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## **Study of the cultural, artistic and historical relations between Iran and India in the Achaemenid period**

### **Abstract**

A long time ago when the tribes of Indo- Iranian were still as one and inhabited on the vast plains of the Central Asia, one ruler was both the leader and priest of the tribe. One of the most reasonable evidences proving the relationship between Iran and India is the mythical signs. The oldest Asian myths, which belong to the Indians, mostly signify the culture of the Aryans who immigrated to India in about 2nd millennium B.C. Even before penetrating of the Aryans into the Iranian plateau, people of India and Iran have had relations throughout history. The archaeological finds of India are similar to those found at the Iranian plateau and Mesopotamia. After the immigration, Aryans divided into empires of Median and Persian. By defeating Bactria, Cyrus got close to India for the first time; and in 517 B.C Darius gained control over the north west of India. However, the Achaemenid remains including designs and inscriptions of the Persepolis reveal the expansion of Persian Empire into the west of India and indicate that some parts of the western India were tributaries of the central empire of Iran. The new satrap or Hindus of the Achaemenid inscriptions encompassing to

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the southern parts of Sind waterway and the modern territories of Pakistan was the eastern border of the Achaemenid Empire. After reducing India, large amount of gold dust was paid to Persia. The historical events, trade and religious beliefs incited India to be impressed by Iranian art specially the art of Achaemenid, Parthian, Sassanid and Islamic period of Iran.

**Keywords:** Aryans, Iran, India, Medes and Persians, Hindus satrap, cultural and artistical relation

### **Introduction**

There was a time when different Iranian and Indian demographic groups would live together and speak a unanimous language. This has been found out by perusing the common words between these two languages. That said, this lifestyle dates back to the prehistory which has passed and left the question that how these people got separated and drifted apart. The cleavage caused the people go their own various ways in language, customs and religious beliefs so immensely that they could not understand each other's words any longer. The ethnic groups of Iran and India both had descended from the Aryan race. The Aryans were fair- complexioned and, generally, more civilized than their fellows. The artifacts relating to this race are very old. After a while, the Aryans dispersed, and a group of them- who are the present Indians' ancestors- went to Punjab catchment, and the other inhabited Iran plateau. There was also another crowd, named Scythe, settling in southern Siberia and south of Western Europe. Moreover, a group of them picked nomadic lifestyle. The Scythes did not gain much civilization achievements, and no written record has remained from them. Due to this fact, Jawaharlal Nehru commentates in his book, "An overlook to the history of the world", that: Among all nations, only the Iranians diverge from the same Indian- Aryan race that the Indians do, and this is merely them who influenced the Indian civilization and cultural facets since the very ancient times. The Veda and Zoroastrian religion have so much in common. The Sanskrit and Pahlavi languages are very analogous as well. The Iranian culture has been so rigorous and deep that would transmute every single stiff invader. The Iranian and Indian people used to have many ties with each other throughout long periods of time even years before their entering Iran plateau. The

artifacts discovered by the archaeological surveys in Mouhanjodaro, Harapa, in north west of Punjab and Sourashtra province indicates that there has been a developed civilization in that region about 2500 BC. The unearthed finds in India are similar to those of Iran plateau and also Mesopotamia in Tigris and Euphrates basin, which imply that the residents in India and Iran would retain close bonds; one of the main documents proving this is mythological factors. The oldest myths in the Middle East are those belonging to Indian people which shows the Aryan culture immigrating to India over 2000 years BC, then, the Hindus adopted some of these myths and change them into other forms such as the myth of sun and Mehr (Mithera). The Achaemenid elements have manifested in the art of ancient India owing to the fact that the historical events, trades and religious beliefs led to disseminating of the Iranian art in India, especially in the Achaemenid, Parthian, and Sasanid times. The Indian religion and a set of religious beliefs represent an array of myths. Religion and, preliminary, religious thought in India are totally different from the concept of religion in the culture of Semitic sects, and naturally though, believing in God is in discordance with the common ones of the Creator. To know these religious sects and their orthodoxy best, Vedas and particularly Rig Veda are the most important textual sources. The interrelations between Iran and India's ancient civilizations have brought about similarities in different decorative, symbolic, mythological aspects of the motifs-particularly the motifs of the sun and fire. These motifs are eminently seen on the facade of the Indian shrines such as swastika with horses, Syrian swastika, which have been transmitted from Iran to India with changed and synthetic motifs. It is to mention that the oldest gods in Vedas were the natural powers and elements, namely, the sky, the ground, fire, light, wind, water and of course the sun.

