

GLIMPSES OF MEDIEVAL INDIAN CULTURE

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of
Medieval
Indian Culture

by

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FOR
MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD

Preface

I AM grateful to the Syndicate of the University of Madras for having invited me to deliver a series of five extension lectures on Indo-Muslim culture under the Osman Muhammad Ismail—Osman Abdul Haque Endowment. The lectures were delivered at the University of Madras in October 1954; these were later revised and a few alterations were made here and there before sending them for publication.

In these lectures an attempt has been made to present the significant features of the process of social change and adjustment which was brought about in medieval India as a result of the Islamic impact on Indian life and thought. Stress has necessarily been laid on the interplay of forces which helped the growth of an integrated culture.

The treatment of the subject has inevitably been a work of selection; and perhaps no two persons would agree upon what to put in and what to leave out. My special object in these lectures has been to put in high relief those social processes which are of great general interest even today, and which were mainly responsible for ushering in a new outlook in the realms of intellect, emotion and culture in medieval Indian history.

My criticism has been strictly impersonal; while details about personalities have been introduced merely for the sake of giving greater clarity to the general outlook.

YUSUF HUSAIN

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Islam and the Cult of Bhakti

WITH THE coming of Islam to India, the inhabitants of the sub-continent were led to establish contact with a civilization quite new to them. The two religions had no points of contact with each other. The manifold activities of the Musalmans in India, as elsewhere, were so intense that the inhabitants of the sub-continent were unable to ignore them. The principles of universal brotherhood and human equality, the bases of Islamic society, of necessity, exercised an influence on the conceptions of their neighbours. The religious conditions were favourable to an unconscious penetration of Islamic ideas into Indian society. The defeat of Buddhism had restored the original Brahman rites. It is doubtful—the learned are not at one in this matter—whether Buddhism and Brahmanism ever struggled with animosity for spiritual supremacy in India. But it is certain that for almost a thousand years many of the Hindus had a system of beliefs which, though different from the Brahmanism which it reformed, was only an emanation of Brahmanism itself. But little by little the original cult, after undergoing many modifications, regained ground. At the time when the Musalmans reached India Brahmanism had completely triumphed over its former rival. To consolidate their influence the Brahmans made a compromise with Buddhist doctrines as well as with pre-Aryan practices. At that period, just as to-day, Hinduism presented a blending of the ritualistic religion of the Vedic age, the humanitarian principles of the Buddha, and the pre-Aryan religious forms and symbols.

Thanks to this teaching, so full and so varied, Brahmanism satisfied the mass of the people as well as those who were given to individual, independent reflection. Those who had neither the time nor the opportunity to cultivate their thought by means of the spiritual practices of meditation and contemplation received dogmas and symbols to worship. The works known under the collective name of Tantras describe the rites and the formulas, destined for those who were incapable of appreciating the pantheistic metaphysics of Brahmanism. They believed in symbols and worshipped images, just as they do to-day. It was by maintaining this pliancy of faith for the people of different levels that Brahmanism was able to be at once an intellectual and educative force and an instrument for the propagation of ritualistic dogma and polytheism. Brahmanism had the good fortune of having as principal interpreter the famous Shankaracharya, who systematized the philosophy of the Upanishads. We are not sure of the time at which he lived. There are differences of opinion about his exact date. Certain scholars think that he lived in the ninth century A.D. He taught the absolute identity of the individual soul and Brahman, the supreme cause of all cosmic existence, the unreality of the world of the senses, and gave the most complete exposition of the doctrines of the Advaita. His interpretations, based on pantheistic doctrines, have exercised a profound influence on the religious attitude of the Hindus. He interpreted the Upanishads as teaching the immanence of all cosmic existence, the illusiveness of the phenomenal world and the exclusive reality of the Brahman, the primordial verity, creator and immanent at the same time. According to him, man, as all other phenomena, is only a manifestation of the Brahman, who is the very essence of all forms of existence. To all diversities and pluralities he gives the name of Maya.

It is not my intention to enlarge upon the pantheistic philosophy of Shankaracharya, but to draw attention to the fact that at the time of the arrival of the Musalmans,

in India, Hindu society, comprising the followers of Saivism, Vaishnavism and the cult of Sakti, was broadly divided between those who worshipped images at home or in the temples, performed prescribed rites and offered sacrifices, and intellectuals, who had no faith in the path of action (Karma-marga). To them attainment of salvation was possible only through the path of knowledge (Jnana-marga). They disputed among themselves about the theory of metempsychosis, the law of karma and other metaphysical subtleties which had hardly any relation with the actual ethical behaviour of man, aiming at improvement of his status in life and fulfilment of his destiny on earth. Brahmanism had become an essentially intellectual doctrine. It ignored the rights of the heart. (The fundamental principles which it taught were impersonal and speculative.) The people, who were always in need of an ethical and emotional cult in which it was possible to find both satisfaction of the heart and moral guidance, understood nothing of it. It was in these circumstances that the movement of Bhakti, devotion blended with love of God, found a favourable atmosphere.

The chief mark of this movement is the attitude of the soul with regard to the Supreme Being. (Epigraphy shows that the word *Bhakti*, as a technical term of religion, existed at the commencement of the second century before Christ, and M. Garbe has noted its existence in Pali literature.) According to Buhler its mention is found in the eighth century B.C. In the religion of the Panchratras, Gopal Krishna and Vasudeva Krishna had blended into one personality, whose mention is found in the pre-Buddhist *Chhandogya Upanishad*. The mention of the word *salvat* in the meaning of *bhagvat* in the *Santiparvan* and in the *Niddesa*, one of the most important Buddhist texts, shows that the need of adoring one God existed in India before the Christian era. (The *Ekantika Dharma*, the religion addressing itself to a single God in the *Bhagavadgita*, is but the first exposition of the doctrine of Bhakti.)

Scholars have frequently discussed the origin of the ideas of Bhakti in India. According to the school represented by Weber; Bhakti, as the means and condition of spiritual salvation, was a foreign idea which came to India with Christianity and exercised a considerable influence on the Hinduism of the period of the great epics and of the Puranas. But the resemblances found between many symbols and practices of Christianity and Hinduism are too fortuitous and insufficient to allow of drawing general conclusions. The existence of small Christian communities in the south-west of India is not improbable, but it is doubtful whether these communities were ever able to exercise any deep influence on Hindu thought. The activity of Nestorian missionaries, the evangelization of India by the Apostle Thomas, and the pious interest which Pantænus of Alexandria showed in the salvation of Hindu souls, are only legends without verifiable foundation. The teaching of the *Gita* and that of the New Testament, the doctrine of the Logos, and that of Vak, the circumstances of the nativity of Christ and of Krishna, present, indeed, striking coincidences, but these can be explained without showing reciprocal influence. Of course facts and ideas do not exist isolated in the world, but in the course of their development they are able to produce phenomena which are at once original and similar. Bhakti is a phenomenon which is universal and human; it is Semitic as well as Aryan. It is the reaction of the heart against rigid intellectualism.

Another opinion, held by Barth, maintains that the movement of Bhakti was an indigenous phenomenon which had its roots in the religious thought of the Hindus. 'We have only to ask ourselves', he says, 'whether India had to wait until the coming of Christianity in order, on the one hand, to arrive at monotheistic conceptions, and, on the other, to apply those conceptions to popular gods such as Siva and Krishna. To deny this, and we do not hesitate to do so, is to admit that Bhakti can be explained as an indigenous fact which was capable of arising in India, as elsewhere in the

religions of Osiris, Adonis, Cybele and Bacchus, at its hour and independently of all Christian influence.' (*Oeuvres*, I, p. 193.) And later, speaking of the resemblances which exist between Christian and Hindu symbols, he says :

'It is not therefore against the possibility of borrowing, but against the borrowing itself, that our objections bear. The dogma of the faith is not introduced as is an ordinary doctrine or a custom ; it does not allow itself to be detached from one religion and grafted at a distance upon another. In practice it is confused with the faith itself, and as this faith, it is inseparable from the God who inspires it. But M. Weber does not at all mean that in Krishna, in whom he has not traced either a dogma of the Redemption or accounts of the Passion, the true source and substance of the Christian faith, India has ever adored Jesus.'

Among others who are of the opinion of Barth, Senart is very explicit :

'Bhakti has certainly in India very deep roots. It is much less a dogma than a sentiment, whose powerful vitality is attested all along the course of history and poetry. Already in the Vedic hymns the pious enthusiasm burst into vibrant expressions of quasi-monotheism ; the passionate longing of the One penetrates the oldest metaphysics ; the Hindus, and even Aryans, were largely prepared to bow down before divine unities. Many superhuman personalities must have emerged from the religious fermentation which was working silently under the traditional surface and which assisted, along with the blending of races, the increase of local traditions, and raised to the highest level figures such as Vishnu, Krishna, Siva, whether entirely new or renewed by their unforeseen importance. For this there was no need of any foreign influence.' (*La Bhagavadgita*, p. 35.)

We incline to the opinion maintained by Barth and Senart. Bhakti is not at all specifically Semitic. It is a sentiment everywhere diffused. It came to birth quite naturally in India when devotion turned to a single personal God. Bhakti,

in the sense understood in India, is a devotion full of affection, and the traditions by which it is inspired belong to Aryan as much as to Semitic thought.

We do not possess sufficient data to prove whether there was, in the epic period, any exchange of ideas between the Nestorians and the Hindus. I have no intention of asserting that in its evolution Bhakti never underwent any external influence; at all events, after the arrival of Islam in India, as I shall show later, the religious point of view of the Hindus, though always based on old foundations, became considerably modified.

The movement of Bhakti may easily be divided into two distinct periods. The first was from the time of the *Bhagavad-gita* to the thirteenth century, the time when Islam penetrated into the interior of the country. The second period extends from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century, an epoch of profound intellectual fermentation, the natural result of the contact of Islam and Hinduism. How and to what degree did the influence of Islam help the sentiment of Bhakti, which already existed in India, to become a doctrine and a cult? Here we have a problem of very great historical and cultural importance, the correct solution of which is necessary to the understanding of the formation of modern Indian civilization.

In its first development Bhakti was only an individual sentiment. The religion of Vasudeva was the natural expression of those who did not find spiritual and moral satisfaction in the intellectual and speculative system of the Upanishads, and whose souls were yearning for a personal God, more comprehensible than the impersonal God, without passion or moral feeling of the pantheistic philosophy of the followers of the Advaita. The doctrine of the Pancharatra and of the Ekantika Dharma of the *Bhagavadgita* is based on the idea that the loving worship of God is a means of obtaining salvation; but one cannot say that there is to be found there a monotheistic system of religion. In reality, the principal problem is to liberate the soul from the low and selfish passions, and that by

the intermediary relation of Bhakti towards Vasudeva, the Supreme God. The Bhagavats later indentified Vasudeva with Krishna, as their personal God. But the authors of the *Bhagavadgita*, who believed in the Brahmanic tradition, introduced into the *Bhagavadgita* the pantheistic conceptions of the theosophy of the Upanishads. We find there Narayana, the personal God, by the side of Antaryamin, the immanent being who is the motive force of the life of the universe; also we see there traces of influence of the schools of Sankhya and of Yoga.

The teachings of the *Bhagavadgita* show that the authors of that book, in spite of a strong leaning to the adoration of a personal God, were saturated with traditions of the classic philosophy of the Upanishads; that their object was not to constitute a definite philosophical or theological system, but only to establish a compromise between the different schools of Hindu philosophy. The doctrine of Bhakti was the central point round which the different systems united to fight the Buddhist atheism. The compromise was effected in a manner which shows all the Brahmanic ingenuity. The Bhagavats adopted the philosophy of the Upanishads and the principles of Yoga; the Sankhya Yoga admitted the existence of a single God. This compromise was so much the more necessary since there existed at that time, between the different schools of philosophy, profound differences as to the explanation of Prakriti (Nature) and of Maya (Illusion).

In spite of the elevation of the monotheistic sentiment which it expresses, the *Bhagavadgita* inclines towards pantheism. In many places it borrows not only the ideas, but even the phraseology of the Upanishads. But it introduces the warmth of Bhakti and attaches great value to the moral purpose of life. Narayana and Vasudeva, the only gods of the Bhagavats, often seem to disappear before the Brahman, the abstract and supreme deity of the Vedanta. Moreover the *Bhagavadgita*, far from showing itself hostile to the Vedas, so violently criticized by the Bhagavats of the middle ages,

enjoined respect for them. It recognizes the *Bhakti-marga*, the way of devotion, and the *Jnana-marga*, the way of knowledge, as two means of obtaining salvation. It is an exposition at once theist, pantheist, emotional and speculative.

Later, in the *Bhagavatapurana* and in the aphorisms of Sandilya, two books which contain the teachings of the school of Bhakti, the attempt was made to introduce some emotion to lighten the heavy burden of ritual and dogma. As in the *Bhagavadgita*, we find in these books tendencies at once pantheist and theist; however, the pantheist conception of life and the faith in the Vedas are without doubt the most conspicuous traits of these works, which were written, as was the *Gita*, by authors who never deviated from the Brahmanic tradition. 'Every time that the old way of the Veda proclaimed by Thee, for the good of the world, is obstructed by the bad ways of heresy, then dost Thou assume the quality of goodness', says the *Bhagavatapurana*. And, with reference to Maya: 'This world, which is illusion, an unceasing course of the qualities and ignorance, has no reality for Thee.' (Burnouf, *Bhagavatapurana*, p. 240.)

The aphorisms of Sandilya, which expound the doctrine of Bhakti under its various aspects, admit Maya and approve of the worship of images, those two essential principles of Brahmanism, the one destined for the intellectuals and the other for the mass of the people.

So what strikes one in the first period of Bhakti is that we do not find there any heterodox teaching about the infallibility of the Vedas. The *Bhagavadgita* recognizes the social system of castes.¹ From the completion of the great epics to the arrival of Islam in India the religion of the Hindus remained a blending of the two different tendencies, the pantheism of the intellectuals and the deistic polytheism of the masses. We shall try to show how the deistic tendencies of Hinduism ended in

¹ Telang: *Bhagavatgita*, p. 22 (Introduction). *Bhagavatgita*, ch. IV, 13. 'I have created the division into four classes which distinguish the gunas and the duties which are peculiar to them'. E. Senart.

monotheism, thanks to contact with Islam, a religion having as its basis the principle of the unity of God.

It was in the twelfth century that Ramanuja gave a philosophic basis to the teachings of Vaishnavism. He represents the reaction against the Advaita philosophy of Shankaracharya, of which the commentary on the Brahmasutras had seduced the thought of all India. Ramanuja made in his turn a commentary on the Brahmasutras, refuted Shankara, and offered his own interpretation based on the theistic idea. He systematized the emotional and theistic tendencies of Bhakti and determined the philosophy of Vaishnavism. Vaishnavism, at once a philosophy and cult, underwent variations in the course of time. Nimbarka, who was the founder of a new school of thought, conceived the human spirit as distinct from the divine spirit, of which, however, it is a part. This theory was called Dvaitadvaitavada, or dual unity. According to Ramanuja, the supreme spirit, or Vishnu, allows of two aspects: the Paramatma, which is the cause of all existence, and the Vishesha, the attributes. There is only one existence, that of Narayana, the rest consists of His attributes, and they are real and permanent. In *Vedartha-Samgraha* he refuted the Advaitic meaning of Tattvamasi as well as the doctrine of Maya laid down by Shankara. His chief work was *Shri Bhashya* on the Vedanta Sutras in which he advocated the worship of a personal deity who would reward the worshipper for his single-minded devotion. According to him this is the only way to achieve salvation. But even Ramanuja prescribed the path of Bhakti for the high castes, the Sudra was expected to remain content with the Prapattimarga, i.e. dependence on God.

Ramanuja is a monist but, contrary to Shankara and his school, he does not believe that the Supreme God may be exempt from form and qualities. His doctrine of qualified monism, or Visishtadvaita, established the unity of God, possessing attributes. According to him, there is no contradiction in the unity manifesting itself in external pluralities. He does not regard the cosmic appearances as false, but as an

aspect, *prakara*, of God. The relation between God and the cosmos appears to him as that of the light and the objects illuminated.

Ramanuja, an orthodox Hindu, performing all the rites enjoined, did not resemble certain reformers who came after him and who were influenced by Islam. Contrary to Kabir and his school, he never preached any heterodox doctrine implying disavowal of the authority of the Vedas and of Brahmanic traditions. The important thing, according to him, is meditation on God. The people attain this by worshipping the images, and those who have no need of any intermediary by the inner concentration called *anlaryamin*. He attaches much importance to the observation of religious ritual. The followers of Ramanuja very scrupulously observed the rites of repast and the rules of caste. Their official language was Sanskrit, and the teaching was strictly confined to the higher classes of Hindu society. The Sudras had no access to their order. Only the Brahmans could be initiated. The success which this teaching had in India was of advantage to the later schools of Bhakti. As so often happens in history, Ramanuja, in spite of his conservatism, involuntarily prepared the way for the reformers who came after him.

The Bhakti-marga was divided into four Sampradayas or schools, all of which attached much importance to the observation of religious ritual. These four schools were: (1) the Shri-Sampradaya founded by Ramanuja, (2) the Brahma-Sampradaya founded by Madhava, (3) the Rudra-Sampradaya founded by Vishnuswami and (4) the Sanakadi-Sampradaya founded by Nimbadiya. The differences among these schools consist in the attitude which they assume towards the Vedanta philosophy of Shankara. Madhava's teaching is frankly dualistic. His followers describe Shankara's Vedanta as disguised Buddhism. A common feature of their teachings is a compromise between monotheism and polytheism.

Whether Ramanuja came under outside influence or not has been much discussed. Sir George Grierson believes that

his monotheistic tendencies were borrowed from Christianity. The conception of an eternal life, such as we find in Ramanuja, was, according to this scholar, a Christian idea. He thinks, besides, that Ramanuja must have made the acquaintance of the Christian monks at Mylapore, where there was a Syrian Christian Church, and that all his ideas show the effect of this. This opinion does not rest on sufficiently sure data. It is true that Ramanuja was at first an adherent of the Advaita school of Shankara and that he left it later; there is nothing to prove, however, that this change was determined by Christian influence. Besides, the Christian communities were insignificant and did not play any marked role in Hindu social life. It is very doubtful whether there was ever any real contact between the Hindus and the Christians in medieval India. But there are other circumstances which must not be neglected. Already the Vaishnavite Alvars and the Shaivaite Adiyars (Hindu mystics of the South in the tenth century) had composed popular hymns (prabandha) marked by strong religious emotion. They attached importance to the love of God as the means of salvation. They succeeded in weaning the people away from Buddhism and Jainism, and thus revived Hinduism in the south of India. It was from these mystic poets of the South that Ramanuja must have taken his cue. At the same time we must not neglect the increasing influence of Islam in Malabar, Gujarat and even on the Coromandel Coast, which is mentioned as the Ma'bar (passage) by the Muslim traders and travellers of the time. Their missionaries and their Sufis had converted to Islam many low-caste Hindus. The commerce of the Arabian Sea, which before the arrival of the Portuguese was in the hands of the Arabs, was one of the principal causes of the Musalman immigration on the coast of Malabar. The Arab traders had established very good and cordial relations with the people of the country. They intermarried with the local women and established themselves on the coast of western India. The Moplahs of our time are the descendants of those Arab merchants who

had built up a prosperous trade between India and the western world. The Nawait community of the Konkan and the Labbaiss of the east Tamil coast are also the descendants of Arab merchants who had established themselves in those parts of the country long before the Muslim conquest of India. These Arab merchants used to load up vessels with spices, incense, ivory, sandal and great quantities of cotton and silk, so much in demand in the western world. They had monopolized all seafaring trade between the East and the West until they were ousted by the Portuguese in the fifteenth century.

According to Zainu'l 'Abdin, the author of the *Tuhfatu'l Mujahidin*, the friendly feelings of the Indian traders towards their Arab counterparts were due to the fact that they profited from the mercantile relations that the Arab traders had established between India and the other markets of the world. The Zamorin of Calicut even went so far as to encourage the lower castes of Hindus to embrace Islam in order to be able to man his ships. His orders were that in every family of fishermen (Makkuvans) living in his dominions, at least one male member should embrace Islam. The influence of these trading Arabs must have been very effective indeed upon the people of the lower castes who entered their service. This must have certainly gone a long way in transforming the social and economic life of the lower castes. Mas'udi, the famous historian of the ninth century who travelled in western India, mentions that the Raja of Balhara, the Vallabhi ruler of western India, professed a great respect for Islam and protected the interests of Muslims in his realm. The same writer points out that all the Rajas of this region lived unusually long. Whether this was his own opinion or whether he simply echoed the popular belief, he attributes the longevity of these kings to their friendliness towards the Muslim subjects. Ibn Hauqal, Abu Zaid and Suleiman, all join in praising the Raja of Balhara for his patronage and tolerance towards the Muslims. Mas'udi further says that in all parts of Gujarat the Muslims

had built splendid mosques where they said their five daily prayers. This tolerance towards the Muslims may probably have been due to the fact that they contributed a great deal to the prosperity of the country they had adopted as their own. This received due recognition in the conciliatory attitude of the political authority towards them.

In the twelfth century A.D., at the very time of Ramanuja, the Arab traders and preachers were making conversions on the western and eastern coasts of India. This intense proselytizing activity of Islam, a religion based on faith and devotion, should certainly have attracted the attention of Ramanuja and suggested to him certain reflections. We do not wish to affirm that Islam exerted a direct influence on Ramanuja; the question, moreover, is a debatable one; but it suffices here to have indicated certain historical facts and circumstances.

The most important moment in the religious history of medieval India was the creation of a new sect by Ramananda, a disciple of Ramanuja and the fourth of his successors—if one admits the list of the *Bhaktamala*: 1. Ramanuja, 2. Devacharya, 3. Haryananda, 4. Raghavananda, 5. Ramananda.

Ramananda most probably must have seen the great progress of Islam in the north of India, during the reigns of the Tughlaqs. The majority of the new converts willingly accepted Islam, since, as we have already said, it gave them higher social standing; others did so under the pressure of political circumstances. In the course of his wanderings Ramananda must have acquired knowledge of Islamic ideas, and perhaps was unconsciously inspired by them. At all events, on his return to Banaras, members of the order to which he had belonged, and whose rigid practices he had criticized, did not wish to have him any longer.

It was then that Ramananda founded his school and renounced the rigidity of Hindu ritual. His disciples took the name of Avadhutas, the detached, for they regarded themselves as free from all sorts of religious and social customs. But Ramananda did not go far enough. It is true that he imparted devotional

knowledge to all alike, whatever their religion or caste, but he was not prepared to make a complete departure from the past traditions. 'In his *Anand Bhashya*, in the chapter on Sudras, he did not recognize the right of a Sudra to read the Vedas. And in matters of social concern, he could not be expected to cast off the sense of superiority of a Hindu over a Mohammadan and of one belonging to the regenerate classes (dwijas) over Sudra.'¹ Ramananda, like the other Acharyas of the South, did not go in for social equality. He enjoined strict segregation and perfect privacy in the matter of food.

Ramananda and his disciples preached Bhakti in the language of the people, and that was one of the reasons of their popularity. Among his dozen disciples there were a Musalman weaver, Kabir, a currier, who was a member of one of the lowest castes, and a barber.² The legends attached to his disciples show the popular character of the religious movement.

The teachings of Ramananda and his disciples created among the Hindus two distinct schools. The first, while enriching Hinduism by the introduction of Bhakti, also preserved the authority of the Vedas. It did not wish to break with the traditions of the past. This school is represented especially by Nabhadasa, the author of the *Bhaktamala*, and by Tulsidas, the great poet who gave literary form to the religion of Bhakti. His poetry popularized the cult of Rama. In worshipping Rama as the personal incarnation of the Supreme God, this school raised the moral level of Hinduism. Its teachings purged Hindu social life of the mystical sensuality inherent in the cult

¹ Bartheval, *The Nirguna School of Hindi Poetry*, p. 14.

² All the disciples of Ramananda taught in the vernacular languages. Of the teachings of Ramananda himself there remains hardly anything but a few verses handed down by word of mouth. But it seems certain that he preached in the language of the people. It is to this innovation that one owes the creation of literature in Hindi, which till then was regarded as a vulgar dialect, the only language of the learned being Sanskrit. The names of Ramananda's twelve disciples are: 1. Ravidas (shoe-maker), 2. Kabir (weaver), 3. Dharna (Jat), 4. Sena (barber), 5. Pipa (Rajput), 6. Bhavananda, 7. Sukhananda, 8. Asananda, 9. Sur-Surananda, 10. Paramananda, 11. Mahananda, 12. Sriananda.

of Krishna, of which Nimbarka, Vallabha and Chaitanya were the most famous teachers. Vallabha in particular repudiated all asceticism and preached, by means of mystic symbols, unlimited sensual enjoyment. This cult degenerated among the people and took the form of an obscene worship of sex. The school of Ramananda, especially in northern India, endeavoured to struggle against its demoralizing influence and gave due importance to ethical purpose in life.

Another school, represented by Kabir, who preached a religious system strictly monotheistic, taught the absolute abolition of caste, and cast doubt upon the authority of the Vedas and other sacred books. The followers of this school were essentially heretics. Not believing in religious authority, they were more accessible to foreign influence. The school of Kabir sought to understand Islam and even to establish a syncretic system appropriate to the life of the people of India. Its doctrine was sufficiently wide to incorporate some of the basic principles of Islam.

Thus, the arrival of Islam in India coincides with a powerful spiritual upheaval, resulting in the development of deistic sects which completely changed the religious outlook of the Hindus by introducing a personal conception of God. By the nature of things, Islam must have served as an intellectual stimulus to those who were repelled as much by the rigid formalism of rites and the tantric licentiousness as by the metaphysical subtleties of the Advaita. The monotheism of the poets and mystics of the fourteenth, fifteenth and the following centuries is more definite and more ethical; their religious experience is deeper and they aspire to a universal religion, or at least to a religion which raises itself above caste.

The personality of Kabir is as interesting as mysterious. All his life, from birth to death, is obscure. Indeed, apart from legendary and traditional accounts, there is scarcely any historical confirmation of his real existence to be found. When an abstraction is made of the works of which he passes as the author, the first text which speaks of him is the *Janam Sakhi*

of Guru Nanak, which forms part of the *Adi Granth*, the sacred book of the Sikhs, but which cannot be regarded as historical evidence in the precise sense of the term. A cursory mention of Kabir is made by Abul Fazl in the *Ain-i-Akhbari* and by 'Abdul Haq Muhaddis in the *Akhbarul Akhbar*, as the unitarian who lived in the time of Sikandar Lodhi. Among the later Mughal historians, a detailed account of Kabir is left by Muhsin Fani of Kashmir who lived in the seventeenth century. He devotes to Kabir many pages of his book. He also quotes certain traditions which he must have learnt from the Kabirpanthis, which bear witness to the lasting glory of Kabir. He says: 'It is said that a group of Brahman scholars, sitting on the bank of the Ganges, were praising the water of this sacred stream, which washes away all sins. In course of conversation, one of them became thirsty. Kabir raised himself from his place, and having filled a wooden bowl which he had with him, carried it to the Brahman. The water was not accepted. Kabir being a weaver, a man of low caste. Kabir observed: "You have declared that the water of the Ganges purifies the soul and the body from all impurity. But if this water is not even able to purify this wooden bowl, it does not deserve your praise".'

'Another day', we read in the same author, 'Kabir was watching the wife of a gardener, who gathered flowers to offer them to an idol. He said to her: "In the petals of the flower dwells the soul of vegetation, and the idol to which you are going to make your offering is lifeless. The vegetal condition is better than the mineral condition. The idol to which you are going to offer flowers has neither feeling nor life. The vegetal condition is far superior. If the idol has a soul it would chastise the sculptor who in carving it had to put his feet on its chest. Go! venerate that which is wise, intelligent, and perfect".' (*Dabistan-i-Mazaheb*, p. 246.)

The name Kabir is Musalman. According to the legend widespread in northern India, a region where his activity was localized and where there still remain traces of his influence,

he was the illegitimate son of a Brahman widow. To hide her shame, she threw the child in a pond called the Lohar Talao at Banaras. A Musalman weaver named Ali saw the little one, took pity on it and carried it home. His wife Nima had not borne him any children, so they adopted the rescued child. They took it to the Qazi, who consulted the Quran to find the name that should be given to the baby. The first word which struck the eyes of the Qazi was Kabir, and therefore the child was called Kabir. The followers of Kabir say that he was born in the year Sambat 1456 (A.D. 1398). Most probably he was born somewhat later. The traditional date of his birth may have been accepted with a desire to connect him with Ramananda who is believed to have died somewhere about A.D. 1410 when Kabir would have been twelve years old. But according to other scholars Ramananda lived from A.D. 1400 to 1470 and Kabir lived from 1440 to 1518, which seems to fit well into the facts and circumstances...

