven days for Friday to come and bring their little children five kos for the reward, if it makes a difference in the reward, what will happen to them? If Firoz Shah's era is studied carefully, we find that he has done countless reformative works for the people, in addition to this, he also removed non-Sharia from Islam and Sharia law, for example idol carving or sculpting, painting, eating in gold and silver vessels, idols and animal figures on the flag, all these things were banned as it was against Sharia and the use of earthenware and stoneware started. In addition to some non-Sharia affairs that were practiced in the ancient times of the sultans, he abolished them. Like Dangana, means the wealth and resources that were collected for Zakat. One dang was charged for a tangeh, a custom that was against the Sharia. It was called as Mustagil. It was a government tax on houses and land, which was called land tax, for taking it, there used to be so much strictness that even widows, and the people of the poor class were not spared. Another strange thing was the amount of Jazari, in that if a butcher slaughtered a

female cow, he had to pay twelve jateels as a tax. People were distressful from all such taxes. It has been written in Fatuhat-e- Firoz Shahi that he prohibited women from visiting shrines, and put to an end to all such illegal and immoral practices and rituals. But Jizya was strictly collected from non-Muslims. In the fifteenth chapter of the fifth part, some strange men and women, birds and animals are mentioned, which are not devoid of pleasure, for example, tall and short men, bearded women, three-legged sheep, a red-beaked and white-legged crow, a white parrot, a river fish with a head equal to an elephant's head, a cow with five legs, All these creatures were considered to be miraculous and they were kept as an exhibition for some days in king's court, so that people could learn from it. Afif himself confirms all these rarities and presents himself as an eye witness. Firoz Shah worked for the welfare of his peoples till his last breath. For example, decorating and repairing mosques, appointing imams and muezzins and approving lamps and other expenses so that all the mosques are illuminated. Apart from this, Firoz Shah paid special attention to the prisoners. And as far as possible, he released them from prison and showed justice in favor of the oppressed. Therefore, the book Tarikh-e-Firoz Shahi of Afif is an important source of the Firoz Shah's period, which gives us the social and cultural history of that time.

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