### **The historic background of the Aryan race and Iranian- Indian relationships' origin**

In very much old times of prehistory, when the Iranian and Indian ethnic groups had not separated yet and were living in the vast plains of Central Asia, they all had one ruler who was both the head of the tribes and also a religious leader. These people, who were scattered over a wide-spread land of Central Asia (where seemingly had a more favorable climate as well as spacious pasturage), had a pastoral

subsistence base and were nomads. They, owing to the fertile pastoral lands, possessed a lot of castles, and they themselves were also numerous. According to the narrative of Vandidad during roughly three thousands of years, three different waves started obtaining more land and also diverging to the around whereabouts. (Farah Vashi, 1382, p: 5) therefore, the Aryans have a long history lasting more than 5000 years and one of the earliest civilizations. The south west of Central Asia and the north of Afghanistan, has been the birth place of this civilization. The Aryan tribes have experienced many stages of prehistoric inventing; the potter's wheel, the first technical fire usage and the discovery of quarries like copper, tin and so forth as well as horse and cart riding. Because cart making was almost impossible without utilizing the metal and the wheel, its invention is considered as the main path to technical achievement. (Hazrati, 1387, p:40) at a point in the prehistoric time, before the Aryans' immigration, very cold long-lasting winters appeared in Central Asia because of the climate change, which caused the human and animal demise. After a while, a temperate climate came back to the nature and thereby there was a boom in human population as well as the animals which brought about lack of appropriate places for dwelling and pasturage, so the Indian- Iranian the Indian- Iranian immigrated to the warmer southern places in search for better, untapped pasturage; a multitude to Iran plateau, another group to the Anatolian plains and the third one traversing to the warm vast land of India and Pakistan. (Farah Vashi, 1382, p:6) the Aryans' entrance was a prologue to several revolutions which made a change in the history of eastern ancient nations as well as putting an end to the thousand- years predominance of the Asianique and Semitique race over the countries in Western Asia. This race is called Indo European since they spread all over India and Europe, and these people comprise the majority of mentioned regions' population. The group settled in Iran and India is known as Indo Iranian, but they are usually called Aryan. (Sami, Ali, 1389, p: 44) Based on Rig Veda- the most reliable ancient document which is flush with the archaeological finds of the subcontinent- the Aryan's ingress has been described as follows: the cattle of cows and horses were their wealth, their vehicles are carts being run using horses, and their weapons were bows, clubs and spears (sickles have been named too, but as tools not weapons). There is no description of temples or towns, however, some fortresses were

mentioned. The corpses were often incrimated and their ash remains would be buried in a midden. It seems as if these people were from Gur Tepe a fresh strong race having just arrived from the mountains and found ascendancy over the scorching plains located on the north of India. From a conventionalized point of view, they were still in Punjab, the place to which they had just come. The names of those rivers situated in west of Indus river valley and Kandahar river are still familiar to the singers. As the evidence shows, the south of India is very much unknown; hence, Punjab constitutes the Aryan Indian's heart land in Vedas time. (Gordon Child, Vir, 1387, p: 52) As observed in the surveys on how the Aryans settled in India, it was realized that the civilization of axes with handle in North West of India has originally the same traits that the civilizations of western Asia and Africa do. Nonetheless, the whole south eastern civilizations in India were excluded. The Neolithic culture in North West of India is very much in harmony with those from south west Asia, and besides, some cultures and civilizations formed in the Indus river valley during the 3rd millennium which resembled the ones in Iran, Mesopotamia and the Central Coast. (Hazrati, 1387, p: 69) On the other hand, the Urbanization revolution took place in Indus river valley and India at a time when coinciding with the same shift in Egypt and Mesopotamia. On the grounds of Child's analysis, in 3000 BC there were three spots in which the economic revolution had come about, whereby each of these three regions could be regarded as centers for significant and great civilizations. The mentioned regions are: 1. the large-scale alluvial valleys round Nile in Egypt, 2. The River banks of Tigris and Euphrates in Mesopotamia, 3. The Indus river basin in India subcontinent. (Child, 1369, p: 122) Arnold Toynbee believes that the Aryans' arrival in India has occurred after the development of early Indus civilization approximately before 15th century BC (2500-1500BC), a theory in agreement with those of the Greek historians'. In addition, he takes the last millennium BC into account for Indian civilization's commencement as a substantial progress could be seen during this period of time. (Toynbee, Arnold, 1362, p: 665)