It is said that he followed the profession of his adoptive father; he makes allusion to it in his verses. He explains the mysteries of human existence in a symbolic manner and freely uses the terms employed by the weavers of northern India even to-day.

'Nobody knows the secret of the weaver who, after coming to this world, has spread his warp. The earth and the heaven are two holes he has dug; the sun and the moon are two shuttles he has made, Kabir says: The weaver weaves good and bad thread according to his karma.' (*Bijak, Ramaini*, 28.)

He refers to his caste as that of a weaver in these lines:

'By caste a weaver and patient of mind,
Utters Kabir with natural ease the excellences of Rama.'

Although brought up in a Muslim family, Kabir found the means to initiate himself into the sacred texts of the Hindus. In his early years he appears to have been influenced by the

teaching of Gosain Ashtananda, a Hindu saint of Banaras, thanks to whom he learnt the religious philosophy and the traditions of Hinduism. Later he became a disciple of Ramananda who, as we have already seen, separated himself from his colleagues on the question of the rigid rules of caste. Kabir was admitted to the company of the disciples of Ramananda, although some of them were opposed to it, for their tolerance with regard to Hindus of low caste was not always extended to the Musalmans. However that may be, Kabir rallied to the sect of Ramananda. Some of his conceptions were heretical in the eyes of Ramavats, the followers of Ramananda, and of Hindus in general. But, in spite of this divergence, he continued in the practice of Bhakti towards Rama, whom he did not believe to be distinct from Allah of the Musalmans. He adored him as the Supreme Being, the Saviour of the world and the personification of all goodness.

From Kabir's intimate knowledge of Hinduism some scholars, including Wilson and Bhandarkar, have concluded that he was a Hindu. But the *Adi Granth* is quite explicit in this matter. It is mentioned therein: 'In whose family on the occasions of 'Id and Baqrid the cow is butchered, in whose family Sheikh, Shahid and Pir are revered: whose father did like that, the son following him, he, Kabir, well known in the three worlds.'

Although brought up in a Muslim family, Kabir had no desire to attach himself to any organized religion, nor did he attempt to formulate any religion or philosophical system of his own. All he did was to popularize the current ideas of Bhakti or loving devotion to God who is the creator and sustainer of all.

The chief aim of the teaching of Kabir was to find a *modus vivendi*, an acceptable means of reconciling the different castes and the religious communities of northern India. He wished to abolish the caste system as well as the antagonism of religions based on blind superstition or on the selfish interest of a minority exploiting the ignorance of others. He desired to

establish social and religious peace among the people who lived together, but who were separated from one another by religion.

According to his teaching, summarized in the *Bijah*, the book which holds authority on all that concerns Kabir and his system, he never thought of founding a religion, as happened after his death. He only wished to give a syncretic fulness to the movement of Bhakti, which in his time had made a strong advance. Consequently, he heartily welcomed those who shared his views, of whatever religion they might be.

He thus established a group of disciples who were willing to admit the representatives of different castes and religions, and whose ideas were marked by a peculiar originality and whose approach was different from the traditional outlook of the orthodox in that it laid greater stress on spiritual life as opposed to external observances. The system of Kabir is an attempt at a fusion of Islamic mysticism, having as its object a loving devotion to a single God, and Hindu traditions. The comprehensive breadth of his culture and his opinions appear, as we shall see later, not only in his teaching but also in the fact that, though initiated into the sect of Ramayats, he remained in spiritual communication with a Muslim Sufi, Sheikh Taqi, who had settled in the neighbourhood of Allahabad. Sheikh Taqi was the son of Shabanu'l-Millat and belonged to the Suhrawardiya order of Sufis. Kabir openly rejected all outward signs of Hinduism and acknowledged no caste distinctions, saw no virtue in asceticism, fasting, pilgrimages and ceremonial ablutions. He despised the six schools of Hindu philosophy. Belief in a Supreme Being is the foundation of his preaching. According to him salvation is possible not by knowledge or action but by faith (bhakti). God is the creator and preserver of all. Man being His creature needs to worship Him. It is sin which separates the soul from God.

The teaching of Kabir does not give preference to either Hindus or Muslims. He admires all that is good in the two cults, and condemns all that is dogmatic. He detests the

sacerdotal spirit as much among the Brahmans as among the Muslim 'ulama. He cannot repress his indignation against the ignorance of those who imagine themselves to be the only ones who know the true way and the true God. According to him, the different appellations of God are only expressions of one and the same truth. He says :

'Brother! From where have the two masters of the Universe come? Tell me, who has invented the names of Allah, Ram, Keshav, Hari and Hazrat? All ornaments of gold are made of a unique substance. It is to show to the world that two different signs are made, one is called Nimaz while the other is termed Puja. Mahadev and Muhammad are one and the same; Brahma and Adam are one and the same. What is a Hindu? What is a Turk? Both inhabit the same earth. One reads the Veda, and the other the Qur'an and the Khutba. One is a Moulana and the other a Pandit. Earthen vessels have different names, although they are made from the same earth. Kabir says: both are misled, none has found God.' (*Sabd*, 30.)

Elsewhere he takes up the same subject:

'Rama, Khuda, Sakti, Siva are one. Then to whom do the prayers go? The Vedas, the Puranas and the Qur'an are only different manners of description. Neither the Hindu nor the Turk, neither the Jain nor the Yogi is cognizant of the secret.' (*Sabd*, 28.)

Religious differences are fortuitious. External and essential humanity is always the same.

'O Saints! I have seen the ways of both. In their pride the Hindu and the Turk do not recognize me. . . . The way of the Hindu and the Muslim is the same. The Satguru has revealed this to me. Hear what Kabir says: Rama and Khuda are one and the same.' (*Sabd*, 10.)

In denouncing religious symbols and superstitions Kabir shows favour neither to Musalmans nor to Hindus. His criticism of each of them is equally severe. The rites and practices which constitute the two forms of worship seem to him equally vain; it is in the heart that the true faith resides. The external

forms conceal from the eyes of men the deep meaning of existence. He says:

'Allah and Rama are thy names. Thou art master full of *misericorde*. It is no use bending the shaven head to the ground; it is no use washing your bodies with water... The Hindu observes twenty-four fasts of Ekadasi, while the Muslim observes his full month fast. If only one month is sacred, what about the other eleven months?' (*Sabd*, 97.)

'Saints, see how the world has gone mad. If I tell them the truth they run after me to beat me. The world believes in falsehood. I have seen those who observe punctiliously all the religious practices and ceremonies. I have seen those too who take a bath every morning... They worship idols of copper and stone. They have become mad by the pride of their pilgrimages... The Hindu says that he worships Rama and the Muslim says that he worships Rahman. They die of disputing with one another. Both are ignorant of the secret. Kabir says: O Saints, listen! All this is due to error and ignorance!' (*Sabd*, 4.)

The epoch in which Kabir lived was one of great social and political unrest. The first contact with the Muslims must have given to Indian thought a new orientation and given birth to new spiritual and social ideals. It is always the epochs of this character that upset all established values of life. The individual requires self-consciousness and protests against all rules and all stereotyped and traditional systems. Kabir represents this kind of school. He believed neither in the Vedas nor in the Shastras. He held in doubt and called into question the spiritual efficacy of every tradition; the scriptural knowledge of whatever religion did not satisfy his longing for truth and failed to meet the deepest needs of his soul. His criticism of the Qazi and the Pandit is the natural result of his own spiritual dissatisfaction. To him observance of rites does not bring salvation; it only aggravates the distinction between people. Thus he speaks:

'The Pandit has gone astray, although he punctiliously

recites the Vedas. He is ignorant of the secret of his self. In the evening he makes ablutions and performs the six enjoined acts. His religion is only in externals. For four ages of the universe people have been reciting Gayatri; I should like to know if a single man has obtained salvation through it. If he touches anybody else he washes his person with water. Tell me, who in the world is inferior to you? You had better abolish all distinctions of caste and seek the abode of Nirwana.' (*Ramarni*, 35.)

About ritualism he says :

'There is nothing but water at the holy bathing places; and I know that they are useless, for I have bathed in them. The images are all lifeless, they cannot speak; I know, for I have cried aloud to them. The Puranas and the Karma are mere words; lifting the curtain I have seen. Kabir gives utterance to the words of experience and he knows very well that all other things are untrue.' (*Adi Granth.*)

In a very sarcastic tone Kabir ridicules the practices of exterior purity, and the defilement produced by contact with other human beings.

'Tell me, what is pollution, if you believe in it. How does it arise? There exist eighty-four hundred thousand vessels that will become earth. The whole world is sitting on the same bank; from whom will you get pollution? There is defilement in your repast and in the water with which you clean your mouth. The entire world is created from pollution. Kabir says: Those who do not associate themselves with Maya give up all talk about pollution.' (*Sabd*, 41.)

'O Pandit! You reflect before drinking water... Fifty-six times ten million descendants of Yadu (one of the ancestors of Krishna) and eighty-eight thousand Munis are immersed in it. At every step prophets are buried and have become dust. In the form of fish, tortoise and crocodile the river is full of blood. O Pandit! You sit on the earth to take repast, but earth is polluted! You had better abandon the Vedas; they create confusion of spirit.' (*Sabd*, 47.)

Kabir reproaches the Brahmans with their ignorance of spiritual truth:

'Thou art a Brahman, I am a weaver of Banaras; how can I be a match for thee?

'By repeating the name of God I have been saved; while thou, O Pandit, shalt be lost by trusting in the Vedas.'

(*Adi Granth, Ramkoli, 5.*)

Kabir is categorical in that which concerns the abolition of the caste system. He regards it as arbitrary and unjust, and denounces it openly as no Hindu reformer before him had the courage to do. He claimed for the Sudras perfect social equality with the other castes. Brahmanic Hinduism has always been tolerant in the matter of metaphysical interpretations, however radical and novel they may be; but it does not allow any innovation in its social system. It has been extremely uncompromising on this point. Caste has been the central point of the system of Brahmanism and the characteristic feature of Hindu culture. In opposing it, under the influence of Islamic ideas, Kabir exercised a great influence on the social and religious history of medieval India. He has given appropriate expression to the social fermentation caused in the Hindu society by certain powerful factors, evidently Islam being the most important one. Here are some examples, taken from the *Bijak*, in which Kabir denounces what is irrational and inhuman in the division of society into castes.

'If you reflect on the origin of castes, they come into being from one and the same order... How is it that one is born Sudra, and remains Sudra till his death?... One makes a Brahmanic thread oneself and then puts it on. The world is thus in confusion. If thou art a Brahman, born of a Brahmani, why art thou not born in a different fashion? If thou art a Turk, born of a Turkish woman, why wast not thou circumcized in the mother's womb. If you milk a black cow and a white

cow and then mix their milk, will you be able to distinguish the milk of one from the other?' (*Ramaini*, 62.)

Again he says:

'Those who talk of high and low are drowned. They have perished... There is one earth and only one potter, one is the creator of all; all the different forms are fashioned by one wheel.' (*Bipramatisi*.)

Kabir does not believe in the efficacy of pilgrimage to holy places. He says without any circumlocution that they are quite useless to the true spiritual life. He says:

'By' going to the pilgrimage you cannot save your soul, even if you give millions of diamonds as alms... Kashi (Banaras) and the barren land of Maghar are not the abode of Rama; He resides in my heart. If Kabir dedicates his life to Kashi, what would be left for Rama?' (*Sabd*, 103.)

The doctrine of the unity of God (tauhid) is more definite in the teaching of Kabir than in that of his predecessors. He believed in the Sat Purusha, the Eternal Truth, which created the Universe and which is independent and without passion. According to him God is eternal and almighty. He believed also in the existence of Kal Purusha or Niranjan, the diabolical personage who has the power to lead the true believers from the way of virtue. Neither the philosophy nor the classical theology of Hinduism knew these coexistent, personal and clearly distinct entities. They recall rather the opposition of Allah and Shaitan in the doctrine of Islam. He considers man to be the creative efficient of his actions, in that he himself is responsible for what he does, whether good or bad. The one and only God of Kabir, whom he sometimes addresses as Saheb, is the object of all devotion. It is undoubtedly true that Kabir owed much to Vaishnavism, but he did not worship Vishnu, his Avatar or his idol. He differentiates between himself and a Vaishnava in the following verse:

'In meditating on the four-armed are the saints of Brij immersed. But Kabir is immersed in the meditation of that form whose arms are endless.' (*Granthavali*.)

About the nature of the Supreme Being he categorically says that He is beyond all images and comparisons and therefore the mind cannot grasp and human speech cannot give expression to His attributes:

'What you speak of Him that He is not. He is what He is.'
(*Granthavali.*)

Like Tulsidas and other Bhagats who came after him, Kabir worshipped Rama as the Supreme God of all. Through the principle of the unity of God, Kabir did much to elevate the social and moral level of the Hindu society of the time. His ethical attitude towards life was a necessary concomitant of his transcendental belief in One God. This added religious force and sanction to moral obligations and equally tended to impart a moral aspect to religious belief and worship. In fact, Kabir attaches far greater importance to the problems of human conduct than to metaphysical quibblings.

Besides, though a stern moralist in his attitude towards life, Kabir always denounced the practices of the Yogis. He considered their practices as quite useless for leading a moral and religious life. According to him ritualistic attitudes and prescribed practices serve no purpose, it is the inner life which must be suffused by faith and reformed.

'Devotion does not consist in the contortions of the body. There are many who believe in the efficacy of these practices. They tell you one thing and their hearts are set on different things altogether. They cannot see God even in dream.'
(*Ramaini*, 67.)

Again he says:

'The Yogi says that Yoga is the best form of worship. There is nothing to equal it. I ask the one with plaited hair, the one with a shaven head, and the one who is keeping an oath of silence, if they have thereby found perfection.' (*Sabd*, 38.)

In the *Bijak*, Kabir often speaks of Maya, but his idea of it differs in many points from the classical Brahmanic conception. This world, in its forms and names, is for him more than a simple appearance, but he does not recognize in it an

eternal value, and therefore he asks his followers not to attach themselves closely to it. Maya, to him, is not an illusion superposed on the world of human conduct, as the classical doctrine maintained, but rather a force of evil which alienates man from God. Kabir likens Maya to a clever beguiler, full of lascivious charm. She lies in wait for her victims and assumes a multitude of forms. She instals herself in the mind and spirit and distracts the righteous from the path of duty. What Kabir means by this symbol of Maya is not the usual domain of illusion expounded by classical writers. The real world, for him, is the domain of illusion only in the sense that man should not attach himself to it; the Eternal alone being real and rightly the object of his pre-occupation.

The teachings of the Upanishads, of the Shastras and other sacred scriptures do not suffice, according to Kabir, to give spiritual satisfaction to believers. His own teachings and his life, as it is recounted, present a strong reaction to the philosophical spirit of the Brahmans. It does not follow that he did not appreciate the importance of metaphysical problems which, in one sense or another, touch actual life. But he treated them, on his part, in an extremely simple manner so that they might be understood even by the meanest intelligence. At the same time he did not shirk in denouncing the ignorance of people who believed in all sorts of dogmas without understanding their true import.

The verses of Kabir on Bhakti present a style that is quite new in the literature of India. The style is at once simple, spontaneous and marked by a passion which is new to India. There is something Semitic in it. Though an apostle of universal tolerance, Kabir becomes uncompromising in defence of his own cherished ideas. He even sometimes abandons courtesy to criticize in very severe terms the abuses committed by the Pandits and the Mullahs. Certain other traits also deserve to be brought forward.

Kabir, in the works attributed to him, does not refrain from employing such terms as Allah, Khuda, Kalima, Rahim,

Rahman, Saheb, and so forth. He also attempts to interpret in Hindu terms the conception of God peculiar to Islam. Ancient Sanskrit words like Kartar, Pratipala, Samrat take with him a very definite meaning of personal God. The traditional conception of the Brahmanic triad is very far removed from the definite conception of a single God whom Kabir never ceased to invoke. Even the names of the Hindu divinities and terms like Karma and Mukti take in his mouth quite a new sense. He was thus the first to popularize in India the terms and conceptions peculiar to Islam.

Nothing seems to have been more contrary to the teaching of Kabir than the division of mankind into sects and denominations. Yet, after his death, which took place at Magliar, in the district of Gorakhpur, a violent dissension arose between his disciples on the question of what to do with his remains. The Musalmans wanted to bury him, while the Hindus demanded that he should be burnt. It is said that, to put an end to their dispute, the body of Kabir disappeared. Nothing remained of him under the shroud but a handful of flowers which the Musalmans and the Hindus divided; the former buried their share at Naghdar which became after that the centre of the Musalman Kabirpanthis, while the others burnt theirs at Banaras, at the place now called Kabir Chaura.

A new cleavage among the followers of Kabir was produced when Dharmadas, one of the chief disciples of Kabir, founded his Math at Bandogarh, in the neighbourhood of Jabalpur.¹ Nanak, who was a believer in Bhakti, lived in the fifteenth and the early part of the sixteenth century when the doctrines of Kabir had already made their way in northern and north-western India. The teaching of Nanak is certainly inspired by them as Guru Govind Singh has observed: Kabirpanth ab bhyo.

¹ The first foreign writer whose attention was attracted by the sect of Kabirpanthis was the priest Mares Della Tomba, a Jesuit missionary, who visited India in 1716. He translated a text entitled *Juan Sagar*, which was, according to him, "the book of the Kabirpanthis" (*Libro de Cabiristi*); also another which he called the *Mul Pang* and which is probably "Mul Panthi." See *Mines de L'Orient*, Vol. 3, pp. 308-17.

Khalsa (The religion of Kabir has now become the Khalsa).

Besides the influence of Kabir, under which he came from his early days, Nanak, though a Hindu, frequented the company of Muslim saints. The *Janam Sakhi* contains the account of many interviews he had had with the Sufis of his time; among them were Shah Bu 'Ali Qalandar of Panipat, Sheikh Ibrahim and Mian Mitha. The *Janam Sakhi* also mentions the pilgrimage of Nanak to Mecca, though it is not very likely that Nanak ever left India. But this imaginary visit of Nanak is very typical of the religious tendencies of his epoch.

Nanak, like Kabir before him, was a divinely inspired personality. He believed in God as the omnipotent reality, but maintained that the separate individuality of the human soul could attain union with Him through love and devotion, and not by knowledge or ceremonial observance. He attached great importance to the principle of the oneness of God and the brotherhood of man. He proclaimed that the law of life for human beings was to love one another and to find God through loving devotion. He taught that all human beings were created by one transcendental God who judges mankind and upholds the moral order of the world. He condemned ritual as useless.

The most important trait of Bhakti from the social point of view was the protest against the principle of caste. Nanak did not fail to associate himself with this protest. In the *Janam Sakhi* it is mentioned that in the course of his travels Nanak decided to stay with a poor untouchable. There was great consternation among the Pandits, and all those who were proud of their caste came and sat at a distance from the Guru.

'You are puzzled because I am staying with a good, kind and hardworking man, who is doing his duty', said the Guru.

'Remember

Actions determine caste

Man exalts or lowers himself by his own acts.

By devotion to the sacred name

Release from the wheel of birth and death is obtained.
 Do not worry about distinction of caste
 Realize that His light is in all
 There is no caste on the other side.'

(*Janam Sakhi.*)

Again he says:

'There are lowest men among the low. Nanak shall go with them; what has he got to do with the great? God's eye of mercy falls on those who take care of the lowly. Nonsense is caste and nonsense the titled fame. What power has caste? Nobody is without some worth. (*Janam Sakhi.*)

Nanak's monotheistic conception of God is defined in the following words:

'God is the one Supreme Being, of the true name, the Creator, devoid of fear and enmity, immortal, unborn, self-existent and the enlightener by His Grace. God is self-existent, so is His name. Besides Himself He made Nature, wherein He has His seat and looks on with fondness. He who fashioned the body of the Real is also the Creator of the five elements and their master, the mind. Real are thy works and thy purposes, thy rule and thy orders and thy edicts, thy mercy and the mark of thy acceptance. Hundreds of thousands, millions upon millions, call upon thee as the true Reality. All forces and energies are from that Reality. Thy praise and glorification is of real worth. Those who worship the true Reality are real. Only those who worship what is born and dies are most unreal.' (*Janam Sakhi.*)

Nanak, like his predecessor Kabir, had the daring to rise against the ritualism of his time and engage in a movement of reform. He believed in the unity of God and desired to smooth the differences between Hinduism and Islam. He taught in the language of the people which was one of the reasons which determined the success of his mission. The sacred book of the Sikhs, the followers of Guru Nanak, is the *Adi Granth*. It was composed at the time of Guru Arjun, fifty years after

the death of Guru Nanak. Afterwards, the verses of Guru Tegh Bahadur were incorporated in it. The *Granth Saheb* bears testimony to the fact that the essential beliefs of the Sikhs and the Muslims have a striking similarity. Muslim influence on the teachings of Guru Nanak is clear and beyond dispute.

From Kabir sprang a galaxy of reformers who preached their ardent faith in a personal God and a moral law which rules the world. That which characterizes them all is their faith in Bhakti, as well as their critical attitude towards orthodoxy. They all preached against the rigidity and iniquity of the caste system and proclaimed the equality of all men in the eyes of God. They popularized the basic principles of Bhakti in different parts of India. Dadu, Chaitanya, Mirabai, Tukaram and Surdas, though not directly connected with Kabir, were monotheists and preached the doctrine of Bhakti. They have left behind them the traditions of their own Sadhana, enjoining on all to awaken the spirit of devotion and to worship the One God. Tulsidas, who lived in the time of Akbar, popularized the Hindu religion, revitalizing it by the conception of a personal and transcendental God who judges mankind for its good and bad actions. It is not a mere chance that many of the reformers of medieval India were of lowly origin. If there is in the doctrine of Islam a principle to which it has remained invariably faithful until our days, it is, indeed, the principle of the equality of men, whatever be their social condition. In Islam there is no caste system. The contact with Muslims must have awakened the lower classes of Hindus to the reality of their position, debarred as they were from having any access to a higher spiritual life. Namdeo, one of the Bhagats who preceded Kabir, has recorded in one of his verses how once he was turned out of a temple when the Brahmans came to know that he was a calico-printer by caste. (*Adi Granth.*) The Sudra, whose condition Bhakti reformers wanted to alleviate, was relegated to the lowest stratum of humanity. Having no access to the gods, he was not allowed the privilege

of Brahmanic rites and sacraments. To these people the message of Islam had a special appeal, preaching the brotherhood of man and guaranteeing salvation to each individual through the performance of good actions.

Like the Reformation in Europe, the Reformation of Hinduism in the middle ages owed a great debt to Islam. It delivered a new social message of the worth of every human being in the sight of God, and urged a reconstruction of the current Hindu thought with a view to making it an efficient vehicle of the new social and spiritual ideals by the pursuit of Bhakti. And yet it must be admitted that the influence of Islam leavened, but did not fundamentally alter the structure of the Hindu society, which retains the elements of exclusiveness and untouchability even up to our times.

It is generally conceded by historians of civilization that religious developments reflect or accompany basic changes in social processes. (The Bhakti movement of medieval India represents the first effective impingement on Hindu society of Islamic culture and outlook. It is true that the Bhakti cult was essentially indigenous, but it received a great impetus from the presence of Muslims in this country.) This movement not only prepared a meeting-ground for the devout men of both creeds, it also preached human equality and openly condemned ritual and caste. It was radically new, basically different from old traditions and ideas of religious authority. It sought to refashion the collective life on a new basis, envisaging a society in which there shall be justice and equality for all and in which men of all creeds shall be able to develop to their full moral and spiritual stature.

Sufism in India

ALL MYSTICISM is born of religion. Sufism was born in the bosom of Islam. Among the Sahabah (the companions of the Prophet) there were, at the very beginning, people who despised the world and led an austere life.) This tendency, common to all religions, affirmed itself among the Muslims when the rapid expansion of Islam, in the first century of the Hegira, assured to its adherents political supremacy from Spain to the Indus. The pious and sincere followers of the Qur'an had to reprove the profane desires and ambitions of the faithful, who increased day by day, as new countries were conquered, and material prosperity seemed to bring forgetfulness of God. (Many, who regarded all external splendour and wealth as an infraction of the principles governing the true Islamic life, retired from the world to lead a life of abstinence and renunciation.)

The Muslim mystics or the Sufis of the first two centuries of the Hegira were ascetics, men of deep religious feeling, who laid great stress on the principles of Tauba (repentance) and Tawakkul (trust in God). These early mystics of Islam were fundamentally inspired by the Ouranic conception of a transcendent God. Their contemplation remained confined within the limits of the Qur'an and the practice of the Prophet.¹ By the end of the second century of the Hegira, Sufism had become a monotheistic theosophy, of which the fear of God and the Day of Judgement were the dominant features, but

¹ Massignon, *Essai sur les Origines du Lexique Technique de la Mystique Musulman*, Paris, 1922.

the element of loving adoration was not altogether absent. Rab'ia, the woman mystic of the second century Hegira, says: 'Love of God hath so absorbed me that neither love nor hate of any other thing remains in my heart.' In her verses also she uses the symbolical language of human love to describe the relations between the mystic and his Divine Beloved, a practice which became popular in the later centuries, both in the Arabic and Persian languages.

The erotic imagery used by Dhu'l Nun Misri in his verses is full of passionate devotion to the Divine Being. In fact, the nature of love is such that it tends to resolve all differences between the lover and the beloved into one simple unity. In later centuries the allegory of love became a prominent characteristic of Sufi literature.

(The asceticism of the early Sufis gave birth to the regular movement of Tasawwuf in the third century of the Hegira, aiming at the loving devotion to God and a discipline of the individual soul. At Baghdad, under the Abbasids, the Sufi theosophy attained its perfection.) The influence of Greek thought had shaken the very foundations of Islamic faith, and scepticism had become the order of the day. To meet this situation the Muslim theologians had to justify their faith and dogma by logical disputations. This was a very favourable moment for the incubation of mystical doctrines, likely to give a spiritual satisfaction to troubled souls who cared more for the inner light than for external rituals, however ingeniously sought to be justified by argumentation.

(The man who played an important and decisive role in the history of Sufism was a Persian, the celebrated Bayazid Bustami,) a contemporary of Dhu'l Nun Misri, (who gave a definite turn to Tasawwuf by introducing into it the element of ecstasy and the mystic doctrine of the immanence of God, which in Islamic mysticism has invariably implied that "all is in God," and not that "all is God," as is sometimes erroneously believed.) He was banished from his native town for having made heterodox declarations which shocked the orthodox 'ulama.

(He said, 'Beneath the cloak of mine there is nothing but God.' 'Glory to me! How great is my Majesty.' (*Tazkiratu'l Auliya.*))

Bayazid died in A. D. 875. His school took the name of "Taifurian." (He was the first in Islamic mysticism to employ the word "fana," the annihilation of the self, which later became the basis of Sufi theosophy. It implies that human attributes are annihilated through union with God, a state in which the mystic finds eternal life (baqa).)

(The method of Bayazid was still further developed by Husain Ibn Mansur Al-Hallaj, a disciple of Al-Junaid who was condemned and executed in the reign of the Caliph Al-Muqtadir. His mystical formula (Ana'l Haq) "I am God" became a very important factor in the evolution of the mystical ideas in Persia and then in India.)

(Hallaj, who travelled widely in Khurasan, Persia, Turkistan and north-western India, was a man of original genius and a profound metaphysician.) The orthodox 'ulama considered him to be a rank blasphemer. It was at their instance that he was imprisoned and then executed. (His chief work is *Kitabu'l Tawasin*) which has been ably edited and annotated by Monsieur L. Massignon, formerly of the College de France, Paris. (In it Hallaj has affirmed the idea of the transcendence of God. It was the manifestation of Love in the Divine Absolute that determined the multiplicity of His attributes and His names) (*Kitabu'l Tawasin*). (The ideas of Hallaj furnished a basis for the development of the doctrines concerning the nature of the "Insan-i-Kamil" (the perfect man),) which are so marked a feature of the writings of Ibnu'l 'Arabi and 'Abdul Karim Jili in later centuries.

"The natural reaction of the monistic doctrines of Bayazid and Hallaj was to reinforce orthodox Islam by re-establishing the principle of Unity, on the basis of mystical experience, and thus to effect a rapprochement between the Shari'at and the Tariqat." In fact, this position was taken up by Junaid of Baghdad himself and later by Ghazzali (A.D. 1058-1111), Sheikh 'Abdul Qadir Jilani (A.D. 1077-1166) and Sheikh

Shihabuddin Suhrawardy (1145-1234), who not only reconciled the divergent tendencies of Islamic mysticism into one consolidated unity but also won recognition for Sufism of the sober type in orthodox theology and religious law. They enjoined on the devotee the practice of self-discipline which prepares the heart for the intuitive knowledge of God.