### **Pre- Achaemanid observation on Iran- India cultural relationship**

The Aryan race was composed of nomadic Asian people who had invaded to south east Asia through the vast Asia- Europe plains and

then the cleft between Pamir plateau and south east of the Caspian sea. Two groups diverged from this race; one traveling along south east towards Indus river basin, and the other which went to the West through the strip of the Alborz and the northern edge of central desert in order to get the pasturage round lake Urmia and the Kura-Aras Lowland adjacent to the western Caspian coast. (Toynbee et al. 1388, p: 51) There was a group of this race who took the path between Aras and Ghezelirmaq basin and finally reached the peninsula of Anatolia. In the latter coming Iranian speaking ethnic groups embracing the Medians and Persians, their dispersal pattern was symmetrically opposite to what was described above. In fact, during this immigration the Persians were the major individuals rather than the Median ones. (the same) All the archaeological finds discovered from India and the valley of Tigris and Euphrates let us infer that the residents of Iran and India have had bilateral relationships even years before the Aryan's massive immigration. (Jalali Naeeni, 1375, p: 5-6) One can study these two nations' united origin surveying the archaeological sites such as Ekbatan or Raga belonging to the Persians and also to the Medians. As a case in point, horseback riding was very common among the Medians, whereas the horse use was only in cart carrying in India, and hardly would people ride them. Or while the Iranians in the Median dynasty wore trousers, the Indians did not. According to the funerary traditions in Iran, after the Zoroast's reforms, dead bodies were to be retained in Dakhmeh or Qal'eh-ye Khamushan (Towers of Silence) in an open- air site so as to impede the ground or the fire from being polluted. It was also strictly forbidden to bury or incremate the corpses. However, the Achaemanid kings would be buried into the Rock Tombs, moreover, the explicit ban on incremation in Avesta denotes this was quite common in ancient Iran (before Zoroast). (Gordon Child, Vir, 1378, p: 65) The Aryan nations are definitely important because of the fact that they have left a major influence on the history of the East, and they have been unified and ruled by the Achaemanid Empire after a period of time. However, the lack of document and artifact prevents us from obtaining much information about the Aryans immigrating to the West Asia with the evident exception that the Medians and the Persians were dominated by Babel, Assyria and Elamite, while adopting many things from them. That when the Aryans began the historic age is still an area of argument. Some researchers subscribe to the fact that the

Aryans entered the West Asia in 14th century BC, although there are some who associate it with 2000 BC. As the record shows, they (Aryans) came to the West Asia gradually, during different centuries through various paths. As an illustration, the remaining artifacts prove the Aryan elements were in existence in the Asia Minor and Syria. The documents of Boghazkuy- the capital city of Hitits (1906)- indicates that the chiefs of Mitani race in the North of Mesopotamia would took oath to the Aryan Indian gods (Inder, Varoon, Nasati and Mithera), which could be a proof for the fact that they were all Aryans. (Pirnia, Hassan, 1387, p: 47) Some archaeologist speculate the residents in India before the Aryans' ingress, in Iran before the Medians and also Achaemanids, and the Sumerian ones in Mesopotamia, all had descended from one origin; yet, it is in doubt. Over the reign of Daryus, the Achaemanid Empire spread to Punjab, thereby the skilled workers, craftsmen and merchants would travel from Iran to India and the other way round; this is clearly depicted in the Achaemanid record such as the reliefs and inscriptions of Persepolis. Herodotus mentions this fact and says: the tribute Daryus exacts from India is more than that of others'. Furthermore, the Indians are employed in some wars between Iran and Greece. (Herodotus, the forth book, paragraph 40)

### **The conquest of Iranian east lands by the Achaemanids**

Cyrus the great, the Achaemanid dynasty founder, could first begin conquering on the East in 544 BC, by taking Bactria up. Since then, Bactria became the most important eastern satrapy for the Achaemanids, and Smerdis (Bardia) its first ruler appointed. (Rawlinson 1969. P: 127) Cambyases, Cyrus's successor, was much more interested in the West, particularly Egypt, so Smerdis started increasing his predominance over the East, the probable reason why he was murdered by his older brother. The Behistun inscription is the most important document from the Achaemanids in the East. Daryus allows for Bactria as one of his tractable and obedient states. (Kent 1963, p: 127) Having quelled all the rallies and revolts at the outset of his reign, Daryus opened a new way to the new land conquest. Apparently the Persians dominated over the north west of India in 517 BC, but before that, Daryus had commanded his admiral- who was from Cariande- to spot the Indus river estuary. After the discovery he went toward the West through the Indian Ocean. The new satrapi or the same Hindush in

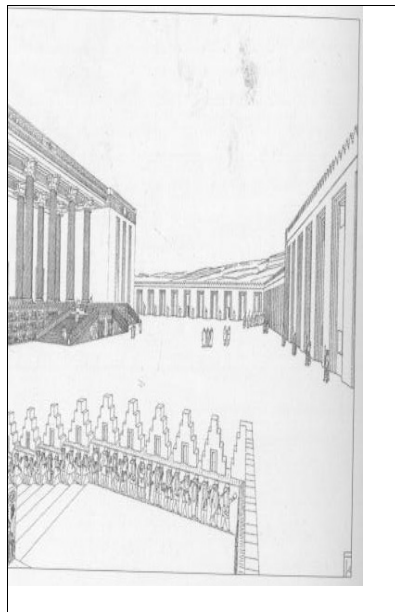
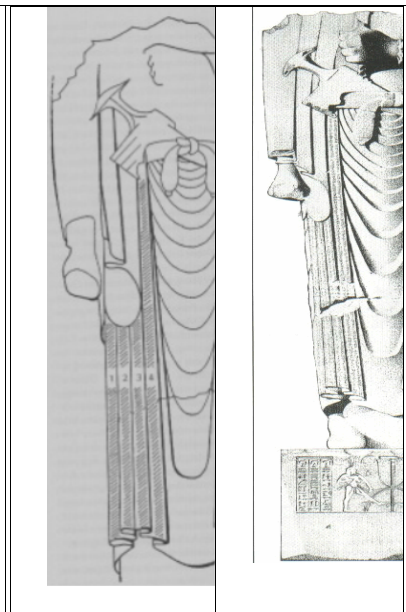
the Achaemenid inscriptions, spanning to the south of Indus valley in present Pakistan, was the most eastern state for the Achaemenid Empire. (Dandamayove 1381, p: 191) The conquest of India was vital to Daryus I, due to its wealth and population. This conquest was so important for the Indians themselves that take it as well as Buddha's appearance into account as the two main history points. (Pirnia, Hassan 1366, p: 631) The Arakhusia region, located on the South of Hindu Kush round Kandahar and probably Kuthna, experienced some revolts in 522- 521 which were crushed by Daryus I, and Thangush- new name of Hindush- was added to his territories. It is to say that all these happened while Gendareh was in a safe quiet status. "Thangush" means the land of one hundred cows which could be an equivalent for the name of Punjab in Pakistan or the same old name "Panj Rood" (= Five Rivers). (Cook 1384, p: 120) these imply that the neighboring countries would always be influenced. (Briant 1378, p: 1427) On the accounts of what Herodotus says (the forth book, 44) Daryus appointed several persons to find a way from the Persian Gulf to India, so Scylas who was from Cariande went on an expedition lasting two years and a half. He started his travel from the Indus estuary to Egypt. It is likely that Daryus's aim had been to build up better relationships with commercial purposes between Iran and India. (Kuhrt 1378, p: 63) Unfortunately we cannot determine the exact eastern frontiers in Cyrus's reign; however, we can suggest that they would have spread up to Kandahar and Peshawar. That said, the Daryus's crackdown on the riots shows that his men did not go beyond Kabul. Anyway so, Daryus could find ascendancy over Kandahar, West of India and alluvial plains around the Indus River as a result of his military operations. Then, the expedition of Scylas de Cariande took place where Kabul and Indus rivers meet in a city named Caspapyros. This crucial expedition, taking more than thirty months, has surely been a daring did which followed both political and commercial goals. (Grishman 1388, p: 137) Herodotus believes Daryus wanted to find out whether it is possible to conjoin both eastern and western parts of his Empire in Elamite. However, on the other hand, it seems that this expedition had been a prologue to dominating the areas near the Indus River. (Briant 1378, p: 332) Later on, Daryus attacked and overcame India through this path. During this period of time the Greek, Phoenician and Arab sailors would support