(Ghazzali constantly appealed to the supreme authority of Muhammad and insisted that sainthood was derived from prophecy. In his *magnum opus*, the *Ihya' u'l 'ulum*, he laid stress on immediate experience, ecstasy and inward transformation without which no salvation was possible.)

(Before reaching India, the movement of Tasawwuf had reached the highest point of its development in the twelfth century.) After the conquest of northern India by the Muslims, various Sufi orders were established. (In particular, the Chishti and the Suhrawardy orders took root in different parts of the country and there developed very great activity.) The orders of the Qadri, Naqshbandi, Shuttari and the Madari, etc. were also represented and functioned on more or less the same lines. (The extraordinary success of the Chishti order was due to the fact that it knew better how to adapt itself to the usages and customs of the country in which it had come to settle and it was also due to the personality of its early leaders.) (The order of the Chishtis, founded by Khawaja Abdal Chishti (d. A.D. 966), was introduced into India by Khwaja Mu'inuddin Chishti, the disciple of Khwaja Usman Haruni. Born in Seistan in A.D. 1143, he came to India a little before the invasion of Shihabuddin Muhammad Ghori) and acquired great renown and was given the title of Sultann'ul Hind, the spiritual king of India. In his youth he had travelled widely in Islamic countries, and had started the life of a wandering hermit in search of a spiritual guide. (Eventually he came to Harun, a small town in the province of Nishapur, where he was formally initiated as a disciple of Khwaja 'Usman Harun, a famous saint of the Chishti order, who directed him to settle in India.) Before coming to India Khwaja

Mu'inuddin associated with many leading Sufis of the time, among whom was 'Abdul Qadir Jilani, founder of the Qadiria order of Sufis.

(Khwaja Mu'inuddin Chishti arrived in India in A.D. 1190 and first proceeded to Lahore which was a centre of Muslim learning since the time of Mahmud Ghazni.) In Lahore he spent some time in meditation at the tomb of Ali Hujwiri, popularly known as Data Ganj Bakhsh, who was one of the early Sufis that settled in India. He was the author of *Kashfu'l Mahjub*, a work written thirty years after the famous *Risalah* of Al-Qusheri (d. 1072), in which the author has upheld the cause of Tasawwuf as a means of purifying the inward spirit and life which makes religion a reality. His entire approach is based on the religious law of Islam.

(From Lahore Khwaja Mu'inuddin Chishti went to Delhi and then to Ajmer, which was ruled by Rai Prithivi Raj.) One cannot think without admiration of this man, almost alone, living among people who considered the least contact with a Muslim as defilement. Sometimes he was refused water to drink. In the torrid climate of Rajputana this was the hardest punishment one can imagine. The high-caste priests demanded of the Raja of Ajmer that he should banish the Khwaja, whose influence had begun to make itself felt among the lower classes of the place. The Raja sent the order of expulsion through Ram Deo, head of the priests of Ajmer. Legend relates that in approaching the Khwaja, Ram Deo was so much impressed by his personality that he became, from that moment, a faithful disciple of the Khwaja and spent the rest of his life in the service of the helpless and the down-trodden. After the death of the Khwaja in 1234, his numerous disciples continued his apostolic work. (*Siyaru'l Aulia.*)

(The Chishti mystics believed in the spiritual value of music and patronized professional singers of talent, whatever their caste or religion might be.) Khwaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiar Kaki, the chief successor (Khalifa) of Khwaja Mu'inuddin Chishti, died in a state of ecstasy at the Khanqah of Sheikh 'Ali

Sijistani, where the singers recited the verse: 'To those who have been killed by the dagger of submission, there comes new life every moment from the unseen world.'¹

(Iltutmish, himself a man of deep piety, had great respect for Khwaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiar Kaki.) He requested the latter to stay with him but this request was not acceded to, as the Khwaja had no desire to abandon his independence. He visited the Darbar only once to seek redress for the sons of his master, Khwaja Mu'inuddin Chishti.

On the death of Maulana Jamaluddin Muhammad Bustami, Iltutmish offered the high office of Sheikh u'l Islam to Qutub Sahib who declined it. On his refusal Sheikh Najmuddin Sughra was appointed to this post. He was jealous of Qutub Sahib for whom Iltutmish had great regard. Seeing that the Sheikh u'l Islam's attitude towards him was unfriendly, Qutub Sahib decided to leave Delhi. On this occasion Khwaja Mu'inuddin happened to be in Delhi. Qutub Sahib wanted to accompany him to Ajmer. When the party started from Delhi for Ajmer the public of Delhi flocked behind them, imploring Qutub Sahib not to leave them. Iltutmish himself followed the crowd of people and requested Qutub Sahib to remain in Delhi. Khwaja Mu'inuddin Chishti was very much touched by this spontaneous demonstration of loyalty and devotion and he persuaded his disciple to return to his headquarters in Delhi. After this the Sheikh u'l Islam never offended Qutub Sahib, neither did he raise any objection to his music parties.

(Qutub Sahib was succeeded by Khwaja Fariduddin Mas'ud Ganjshakar, popularly known as Baba Farid. Disliking popularity and preferring solitude, he purposely took up his residence far from the capital.) He had a great aversion for the company of the rich and avoided intercourse with them. When Sayyidi Maula, one of his disciples, wanted to leave Ajodhan for Delhi, the Khwaja, while reluctantly permitting him to do so, addressed him in the following words: 'Pay particular attention

¹ Kushtagane khanjare taslim ra,
Har zaman as ghaib jane digar ast.

to my one advice. Do not make friends with kings and nobles. Consider their visits to your home as fatal (for your spirit). 'Every Darvesh, who makes friends with the kings and nobles, will end badly.' (Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi*.)

(Baba Farid, while advising his chief disciple Sheikh Nizamuddin Aulia, observed: 'The main purpose in this path (Sufism) is the concentration of heart which can be achieved only by abstention from the prohibited means of livelihood and the association with kings.' (*Rahatu'l Qulub*.) Balban showed great respect to saints and mystics. His devotion to Baba Farid was great, but the latter never took any advantage of this; only once he wrote him a letter of recommendation. Even in this letter, which is written in very dignified language, he has implied that the real power of bestowing anything on human beings lies in the Supreme Being. The letter runs thus: 'First I referred this matter to Allah and later on to you. If you bestow anything on him, the real bestower is Allah, and as His agent you will deserve gratitude for doing a favour. But if you fail to bestow anything you are helpless in the matter, as Allah may have prevented you from doing so.'

(Baba Farid led a life of severe austerity and piety and died at the age of 93 in A.D. 1265. He was buried at Pakpatan, which is a great centre of pilgrimage.)

(His chief disciple, Sheikh Nizamuddin Aulia, was born in Badaun in A.D. 1336. His father died when he was only five years of age. His mother, who was a very pious woman, brought him up. When twenty years of age, he went to Ajodhan and became the disciple of Baba Farid who was struck with his intelligence and the depth of his inner vision. In 1258, he returned to Delhi, which was destined to be the centre of his spiritual activity for nearly sixty years. After residing in the heart of the city for a number of years he moved to Ghiaspur, a village not very far from Delhi, and yet away from the din of the city. Here one of his disciples Maulana Ziauddin, Vakil of Imadu'l Mulk, constructed a Khanqah for him which still exists. According to the author of *Akhbaru'l Akhyar*, when

Kaiqabad, successor of Balban, made Kelokheri his residential quarters, this locality became extremely congested and so many people started coming to Ghiaspur that the Sheikh thought of moving to the city again. While he was contemplating this, a young man came to him and recited this verse:

'On the day thou becamest the full moon, thou didst not realize that the people would raise their fingers towards thee.'¹

The young man further added that there was no special virtue in remembering God after withdrawing from the world; one should aspire to remember Him while remaining amidst the people. On hearing this speech the Sheikh changed his mind and stayed on in Ghiaspur.

(Sheikh Nizamuddin Aulia saw the reign of seven Sultans, succeeding one after another, on the throne of Delhi; but he never visited the Darbar of any of them. He considered it beneath his dignity, as a Sufi, to do so.) (Sultan Jalaluddin Khilji requested the Sheikh to grant him an interview and in this connection even tried to use the influence of Amir Khusrau, a very dear disciple of the Sheikh, but all his efforts failed.) When the Sheikh was apprised of the intention of the Sultan to pay him a surprise visit, he went away to Ajodhan to avoid it. Sultan 'Alauddin was also insistent on paying a visit to the Sheikh, who conveyed to him the following message: 'There are two doors in my house. If the Sultan comes by one door I will quit by the other.'

Mubarak Shah, son and successor of 'Alauddin Khilji, was a vain person and lacked a sense of proportion. He insisted that the Sheikh, like other 'ulama and mystics, should attend the court. The Sheikh's reply to this insolent demand was: 'I live a retired life and I do not go anywhere. As it has been the practice of my spiritual masters not to associate with monarchs, I should on these grounds be excused.' (*Siyaru'i 'Arifin.*)

¹ An roz ke meh shudi na mi danisti,
Kangusht numai 'alame khuwahi bud.

(The liberal outlook of Nizamuddin Aulia, as well as his delight in music, caused him to be denounced by the orthodox 'ulama, at whose instance Ghiasuddin Tughlaq had him brought before a tribunal of fifty-three theologians. But they pronounced in favour of the Sheikh,) influenced as they were by the mysterious sway of his magnetic personality. They even abstained from forbidding the musical and mystical practices for which, above all, the Sheikh and his followers were reproached. One of his disciples, Maulana Fakhruddin Zarradi, compiled a booklet to prove the validity of hearing music, in which all kinds of religious arguments were advanced to justify the practice. But it is pertinent to note in this connection that the Sheikh in later life did not approve of instrumental music. (*Fawaidu'l Fuwad.*)

(It is said that Ghiasuddin Tughlaq was jealous of the great moral and spiritual influence which the Sheikh exercised over the people,) and when he had enrolled among his followers such persons as Ulugh Khan (later known as Muhammad Tughlaq), son of the Sultan, the latter saw in the Sheikh a great political danger.

(While returning from a successful expedition in Bengal, Ghiasuddin sent word to the Sheikh to quit Ghaspur,) for too many people went there to see him, so that those going there on business of state could not find anywhere to stay. (Tradition has it that the Sheikh gave expression to the words: 'Hanoz Dilli dur ast' (Delhi is yet far off).) This Persian phrase has since been preserved in the language; today it is still used to designate difficulties which have to be surmounted before arriving at the end of an enterprise. (As it happened, the Sultan met an unexpected death through the fall of a pavilion, before having reached the capital, and the Sheikh, whom nobody dreamed of banishing, lived there till his death in A.D. 1325. Even today his tomb attracts a large number of pilgrims from all parts of India.)

(Sheikh Nizamuddin Aulia, generally known as Mahbub-i-Ilahi (the beloved of God), represents a great spiritual force in

the history of Muslim India. His disciples spread all over the country. His personality and the breadth of his religious outlook assured the popularity of the Chishti order in India) For nearly sixty years he was a source of blessing to hundreds and thousands who came from far and near to seek his guidance. He inspired men with the love of God and helped them to get rid of their attachment to worldly affairs. (He regulated the life of his disciples, in accordance with the Shari'at, to reach a higher stage of spiritual development. (Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi*.) Those who were advanced in the stage of submission (ta'at) he led to the stage of Tariqat.) His method of guiding his disciples is embodied in the *Fawaidul Fuwad* of Amir Hasan Sijzi in which the conversations of Sheikh Nizamuddin Aulia are recorded. The great historical value of this work lies in the fact that it was revised by the Sheikh himself who filled up the gaps which were intentionally left by the writer, wherever he was in doubt as to the real meaning of the Sheikh's conversation. It is a manual of practical mysticism, eschewing all discussions pertaining to technical terms of Tasawwuf, having any metaphysical implications.

(A characteristic feature of the teachings of Nizamuddin Aulia is the stress he laid on the motive of love which leads to the realization of God.)

Mir Khurd in his *Siyaru'l Aulia* quotes him thus: ('The followers of the Tariqat (the way) and the Haqiqat (the reality) agree that the main purpose and objective of man's creation is the love of the Supreme Being.')

(The intuitive insight of the Sheikh readily extended his love of God to the love of humanity without which the former would be incomplete.)

The same author writing of the Sheikh says: 'He (the Sheikh) said that in a state of dream he was offered a book in which it was written that one should do one's best to be kind and benevolent and give comfort to the human heart which is the abode of the mysteries of the Supreme Lord. Some saint has well said: ("Do your best to give

comfort to somebody, or enable a broken hand to reach the bread." "1)

The Sheikh also once said that on the day of resurrection nothing would be deemed of greater value than giving comfort to the human heart. Human submission (ta'at) is of two kinds: (1) Necessary and (2) Communicable. The necessary submission implies benefit to the person who offers prayers, fasts, goes on pilgrimage and recites the name of God and praises Him. But communicable submission implies doing good to others. It consists in such virtues as affection, kindness and benevolence to others. The reward of these is infinite. (*Fawaidul Fuwad.*)

A similar sentiment is quoted by Amir Khusrau in his *Afzalu'l Fawaid*:

(He (the Sheikh) said that the entire knowledge of the learned is not equivalent to two virtues: (1) Reform of the people (Tashihe-millat) and (2) Detached service of men (Tajride-khidmat).)

(Both these quotations of Sheikh Nizamuddin Aulia have a direct reference to social justice and benevolence as a part of Islam.) In fact, love and justice go together and belong to the essence of the Islamic life as presented by the Prophet. The Sheikh's reference to "bread" shows the practical and realistic approach of his mystical theosophy.

(Love of humanity was one of the ethical ideals which Sheikh Nizamuddin Aulia inculcated in the minds of his disciples.) Mir. Khurd has noted the text of a certificate of succession (Khilafatnama) given by the Sheikh to Shamsuddin Yahya (d. A. D. 1345), and it is likely that similar certificates given to other disciples were couched in the same language. It shows the breadth of the Sheikh's vision and his tolerant attitude towards others. It runs thus: 'O Muslims! I swear by God, that He holds dear those who love Him for the sake of human beings, and also those who love human beings for the sake of God. This is the only way to love and adore God.' (*Siyaru'l Aulia.*)

¹ Milkosh ke rahete be jane be rasad,

² Ya daste shikastaiba nane be rasad.

This message of love imparted by the Mahbub-i-Ilahi was carried to the different parts of the country by his disciples. Sheikh Sirajuddin 'Usmani (d. A. D. 1357), known as "Akhi Siraj" (brother Siraj), carried the message to Bengal. His spiritual master gave him the title of the "Aina-i-Hind" (the mirror of India) and bestowed on him the spiritual domain of Bengal. He was succeeded by Sheikh 'Alauddin 'Alau' Haq (d. 1398), who continued the work of his master in the eastern parts of India. His son and successor, Nur Qutb-i-'Alam, spent all his life among the poor and the down-trodden who responded to the Islamic message of equality and brotherhood. Sheikh 'Abdul Haq Muhaddis has spoken highly of his Maktubat. (*Akhbaru'l Akhyar.*)

One of the disciples of the Mahbub-i-Ilahi, Sheikh Burhanuddin Gharib (d. 1340), made Daulatabad his headquarters. His successor was Sheikh Zamuddin. In Gujarat Sheikh Syed Husain, Sheikh Hisamuddin and Shah Barakullah spread the message of love and humanity. Their missionary work was entirely of a peaceful character, relying wholly on personal example and precept and on the spread of education. They were exponents of the doctrine of the inner light and "the theology of the heart."

It is to be noticed that the Muslim mystics, in spite of their speculative leanings, did not lose touch with the realities of life. And after all bread is a reality of life which can only be ignored at the expense of social justice and tranquillity. It seems that these mystics were not prepared to give up the socio-moral aspect of life in the interest of spiritual exaltation and ecstasy. They fully realized that the socio-moral existence of man clings to earth; it is of the earth, earthy. This is why they enjoined upon their followers the practice of justice and benevolence.

In Qur'anic teaching, also, prayer is correlated with charity towards fellowmen, the implication being that without the latter the former would be incomplete and ineffective. In the very beginning of the Qur'an the three essentials of

religious life are mentioned together so that their equal importance may not be lost sight of. It is said: 'The Qur'an is a guidance for those good people who believe in the Unseen, keep up prayers and bestow on others from that which God has given them.' Again the Qur'an says: 'Woe unto those who pray for show and prevent themselves from being charitable.'

(From these Qur'anic verses it will have become clear that charity and benevolence towards fellow-beings is one of the cardinal principles of Islam, on which the mystics laid considerable stress.) Some of them have been outspoken critics, whenever there was any deviation from the high ideal set by the Prophet. This is one of the reasons why they were not keen to be the beneficiaries of the State, as it would have infringed their independence of mind and action. We have many examples in the cultural history of Islam when the recluse Sufis came out with bold criticism of the highest in the State.

Fuzail bin Ayaz admonished Harun'ul Rashid, the great Abbasid Caliph, in the following words: 'The country is thy house, and the people are thy progeny. If an old woman sleeps at night without having had her meals, she would hold thee responsible on the Day of Judgement.' (*Tazkiratu'l Auliya.*)

The early Chishti mystics were content to impart instruction to their disciples in practical mysticism, aiming at transforming the life of the disciple and kindling the fire of devotion. Being much too busy with the organization of their orders, they did not feel like compiling books or manuals on theoretical problems. The elemental simplicity and purity of their devoted lives was instrumental in reforming the lives of their own co-religionists and in spreading their faith among other inhabitants of the country. They considered themselves to be the torch-bearers of the principles of equality and social justice. For this they did not require any organized system of propaganda through books or tracts. Mostly the works

attributed to the early Chishti masters were fabricated later, as is clearly shown by the statement of Sheikh Nasiruddin Chiragh Dehlavi that neither Sheikh Nizamuddin Auliya, nor Sheikh Fariduddin nor Qutbuddin Bakhtiar Kaki, nor any of the preceding Sheikhs of his order had written any book and that apocryphal works attributed to them contained portions which were unworthy of them. (*Khairu'l Majalis.*)

One of the disciples of Sheikh Nasiruddin Chiragh Dehlavi, Khwaja Syed Muhammad Gesudaraz (the man with the long curls), settled in Gulburga in 1398. Ahmad Shah Bahman conceived a great admiration for the Khwaja and followed with unwearied delight his discourses on religion and mysticism. The Khwaja was very fond of music. It appears that through his influence music festivals became popular all over the Deccan to the chagrin of the orthodox 'ulama.

(Even a way was found to justify the music parties of the Chishtis by saying that a Sufi is a lover of God, and as such he stands in a different relation to God from others who are merely "abd" or slaves. As music inflames the fire of love and helps in creating the supreme state of ecstacy it is permissible for those who have discretion.)

Khwaja Gesudaraz, contrary to the practice of Chishti masters,--was a voluminous writer on Tasawwuf. At least thirty-three works are attributed to him. Some of his works, including the *Khatairu'l-Quds*, the *Asmau'l Asrar* and the *Sharh-i-Risala-e Qusheri* have been edited and published in Hyderabad. His other works are *Hawashie Kashshaf*, *Sharhe Mashariq*, *M'aarif*, *Sharhe Adabu'l Muridin*, *Sharhe Fusus-us Hikam*, *Sharhe Fighe Akbar* and *Hawashie Quwwatul Qulub*. Sheikh 'Abdul Haq Muhaddis has spoken very highly of the *Asma'ul Asrar* in which the Khwaja unravelled the mysteries of Tasawwuf in a symbolic manner. (*Akhbaru'l Akhyar*, p. 127.)

After the death of Baba Farid, the Chishti order was divided into two main subdivisions, known respectively as the Nizam-iyya and Sabiriyya order. The Sabiriyya order was founded

by Makhdum 'Alauddin 'Ali Ahmed Sabri of Piran Kaliar. This contemporary of Sheikh Nizamuddin Auliya was a great mystic in his own way. He was just the opposite to Sheikh Nizamuddin Auliya in disposition and character. The latter represented the Jamali (beauteous), whereas the former represented the Jalali (majestic) attributes of God and these complemented each other. Sheikh Nizamuddin Auliya by his sympathetic and generous approach towards life attracted thousands to himself, whereas Sheikh Ahmed Sabri isolated himself from the world and lived the life of a recluse. And yet his moral influence for the uplift of men cannot be minimized.

We have no intention of giving an exhaustive list of the Chishti saints and describing their achievements in the spiritual and moral realms. Besides this order there are other orders also which have played quite a significant role in the spread of Sufi doctrines in India. The Suhrawardy order is one of the oldest that established itself in north-western India. Sheikh Shihabuddin Suhrawardy, the eminent author of '*Awarifu'l M'aarif*' had directed several of his disciples to proceed to India, including Sheikh Hamiduddin Nagori and Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariyya of Multan. Sheikh Hamiduddin Nagori was the author of two books, *Tawali'ush Shams* and *Lawa'ih*. He was very fond of music parties and sometimes he formed such parties with Sheikh Qutbuddin Bakhtiar Kaki, with whom he was on very intimate terms. Each respected the other, and treated him as if he were his Sheikh.

The man who may be called the pioneer of the Suhrawardy order in India was Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariyya Suhrawardy. His master Sheikh Shihabuddin had directed him to make Multan the centre of his activity. In those days Multan was the capital of Qabacha, the rival of Iltutmish.

Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariyya Multani was a man of great courage of conviction. He was critical of Qabacha's administration and even went so far as to write to Iltutmish about it. The letter was intercepted by Qabacha's men and the Sheikh was

asked to give his explanation in person. Without losing confidence, Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariyya went to Qabacha and without getting perturbed in the least said: 'Whatever I have written is absolutely correct. I was prompted to write the letter under the commands of God.'

Qabacha, on hearing this, got so nervous that he asked forgiveness and paid his respects to the Sheikh. (*Fawaidu'l Fuwad.*)

Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariyya was a man of very mild disposition. He was generous. His relations with the mystics of the Chishti order were extremely cordial. When Qutub Saheb first came to India he stayed in Multan in his Khanqah for some time. He was on terms of most affectionate intimacy with Baba Farid Ganjshakar, with whom he had a regular correspondence. In one of his letters addressed to Baba Farid he said, 'Between you and me, there is a relationship of love.' To this Baba Farid replied: 'Yes, between you and me there is love, and not a mere game.' (*Akhbaru'l Akhyar.*)¹

Sheikh Fakhruddin 'Iraqi, the well-known mystical poet of Persia, was one of the chief disciples of Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariyya. His famous Ghazal, the first couplet of which runs,

Nakhustin bada kandar jam kardand,
Ze chashme maste saqi wam kardand

(The first wine that was poured in the goblet was borrowed from the intoxicated eye of the cup-bearer),

was composed in the Khanqah of the Sheikh at Multan.

Sheikh Husain Amir Husaini Suhrawardy was another disciple who compiled several books on Tasawwuf, the most important of them being: (1) *Nuzhatu'l Arwah*, (2) *Siratu'l*

¹ Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariyya used the following words: 'Miane ma wa shuma ishqbazist.' In reply Baba Farid said: 'Miane ma wa shuma ishq ast, bazi nist.' There is a play on the word "bazi", meaning game or sport.

Mustaqim, (3) *Tarabu'l Majalis*, (4) *Zadu'l Musafirin* and (5) *Kanzu'l Rumuz*. Jami in his *Nafahatu'l Uns* mentions his *Diwan* and adds that his verses were extremely elegant.

Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariyya was succeeded by his son Sheikh Sadruddin, and the latter by Sheikh Ruknuddin, who appointed Syed Jalaluddin Bukhari Jahanian Jahangasht as his Khalifa. The latter had travelled widely in Islamic countries and had benefited from the company of the mystics of his time. He made Uch his headquarters. (*Akhbaru'l Akhyar*.)

Sultan Muhammad Tughlaq appointed Syed Jalaluddin Bukhari to the post of the Sheikh u'l Islam, but the latter relieved himself of this position and went to Mecca for Hajj. He himself says that if he had not done so he would have become conceited and would have "stuck in the mud."

When Syed Jalaluddin Bukhari visited Sheikh Nasiruddin Chiragh Dehlavi, the latter initiated him into the Chishti order and presented him with the garment of khilafat. This shows the extreme tolerance that prevailed among the leaders of different mystic orders in those times.

Firoz Tughlaq had great regard and esteem for Syed Jalaluddin Bukhari. Whenever the latter went to Delhi, the Sultan came out of the city to offer him a welcome. When in Delhi, the Syed used to be a royal guest and was treated with the greatest honour. (*Afif, Tarikh-e-Firoz Shahi*.)

Another contemporary mystic whom Firoz Tughlaq held in high esteem was Sheikh Sharfuddin Yahya Manairi (d. A. D. 1380) who belonged to the Firdausia order of mystics which was a branch of the Suhrawardy order. The activities of the Firdausis were largely confined to Bihar. Sheikh Sharfuddin Yahya Manairi, disciple of Khwaja Najmuddin Firdausi, made his headquarters at Rajgir, after undergoing severe austerities and self-mortification for nearly twelve years. The Sheikh was not only a practical guide, but also an excellent exponent of the theoretical side of mysticism. His epistles (*maktubat*) are a fine specimen of orthodox moderation in

which it is sought to reconcile the doctrine of the "Unity of Being" (Wahdatu'l Wujud) with the law of Islam.

This is the period of history when the doctrine of "Wahdatu'l Wujud" (Unity of Being), as expounded by Sheikh Muhiuddin Ibnu'l 'Arabi (A. D. 1165-1240), had found its way in mystic circles in India. The teachings of Ibnu'l 'Arabi were generally condemned by the orthodox Sufis who sensed in their extraordinary complexity and unreconciled contradictions a great danger to mystical theosophy itself. His system is openly monistic, although he invariably supports his ideas by the text of the Qur'an. Ibnu'l 'Arabi asserted the identity of the Haq and Khalq, the creator and the created. According to him God is the Unity behind all the plurality and the Reality behind all phenomenal appearance: 'There is nothing but God, nothing in existence other than He; there is not even a "there" where the essence of all things is one.' (*Futuhate Makkiya*.)

Ibnu'l 'Arabi's conception of "Wahdatu'l Wujud" is an extension of the Islamic doctrine of "Tauhid". From the doctrine that "there exists but one God," he takes us to the profession that "there is nothing in existence except God". This, he maintained, being a matter of the heart could not be realized through reason. It needed a higher system of knowledge, based on the intuitive experience of the individual which he called "zauq".

Ibnu'l 'Arabi's system implies the immanence of the Divine Being. He fully realized that it might lead to polytheism which he rejected. To escape this dilemma he laid emphasis on the principle of love which binds all beings together. According to him the highest manifestation in which God is worshipped is love. In the *Fususul Hikam* and the *Futuhate Makkiya*, Ibnu'l 'Arabi has expounded some of the most momentous doctrines of mystical theosophy, which had enormous influence on Muslim thought. As its reaction Imam Ibn Taimiyya and Imam Zahabi strongly opposed and rejected the doctrine of the "Unity of Being" and

similar reaction was evident in India as we shall show later.

In his *Maktubat* (epistles), Sheikh Sharfuddin Yahya Manairi discussed the mystic implications of Islamic "Tauhid" and clearly expounded that both in its stage of gnosticism ('ilm) as well as in the stage of immediate vision (shuhud) of the doctrine of the "Unity of Being", the slave remains a slave and God remains God. His interpretation of the passing away of the self (fana) is that the devotee in this state of consciousness experiences a vision in which he feels one with God who manifests Himself in the form of Light or Illumination (tajalli). The union with God is not like the union of a body with a body, or of a substance with a substance, or of an accident with an accident; on the contrary, it is an intuitive contact, and a detachment from the world and all that is other than God. The remoteness and nearness to God is maintained only in relation to our ignorance and knowledge. In other words, he who knows more stands nearer to Him than he who knows less.¹ The association of a body with a body is not real. It can be real only when the thing with which it is associated is comprehended by it. The comprehension of one object by another is in relation to its fineness; the finer it is the more comprehensible it would be. The essence of association is the secret of the Qur'anic verse: "Wa hua m'akum" (that He is with you).² Only men of Vision can realize this as it is beyond the power of reason to understand. (*Maktubat*.)

We have a feeling that the ideas expressed by Sheikh Sharfuddin Yahya Manairi in his *Maktubat* about Tauhid (Unity of God) and the intuitive contact or association with Him have a direct bearing on the position taken up later by Sheikh Ahmad Sarhindi, generally known as the Mujaddid. Like Sheikh Sharfuddin Yahya Manairi he also adopted the form

¹ The term "Qurb" (nearness) used by the Sufis is taken from the Qur'an: We are nearer to him than his life-vein (50 : 16).

² The full Qur'anic verse is: That He is with you wherever you are (57 : 4).

of *Maktubat* for the exposition of his ideas and theories of mysticism. The similarity of ideas between the two mystics is clear and unmistakable.

Sheikh Sharfuddin Yahya Manairi was not only a speculative thinker of a high order, but also a practical guide to his disciples. He was a prolific writer as is testified by no less an authority than Sheikh 'Abdul Haq Muhaddis. (*Akhbaru'l Akhyar*, 109.) Apart from his *Maktubat* (epistles) and *Malfuzat* (sayings), he compiled several books for the guidance of devotees. The *Fawaidu'l Muridin*, the *Irshadat Talibin* and the *Rahatu'l Qulub* may here be mentioned.

As a practical mystic, Sheikh Sharfuddin Yahya Manairi, like his predecessors, laid particular stress on the service of humanity as a part of mystic discipline. In his letter addressed to Malik Khizr he writes: 'In this dark world it is incumbent to serve the needy by the pen, tongue, wealth and position. Prayers, fasting and voluntary worship are good as far as they go, but they are not as useful as making others happy.' (*Maktubat*.)

In another letter he writes: 'The nearest way to reach God for kings and nobles and men of means and wealth is to succour the needy and to offer a helping hand to the down-trodden. A saint has said that there are many paths leading to the Lord, but the shortest is to console the afflicted and to give comfort to the hearts of men. Someone mentioned to the saint the goodness of a ruler who kept awake the whole night to offer prayers and fasted during the day. Having heard this the saint said: "He is neglecting his own work, while he is doing the work of others." When the saint was asked what he meant by his remark, he added: "The real function of a ruler is to feed his people well, to clothe the naked, to rehabilitate the desolate hearts of men and to succour the needy. As for prayers and fasting and voluntary worship, the Darveshes can very well do this." ' (*Maktubat*.)

"It was primarily due to these mystics that the Muslim society was spiritually and morally consolidated after the

disintegration of the Delhi Sultanate and the foundation of various dynasties in different parts of the country. It was through these mystics on the one hand and the Hindu Bhagats on the other that the gulf between the ruler and the ruled was to some extent bridged. \

Sheikh 'Abul Quddus Gangohi (d. A.D. 1537), a mystic of the Chishtia Sabiriyya order, admonished Sikandar Lodhi and then Babar, when the latter had established his rule over northern India, to do justice and to ameliorate the condition of the people. (*Maktubat-i-Quddusi*.) He was an exponent of the doctrine of the "Unity of Being" which had by now become a part of the texture of mystic thought in India. Moreover, it was the poetry of Jalaluddin Rumi, Hafiz and Jami that had a special appeal to Indian Muslims and which by implication went a long way to popularize the concept of "Wahdatu'l Wujud" among the intelligentsia of the country.

Having dealt to some extent with the development of the mystic orders of the Chishti, the Suhrawardy and the Firdausi, let us now try to appraise the contributions of the Qadiri and the Naqshbandi orders.

The original founder of the Qadiri order was the celebrated Sheikh 'Abdul Qadir Jilani of Baghdad (d. A.D. 1165), most universally revered of all the saints of Islam. The Qadiri order has been especially instrumental in the spread of Islam in Western Africa and in Central Asia. It was late in reaching India. The first to introduce it in this country were Shah Ni'amatullah and Makhdum Muhammad Jilani, who lived towards the middle of the fifteenth century. The latter settled in Uch which was already a centre of the activities of the Suhrawardy order. He was succeeded by his son, Makhdum 'Abdul Qadir. His grandson, Sheikh Hamid Ganj Baksh, was a man of keen mystical insight. He had two sons, Sheikh 'Abdul Qadir and Sheikh Musa who, after the death of their father, moved to Agra. The latter had accepted a Mansab of five hundred zat, given by the Emperor Akbar. Sheikh 'Abdul Qadir was of an independent disposition. He did not care for

Government service. He used to say his prayers in the audience-hall of Fatehpur Sikri, and when asked by Akbar to say them at home, he said, 'My king, this is not your kingdom that you should pass orders.' Akbar cancelled his grant of land, whereupon 'Abdul Qadir went back to Uch. (*Ain-i-Akbari* and *Muntakhabat Tawarikh*.)

Other famous mystics of the Qadiri order were Sheikh Daud Kirmani and Sheikh 'Abdul Ma'ali Qadri of Lahore. Sheikh 'Abdul Haq Muhaddis, who had previously accepted the discipleship of Sheikh 'Ali Muttaqi at Mecca, became a follower of Sheikh Musa Gilani about whom he has given a detailed account in his *Akhbaru'l Akhyar*.

The Qadiri order found a great devotee in Prince Dara Shukoh who visited Mian Mir (A.D. 1550-1635) at Lahore with his father, the Emperor Shahjahan, and was much impressed by his saintly personality. That very year Mian Mir died and was succeeded by Mullah Shah Badakhshi as his Khalifa. Dara became the latter's disciple. After having acquired the esoteric knowledge of the Qadiri order, Dara wrote *Safinatu'l Aulia* and *Sakinatu'l Aulia*, both being mystics' biographies. The theosophy of Dara Shukoh is of a piece with the current notions of "Wahdatu'l Wujud" among the Indo-Muslim mystics. His other works on mysticism are: (1) *Risalae Haqnuma*, (2) *Majmau'l Bahrain* and (3) *Hasanatu'l 'Arifin*. At his instance the Persian translations of the *Bhagavad-gita* and the *Yoga Vasist* were made by competent scholars. He himself rendered into Persian the Upanishads under the title of *Sirre-Akbar* (The Great Secret) or *Sirre Asrar* (The Secret of Secrets) which should be considered a great literary achievement of this mystic prince. The object of Dara's literary pursuits was to establish harmony and concord between Islam and Hinduism and thus to transcend the barriers imposed by the dissimilarity of the religions.

In this connection it should be noted that besides the influence on him of his spiritual teachers of the Qadiri order, Dara came in contact with Sarmad, the famous Sufi anarchist

of Delhi. The intimate relations of Dara with Sarmad are confirmed by one of the former's letters: 'My master and guide, for so many days I have been thinking of coming to you but I could not. If I am I, then why this suspension of my intention? If I am not I, then this is no fault of mine. If the martyrdom of Imam Husain was in accordance with the divine will, how would you account for the Qur'anic verse: "Allah doeth what He wills and commandeth what He wishes." When the holy Prophet was engaged in a battle with the infidels, the armies of Islam were routed by the enemies. Learned people say that this was meant to be a lesson in patience. But one who has already reached perfection does not require lessons any more.' To this letter Sarmad replied: 'Dear friend! whatever we learnt we have entirely forgotten, except the words of our beloved which we go on repeating.' After the accession of Aurangzeb, a council of 'ulama, presided over by Sheikh 'Abdul Qavi, passed a verdict on the heresy of Sarmad and he was executed and buried in front of the Jam'i Masjid of Delhi. His *Rub' ayiat* (quatrains) are rightly praised for their exquisite elegance and penetrating vision.

The Chishti order gained in popularity in the time of Akbar. We know it as a historical fact that Akbar became greatly devoted to the Chishti order from the time that he had a son in answer to the prayers of a Chishti saint, Sheikh Salim, in whose house Jahangir was born. This is why Akbar used to call him "Sheikhu Baba." (*Tuzuk*, p. 1.) Another Chishti saint of the early Mughal period was Sheikh 'Abdul 'Aziz Chishti, for whom Bairam Khan had great esteem. His son Sheikh Qutube 'Alam Chishti carried on the torch of esoteric knowledge handed over to him by his father. (*Akhbaru'l Akhyar*.)

In the eighteenth century, Sheikh Kalimullah of Delhi and his disciple Sheikh Nizamuddin Chishti stand out as prominent personalities of the time. The latter, in accordance with the wish of his master, made Aurangabad his headquarters. For a number of years he was a source of blessing to

thousands of men who came to him from all parts of the Deccan. His son and successor Sheikh Fakhruddin went to Delhi where Akbar Shah, the Mughal Emperor, became his disciple. His chief spiritual successor was Maulana Niaz Ahmed of Bareli who wrote elegant mystical verses in Urdu and Persian.

How the ideas of "Wahdatu'l Wujud" had permeated the spiritual and intellectual life of the period is evident from the inscription which Abul Fazl wrote for a temple in Kashmir. It runs:

O God, in every temple I see people that seek Thee, and
in every language I hear spoken people praise Thee!
Polytheism and Islam feel after Thee,

Each religion says, "Thou art one, without equal".

If it be mosque, people murmur the holy prayer, and if
it be a Christian Church, people ring the bell from love of
Thee.

Sometimes I frequent the Christian cloister and sometimes
the mosque,

But it is Thou whom I search from house to house,
Thy elect have no dealings with either heresy or orthodoxy;
for neither of them stands behind the screen of Thy truth.

Heresy to the heretic, and religion to the orthodox,
But the dust of the rose petal belongs to the heart of the
perfume-seller.

This temple was erected for the purpose of binding together
the hearts of the Unitarians of Hindustan, and especially
those of His worshippers that live in the province of Kashmir,
By order of the Lord of the throne and the crown, the lamp
of creation, Shah Akbar,

In whom the seven miracles find uniformity, in whom the
four elements attain perfect fusion,

He who from insincere motives destroys this temple, should
first destroy his own place of worship; for if we follow the
dictates of the heart, we must bear up with all men, but

The Educational System.

(BEFORE THE advent of the Muslims in India, they had already developed a system of education suited to their genius.) By the eleventh century A.D. the institutions of higher learning in the Muslim countries, called Madrasahs, had developed into centres of learning with a distinct religious bias.) They were essentially schools of theology, with auxiliary linguistic studies. These Madrasahs were the strongholds of orthodoxy and were subsidized by the State. They aimed at stabilizing a body of beliefs and a discipline prescribed by these beliefs, around which the entire social structure revolved. Incidentally, these Madrasahs supplied the State with suitable recruits for the posts of Qazis, Muftis and other administrators. (Theology being the mode of thought of medieval times, politics, philosophy and education were brought under its control and adjusted to a technical theological terminology. Men thought theologically and expressed themselves theologically,) but when we penetrate into this formal expression we find their aims and hopes to be at bottom not very different from our own.

(Besides the Madrasahs,) which were centres of higher learning in Islamic countries (there were the Maktabs to provide primary and lower secondary education.) It seems that the Madrasahs were endowed by the State or by some munificent nobleman, while primary education, imparted in the Maktabs, was left entirely to private enterprise. Under the Abbasids, all the important cities in Persia and Central Asia vied with Baghdad in the magnificence of their educational institutions,

established by royal personages or munificence of private individuals. Through these institutions the highest spirit of culture and investigation flourished. Sultan Mahmud founded and richly endowed a Madrasah at Ghazni which attracted students from all over Central Asia and Persia. He was a patron of learning and the arts. Al Biruni, Firdausi and Daqiqi and many other thinkers and poets flourished at his court. The library attached to the Madrasah was unique. It contained a vast collection of books on all branches of learning. The well-known philosopher, 'Unsuri, was the Principal of the Madrasah.

Mas'ud maintained the traditions of his father and liberally patronized the learned men. It was in his reign that Al Biruni completed *Al Qanunul Mas'udi* (Canonicus Masudicus), the most valuable work on astronomy and geography written in the middle ages. The later descendants of the Ghaznavids transferred their capital from Ghazni to Lahore which became a centre of Muslim learning in the twelfth century (After the Ghorid conquest, the seat of political authority shifted from Lahore to Delhi. In this way, by the middle of the thirteenth century, the whole of the science and culture of the Islamic world was imported into India and Delhi became the greatest centre of Muslim learning in the East) (The pattern of education which found its culmination in Ghazni was adopted in Delhi from where it spread all over the country. According to Hasan Nizami Nishapuri, the author of the *Taju'l Ma'asir*, Sultan Shihabuddin Muhammad Ghori established several Madrasahs at Ajmer which were the first of their kind in India.)

Iltutmish, the real consolidator of the Sultanate of Delhi, found time to encourage the learned and the holy. He is credited with having built the Qutub Minar, whose massive grandeur and beauty of design are unrivalled and which still stands as a memorial to his great and lofty purpose. (He was the first to establish a Madrasah at Delhi, naming it "Madrasae Mu'izzi" after the name of Shihabuddin Muhammad Ghori, whose real name was Muizuddin Muhammad Ghori. A Mad-

rasah of the same name was founded at Badaun which had become another centre of Muslim culture in northern India.

Sultan Nasiruddin Mahmud (A.D. 1246-1260) was a pious man, preoccupied with the learned and the religious. (His Chief Minister, Balban, founded a Madrasah and named it "Nasirya" after the name of his master. Minhajus Siraj, the celebrated author of the *Tabaqate Nasiri*, was appointed its Principal.)

(Balban, first as Chief Minister and then as Ruler, extended his patronage to men of erudition.) Although fastidious with regard to his dignity as a ruler, he had no hesitation in visiting men of letters and even took his meals in their company. (Barani, p. 46.) (Amir Hasan and Amir Khusrau were the brightest stars of his court. Barani has given a long list of professors who taught in the various Madrasahs of Delhi and who were eminent for their erudition and scholarship. Besides the learned scholars there were the jurists, physicians, astronomers, mathematicians and theologians who received patronage of the Emperor Balban. During the invasions of the Mongols, many men of letters, artists and craftsmen found refuge in Delhi and thus enriched the life of the capital. The famous teachers of this period were Shamsuddin Khwarzimi, Burhanuddin Bazzaj, Najmuddin Dimishqi and Kamaluddin Zahid. Even the great Sheikh Sa'di was invited by Prince Muhammad Khan to visit India but the Sheikh excused himself on grounds of old age.

(Sultan 'Alauddin Khilji, after his accession to the throne, founded a Madrasah attached to the "Hauz-i-Khas" which was later repaired by Firoz Shah Tughlaq.) The inscription on the 'Alai Darwazah describes Sultan 'Alauddin Khilji as "the upholder of the pulpits of learning and religion and the strengthener of the rules of colleges and places of worship". (His Chief Minister Shamsu'l Mulk was a man of erudition and had started his early life as a teacher. He had taught no less a person than Nizamuddin Aulia at Badaun.) He continued to patronize men of erudition in his official capacity as well.

Muhammad Tughlaq established a Madrasah in Delhi in A.D. 1346 with a mosque attached to it.) The famous poet Badr Chach composed a chronogram on this occasion, some verses of which are translated here:

'To see this cheerful and auspicious edifice, the sky, being the mirror-holder of the universe, has opened its thousand eyes. Its courtyard contains engravings that vie with the picture-gallery (nigarkhana) of paradise. Its air has the fragrance of the gentle breeze of spring. Its pillars are without equal and its quadrangle encircles the foundations of the nine skies. The upper portions of its four pillars are buttressed by Fortune and in their height they embrace the heaven itself. Outside, there is the noise of troops full of ardent zeal; inside one hears the echoes of recitations and prayers. The head of the Madrasah, in his erudition, may be likened to the teacher of the prophet Enoch, and the Imam of its mosque is sweet-spoken and eloquent. The chronogram of its foundation is contained in the Qur'anic verse "Wadkhulu Fiha" (And you enter it). And I tell you (openly) it comes to 747 Hejira (according to the system of Abjad).'¹

(In the time of Firoz Tughlaq, great advance was made in higher education. He was a lover of learning and a patron of scholars and he built and endowed thirty Madrasahs in different parts of his kingdom. The most famous was the Madrasa-i-Firoz Shahi near Hauze-i-Khas, of which Barani has given a detailed description.) It was situated within well-planned gardens and had suitable buildings for the residence of teachers and scholars. There was a mosque and a tomb attached to it. Foreign celebrities, when they happened to be in Delhi, never failed to visit it and admired its surroundings and its elegant construction. Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi was appointed as the Principal of this institution. (Barani, p. 564.)

(Another Madrasah was established by Firoz Tughlaq at Siri which was housed in a superb building, situated in lovely

¹ An arrangement of the letters of the Arabic alphabet, according to the numerical value of the letters from one to one thousand.

surroundings. (Barani, p. 665.) (Similar types of Madrasahs were established at Firozabad and other towns in the kingdom with large estates assigned to them to meet their expenses. (According to Al Qalqashandi, author of the *Subhu'l A'sha fi Sina't il Insha*, an Arabic work written during the Tughlaq rule in India,¹ there were one thousand educational institutions and seventy hospitals in Delhi alone. Out of these one thousand Madrasahs one belonged to the Shafites and the rest were for the Hanafites. (Vol. V, pp. 68-69.))

(Firoz Tughlaq made new grants of lands for the upkeep of educational institutions and renewed old endowments. (*Fatihat-i-Firoz Shahi*.)) (Special grants of lands were given to men of erudition and stipends were fixed for poor students so that they might pursue their studies without financial worries. (Barani, p. 460.))

(A large number of Karkhanahs (workshops) were maintained by Sultan Muhammad Tughlaq) to supply the royal household as well as the departments of the Government with provisions, stores and equipment. (Firoz Tughlaq turned these Karkhanahs into institutions for vocational training.) The captives of war, who were made slaves, were distributed among these Karkhanahs, where they were taught different arts and crafts so that they might start their own work as independent artisans and thus become useful and loyal citizens. At one time there were twelve thousand slaves, who were under training in these Karkhanahs. ('Afif, pp. 268-73.)

(From the time of Iltutmish to the reign of Sikandar Lodhi the curriculum of the Madrasahs followed a set pattern. Greater emphasis was laid on theological education (Manqul).) (According to the testimony of Barani) a contemporary writer,

¹ It is an encyclopaedia of all the branches of knowledge of his time. Al Qalqashandi had never been to India; his description, well-informed and accurate, is based on literary sources and on oral relations of travellers. He has also utilized the information contained in the *Masalikul Absar* of Ibn Fazlullah al 'Umari. Al Qalqashandi's work is, however, a valuable source of information for the cultural, administrative and geographical history of the Middle East and India. The author died in Cairo in A. D. 1418.

the main subjects taught at the Madrasa-i-Firoz Shahi at Delhi were Tafsir (exegesis), Hadis (traditions) and Fiqh (jurisprudence.) In "Ma'qulat", "Sharhe Shamsiah" and "Sharhe Shafia" were included in the course of studies, (Badauni.) Besides these subjects grammar, literature, logic, mysticism (tasawwuf) and scholasticism (kalam) were also taught. (*An Nadwah*, Feb. 1909.)

(When Sikandar Lodhi laid the foundation of the town of Agra in A.D. 1504) and made it his residence, so that he might exercise more effective control over the chiefs of the unruly neighbourhood, especially Koel, Etawah and Gwalior, the educational activity in the new city received a considerable fillip.) Being a poet and a litterateur himself, Sikandar Lodhi established Madrasahs in all parts of the kingdom and invited qualified teachers from distant places to take charge of the institutions established by him at Agra and other places. He insisted on the compulsory education of even his military officers.) According to Sheikh 'Abdul Haq Muhaddis, Sikandar Lodhi invited learned men from Arabia, Persia and Central Asia to take charge of education and many men of letters came even uninvited and adopted India as their home. (*Akhbarul Akhyar*.) (Sikandar Lodhi founded Madrasahs at Mathura and Narwar which were open to all without any discrimination of caste or creed.)

Among those 'ulama whom (Sikandar Lodhi had invited were two brothers from Multan, (Sheikh 'Abdullah) and Sheikh 'Azizullah, both being specialists in the rational sciences (m'aqulat). Sheikh 'Azizullah was put in charge of the Madrasah at Sambhal, while Sheikh 'Abdullah remained in the capital. (Sikandar Lodhi was so enamoured of the Sheikh's method of teaching that, whenever he could find time from state business, he would attend his lectures.) (*Badauni*, p. 324.) The vast influence of Sheikh 'Abdullah in the intellectual circles of the capital went a long way in popularizing rational sciences (m'aqulat). He produced forty disciples who were all specialists in the "m'aqulat". Among them the names of Mian Laddan,

Jamal Khan Dehlavi, Mian Sheikh of Gwalior and Mian Syed Jalal of Badaun may be mentioned.

(It is to be noted that it was during the reign of Sikandar Lodhi that the Hindus, especially the Kayasthas, took to the study of the Persian language and literature. After a few decades they made themselves as proficient in this language as the Muslims and entered government service and even produced great writers and poets in later centuries.)

(After the invasion of Timur (A.D. 1398) many men of learning had migrated to the provincial capitals which had developed a cultural and intellectual life of their own, and there flourished hundreds of Madrasahs.) (Jaunpur was a great educational centre where students were drawn from far and near.) Under the benign rule of Sultan Ibrahim Shah it received the title of "Shiraz-i-Hind." During his reign the Court of Jaunpur far outshone that of Delhi and was the resort of the learned men of the East. The Madrasah of Bibi Raja Begam was the most famous institution of Jaunpur and produced some great savants (Sher Shah Suri prosecuted his studies at Jaunpur, where along with theological subjects he studied history and philosophy. Later, he founded a Madrasah at Narnaul which became a great seat of learning and in which the syllabus of Jaunpur Madrasahs was followed.)

There was great cultural and educational activity in Bengal, Bihar, Gujarat, Malwa, Khandesh and the Deccan. Sultan Mahmud Shah Bahmani was a great patron of learning. Hosts of scholars resorted to his capital. He founded special schools for the education of orphans in Gulbarga, Bidar, Elichpur, Daulatabad, Debol and Junnar and provided for their maintenance. (*Tarikhe Firishta*, ed. Nivalkishore, Lucknow, p. 302.) Mahmud Gawan, the great Bahmani wazir, spent a large part of his personal wealth in building his famous Madrasah at Bidar, the remains of which are still extant. It is recorded by historians that Mahmud Gawan invited Maulana Abdur Rahman Jami, the celebrated poet and scholar of Persia, to accept the Principalship of his college, but the latter declined

owing to his advanced age. Then his choice fell on Sheikh Ibrahim Multani, a well-known savant and a man of saintly character, under whose supervision the institution grew from strength to strength. The Madrasah of Mahmud Gawan is an imposing building of the Bahmani period which in its design is a unique monument of its kind in India. It has an open courtyard in the middle, with four sides in which the lecture-rooms, the prayer-hall, the library, the teachers' and the students' rooms are built. It was beautifully decorated with encaustic tiles, the arrangement and colour-scheme of which would also have given feelings of depth and light and shade as the specimens still sticking to the walls show. (G. Yazdani, *Bidar, Its History and Monuments.*)

The chronogram which gives the date of its foundation is as follows:

In Madrasae rafi' wa mahmud bina
T'amir shud ast qiblae ahle safa
Asare qubul bin ke tarikhash
Az ayate "rabbana taqabbal minna."

(This exalted Madrasah, with a praiseworthy foundation, has been built as the place of adoration for the pure-minded. Look at the signs of its Divine acceptance that its chronogram is contained in the Qur'anic verse, Our Lord, accept it from us.)

The numerical value of the verse according to the system of Abjad gives the date 877 H. corresponding to A.D. 1472. (*Bidar, Its History and Monuments.*)

(After the Mughal conquest of India all kinds of cultural activities, including education, received great encouragement. Both Babar and Humayun were men of refined taste, the latter being a great bibliophile and scholar. In the Madrasah which he founded in Delhi, special provision was made for teaching mathematics, astronomy and geography, the subjects in which he was personally interested. One of the famous

teachers of this Madrasah was Sheikh Husain.)

It is true that the Mughals, like their predecessors, the Turco-Afghan rulers, had no separate department of education either in the central or the provincial government, but the emperors and the nobility were invariably great patrons of learning. Akbar took keen interest in the education of the people and even attempted to introduce reforms in the curriculum of the primary schools then in vogue. At his suggestion certain important subjects such as logic, arithmetic, mensuration, geometry, astronomy, accountancy, public administration and agriculture were included in the course of studies. This scheme gave a secular bias to the entire educational system of the country.

Himself almost an illiterate, Akbar evinced great interest in the early education and training of children. In one of his sayings, he expressed the great love he bore to children: 'Children are the tenderest bud of the Garden of Existence. By loving them we praise the Creator.' (*Ain-i-Akbari*, Vol. III, Saying No. 75.)

Ain 25 of the *Ain-i-Akbari* (Book Second) is devoted to the organization of elementary education for children and runs thus:

'In every country, but especially in Hindustan, boys are kept [in school] for years, where they learn the consonants and vowels. A great portion of the life of the students is wasted by making them read many books. His Majesty orders that every schoolboy should first learn to write the letters of the alphabet, and also learn to trace their several forms. He ought to learn the shape and name of each letter, which may be done in two days, then the boy should proceed to write the joined letters. They may be practised for a week, after which the boy should learn some prose and poetry by heart, and then commit to memory some verses in praise of God, or moral sentences, each written separately. Care should be taken that he learns to understand everything himself; but the teacher may assist him a little. He then ought, for some

time, to be daily practised in writing a hemistich or a verse, and will soon acquire a current hand. The teacher ought especially to look after five things: knowledge of the letters; meanings of words; the hemistich; the verse; the former lesson. If this method of teaching be adopted, a boy will learn in a month, or even in a day, what it took others years to understand, so much that people will be quite astonished. Every boy ought to read books on morals, arithmetic, the notation peculiar to arithmetic, agriculture, mensuration, geometry, astronomy, physiognomy, household matters, the rules of government, medicine, logic, the Tabiyi, Riazi and Ilahi sciences¹ and history; all of which may be gradually acquired.

'In studying Sanskrit, students ought to learn the Bayakaran, Niyai, Bedanta, and Patanjai. No one should be allowed to neglect those things which the present time requires.

'These regulations shed a new light on Maktabas, and cast a bright lustre over Madrasas.' (Blochmann, *Ain-i-Akbari*, p. 288.)

(The man who greatly influenced the educational policy of Akbar was Mir Fathullah Shirazi, one of the greatest intellectuals of the time.) At the earnest solicitation of 'Ali 'Adil Shah of Bijapur, he left Shiraz for the Deccan. He was the disciple of Mir Ghiyasuddin Mansur of Shiraz, a great master of the rational sciences (m'aqulat) in Persia. After the death of 'Ali 'Adil Shah, he was invited by Akbar who appointed him as Sadr. He so excelled in all branches of natural sciences, especially mechanics and philosophy, that Abul Fazl said of him, 'If the books of antiquity should be lost, Mir Fathullah Shirazi will restore them.'

Mir Fathullah Shirazi had many inventions to his credit. He constructed a millstone which was placed on a cart and turned itself and ground corn. He invented a looking-glass which, whether near or at a distance, showed all sorts of curious figures; also a wheel which cleaned at a time twelve barrels.

¹ Tabiyi science stands for natural science, Riazi is higher mathematics, Ilahi is metaphysics and theology.

The matchlocks invented by Mir Fathullah Shirazi were so strong that they did not burst, though let off when filled to the top with gunpowder. Formerly they could not be filled to more than a quarter. The iron was flattened and twisted obliquely in the form of a roll, so that the folds became longer at every twist. Then the folds were joined so as to allow them to lie one over the other and were heated gradually in the fire. The matchlocks were made in such a manner that they could be fired off without a match by a slight movement of the cock. (*Ain* 37.)

He also invented a gun which on marches could be taken to pieces, and then put together again when required. Another gun joined seventeen guns in such a manner as to be able to fire them simultaneously with one match. (*Ain* 36.)

Mir Fathullah Shirazi, the Sadr and later the chief associate of Raja Todar Mal in the work of organization of the revenue system, could find time not only for his scientific and mechanical inventions, but also for teaching advanced students. His hobby was to give lessons to small boys of the age of seven or eight. (*Badauni*.) The son of Abul Fazl was also one of his pupils. Besides these activities, he found time to write explanatory notes on such standard books as *Sharhe Mullah Jalal* and also an exegesis of the holy Qur'an.

Mir Fathullah Shirazi supervised the work of translation of the astronomical tables of Ulugh Beg and also introduced the works of 'Allama Dawani, Sadr Shirazi and Mirza Jan in India, which were included in the curriculum of the Madrasahs as optional subjects. This gave a general bias towards "m'aqulat" to the entire scheme of higher studies in this country. Thus the tendency which started in the time of Sikandar Lodhi found its culmination in the reign of Akbar.