the ties between India, the Persian Gulf, Babel, Egypt and the ports of Bahro-l-Rom. (Grishman 1372, p: 206)

### **The archaeological records and finds introducing India Satrapy during Darius's reign**

In the Achaemenid inscriptions, particularly in Behistun, Persepolis and Susa, the dependent and conquered nations have been called "Dahyava", which make us imply that the mentioned places have been given to Darius. Darius says 'They were afraid of Darius and would hand in tribute to him. Moreover, they would abide by anything I ask them to.' (Lecoq 1382, p. 207-318) And there, in Behistun, Darius points out that 'These are all the Dahyava which became mine: Pars, Elamite, Babel, Assyria, Arbayeh, Egypt, ... and India, which are together twenty three ones. (Akbarzadeh, p. 68)

	
<p>3- The illustration of Apadana palace (A.Lindsay,2005,S61)</p>	<p>1, 2- The statue of Darius and its inscriptions on the robe (reference: 1- The National Museum of Iran; 2- Mysliwicz,1998,S.192 )</p>

### 7.1- The Achaemenid dependent nations' enumeration based on the archaeological finds discovered from Egypt

The statue of Darius, discovered at Susa, and his steles for inaugurating the Suez Canal- which introduce the Achaemenid Satrapies based on the Egyptian culture and literature in the Hieroglyphic reliefs- are very important artifacts giving more information on the Satrapies. The statue of Darius found at Susa has an inscription in three languages of old Persian, Akkadian and Elamite on its clothes and there is also reliefs on its feet in Hieroglyph which shows the names of the vast geographical name in the Achaemenid time. (Fig. 1) According to the artistic traits and the usage of statue making in Egypt, it is highly likely that this statue had been made of a dark gray stone in Egypt by Darius's command. (Koch 1993, 163) We can realize the Egyptian artistic characteristics reading the foreigner nations' enumeration on the feet of Darius's statue. This list could be compared with the little bronze statue of Neko II (610-595 B.C.). (Luschey 1976, 209) The nations' categorizing as an Egyptian cultural and artistic tradition reminds us of many other Pharaoh's statues with the same inscriptions on their feet at first sight. (Mysliwiec 1998, 194) The engraving designs on the feet of the statue of Darius are observed on three commemorative columns adjacent to the Suez column. The mentioned columns are: 1. the commemorative column of tell el-Mashkuta, 2.the commemorative column of Kabrit, 3. the commemorative column of Suez Canal, which signed this canal from the Mediterranean Sea to the Red Sea. There were three columns considered for supervising the ships that would cross the canals toward the Red Sea, from the promontories. This could denote the importance of building this canal and its settlement place. It is to say that the way of constructing columns and also locating them for especial purposes are roughly the same. (Posener 1936, 58)

### 7.2- The comparison of the dependent nations' name list in Egyptian sources with the Achaemenid inscriptions in Iran

To compare the dependent nations' name list in Egypt, we should look over the Achaemenid inscriptions in Behistun, Naghsh-e-Rostam, Persepolis and the Achaemenid followers enumeration found at Susa. We come across 23 Satrapies in Behistun- the most important Achaemenid inscription in Darius' reign. As Darius states in Behistun: 'These people are all my followers and I became their king – 23 Satrapies from Persians to the Makrani people and the Indians – as Ahuramazda commanded.' (Cook, John Manuel 1383, 146) His second inscription in relation with the dependent nations' enumeration has been incised on the south wall of a stage in Persepolis; it names people who are obedient to the Persian army, which embraces names of 23 ethnic groups. (Lecoq, Pier 1382, 273)