Mir Fathullah Shirazi carried on his experiments in mechanics in the Karkhanahs or workshops which formed a regular department under the Diwan-e-Buyutat and the Mir Saman in the time of Akbar. There were different departments in the Karkhanahs which specialized in particular lines. For instance

one department specialized in brocade, while another specialized in the making of matchlocks and guns. Father Monserrate, the Jesuit missionary, who was at the court of Akbar in 1580-2, writes in his Commentary¹ about the Karkhanahs: 'He (Akbar) has built a workshop near the palace, where also are studios and workshops for the finer and more reputable arts, such as painting, goldsmith's work, tapestry making, carpet and curtain making, and manufacture of arms. Hither he (Akbar) very frequently comes and relaxes his mind with watching at their work those who practise these arts.' Akbar took personal interest in mechanical experiments. For instance he looked personally to the details of the process of barrel-making and tested the barrels himself during the various stages of their construction. Even during his hunting tours he used to spend some time in the blacksmith's shop looking after gun-making. (*Akbar Nama*, III, p. 744.)

Akbar not only patronized inventors in his court, but also sent his envoys to foreign countries to bring the curiosities from them. Haji Habibullah was despatched to Goa and a number of craftsmen were sent along with him to acquire the arts of the Europeans. (*Badayuni*, II, p. 299.)

The Karkhanahs were not only manufacturing agencies but also served as centres for technical and vocational training to young men by the system of apprenticeship. They were placed under a master-craftsman (*ustad*) to learn the trade and in course of time became experts themselves. The Karkhanahs trained and turned out numerous artisans and craftsmen in different branches, who later set up their own independent workshops.

Bernier, the French traveller, who visited India in the seventeenth century, saw these Karkhanahs at work. He observes: 'Large halls are seen in many places, called *karkanays* (Karkhanahs) or workshops for the artisans. In one hall embroiderers are busily employed, superintended by a

¹ The full title of his narrative is *Mongolicae Legationis Commentarius*.

master. In another you see goldsmiths; in a third painters; in a fourth varnishers in lacquer-work; in a fifth joiners, turners, tailors and shoe-makers; in a sixth manufacturers of silk, brocade, and those fine muslins, of which are made turbans, girdles with golden flowers, and drawers worn by females, so delicately fine as frequently to wear out in one night... The artisans repair every morning to their respective kar-kanays (workshops) where they remain employed the whole day; and in the evening return to their homes... The embroiderer brings up his son as an embroiderer, the son of a goldsmith becomes a goldsmith, and a physician of the city educates his son for a physician.' (*Travels in the Mogul Empire*, p. 259.)

(Evidently, the bias of education in the time of Akbar was more secular than religious.) Sheikh 'Abdul Haq Muhaddis of Delhi, a contemporary of Akbar, has recorded an interesting conversation among some students, which throws revealing light on the psychological condition of young men in the time of Akbar. In his well-known work *Akhbaru'l Akhyar* he says, 'Once the students were having a conversation among themselves and were asking each other about the aim and object of their studies. Some of them pretended and insincerely asserted that they were pursuing their studies to get an insight into divine mysteries, while others were truthful and straightforward and said that the object of their pursuing knowledge was to have some worldly gain in the future. When they asked me about my opinion, I said that my purpose in pursuing knowledge was to acquaint myself with the views of men of erudition and wisdom of the past and to know their intuitive method of resolving intellectual difficulties and realizing the reality.'

(The result of the new educational policy of Akbar was that many Hindus took to the study of Persian. In the Madrasahs and the Maktabas there was no invidious discrimination between the Hindus and the Muslims.¹ Within a few decades

¹ Della Valle, who visited India in the time of Jahangir, noticed that Hindus and Muslims 'live all mixt together and peaceably, because the Grand

of the new educational policy there flourished large numbers of Hindu poets, historians and even lexicographers, whose intellectual stature was in no way lower than that of their Muslim compeers. Some of the Hindu scholars excelled in rational sciences (m'aqalat) and were appointed as teachers in the Madrasahs. (Abul Fazl has given a list of some Hindu scholars in the *Ain-i-Akbari*) who had made their mark in the "m'aqalat". It includes the names of Narayan, Madho Bhat, Sri Bhat, Bishan Nath, Ram Kishan, Balbhadra Misr, Vasudeva Misr, Bhan Bhat, Vidya Nivas, Gauri Nath, Gopi Nath, Kishan Pandit, Bhattacharji, Bhagirath, Kashi Nath, Mahadeo, Bhim Nath and Narain Sivji. The last four were scholars of medicine as well as practising physicians attached to the court. (Some of the Hindu physicians wrote books in Persian on the science of medicine. Akbar built a magnificent Madrasah near the royal residence on the hill in the palace-city of Fatehpur Sikri, "the like of which few travellers can name").

(Abul Fazl also founded a Madrasah at Fatehpur Sikri which was known as "Madrasae Abul Fazl.") It is extant even today. As Fatehpur Sikri was out of the way for the scholars living at Agra, (Akbar founded a Madrasah at Agra and Chalpi Beg, a savant of Shiraz, was appointed as its Principal. (*Akbar Nama*.) In 1561, Akbar's foster-mother, Maham Angah, established a Madrasah at Delhi, with a mosque attached to it. It was called "Khairu'l Manazil," a name determined from a chronogram.)

(During the reigns of Akbar's great successors, the progress of education in the kingdom was maintained. It was stipulated by Jahangir that if a noble died and his property reverted to the State, its proceeds should be utilized for the building and the upkeep of the Madrasahs.) (Khafi Khan, *Muntakhabu'l Lubab*.) He encouraged men of learning. The celebrated savant

Mughal, although he be a Mahomedan, makes no difference in his dominions between the one sort and the other, and both in his court and armies, and even amongst men of the highest degree, they are of equal account and consideration' (*Travels of Pietro Della Valle*, ed. Edward Grey)

of his time, Sheikh 'Abdul Haq Muhaddis, was patronized by him. Jahangir has noted in the *Tuzuk* that the inhabitants of Agra exerted themselves greatly in the acquirement of craft and the search after learning. Professors of every religion and creed had taken up their abode in Agra, where students thronged from far and near.

(During the reigns of Jahangir and Shahjahan arts and crafts thrived as never before, which is testified by Sir Thomas Roe and Bernier.) The latter says about the workmanship displayed by the Indian craftsmen:

'There are ingenious men in every part of the Indies. Numerous are the instances of handsome pieces of workmanship made by persons destitute of tools, and who can scarcely be said to have received instruction from a master. Sometimes they imitate so perfectly articles of European manufacture that the difference between the original and copy can hardly be discerned. Among other things, the Indians make excellent muskets and fowling-pieces, and such beautiful gold ornaments that it may be doubted if the exquisite workmanship of those articles can be exceeded by any European goldsmith. I have often admired the beauty, softness, and delicacy of their paintings and miniatures and was particularly struck with the exploits of Ekbar, painted on a shield by a celebrated artist who is said to have been seven years in completing the picture.' (*Travels in the Mogul Empire*, pp. 254-5.)

He mentions the craftsmanship of the Kashmiris in these glowing terms:

'The workmanship and beauty of their *palkeys*, bedsteads, trunks, inkstands, boxes, spoons, and various other things are quite remarkable, and articles of their manufacture are in use in every part of the Indies. They perfectly understand the art of varnishing, and are eminently skilful in closely imitating the beautiful veins of a certain wood, by inlaying with gold threads so delicately wrought that I never saw more elegant or perfect. But what may be considered peculiar to Kachemire, and the staple commodity, that which particularly

promotes the trade of the country and fills it with wealth, is the prodigious quantity of shawls which they manufacture, and which gives occupation even to the little children'¹ (p. 402).

It is true that Shahjahan's hobby was architecture, but other cultural activities were not neglected by him. (He founded a Madrasah near the Jami' Masjid of Delhi and endowed it with sufficient estates for its maintenance.) (It was also during his reign that Mulla Farid, a great mathematician of the time, prepared a new astronomical table) which rectified the astronomical table of Ulugh Beg and was named "Ziche Shahjhani" (*Amal-i-Saleh*). (Shahjahan patronized men of learning and poets. One of his beneficiaries was Chandar Bhan Brahman) a writer of distinction. His *Manshaat-i-Brahman* was a textbook in schools for a very long time. Other learned men of his time to whom he extended his patronage were 'Abdul Hakim Sialkoti, Mulla Muhammad Fazil and Qazi Muhammad Aslam. They were eminent in one or other branch of knowledge. (Jahanara Begum, one of Shahjahan's daughters, founded a Madrasah at Agra, attached to the Jami' Masjid,) which acquired great renown and continued to function and prosper even in later times.

(Aurangzeb founded numerous Madrasahs all over the country and fixed stipends for teachers and students. A considerable amount of money used to be spent annually on these subsidies.) The result of this policy was that the number of students in the Madrasahs increased to an unprecedented degree and poor and deserving students could pursue their studies without financial worries. (*Alamgir Nama*.) The assistance given to students was in proportion to their proficiency. The students who studied Mizan received one anna daily, and those who

¹ In the *Ain-i-Akhbari* Abul Fazl says, 'His Majesty encourages, in every possible way, the manufacture of Shawls in Kashmir. In Lahore also there are more than a thousand workshops.' In this *Ain*, Abul Fazl has enumerated the varieties of shawls which were manufactured in Kashmir and elsewhere. (Blochmann, *Ain-i-Akhbari*, p. 97-102.)

studied Munsha'ib two annas, and up to Sharhe Waqayah, eight annas daily. (*Tarikhi Farah Baksh* of Muhammad Faiyaz, quoted by Law.)

Aurangzeb had issued orders to the Provincial Diwans in his dominions that all students from the lowest to the highest form, those who studied the Mizan and those who studied Kashshaf, be given financial help from the provincial treasury with the sanction of the provincial Sadr. This was communicated to Makramat Khan, the Diwan of Gujarat, and was preserved and reproduced in the *Mira't-i-Ahmadi* of 'Ali Muhammad Khan, which is a mine of information about the Mughal system of administration. According to this authority, (Aurangzeb sanctioned a sum of money for the repair of the Madrasahs in Gujarat.) It is also mentioned in the same work that Akramuddin Khan, Sadr of Gujarat, built a Madrasah at Ahmedabad at an expense of one lakh and twenty-four thousand rupees and requested pecuniary help from the Emperor to meet its running expenses. The Emperor, thereupon, was pleased to grant as Jagir the village of Sondrah (in Pargana Sanoli) and the village of Sabilah (in Pargana Kari) and sanctioned the stipend of two rupees, daily to be distributed to poor and deserving students.

(Aurangzeb's approach, even in the intellectual and cultural sphere, was orthodox.) He could not tolerate any book to be included in the curriculum of the Madrasahs which in any way violated the orthodox point of view. In those days the works of Sheikh Muhibullah Allahabadi were very much in vogue. Aurangzeb took exception to some statements of the Sheikh in his book *Taswiah*. As the Sheikh had died, he called upon his chief disciple Sheikh Muhammadi to give a satisfactory explanation of the objectionable statements or to renounce the discipleship of the Sheikh and to have the copies of the book burnt. Sheikh Muhammadi, who was a man of sturdy independence and had a saintly character, replied that he was not prepared to renounce his discipleship in any case. As for offering an explanation, he said that he could

not comply with the Imperial order as he had not yet reached that spiritual stage from which the Sheikh had made those utterances, and that when he would get to that spiritual stage, he would send the Emperor a commentary on those statements. He added that if the Emperor had decided to have the copies of the said treatise burnt, there was enough fire in the royal kitchen for this purpose. The Emperor kept quiet after receiving this outspoken letter. (*Ma'asirul Umara*, III, p. 606.)

In this connection it may be noted that Sheikh Muhibullah Allahabadi was an advanced mystic and a bold and original thinker, who believed in the doctrine of the "Unity of Being." As a teacher also he had many disciples who were spread all over the country. In the treatise in question he argued that the Gabriel of the Prophet Muhammad was within Muhammad himself. Similarly, every prophet had his Gabriel within his own self. Dara Shukoh was a great devotee of the Sheikh and used to have correspondence with him on mystical problems. This also accounts for the antipathy of Aurangzeb towards Sheikh Muhibullah Allahabadi.

A great achievement of Aurangzeb's time was the compilation of the *Fatawai 'Alamgiri*, the most comprehensive digest of Muslim jurisprudence ever compiled. For this work, he engaged the services of the most famous 'ulama of his time, under the supervision of Sheikh Nizam of Burhanpur.

Aurangzeb's excessive orthodoxy caused him to discourage the fine arts. Thus the profession of musicians attached to the royal court was almost finished. It is said that about a hundred of these took out twenty biers with loud cries and lamentations, in order to excite the pity of the Emperor on their condition, while he was on his way to the mosque. On Aurangzeb's inquiry, he was told that the musicians were going to bury "Music". The Emperor calmly remarked that they should pray for her soul and see that she was well buried. (Manucci, *Storia do Mogor*, Vol. II, p. 8.)

During the later Mughal period, most of the new Madrasahs

owed their existence to private effort and munificence. The Madrasah of Ghaziuddin Khan, and the Madrasah of Sharfud Daulah and the Madrasah of Raushanud Daulah in Delhi, the Madrasah of Hasan Raza Khan at Farrukhabad and similar Madrasahs at Allahabad, Ahmedabad, Surat, Azimabad, Murshadabad, Aurangabad, Hyderabad and Karnul were founded by the nobles who were of a pious bent of mind and were interested in the advancement of learning.

During the later Mughal period the courses of study with the bias towards "m'aqulat" continued to be the order of the day, with slight modifications from time to time. In Delhi and the Punjab the subjects bearing on "m'aqulat" were optional, while in the eastern districts of Oudh and Bihar they were compulsory for all students.

In the middle of the eighteenth century, Mulla Nizamuddin, who was a contemporary of Shah Waliullah, drew up a syllabus known as "Dars-e-Nizami," which was in keeping with the previous syllabuses in vogue. It was adopted all over the country and consisted of the following eleven subjects with books prescribed for each (Abul Hasanat Nadvi, *Hindustan ki Qadim Islami Darsgahen*, p. 97):

- (1) Sarf (declension and conjugation): Mizan, Munsha'ib, Sarfe Mir, Panjganj, Zubda, Fusule Akbari, Shafi'a.
- (2) Nahv (grammar and syntax): Nahv Mir, Sharhe Ma'ta 'Amil, Hidayatun Nahv, Kafia, Sharhe Jami.
- (3) Mantiq (logic): Sughra, Kubra, Isaghoji Tahzib, Sharhe, Tahzib, Qutbe ma Mir, Sullamul 'ulum.
- (4) Hikmat (philosophy): Maibazi, Sadra, Shamse Bazigha.
- (5) Riazi (mathematics): Khulasatul Hisab, Tahrire Uqle-das Maqalai ula, Tashrihul Aflak, Risalai Qaushajia, Sharhe, Chaghmani babe awwal.
- (6) Balaghat (rhetoric): Mukhtasar Ma'ani, Mutawwal up to ma'ana qultu.
- (7) Fiqh (jurisprudence): Sharhe Waqaya Awwalin, Hidaya Akherin.

- (8) Usule Fiqh (principles of jurisprudence): Nuru'l Anwar, Taudihe Talvih, Musallimas Subut (mabadie Kalama).
- (9) Kalam (dialectics): Sharhe 'Aqaide Nasafi, Sharhe 'Aqaide Jalali Mir Zahid, Sharhe Mawaqif.
- (10) Tafsir (exegesis of the Qur'an): Jalalain, Baizawi.
- (11) Hadis (traditions): Mishkat almasabih.

A few decades later the following four subjects were added to the above syllabus:

- (1) Adab (literature): Nafhatul Yaman, Sab'a Mu'allaqa, Diwane Muntannabbi, Maqamate Hariri and Hamasa.
- (2) Faraiz (obligations): Sharifia.
- (3) Munazara (disputation).
- (4) Usule Hadis (principles of Hadis).

The chief merit of the Darse Nizami is that it did not lay emphasis so much on the prescribed books as on mastering the subject under study. In this system the teacher had to supply all the relevant information available regarding a particular topic which happened to be the subject of study. In spite of its emphasis on logical study, it was certainly a more flexible and useful system than the previous ones.

For the primary and secondary stages of education, great emphasis was laid on the Persian language and sometimes it was made the medium of instruction. Being the official language of the country even the non-Muslims eagerly acquired it. It was as a result of the cultivation and dissemination of this language that India could very well be proud of having produced great masters of poetry and prose in Persian, like Amir Khusrau, Mir Hasan, Faizi, Abul Fazl and Mirza Ghalib, who obtained the tribute of recognition from Persians themselves. The syllabus prescribed for the primary and the secondary schools in the eighteenth century was as follows:

Prose: Nuskhai T'alimia, T'alime Azizi, Dasturus Sibyan, Inshae Madho Ram, Inshae Faiq, Inshae Khalifa, Ruqaate Alamgiri, Gulistan, Maktubati Abul Fazl, Bahare Danish, Anware Suhaili, Seh Nasre Zuhuri, Waqa'e Nia'mat Khane 'Ali.
Poetry: Karima, Ma Muqima; Khaliq Bari, Bustan, Yusuf Zulaikha, Qasaide 'Urfi, Qasaide Badr Chach, Diwane Ghami, Sikandernama etc.

Broadly speaking, it may be said that each seat of higher learning specialized in one particular branch. For instance, the Delhi school of Shah Waliullah specialized in the Traditions (Hadis) and the Exegesis (Tafsir); the Farangimahli school of Lucknow specialized in Jurisprudence (Fiqh), and the Sialkot school specialized in Grammar. This accounts for the fact that the scholars constantly migrated from one place to another in search of a suitable teacher. There was constant and intimate touch between the teacher and the taught which should be considered the chief feature of the educational system of those times. The pupil imbibed the methods of the teacher for widening his knowledge. The same principle applied to vocational education, perhaps even more so. The apprentice constantly lived with the master-craftsman to learn and assimilate the secrets of his efficiency which were revealed in an informal, casual manner.

Students were promoted from a lower to a higher class according to the opinion of the teachers concerned who took into account the total academic career of the students, whom they knew very intimately. There was no regular system of annual examinations. Academic distinctions were awarded in accordance with the aptitude of the candidate in a particular branch of knowledge. For instance, one who had excelled in logic and philosophy was awarded the degree of Fazil, one who specialized in theology was awarded the degree of 'Alim, and the expert in literature was entitled to the degree of Qabil. A regular ceremony was held when these degrees were awarded to eligible students.

We may here offer a few passing remarks about the education of women in medieval India. (During the Turco-Afghan rule the women belonging to royalty were given private tuitions.) The daughter of Iltutmish, Raziya Sultana, who succeeded him on the throne, had received a sound education and was taught even riding and the arts of war. She was a patron of the learned. (*Tabqate Nasiri.*)

Ghiasuddin Khilji, son of Mahmud Khilji of Malwa, had founded a Madrasah at Sarangpur in which special arrangements were made for teaching arts and crafts to women. According to Firishta women were taught dancing, music, sewing, weaving, velvet making, carpenter's craft, goldsmith's craft, ironsmith's craft, quiver making, shoemaking, wrestling and the military arts. (*Tarikhe Firishta*, ed. Nivalkishore, Lucknow, p. 255.) On the basis of this evidence, we can safely assert that girls of higher and middle class families had sufficient opportunities for acquiring proficiency in general learning and crafts. (In Mughal times, the royalty and the aristocracy did not neglect the education of their womenfolk. Gulbadan Begum, Humayun's sister, wrote *Humayun Nama*, which is of great historical value.) She has recounted the story of Humayun's marriage with Hamida Banu Begum, daughter of a nobleman, who was an educated woman of strong character. She says that when Humayun offered to marry her, she refused to consider his proposal, as he had much too elevated a status for her. 'I would rather marry a man,' she said, 'whose collar I can hold than one whose skirt I cannot reach.' (*Humayun Nama.*) (Salima Sultana, Maham Angah, Nur Jahan, Chand Sultana and Mumtaz Mahal were all educated women.) Jahanara Begum, daughter of Shahjahan, had a genius for poetry. She wrote her own epitaph which is still to be found on her grave in Delhi and which reads:

Let not anyone scatter over my tomb
anything other than grass, for it is
enough for the grave of the poor.

Zebunnisa, daughter of Aurangzeb, was a highly intellectual person who was interested in the advancement of knowledge. She established a literary academy and a library for the use of scholars. It was at her instance that Mullah Safiuddin translated Imam Razi's *Tafsire Kabir* into Persian and named it *Zebul Tafasir*, after the name of his patron. A contemporary historian has recorded that Zebunnisa was a sedulous collector of books and had a large library. (*Ma'asire 'Alamgiri*.) She also wrote poetry of a high order.

(Besides royalty and the nobility, even among the middle classes the education of girls was quite common.) There were *Maktabs* for imparting religious education to girls in private houses where elderly ladies taught the Qur'an, *Gulistan*, *Bustan* and books on morals. It was customary that when a girl started a new book, her parents entertained the teacher and offered her presents. Even the widows of middle-class families conducted private schools in their houses for the benefit of the daughters of poor people who lived in their quarter. This was considered to be an act of piety.

In almost all the cities and towns of medieval India there were *Madrasahs* attached to mosques and mausoleums. Everywhere there were *Maktabs* in which reading, writing and arithmetic were taught to the children of all classes without any distinction of caste or creed.

Ibn Fazlullah, author of the *Masaliku'l Absar*, and Al Qalqashandi, author of the *Subhu'l A'sha*, say that there were one thousand schools (*Madrasahs* and *Maktabs*) in Delhi in the time of Muhammad Tughlaq. Such schools, according to Della Valle, existed in every town and village in the time of Jahangir. In a later period, according to Hamilton, who visited north-western India in the last decade of the seventeenth century, four hundred schools (*Maktabs* and *Madrasahs*) existed in the city of Thatta alone.

In these schools the children were made to write the alphabet and figures on smooth wooden boards called *takhtis*. It seems

that particular attention was paid to elementary arithmetic and there was a system in vogue to commit to memory the multiples of numbers called *paharas*, which was generally practised in a collective manner by the whole class. Good handwriting was also valued and calligraphy was practised and encouraged. The *Maktabs* functioned in the morning and in the afternoon, with an interval for the midday meal. The students were not charged any fees. The teacher was supported by the rich of the locality and was respected by all. Such sports as *Kabaddi* were common all over the country.

The friendly relations subsisting between Hindu and Muslim intellectuals in medieval history had a direct bearing on the educational development of those times. Al Biruni, philosopher, mathematician and geographer, who had travelled extensively in India and studied the language, the sciences and the philosophy of the Hindus, embodied his observations in a book which is remarkable for its sympathetic insight. He introduced the Hindu civilization and culture to the Muslims in its true perspective. The work of translation of the Sanskrit classics into Persian was undertaken during the reigns of Firoz Tughlaq, Sikandar Lodhi and Akbar, and lastly by Prince Dara Shukoh. Apart from religious books like the *Upanishads*, the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*, books of a technical nature were also translated for the benefit of the advanced students of the subject. Among the treatises which were translated from Sanskrit into Persian, the following may be mentioned: Bhaskaracharya's *Siddhanta Siromani*, consisting of four parts, *Lilavati*, *Bijaganita*, *Grahaganita* and *Goladhyaya*. *Lilavati* was translated by Faizi and *Bijaganita* (Algebra) by 'Ataullah Rashidi.

Dastur al Amal by an unknown writer and *Zubdatul Qawanin* by Harsukh Rai Sahgal contain an account of Hindu astronomy. *Bada'ul Funun*, a treatise on arithmetic based on *Lilavati*, was translated from Sanskrit into Persian by Modini Mal. *Amwar ul Nujum* was a treatise on Hindu astronomy by Qubul Muhammad Ansari; *Khulasatu'l Hisab* by Bahauddin 'Amili

was a very popular text book and was based on a Sanskrit treatise.¹

There are some treatises in Sanskrit, written during the medieval period, which show an unmistakable influence of Islamic thought. Dutt and Singh in the *History of Hindu Mathematics*, refer to the Gelosia method (kapat sandhi) which appears in Ganesha's *Ganita Manjari*, a commentary on Lilavati, written in the 16th century. The method appears first in the writings of Abu Zakariya Hassar (12th century). We have also an astrological work for calculating auspicious days (muhartas), bearing the title *Jyotirvidhabharana* (16th century) as ascribed to one Kalidasa, which shows a distinct Arab influence. Similarly Kamalakara's *Siddhanta Tattva Viveka* shows a knowledge of Muslim astronomy. Mathuranath Sukla wrote the *Jyotish Siddhantasara* by the order of Raja Dalachandra of Banaras, drawing his materials chiefly from Arabic sources.²

In the time of Muhammad Shah, Mirza Raja Jai Singh of Ambar established a number of observatories in Jaipur, Ujjain, Mathura, Banaras and Delhi. Under his patronage, Arabic astronomical works were translated into Sanskrit. He was himself an excellent mathematician and astronomer and it was at his suggestion that Pandit Jagannath translated from the Arabic Ptolemy's *Almagest* and called it *Siddhantasara Kaustubha*. Nasiruddin Tusi's work on the use of circular instruments was rendered from Arabic into Sanskrit under the title of *Katara*. Jai Singh's chief aim, however, was to correct the calculations of the astronomical tables then in existence and, for this purpose, he erected five observatories in different parts of the country and compiled the *Zich-e-Muhammed Shahi*.

In the field of medicine, translations of Sanskrit books were made in Persian. In the time of Sikandar Lodhi,

¹ Tara Chand, Presidential Address, Mughal History Section, Indian History Congress, 1939.

² Ibid.

Ma'danush Shifae Sikandari was compiled by Bhuvah bin Khawas Khan from Sanskrit sources. It was divided into three parts: (1) Sutrasthana, (2) Saririkasthana, and (3) Nadina Chikitsa. Other medical compilations based on Sanskrit are *Dasturu'l Atibba* by Muhammad Qasim Hindu Shah Firishta, which is a compendium based on Sanskrit sources; *Talife Saharif* by Hakim Muhammad Sharif Khan and *Tuhfatu'l Momin* of Muhammad Mominu'l Husaini.

Similarly, in the Sanskrit treatises on medicine, written in the 16th and subsequent centuries, clear traces of the influence of Arab medicine and allied sciences are found. *Rasapradipa*, *Rasa Kaumudi*, *Bhavaprakasha*, *Dhatukriya* and *Arkaprakasha* are cases in point. According to P. C. Ray, 'the regular application of the mineral acid to technical operations dates from the time of the Emperor Akbar or perhaps a little earlier.' (*History of Hindu Chemistry*, p. 187.)

The first book in Persian on Indian Music is *Lahjate Sikandar Shahi*, which was compiled by Hammad in the time of Sikandar Lodhi. It deals with all the aspects of Indian music. The author has adopted the method of questions and answers, and the important points have been adequately elucidated with the help of diagrams and sketches. (*Islamic Culture*, July, 1954.)

There were seats of learning at many places where special provision was made for the study of Hindu religion. In the North, Banaras, Nadia, Mithila (Tirhut), Mathura, Prayag (Allahabad), Hardwar, Ujjain and Ayodhya were well known as great centres of Hindu learning, where students gathered from all parts of the country. In the South, Madura and Tanjore had high reputation for erudition of their Acharyas. Bernier writes about Banaras which he visited in the seventeenth century: 'Banaras is a kind of university, but it has no college or regular classes as in our universities, but resembles rather the schools of the ancients, the masters being spread over different parts of the town in private houses.' (*Travels in the Mogul Empire*, p. 341.) In almost all these seats of learning were taught Sanskrit grammar, literature, and six

systems of Hindu philosophy (darsanas) and Hindu religious scriptures.

Critically speaking, the system of education in vogue in medieval India lacked resilience and had become much too rigid and non-creative.) The modifications made in it from time to time did not go far enough to meet the challenge of the times it was called upon to face. After all, one of the main functions of knowledge is to cultivate the faculty to apprehend relations found in social and natural phenomena, so that one may be able to orient oneself in time and place which is a sign of intellectual development. Without this faculty no group can survive. (The chief failing of the medieval system of education was that it was not found adequate to enable its adherents to form habits of accurate observation and practical judgment.) It was much too rigid, sterile and bookish. The chief factor in assessing all educational activity should be whether it calls forth the best of the potentialities for moral and spiritual growth. It would be historically true to assert that the medieval system of education, especially in the later Mughal period, failed to impart the qualities of leadership and thus ensure the supply of outstanding personalities in the different walks of life.

We know that Aurangzeb's first tutor was S'adullah Khan, the most erudite scholar of his time, who later became the chief minister of Shahjahan. His other teachers were Mir Muhammad Hashim and Mulla Saleh. When the latter went to congratulate Aurangzeb on his accession to the throne, the Emperor administered to his teacher the celebrated rebuke recorded by Bernier. It embodies Aurangzeb's views on the system of education then in vogue.