4- The symbolic figures and the enumeration of nations subject to the king on the left hand-side of the statue

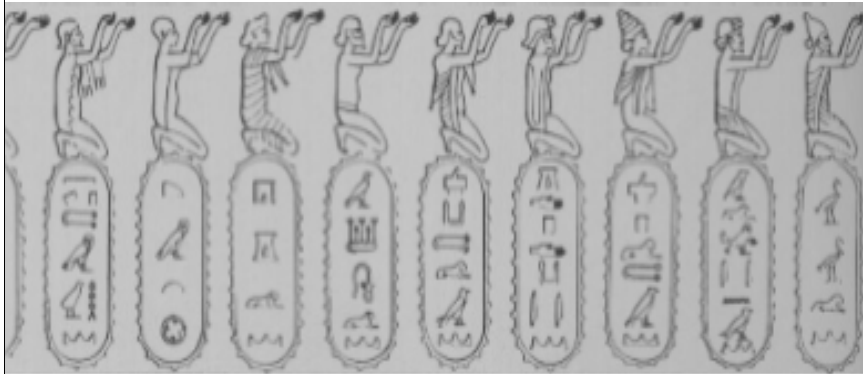


From left: 1. Persia, 2. Media, 3. Elamite, 4. Aria (Aryan), 5. Parthia, 6. Bactria, 7. Sogdia, 8. Arakhusia, 9. Drangiana, 10. Sattagydia, 11. Chorasmia, 12. Scythians. (Mysliwiec 1998, 194)

The greatest numbers of the subject nations of the Achaemenid Empire were under the rule of Darius I. As it is shown in reliefs, 30 representatives of these nations are carrying Darius' throne which shows the boost in number: people from: 1. Kandahar, 2. India, 3. Scythia, 4. Greece, 5. Thrace, 6. Ethiopia, 7. Kariëh. (Lecoq, Pierre 1382, 270) An inscription has been found at Susa in which Darius expresses: 'These people are ones. I predominated over out of Persia';

and he talks about 27 Satrapies which are different from Behistun in mentioning Trakia. (Koch 1993, 113)

5- The symbolic figures and the enumeration of nations subject great king on the right hand-side of the statue



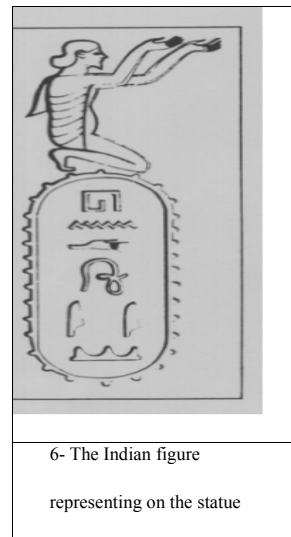
From right: 13. Babylonia, 14. Armenia, 15. Sard (Lydia), 16. Cappadocia, 17. (Thrace), 18. Assyria, 19. Arabia (Hejr), 20. Egypt (Kaml), 21. Lybia (Cyrenai Nobieh), 23. Maka, 24. India.

7.3- Comparing list of the subject nations of the Achaemenid Empire in the Egyptian sources

The foreign nations' enumeration on the column of tell el-Mashkuta and Suez Canal is in accordance with that of the statue of Darius' feet. We can recognize the Hieroglyphic names of the Achaemenid Satrapies on the statues' left foot as following; 1. Persia, 2. Media, 3. Elamite, 4. Aria (Aryan), 5. Parthia, 6. Bactria, 7. Sogdia, 8. Arakhusia, 9. Drangiana, 10. Sattagydia, 11. Chorasmia, 12. Scythians. It continues naming with the same style on the right foot; 13. Babylonia, 14. Armenia, 15. Sard (Lydia), 16. Cappadocia, 17. Skudra (Thrace), 18. Assyria, 19. Arabia (Hejr), 20. Egypt (Kaml), 21. Lybia (Cyrenaica), 22. Nobieh, 23. Maka, 24. India. (Mysliwicz 1998, 194)

7.4- The description of Indian designs on the statue of Darius and its comparison with the porters' relief in Naghsh-e-Rostam (people who carry the royal throne)

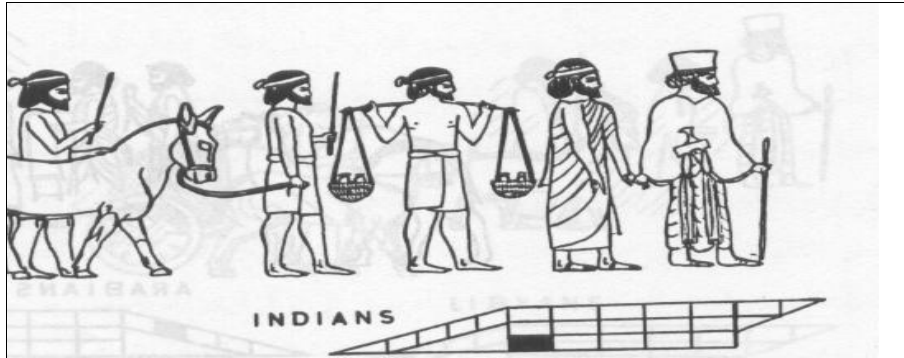
The symbolic figures of the Indians on the statue of Darius also have an uncovered head. His hair is on his forehead in a straight state, and it is tied as a bun at the back of the head. The whole ear has been depicted. It is known from the chin that he has a short pointed beard. This man is wearing a long shawl. A straight line begins from the armpits and goes toward the bottom and the heel afterwards. This indicates the front part of the shawl having a lot of creases and continuing to the chest. (Fig. 4) It seems as if the shawl has been put on the left shoulder, and the part hanging from the back is completely right-angled. There is nothing like a belt or shoe on the Indian representative. (Roaf 1974, 145) Schmidt describes the mentioned Indian in this way: 'We cannot say much about his hair style as the parting has been destroyed. The Indian figure, number 13, has a beard. The head covering is in doubt. The weapon's picture has been removed, and we are not sure about bangle and earrings either. (Schmidt 1970, N.)



6- The Indian figure  
representing on the statue

7.5- The Indian groups' reliefs as one of the subject nations in Persepolis

In the inscription, a Persian agent is the guide for a group of five Indians. The first person is in a fine thin cloak and sandals, while the other four ones are wearing something like a wraparound with bare feet. All of them have covered their foreheads using a strip. The first man is also carrying a scale which is full of spices or gold dust. The third and fourth are bringing a mule, and the last one has a bifacial axe in his hand. (Saeedi 1375, 84)



7- picture of the Indian porters on the eastern stairway of the Apadana palace (Saeedi 1375, 97)

The Indian group is the last one seen at the end of the row; owing to the fact that they were coming from the tropical places, they were only wearing a piece of wraparound. The first person, carrying the offering present, has a stick on his shoulder in a horizontal position which has two baskets at the two ends and in each basket there is a packed bag probably containing the renowned Hindus or Indus gold dust. The Indians carry a mule with them as well. In the relief, the snaking line of the subject nations comes to an end by the picture of Indians. (Koch 1993, 112) As once described, the Indians are from the Indus river area, their leader in the inscribed image is in a thin cloak and sandals, and the others are merely wearing a wraparound around their waists. They all have straight beard and headband on their forehead. The offering presents of theirs are bags filled with either precious spices or gold dust, and someone guide them. (Shahbazi 1384, 133)

### **Geographical positioning of the Achaemenid Satrapies in India based on historical sources**

The exact location of the main Satrapy in India is not known yet. It is likely that this Satrapy had been somewhere in the western India. Over a period of time in the Achaemenid army had reached at least to Punjab. A person called Sambous had been appointed as the chief and ruler of the Satrapy. His territory would include all the mountains area in the west of Anno in Baluchistan, Pakistan, while the center of this

territory was situated in the west of India. (Jacobs 1994, 243) Hindus Satrapy, as Arnold Toynbee suggests in the book “The official geography of the Achaemenids”, had a common border line with Thangoush state and took up to the current Punjab state in Pakistan, the word “Hindus” originally means “people’s living place”; the people who have been mentioned and referred to as “Sindhu” in Sanskrit. These people had been living here (India) a bit sooner than the time that Iranians entered India. (Toynbee 1379, 122) It appears that the Satrapy of India was located in three states; Baluchistan in region one in the map no. 8, a part of Punjab up to Multan in region three in the map no. 8, and Indus state in Pakistan flush with region four in the map no. 8 which is the same Hindus- the Achaemenid Satrapy. (<http://fa.wikipedia.org>)