'Was it not incumbent upon my preceptor', he said, 'to make me acquainted with the distinguishing features of every nation of the earth; its resources and strength; its modes of warfare, its manners, religion, form of government, and wherein its interests principally consist; and, by a regular course of historical reading, to render me familiar with the origin of

States, their progress and decline; the events, the accidents, or errors, owing to which such great changes and mighty revolutions have been effected?... If you had taught me that philosophy which adapts the mind to reason, and will not suffer it to rest satisfied with anything short of the most solid arguments; if you had inculcated lessons which elevate the soul and fortify it against the assaults of fortune, tending to produce that enviable equanimity which is neither insolently elated by prosperity nor basely depressed by adversity; if you had made me acquainted with the nature of man; accustomed me always to refer to first principles, and given me a sublime and adequate conception of the universe, and of the order and regular motion of its parts;—if such, I say, had been the nature of the philosophy imbibed under your tuition, I should be more indebted to you than Alexander to Aristotle.' (*Travels in the Mogul Empire*, p. 156.)

Even if the long discourse of Aurangzeb, quoted by Bernier, be not wholly authentic, the points raised in it are relevant, and the views expressed about the inadequacy of the educational system of those times are far from being incorrect. There is no doubt about the fact that it failed to produce the right type of leadership which the later Mughals needed so badly.

The Origin and Growth of the Urdu Language

THE ORIGIN of the Urdu language like most other origins is obscure. Various theories have been advanced to explain it. Muhammad Husain Azad maintains that Brij Bhasha, a dialect of Western Hindi, is the basic language on which, after the conquest of Delhi by the Muslims, the Persian element was grafted as the result of which the Urdu language came into existence. I am afraid Azad has tried to simplify the explanation of the origin of Urdu which, in its nature, is complex. In fact, Brij Bhasha, though linguistically allied to the dialect spoken in the neighbourhood of Delhi, is different in its construction and morphology. In Mughal times, when Agra, which is situated in the Brij area, became the centre of the Empire, the influence of Brij Bhasha on the formation of the Urdu language somewhat increased, but as it had already crystallized itself on the basis of "Khari boli" it did not change materially. It only absorbed new words and idioms, which it continued to do even in later times.

Mahmud Sherani, on the contrary, holds that the Urdu language owes its origin to the first contact of the Muslims and Hindus after the conquest and incorporation of the Punjab and Sind in the Empire of Mahmud of Ghazni. In his book *Punjab men Urdu* (Urdu in the Punjab) he has discussed the structure and morphology of Urdu and has shown the grammatical affinity which it has with the Punjabi language.

It is a challenging book written with scientific thoroughness and precision.

It is true, as Mahmud Sherani has pointed out, that during the occupation of the Punjab by the Ghaznavid rulers for one hundred and seventy years, a large number of Persians, Turks and Afghans poured into the Punjab and settled there. The last rulers of the Ghazni dynasty established themselves at Lahore and continued to be there until their rule came to an end. Moreover, many Hindus such as Sundar, Tilak, Nath and others held high positions in the court of Ghazni, and a Hindu army was also stationed there. (*Tarikhe Baihaqi.*) This close contact of the Persian-speaking and the Punjabi-speaking peoples, according to Sherani, resulted in the mingling of the two languages which, in course of time, had far-reaching linguistic consequences. Dr. Suniti Kumar Chatterji is also of the view that 'the language that they (Muslims) adopted was naturally that current in the Punjab.' (*Indo-Aryan and Hindi*, p. 167.)

It seems that some Punjabi (Hindi) words had obtained currency even outside the limits of India. For instance, several Persian poets of the Ghaznavid period have employed Punjabi words in their poetry. Hakim Sinai minimizes the difference of language between peoples in one of his qasidas. He says: 'Without death you cannot attain deliverance from the doubts about the meanings of this and that. Different names have gained currency in the world, otherwise I can swear that there is no difference between " ab " and " pani " or " nan " and " maida."' Similar other examples can also be cited.

Aufi and Amir Khusrau affirm that the famous poet, Mas'ud bin S'ad Salman, who was born in Lahore, wrote, besides Arabic and Persian, in Hindi also, and has left a diwan in that language.¹ The diwan unfortunately is not extant.

Mas'ud bin S'ad Salman used Punjabi words and idioms in his poetry and had even invented a new poetic form called

¹ Khusrau's *Introduction to the Ghurrahu'l Kamal.*

“Dwazdeh maha,” which was definitely in imitation of the Punjabi “baramasah.” (Sherani, *Punjab men Urdu*, p. 38.)

After the occupation of Delhi by the Ghoris, the Punjabi Muslims and Hindus, who had already become familiar with the Persian language, migrated to Delhi in order to run the administration of the new government. We know it as a historical fact that Qutbuddin Aibak had annexed Ajmer, Hansi, Meerut, Badaun, Koel, Kanauj, Banaras, Nahrwala, Gwalior, Kalanjar, Oudh and Malwa in a very short time. Naturally, it must have required a large number of government functionaries to undertake the work of organizing the administration. Sherani poses the question: Where did these men come from? And answers that they could not have come in large numbers from Afghanistan. They came from Lahore and other parts of north-western India where people had taken to learning the Persian language. This exodus of people on a large scale from Lahore to Delhi influenced the “Khari boli” or the Hindi spoken in Delhi and its neighbourhood. In course of time the Punjabi words and idioms became interwoven in the Hindi of Delhi and thus a new language came into being.

A third theory about the origin of Urdu has recently been propounded by Dr. Mas‘ud Husain of the Muslim University, Aligarh, in which he has sought to prove that the basic language spoken in Delhi at the time of the Muslim conquest was Hariani. When Persian was grafted on Hariani, it resulted in the creation of the Urdu language. In course of time the Persian words and idioms were so interwoven with Hariani that the duality of the two languages was annihilated. Dr. Mas‘ud Husain has put forward his ideas in the *Maqaddamai Tarikhe Zabani Urdu* and has brilliantly sustained his thesis. His approach, like that of Sherani, is scientific, and characterized by meticulous scholarship and research. He does not affirm without producing adequate evidence. He has discussed the grammatical structures of Hariani and Urdu and has based his conclusion on a comparative study of the

two languages. This is certainly an original contribution to explain the origin of the Urdu language after the publication of Sherani's book.

To me it seems that Delhi was ideally situated for the development of a synthetic language, surrounded as it was by the people speaking different dialects of the Western Apabhramsa. Even before the Muslim occupation of Delhi a common language was already fairly advanced in its course of evolution. In fact, the occupation of the north-western territory of India by the Ghaznavid rulers must have expedited the process of its evolution. The leaders of Hindu thought had set about consolidating their defences on the political as well as on the spiritual and cultural planes. The epics and the Puranas were expounded in the Shaurseni Apabhramsa, and heroic tales were written by the poets of the period to fortify the people psychologically. The itinerant sadhus carried their message in the same common language as was understood all over northern India. The books of the Gorakhpantis were written in this language and are extant even today. They throw revealing light on how the Apabhramsa had emerged into Hindi.¹

The oldest book of the Hindi language is said to be the *Prithvi Raj Raso* of Chand Bardai, the court poet of Prithviraj. In it we find distinct traces of the new developments that had taken place in the formation of a common language. It contains a large number of Arabic and Persian words which had become current in northern India even before the consolidation of the Muslim power in Delhi.

It seems fairly clear that after the Ghori conquest of Delhi, Persian and Punjabi words got interwoven with the language which was spoken there, and which was a mixture of "Khari boli," Brij, Rajasthani and Hariani. Languages do not originate overnight. It must have taken at least a century to give shape to the new common language of Delhi which has been called "Hindawi" or "Dehlavi" by Amir Khusrau

¹ Pandit Hari Audh, *Hindi bhasha aur uske sahitya ka vikas*, p. 164.

(A.D. 1255-1325). Later Abul Fazl also called it the "Dehlavi" language.

Amir Khusrau used the "Hindawi" or the "Dehlavi" medium in his compositions which he has mentioned in the introduction to his diwan, *Ghurratu'l Kamal*. In his Hindi couplets and riddles and in his mixed Persian and Hindi poems we get a glimpse of his personality. He was not only an artist who created but also one who revealed the hidden paths to the imagination. He showed the way for the future development of the Urdu language and its inherent humanism.

In his mixed ghazals, Khusrau employs alternate hemistichs in Persian and Hindi, which accounts for the Urdu or the "Dehlavi"; the language was later called "Rekhta," which means mingling several things to produce something new. The fashion set by Khusrau of writing mixed poetry was followed by others also. Here a few examples are given:

Shabane hijran daraz chun zulf o ruze waslat cho 'umr kotah,
Saki piya ko jo main na dekhun to kaise katon
andheri ratian.
-Khusrau

Sometimes Khusrau uses Hindi words so exquisitely in his Persian verses that their aesthetic effect is greatly heightened. In one of his quatrains he depicts the life-like scene of a Gujari damsel selling curd in the streets of Delhi:

Gujri to ke dar husno latafat cho mahi,
In dege dahi bar sare to chatre shahi,
Az har do labat shahd o shakar mi rezad,
Hargah ke gui ke dahi lehu dahi.

Amir Hasan Ala Sijzi is generally known to be a Persian poet of high repute. The following Hindi ghazal by him of the mixed variety has been recently brought to light (*Urdu*, October, 1950):

Har lahzā ayad dar dilam dekhunuse tuk jae kar,
 Guyam hikayat hijre khud ba an sanam jiv lae kar.
 An simtan guyad mara dar koe ma ai chara,
 Mahi sifat tarphun para jo tuk na dekhun jai kar.

Khusrau has stated quite explicitly that he wrote poetry in the Hindawi language. While speaking of his works in the preface to his third diwan, he says: 'I have scattered among my friends a few chapters of Hindawi poetry also, but I would be content here with a mere mention of this fact.' Then he gives a few specimens of his verses capable of being interpreted both in Persian and Hindi.

Ari ari hama ba yari ai, marimari barahe mori ai.¹

The quatrain below is in the same strain and is attributed to Khusrau:

Raftam be tamashai kanare jue,
 Didam ba labe ab zane-hindui
 Guftam sanama bahi zulfat che buad,
 Faryad bar award ke dur dur mue.

It seems that Khusrau was proud of his Indian origin and his Hindi poetry. He states: 'I am an Indian Turk and can reply to you in Hindawi. I have no Egyptian sugar to talk of Arabic.'²

Again he says: 'As I am a parrot of India ask me something in Hindawi that I may talk sweetly.'³ It may be that this verse was composed when Khusrau was taunted and criticized by 'Ubaid, a Persian poet, who attached himself to Muhammad

¹ Khusrau's *Introduction to the Ghurratu'l Kamal*, p. 66.

² Turke Hindustaniyam man hindawi goyam jawab,
 Shakkare misri nadram kaz arab goyam sukhan.

(Khusrau's *Introduction to the Ghurratu'l Kamal*, p. 66.)

³ Cho man tutue hindam ar rast pursi,
 Za man hindawi purs to naghz goyam.

(Khusrau's *Introduction to the Ghurratu'l Kamal*, p. 66.)

Tughlaq's court when the latter was still a prince. 'Ubaid scoffed at Khusrau's idea to equal Nizami Ganjavi in writing Masnavi, and described his production as 'a stew cooked in Nizami's pot and the foolish self-conceit of an immature person.'¹

There seems to have been a continuous tradition about the existence of Khusrau's Hindi poetry. Taqi Auhadi, author of the '*Arafatu'l 'Ashiqin*' who visited the court of Jahangir in A.D. 1606, mentions Khusrau's Hindi poetry, and later, Mir Taqi Mir in his *Nikatush Sh'ura* states that Khusrau's Hindi songs were very popular in Delhi upto his time.

There is an old legend, related by many writers, that Khusrau recited the following pathetic Hindi verse at the grave of his spiritual master, Sheikh Nizamuddin Auliya:

Gori soe sej par, mukh par dale kes,
Chal Khusrau ghar apne, rain bhai chaudes.

(The fair one sleeps on the bed with the tresses scattered on her face. O Khusrau, come home now, for night has fallen all over the world.)

'My end is now not far off', he is reported to have said, 'for the Sheikh had told me that I would not survive him long.' As it happened he died only a few months after and was buried at the foot of his master's grave. It is said that Sheikh Nizamuddin Auliya had desired that Khusrau should be buried by his side. 'He is the keeper of my secrets, and I shall not set foot in Paradise without him. If it were lawful in the Shari'at I should have asked you to bury him in the same grave with me, so that we two may always remain together.'²

The authorship of some Hindi poetry ascribed to Khusrau

¹ Ghalat ustad Khusrau ra za khami, Ke sikba pulkt dar dege Nizami.

² See *Khazanai Amira; Sher'ul 'Ajam; Wahid Mirza's Life and Works of Khusrau.*

has recently been questioned on linguistic grounds. But the arguments advanced are hardly convincing in every case. Sherani's criticism about the *Khaliq Bari* may be correct, but the intrinsic worth and excellence of other Hindi poetry attributed to Khusrau is such that it can only be the work of some great master. It does not stand to reason to disbelieve the continuous tradition in this regard. If Khusrau did not write it, it must have been the creation of some other great mind.

Khusrau was a great representative of the Indo-Muslim culture of the time. In medieval Indian history, his all-round personality stands out prominently, unrivalled and unequalled by any of his contemporaries. He is the representative of the whole epoch, so rich in its cultural potentialities. Even his poetic fancy was an incentive to social action, as it gave a direction to the cultural life of that period.

Khusrau, in his *Masnavi, Nuh Siphir*, has stated that the language spoken in his time in and around Delhi was Hindawi: 'Now in India every province has a peculiar dialect of its own. There is, for instance, Sindhi, Lahori, Kashmiri, Canarese, Dhursamudri, Tilandi, Gujri, M'abari, Gauri, Bangali and Oudhi. But in Delhi and all around it, the current language is the same Hindawi that has been in use in India from ancient times and has been used for all forms of speech.'

The above statement proves beyond any shadow of doubt that by the time of Khusrau, the language spoken in Delhi and its suburbs had acquired a particular form which was unmistakable to contemporaries. It is also significant that in enumerating the languages of India he makes no mention of Hariani, Brij and Rajasthani, as they did not enjoy the status of being called regular languages. It was "Khari boli" or "Hindawi" which, after having absorbed a good deal from other neighbouring dialects, had become the common language of Delhi and its suburbs. Khusrau's Persian *Masnavi Tughlaqnama* contains a phrase which reveals the nature of the Hindawi which he employed:

'Hay, hay, tir mara!'
(Oh! he shot the arrow.)

Delhi became a great centre of the Sufis, after Qutbuddin Bakhtiar Kaki and Hamiduddin Nagauri had established their headquarters there. From the very beginning it was a definite policy of the Sufis to employ the Hindawi language for preaching their message of love and equality of men in the sight of God. They had realized that they could not reach the people through Persian, the official language of the Muslim rulers. They found Hindawi to be the most suitable medium for conveying their message to the masses. Sheikh Fariduddin Ganjshakar freely used Hindawi words in his conversation with his disciples. Some of his Hindawi utterances have been preserved by Mir Khurd in the *Siyaru'l Auliya*. He is also said to have devised certain formulas of "Zikr" (reiteration of God's names) in the Hindawi language which have been mentioned in some books on Sufism.¹

Sheikh Nizamuddin Auliya also used to employ Hindawi words during the course of his talks as is noted by the author of the *Fawaidu'l Fuwad*.

After the conquest of the Deccan and Gujarat by 'Alauddin Khilji, the Hindawi language was introduced into these regions. Khwaja Syed Muhammad Gesudaraz wrote *Mi'rajul 'Ashiqin*, which is considered to be the first prose work in the Hindawi language and which has been edited by Maulvi 'Abdul Haq Saheb.

Khwaja Muhammad Gesudaraz established a tradition which later was followed by his spiritual successors, and thus the foundation of the Deccani school of the Hindawi language was laid.

Other Sufis of the period who employed Hindawi are Sheikh Hamiduddin Nagauri, Sheikh Sharfuddin bu 'Ali Qalandar, Sheikh Sirajuddin 'Usman, Sheikh Sharfuddin Yahya Manairi,

¹ Risalati Sheikh Bahauddin, quoted by Maulana Suleiman Nadvi in the *Naqush-e Suleimani*, p. 41.

Shah Burhanuddin Gharib, Sheikh 'Abdul Quddus Gangohi, Shah Muhammad Ghaus Gwaliari, Shah Aminuddin A'la and others.

The following exquisite "Doha" is attributed to Shah bu 'Ali Qalandar:

Sajan sakare jainge aur nain marengae roe,
Bidhna asi kijyo ke bhor kabhu na hoi.

Shah bu 'Ali Qalandar was the contemporary of Sheikh Nizamuddin Auliya. His "doha" shows that in the early part of the fourteenth century the Hindawi language had become an effective medium of expression and had acquired all the grace and beauty of a cultured language.

Maulvi 'Abdul Haq has given examples of the language used by the early Sufis in his brochure *Urdu ke Ibtadai Nashwa Numa men Sufiane Kiran ka Kam* and I need not repeat them here.

One thing to be noted in this connection is that the language of all these Sufis, who had settled in different parts of the country, has certain common linguistic features. The metres used by them are mostly Hindi, and occasionally Persian. The rhyming of all words, whether of Hindi or Arabic or Persian origin, is based on their similarity of sound as they are pronounced by the inhabitants of this country. The result of this practice was that even Arabic and Persian words were Indianized and their foreign accent was lost. In their mystical utterances the Sufi poets have freely borrowed from the Indian spiritual and intellectual atmosphere and Indian literary motifs. Their verses are both discursive and lyrical, and sometimes in the form of a folk-tale or questions and answers.

In the development of early Urdu or Hindawi, the Bhagat poets have also played an important role. The language used by Namdeo, Kabir, Pipa and Ravidas is hardly different from the one used by the Sufis, except for the fact that they invariably employed Hindi rhymes and metres and borrowed

their technical terms from the Hindu religion and mythology. As both the Bhagats and the Sufis aimed at reaching the people, they employed the all-India medium available, i.e. the Hindawi language, with which the people seemed to have been familiar all over the country. Namdeo lived in Maharashtra, Kabir hailed from the eastern districts of Uttar Pradesh, and Nanak belonged to the Punjab, yet the medium of expression used by them is almost the same with slight shades of difference. We know that these Bhagats and Sufis travelled a great deal and therefore they had to adopt a medium that could be understood all over the country.

Kabir is even said to have composed a ghazal in the Persian-Arabic metre, the language of which is very much like the developed Urdu of later centuries.

The credit of introducing the Hindawi language in the Deccan goes to Sheikh Burhanuddin Gharib, a disciple of Sheikh Nizamuddin Auliya and Hazrat Bande Nawaz Gesudaraz. In the later centuries two great centres of the Hindawi language developed after the fall of the Bahmanids, viz. Golconda and Bijapur.

The Qutub Shahi rulers of Golconda not only patronized learning, but wrote poetry themselves. Sultan Muhammad Quli Qutub Shah, whose *Diwan* is a voluminous work, was a poet of great merit. His two successors, Muhammad Qutub Shah and 'Abdullah Qutub Shah, also wrote poetry in the Deccani style. Other famous poets who were attached to the court of the rulers of Golconda are: Wajhi, author of the *Qutub wa Mushtari* in poetry and *Sabras* in prose; Ghawwasi, author of *Saiful Muluk wa Bad'iu'l Jamal* and *Tulinama*; and Ibne Nishati, the author of *Phul ban*.

The 'Adil Shahi kings of Bijapur were also great patrons of art and poetry. The following poets of eminence flourished under their patronage: Hasan Shawqi, author of *Fath nama*; Muqimi, author of the love poem, *Chandar Bhan wa Mahyar*; and Rustami, author of the Masnavi of *Khawar nama*.

Ibrahim 'Adil Shah II was called Jagat Guru on account

of his mastery of Indian music. He wrote the famous work on Indian music called *Nauras*. He also made the Deccani Urdu his court language in place of Persian. Under 'Ali 'Adil Shah, the famous poet of the period, Mulla Nusrati, flourished at Bijapur. He was the author of '*Ali Nama* and *Gulshane 'Ishaq*.

The credit of introducing and popularizing the Hindawi language in Gujarat goes to the Sufis of the time. Sheikh Qutub 'Alam and Sheikh Ahmad Khattu migrated to Gujarat after the invasion of Timur in 1398. They employed the Hindawi language for communicating their ideas to their disciples and some of their utterances have been preserved in *Mira'te Sikanadari*. In course of time a regular school of literary style developed in Gujarat, which came to be known as the Gujarati style. Shah Ali Muhammad Jiv, author of the *Jawaharu'l Asrar*, Khub Muhammad Chishti, author of *Khub Tarang* and Amin, author of *Yusuf Zuleikha* belonged to Gujarat. Miranji, surnamed Shamsu'l 'Ushshaq and his son, Burhan Janam, originally belonged to Gujarat but had settled at Bijapur at the invitation of Ibrahim 'Adil Shah. Both father and son have left works in poetry and prose in the Gujarati style. Both were Sufis of advanced views with a considerable following in the Deccan and Gujarat.

Khub Muhammad Chishti was the most outstanding mystic writer of Gujarat. Besides *Khub Tarang* he is the author of several treatises on Sufism. He sometimes gives a Gujarati form to Arabic and Persian words to enhance their effect. Another work of this author is *Chand Chandan* which deals with Hindawi and Persian prosody. In his poetry he freely uses Persian words and metres. He was a contemporary of Akbar, who annexed Gujarat in A.D. 1572.

It is illuminating to observe that, after the advent of the Mughals on the stage of Indian history, the Hindawi language acquired greater flexibility and range. Persian words and phrases came into vogue freely. The Hindawi of this period was known as the Rekhta, or the Hindustani and later as

Urdu. Perfect amity and tolerance between Hindus and Muslims tended to foster the Rekhta or Urdu which represented the principle of unity in diversity, so marked a feature of Indian life at its best.

It is not surprising that Babar, with his highly imaginative temperament, envisaged the phenomenon of unity in diversity to which he has alluded in his Tuzuk. He once dreamt a dream which he recounted with relish and pleasure years afterwards. In his dream, he says he visited a beautiful garden about which he expatiates thus: 'In its different beds the ground was covered with flowers in bloom; on the one hand were beds of yellow flowers in bloom; on the other red flowers in blossom. In many places they sprang up in the same bed, mingled together, as if they had been flung and scattered abroad. I took my seat on a rising ground to enjoy the view of all the flower pots. As far as the eye could reach, there were flower-gardens of a similar kind.'

The dream was not only characteristic of Babar, a man of great poetic and imaginative capacity, it was also prophetic and came true in actual history. If dreams represent reality symbolically, the springing up of flowers of varying colours in the same bed could be nothing else but the mingling together of Hindu and Muslim cultures under the aegis of the Mughals in India.

Babar employed many Urdu words in the text of his Tuzuk. He also used Urdu verbs in a Turkish metrical composition in his diwan,¹ about which Sir Denison Ross remarks: 'I will not discuss here the matter and manner of these poems, as I hope on a future occasion to publish an English translation of the contents of this little book. I cannot, however, refrain from calling attention now to what is perhaps the most curious verse in the collection, namely, which occurs on page 20 of the text. Here we have the uncommon combination of Turki and Urdu in one and the same line.'

¹ Mujh ka na hua kuch hawase manak wa moti,
Faq ahligha bas bu lughu sidar pani wa roti.

According to the *Tarikhe Daudi* a man recited the following verse before Babar, after his victory at Panipat against Ibrahim Lodhi:

Nausi a uper tha battisa, Panipat men Bharat disa,
Athain Rajab sukkarwar, Babar jita Ibrahim hara.¹

(Nine hundred, thirty-two years were above it,
At Panipat—the land of Bharat.
Eighth Rajab, Friday,
Babar won; Ibrahim vanquished.)

Sheikh 'Abdul Haq Muhaddis, in his *Zadul Muttaqin*, states that his teacher Sheikh 'Abdul Wahab Muttaqi, who had settled in Mecca, used to deliver his lectures in Arabic for Arab students, in Persian for those who hailed from Persia and Central Asia, and in Hindi for the benefit of Indian students. We know for certain that Sheikh 'Abdul Wahab taught at Mecca Hadis (traditions) and Tafsir (exegesis) only to advanced students, and naturally, the standard of his discourses must have been very high indeed, as is testified by Sheikh 'Abdul Haq himself, who had attended them at Mecca. Now, it is evident from this that, in the time of Akbar and Jahangir, the development of Urdu had reached a stage when it could readily be made the medium for the expression of the most abstruse intellectual problems.

The literary genre of writing mixed ghazals, with one hemistich of Persian and another of Hindi, introduced by Khusrau and Amir Hasan in the fourteenth century, continued even in the time of Akbar. For instance the following verse is attributed to Mulla Nuri of A'zampur, a friend of Faizi:

Har kas ke khiyanat kunad albatta be tarsad,

¹ Quoted by M. A. Ghani in *A History of Persian Language and Literature at the Mughal Court*, p. 61.

Becharai Nuri na kare hai na dare hai.¹

Another poet of the same period, Kamaluddin Makhdum S'adi of Kakori, uses a language with which we feel so familiar:

Hamna tuman ko dil diya tum dil liya aur dukh dia,
Ham yeh kiya tum woh kiya aisi bhali yeh pit hai.

During Akbar's reign, translations were made from Sanskrit works into Persian, and Hindus and Muslims came very close to each other and their social and political contacts deepened as never before. Faizi wrote Hindi couplets, and 'Abdur Rahim Khan Khanan excelled in Hindi poetry to which he gave a new metre, shorter and more delicate than the "doha". It is known in Hindi prosody as "barva", having a pastoral touch in it. When sung in chorus it creates an exquisite aesthetic effect. Khan Khanan wrote his *Nayika Bheda* in this metre. In it he also made extensive use of Persian words which could be appropriately interwoven in the texture of his text. It is interesting to see the aesthetic effect of Sanskrit and Persian words placed side by side in an artistic manner. The language of the other works of Khan Khanan is also highly Persianized, but it was understood by those to whom it was addressed.

The impetus given to Hindi literature by the policy of Akbar is remarkable. In his time Tulsidas wrote his famous *Ram-charit-manas*, popularly known as the *Ramayana*. He was patronized by Raja Man Singh and 'Abdur Rahim Khan Khanan, the two most powerful nobles of Akbar's time. Surdas also flourished at the same time.

Akbar's intimate relations with the Rajputs indirectly helped the development of Urdu. It is said that when the marriage of Jahangir with the daughter of Raja Bhagwan Das was celebrated, the latter gave expression to his feeling of elation and pride in the following verse: 'Our daughter is

¹ Mir Hasan, *Tazkirai Sh'urwai Urdu*, p. 176.

the maid-servant of your palace, and we are slaves.' To this Akbar promptly replied, 'Your daughter is the queen of our palace, and you are the Sardars.'

In the time of Akbar, Raja Todar Mal introduced reforms in the revenue administration which had far-reaching significance. Hitherto, all the accounts had been kept in Hindi, but Raja Todar Mal made it incumbent on all government officials, high and low, to acquire proficiency in Persian as a condition for promotion and advancement. This indirectly led to the propagation of Urdu all over the country and finally to its standardization in the time of Shahjahan and Aurangzeb, when the synthetic character of Urdu (Rekhta) acquired a complete form and a greater content and power than before.

The famous poets of this period who wrote in Urdu are Chandar Bhan Brahman, M'uizuddin Musavi Khan, J'afar Zatali, Mirza 'Abdul Ghani Kashmiri and Mirza Bedil. There is a certain freshness in their diction that is remarkable. They prepared the way for the greatest lyricist of the time, Shamsuddin Wali, who is regarded as the founder of modern Urdu poetry. But the break is not sudden. The language of Chandar Bhan Brahman, Ghani and Bedil is not basically different from that of Wali. Here are a few examples:

Chandar Bhan Brahman:

Khuda ne kis shahar andar haman ko lai dala hai,
Na dilber hai, na saqi hai, na shisha hai, na piyala hai.

Ghani:

Dil yun khiyale zulf men phirta hai n'ara zan,
Tarik shab men jaise koi pasban phire.

Bedil:

Jab dil ke astan par 'ishq an kar pukara,
Parde se yar bola, Bedil kahan hai ham hain.

☞ Shamsuddin Wali (A.D. 1668-1744) is most appropriately

Wali freely makes use of the Persian "izafat" and "tarkib", Persian imagery and Persian vocabulary. His approach seems to be quite different from that of Shah Miranji, who employed the metres of Hindi "dohas" and "chaupais" without any hesitation.

The example set by Wali was followed by Abru, Arzu, Hatim, Janjanan Mazhar and others at Delhi, who standardized Urdu prosody. They adopted the Persian expression with discrimination and modelled their own constructions on those of Persian without in any way violating good taste and the genius of Urdu as an Indian language. Urdu borrowed from Persian its poetic forms and conventions of diction. The qasida or laudatory ode, the ghazal or love song, the masnavi or narrative poem, the marsiya or dirge, the rubai or quatrain, the hajv or satire, all were introduced into Urdu.

The first group of the followers of Wali was followed by the second which consisted of some great masters like Mir Taqi Mir, Khwaja Mir Dard, Sauda, Mir Soz and then Mushafi and Insha. The last two migrated to Lucknow at the invitation of Nawab Asafad Daulah, who was keen on establishing a separate Lucknow school of Urdu poetry. Among the later poets of renown belonging to the Lucknow school, Atish and Nasikh hold a high place. Mir Anis and Mir Dabir made a departure from the beaten track and composed marsiyas, or elegies on the martyrdom of Imam Husain. They refined and polished the Urdu language, vastly enriching its store of vocabulary and construction.

In Delhi, Zauq, Ghalib and Momin raised the standard of Urdu poetry to a very high level. Ghalib was the first to realize the shortcomings of Urdu prosody. His approach is original, away from the beaten track, and yet he did not consider it necessary to discard conventional forms. He is a consummate artist who presents a fine synthesis of emotion and intellect in his poetry. Both Ghalib and Momin indulged in Persianization. Some of their verses were written in high flown Persian, with a sprinkling of Hindi words and idioms here and there.

This artificial style was, however, discarded by their disciples who aimed at simplicity and directness of diction.

The Urdu language was enriched from generation to generation, mainly through accumulated wisdom, techniques and cultural traditions. Urdu, or Hindawi as it was known in its early stages, was at once a social product and a means of social contact and communication between Hindus and Muslims. Its development was largely conditioned by the new social *milieu* which was brought about after the advent of the Muslims in northern India. In its growth and development the psychological process of reconciliation and synthesis should be taken into account. This is why it reveals the soul of medieval Indian culture in a more significant manner than even religion and philosophy can do. Through its medium the different sections of Indian society found the way to perfect comprehension of one another.

A mixed language like Urdu could have developed only by the creative activity of imagination that springs from the give and take of the members of society and involves at every stage vital social adjustments. Language is an integrated total experience brought about by the fusion of the individual's feelings and strivings with social values, judgment and experience. Social contacts and cultural relationship of a most vital character have governed the achievements of the Urdu language at every stage of its development. The early contact of Hinduism and Islam in north-western India determined the linguistic technique of Hindawi or Urdu which stood behind all other impulses of civilization. It was deemed to have been the essential condition of social action. It seems to me that in the very early period of Hindu-Muslim contact it was well realized by both the parties that their common society could function only in virtue of the linguistic communication that linked its members and their multifarious social and economic activities. It must have involved a great revolution in the very thought-process of the society concerned. Language is so closely related to the thoughts, feelings and actions of men that one cannot

change its function without setting in motion further, perhaps unintended, changes. That is exactly what happened in northern India in the thirteenth century. Linguistic adjustment first brought about stresses and strains, but in course of time it became the means of cultural co-operation and mutual understanding. The Urdu language, no doubt, bears throughout indubitable marks of that process of absorption, compromise and accommodation which is the keystone of medieval Indian thought and history.

Social and Economic Conditions

THE SOCIAL institution of caste in India attracted the notice of the early Muslim immigrants, who had not seen the like of it in any part of the Muslim world. Equality and brotherhood were the recognized principles on which Muslim society was based. The early Muslims were treated in India as "mlechchas", the impure, like the non-caste people. In other words, their social status was lower than that of the Sudras. The institution of caste, however, did not fail to arouse curiosity among the early Muslim intellectuals who visited this country.

Al Biruni observes: 'All their fanaticism is directed against those who do not belong to them—against all foreigners. They call them mlechcha, i.e. impure, and forbid having any connection with them, be it by inter-marriage, or any other kind of relationship, or by sitting, eating, and drinking with them, because thereby they think they would be polluted.'

This attitude of exclusiveness on the part of the Hindus, indicated by Al Biruni, did not last long. It took about a century for the Hindus to reconcile themselves to the new-comers from the north-west. During this period a large number of Muslim immigrants had settled in the interior of the country, and had made India their home. They even shed their blood for its defence against their own co-religionists.

The chief result of the political domination of the Muslims was that the Brahmans, who had been exempt from all sorts of taxes in the previous regime, lost their privileged position. The lower castes, who whole-heartedly co-operated with the

newcomers, got an opportunity to alleviate their material position. Some of them embraced Islam as it gave them a higher social status. For instance the weavers, who were assigned a low position in the caste-hierarchy of the Hindus, were the first to take advantage of the Muslim domination in northern India, by embracing Islam *en masse*.¹ But, in this connection, it would be hazardous to form any generalization about group conversions as the data available are very meagre and flimsy. The question, naturally, arises why only the weavers¹ were so sensitive as to take advantage of the political revolution by embracing Islam *en masse*. Why did not the fuller, the shoemaker, the basket and shield makers and others who suffered from the same disabilities embrace the new creed? It may be that the individual approach made the difference. Professional guilds must have been under the influence of religious leaders, just as they are even now. If any particular leader was properly approached by a Muslim tradesman or missionary and was impressed with the doctrines of equality and brotherhood of the new creed, he may have embraced the new creed and the rest of the members of the guild may have followed in his footsteps. Al Biruni does not mention any separate guild of butchers, as this guild came into existence after they had embraced Islam. Most probably, all those who originally belonged to the class of Chandalas, who slaughtered animals and ate the flesh of cows, and the hunters of wild animals and of birds, formed themselves into a separate guild. It is

¹ Speaking about the lower castes Al Biruni says: 'After the Sudras follow the people call Antyaja, who render various kinds of services, who are not reckoned amongst any caste, but only as members of a certain craft or profession. There are eight classes of them, who freely intermarry with each other, except the fuller, shoemaker, and weaver, for no others would condescend to have anything to do with them. These eight guilds are the fuller, shoemaker, juggler, the basket and shield maker, the sailor, the fisherman, the hunter of wild animals and of birds, and the weaver. The four castes do not live together with them in one and the same place. These guilds live near the villages and towns of the four castes, but outside them.' (*India I*, p. 101.)

true that the economic condition of the weavers (Julahas) and the butchers (Qasais) must have improved considerably by enjoying the same social status as other Muslims. The question, however, is whether those who embraced Islam were motivated only by economic considerations or were there other factors also at work, the economic motive being one of them? It is highly probable that there were other considerations as well, which should be taken into account in order to get a true and full picture of the situation.

(Now, we enter a new period of our social history. During the course of a century the Muslim population, consisting of the converts and the immigrants, spread all over northern India. The converts, naturally, retained many of their former traditions, but soon adjusted themselves to the new social situation. The immigrants, who settled in small towns (qasbas) which they founded in most cases, had their roots fixed in the soil of the country. They were no longer strangers. The early resentment of the Hindus no longer existed. They could establish social intercourse with the Hindus who lived in the neighbouring villages and those who lived in the town itself. In course of time the descendants of these immigrants came to regard India as their home. The foundations of Indo-Muslim society were now laid.

One of the most prominent representatives of Indo-Muslim culture was the great poet, litterateur and mystic of the time, Amir Khusrau (1253-1325). He came from a family of Turkish immigrants, who had settled in Patiali, in the present Etah district of Uttar Pradesh. Being a man of versatile talents, he took to the career of a courtier, and for nearly half a century saw the rise and fall of dynasties and the changes and convulsions consequential to it. He became a disciple of Sheikh Nizamuddin Aulia, who conceived a strong liking for him and gave him the title of "Turkallah" and is said to have remarked, 'I hope on the Day of Judgement to be expunged of all blame by the fire that burns in the heart of this Turk.'

Khusrau was a man of wide sympathies and was equally

at home in Persian and Bhasha. In one of his Persian Masnavis called *Nuh Siphir* (the Nine Skies) he has depicted the life familiar to him; India's climate, its flowers, birds and animals, its sciences, religious beliefs and languages. He has attempted to prove India's superiority over other countries. He says, 'Why, someone may ask me, all this zeal and admiration for India? It is because India is the land of my birth and is my own country. The Prophet has said that "the love of one's country is part of the faith". As it is my country, I am going to speak about it within the limits I have set to myself.'

Khusrau commences by likening India to the Garden of Eden, where Adam resided before his fall. Then he speaks about the fertility and fruitfulness of its soil, the temperate nature of its climate, and the presence of the peacock which is a bird of paradise. To gladden the heart of man there are flowers here all the year round, while in Persia and Turkey they last only for two or three months. Indian flowers have a sweet scent, while the flowers of Persia and Turkey have no fragrance on account of the cold climate. In this land lie concealed wisdom and ideas beyond reckoning. Greece has been famous for its philosophy, but India is equally famous. Logic, astrology, physics, mathematics and astronomy, all are cultivated here. The Hindus believe in the unity and eternity of God, His power to create from nothingness, and so are better than the Dualists, the Sabians or the Mushabih (who liken God to visible objects). They worship, no doubt, stones, plants and the sun, but they recognize that these things are creations of God and adore them simply because their forefathers did so. (*Nuh Siphir*, ed. Wahid Mirza.)

Amir Khusrau cites the following arguments to prove India's superiority:

- (1) Knowledge and learning are common and widespread among the people.
- (2) They can speak all the languages of the world correctly.
- (3) Scholars from all parts of the world have come, from

time to time, to study in India, but no Indian scholar has found it necessary to go abroad in quest of knowledge. Abu Ma'shar, the famous Arab astronomer of the 9th century A.D., for instance, came to India and learnt astronomy from Hindu scholars at Banaras, where he lived for ten years.

(4) The numerical system, especially the symbol zero, originated in India. As a matter of fact, the word "Hindsa" is compounded of "Hind" (India) and "Asa", a famous Indian mathematician.

(5) The wonderful book of wisdom, *Kabila wa Dimna*, was composed in India, and acquired fame all over the world, having been translated into Persian, Turkish, Tazi (Arabic) and Dari.

(6) The game of chess, similarly, was invented in India. The elaborate and intricate technique of the game has seldom been mastered by anyone, and it holds a unique position among pastimes of a kindred nature.

(7) Indian music, which is like a fire that inflames the heart and the soul, is of a higher order than the music of any other country. No foreigner, even if he has lived in India for a number of years, has been able to grasp its principles thoroughly, or even to render a single melody correctly.

(8) This music has a peculiar charm not only for human beings, but for animals also. Deer have been hypnotized and caught by means of music alone.

(9) Lastly, in no other land is there a wizard like Khusrau, albeit a lowly and humble panegyrist of the great monarch.

Then Khusrau proceeds to mention the talking birds like the parrot, the magpie and other birds that have been trained to perform wonderful tricks, horses trotting to music, goats performing balancing feats, manlike monkeys that can distinguish between one coin and another. (*Nuh Siphur.*)

Khusrau seems to be full of admiration for the familiar scenes of everyday life, which clearly shows that his approach was that of a genuine patriot who loves the country of his birth and its life and environment.

In his *Masnavi*, *Daval Rani Khizr Khan*, he says that if he admired India he should not be considered a partisan. He was not like the proverbial blind woman of Basra who gave preference to Basra over Syria out of sheer parochialism. According to him India is a paradise on earth, which accounts for Adam and the peacock descending here from Paradise itself. Then he proceeds to admire the flowers of India, the entire description being realistic and true. While describing the qualities of each flower he mentions the names of bela, juhi, kevara, champa, molsari, duna, karna and sevti. Then he says that just as the flowers of India are superior to those of other countries, the beauties of this country are also incomparable. 'With regard to the beauties of India one can say that a hundred countries like China are not worth one hair of theirs. The beauties of Yughma¹ and Khullukh² cannot be compared to them, sharp-sighted and sour-visaged as they are. The beauties of Khorasan may be white and red, but they are odourless like the flowers of their country. As for the beauties of Russia and Turkey, they lack submission and humility. They are white and cold like blocks of ice of whom even hell would be afraid. The lips of the Tartar beauty do not smile and the beauty of Khutan lacks salt. As for the beauties of Samarqand and Qandahar, they have no sweetness in them. The jasmine-bodied beauties of Turkey and Egypt have no elegance and smartness compared with the beauties of India.' (*Daval Rani Khizr Khan*.)

In the same *Masnavi* he praises the use of "pan" (betel-leaves) and says that the Persians are so stupid as not to be able to distinguish between the "pan" and grass. It requires taste to do so. In his other *Masnavi*, *Qiranus S'adain*, Khusrau says that "pan" is one of the delights of India as it diminishes the bad odour of the mouth, and also strengthens the teeth when they are weak. It gives appetite to one who has no appetite, but if one is feeling hungry, it diminishes hunger.

¹ A city in Turkistan celebrated for the beauty of its inhabitants.

² A city of Cathay remarkable for the comeliness of its women.

In the *Dawal Rani Khizr Khan*, Khusrau admires the fine cloth of India, the like of which was not to be had anywhere else. In this connection he mentions the "Deogiri" which most probably was a kind of fine cloth made at Deogir in the Deccan. He describes it poetically. 'The fairy-like beauties know that the Deogiri suits their taste better than the fine grey linen (Katan). It can be likened in delicacy and elegance to sunshine or shadow or moonlight!'

Khusrau was a religious man, but he was not a bigot. Tolerance of believers of other creeds was a prominent feature of his character. He admired the devotion and enthusiasm of the Hindus for their religion and urged the Muslims to be as devoted to their faith as they were. He was impressed when he saw the Hindus die out of devotion—a woman dying willingly for her husband and a man for an idol. He considered it to be against the tenets of Islam, but then he observed, 'See, how noble it is!' (*Nuh Siphir.*)

In the *Hasht Bahisht* he relates the tale of a Hindu and a Muslim pilgrim in these words:¹

'A Muslim Haji proceeding to Mecca met a Brahman pilgrim going to Somnath. Owing to the strength of his devotion, the Brahman was measuring the ground with his body and the stones of the road had torn off the skin of his breast. "Whereto friend?" the Haji inquired. "I have been travelling like this for several years," the Brahman replied. "But God has given you your two feet; why do you crawl on your breast instead of walking upon them?" "Ever since I had dedicated my life to my idol, I have crawled towards him on my breast," the Brahman replied.

'And you, who taunt the Hindus for being idolators, should at least condescend to take a lesson from the sincerity of their faith. Granted, the arrow of the idolator is shot at a wrong target; but towards that target it is moving straight. How much more pathetic the condition of one who, knowing

¹ *Hasht Bahisht*, one of the Masnavis in Khamsa. Habib, *Hazrat Amir Khusrau*, p. 88.

the true object of life, none the less shoots in a wrong direction! Go on thy path like a straight arrow, O my master, so that people may rightly call thee the warrior of the Lord.'

Khusrau had a great genius for synthesis. He was the first Indo-Muslim to have thought of combining Persian and Indian tunes and thus enriched Indian music. He is credited with having given shape to Khayal music by abandoning the Dhrupad. Khusrau is said to have invented the following new melodies which represented the new Indo-Muslim culture:

Mujir, Sazgari, Aiman, 'Ushshaq, Muwafiq, Ghazan, Zilaf, Farghana, Sarpada, Bakharz, Qaul, Tarana, Khayal, Nigar, Basit, Shahna and Suhila.¹

Khusrau also invented the "Sitar" by combining the old Indian "Vina" and the Iranian "Tambura." He is said to have modified the old "Mirdang" and to have given it the shape of the "Tabla". It is not possible to determine the exact modifications introduced by him in the vocal and the instrumental music of India, but this much is certain that he did introduce changes which were in keeping with the new spirit of cultural synthesis which was the result of the impact of Islam on Hinduism.

Music being the language of the soul, the changes introduced by Khusrau had far-reaching social consequences in bringing together people of two divergent creeds. Music has always played an important role in social cohesion and integration throughout the ages in close association with feasts, dances and games, etc. In the Turco-Afghan period and then in the Mughal period of history, Muslim musicians have been in the forefront of this fine art.

Almost all the Mughal Emperors were fond of music. Akbar was a skilled musician and liked to play on Naqqara (kettle drum). 'His Majesty,' writes Abul Fazl, 'pays much attention to music, and is patron of all who practise this enchanting art.' Tan Sen (d. 1589) was the greatest singer of the age and according to Abul Fazl, 'a singer like him has not been in

¹ Shibli, *Shirul Ajam*, II, p. 137.

India for the last thousand years'. He became a Muslim and was cordially received by the Emperor. Tan Sen completed the work initiated by Amir Khusrau in the field of Indian music. He succeeded in evolving a fusion of the Hindu and the Iranian systems. Instead of the classical strains, he introduced light songs, just as Amir Khusrau had introduced the "Qawwali". His popularity may be gauged from the fact that the melodies introduced by him were sung by the people of India everywhere. (*Ain-i-Akbari*.)

Music is a medium acceptable to high and low. Especially in India the aristocracy have been as fond of it as the lower classes. The melodies introduced by Amir Khusrau and Tan Sen became the basis of the music of the people, especially in northern India. Musical parties brought Hindus and Muslims together, and this helped a great deal in bridging the social gulf between them.

Besides musical parties, common sports, amusements and ceremonies lessened the estrangement between the votaries of the two divergent creeds. Muslim customs were also modified in the new environment. Certain new festivals, like Shabe-barat came to be celebrated all over the country. Most probably it was copied from the Hindu festival of Sivaratri, night-vigil and fireworks being common to both. Similarly the Ta'ziyas (the miniature models of the mausoleums of the martyrs of Karbala) took the form of a regular celebration in the month of Mohurram. They have a striking resemblance to the Jagannath car and the celebration of the Krishnalila among the Hindus. In no other Islamic country are Ta'ziyas to be found. The official celebrations were carried out more or less on a uniform pattern under the Turco-Afghan and the Mughal rulers, and also under the contemporary Hindu rajas. Pavilions were erected and adorned with embroidered tapestry. Expensive carpets were spread and large chandeliers were hung under the arches for light and decoration. Dancing girls and musicians entertained the audience and sweet drinks and betel were distributed to the visitors. Sometimes

jugglers, athletes and other showmen exhibited their skill and prowess. (Ashraf, *Life and Condition of People in Hindustan*, p. 303.)

(The Mina Bazar (fancy fair) was a special feature of Mughal social life.) It was first organized at the instance of Akbar. Sometimes the Emperor and the members of the royal family acted as salesmen. According to Abul Fazl the main object of organizing such Bazars was that the Emperor wanted to acquaint himself with the condition of the people and to come in contact with them directly. Sometimes aggrieved persons used this opportunity to bring their grievances to the notice of the Emperor, and even acquainted him with the irregularities of the administration and high-handedness of officials. The Mina Bazar was open to members of the nobility, irrespective of their caste or creed, who visited it for enjoyment and fun. Here, sometimes, aristocratic ladies consulted the Emperor for contracting the marriages of their sons or daughters, and sometimes he introduced the parties to one another and made recommendations if necessary.

“ Although there were many points of contact between Hindus and Muslims on the higher as well as on the lower levels, their life currents flowed separately. Historically we have to admit that Indian society in medieval times was distinctly divided between the Hindus and the Muslims, whose spiritual sources of inspiration were different, although on the material and outwardly plane they had many things in common. The Sufis and the Bhagats attempted to bring them closer spiritually, but they succeeded only partially. They supplied a very useful leaven to the culture of medieval times. ”

“ The high-caste Brahmans, who had previously been deprived of their privileges, soon consolidated their hold by making the caste system more rigid and by multiplying it into sub-castes, for the greater the multiplication of castes, the more was their position secure and indispensable. The Kshatriyas, who had suffered an eclipse during the Turco-Afghan period,

retrieved their position under the Mughals. The Vaishyas had grown prosperous by increase of trade and commerce during the Muslim rule in India. The social and economic status of the Sudras had considerably improved. The Kayasthas of northern India, who were once considered to be Sudras, now monopolized a large proportion of the jobs in the Mughal bureaucracy. They served as intermediaries between the rulers and the ruled."

The Muslim aristocracy no doubt consisted mostly of the descendants of foreign immigrants. But in course of time they had adapted themselves to their environment and became thoroughly Indianized. They supplied leaders in the field of politics and administration. The large majority of Indian Muslims consisted of those whose forefathers had embraced Islam. They retained their affinities with the corresponding groups of Hindus to whom they had originally belonged. But after becoming Muslims they were more punctilious in the observance of religious rituals than others, while there were some among them who could hardly be distinguished from the neighbouring Hindu population.

(Purdah was observed much more strictly among Muslim ladies, but the Hindu aristocracy and the middle classes in northern India, being in a position to do without the labour of their women, also observed it. Among the poorer classes it was necessary for women to work and the elaborate niceties of etiquette were set aside, but even the lower-class women carefully concealed their faces from men when they appeared in public.) Polygamy was permitted both in Islam and Hinduism, but monogamy was the rule among the vast majority of people on account of the economic necessity. The richer classes of both creeds married more than one wife. Child-marriage was permissible. Generally speaking, women exercised great influence and were respected, especially among the Mughals.

The dress of the people in the period under review differed from place to place and from class to class. In the pre-Mughal India the nobles wore a "Kulah" for head-dress, a tunic

worked in brocade and a white belt on official occasions. In private life they wore a shirt, Indian turban (pagri), a tunic of velvet or silk, or ordinary shirt and large drawers. (Khusrau, *Daval Rani Khizr Khan*.) The Hindu nobility dressed like the Muslim aristocracy. Generally, the poor people used a dhoti or a single sheet of long-cloth below the waist and sometimes a tunic. The Brahmans usually went bare above the waist, throwing the sacred thread over the body. (Ashraf, *Life and Condition of People in Hindustan*.)

Moreland maintains that the general effect of the contemporary evidence is to 'lay stress on the nakedness of the people than to enter into details regarding the various garments worn.' (*India at the Death of Akbar*, p. 274.) This opinion is not quite correct. There is ample material found in the narratives of foreign visitors about the dress of the people of India which shows that the opinion of Moreland is only partially true.

Ma Haun, a Chinese traveller who came to Bengal in 1405, says, 'They wear white cloth turbans and long loose robes with a round collar, which they put on over their head, and which is fastened in at the waist by a broad coloured handkerchief; they wear painted leather shoes. The King and his officers all dress like Muhammadans; their head-dress and clothes are becomingly arranged.' (*J.R.A.S.*, 1895; Chablani, *The Economic Conditions of India in the Sixteenth Century*, p. 88.)

Nicolo Conti, who visited Gujarat, Vijayanagar and the northern parts of India in the years 1420-21 tells us: 'The style of dress is different in different regions. Wool is very little used. There is great abundance of flax and silk, and of these they make their garments. Almost all, both men and women, wear a linen cloth bound round the body, so as to cover the front of the person, and descending as low as the knees and over this a garment of linen or silk, which, with the men, descends to just below the knees and with the women, to the ankles. They cannot wear more clothing on account of the great heat, and for the same reason they only wear sandals

with purple and golden ties, as we see in ancient statues. In some places, the women have shoes made of leather, ornamented with gold on their arms and on their hands, also around their necks and legs, of the weight of three pounds, and studded with gems. The manner of adorning the head is various, but for the most part the head is covered with a cloth embroidered with gold, the hair being bound up with a silken cord. In some places they twist up the hair upon the top of the head like a pyramid, sticking a golden bodkin in the centre, from which golden threads, with pieces of cloth of various colours interwoven with gold, hang suspended over the hair.' (Major, *India in the Fifteenth Century*.)

In one of the Girdano Seringis letters on Vasco da Gama's first voyage, we have the following description of the people of Calicut: 'All or most of the people are clothed in cotton clothes from the waist down to the knee, but from the waist upward they go naked. Courtiers and men of condition dress in the same manner, but make use of silk stuffs, reddish or scarlet or of other colours, as seem good to them. The wives of men of condition are clothed above the girdle in very white and delicate linen but the wives of lower degree are naked above the waist. The Moors dress according to their custom in Jubbi (long coat) and Balandrau (Surtout worn by Brothers of Mercy in Portugal).'

Another traveller who makes detailed observations about the dress of the people in India is Duarte Barbosa, who visited India in the first quarter of the sixteenth century. About the ruling tribe in Malabar he says, 'They go naked save that from the waist downward they are clad in white cotton or silk. Sometimes they wear coats open in front, coming down to the middle of the thigh, of cotton or silk, or very fine scarlet cloth or brocade. . . . Their ears are bored, and in them they wear very rich jewels of precious stones filled with great pearls and over their garments they are girt with belts of precious stones, well-worked and rich.' (*The Book of Duarte Barbosa*, Hakluyt Society, London.)

About the dress of the people of Gujarat he says, 'These heathens are tawny men, tall and well-looking, gaily attired, delicate and moderate in their food. They are clad in long cotton and silken shirts and are shod with painted shoes or richly wrought cordwain; some of them wear short coats of silk and brocade. The women of these heathens are beautiful and slender with well-shaped figures, they are both fair and dark. Their dress is as long as that of their husbands, they wear silken bodices with tight sleeves cut low at the back, and other long garments called chauders which they throw over themselves like cloaks when they go out. On the heads they wear nought but their hair well dressed on the top of it. They always go barefoot. . . . The Moors of the kingdom go very well attired in rich cloth of gold, silk, cotton and camlets. They all wear turbans on their heads. . . . They have very beautiful white women, very well clad, and they may marry as many as they can maintain according to the law of Mafameda.' (*The Book of Duarte Barbosa.*) †

About other customs of the people of Gujarat Barbosa tells us, 'In the Gujarat the Baneans used to put flowers and other sweet-scented things in their hair and to anoint themselves with white sandalwood mixed with saffron and other scents. The women wore on their legs very thick anklets of gold and silver with plenty of rings on their fingers and toes, and they had holes bored in their ears wide enough for an egg to pass through, in which they wore thick gold and silver ear-rings.' (*The Book of Duarte Barbosa.*)

Pietro Della Valle, who visited India in the time of Jahangir, makes the following general observations about the dress of the people in northern India: 'The garment which they wear next to the skin serves both for coat and shirt, from the girdle upwards, being adorned upon the breast, and hanging down in many folds to the middle of the leg. Upon this cassock, from the girdle downwards they wear a pair of long drawers of the same cloth, which cover not only their thighs, but legs also to the feet; and it is a piece of gallantry to have it wrinkled

in many folds upon the legs. The naked feet are not otherwise confined but to a slipper and that easier to be pulled off without the help of the hand, this mode being convenient in regard to the heat of the country and the frequent use of standing and walking upon tapestry in their chambers. Lastly, the head with all the hair, which the Gentiles keep long, contrary to the Mohamedans who shave it, is bound up in a small and very neat turban, of almost a quadrangular form, a little long, and flat on the top. . . . I was so taken up with this Indian dress in regard of its cleanliness and easiness that I caused one to be made for myself, complete in every point, and to carry with me to show it in Italy. The Mohamedan women go clad likewise all in white either plain or wrought with gold flowers. Their upper garment is short, more beseeeming a man than a woman, . . . sometimes they wear a turban too upon their heads. Their clothes are often times red of the same rich and fine linen, and their drawers are also either white or red, and often times of sundry sorts of silk stuff striped with all sorts of colours. . . . The Indian gentile women commonly used no other colour but red. . . . And for the most part they use no garment, but wear only a close waistcoat, the sleeves of which reach not beyond the middle of the arms, the rest whereof to the hand is covered with bracelets of gold or silver or ivory. From the waist downwards they wear a long coat down to the foot (Lanhga); when they go abroad they cover themselves with a cloak of ordinary shape, like a sheet which is also used by the Mohamedans.' (*Travels of Pietro Della Valle*, ed. Edward Grey, Hakluyt Society.)

Speaking about the embellishments of dress used by the Hindus of northern India, Abul Fazl says that a man is adorned by twelve things: (1) trimming his beard, (2) ablution of his body, (3) drawing the sectional marks of caste, (4) anointing with perfumes and oil, (5) wearing gold ear-rings, (6) wearing the Jama fastened on the left side, (7) bearing the mukuta which is a golden tiara worn on the turban, (8) wearing a sword, (9) carrying a dagger at the waist, (10) wearing a

ring on the finger, (11) eating betel, (12) wearing sandals or shoes.