<p>9- The political map of Pakistan according to the Satrapy of India (<a href="http://golshn.blogfa.com">http://golshn.blogfa.com</a>)</p>	<p>8- The administrative divisions of Pakistan (reference: <a href="http://fa.wikipedia.org">http://fa.wikipedia.org</a>)</p>

### **The reasons of India's importance as a Satrapy during Darius' reign and the background of Iran-India trades**

Over Darius' time, the Achaemenid Empire had been subdivided into twenty states or "Satrapies" for official and governing purposes. Among all the states, India and Egypt were the most important ones. The reason why Egypt was important is quite evident because of its rich and brilliant culture and high-rank civilization, but India was viewed as a major Satrapy since it could provide 360 talents of gold dust which was more than that of the other districts and countries. As a matter of fact, this amount of tribute was thirteen times as much as worth of silver. (Grishwich, Ilia 1385, 255) In the ancient times, "talents" was used as a criterion for calculating the worth of gold and silver. Each talents equaled the amount of water that could fill a particular Greek jar with constricted bottom called "Amphora" which is almost one square foot each. In the ancient Greece each talents included twenty-six kilos, and gold talents had been ten times as worthy as the silver one. (<http://fa.wikipedia.org>) Therefore, India was regarded as a major state for the Achaemenids as it owned a lot of wealth and properties as well as a great population. On the other hand, the Achaemenid military expedition to India and their predominance over this land brought about florescence in the trades between India and the western countries. (Pirnia, Hassan 1366, 629) The commercial relations between Iran and India were gradually formed about the 4th millennium BC. Actually, it could even have started a little before this date. There also was such a relationship with Baluchistan in India through the Persian Gulf. The inscription in Darius' palace at Susa, 4th century BC, is the oldest document bespeaking the beginning of the history of the interrelations between India and the Persian Gulf by talking about Indian wood and ivory. (Tavasoli, Mohammad Mehdi 1378, 92)

### **Conclusion**

- In the very old times, when the Iranians and Indians inhabited in the vast plains of the Central Asia, they had one leader who was both the ruler and the religious guide as well.



- People in Iran and India had many ties and relations even before the Aryans came to the Iranian Plateau. The artifacts discovered in the Indian areas show that there has been a developed civilization in India dating back to 2500 BC. Moreover, the unearthed archaeological finds in India are very similar to those at the Iranian Plateau and Mesopotamia.
- First, Cyrus the great succeeded in approaching India by finding ascendancy over Bactria, and then Darius could conquer the north west of India in 517 BC. Hence, the Achaemenid remains such as inscriptions and reliefs (like what we see in Persepolis) indicate that some parts of the western India had been a tributary of Iran.
- The geographical position of Hindus Satrapy based on Arnold Toynbee's theory in his book "The official geography of the Achaemenids", is a place neighboring "Thangush" northward and would entail present Punjab in Pakistan too. In the other words, Hindus Satrapy contained the city of Multan. "Hindus" means "where people live", and its people were called "Sindhu" in Sanskrit- the people who moved to the south before the Iranian's arrival in India.
- It seems that India Satrapy embraced the whole state of Baluchistan and also part of Punjab near Multan and the Indus state in Pakistan from which the Achaemenid Satrapies' name "Hindus" has been adopted.
- In the most Achaemenid sources and records such as the statue of Darius has enumerated the subject nations of the Achaemenid Empire- as well as the inscriptions of Persepolis and Susa besides the relief of the people carrying the throne of Darius in Naghsh-e-Rostam above his tomb, the role of India Satrapy has been taken into account.
- The core reason for India Satrapy's eminence during Darius's reign was the especial tribute paid by the Indians. Their tribute amount was far more than that of other countries, which compromised 360 talents of gold dust. This amount of tribute was worth thirteen times as much as silver or even it could be said that it equaled 4680 talents worth.

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