A woman is adorned by sixteen things: (1) bathing, (2) anointing with oil, (3) braiding the hair, (4) decking the crown of her head with jewels, (5) anointing with sandalwood unguent, (6) wearing of dresses (These are of various kinds. The sleeves of some reach to the fingers, of others to the elbows. A jacket without a skirt called *angiya* was chiefly worn, and instead of drawers, a *lahanga* which is a waist-cloth joined at both ends with a band sewn at the top through which the cord passes for fastening. It is also made in other forms. Others wear the *daneliya* which is a large sheet worn over the *lahanga*, part of which is drawn over the head and the other end fastened at the waist. These three garments are worn of necessity. The wealthy wear other garments over any of these. Some wear the sheet covering the head and upper part of the body and long drawers—*paejamas*), (7) sectarial marks of caste, and often decked with pearls and golden ornaments, (8) tinting with lamp-black like collyrium, (9) wearing ear-rings, (10) adorning oneself with nose-rings of pearls and gold, (11) wearing ornaments round the neck, (12) decking oneself with garlands of flowers or pearls, (13) staining the hands with henna, (14) wearing a belt hung with small bells, (15) decorating the feet with gold ornaments, (16) eating pan. Finally blandishments and artfulness. (*Ain-i-Akbari*.)

Then Abul Fazl enumerates thirty-seven kinds of different ornaments used by the women of India, all of which are made either of plain metal, such as gold or silver, or studded with jewels and which are of many styles, and observes, 'What words can express the exquisite workmanship of the trade?' The various craftsmen who made these ornaments mentioned by him are: Zarnishan, Koftgar, Minakar, Sadahkar, Munabatkar, Shabakar, Charamkar, Simbaf, Sawadkar and Zarkob. All these details given in the *Ain-i-Akbari* show that the people had a taste for ornaments and jewelry which was worn in profusion, according to their means.

It would be tedious to enumerate here the number of festivals,

ceremonies at child-birth, the ceremonies at death and the ceremonies of eating and cooking which are given in the *Ain-i-Akbari* in great detail.

A remarkable development of medieval Indian history is the growth of large cities all over the country. Delhi, founded by Iltutmish, and adorned with the great minaret, symbolic of the unity of the central administration of India, grew rapidly both in extent and population. It became the greatest centre of industry and culture in the whole of Asia after the Ghorian conquest. Some of the great cities of Persia and Central Asia had been laid waste by the Mongols and their inhabitants passed under their dominion. Those who survived lived a precarious existence. Many men of erudition and learning came to Delhi, where they received royal patronage. Amir Khusrau idealizes Delhi in his *Masnavi*, *Qiranas S'adain*, referring to it as "Hazrate Dehli" (Sacred Delhi): 'Sacred Delhi is the abode of religion and justice. It is the garden of Eden. May God keep it fully inhabited. It is like the fabulous garden of Iram; may God protect it from disasters. Its administration has been so efficient and skilful, that the sky after seeing it, feels giddy by its own constant turning. After its foundation, there is no other city in the world that can be compared with it in grandeur. In its three fortifications the entire world is resident; and the two worlds offer ten salutations to its one breath (word). If the fortification wall is the body, the parapet is its tongue which is in conversation with the moon. Its name has reached great heights and has captured the imagination of the people of Khutan. Even Mecca, if it hears the tale of this garden, will start turning round India in reverence. The City of the Prophet swears by its head and the city of God has become deaf after hearing about its fame and reputation.¹ In the entire world it represents the dome of Islam, with which is attached the dome of the seven skies. Its inhabitants consist

¹ Gar shunawad qissai in bostan, mecca shawad taif hindostan.

Shahri nabi ra ba sari ou gasam, Shahri khuda gashtaze sitash asam.
(*Qiranas S'adain*).

of the great men of the country, and in every corner of this city some pillar of the state is to be found. Every street of it is like paradise in its magnificence, a tremendous amount of wealth having been spent on art and industry. In its every lane gifted men stand in line, and in its every arch precious things are deposited.'

Proceeding further, Khusrau admires the virtues of the water reservoir situated near a hill, and says, 'Many streams join it to the river Jamna and thus the Jamna itself seeks help and succour from its water. . . . It is not a reservoir, but a world of light and illumination. May God protect it from the evil eye. This city (Delhi) is a wonder of creation; in its bosom the sea and the mountain have become friends. The sky has supplied it with water from the river Jamna, just as the Tigris carries water to Baghdad. Anyone who has tasted the water of this country, his heart is bound to become cold towards the water of Khorasan. As the sky found Khorasan to be cold, it became cold towards it for the whole year. It is true that the air of this country (India) is hot, but it need not be envious of the frigidity of Khorasan. Do you know why the air of this country is hot? It is because of the warmth of loyalty and devotion that the sun demonstrates towards this country.' At the end of this chapter Khusrau has recited his famous "ghazal" in which there is an appreciative reference to the city of Delhi: 'O Dehli ! Thy pure and simple-hearted beauties !'¹

¹ Ai Dehli wa ai butane sada.

Even in later centuries poets have idealized Delhi. Mir Taqi Mir says: 'The lanes of Delhi are like the book of pictures of a painter, every face here is like an image (Dilli ke na the kuche awaraq musawwir the, jo shakl nazar ai taswir nazar ai).

Khwaja Mir Dard, who had seen the destruction of Delhi in the last decades of the eighteenth century, says in his treatise, *Nalai Dard*: 'May God keep it (Delhi) inhabited till the Day of Judgement. It was a strange garden, now lying desolate. All sorts of men were found there. Now it has been destroyed by the blows of misfortune. There was a time when its comely face was like that of the loved ones, moonlike and attractive' (*Nalai Dard*, p. 20).

It is not surprising that Khusrau, in his panegyric on Delhi, did not omit to mention its arts and industries and the sense of security that its inhabitants felt in its urban life.

It seems that before the Ghorian conquest of northern India, commercial capitalism was already well established in the Islamic countries bordering on India, and it reached Delhi in the 13th century. Without free movement and liberty of contract no trade and commerce is possible. There is something in the city air that gives freedom to a man to take the initiative and try new experiments. A striking feature of the economic life of northern India in the period under review was the organization of fairs by the collaboration of several master-craftsmen who were independent entrepreneurs, whose sole capital consisted of their houses and the tools indispensable for their crafts. These craftsmen mostly produced for the limited clientele of the city and its neighbourhood, while there were others who worked for export and wholesale trade.

The introduction of the city economy by the Turco-Afghans in the thirteenth century was based on commercial capitalism of the variety in vogue in the Central Asian countries and in the Mediterranean world. Free competitive enterprise was the motive force of this economy. This is why the price control system imposed by 'Alauddin Khilji was resented by the citizens of Delhi, about which Barani says, 'The citizens of Delhi had for eighty years prospered under the rule of the Turks and the government of the Khiljis appeared to them intolerable.' Although Barani expressed this view in connection with the accession of Jalaluddin, he actually recorded it later in the time of Firoz Shah Tughlaq, when he was in a better position to form a more objective estimate of the Khilji administration.

And then Barani remarks with a sense of relief that 'Alauddin's market regulations died with him. The rules, the inquiries, the strictness with which the orders were carried out and the punishment inflicted on the market people came to end with his death. (*Tarikh-i-FirozShahi*.)

(Delhi retained its position of pre-eminence in the political and economic fields till the invasion of Timur in 1398, after which its social and economic fabric was thrown out of gear. The artisans of Delhi had been deported by Timur to various parts of his kingdom and stone-masons were sent to Samarqand. Famine and pestilence followed in the wake of Timur's invasion, from which Delhi did not recover for a long time. Practically speaking the Empire of Delhi had ceased to exist, the effective sovereignty of its kings having been limited to Delhi, Agra and the districts along the Jamna for nearly a century. But the economic system which was stabilized under the Sultanate was universally adopted by the provincial Muslim dynasties and even by Vijayanagar, which could not isolate itself from the surrounding economic influences. The economic domination of the cities and towns continued in later centuries.)

Foreign travellers who visited India during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries did not hesitate to compare Indian cities to London, Paris or Constantinople, the greatest cities which were known to them. Besides Delhi, the important cities in northern India were Srinagar, Lahore and Agra. Mirza Haider, a companion of Humayun, has left a detailed description of the city of Srinagar. He says, 'In the town there are many lofty buildings, constructed of fresh cut pine. Most of these are at least five stories high and each story contains apartments, halls, galleries and towers. The beauty of their exterior defies description and all who behold them for the first time, bite the finger of astonishment with the teeth of admiration. But the interiors are not equal to the exterior. The passages in the markets and the streets of the city are all paved with hewn stone.'

Father Monserrate, visiting Lahore in the reign of Akbar, describes it as a 'city second to none either in Asia or Europe with regard to size, population and wealth, crowded with merchants who forgather there from all over Asia', and having 'a population so large that men jostle each other in the

streets'.¹ Terry describes Lahore as 'the chief city of the Punjab, built very large and abounds both in people and riches; it is one of the most principal cities for trade in India'. (*Voyage to East India*.)

Agra was made the capital of his dominions by Sultan Sikandar Lodhi, but it reached its full development in the time of Akbar. Abul Fazl describes it thus: 'The excellence of its climate is almost unrivalled. Agriculture is in perfection. Fruits and flowers of all kinds abound. Sweet-scented oil and betel leaf of the first quality are here obtained, and its melons rival those of Persia and Transoxiana. Agra is a large city and possesses a healthy climate. It is filled with people from all countries and is the emporium of the traffic of the world.' Then about Fatehpur Sikri he observes: 'In these two cities (Agra and Fatehpur Sikri) under His Majesty's patronage carpets and fine stuffs are woven and numerous handicraftsmen have full occupation.'

Ralph Fitch, the only lay European traveller known to have visited Akbar's dominions, writes about Agra and Fatehpur Sikri as follows: 'Agra and Fatehpur are two very great cities, either of them much greater than London and very populous. Between Agra and Fatehpur are twelve miles and all the way is a market of victuals and other things, as full as though a man were still in a town, and so many people as if a man were in a market.' (*Principal Navigations*, Hakluyt Society.)

Nikitin, who was in India from 1468 to 1471, visited the Deccan when it was under the Bahmanis. Describing Bidar, he tells us, 'Bidar is the chief town of the whole of Mahometan Hindustan; the city is large, and contains a great many people.' Barbosa refers to it as a place 'where there is great luxury'. Chaul, an important port of the Bidar Kingdom at this time, was a centre of great trade where according to Barbosa 'even in the months of December, January, February and March

¹ *Mongolicas Legationis Commentarius* (English summary published by Maclagan and Rev. Heston, pp. 159-160).

a great concourse of ships is found, the more part of which are from the land of Malabar; and from many other parts as well.' Dabul was also 'a great town of Moors and Heathen' and 'a fine and well-situated place, which had a very good harbour whither sailed many ships of the Moors from diverse lands, to wit, from Mecca, Aden and Ormuz (which bring here many horses) and from Cambaya, Diu and Malabar which constantly dealt in goods of every kind, with many very worthy merchants of whom some in this land were of great wealth, as well Moors as Heathen', and where 'great sums of money were gathered in at the customs house.' (*The Book of Duarte Barbosa.*)

The chief city of Gujarat was Cambay, which Nikitin (1468-1471) found to be a 'manufacturing place for every sort of goods as long gowns, damasks and blankets'. Barbosa says that 'it is a great and fair city in which dwell substantial merchants and men of great fortune, both Moors and Heathen. There are also many craftsmen of mechanic trades in cunning work of many kinds as in Flanders.' Barbosa mentions about Ahmadabad also as a great centre of trade and administration. Abul Fazl says about Ahmadabad, 'It is a notable city in a high state of prosperity, which for the pleasantness of its climate and its display of the choicest production of the whole globe is almost unrivalled.' (*Ain-i-Akbari.*)

Abdur Razzaq, an envoy of Iran, who visited India in 1442 and travelled extensively in the South, was struck by the extent of commerce at Calicut. He says that vessels were continually sailing from there for Mecca mostly laden with pepper. About the same city Barbosa observes that 'the Moors took on board their ships goods for every place and every monsoon ten or fifteen of these ships sailed for the Red Sea, Aden and Mecca, where they sold their goods at a profit, some to the merchants of India, who took them on thence in small vessels to Toro, and from Toro they would go to Cairo, and from Cairo to Alexandria and thence to Venice. These were pepper, ginger, cinnamon, cardamom, tamarind, canafistula, precious stones of every kind, seed pearls, musk,

ambergris, rhubarb, aloes-wood, great store of cotton clothes and porcelains'. (*The Book of Duarte Barbosa*.)

Barbosa gives a detailed description of Diu as a centre of trade: 'All these goods are carried by the folk of the country to Mecca, Aden, Ormuz, and other parts of Arabia and Persia, to such a degree that this town now has the greatest trade of any found in these regions, and yields such a sum of money that it is an astonishing thing, by reason of the bulky and precious goods that are here laden and unladen. Thus from Mecca and Aden alone they bring hither coral, copper, quicksilver, vermilion, lead, alum, madder, rose water, saffron, gold, silver (coined and bullion) in such abundance that it can not be reckoned.'

Of Vijayanagar, which was the capital of a prosperous Empire in the South, Abdur Razzaq gives a glowing description: 'The city of Vijayanagar is such that the eye has not seen nor the ear heard of any place resembling it upon the whole earth. It is so built that it has seven fortified walls, one within the other. Between the first, second and third walls, there are cultivated fields, gardens and houses. From the third to the seventh fortress, shops and bazaars are closely crowded together. The bazaars are very broad and long so that the sellers of flowers, notwithstanding that they place high stands before their shops, are yet able to sell flowers from both sides.' According to Conti the circumference of the city was sixty miles; its walls were carried upto the mountain and enclosed the valleys at their foot, so that its extent was thereby increased. 'In the city', continues Conti, 'there are estimated to be ninety thousand men fit to bear arms.' Barbosa and Paes have also spoken about Vijayanagar in glowing terms. According to Barbosa, there were to be found in this city 'metals both wrought and unwrought, copper in abundance, quicksilver, vermilion, saffron, rose-water, great store of opium, sandal-wood, camphor, musk and scented material.'

In Bengal, the city of Gaur in the days of the Husaini dynasty was a great centre of trade and commerce. It is said

to have been three leagues in length and to have contained two million inhabitants. Its streets according to De Barros 'were so thronged with the concourse and traffic of people . . . that they could not force their way past'. Sonargaon was another large town in Bengal. Hugli, Chatgaon (Chattagong) and Satagaon have also been referred to as seats of brisk trade. In Sind, Thattah was likewise a great centre of commerce.

According to Manrique (1629-1643) there were as many as six hundred brokers and middlemen in Patna and most of them were wealthy. At Agra he found merchants of great wealth and speaks of vast sums of money piled up like heaps of grain in their houses. Similarly in Dacca he saw money heaped up in such large quantities that, counting being difficult, it used to be weighed. (*Travels of Sebastian Manrique.*)

The banias of Gujarat used to do business all over the coast of India and even had commercial dealings in Persia and Arabia. Among them were many rich merchants, for instance, Virji Vora (1619-1670) controlled the entire trade of Surat and a large portion of the coastal trade of Malabar. He had his establishments in Agra, Burhanpur and Golconda and traded with the Persian Gulf and the Indian Archipelago. According to Thevenot, the French traveller who visited India in the seventeenth century, he was considered to be the richest man in the world. (*Indian Travels of Thevenot and Careri*, ed. Dr. P. C. Sen.) The seths of Murshidabad and the chettis of South India were also reputed to be very rich. It seems that owing to the development of both internal and foreign trade a strong and competent mercantile community was built up all over the country.

Barbosa mentions the wealth and opulence of the Muslim merchants of Rander, and Della Valle observes that the businessmen of Surat lived in a very aristocratic and luxurious manner. Evidently, this prosperity of the mercantile class would not have been possible without a flourishing trade, both internal and external.

Internal trade was well developed, and in all the great centres of the country there were bankers and wholesale dealers who had large supplies of capital at their disposal. Through their intermediaries, they used to advance money to weavers and indigo growers and others to obtain the merchandise required for internal consumption or foreign export. There was efficient arrangement for transmitting money from one place to another and hundis (bills of exchange) were generally in use.

Every subah (province) supplied the requirements of others. For instance, Gujarat supplied to Agra the articles imported from the countries of the Near East or Europe, which consisted mostly of precious stones and metals, velvets, wines, African slaves and silk manufactures. Agra was the converging centre for all routes from the important centres of the Mughal Empire. Bengal supplied rice, sugar, cotton and silk goods. Sugar was sent from Bengal to Agra by way of the Ganges and the Jamna and to Malabar along the sea-coast. Lahore and Multan supplied sugar, opium, sulphur, nut-galls, paper and steel weapons. Agra was famous for its excellent Biana indigo. Kashmir supplied fruits, wines, shawls, smoking hemp (charas), raw silk, borax, etc. and imported cotton goods, indigo and salt. The most important emporium of South India was Golconda, which was directly connected with the three ports of Goa, Masulipatam and Surat. Here a large variety of merchandise was available throughout the year.

The exports of India in the seventeenth century were textile goods, spices, indigo, saltpetre, ginger, opium and sugar. The imports were gold, silver, horses, copper, tin, zinc, lead, mercury, coral, amber, precious stones, velvets, perfumes, China goods, wines and African slaves. Cloth was made in different parts of the country and was the chief article of export to European and Near-Eastern countries and even to East Africa. Abul Fazl has enumerated thirty-three qualities of silk and thirty of cotton in the *Ain-i-Akbari* (pp. 99-100)

which were manufactured in India. In connection with the Karkhanahs (workshops) Abul Fazl says, 'His Majesty pays much attention to various stuffs; hence Irani, European, and Mongolian articles of wear are in abundance. The Imperial workshops, the towns of Lahore, Agra, Fatehpur, Ahmadabad (Gujarat) turn out many masterpieces of workmanship and the figures and patterns, knots, and variety of fashion which are now prevailing astonish experienced travellers. His Majesty himself acquired in a short time a theoretical and practical knowledge of the whole trade; and on account of the care bestowed upon them, the intelligent workmen of this country soon improved. All kinds of hair-weaving and silk-weaving were brought to perfection, and the Imperial workshops furnish all these stuffs which are made in other countries. A test for fine material has since become general.' Abul Fazl's statement is corroborated by Bernier who, in the middle of the seventeenth century, saw these Karkhanahs at work. ✓

The Mughal Empire, and even its predecessor, the Turco-Afghan Empire, helped a great deal in re-establishing the contact between India and other Asiatic countries which had been completely destroyed with the decline of Buddhism in its home. The centralized structure of the Mughal Empire was not only favourable to the development of internal trade, but it also stimulated a vigorous prosecution of foreign trade between India and the countries of the Near East and Central Asia. No less than fourteen thousand loads of merchandise passed every year from India to Qandahar through the Bolan Pass in the reign of Jahangir. Under Shahjahan the traffic increased even more. A brisk trade from Surat was carried on in jewelry and in silver, imported from Turkey and Iraq, while cotton yarn was exported to Ormuz and Basra. Khafi Khan mentions that the Imperial ship "Ganje Sawai", which was bringing gold and silver worth fifty-two lakhs of rupees from the sale of goods at Mocha and Jeddah, was attacked by the English pirates in the Indian Ocean. This incident throws

revealing light on the volume of trade between India and Arabia alone.

The Mughal government facilitated and fostered commercial relations with European nations also and allowed them to establish their factories in coastal towns. This period of our history coincided with the rise of the energetic races of Europe into more civilized forms and manifold vigour and copiousness of life. The Mughals being a land power neglected the building up of an efficient navy. There was no alternative for them but to be on friendly terms with the Portuguese and other Europeans who could otherwise disturb their pilgrim and other traffic in the Indian Ocean. And yet when the foreigners exceeded the limit set for them, they were properly dealt with, as in the time of Aurangzeb.

A successful prosecution of internal and external trade depends on a reasonable security of life and property. In Mughal times roads were fairly secure in the interior of the country, although in less settled parts the traders were protected by guards as is testified by Terry's account as well as by innumerable documents called "Dastaks" in the Central Records Office, Hyderabad (Deccan). These "Dastaks" served the purpose of travellers' passports for providing facilities to persons proceeding on a journey from one subah to another. Tom Caryate was much impressed by the "Long Walk", four hundred miles in length, "shaded by great trees on both sides," which was a highway between Agra and Lahore. Thus says Terry: 'It is looked upon by travellers, who had found the comfort of that cool shade, as one of the rarest and most beneficial works in the whole world!' (*Voyage to East India*.) Generally, in inter-provincial highways serais (public inns) and wells were provided for the comfort of traders and travellers.

Terry also notes with satisfaction that the customs charged at the ports were not high, so that traders of all nations might have the greater encouragement to establish trade relation with the country under the Mughals.

Speaking generally, it would be correct to say that under the Turco-Afghan and Mughal rulers India enjoyed economic self-sufficiency. Even Moreland admits that 'at this period India was very nearly self-supporting and that her imports were limited to certain metals and raw materials together with a large number of articles of luxury required for consumption by a very small proportion of the population.' (*India at the Death of Akbar*, p. 142.)

As regards the standard of life of the people, the material at our disposal is hardly adequate. We know that the nobles lived lavishly and more often than not beyond their means. 'I was acquainted,' says Bernier, 'with very few wealthy Omrahs: on the contrary most of them are deeply in debt, they are ruined by the costly presents to the King and by their large establishments.' (*Travels in the Mogul Empire.*)

The nobles usually followed the pattern set by royalty. They used to have a large staff of servants and retinue. Many men got employment in their households. A great deal of money was spent on entertainment. Terry has given a vivid description of the dinner given by Asaf Khan to Sir Thomas Roe, which gives us some idea of the lavishness of provisions and service maintained by the nobles of that period. We know that Abul Fazl used to distribute his entire wardrobe every year to his personal servants and one can say with certainty that he was not the only noble to indulge in such lavish generosity. It is possible that the escheat system was to some extent responsible for the extravagance of the nobility.

There were some nobles who accumulated large fortunes, sometimes by trade. Mir Jumla is a case in point, but he is an exception to the rule.

(With regard to the condition of the middle class, our knowledge is very meagre. It consisted of merchants and traders and the government functionaries, or the writer class as they were called. The merchants and traders living in the coastal towns had definitely a higher standard of life than those who lived in the interior of the country, the reason being that

they had to come in contact with men of other nationalities and had to follow international standards of comfort and convenience.)

(The condition of the lower classes living in the towns and cities and the peasantry was much the same as at present. As regards housing accommodation, most of the foreign visitors characterized it as miserable. Most of the peasantry and labourers lived in thatched huts. Pelsaert's account of the habitations of the mass of the people in the time of Jahangir is as follows: 'Their houses are built of mud with thatched roofs. Furniture there is little or none except some earthenware pots to hold water and for cooking and two beds; their bed-clothes are scanty, merely a sheet or perhaps two, serving as under-and-over sheet. This is sufficient in the hot weather, but the bitter cold nights are miserable indeed.' (*Jahangir's India*, tr. Moreland and Geyl.)

Manrique's observations about Bengal corroborate the above statement: 'The people usually live in huts of mud and clay, low and thatched with straw or olas, which is the leaf of a palm. They keep their dwellings very clean, usually scouring them over constantly with the excrement of cattle dung mixed with mud, this being used not only on the walls but also the floors.'¹

As regards the housing condition of the higher classes Al Qalqashandi, who wrote in the last quarter of the fourteenth century, says that the houses of Delhi are built of stone brick, the roofs are of wood and the floor is paved with white stones resembling marble. According to him they did not build houses more than two stories high, often confining themselves to only one. (*Subhal A'sha*, Vol. V, p. 76.)

Two centuries later Pelsaert made the following observation about the houses of the upper and middle classes: 'I shall now speak of the houses which are built here. They are noble and pleasant, with many apartments, but there is not much in the way of an upper storey except a flat roof, on which to

¹ *Itenerio de la misiones*, p. 28a.

enjoy the evening air. There are usually gardens and tanks inside the house; and in the hot weather the tanks are filled daily with fresh water, drawn by oxen from wells. The water is drawn, or sometimes raised by a wheel, in such quantity that it flows through a leaden pipe and rises like a fountain; in this climate, water and plants are a refreshment and recreation unknown in our cold country. These houses last for a few years only, because the walls are built with mud instead of mortar, but the white plaster of the walls is very noteworthy, and far superior to anything in our country. They use unslaked lime, which is mixed with milk, gum, and sugar into a thin paste. When the walls have been plastered with lime, they apply this paste, rubbing it with well-designed trowels, until it is smooth; then they polish it steadily with agates, perhaps for a whole day, until it is dry and hard, and shines like alabaster, or can even be used as a looking glass. They have no furniture of the kind we delight in, such as tables, stocks, benches, cupboards, bedsteads, etc.; but their cots, or sleeping places, and other furniture of kinds unknown in our country, are lavishly ornamented with gold or silver, and they use more gold and silver in serving food than we do, though nearly all of it is used in the mahal, and is seen by scarcely anybody except women. Outside the mahal, there is only the diwan-khana, or sitting-place, which is spread with handsome carpets, and kept very clean and neat.' (*Jahangir's India*. tr. Moreland and Geyl.)

As regards the furniture used by the masses of the people Manrique states that it consisted generally of a straw mat on which they slept, using cotton quilts as bed covers, four pots in which they cooked rice and a few simple stews and other things of the same class,¹

Foreign travellers seem to have been greatly struck by the cheapness of food and milk in Indian towns and cities. Terry states that fish could be purchased 'at such easy rates as if they were not worth the valuings,' and that, generally speaking,

¹ Ibid.

' the plenty of all provisions was very great throughout the whole monarchy and everyone there may eat bread without scarceness.' (*Voyage to East India*, Hakluyt Society.) This statement of a foreign visitor is of great significance indeed. It brings credit to the economic management of the period. That the Mughal government aimed at the improvement of the material conditions of life of the people is amply shown by *Ain 2* of the *Ain-i-Akbari*. It reads: ' Every man of sense and understanding knows that the best way of worshipping God consists in allaying the distress of the times, and in improving the condition of man. This depends, however, on the advancement of agriculture, on the order kept in the King's household, on the readiness of the champions of the empire, and the discipline of the army. All this is again connected with the exercise of proper care on the part of the monarch, his love for the people, and with an intelligent management of the revenues and the public expenditure. It is only when cared for that the inhabitants of the towns and those of the rural districts, are able to satisfy their wants, and to enjoy prosperity.'

The mention of the word " people " time and again in the *Ain-i-Akbari* strikes a new note in the policy of the Mughal rulers. The documents of the reign of Shahjahan and Aurangzeb seem to be equally concerned with the welfare and prosperity of the inhabitants of the country. In this connection Parwanas reproduced in the *Selected Documents of Shah Jahan's Reign*¹ prove conclusively that the Mughal government put into actual practice the benevolent sentiments about the general material prosperity and well-being of the people. The words " r'iaya " and " baraya " which have been constantly employed in Mughal documents are significant, the former meaning the ryots and the latter meaning the people. The Regulations (Dasturul 'amal) issued from time to time also testify to the deep concern of the government

¹ Ed. Dr. Yusuf Husain, pp. 23 and 157. The Central Records Office, Hyderabad, Deccan.

with regard to the welfare of the people.

(It seems the Mughal government took practical steps to improve the condition of the peasantry. Akbar directed the Subedars to be energetic in the making of reservoirs, wells, water courses, gardens, serais and other pious foundations. Jahangir tells us in his Tuzuk that he gave an order ' that the officials of the Crown lands and the Jagirdars (grantees) should not forcibly take the ryot's lands and cultivate them on their account.

According to Pelsaert, there was a large number of wells in the Subah of Agra which were dug in summer for irrigation purposes. He mentions millets, rice, indigo, bajra, kangni, urd and mung as kharif crops and wheat, barley, gram and oil-seeds as rabi crops. Bernier came across a good deal of irrigation between Agra and Delhi. Shahjahan caused the old Firuz Shahi canal to be repaired and a new canal dug from Safidun to Delhi which was 30 kos long.

In Bihar cotton, sugarcane, rice and opium were the principal crops. In the Deccan, Nuniz mentions wheat, gram, rice and millet as the crops grown. Khafi Khan also mentions that jawar and bajra were the main support of the people of the Deccan, while rice was the principal food in the Telangana. Thevenot mentions cotton as being grown everywhere and sugarcane in some places.

The general prosperity of the country presumes a fairly high standard of administration without which no material advancement is possible. It is a pity that this aspect of Mughal history has not yet received as much attention from our scholars as it deserves. There are innumerable compendiums and documents bearing on the subject, which need scholarly interpretation and elucidation. If the documents in the Central Records Office, Hyderabad (Deccan), and in the archives of Jaipur were properly edited and interpreted, a new field of historical research would be opened for the historian of the medieval Indian history. Such compendiums as *Siyaq Nama*, *Usulus Siyaq*, *Siyaqe Dakan*, *Zwabite Alamgiri*, *Dejhara*

Subajate Dakan, and various other Dastur'ul-Amals should not be ignored by scholars, who want to contribute fresh data regarding the administrative and economic set-up of the period. These compendiums are veritable mines of information about grants, taxes, land-tenures and other matters allied with the economic life of the period.